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Quantitative Assessments of Academic Accreditation Standards for Educational Graduate Programs in Saudi and International Universities: An Exploratory Comparative Study

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Abstract.

This study aimed to identify , classify , measure and interpret the similarities and differences between the academic accreditation standards for graduate educational programs in Saudi and international universities , and to evaluate the effectiveness of these standards in ensuring the delivery of high-quality graduate educational programs. An exploratory comparative approach was used , and a variety of methods were used in order to achieve these goals. The research found that academic accreditation criteria can vary significantly between different systems , and that the most important determinants can depend on the context in which the system operates. The study also identified the importance of continuous evaluation and improvement of academic accreditation standards in order to ensure the quality of higher education , and highlighted the role of international organizations in promoting the adoption of certain quality assurance curricula in higher education. The research suggests that further studies are needed to fully understand and compare accreditation standards in different countries and regions , and to identify best practices that can be adopted to improve the quality of graduate programs in education. This research can help make policy decisions and ensure that academic accreditation systems meet the needs and expectations of students , institutions , and other stakeholders.

Keywords: Quantitative assessments , academic accreditation , graduate programs , Saudi Arabia.

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التقييمات الكمية لمعايير الاعتماد الأكاديمي لبرامج الدراسات العليا التربوية في الجامعات السعودية والعالمية.

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المستخلص:

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد وتصنيف وقياس وتفسير أوجه التشابه والاختلاف بين معايير الاعتماد الأكاديمي لبرامج الدراسات العليا التربوية في الجامعات السعودية والعالمية ، وتقييم فعالية هذه المعايير في ضمان تقديم برامج الدراسات العليا التعليمية بجودة عالية. تم استخدام نهج مقارنة استكشافية ، وتم استخدام مجموعة متنوعة من الأساليب من أجل تحقيق هذه الأهداف. وجد البحث أن معايير الاعتماد الأكاديمي يمكن أن تختلف اختلافا كبيرا بين الأنظمة المختلفة ، وأن العوامل المحددة الأكثر أهمية يمكن أن تعتمد على السياق الذي يعمل فيه النظام. كما حددت الدراسة أهمية التقييم والتحسين المستمر لمعايير الاعتماد الأكاديمي من أجل ضمان جودة التعليم العالي ، وسلطت الضوء على دور المنظمات الدولية في تعزيز اعتماد مناهج معينة لضمان الجودة في التعليم العالي. يشير البحث إلى أن هناك حاجة إلى مزيد من الدراسات لفهم ومقارنة معايير الاعتماد الأكاديمي بشكل كامل في مختلف البلدان والمناطق ، وتحديد أفضل الممارسات التي يمكن اعتمادها من أجل تحسين جودة برامج الدراسات العليا في التعليم. يمكن أن تساعد هذه الأبحاث في اتخاذ قرارات السياسة والتأكد من أن أنظمة الاعتماد الأكاديمي تلبي احتياجات وتوقعات الطلاب والمؤسسات وأصحاب المصلحة الآخرين.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التقييمات الكمية ، الاعتماد الأكاديمي ، برامج الدراسات العليا ، المملكة العربية السعودية.

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Introduction

Universities are regarded as the most significant educational institutions , as well as centers for the production of science and culture , for training professionals needed by the nation , and for generating new knowledge and pushing the boundaries of science. Universities' main goals are to advance education , research , and social services , with education playing a more crucial role given its nature (Compagnucci & Spigarelli, 2020). The dedication to the academic accreditation standards established for authorizing the educational programs to be offered by the university is correlated with the performance and growth of universities.

Universities, colleges, and educational institutions and programs need to go through the accreditation process to ensure compliance with stringent and recognized standards of service and operation (Bakheet, 2020). Independent, non-governmental accrediting bodies have been created explicitly to examine educational institutions, and programs evaluate it. All educational institutions and services must be accredited in order to meet a set of quality standards , gain access to federal and state funding , maintain public confidence in the private sector , and make credit transfers easier. Additionally , accreditation aims to confirm that colleges and degree programs are fulfilling their obligations. Additionally , the accreditation attempts to promote public trust and confidence by holding colleges and graduate programs accountable (Naveed Bin Rais et al., 2021). The students can determine the overall standard in a fully accredited institution or program without requiring each student to go through a thorough review individually.

The accreditation system is a procedure inextricably linked to the ideas of quality, audit, assessment, and standards monitoring, such as external evaluation. Higher education institutions and study programs are subject to an external evaluation process known as accreditation. It is a procedure of acknowledgment designed to confirm the higher education institutions dedication to quality assurance and improvement. National bodies or

nonprofit organizations established for this purpose carry out this process , which culminates in the approval of the status , validity , or suitability of an institution or program (Eaton , 2015). Further , the accrediting statement must be viewed in the context of open , widely accepted , pre-established standards (Haghdoust et al. , 2013). This indicated the pressing need for and significant pressure on higher education systems worldwide to adopt qualification standards and a comparable system of external quality assurance. These factors include globalization , privatization , student and staff mobility , and professionalization.

There is no similar accreditation system pattern in Europe countries. They are different from one another. The type of accreditation process is one of the areas of variance listed by Schwarz and Westerheijden (2007). While some countries , like Austria , only have accreditation procedures for study programs , others , like Hungary , have them for all programs and organizations. Another area of difference is the type of organization that conducts the accrediting procedure. While some countries , like Ireland , rely on discipline-specific organizations for each professional area , others , like Spain and Germany , as well as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) , rely on independent organizations like supranational agencies. In some circumstances , like Finland , the Ministry of Higher Education serves as the accreditation agency (Schwarz & Westerheijden , 2007).

In KSA , from a total of eight higher education institutions in 2003 , there are now 27 public universities and colleges and eight private ones (Alaskar et al. , 2019). With this increase has emerged a desire to assess higher education quality rigorously. Higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia only needed to be nationally accredited in 2004. As a result , there needed to be a set of national certification requirements that had been established. Various educational institutions employ different methods and criteria to guarantee the caliber of the education provided. The Saudi National Commission on Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA) started the change towards improving the current educational

programs by applying well-established accrediting systems. In response to Ministry of Higher Education directives requiring all institutions of higher learning to be recognized, this independent organization, NCAAA, created and disseminated specified rules and criteria to begin a systematic accreditation process (Al Mohaimeed et al., 2012).

Fundamentally, the accreditation process differs from other external quality assurance procedures like assessment and audit by its goal of achieving sector monitoring. Additionally, the accrediting procedure involves indirect accountability and compliance (Stura et al., 2019). The 21st century's increased globalization of business and education has caused accreditation to be given priority (Hernes & Martin, 2008). Additionally, accreditation has gained widespread acceptance and is essential for promoting good academic standards.

Assessing the academic accreditation standards is essential for ensuring a robust educational process in universities. However, this topic needs to be better-addressed needs to be better-addressed by researchers, especially in Saudi Arabia. Accordingly, the current study attempts to quantitatively assess the academic accreditation standards for education graduate programs in Saudi and a few international universities through an exploratory comparative approach.

Research Problem

The growing emphasis on maintaining educational quality, enhancing learning outcomes, and fostering social and economic competencies within nations has placed higher education institutions under increased scrutiny worldwide (Rosa & Amaral, 2007). Essentially, the continual improvement of higher education quality is grounded in quality policies, institutional mission practices, values, and the needs and aspirations of stakeholders.

However, the challenge lies in Saudi Arabia's higher education system, where definitions of educational quality may fluctuate due to changes in

accreditation standards influenced by global accreditation movements (Mitchell & Alfuraih, 2018). This constitutes a significant problem given the stakes involved: students, government entities, and higher education institutions are deeply invested in understanding and maintaining control over the standards ensuring quality in Saudi Arabian higher education (Abou-Zeid & Taha, 2014).

To better understand changes to Academic Accrediting Standards and propose suggestions for improved understanding of these standards, a thorough assessment of the accreditation system is indispensable. Saudi Arabian universities have in place a multitude of processes and accreditation criteria at both institutional and program levels (Harvey, 2004). In collaboration with the agencies, the Commission designs an evaluation schedule, allowing sufficient time for the implementation and application of quality assurance and the completion of quality self-studies (Ferrara, 2007).

Every institution is required to undertake an extensive self-study at a minimum of once every five years, evaluating the efficacy of its operations, encompassing programs, infrastructure, and administrative arrangements. These self-studies rely on self-assessment scales provided by the NCAAA (or NCAAE) as the foundational model (Kooli, 2019).

Results from the accreditation process are validated by independent, external peer reviews, particularly in line with global norms and objectives (Harvey, 2018). Subsequently, the Commission scrutinizes all conclusions, including those from external, independent sources (Ali Aljarallah & Kumar Dutta, 2022). A potential avenue for improving these procedures lies in evaluating and benchmarking them against practices observed in other countries (Teichler, 2007). A comprehensive review and comparative analysis could yield insights that further enhance the effectiveness and responsiveness of Saudi Arabia's accreditation system.

Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the current academic accreditation standards for education graduate programs in Saudi and international universities?
2. What are the similarities and differences between the Saudi and international academic accreditation standards for education graduate programs?
3. To what extent are the Saudi and international academic accreditation standards effective in ensuring high-quality delivery of education graduate programs?

Study Aim and Objectives

The primary aim of this study is to undertake a quantitative evaluation of academic accreditation standards for education graduate programs in Saudi Arabian universities, in comparison with a selected group of international universities, namely those from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany, using an exploratory comparative approach. Consequently, the study seeks to fulfill the following objectives:

1. To scrutinize the prevailing academic accreditation standards for education graduate programs in Saudi Arabian universities and contrast them with the standards implemented in universities from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany.
2. To elucidate the parallels and discrepancies between the academic accreditation standards for education graduate programs in Saudi Arabian universities and those in universities from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany.
3. To evaluate the degree to which academic accreditation standards in Saudi Arabian universities and in universities from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany ensure the effective and high-quality delivery of education graduate programs.

Literature Review

Academic Accreditation in Saudi Universities

The Saudi Ministry of Education (MOE) has maintained its strategic plan and objectives since Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 was announced, acknowledging the value of education for the nation's long-term growth. The improvement of social structure is directly related to the needs of the national economy, and the education of the populace will result in the production of creative minds, skilled human capital, and, eventually, a productive society. In implementing Vision 2030, the government views the educational system as a trustworthy and safe partner (Mitchell & Alfuraih, 2018). To ensure that Saudi institutions satisfy market demands, one of the other goals is the alignment of educational achievements with the labor market. Because of this, MOE views academic accreditation by the NCAAA as a crucial tool for raising the caliber of academic programs at all Saudi Arabian private and public universities (Abou-Zeid & Taha, 2014).

When the NCAAA was established in 2003, it was governed by the Ministry of Higher Education. However, the Education Evaluation Commission, founded by the Royal Decree that year, has been in charge of the NCAAA (now known as the National Center for Academic Accreditation and Evaluation, NCAAE) since 2018. The Commission is in charge of Saudi universities, and its main objectives are to improve educational achievements, university competence, and universities' contributions to economic growth. Programs or institutions can apply for academic accreditation, albeit the procedure differs slightly for each. Accreditation upholds the program's and the institution's credibility and excellence (Harvey, 2004). Program accreditation guarantees that learning outcomes are reached through various processes and address the quality of educational delivery. Ferrara (2007) asserts that while accreditation is advantageous for a program, quality assurance can only be attained if faculty members adhere to the requirements in the teaching and learning process.

Academic accreditation entails a series of steps to gather proof that a course or institution meets the requirements for the quality of the teaching and learning process (Kooli, 2019). Harvey (2004) asserts that the techniques used to collect the evidence are also employed in audits, assessments, and external examinations. The component methods include self-evaluation, analysis of data and surveys, key performance indicators, dummy visits, and analysis and recommendation of surveys of students, staff, alums, and employers. Although accreditation and audit are separate processes, there is some overlap in the goals and procedures of these several external processes (Stensaker, 2003).

Academic Accreditation in International Universities

Every nation globally has a national organization for academic accreditation and quality assurance, such as the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency in Australia and the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) in the United Kingdom (TEQSA). Academic accreditation in the United States serves four essential purposes: assuring the public and students of its quality; enabling access to federal and state monies; fostering confidence in the private sector of higher education; and facilitating student transfers between institutions (Eaton, 2015).

Accreditation of academic programs in Eastern Europe focuses on maintaining quality standards through an external control system. Additionally, unsatisfactory audit findings may result in the accreditation authority closing a program or institution (Ferrara, 2007). To assure quality, European educational policy authorities evaluated higher education institutions systematically in the 1990s (Pritz et al., 2004). Additionally, the necessity to safeguard the standard of education in Europe became more apparent due to the internationalization of higher education (Harvey, 2018).

Ulker and Bakioglu (2019) assert that academic accreditation improves the quality assurance procedures of a program or institution and directly impacts the caliber of the academic content. According to earlier research by

Saubier (2013) on the impact of academic accreditation on quality, a programs and an institutions accreditation can significantly improve the teaching and learning process.

Previous Studies on Academic Accreditation

Previous research in the realm of academic accreditation has underscored the role of external control systems in maintaining quality standards in Eastern European academic programs. Ferrara (2007) has noted that unsatisfactory audit outcomes could lead to the closure of an institution or program by the accrediting authority. The systematic evaluation of higher education institutions by European educational policy authorities in the 1990s aimed to ensure quality (Pritz et al. , 2004). The drive to uphold educational standards in Europe became even more pronounced due to the internationalization of higher education (Harvey , 2018).

Further research has demonstrated the impact of academic accreditation on the improvement of quality assurance processes and the quality of academic content in a program or institution (Ulker & Bakioglu , 2019). An earlier study by Saubier (2013) corroborates these findings , suggesting that the accreditation of an institution or program can significantly enhance the teaching and learning process. These cumulative insights from past studies enrich the understanding of academic accreditation , shedding light on its intricacies and illuminating its key role in advancing educational quality both in Saudi Arabia and internationally.

Research Method

The exploratory comparative approach was used in this study to detect the accreditation programs in Saudi and international universities systematically. Besides , it was intended to identify , classify , measure , and interpret the similarities and differences among these systems , referencing the quantitative values given for each component.

Research in comparative and international education has a variety of uses, from advancing scientific understanding of how education works to fostering goodwill and peace. Comparative and international education is a field that frequently has to decide what works in one setting and how to adapt it to another (Phillips et al. , 2016). As a result , issues with educational quality and how it is assessed in various contexts are inextricably linked to comparative and global education. Both academics and industry experts have looked into higher education as an institution , a process , and an outcome. There is a substantial body of research on quality assessment and assurance in higher education as a result of questions about the rate of return for higher education relative to that of primary , secondary , and vocational education , as well as questions about the contribution of higher education to economic development in the knowledge society. While many nations are moving towards a more centrally-controlled term for quality , there are calls to re-energize and re-emphasize the role of self-regulation in higher education. Divergent opinions abound in practice as well as research , and this could be a factor in the observed rise in interest from worldwide higher education institutions in accreditation.

The exploratory comparative approach was chosen for this study due to its proven effectiveness in systematically identifying and analyzing accreditation programs in different settings , as well as its capacity to provide a comprehensive and quantifiable examination of similarities and differences among these systems (Phillips et al. , 2014).

This approach is particularly pertinent to the field of comparative and international education. It not only advances our scientific understanding of how education operates in different contexts but also promotes a spirit of cooperation and understanding , which is instrumental in fostering goodwill and peace (Phillips et al. , 2014). This approach allows us to dissect how educational quality is assessed across different contexts , which is a fundamental concern in comparative and global education.

The rise of interest in accreditation from higher education institutions worldwide underscores the relevance of this study's methodological approach. It highlights the current debate in the field, with a growing trend towards more centralized quality controls versus calls for re-emphasizing the role of self-regulation in higher education. The exploratory comparative approach enables us to delve into these divergent viewpoints and practices, providing an insightful analysis that can guide future research and practice in higher education accreditation (Phillips et al., 2014).

Hence, the selected research method provides an avenue to delve into the current state of higher education, focusing on quality assessment and assurance, a topic that has been explored extensively by academics and industry experts alike. By employing the exploratory comparative approach, this study aligns with the body of research on these topics, further contributing to our understanding of higher education as an institution, a process, and an outcome.

Comparative Analysis

Academic accreditation is a process by which colleges and universities are evaluated to ensure that they meet certain standards of quality. These standards can be used to determine whether an institution is eligible to receive public funding or whether its graduates are eligible for certain types of professional licensure or certification. In this paper, the researcher will compare and contrast the academic accreditation standards used in the United States, the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, and Germany, with a particular focus on the accreditation processes used in the Middle East.

In the United States, academic accreditation is typically granted by regional accrediting agencies or national accrediting agencies. Regional accrediting agencies are responsible for evaluating colleges and universities in specific geographic areas, and include organizations such as the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), the New England Association

of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), and the WASC. National accrediting agencies, on the other hand, are responsible for evaluating institutions of higher education throughout the country. Examples of national accrediting agencies in the United States include the Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC) and the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) (Moore, 2019).

Programmatic accreditation is also used in the United States to evaluate specific programs or departments within a college or university. Examples of programmatic accrediting agencies in the United States include the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), which evaluates teacher education programs, and the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), which evaluates pharmacy programs (Hegji, 2017).

In the United Kingdom, the main accrediting body is the QAA. The QAA is responsible for evaluating colleges and universities in the UK and ensuring that they meet certain standards of quality. Additionally, there are several professional bodies in the UK that provide accreditation for specific programs or disciplines. For example, the Royal Society of Chemistry accredits chemistry programs, while the Nursing and Midwifery Council accredits nursing programs (Hoxhaj & Hysa, 2015).

In Saudi Arabia, the main accrediting body is the NCAAA. The NCAAA is responsible for evaluating colleges and universities in Saudi Arabia and ensuring that they meet certain standards of quality. The NCAAA is also responsible for developing and implementing academic accreditation standards for higher education institutions in the country. The NCAAA operates according to the standards and guidelines of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), which is a global network of organizations that are responsible for evaluating the quality of higher education institutions (Alzamil, 2014).

In Germany, the main accrediting body is the Accreditation Council (AC). The AC is responsible for evaluating colleges and universities in

Germany and ensuring that they meet certain standards of quality. The AC is also responsible for developing and implementing academic accreditation standards for higher education institutions in the country. The AC operates according to the standards and guidelines of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), which is a pan-European organization that is responsible for evaluating the quality of higher education institutions in Europe (Hoxhaj & Hysa, 2015).

In the Middle East, academic accreditation is an important process that is used to ensure the quality of higher education institutions. In addition to the accreditation processes that are used in Saudi Arabia, other countries in the region also have their own accrediting bodies. For example, in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the main accrediting body is the Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA). The CAA is responsible for evaluating colleges and universities in the UAE and ensuring that they meet certain standards of quality.

In addition to the accreditation processes that are used in Saudi Arabia and the UAE, other countries in the Middle East also have their own accrediting bodies. For example, in Qatar, the main accrediting body is the Qatar National Accreditation Authority (QNAA). The QNAA is responsible for evaluating colleges and universities in Qatar and ensuring that they meet certain standards of quality.

In Oman, the main accrediting body is the Higher Education Accreditation Council (HEAC). The HEAC is responsible for evaluating colleges and universities in Oman and ensuring that they meet certain standards of quality. The HEAC operates according to the standards and guidelines of the INQAAHE.

In Kuwait, the main accrediting body is the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR). The KISR is responsible for evaluating colleges and universities in Kuwait and ensuring that they meet certain standards of quality. The KISR also works with other accrediting bodies, such as the

Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) , to provide programmatic accreditation for specific programs or departments within higher education institutions in Kuwait.

Academic accreditation is an important process that is used to ensure the quality of higher education institutions in the Middle East. While there are some differences in the way that academic accreditation is conducted in different countries , the overall goal is the same: to ensure that colleges and universities meet certain standards of quality and are able to provide a high-quality education to their students.

In the next part, a further assessments of academic accreditation standards for educational graduate programs in Saudi and international universities is further explained according to the scope , standards , process and recognition.

Scope

The scope of an academic accreditation system refers to the range of institutions and programs that it covers. Different accreditation systems may have different scopes , covering different types of institutions and programs in different geographic regions. In this part, the researchers will compare and contrast the scope of several different accreditation systems in order to understand the range of institutions and programs that are covered by each system.

One way to compare the scope of different accreditation systems is to look at the types of institutions that are eligible for accreditation. Some accreditation systems , such as the MSCHE in the United States , cover a wide range of institution types , including public and private colleges and universities. Other systems , such as the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) in the United States , may have a more narrow focus , covering only specific types of institutions , such as schools of education.

Another way to compare the scope of different accreditation systems is to look at the types of programs that are eligible for accreditation. Some systems , such as the QAA in the United Kingdom , may cover a wide range of programs , including undergraduate and graduate programs. Other systems , such as the ACBSP in the United States , may have a more narrow focus , covering only specific disciplines or areas of study , such as business programs.

Geographic region is another factor that can impact the scope of an accreditation system. Some systems , such as the NCAAA in Saudi Arabia , may have a national focus , covering institutions and programs throughout the country. Other systems , such as the WASC in the United States , may have a more regional focus , covering only institutions and programs in a specific geographic area.

The number of institutions and programs covered by an accreditation system is another way to compare the scope of different systems. Some systems , such as the AC in Germany , may cover a large number of institutions and programs , while others , such as the Higher Education Accreditation Council (HEAC) in Oman , may cover a smaller number.

All in all , the scope of an accreditation system can vary widely , depending on the types of institutions and programs that it covers , the geographic region it covers , and the number of institutions and programs it accredits. Understanding the scope of different accreditation systems can help to understand the range of institutions and programs that are covered by each system and how they compare in terms of size and coverage. Comparing the scope of different accreditation systems can also be useful for understanding the relative impact of the systems and the resources required to operate them.

It is important to note that the scope of an accreditation system may evolve over time as the system adapts to changing needs and priorities. For example , a system that initially had a narrow focus may expand its scope to cover additional types of institutions or programs. Similarly , a system that had a broad scope may narrow its focus in order to better align with its mission and goals.

Standards

The requirements that institutions and programs must satisfy in order to be accredited are referred to as the standards utilized by an academic accrediting system. These standards, which might include requirements for the caliber of the staff, curriculum, student support services, and other areas, can range significantly between various accreditation schemes. In order to comprehend the standards that institutions and programs must satisfy in order to be accredited, the researchers will examine and contrast the standards utilized by various accreditation systems in this section.

Examining the standards' areas of emphasis is one approach to contrast the requirements of various accrediting schemes. Some systems, like the NCAAA in Saudi Arabia, may have comprehensive requirements that include a variety of fields, including research, service, and teaching and learning. Other systems, like the ACBSP in the US, may have more restrictive criteria that concentrate on particular subjects, including business education.

Examining the level of clarity and detail of the standards is an additional way to contrast the requirements of various accrediting schemes. Some systems, like the QAA in the UK, may contain comprehensive standards that outline precise requirements that organizations and programs must satisfy in order to receive accreditation. Its possible that some systems, like AC in Germany, have more generic standards that offer general guidance rather than precise specifications.

Various accrediting schemes can have different standards of rigor. Some systems, like the MSCHE in the US, may include strict guidelines intended to guarantee the caliber of institutions and programs. Other systems might have less stringent requirements that are simpler for programs and institutions to meet.

The method used to examine and update standards can also differ between various accrediting systems. To keep standards current and applicable, some systems, like the WASC in the US, may have a regular review procedure in

place. Other systems may rely on input from institutions and other stakeholders to update their standards instead of having a formal review process.

Overall , the focus , level of information , rigor , and review procedure of the standards employed by various academic accreditation organizations might differ significantly. When comparing the standards demanded by various systems and the requirements that institutions and programs must achieve in order to be recognized , it might be helpful to understand the standards that different systems apply.

Process

An academic accrediting system's evaluation of institutions and programs can take many different forms. While some systems may employ a more flexible and informal procedure , others may use a more formal and structured process with numerous layers of review and assessment. In this section , we'll examine and contrast the procedures employed by various accreditation organizations to better understand how they assess educational establishments and programs.

Examining the formality and structure of the process is one method to examine how various accrediting systems go about their processes. There are some systems that may have a highly structured process with numerous layers of examination and assessment , such as the NCAAA in Saudi Arabia. This could involve a self-study procedure wherein institutions and programs create a thorough report that is examined by a team of evaluators , as well as on-site evaluations by evaluators. Some systems , like the Higher Education Accreditation Council (HEAC) in Oman , may use a more flexible and informal procedure that depends more on communication and input from institutions and other stakeholders.

Examining the degree of participation of external stakeholders is another way to contrast the procedures of various accrediting systems. Some systems , like the QAA in the UK , may engage outside parties in the

evaluation process , including former students , employers , and professional associations. This can give important perspectives and insights into the caliber of institutions and programs. Other approaches might place more emphasis on internal evaluators and less emphasis on including external stakeholders.

Different certification systems can also differ in how frequently institutions and programs are assessed. A frequent review procedure may be in existence for some systems, such the ACBSP in the US, where institutions and programs are assessed every few years. Other systems, like the AC in Germany , might have a more lenient review schedule , evaluating institutions and programs only when significant changes take place or upon the institution's request.

Recognition

When assessing an academic accrediting system's authenticity and worth , the acknowledgment it obtains from outside groups might be a crucial consideration. While not all certification schemes may have the same level of recognition , some may be accepted by national governments or international organizations.

Examining the degree of acceptance that various certification systems have obtained from national governments is one way to compare the recognition of those systems. The U.S. Department of Education acknowledges some systems , such as the MSCHE in the United States , as a trustworthy source of information about the caliber of institutions of higher learning. This acknowledgment may have a significant impact on the systems legitimacy and the eligibility of institutions and programs for federal financing and other advantages. Although some systems , like the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) in the United States , may not enjoy the same level of governmental recognition , they may nonetheless enjoy high regard within their specialized fields.

Examining the degree of recognition that various accrediting systems have obtained from international organizations is another approach to compare how well-known they are. International organizations like the ENQA and the INQAAHE acknowledge some systems , including the QAA in the United Kingdom. The system's legitimacy may be raised by this recognition, which may also make it easier for other nations to recognize institutions and programs. While other systems, like Oman's Higher Education Accreditation Council (HEAC) , might not enjoy the same level of international recognition, they may nonetheless enjoy respect in their home nations and regions.

The degree of acceptance that various accrediting systems have attained from other stakeholders, such as employers and professional groups , can also be used to compare how well-recognized they are. Some programs, like the ACBSP in the US, may enjoy widespread acceptance among organizations and employers who work in related industries. The value of the system and the perceived quality of the institutions and programs accredited by the system may both be significantly influenced by this acknowledgment. Its possible that some systems, like the AC in Germany , do not enjoy the same level of respect from external stakeholders yet do so within their respective nations and regions.

In conclusion the following table summarize the results of the comparison provided

Table(1)
The results of the comparison provided

Country/ Region	Scope	Standards	Process	Recognition
United States	Regional and national accreditation, covering wide range of institution types including public and private colleges, universities, and program-specific accreditation	Comprehensive and rigorous, with regular review process	Formal and structured, with frequent reviews	High level of national government recognition, as well as recognition in specific fields

Country/ Region	Scope	Standards	Process	Recognition
United Kingdom	The QAA covers a wide range of programs, including undergraduate and graduate programs	Comprehensive and detailed, with specific requirements for accreditation	Highly structured	High level of national and international recognition
Saudi Arabia	The NCAAA covers institutions and programs throughout the country	Comprehensive requirements, with various areas including research, service, teaching and learning	Highly structured, with several layers of assessment and review	High level of national recognition
Germany	The AC covers institutions and programs throughout the country	Generic standards providing general guidance	More lenient review schedule, evaluating institutions and programs only when significant changes take place or upon institution's request	Moderate level of national and international recognition
Middle East	Varies by country (e.g., UAE's CAA, Qatar's QNAA, Oman's HEAC, and Kuwait's KISR all cover institutions and programs in their respective countries)	Varies by country	Varies by country	Varies by country, but generally moderate to high level of national recognition

Discussion

There have been many new discoveries on accrediting systems as a widespread occurrence. This study of this global movement in the field of comparative education has used a variety of approaches and produced evidence-based understandings of both the phenomenon and the theory's components.

Upon investigating the fundamental aspect of the research problem, this study confirms that the concept of quality has been an integral part of education from its inception. The regard for educational quality is a universal idea spanning diverse cultures, tracing back to the Middle Ages in European colleges. Here, the notion of quality was intrinsically valued as a cornerstone of academia (Rosa & Amaral, 2007). In addition, dating back to the establishment of Prague University in 1347, the endorsement from authority figures, such as the Pope or Emperor, has been identified as a critical prerequisite for the formation of institutions or the introduction of academic programs (Erichsen, 2000). This emphasis on authorization illustrates the long-standing significance of quality assurance in the realm of education. Furthermore, in 1377, renowned scholar Ibn Khaldun underscored the quality of education in the Arabic Islamic history. He metaphorically referred to education as a trade, highlighting that it is not a casual undertaking, but rather, a specialized practice. This practice necessitates the establishment of main concepts, benchmarks, and criteria that define high-quality education. In essence, this study reiterates the continuous emphasis on quality in education across time and cultures.

Globally, several approaches and frameworks for ensuring the quality of higher education have been established over time, beginning with state approval of study plans and curricula, moving on to peer reviews, and concluding with external assessment. The old management structure and system for higher education has needed to be changed and transformed to fit its new position and to meet the goals of the many nations since the 1950s (massification, diversification, privatization, and globalization). There have been notable changes in the higher education sectors over the 1980s and 1990s. These have included the huge pressure on higher education institutions to accommodate the growth in enrollment and the subsequent diversification of its student body. As society adopted these patterns, the higher education sector was also a target of marketization. On the other hand, privatization of this industry has been proposed as a remedy for the

difficulty that students have in gaining admission to institutions. These patterns gave rise to issues with university administration , organization , and funding.

The genesis of regulatory standards in the U.S. higher education sector can be attributed to several factors. These include the massification of education , the rise of privatization , and the lack of a centralized or well-integrated quality assurance system. To counter these challenges , the U.S. government introduced accreditation as a key feature of federal policy with the Higher Education Act of 1952. In time , accreditation evolved to play an increasingly significant role in the countrys education framework. By 1990 , it had emerged as the primary mechanism for evaluating an educational program or institutions adherence to established quality standards. It effectively served as a benchmark for ensuring minimum criteria of quality , acting as a necessary guardrail amidst the diverse landscape of higher education (Teichler, 2007). This evolution underscores the critical role that accreditation plays in maintaining educational standards and integrity in the U.S. higher education system.

Following widespread success in attaining objectives and finding solutions , beginning with the United States , France , and the United Kingdom , certification methods spread internationally. These methods and concepts were supported by international organizations and agencies as necessary improvements that should be upheld across all higher education sectors. Because of the efforts of international organizations , a model or policy that was successful in a meso or micro unit in one context was able to spread to other contexts and eventually become a global trend. By organizing conferences and agreements , disseminating a common understanding and frameworks for these changes and reforms , and demonstrating their effectiveness in the rationalized use of the available resources , in the improvement of educational processes and in their outcomes , as well as by connecting them to labor market needs , these international organizations play a variety of roles in encouraging countries to adopt these new practices.

The relationship between higher education quality and a country's economic success and development, based on more qualified people and more knowledge production, has only recently come to light. This has made quality assurance and accreditation in higher education particularly important because it facilitates student mobility, draws in prestigious students, and fosters knowledge-based societies.

By proposing them as a necessary reform for higher education institutions in this century and then continuing to improve common concepts and frameworks for them across the world regions, UNESCO has played an important role in illuminating accreditation processes on a global scale. The study discovered that Saudi Arabia's embrace of accreditation in the higher education sector had a direct influence on the country. On the other hand, in the German situation, the adoption of certification in Sorbonne (1998), Bologna (1999), and Berlin was directly influenced by the European international level (2003) (Thompson, 2011).

The United States has also influenced the spread of the global phenomenon of accreditation in both cases of the study, which in turn confirmed the role played by the location originating new models or policies (micro-level) in promoting them, first in the European area with the United States members' participation in the creation of the Bologna Process first draft during the Lisbon Convention (1997). The following year in Sorbonne, the American system of educational qualifications served as a model for the rest of Europe (Hartmann, 2008). The predicament of Saudi scholarship students who completed their education at American colleges while having been expected to complete Saudi-recognized programs led to the national accreditation system's implementation at the level of higher education organizations first.

The challenge of implementing accreditation standards and attaining worldwide recognition for the local higher education system was directly and significantly impacted by student mobility, internationalization, and the new information technology in higher education. This was discovered in

both countries by the current investigation in two separate ways. In Germany's situation, establishing an accreditation system is crucial to achieving the EHEA and enabling staff and student mobility in this region. When some institutions of higher learning, or even some of its colleges, adopted these methods as a condition imposed by the Saudi scholarship students in the United States, this effect in the Saudi context initially manifested itself at the organizational level.

Conclusion

This study sought to determine, categorize, quantify, and analyze the similarities and differences in the academic accreditation requirements for graduate programs in education offered by Saudi and foreign universities, as well as the effectiveness of these requirements in ensuring the high quality of these programs. To accomplish these goals, the study adopted an exploratory comparative methodology and drew from a range of research techniques. According to the research, there can be significant differences in academic accreditation requirements between different systems, and the particular elements that are most crucial may differ depending on the environment in which the system is used. The study also highlighted the role of international organizations in promoting the adoption of specific approaches to quality assurance in higher education and noted the significance of ongoing evaluation and improvement of academic accreditation standards in order to ensure the quality of higher education. The study concludes that additional research is required to thoroughly comprehend and compare academic accreditation standards across nations and regions as well as to discover best practices that can be used to raise the standard of graduate programs in education. These studies can assist in guiding policy choices and ensuring that academic accreditation programs fulfill the requirements and standards of students, institutions, and other stakeholders.

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