

AN IMPACT OF ASSESSING QUALITY ASSURANCE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT ON HIGHER EDUCATION

(An Applied Study of Kingdom of Bahrain)

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ABSTRACT

The governance of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is a determining factor for the functioning and quality of higher education systems. Several the major challenges facing higher education are related to the quality assurance, governance, and management of HEIs specifically the PHEIs. With the increasing demand for higher education as well as the acknowledgement of its role in promoting economic growth, it becomes more essential to ensure that HEIs are managed in an effective manner. Based on the Higher Education Review Unit (HERU)/National Authority for Qualifications & Quality Assurance of Education & Training (NAQQAET) review findings, a number of the major challenges facing higher education in the Kingdom of Bahrain are related to the quality assurance, governance, and management of HEIs. Most HEIs face challenges in forming their governance structures and activities to be in line with international good practice. In many PHEIs there is a disjuncture between the institution's vision and mission and its education provision. In addition, there is a blurring between ownership and governance in almost all PHEIs. Furthermore, governance and management structures are generally not clearly outlined, which means that there is a lack of good corporate governance. The researchers identify the factors affecting governance, management, and quality assurance of higher education from stakeholders' perspectives.

Keywords:

Higher Education, Quality Assurance, Governance, Management.

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Research

Education is a fundamental need of every society; a better education system can enhance the social, scientific, and technological advancement of any country (Mohanthy, 2000). Higher education plays a vital role in the development process of any society; therefore, higher education is gaining more importance and several countries have linked it to economic development.

One of the most important contributions that quality higher education makes to a nation as a whole is to foster economic growth. The International Bank for Development and Reconstruction/World Bank (2000, P. 15) has observed that "High quality human capital is developed in high quality education systems, with tertiary education providing the advanced skills that command a premium in today's workplace". Higher education is not only essential for the society, but also for individuals. Higher education is no longer about educating an elite population, but instead building a utilizable body of skills for the society.

The Economic Vision 2030 for the Kingdom of Bahrain (2008) states that:

- Because education is essential for making this Vision a reality, we need to develop an education system that provides every citizen with educational opportunities appropriate to their individual needs, aspirations, and abilities. Education and training need to be relevant to the requirements of Bahrain and its economy, delivered to the highest possible quality standards, and accessible based on ability and merit.
- To do this, we will develop a clear strategy for raising standards and performance in our schools, vocational institutions, and universities.

It is encouraging to note that steps are being taken in the Kingdom of Bahrain to improve the quality of higher education as a top development priority. Bahrain's strategic policy is to encourage investment in private higher education. Therefore, the number of private higher education institutions (PHEIs) increased rapidly in the Kingdom between 2001 and 2005 in an effort to increase higher education capacity beyond national systems. In the last few years, 13 PHEIs were established and only one public HEI, Bahrain Polytechnic, which was opened in 2008.

In order to regulate the rapid expansion in higher education, a number of Decrees and Laws were issued including the Higher Education Law in 2005, the formation of the Higher Education Council (HEC) in 2006 and the Quality Assurance Authority for Education and Training (QAAET) in 2008 which became the National Authority for Qualifications & Quality Assurance of Education & Training (NAQQAET) in 2012.

1.2. Objectives of the Research

The general objectives of this research are to identify the factors that define and impact governance as well as assessing the impact of governance and management on the quality assurance in PHEIs. The result of the research could assist the Kingdom of Bahrain in its efforts to enhance the quality of higher education. Factors affecting the PHEIs governance will be also derived from literature and NAQQAET Review reports. The specific objectives of this research are:

1. To review critically the published literature on governance of higher education institutions.
2. To identify the factors affecting quality assurance in private higher education from stakeholders' perception.
3. To develop a set of factors that impact governance of private higher education institutions.

1.3. Research Questions

This research will explore the impact of governance on quality assurance and answer the following questions:

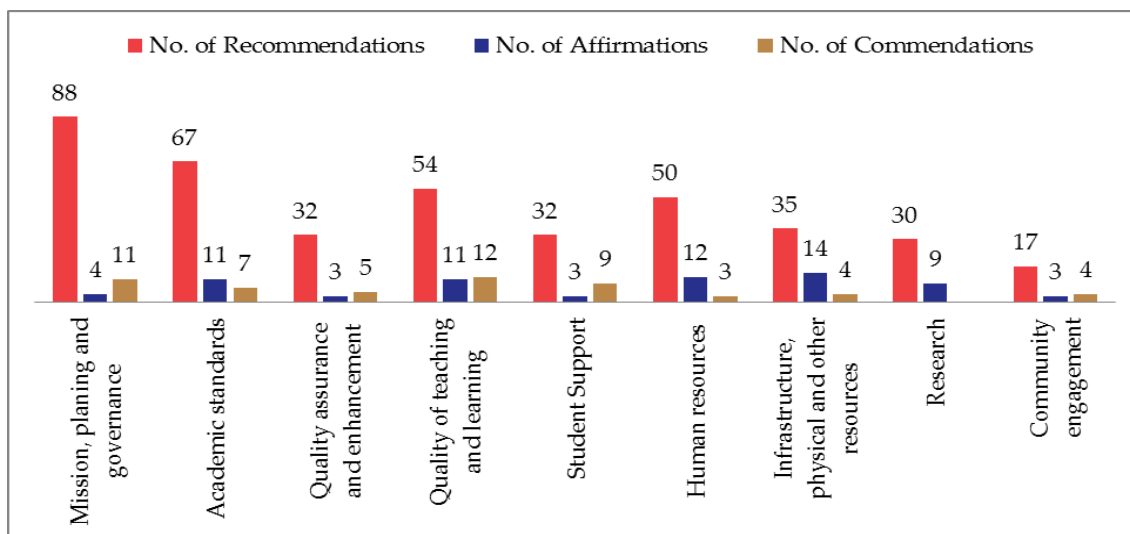
1. What are the factors affecting quality assurance in private higher education from stakeholders' perceptions?
2. What are the most influential factors on governance and management of private higher education institutions?

1.4. Significance of the Research

Research on the governance of PHEIs and its impact on quality assurance is a relatively recent trend in the mainstream of higher education research. When considering the rapid expansion of private higher education in the Kingdom of Bahrain, there remains a lack of information on this topic. However, it is worth mentioning that the need to develop and improve the way PHEIs are governed has been identified by the NAQQAET. Based on the NAQQAET Annual Report of 2011, it can be seen that most HEIs face a number

of challenges in establishing their mission, planning and governance structures and activities to be in line with international good practice. A total of 88 recommendations were made in this regard.

Figure 1.1 shows the number of Commendations, Affirmations, and Recommendations by theme 2008-2011 for 12 private and two public HEIs



Hence this research will supply the much-needed information on the impact of private higher education governance on quality assurance and to develop a set of factors that influence governance of PHEIs. Furthermore, this research can assist higher education policy makers in mapping a constructive strategy for higher education governance and quality assurance guidelines in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

1.5. Definition of Terms

In order to avoid ambiguity, the important terms used in this research are defined in this section.

Quality:

A review of the literature with regard to quality in Higher Education reveals different definitions of quality. According to Whereas Middlehurst (1992) defines the concept of quality from a variety of stakeholder perspectives. Quality, in the context of this research, refers to fitness for purpose. Such a definition allows the institutions to define goals (purpose) in the mission statements, the quality is evaluated and presented through the mission statement and goal accomplishment (Woodhouse, 1999).

Quality Assurance:

Our research is going to adopt the following definition of quality assurance by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) (2002) Quality assurance is a planned and systematic review process of an institution & program to determine whether or not acceptable standards are being met, maintained, and enhanced.

Governance:

Shattock (2002) defines the higher education governance as: "the constitutional forms and processes through which universities govern their affairs." Shattock adds that while governance and management are theoretically separate functions; management is more about the preparation of policy proposals; the implementation of what is agreed and the efficient and effective deployment of resources. However, these two functions have close interrelationships in the higher education context, in a way not always seen in the corporate world because governance operates at many more levels in the university context.

Management:

Griffin (2002) describes management as a set of activities (including planning and decision making, organizing, leading and controlling) directed at an organization's resources (human, financial, physical and information) with the aim of achieving goals in an efficient and effective manner. Management is a process of continuing and related activities which concentrates on reaching organizational goals by working with and through people and other organizational resources.

Stakeholder:

For the purpose of this research, the term stakeholder will refer to a person (or group) that has an interest in the activities of an institution or organization. Stakeholders are those groups that have an interest in the activities of an institution or organization and in the quality of provision and standard of outcomes. This definition implies that both internal and external stakeholders play an influential role on the quality of higher education (Amaral & Magalhães, 2002). Internal stakeholders can be defined as persons employed by or enrolled at a HEI, whereas external stakeholders refer to actors who are normally not involved in the daily activities of the HEIs, however they have interest in the function, practices, and outcomes of HEIs.

1.6. Limitations of the Research

This research will identify the factors affecting quality assurance, governance, and management of PHEIs located in the Kingdom of Bahrain from different internal and external stakeholders' perception. A limitation of this research relates to the lack of prior research studies on this particular topic, since the research on this issue is relatively recent in general especially in the Arab world. Moreover, access to information is a critical aspect for the conduct of most research studies and gaining access to the relevant information within the HEIs is a challenge since in most cases this information is considered confidential.

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is becoming increasingly obvious that higher education is a vital component in modern societies (Van der Ploeg & Veugelers, 2008). The recognition that higher education is a major driver for economic competitiveness has made high-quality higher education more important than ever before. For this reason, the concepts of quality and quality assurance have become internationally important in higher education discussions.

2.1. Quality and Quality Assurance in Higher Education

A review of the literature with regard to quality in higher education reveals different definitions of quality. According to Harvey and Green (1993) quality is something exceptional that exceeds high and required standards, perfection exhibited through zero defects, fitness for purpose in terms of meeting customers' specifications and satisfaction, and value for money through efficiency and effectiveness. Whereas Middlehurst (1992) defines the concept of quality from a variety of stakeholder perspectives. Definition of quality as fitness for purpose sees quality in terms of satisfying a customer's requirements, needs or desires.

According to Wahlen (1998) quality assurance in higher education is the activity that aims at maintaining and improving quality. The purpose of quality assurance in higher education is to guarantee the enhancement of standards and quality in higher education in order to ensure higher education meets the requirements of different stakeholders (Lomas, 2002). There are many stakeholders who are interested in higher education quality assurance including: the students, parents, policy makers, employers and the HEIs

themselves. Quality assurance can be either an external or internal process. External quality assurance refers to the review of the institution or its programs by an external agency or body, which assesses the operations of the HEI or its programs to ascertain the level of compliance with set minimum standards. On the other hand, internal quality assurance refers to the internal policies and mechanisms of a HEI or program for ensuring that it is fulfilling its purposes. In higher education, quality assurance refers to a clear commitment and practices of HEIs to the development of an institutional culture which recognizes the value and the continuous enhancement of quality.

According to Kontio (2008) quality assurance means all the procedures, processes and systems that support and develop the education and other activities of the HEIs. The quality assurance system has been introduced in both public and PHEIs due to the increasing demand for accountability (Gibbons, 1998).

Quality in higher education is a complex and multidimensional concept, which should embrace all the related functions and activities of the HEI system. Hence, any framework for the assessment of higher education quality should consider the quality of students, academics, infrastructure, student support services, curricula, assessment and learning resources.

2.2. Factors Affecting Quality Assurance in Higher Education

In higher education, fitness for purpose means that the HEI has the appropriate procedures in place for the stated purposes and that there is an indication that these procedures are accomplishing the stated purposes. A wide range of factors affect quality in HEI including their vision and mission, the expertise of the teaching staff, admission and assessment standards, the teaching and learning environment, the employability of its graduates, the quality of the library and laboratories, management effectiveness, governance and leadership (Marjorie, 2002).

Cheng and Tam (1997) argued that quality in higher education is a multi-dimensional concept and cannot be easily assessed by only one indicator. Different indicators may be developed in different aspects of educational inputs, educational processes, and educational outcomes to evaluate higher education quality. Inputs include financial, physical, and human resources along with the resources that are provided for students at different educational levels. Educational outputs are the consequences of the educational process which are reflected in measures such as the levels of knowledge, skills and values acquired by students. Educational processes refer to all processes from curriculum development to final assessment including admission, teaching, and learning.

Sabri and El-Rafae (2006) indicated that the HEIs are considered as parts of the larger higher education system in any country. However, a HEI can be perceived as a system by itself that consists of different parts or subsystems. The quality of HEI systems derives from the quality or capacity of the individual parts of the system as well as from the quality of the relations between the parts. Furthermore, HEI performance is influenced by the larger higher education system it is part of and its overall environment.

The HEI system consists of different parts or subsystems including teaching and learning, research, quality assurance activities and procedures, human resources, facilities and infrastructure, financial resources, organizational aspects, and management practices and governance aimed at balancing interests of stakeholders.

2.3. Higher Education Governance and Management

As higher education institutions (HEIs) have become increasingly complex organizations, the issue of institutional governance has become a major concern (Gerber, 2001; Semplicio, 2006). This concern has been intensified by the increasing pressures and expectations being placed on HEIs by different

stakeholders, the institutions are being asked to do more with less (Kezar & Eckel, 2004). These pressures have increased the value of effective governance systems in higher educational institutions (Amacher & Meiners, 2003). Moreover, these pressures have also led to an increased interest in understanding how decisions are made within the HEIs.

It is important to draw a distinction between higher education governance and management; in fact, management is considered as part of the governance process. Governance should be understood as a process of setting long term goals and establishing strategies for accomplishing these goals. Management refers to the process of implementation of these decisions, the day-to-day activities ensuring the achievement of the aforementioned strategies and goals.

According to the European Commission (2008), higher education governance focuses on the rules and mechanisms by which different stakeholders influence decisions, how they are held accountable, and to whom. In the context of higher education, governance encompasses the framework in which an institution pursues its goals, objectives and policies in a coherent and coordinated manner.

The management and governance of private higher education is a complex process. On one hand, similar to other private endeavours, stakeholders (owners/founders) are interested in making good profit, whilst on the other hand; students and parents including other stakeholders want to be assured of quality academic standards. Accomplishing both goals require serious analysis and consideration. In the literature, there is much research on for-profit private higher education that have expressed concerns on the quality of education in favour of making a profit for the founders and stakeholders (Altbach, 2002; Buchbinder & Howard, 1993).

Governance is currently a key issue not only for higher education institutions but for society as a whole. Governance has become a major leverage tool for improving quality in all aspects of higher education.

2.4. Factors affecting Higher Education Governance and Management

Shattock (2002) defines higher education governance as: "the constitutional forms and processes through which universities govern their affairs." It refers to the internal structure, organization and management of the HEI. Governance generally includes at least four elements: ensuring accountability; setting strategic goals; monitoring and measuring performance; and appointing and ensuring the effectiveness of the head of HEI. The organization of governance is generally composed of a governing board (e.g., board of trustees and board of directors); the university president; administrative staff, faculty members, academic deans, department chairs; and some form of student's representation.

HEIs governance is a multidimensional issue. Based on a study by the World Bank (2012) there are five dimensions that together paint a complete picture of governance: overall context, mission, and goals; management orientation; autonomy; accountability; and participation.

Hénard and Mitterle (2010) performed a study in order to examine the relationship between good governance and quality assurance guidelines in higher education. The study shows that even though the guidelines vary in terms of the form, details, and aim, they have the same direction. Quality assurance and governance share several key issues namely, defining the mission, the institutional structure, planning, participation, and transparency. The governance guidelines work on clarifying the institutional structures and procedures of the board whereas the quality guidelines focus more on the planning processes themselves and the promoting of a quality culture within the institution.

Research on the impact of private higher education governance on quality assurance is relatively recent in the Arab world. When considering the rapid expansion of private higher education in the Arab world

including the Kingdom of Bahrain, there still remains a lack of information on this aspect, and hence it is much needed to address such a vital topic.

2.5. Governance and Management of Private Higher education in the Kingdom of Bahrain

PHEIs in Bahrain comes under the jurisdiction and supervision of the Ministry of Education (MoE) through the HEC which was established under a 2005 Higher Education Law. Higher education is also a shared responsibility with the NAQQAET. The NAQQAET is mandated to ‘review the quality of the performance of education and training institutions in light of the guiding indicators developed by the Authority’.

The HEC is in charge of setting the conditions and criteria for granting licenses to PHEIs, in addition to following up and monitoring their performance. The Higher Education Law in Bahrain allows for banning the enrolment of new students to programmes in cases of licensing requirements violation and poor quality of education provision. The HEC regulations which were gazetted in October 2007 set out the administrative, academic, financial, and physical infrastructure requirements for PHEIs.

The PHEIs in Bahrain have autonomy in managing administrative, financial, and technical matters, and are solely responsible for attaining their mission and objectives. However, the MoE in Bahrain is considered as the highest official authority for some HEIs (e.g. University of Bahrain and Arabian Gulf University).

According to the HEC Regulations, each HEI is required to have a full-time president to manage it. The president must have a doctoral degree, or its equivalent, with adequate experience to manage the institution in both academic and administrative aspects. A recent regulation of the HEC bans any investor/owner from being appointed as university president. The Board of Trustees (BoT) usually nominates the president of the HEI for approval by the HEC.

There are two categories of stakeholders of HEIs: internal stakeholders and external stakeholders. Internal stakeholders are all those who participate in the daily life of institutions and this include for example the academic staff, the non-academic staff and the students. External stakeholders are groups or individuals that have an interest in higher education, and they are coming from outside the HEIs such as employers and external quality assurance bodies.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The key objective of this research is to investigate the impact of the governance and management of HEIs on the quality assurance of higher education. The research has also attempted to identify the factors affecting governance, management, and quality assurance in higher education. To achieve the objectives of the research and to answer the questions posed in chapter one, a qualitative research method was employed by mean of a questionnaire.

3.1. Research Design

Ghuri and Grohaung (2005) state that research design is a way in which a researcher makes a plan, how to collect and analyse data, so that it provides a theoretical structure for conducting the research. The survey method was employed as the basic research design for this exploratory research. The objective of this research is to gather preliminary information that will help define the problem and suggest hypotheses in regard to governance and its impact on higher education quality assurance. The survey method is one of the main research methods used in education as well as other disciplines for data collection because it is an efficient mean of gathering a large amount of data in a relatively short period of time.

3.2. Research Population

The higher education institutions in the Kingdom of Bahrain represent the population in this research. Higher education in the Kingdom of Bahrain started in the late 1960s with the Higher Institutes for Male and Female Teachers which was developed into the University College of Arts, Sciences, and Education in 1978. After that the Gulf Technical College was established in 1968 and was then renamed Gulf Polytechnic in 1981. The University of Bahrain, which is the main public HEI in the Kingdom of Bahrain, was created in 1986 through a merger of the previously mentioned two institutions. With the deregulation of higher education in the early 2000s, the first PHEI was licensed in 2001.

Currently there are 13 Private (licensed by the HEC) and three public HEIs. Two of the PHEIs are phasing out their operations in Bahrain. Some of the 13 PHEIs are wholly owned by a parent institution whilst the ownership of others is shared between Bahraini investors and a parent institution, the rest are owned by a single or group of investors(s). Three of these HEIs are registered as not-for-profit institutions and the rest are registered for-profit with limited liabilities. The targeted population in this research is the PHEIs licensed by the HEC in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The emergence of PHEIs in the early 2000s came as a result of the growing demand for higher education in Bahrain which could not be met by the public HE sectors. Establishing PHEIs, however, needs the approval of the HEC.

3.3. Sampling Procedure

Given that there are 13 PHEIs licensed by the HEC in the Kingdom of Bahrain shows that the targeted population in this research is relatively small. Therefore, non-probability sampling was suitable for this exploratory research, since this research does not aim to generate results that will be used to create generalizations but to investigate the impact of governance on quality assurance in private higher education, in addition, to identify the factors affecting governance, management and quality assurance in higher education. Consecutive sampling' which is very similar to convenience sampling except that it seeks to include all accessible subjects that are available, was used in this research. This made the sample a better representation of the entire population.

Two hundred survey were initially distributed to a random sample of different participants.

3.4. Instrumentation

Two sources of data were used in this research; primary data collected using surveys and secondary data obtained from different sources. Secondary data sources included the HEC, the published Review Reports and Annual Reports by the NAQQAET- the Higher Education Review Unit (HERU), in addition to the PHEIs' websites. To generate the needed information for this research, the survey method was implemented, and a questionnaire was developed to survey the governance guidelines and procedures in PHEIs. The survey is an important and useful method of data collection and it is one of the most widely used methods in research, primarily due to its flexibility. Questionnaires are the most frequently used survey method for data collection in educational and evaluation research. It helps gather information on knowledge, attitudes, opinions, behaviours, facts, and other information.

The questionnaire consists of three sections (see Appendix) with the aim of collecting relevant information about stakeholders' views on the factors affecting quality assurance, governance and management of PHEIs located in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Stakeholders who responded to the survey included representatives from:

- NAQQAET-HERU

- Institutional leadership
- Academic staff
- Students/ Graduates
- Administrative staff
- Professional staff

No responses were received from HEC representatives.

3.5. Scale Validity and Reliability

A research instrument is valid if it measures what it is proposed to measure and accurately attains the purpose for which it was designed (Patten, 2004). Content validity was used to measure the validity of the survey in this research. It refers to the extent to which a research instrument fully assesses or measures the construct of interest. Patten (2004) identifies some principles to enhance content validity including the use of a broad sample rather than a narrow one and the emphasis on important material by writing questions to measure the research variables. These principles were addressed when writing the survey items. Moreover, the content validity method emphasises whether the survey questions are measuring different concepts. This problem could be checked by asking competent colleagues who are familiar with the purpose of the survey to measure its validity, then to adjust the questionnaire items accordingly.

Reliability relates to the consistency of the data collected and to ensure internal reliability of the research instrument. The most common internal consistency reliability measure is given by Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The coefficient alpha is an internal consistency index designed for use with surveys containing items that have no right answer. This is a very useful tool in educational and social science research because research instruments in these areas often ask respondents to rate the degree to which they agree or disagree with a statement on a particular scale. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used in this research. In order to test the reliability of the questionnaire, a correlation matrix was obtained for:

- Higher education quality assurance, the items correlated between 0.77 and 0.57.
- Higher education governance and management, the items correlated between 0.65 and 0.39.

Generally, relationships below 0.10 are not large enough to be significant. Relationships between 0.10 and 0.20 are small but consequential; relationships between 0.20 and 0.40 are moderate to strong, large enough to be substantial and important. Any relationship above 0.40 can usually be considered quite strong (Dometrius, 1992).

The items of this questionnaire seem to have moderate to strong correlations, hence any major amendments of these items were not required.

3.6. Data Collection Procedures

The primary data collection was done using survey questionnaire while the secondary data was obtained from publicly available sources such as the published Review Reports and Annual Reports by the NAQQAET-HERU, the PHEIs' websites and the HEC. The questionnaire was self-constructed, and validity and reliability were tested, moreover, it contained a cover sheet explaining the purpose of this research. Furthermore, the survey was translated into Arabic to ease the understanding of the survey questions and increase the response rate. The participants were contacted personally or via email and were briefed on the purpose of the research. They were assured of the confidentiality of their responses which would be used for research purposes only.

3.7. Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 17) was used to analyse the collected data in relation to the research design. To begin the data analysis process, descriptive statistics were computed to summarize and describe the demographic data of participants. Inferential statistics were conducted to reach conclusions and identify the factors affecting governance, management, and quality assurance in higher education. Furthermore, Cronbach's Alpha test was also used to test internal reliability of the questionnaire.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1. Response Rate

Two hundred surveys were initially sent personally or via email to a random sample of different participants (stakeholders) including students/graduates, institutional leaderships, academic staff, administrative staff, professional staff, HEC and NAQQAET/HERU staff. One hundred and twenty-four useable surveys were returned. Ten surveys were returned that were not considered useable. The unusable surveys were partially complete with major portions of the survey blank. All PHEIs responded in some way to survey. With 124 returned and useable surveys out of 200, the response rate was 62%.

In order to increase the response rate, the questionnaire included clear and easily understood instructions and a cover sheet explaining the purpose of the research. Similarly, a reminder email was also sent after two weeks from the date of the first email to inform the participant about the importance of their contribution to the survey's success and urging them to complete the survey. Unfortunately, it was difficult to get responses from institutional leadership and HEC representatives due to the long process of survey request approval and time limitation.

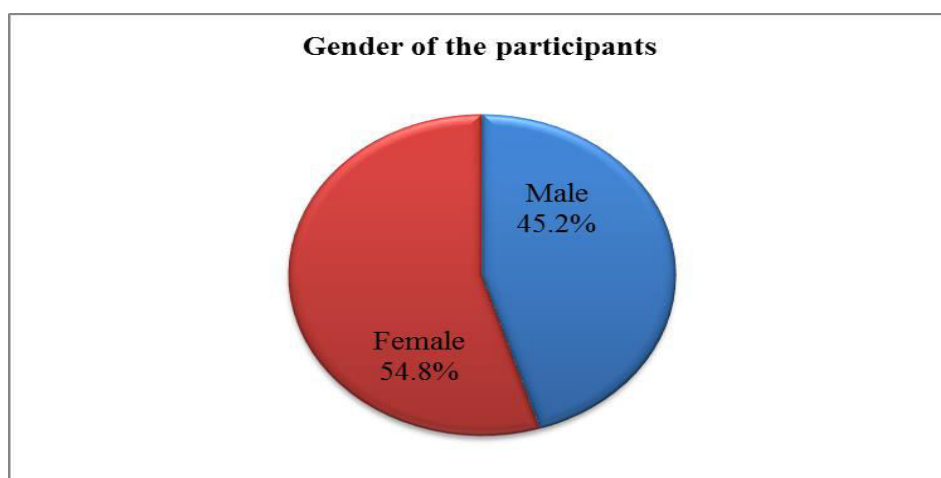
4.2. General Information

Descriptive statistical analysis was used to identify frequencies and percentages for all the questions in the survey.

Gender of the participants:

Sixty-eight (54.8%) of the participants were female while fifty-six (45.2%) were male.

Figure 4.1 shows the gender distribution of the participants



Educational qualifications of the participants:

Thirteen (10.5%) of the participants hold a diploma degree, while eighty-nine (71.8%) indicated having a bachelor's degree. At the same time twenty-two participants (17.8%) have a master's degree or more.

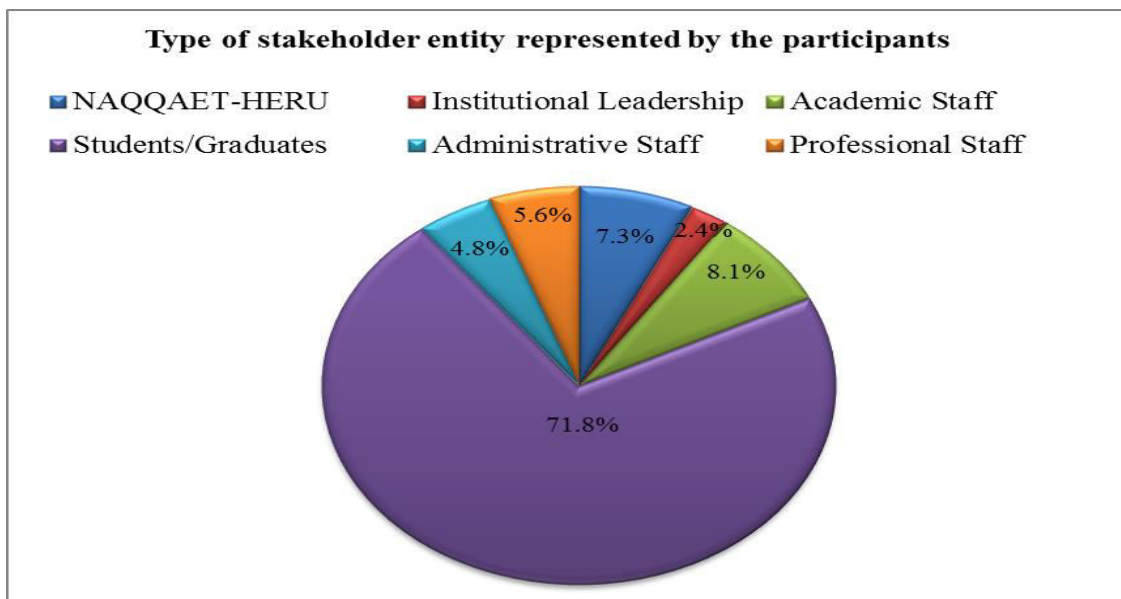
Table 4.1 shows the educational qualifications of the participants.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Diploma	13	10.5	10.5
Bachelor’s degree	89	71.8	82.3
Master’s degree	12	9.7	91.9
PhD	10	8.1	100.0
Total	124	100.0	

Type of stakeholder entity represented by the participants:

Nine (7.3%) of the participants reported that they are NAQQAET/HERU staff, ten (8.1%) academic staff, six (4.8%) administrative staff, seven (5.6%) professional staff, the majority of the participants eighty-nine (71.8%) were students/graduates. Very few responses were received from institutional leadership and no response from HEC representatives.

Figure 4.2 shows the stakeholder entity represented by the participants.

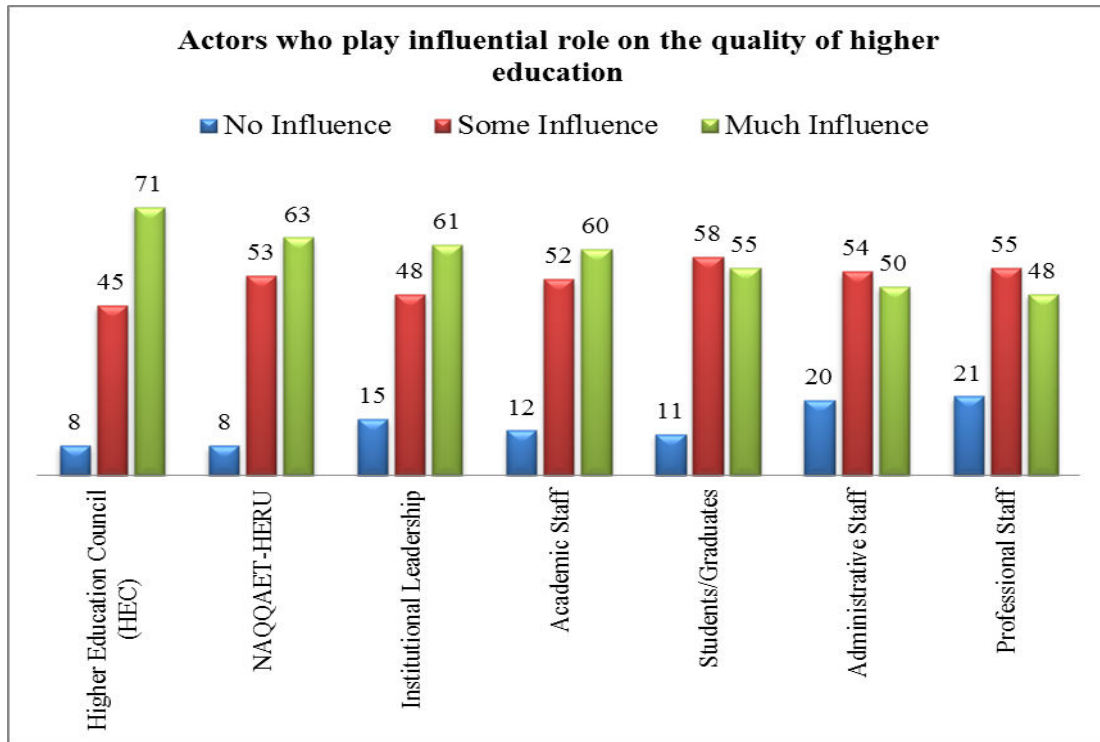


4.3. Higher Education Quality Assurance

Actors who play an influential role on the quality of higher education:

When asked about the degree of influence different actors play on the quality of higher education, seventy-one (57.3%) reported that the HEC has much influence on the quality of higher education, sixty-three (50.8%) indicated that NAQQAET-HERU also has much influence on the quality of higher education while twenty-one (17%) reported that professional staff has no influence on the quality of higher education.

Figure 4.3 shows the influence of each actor on the quality of higher education from stakeholders’ perspectives.

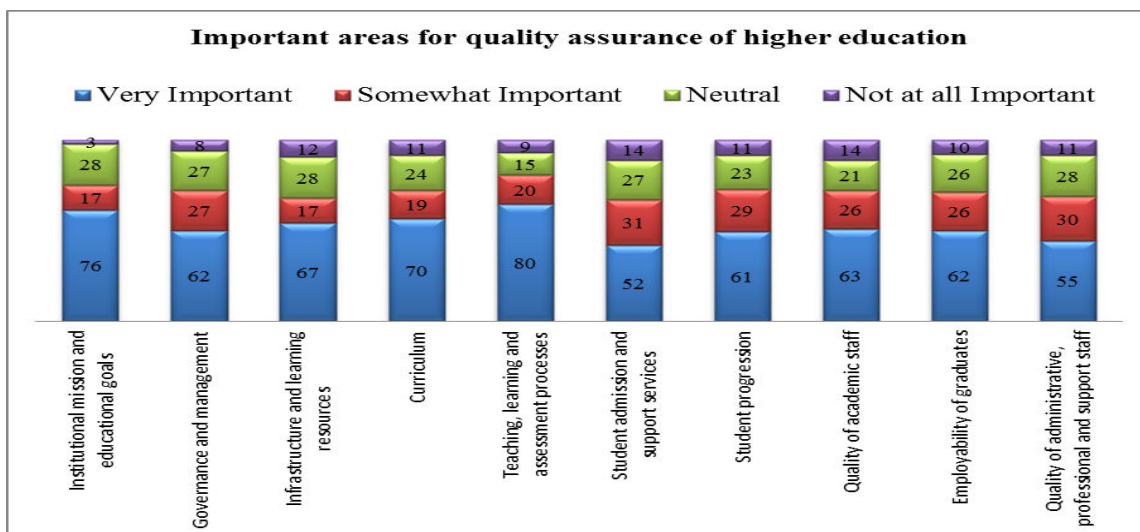


Important areas for quality assurance of higher education:

When the participants were asked about the importance of different areas for quality assurance of higher education, eighty (64.5%) identified teaching, learning and assessment process as a very important area for quality assurance of higher education followed by the institutional mission and educational goals; curriculum; infrastructure and learning resources; quality of academic staff; governance and management; employability of graduates and student progression respectively.

Some participants also indicated that there are other important areas for quality assurance of higher education such as: extra-curricular activities; research; the quality of basic education system; adequate human, financial and technical resources allocation; and academic standards

Figure 4.4 shows the most important areas for quality assurance of higher education from stakeholders’ perspectives.



4.4. Higher Education Governance and Management

Impact of governance and management of HEIs on quality assurance of higher education:

Among the participants, sixty-five (52.4%) indicated that the governance and management of HEIs has a high impact on the quality assurance of higher education, while only nineteen (15.3%) indicated a low impact of the governance and management of HEIs on the quality assurance of higher education.

Table 4.2 shows the impact of governance and management of HEIs on quality assurance of higher education.

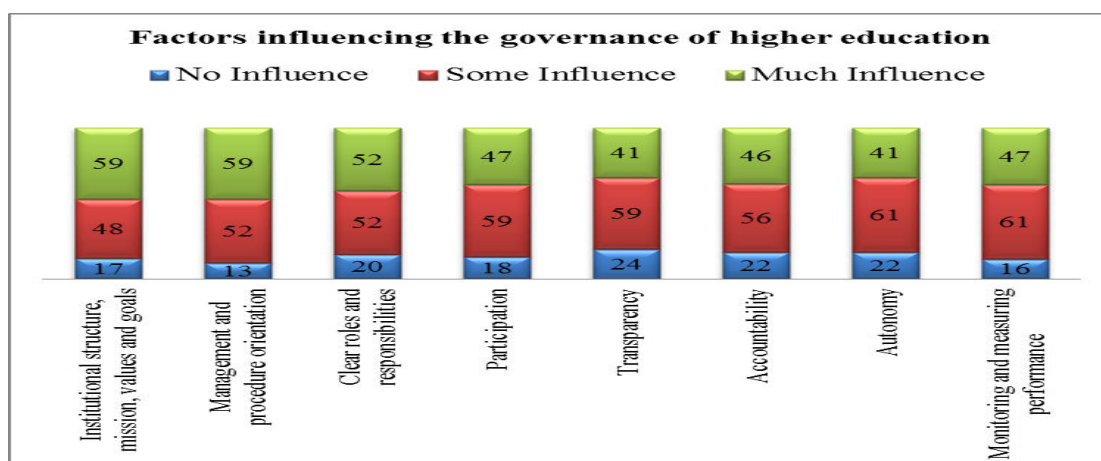
		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Low	10	8.1	8.1
	Low	19	15.3	23.4
	High	65	52.4	75.8
	Very High	30	24.2	100.0
	Total	124	100.0	

Factors influencing the governance of higher education:

In relation to the factors influencing the governance of higher education, fifty-nine (47.6%) indicated that institutional structure, mission, values and goals have much influence on the governance of higher education followed by management and procedure orientation; clear roles and responsibilities; participation; monitoring and measuring performance; accountability; transparency; and autonomy respectively.

Some participants also indicated that there are other factors influencing the governance of higher education such as: the structure of the governing body, the diversity and independence of its members and whether they self-assess their work, and more importantly whether the driver is to maximize profits or a sustainable HEI. Other factors were the clear roles and responsibilities of the governing body, in addition to clear strategic planning supported by Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure the HEI’s achievements against its objectives.

Figure 4.5 shows the factors influencing the governance of higher education.

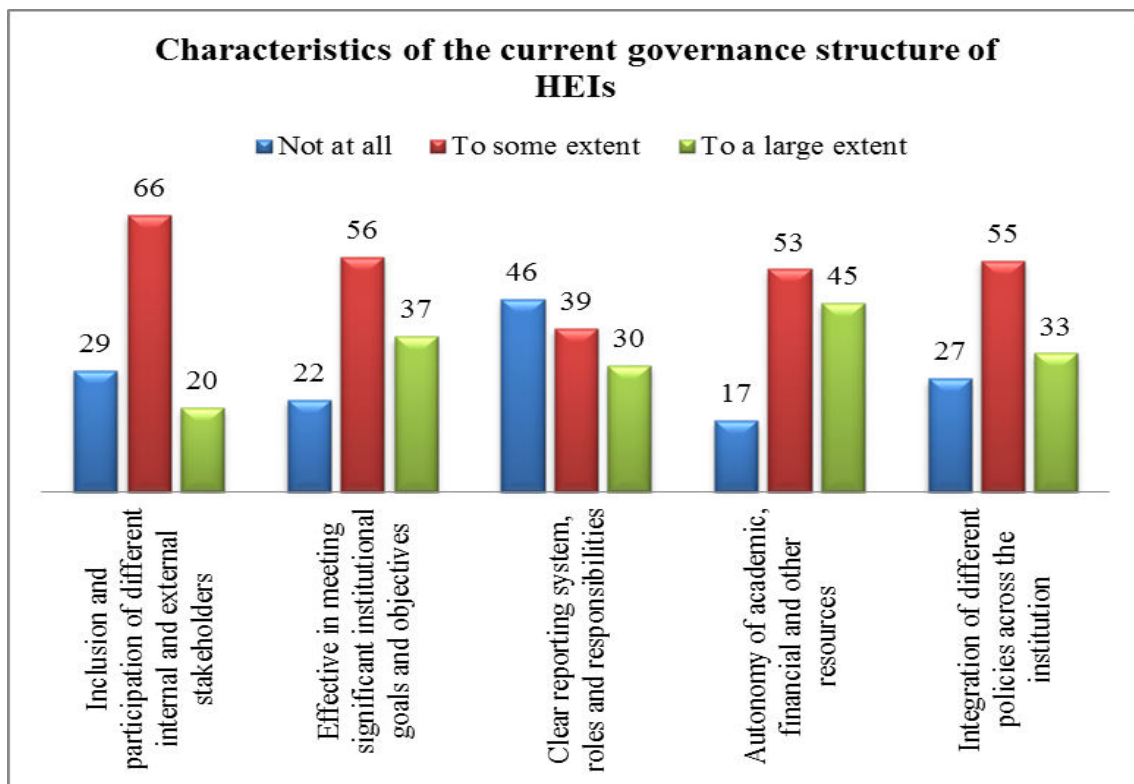


Characteristics of the current governance structure of HEIs:

Internal stakeholders when asked about the characteristics of the current governance structure of their HEIs, twenty (17.4%) believe that the governance structure of their HEI is to a large extent characterized by the inclusion and participation of different internal and external stakeholders, thirty seven (32.2%) believe that the governance structure of their HEI is to a large extent characterized by effectiveness in meeting significant institutional goals and objectives, thirty (26.1%) believe that the governance structure of their HEI is to a large extent characterized by clear reporting system, roles and responsibilities, forty five (39.1%) believe that the governance structure of their HEI is to a large extent characterized by autonomy of academic, financial and other resources, thirty nine (33.9%) believe that the governance structure of their HEI is to a large extent characterized by integration of different policies across the institution.

Only internal stakeholders answered this question therefore percentages reported corresponded to the number of respondents who answered this question.

Figure 4.6 shows responses of internal stakeholders about the characteristics of the governance structure of their HEIs.



DISCUSSION

This research has been concerned with the factors affecting governance, management, and quality assurance in higher education from stakeholder’s perspective. Research on the governance and management of PHEIs and its impact on quality assurance is a relatively recent trend in the mainstream of higher education research. When considering the rapid expansion of private higher education in the Kingdom of Bahrain, there still remains a lack of information on this topic. However, it is worth mentioning that the need to develop and improve the way PHEIs are governed has been identified by the NAQQAET as a major area for improvement.

This research attempted to answer the following research questions in relation to governance, management, and quality assurance of higher education:

1. What are the factors affecting quality assurance in private higher education from stakeholders' perceptions?
2. What are the most influential factors on governance and management of private higher education institutions?

To answer these questions, a questionnaire was designed and administered to obtain the data needed. In this chapter, all items in the questionnaire will be dealt with collectively under two main aspects. The first aspect is quality assurance of higher education, while the second aspect is governance and management of higher education.

5.1. Quality Assurance of Higher Education

HEIs face new and complex demands, they are expected to open up and interact with different actors and stakeholders. All of those stakeholders' demand that their interests be heard by the HEIs. The HEIs are now required to be more responsive to the needs of the stakeholders when it comes to doing research and educating students than they were before. Based on Amaral and Magalhães (2002) study on higher education's stakeholders, a stakeholder is "a person or entity with legitimate interests in higher education and which, as such, acquires the right to intervene". This definition shows that stakeholders can have a formal and informal position.

Internal stakeholders can be defined as persons employed by or enrolled at a HEI. Employees (including academic, administrative, and professional staff), institutional leadership and students are regarded as internal stakeholders in this research. External stakeholders are persons who have interest in the function, practices, and outcomes of HEIs. In other words, the external stakeholders refer to actors who are normally not involved in the daily activities of the HEIs. The HEC and NAQQAET-HERU are regarded as external stakeholders.

This research reveals that the HEC and the NAQQAET-HERU are the most influential actors on the quality of higher education from a stakeholder's perspective. Generally, the HEC oversees HEIs as regards compliance with the higher education regulations. Moreover, it is in charge of setting the conditions and criteria for granting licenses to PHEIs, in addition to following up and monitoring their performance. The HEC deals primarily with PHEIs. The NAQQAET-HERU is responsible for setting quality standards and conducting reviews for improving the quality of education at the HEIs.

A review of PHEIs based on HEC regulations and requirements was conducted during 2007. Institutions that were found breach of the regulation were given deadlines to comply with all the requirements or alternatively have their licenses suspended. In 2009, the enrolment in 6 PHEIs was temporary suspended due to the lack of compliance with the new HEC requirements.

The above clarifies the consensus among participants that both HEC and NAQQAET-HERU are the most influential actors on quality assurance of higher education. This research identifies the factors affecting quality assurance in higher education. These factors are listed below according to their importance from stakeholders' perceptions.

- Teaching, learning and assessment processes
- Institutional mission and educational goals
- Curriculum
- Infrastructure and learning resources
- Quality of academic staff
- Governance and management
- Employability of graduates

-
- Student progression
 - Quality of administrative, professional and support staff
 - Student admission and support services.

In 2010-2011 academic year, the NAQQAET-HERU completed its first cycle of institutional reviews which included the review of 12 private and two public HEIs. According to the NAQQAET annual report of 2011, different shortcomings were identified that affect the quality of higher education provision in the Kingdom of Bahrain, for example: poor strategic planning, lack of good corporate governance, lack of wide-ranging teaching methods, weak admission requirements in PHEIs, lack of mechanism to support academically weak students, lack of adequate quality assurance mechanisms and systems, and inadequate infrastructure for higher education provision.

5.2. Governance and Management of Higher Education

This research shows that different stakeholders agreed that the governance and management of HEIs has a high impact on the quality assurance of higher education. One of the challenges facing higher education is when profits may compromise the quality of provision.

The literature has indicated that the governance of higher education institutions is a determining factor for the functioning and quality of higher education systems (Srećko, 2012). The way the HEIs are managed, the directions they take and the values they hold send clear signals about their role and functions in society (Kennedy, 2003).

Based on the HERU institutional review findings, all HEIs received recommendations with regard to the 'Mission, planning and governance' (the first theme of HERU Institutional Review Framework). Most PHEIs face challenges in forming their governance structures and activities to be in line with international good practice. In addition, governance and management structures are generally not clearly outlined, which means that there is a lack of good corporate governance.

HERU also conducts follow-up review that applies to all HEIs that have had institutional reviews to measure the progress made in meeting the recommendations stated in the institutional review reports. The cumulative progress of 10 follow-up institutional reviews in PHEIs shows that only 50% of the institutions have made the expected progress with regard to the first theme, 'Mission, planning and governance'.

The findings of this research provide greater insights into the perceptions of internal and external stakeholders on factors influencing the governance and management of private higher education. Based on stakeholders' perceptions, these factors are discussed below according to intensity of its influence on the governance of higher education.

The two factors that were widely cited as the most influential factors on the governance of higher education were the institutional structure, mission, values and goals: and the management and procedure orientation of HEIs.

Institutional structure, mission and goals:

The literature indicates that the clarity of institutional mission and the alignment between mission and goals are essential for sound governance in higher education. A mission represents a mutual understanding of the fundamental purposes of the HEI. The establishment and periodical review of institutional mission is a classical governance function. HERU reviews found that in many PHEIs there is a disjuncture between the institution's mission and its education provision. Defining the institutional mission is the foundation for defining the governance structure of the HEI leading to the attainment of its goals and objectives. It is also

important to have processes in place to monitor and evaluate the performance and effectiveness of the HEI against a strategic plan and approved KPIs.

Management and procedure orientation:

The management and procedure orientation refers to the structure of governing bodies available in the HEIs as well as the process for appointing its members. It also refers to the role and responsibilities, reporting lines, and mechanisms for measuring the performance of these governing bodies.

Management refers to the day-to-day decisions of operating the institutions such as: admission, registration, recruitment of academic and administrative staff and other activities to achieve the institutional mission. The management process can influence the mechanisms of governance. Some authors see institutional leadership, management and administration as components within HEI governance (MSCHE, 2006).

The institutional leadership refers to the strategic direction while management refers to the monitoring of institutional accountability and effectiveness, whereas administration refers to the implementation of procedures. A crucial feature of governance is inspiring leaders with a strong strategic vision. Strategic planning is another key element of sound governance in higher education and used as a significant factor of success. Strategic planning includes preparing a strategic plan and defining goals, in addition to determining the mechanisms used to monitor achievement.

Participation and involvement of stakeholders:

Participation refers to the extent to which different stakeholders are involved in the decision-making process. A wide range of stakeholders have interest in HEI, and who have emerged with new demands for higher education to be more responsive to their needs. One of these needs is involving them into the governance of higher education and the creating of adequate mechanisms of involvement on both the institutional level and the level of the system. Involving stakeholders in the decision-making process bring several benefits to an HEI as they have unique insight into issues, moreover, it can build trust and increase transparency. The ability of academic staff to participate in decisions concerning the HEI is one critical factor to determining academic excellence. However, it is difficult to determine the appropriate level of stakeholder participation (Altbach & Salmi, 2011).

Accountability and transparency:

The demand for accountability in higher education is currently increasing. This demand is in the form of measurable demonstrations of achievement and value for money activities as well as progress on the institution's goals. This trend towards greater transparency and accountability is emerging parallel to the move towards greater autonomy. There is a high association between autonomy and accountability, the more autonomous the HEIs are, the more likely they are to be subject to accountability measures.

Public accountability is the extent to which HEI outcomes are measured and to which clear definitions exist regarding who is accountable for these outcomes. It is important to examine how institution leaders and governing bodies are held accountable by society.

The practice of disseminating and sharing information is another critical element of accountability. The information that is most frequently made available to stakeholders include the mission and goals of the HEI, in addition to the results of evaluation (internal and external) and accreditation.

Autonomy:

Autonomy is a critical factor that influence governance of higher education. It allows institutions to manage their resources and quickly respond to the demands of the rapidly changing social, business and industry environment. The PHEIs in Bahrain have autonomy in managing administrative, academic, financial, and

technical matters, and are solely responsible for attaining their mission and objectives. Financial autonomy includes for instance the institution's ability to set tuition fees, invest money in financial and physical assets.

6. Research Findings

This research reveals that:

- The HEC and the NAQQAET-HERU are the most influential actors on the quality of higher education from a stakeholder's perspective.
- There are important factors that affect quality assurance in higher education. According to their importance from stakeholders' perceptions, these factors are: teaching, learning and assessment process; institutional mission and educational goals; curriculum; infrastructure and learning resources; quality of academic staff; governance and management; employability of graduates; student progression; quality of administrative, professional and support staff and student admission and support services respectively.
- The governance and management of HEIs has a high impact on the quality assurance of higher education.
- From stakeholders' perceptions, the institutional structure, mission, values and goals; and the management and procedure orientation of HEIs are the most influential factors on the governance of higher education. Other factors include: participation and involvement of stakeholders; accountability; transparency and autonomy.

7. Research Recommendation

Considering the above-mentioned findings, it is recommended that HEIs should:

- maintain a close relationship with key internal and external actors in the quality assurance process. Moreover, HEIs and external quality assurance bodies should commit to a developmental approach in their quality assurance processes aiming to enhance the quality of higher education provision.
- consider various factors that affect the quality of higher education provision when developing their quality assurance processes. Quality assurance processes should consider the perceptions and requirements of different stakeholders in higher education.
- ensure good governance and management structures at the institutional level which can enable them to effectively accomplish educational goals and enhance the quality of provision.
- consider the various factors that influence the governance and management of higher education with the aim of developing a sound institutional governance structure.

The following are some of the basic principles that influence good governance of HEIs:

- To ensure successful fulfilment of the institutional goals, it should be based on the principles of transparency in procedures; and effective mechanisms of accountability with clear roles and responsibilities of those involved in the governance of the HEI.
- Members of higher education governance bodies should seek to act in the best interest of the higher education system and ensure there is support for the mission as the key driver for the HEI activities.
- The governance and management of HEIs should be based on the adequate inclusion of all relevant stakeholders as higher education serves to satisfy the expectations and needs of different stakeholders within society.
- The institutional strategic plan should include KPIs with clear allocation of responsibilities and resources as well as a monitoring and evaluation mechanism showing how the institutional mission will be achieved.

- There should be a clear outline between governance and management functions with clear articulation of different accountabilities.
- There should a comprehensive suite of policies and procedures that govern the academic conduct and administrative operations and ensure awareness and consistent implementation of the policies and procedures.

8. Conclusion

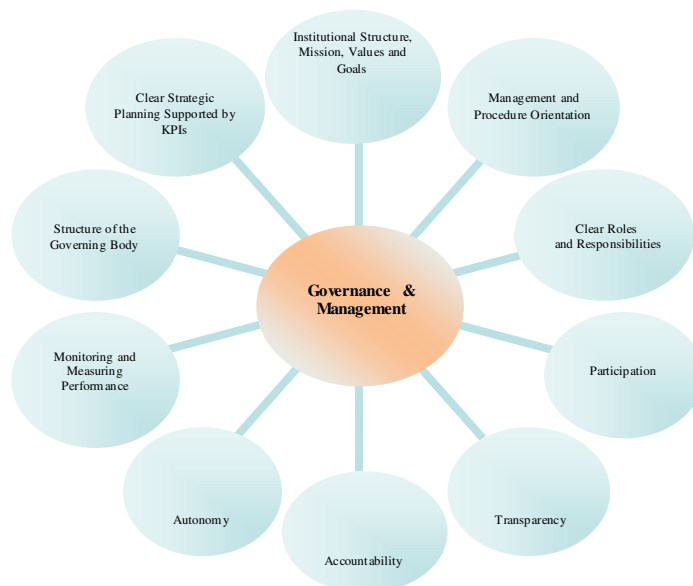
This research aimed to identify the factors affecting governance, management, and quality assurance of PHEIs in the Kingdom of Bahrain from stakeholders’ perceptions. PHEIs in Bahrain have emerged in the early 2000s to meet the increasing demand for higher education. With the increasing demand for higher education as well as the acknowledgement of its role in promoting economic growth, it becomes more essential to ensure that HEIs are managed in an effective manner and most importantly that profit does not compromise the quality of provision. This research reveals that both the HEC and the NAQQAET-HERU are the most influential actors on quality assurance of higher education. They play an important role in the external quality assurance process by reviewing the HEI’s operations or/and programmes to ascertain the level of compliance with set minimum standards.

Identifying the factors affecting governance, management and quality assurance in higher education provides useful insights and can assist higher education policy makers in mapping a constructive strategy for higher education governance and quality assurance arrangements in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Governance and management were identified among others as a very important factor for quality assurance of higher education. In addition, the findings in this research show that the governance and management of HEIs has a very high impact on the quality assurance of higher education.

Good governance and management are expected to promote the quality of higher education. Traditions of governance may vary from on HEI to another, but there is a set of basic factors that influence the governance of higher education. Some of these factors are to some extent practiced in respondents’ HEIs such as the inclusion of different stakeholders; autonomy of academic, financial resources; and the integration of different policies across the institution. The findings of this research discussed above identified important factors that affect the governance, management, and quality assurance in higher education from stakeholders’ perceptions, which are presented in figures below.

Figure 8.1: Factors affecting quality assurance in private higher education



Figure 8.2: Most influential factors on governance and management of HEIs

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