

The Leader's Role in Creating a Quality Assurance Culture in a Multicultural Environment

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the quality assurance culture in a college in a multicultural setting. Its purpose is to explore the role of higher education leaders in creating a culture of quality assurance practices in a multicultural environment. The external stakeholders' perceived value of the institution has been declining over the past ten years, and it is unknown if the lack of a common culture of quality assurance practices within the institution contributes to its decline. The overarching research question is, how do educational leaders create a culture of quality assurance practice and standards in a multicultural environment to improve the perceived value of the institution? The qualitative approach to this research engaged a single case study design. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews, observation, and document review. The data were analysed using manual coding that extracted themes such as the need for a curriculum committee and the creation of policy documents. The conceptual framework outlined the concepts and theories that contributed to the analysis and discussion of the findings. The literature reviewed addressed the use of Hofstede's six-dimension framework in determining the current culture in the institution and the ISO-9001 quality management system's application in the multicultural setting. The findings of the research were that the college lacked a common culture of quality assurance. Participants believed that adapting a quality control model would improve the perceived value of the institution and that the leader played a critical role in creating a culture of quality assurance practices.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions continue to contribute positively to developing economies across the region. They offer courses and programs that suit the needs of the dynamic workforce and the demands of individuals who are keen on entering different industries (Kromydas, 2017). McCowan (2019) postulated that higher education institutions could contribute significantly to a nation's development by creating a sustainable environment and aiding nation-building. They can achieve this by ensuring that the institution maintains high academic standards that deliver quality graduates who can contribute effectively to the workforce (Vilcea, 2014). Gamage *et al.* (2020) stated that one of the reasons an institution holds a high standard is to convey a degree of confidence to society that the institution's quality of education meets the current and future needs of the industries.

Quality assurance has become an integral feature of higher education as the number of higher education institutions increases across the region. Ryan (2015) believed that quality assurance practices could boost higher education institutions in achieving excellence. This research explored the role of leaders in creating a culture of quality assurance practices and how these practices flourish in a multicultural environment. A multicultural environment is where individuals from varying cultural backgrounds operate together to work in one setting (Karacsony *et al.*, 2022). Problems may arise due to cultural differences when the leader implements quality measures that may impact efficiency (Lagrosen, 2003). Creating a standard quality assurance model in the institution is still essential, and the best practices to overcome any irregularities are critical to the leader. Therefore, the research focused on the question of how educational leaders create a culture of quality



assurance practice and standards to improve the perceived value of the institution in a multicultural environment.

Research carried out by [Sattler and Sonntag \(2018\)](#) resulted in recommendations to build on previous studies of the Bologna Process ([Bologna Declaration, 1999](#)) for a Quality Culture Inventory (QCI) model in higher education institutions to assess the state of quality culture in the institutions. However, the researchers' quantitative study was not inclusive and failed to address multicultural institutions and their need to create a standard quality assurance culture. Therefore, with a case study design, this qualitative research aims to explore the quality assurance measures present in a multicultural community college and the administrator's role in creating a culture of quality assurance among a culturally diverse academic and administrative staff.

1.1. Background to the Problem

The institution that is the focus of this research is the only public tertiary institution on a group of islands in the English-speaking Caribbean. The academic staff includes members from other Caribbean countries, such as Jamaica, Trinidad, Belize, Barbados, India, Russia, and Africa, and hence, has a varied cultural background. Leading an institution with this multicultural background can be challenging. [Broucker and de Witt \(2015\)](#) believe that leaders of institutions are tasked with ensuring accountability and reform in their organizational performances. In-depth assessment changes must be continuous to meet dynamic workforces and be efficient and transparent ([Moreno & Molina, 2014](#)).

The college has been experiencing a consistently low intake of students over the past ten years as school leavers opt to enroll with online universities or leave the islands to pursue similar studies in programs currently offered at the college at a lower cost. Discussions with school leavers revealed that the community lacks confidence in the college's quality of programs and its ability to provide the foundation they may need for further studies.

Quality assurance is not new in research and certainly not unique in education. Added information from this research will highlight the institution's efforts in a multicultural environment and assist in improving or adjusting its current practices to meet the institution's needs. Creating a culture of quality assurance involves structural, managerial, and psychological components ([Dzimińska et al., 2018](#)), a spinoff of quality assurance. In their research, [Sattler and Sonntag \(2018\)](#) approached the issue of quality culture from a structural-formal and an organizational-psychological level, all contributing aspects to quality culture. However, the individual cultures of the staff were not considered or addressed in questionnaires developed to gather information. This research will add to previous research on quality control and assess the application of other quality control models, such as the ISO-9001 model, to create a quality culture in higher education institutions from a qualitative perspective. The research outlined different cultural views of quality assurance practices and standards and how the leaders can encourage a common model to improve the institution's value.

1.2. The Problem Statement

The external stakeholders' perceived value of the institution has declined over the past ten years. It is unknown if the lack of a common culture of quality assurance practices within the institution contributes to its decline. The college is experiencing challenges in functioning curriculum committees that the leadership team has formed. New staff members are not oriented on the practices and standards of the institution when they join the staff, there is inconsistency in decision-making, the staff handbook has not been revised since 2003, and the revision of policies has not been documented for reference.

1.3. Significance of the Study

This research adds to the knowledge of higher education institutions' quality assurance standards and practices. [Smidt \(2015\)](#) postulated that the perception of quality assurance is highly multi-dimensional and contextual. The knowledge gap exists as previous research focused on quality management and a culture of quality assurance practices within higher education institutions: literature addressing quality assurance practices and standards in a multicultural environment has proven to be limited. In their studies, [Welzant et al. \(2015\)](#) also identified a clear gap in defining quality assurance practices in diverse higher education institutions.

1.4. The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to explore the role of higher education leaders in creating a culture of quality assurance practices in a multicultural environment. The following objectives are adopted:

1. To provide information based on lecturers' experiences with the quality assurance practices that are being used internally,
2. To highlight policies used in the multicultural environment to maintain standards and the role the leader plays in ensuring policies and standards are achieved,
3. To unearth the complex experiences of staff members in their socio-cultural environment ([Katz, 2015](#)) and create a working model for quality assurance in the institution.

The research sought to answer the question, how do educational leaders create a culture of quality assurance practice and standards in a multicultural environment to improve the perceived value of the institution?

1.5. Research Questions

Quality assurance measures assist in creating structure in an institution as it guides policymaking and the value the institution is expected to have. Indicators such as the responsiveness of academic staff and graduates' employment are integral components of its effectiveness ([Welzant et al., 2015](#)). In their role, the institution leader should be strategic in employing all components necessary to ensure that the desired output is achieved that will add value to the institution. The main research question that will guide the research is as follows:

How do educational leaders create a culture of quality assurance practice and standards in a multi-cultural environment to improve the perceived value of the institution?

This research question is further broken down into four questions below.

- RQ1: How do individual cultural backgrounds influence the quality assurance practices in the institution?
- RQ2: How can a known culture of quality assurance practices for academic and administrative staff contribute to the institution's efficient operations?
- RQ3: What models can be implemented to engrave a culture of quality assurance standards in a multi-cultural environment?
- RQ4: How can higher education leaders create a culture of quality assurance practices in a multicultural institution?

1.6. Implications of the Study

This study will outline the significant challenges that impact a shared culture of quality assurance practices in the institution. The results outlined the internal hiccups that affected the perceived value of the institution by the external stakeholders. It is also expected that the institution leader will recognize the need for a culture of quality assurance policies and enact structures or models that will assist in creating this culture. Higher education institutions are expected to promote and maintain sustainable development within an economy, and the role of the leader is essential (Dzimińska *et al.*, 2018). Sattler and Sonntag (2018) stated that in higher education, quality assurance and quality management are critical to the institution's governance and continue to pose challenges for leaders. Creating a quality culture instrument to assess organizational culture in higher education seemed to have fallen short of its objectives as there is still research needed in this area (Sonntag *et al.*, 2016). The instrument developed by Sonntag *et al.* (2016) proved inadequate in diagnosing quality culture in a higher education context.

Previous case studies conducted in countries such as England and Germany revealed that quality culture does exist (Kottmann *et al.*, 2016). The literature also stated that it is essential to note the quality culture that exists in the specific educational institutions. Creating a common culture of quality control will allow the leader to improve organizational performance. A shared vision between the leader and the institution's employees related to a quality culture makes the process less challenging and more effective (Huson, 2015). ENQA (2015) agreed that a successfully implemented quality assurance system would provide information to assure the higher education institution and the public of the quality of the higher education institution's activities (accountability) as well as provide advice and recommendations on how it might improve what it is doing (enhancement).

1.7. Conceptual Framework

Fig. 1 outlines the conceptual framework surrounding this research and includes the use of leadership theories that play a role in creating an expected quality assurance culture in the institution. The researcher focused on the leader's role in creating an environment that stimulates change and a sustainable educational environment. Lakhera and Kumar (2020) believe that current leaders should have the ability, knowledge, and skills to effectively manage the challenges they face in a dynamic environment.

Hofstede's (2011b) insights on an organizational culture focused on five dimensions of culture, which are independent but can work together to reinforce their impact on the institution. This multi-focus model addresses the various units of an organization and how they may hinder or enable the institution's growth. The researcher used the multi-focus model and further developments to assess the culture of the institution, also the Global Leadership and Organizational Effectiveness (GLOBE) theory, which is discussed below, in collaboration with leadership theories and the application of ISO-9001 standards in higher education institutions to assess the institution's quality culture to make recommendations for the institution's leadership in creating a quality culture and improving the perceived value of the institution. The models outlined guided the researcher in assessing the role of the leaders in the institution to assess the quality culture currently present in the institution. The institution's mission statement, objectives and goals, communication and participation, quality assurance unit, and evaluation of staff and students are all critical areas focused on as lecturers' views regarding these experiences.

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1. The Nature of Higher Education Institutions

In their effort to create an environment that holistically prepares students for a dynamic workforce, higher education institutions seek to employ diverse leaders who will add value to the institution (Adams & Velarde, 2021). This includes employing educators from various regions with varying cultural backgrounds, which results in a mixture of different languages, approaches to teaching and learning, and policymaking in a multicultural environment (Van Knippenberg, 2017). The leadership within this multicultural environment must be concerned about transparency, effectiveness, and efficiency as they create in-depth changes to meet the required standards (Moreno & Molina, 2014). In addition, there must be common standards adhered to by all staff members, which will eventually become engraved into the institution's culture (Kottmann *et al.*, 2016; Naureen, 2020). This viewpoint leads to the study of an institution that employs lecturers from various cultural backgrounds who are part of the institution's leadership team and are involved in decision-making and policy development.

Research conducted by Vilcea (2014, p. 149) outlined that quality culture has two main components, "shared values, beliefs, expectations, and commitments towards quality and 'a structural or managerial element with

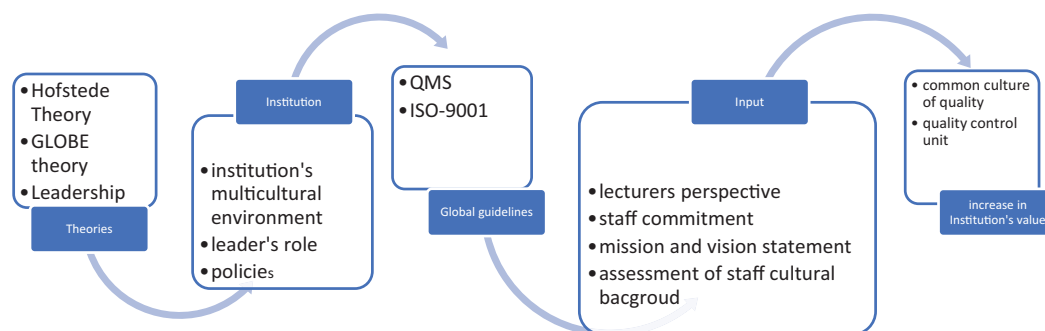


Fig. 1. The conceptual framework.

defined processes that enhance quality and aim at coordinating efforts”. UNESCO (2017) and Thi Dang and Dinh Do (2021) share in their case studies that quality culture is an integral part of an institution's success and development, as it aids in forming its value system. The case studies were conducted in higher education institutions in China and Austria and revealed that quality culture plays a significant role in institutional, educational success. Richards (2014) also found that there is an increasing demand for tertiary institutions to be accountable to their stakeholders, especially in the current economic climate. Globalization has, in part, influenced the easy flow of students within the different regions and easier access to online education. Effective quality control initiatives in higher education institutions create value for the institution and can be improved if all stakeholders are aware of the process. Research findings on higher education institutions in Romania by Adina-Petruta (2014) also regarded quality culture as a priority for those institutions to contribute nation building.

2.2. Leadership and Organizational Culture

Hofstede's model focuses on the importance of national culture in organizations and the values and guiding morality of the organization. He conducted systematic research on these areas and derived a six-dimension model, as seen in Table I. The study provided six dimensions for assessing the various national cultures that exist in that organization. The leader of an institution can use Hofstede's theory in assessing the dimensions of national culture that exist and the impact they may have on the institution (Shi & Wang, 2011). Nguyen (2021) argues that “Hofstede's index is useful when one has to deal with a collective unknown national audience and try to make a generalization that would be the most likely to match with the average target at the collective national level” (p. 7). The leader's use of Hofstede's model to assess the collective.

Hofstede's work has, however, been criticized as not being de-centred as it focused on one company, and the findings did not fulfil the requirements of cultural research (Shaiq et al., 2011). Carbaugh (2007), in their article, detailed Fougere and Moulette's criticism of Hofstede's view towards culture. They believe his views are narrow as it focuses on a single culture and does not consider other possibilities as an instance of disciplinary power.

The Global Leadership and Organizational Effectiveness (GLOBE) study extended the use of Hofstede's study in organizations and focused on the relationships

among societal-level variables, organizational practices, and leader attributes and behaviour (House et al., 2004). The GLOBE theory developed by a group of researchers provided leaders with additional viewpoints on how to function in an international environment (Bright et al., 2019) and how effectively matching culture expectations can be a predictor in successful leadership strategic planning (Gunnell, 2016; House et al., 2004). The GLOBE theory extended the categories mentioned by Hofstede by including the dimensions: assertiveness, human orientation, and performance orientation as seen in Table II.

Using the dimension assertiveness as mentioned in Table II the leader can associate individuals' ability to adapt to the current environment and the ability of individuals to effectively function in that environment (Gunnell, 2016). Lord and Maher (1991) expressed that different cultures may have different expectations of their leader based on their cultural background. Uncertainty avoidance looks at the extent to which people seek orderliness, consistency and structure. Assessing the individual cultures that may exist in the institution using the GLOBE theory allows the leader to approach the development of a quality culture using an effective leadership theory that will benefit the institution (House et al., 2004). Having an awareness of international cultures allows the leader to form better relationships (Gunnell, 2016).

2.3. Quality Culture in Higher Education

Decentralized institutions or those with multiple campuses encounter quality control challenges as they operate from different locations. Multiple campuses that are not coordinated and effectively managed by their leader can lead to discrepancies and inconsistency. The inconsistency requires a standard quality control structure or process (Ryan, 2015). The institution's leaders are integral to establishing a common quality control culture. Dinsdale (2017) stated that leaders play a vital role in creating an institution's culture. Tierney and Lanford (2017) proposed that a key focus needs to be given to the type of culture necessary to sustain the institution and prevent unwanted culture from precipitating throughout the institution. The institution's culture sets the tone for staff and students, and a positive culture will exuberate a positive working environment (Gunnell, 2016; House et al., 2004). Individuals within the institution should view quality control as the norm of the institution, which aids in defining the institution's value. The success of achieving a robust quality control system in the institution depends on the

TABLE I: HOFSTEDE'S SIX-DIMENSION MODEL

	Dimensions	Meanings
1.	Individual vs. Collectivism	Individualism refers to the extent to which people are expected to stand up for themselves and to choose their affiliations, while collectivism refers to the extent to which people are expected to act predominantly as members of a lifelong group or organization.
2.	Large or small power distance	The degree to which a society accepts and expects there to be differences in the levels of power in organizations and institutions.
3.	Strong or weak uncertainty avoidance	The extent to which society accepts uncertainty, ambiguity and risk.
4.	Masculinity vs. femininity	These two extremes depict the distribution of emotional roles between the genders.
5.	Long vs. short-term orientation	It deals with a society's 'time horizon' or the importance attached to the future vs. the present.
6.	Indulgence vs. restraint	This extent to which an individual indulges in social structures versus abandonment of society's social norm.

Note: Source: [Hofstede \(2011a\)](#).

TABLE II: DIMENSIONS OF THE GLOBE THEORY

	Dimensions	Meanings
1.	Assertiveness	Beliefs as to whether are or should be encouraged to be assertive, aggressive, and tough or, nonassertive, nonaggressive and tender in social relationships.
2.	Human orientation	The degree to which an organization or society encourages and rewards individuals for being fair, altruistic, friendly, generous, caring and kind to others.
3.	Performance orientation	Reflects the extent to which a community encourages and rewards innovation, high standards and performance improvements.
4.	Humane orientation	The degree to which a collective encourages and rewards (and should encourage and reward) individuals for being fair, altruistic, generous caring and kind to others.
5.	Institutional collectivism	The degree to which organizational and societal institutions practices encourage and reward (and should encourage and reward) collective distribution of resources and collective action.
6.	In-group collectivism	The degree to which individuals express (and should express) pride, loyalty and cohesiveness, in their organizations and families.
7.	Gender egalitarianism	The degree to which a collective minimizes (and should minimize) gender inequality.
8.	Power distance	The extent to which the community accepts and endorses authority, power differences and status privileges.
9.	Uncertainty avoidance	The extent to which a society, organization or group relies (and should rely) on social norms, rules and procedures alleviate unpredictability of future events. The greater the desire to avoid uncertainty, the more people seek orderliness, consistency, structure, formal procedures and laws to cover situations in their daily lives.

Note: Source: [House et al. \(2004\)](#).

attitude and ability of the leaders to lead ([Amtu et al., 2021](#)).

2.4. Application of ISO-9001 Standards in Higher Education

ISO-9001 uses quality management standards initially developed to apply in industries to conform to industry standards ([Martin & Thawabieh, 2018](#)). They further stated that its' use in education has become increasingly popular as higher education institutions strive for transparency and achieve global standards. [Kamusoko \(2020\)](#) agreed that the seven principles of ISO-9001 provide a foundation for quality assurance in higher education institutions. Quality assurance in higher education has become an integral feature of the institution's development and improving outcomes globally ([Ewell, 2010](#); [Kliot & Bykovskaya, 2011](#); [Yuan, 2010](#)). [UNESCO \(2017\)](#) and [Thi Dang and Dinh Do \(2021\)](#) postulate in their case studies that quality culture is an integral part of an institution's success and development, as it aids in forming its value system. The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 2005 defines quality management as establishing standards that focus on quality control, quality assurance, quality assessment, and enhancement ([Niedermeier, 2017](#); [Vlasceanu et al., 2007](#)). However, [Nguyen's \(2021\)](#)

studies on Vietnamese universities discovered challenges staff encountered with introducing quality assurance practices centered around the staff's lack of knowledge, skills, and experiences. The author concluded that staff could be provided with the knowledge and tools they need to implement quality assurance practices successfully with regular training sessions.

2.5. The Role of Leaders in Higher Education Institutions and Leadership Theories

Leadership in higher education is vital to the development and sustainability of the institution. [Bendermacher et al. \(2017\)](#) believe that quality management in higher education supports, assures, develops, enhances, and monitors the quality of teaching and learning. The role of the leader must be straightforward and communicated to the staff members for the leader to be effective. [Rosowsky and Hallman \(2020\)](#) agree that institutions need to be able to effectively communicate their culture of quality assurance policies, as it gives a clear understanding of who they are and what they stand for. [Cardosa et al. \(2016\)](#), in their study conducted on the Portuguese higher education system, also revealed that obstacles relating to a quality culture and compliance and consistency were linked to the institution's structural governance.

Van Knippenberg *et al.*'s (2013) theory on leadership and diversity stipulated that leaders' core role in a diverse environment is to understand team diversity and learn from this diversity to create a common understanding. The theory of multiculturalism explained by Alismail (2016) is that equality is possible and can be achieved by everyone. With this shared understanding and the team leader's integration of a diverse perspective, the stakeholders will become more innovative and creative (Van Knippenberg, 2017). Structures and policies in institutions have not always catered to a diverse population, which presents difficulties for institution leaders (Arnold, 2020). However, the institution leader can directly interact with their team, and this can influence how they approach lecturers from diverse backgrounds. Leaders can be proactive and considerate in guiding their staff to create a structural framework to manage diversity and target the inclusion of all to improve the institution (Nishii *et al.*, 2018; Van Knippenberg *et al.*, 2020). This structural framework sets the foundation for all and eventually becomes the cornerstone of the institution's existence.

3. METHOD

3.1. Research Design

A constructivist view of this research was used to align with the qualitative research approach. This view highlights the experiences of individuals and interprets data intending to create reform or change (Adom *et al.*, 2016). A philosophical worldview approach allowed the researcher to construct meanings from the phenomenon explored through her own experiences and those of the participants to be studied. The constructivist view is that reality is subjective because the information is derived from the participant's perspective and can be wide and varied (Creswell, 2018), which is the researcher's belief. On the other hand, the pragmatic worldview was not a practical approach as this view arises out of actions and consequences, which aligns with a mixed-method research approach (Creswell, 2018).

A single case study design was adopted for this research to explore the cultural environment of the institution. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) described a case study as an in-depth analysis and description of a bounded system. An analysis of the context of the phenomenon in the institution is done to ensure justice is given to any complex views portrayed (Stake, 2010), and commonalities are noted.

The population comprises 64 full-time lecturers and senior management in a community college in the English-speaking Caribbean. The sample size included 12 participants, members of the management team, and individuals who are heads and deputy heads of faculties. They are also representatives of the varying cultural backgrounds that exist. Purposive sampling was used in this research to include the most appropriate participants in the study's specific context (Johnson *et al.*, 2020). Information was collected using interviews, field observation, and document review. These tools provided deep research to support the conceptual framework.

The researcher was intricately involved in the research process, which may introduce bias, strategies, and ethical

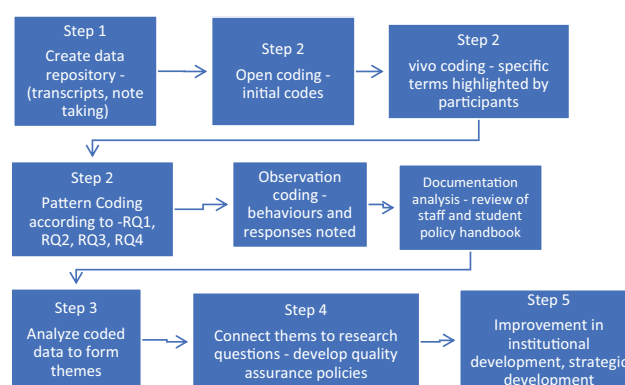


Fig. 2. Data flowchart.

issues experienced in the data collection process (Locke *et al.*, 2013). Bias can be alleviated with reflexivity in formulating questions to ensure participants are guided to share their experiences. Also, the researcher is familiar with the participants in the study as they are her colleagues at the same institution to be studied. Triangulation was used in the data collection process to alleviate the bias in the research of trying to guide the interviews in a particular direction.

3.2. Data Analysis

The analysis followed a step-by-step approach to effectively analyze the vast amount of data collected to ensure the process was efficient and detailed. Creswell (2018) agreed that the process of data analysis requires sequential steps that allow the researcher to move from specific to general analysis. Therefore, the researcher used the steps shown in Fig. 2 to analyze the data collected. Ethical conduct was maintained to protect the employees' rights and the institution's integrity. The researcher sought approval from the University of the West Indies ethics committee and IRB to carry out the studies in the institution. Once consent was given, a formal letter was sent to the community college requesting permission to conduct the research on its premises and involve the staff and its records.

4. RESULTS

Data analysis was done through a thematic approach. Themes were arrived at using open, en vivo, and pattern coding. Emerging themes included: *Input in policymaking, Orientation session for staff, Curriculum development department, and Creation/revision of policy documents.*

Research question one breaks down into smaller questions where the researcher explores the participants' views on individual cultures and quality assurance practices in the institution. Participants believed that the experience they have brought to the institution can positively contribute to policy development to improve and/or develop the quality standards in the institution. Common terms include: "similar leadership structure," mentioned by interviewer # 3, 6. Participants #4 and 3 stated, "can apply knowledge gained in the previous institution on quality assurance practices. Results also showed that lecturers' cultural backgrounds could provide insights into the approach to decision-making. Terms highlighted by interviewer #6 and

participant # 10 include: *“worked in a similar industry in my country,”* Participants # 4 and 8 stated, *“was recruited from overseas, where I was teaching part-time in a university.”* Participants were eager to participate in any review that would address the quality assurance issues that negatively affect the institution's development. They view the institution as one with a lot of growth potential and can contribute to the diverse workforce demands that the community has. The theme that emerged for research question one is “employees’ input in policy making.”

Research question two attempted to gather data on how a culture of quality assurance practices for academic and administrative staff influences efficiency within the institution. The participants were asked if they had an orientation session or any structured period when they started working at the college to introduce them to the college operations. Participants were mostly unaware of any orientation of staff members to quality assurance practices. Interviewers # 3 and 4 believed that if the institution had an orientation session for new staff, they would be exposed to any policy the institution may be operating on. They were mostly left alone to learn procedures as they carried out their roles. For example, examination procedures. The review of the staff handbook was also outdated and has not been revised since 2003. These extractions from the transcript were pattern-coded. Thus, the theme, “orientation sessions for staff that provide a clear vision and mission for the institution,” to introduce staff members to the common culture of quality assurance practice, is extracted and “input in policymaking.”

Most participants are aware of inconsistent program reviews. They believe introducing a curriculum department focusing on international accreditation would increase quality control in the institution. Interviewers #4 and #6 mentioned “incorporating regional standards” and “seeking accreditation.” They believed it is important that the institution's leadership uses the various cultures that exist in the institution as a foundation to create policies to add to the institution's value. Interviewer #4 stated, ‘I believe persons are already contributing,’ and that, if quality assurance measures are implemented, the institution could achieve growth and meet the community's needs.

Research question three asked what models can be implemented to engrave a culture of quality assurance standards in a multicultural environment. Participants #6 and #9 stated, “I am aware of inconsistent program reviews,” and further added that they believe it tarnishes the institution's reputation. There was a general agreement that there was no known common quality culture, and participants were eager to assist in initiating the move toward creating a common quality culture for the institution. Warter (2019), in his findings, revealed a close link between organizational culture and quality in higher education. The shared eagerness and proposed commitment of staff members support the findings in Vilcea's (2014) research, where the results were that a common culture in an institution comprises staff commitment, shared values, and a structural framework. The importance of a known shared culture was also supported in research by UNESCO (2017) and Thi Dang and Dinh Do (2021).

Research question four questioned how higher education leaders can create a culture of quality assurance practices in a multicultural institution. Participants believed that creating policies geared toward quality assurance practices would contribute to institutional development. Participant #1 mentioned “improvement in quality assurance policies.” Participants believe the institution's leadership must use the various cultures that exist in the institution as a foundation to create policies to add to the institution's value. The findings of Bendermacher *et al.* (2017) supported the idea that leaders are the ethos of a driven quality culture development. They can influence role allocations and resources needed, clarify responses, and form relationships. Adams and Velarde's (2021) research supports these findings, as their study showed that school leaders play a critical role in creating an environment with shared core values that guide the institution's vision. The European Universities Association (EUA, 2016) further outlined that quality culture is based on values, beliefs, and expectations towards quality and, secondly, a management structure for quality assurance that is clearly defined and is a collaborative process. In addition, respondents suggested that the institution should seek international accreditation as they think the introduction of quality assurance models that are regionally accepted, such as ISO-9001, can assist institutions in achieving this. Research findings have shown that universities using quality management systems such as the ISO-9001:2008 have seen improvement in institution effectiveness, transparency, and accountability (Dobrzański & Roszak, 2007; Kamusoko, 2020; Martin & Thawabieh, 2018; Moturi & Mbithi, 2015).

5. DISCUSSION

In the responses to the research question, one saw administrators making comments about the recruitment process, comparing the current work environment with their previous workplace, and outlining areas they believed stood out in their current environment. The participants believed that their experiences in similar past positions would qualify them to contribute to any process of policymaking that the college should undertake. Most participants stated that there was no known common culture, and they were eager to assist in creating a common quality culture for the institution, as participants were aware that their commitment to achieving a common quality culture was important. These supported the findings in Vilcea's (2014) research, where the results were that a common culture in an institution comprises staff commitment, shared values, and a structural framework. The importance of a quality culture in developing and creating value in the institution was also highlighted in the findings of UNESCO (2017) and Thi Dang and Dinh Do (2021). Research findings on higher education institutions in Romania by Adina-Petruta (2014) also regarded quality culture as a priority for those institutions to contribute to nation-building. Most participants mentioned that their previous workplace was more structured than the college and believed the college could benefit from integrating some of the standards and policies.

Input from individuals from the institution's varying cultures and ethnic backgrounds could positively impact the move toward creating a common culture of quality assurance. Assessing the institution's current culture would be the first step in determining the extent to which any form of culture exists. The Hofstede model was designed to assess organizational culture and determine the variety of the institution's culture (Hofstede, 2011b). This model would support Nguyen's (2021) findings on the advantages of using this model when the leader must deal with a collective unknown national audience. For example, the process-oriented dimension versus the results-oriented dimension. Using the GLOBE model, the leader can further establish the culture that exists within the institution. An assessment will give an idea of the extent to which the culture is results-focused, which is more bureaucratic than process-focused. The results of using this model can lead to formulating a model that includes the key factors needed for a standard quality culture in the institution.

Research question two addressed how a known culture of quality assurance in the institution can contribute to the institution's efficient operations. The participants outlined that they were not a part of any orientation session upon joining the institution and were not formally introduced to policies and practices. The responses coded and patterned revealed the theme 'orientation sessions for staff that provide a clear vision and mission for the institution'. This theme reflected a need for an orientation session for new staff members to acquaint them with the culture of quality assurance practices and standards, which could result in efficient operations at the institution. The findings were aligned with Nguyen's (2021) study on universities in Vietnam, where it was found that once staff members are provided with the tools they need through training sessions, they will carry out their duties. In addition, they stated that the college vision was vague and not clearly outlined to them. Rosowsky and Hallman (2020) also found that institutions need to communicate their culture to their employees better, which can be done through the institution's vision and mission statements. The authors believe that sharing culture is the glue that holds the institution together, and if it is not effectively communicated, this can negatively affect the institution's operations.

The theme from the responses to research question three is the 'curriculum development department.' The institution needs a curriculum department to monitor program and course developments carefully. The chair of faculties and deputies stated that there should be a scheduled review of curriculums and programs at least every three years. They believed that a functioning committee or department should oversee this process. Respondents stated, 'Leaders should oversee the program development.' When administrators were asked about choosing members for the curriculum committee, most respondents said that 'members of the committee should be strategically chosen to be effective.' Alismail (2016), in his research on preparing student teachers to teach in a multicultural environment in the USA, outlined that the three categories of multicultural pedagogy must be considered when creating a curriculum in a multicultural setting. These categories are that the curriculum is conservative, liberal, and critical. Therefore,

the institution operating in a multicultural environment should consider these facets of curriculum planning and form part of the institution's quality assurance culture.

Participants also believed that the involvement of industry specialists in program and course development would assist the curriculum department in effectively carrying out their jobs. Harvey's (2002) research findings emphasized the need for quality assurance practices and the involvement of external and internal monitoring to ensure a spirit of responsiveness to all stakeholders. Respondents who are part of the management team and faculty chairs mentioned that courses could not run without the involvement of industry players. This would ensure that programs and courses are aligned with industry requirements. In addition, participants stated that regionally accepted quality assurance models such as ISO-9001 could assist institutions in restructuring the entire institution to create a culture of quality assurance.

Research question four revealed that leadership in the institution plays a significant role in how efficiently or effectively that institution operates. The leadership style used contributes to that institution's overall value and reputation. Arnold (2020), in her research, discussed a framework for inclusive leadership that embraces domains such as time, place, preparation, and dignity. These domains assist leaders in supporting inclusive practices and standards and can be used in broader transformational practices and standards. The institution leader can also incorporate Hofstede's theory in assessing the national culture in the institution along with the GLOBE theory to understand the organizational culture further. This assessment would allow the leader to create policies and structures that include the various cultures that exist in the institution (Shi & Wang, 2011). The case study results also referenced the need for inclusiveness of all staff members and leadership's pivotal role in accomplishing this. This is reinforced by Nishii *et al.* (2018) research findings that leaders can be proactive and guide their staff to change and create a structural framework to include its diverse workforce. In response to the research question above, the theme 'creation or revision of policy document' emerged after the different levels of coding were done. Participants believed creating policies and documents geared towards quality assurance practices would effectively contribute to the institution's development. Individual responses from the chairs and deputy chairs of faculties included that there can be an improvement in quality assurance practices, the institution needs a quality control officer, checks and balances need to be done, and staff members are professionals and committed to their jobs.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The multicultural environment is growing due to globalization and the ease with which staff and students can move from region to region. Additional research is therefore needed to ensure that the institution continuously meets global guidelines in quality assurance standards and that other stakeholders are involved in the research process to ascertain their views. The cost of implementing any system needs to be researched and tabled into the institution's

budget to ensure the leadership of the institution supports its practice. The institution should first employ a quality assurance manager to assess the quality culture that exists in the institution and oversee how it can be integrated into policymaking and improve organizational efficiency. This will promote a sense of shared responsibility. The institution's leadership team should also include staff members in initial talks on implementing a shared culture of quality assurance standards.

7. CONCLUSION

A qualitative case study approach was used to gather information for this research because it allowed the researcher to study complex phenomena within their contexts (Baxter & Jack, 2010). The research aimed to determine the role of leaders in higher education in creating a culture of quality assurance practices in a multicultural environment. Interviews, observations, and document review was used to gather information. The results revealed that the institution must have an identity that both internal and external stakeholders can unequivocally say is a contributing component to the institution's value. Adapting a quality culture model will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the institution. Also, the institution's leader plays a significant role in ensuring that the institution is viewed by its stakeholders as one of value and standards.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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