

Education Quarterly Reviews

A-Maawali, Wafa, and Al-Siyabi, Munira. (2020), Impact of Quality Assurance on Quality Teaching among Teachers in Oman Higher Education. In: Education Quarterly Reviews, Vol.3, No.3, 334-350.

ISSN 2621-5799

DOI: 10.31014/aior.1993.03.03.144

The online version of this article can be found at:
<https://www.asianinstituteofresearch.org/>

Published by:
The Asian Institute of Research

The *Education Quarterly Reviews* is an Open Access publication. It may be read, copied, and distributed free of charge according to the conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license.

The Asian Institute of Research *Education Quarterly Reviews* is a peer-reviewed International Journal. The journal covers scholarly articles in the fields of education, linguistics, literature, educational theory, research, and methodologies, curriculum, elementary and secondary education, higher education, foreign language education, teaching and learning, teacher education, education of special groups, and other fields of study related to education. As the journal is Open Access, it ensures high visibility and the increase of citations for all research articles published. The *Education Quarterly Reviews* aims to facilitate scholarly work on recent theoretical and practical aspects of education.



ASIAN INSTITUTE OF RESEARCH
Connecting Scholars Worldwide

Impact of Quality Assurance on Quality Teaching among Teachers in Oman Higher Education

Wafa A-Maawali¹, Munira Al-Siyabi²

¹ Department of English Language and Literature, Rustaq College of Education, Rustaq, Oman

² Department of English Language and Literature, Rustaq College of Education, Rustaq, Oman

Correspondence: Wafa Al-Maawali, Department of English Language and Literature, Rustaq College of Education, Rustaq, Oman E-mail: wafaa.rus@cas.edu.om

Abstract

The study aims to investigate the internally driven factors that should contribute to quality in the teaching process in order to inform the current measures of teacher performance in higher education. Previous studies reported ambivalent views and reactions towards measures of quality which raised the presumption that quality processes were not teacher-driven but imposing. Hence, a sequential mixed study research was employed that included both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. The methods are seven interviews with academic faculty from higher education and a questionnaire which was distributed to 154. The findings of this study indicate an average level of teachers' perceptions towards practices of quality assurance and their impact on quality teaching. This study recommends empowering teachers to take active part in quality teaching protocol and a model of internally driven factors is recommended.

Keywords: Quality Measures, Teaching Quality, Evaluation of Teaching, Professional Development, Student Evaluation Forms, Peer Evaluation

1. Introduction

Quality teaching is arguably one of the most prominent aspects of current educational policy in Higher Education. Within the local context of Oman higher education, quality teaching is defined as follows:

The HEI [Higher Education Institution] ensures teaching enables students to fully develop as learners in their chosen field(s) of study and to achieve the learning outcomes for their program and the HEI's generic graduate attributes. Quality teaching is assured through a range of mechanisms including: implementation of defined and appropriate teaching and learning methods; the recruitment and appointment of appropriately qualified and experienced staff; the ongoing evaluation of teaching effectiveness; and the maintenance of appropriate staff/student ratios." (OAAA manual, p. 35)

According to the Oman Accreditation Authority (OAAA), quality teaching is an outcome-driven towards achieving particular learning assets that is composed of essential elements: sound teaching and learning methods, qualified teaching staff, monitoring systems and suitable teacher/student ratio. Of particular interest is ensuring 'teaching effectiveness'. This merits further discussion in the light of the dynamic and ever-changing cultural forces that may impact education with particular emphasis on the notion that teaching practices always change, as Biggs (2001) acknowledges. Hence, quality teaching and effectiveness of teaching need to be situated within the relevant cultural context.

Within the cultural context in Oman higher education (HE), the quality assurance movement has been initiated for the purpose of developing quality education. The Oman Accreditation Council was established in 2001 by a royal decree which was superseded by the Oman Academic Accreditation Authority (OAAA) in 2010 (Carroll et al., 2009). The OAAA has sought to promote a culture of quality across all the higher education institutions in Oman. It is the accountable unit for setting the general quality framework to be attained by HEIs in Oman, monitoring and evaluating their performance (OAAA, 2020). The process of supervision of Omani HE is indeed crucial to their permanence whereby all undergo an institutional accreditation and academic programs accreditation in a two-stage process, namely quality audit report and standards assessment outcomes. The result of which is made available to the public in the QAAA official website (Carroll et al., 2009).

Cognizant of the need to nurture a culture of quality that include teachers, Hénard (2010) classifies quality teaching endeavours in the OECD institutional management HE project into three interrelated levels: institutional (system, policies, designs, and plans), programme (department or school content and subjects), and individual (initiatives to support teachers). He describes those quality teaching endeavours as diverse and engendering effective quality teaching as long as they are followed up at the departmental level. In Oman at Sultan Qaboos University, Al Barwani and Osman (2010) report a successful model for teachers' engagement in quality improvement at the course level the teachers were teaching as part of the sustainable curricula development. A similar initiative is reported by Huson (2015) in GUtech at Oman HE wherein the students were included in evaluating programmes in order to inform institution-wide decision making. Huson described the process as an attempt to achieve better teaching and learning quality experiences. Overall, it appears that efforts to forge an interrelationship between the three levels of quality teaching endeavours indeed exist locally at Oman.

By and large, there are four components of teaching quality in HE, namely teachers' perceptions of teaching, alignment of learning outcomes, monitoring mechanisms on teaching, and professional development (Biggs, 2001). First, teachers' perceptions of teaching is acknowledged as impacting students' performance and achievement (Abu and Olatundun, 2007). How teachers actually interpret teaching is apparent in the way of teaching (Akerlind, 2004), organization of content and choice of assessment tasks (Zerihun, Beishuizen and Os, 2011). Second, a bird's-eye view on learning outcomes, that have already been institutionally approved, are set in a plan (Schoenfeld, 1998). However, achieving the learning outcome is also a shared responsibility among teachers and students. As Biggs (2003) affirmed, learning is championed by students. Third, constantly reviewing the current practices is essential (Biggs, 2001). Certainly, a review mechanism should place teachers at the heart of the process of evaluating their own teaching practices. Parallel to self evaluation is peer review which may lead to positive sharing of good practices if perceived with positive attitudes (Lomas and Nicholls, 2005). Furthermore, students evaluation forms is another measure that is widely used in higher education institutions (Goos and Salmons, 2016). This tool was positively correlated with peer review and self-evaluation through a large-scale study (Goos and Salmons, 2016). Fourth, professional development (PD), arguably, contributes to promoting quality in teaching practices (Hammond, 1997, Biggs, 2001). PD is conditioned with well-structuredness (Hammond, 1997) and provision of incentives (Hutchings 1994 as cited in Lomas and Nicholls, 2005) such as promotion.

Notwithstanding the importance of the four above-mentioned elements of quality teaching, the concept has failed to sufficiently take into consideration how professional 'growth' of teachers through quality assurance practices can be demonstrated from the empirical studies. Hénard (2010: 5) reports in the OECD institutional management HE project review a concern related to "the impacts of quality teaching on teaching, research and institutional quality culture". Contrary to the link assumed by Tavares et al. (2017: 1294) that "[i]nternal quality assurance is

expected to improve the institutions' core missions: teaching and learning, research and activities related to community engagement", Anderson's (2006) study shows the negative impact of quality on teaching. His study draws on a case study conducted by interviewing *30 academics from 10 Australian universities*, concluding that there is a clash between how quality assurance operates and teachers' academic trajectory. This exposes the need for a mutually agreed mechanism aimed at redressing staff resistance to QA processes. His study participants objected to staff appraisal as it constitutes a surveillance tool for their work and "impugned their own sense of professionalism" (p.167). Staff appraisal also caused ambivalent feelings such as anxiety and stress. With regards to students evaluation of the course, it was found that students are "privileged" and treated as "client, consumer, or customer" which turns the table of the existing relationship between a teacher and student in the classroom. Moreover, the study participants queried how well-prepared the students were to be able to judge some aspects of teaching. Similarly, Tavares et al. (2017) conducted a study to examine the perception of Portuguese academics of the impact of QA on teaching and learning. The study revealed negative perceptions among Portuguese academics due to the non-academic tasks that teachers should complete which leave less time for their main teaching tasks. Huusko and Ursin (2010) stated that QA can lead to bureaucracy which might threaten academic freedom. It is apparent that several studies have characterized actual quality teaching policy as imposed outwardly from the institution, resulting in it being considered as a burden.

Hence, the impetus of the current study is to shift the narrative so that quality teaching becomes teacher-driven and built upon consensus. It intends to move beyond the existing body of studies which showed that the processes were driven by assumption that teaching is managed externally through student evaluation, peer observation and line managers. Indeed, the existing research papers investigated the status of quality as merely top-down procedure such as Anderson (2006), Scott and Scott (2016), and Tavares et al. (2017); hence, running the danger of overreliance on measures to monitor rather than reinforcing teachers' professional growth. With a view to avoiding these pitfalls, the present paper aims to investigate internal uptake by teachers of quality teaching elements. The contribution of this study to knowledge is to form a questionnaire from the introspective insights of the teachers that will support constructing a thorough model for sustaining teacher development as part of quality teaching. The model is based fundamentally on teacher awareness, teacher self evaluation and reflection, continuous development, and top-down monitoring -- the fundamental concepts that are addressed by Schoenfeld (1998), Biggs (2001), Abu and Olatundun (2007), and Goos and Salmons (2016). Hence, the question of the active intrinsic role of teachers in quality teaching remains to be investigated.

2. Methodology

This study aims to investigate the impact of the manner teachers engage with the current quality teaching measures on their own teaching profession in order to develop a framework for sustaining quality teaching. Hence, the research question is: What are the effective internal factors for teaching quality? The sub-questions are:

1. What is the impact of the current evaluation measures for teaching quality on the teaching profession?
2. What are the personal practices of teachers to ensure teaching quality
3. What are the challenges for teaching quality as practised in the Omani context?

The methodology of this study is a sequential mixed methods design that included two stages: qualitative data collection (via interviews) then analysis of the data that fed into the second stage which is quantitative data collection (via a questionnaire). All sub-questions will be directly investigated in the two stages. However, the second stage will attempt to verify the interview findings at large. The process of data collection lasted for six months. Data of both qualitative and quantitative methods are triangulated for validity.

2.1 Sampling

There have been two means for sampling: purposive and random. The purposive sampling is utilized in the first stage of the qualitative data collection for the interviews that included seven practitioners who are academic staff and were involved in the process of quality assurance in order to give introspective insights based on their background in the field. The selection of those practitioners was due to their involvement in quality assurance procedures at their institution. The second sampling is a random one used for distributing the questionnaire at three

institutions in Oman higher education. The response rate was initially low and was repeated so that it eventually received 154 responses from faculty members of multiple nationalities, different professional backgrounds, and different academic departments, i.e. Departments of English, Math, Science, and Biology, Department of Business and Department of IT, and Department of Engineering.

2.2 Instruments

The study instruments are two: face-to-face individual interviews and a questionnaire. First, the interview questions were developed in line with the main themes discussed in the review of literature, particularly concepts of evaluating teaching and their impact on teaching quality. The interviews lasted 30 minutes to one hour, see Appendix 1. Based on the themes and sub-themes emerging from the interview data, the questionnaire items were written as statements or sub-statements, related to teachers' involvement with monitoring systems, professional development, teaching style, and context of teaching. The questionnaire was administered online via Google doc, and responses were automatically collected.

2.3 Analysis

Two means of analysis were employed. Data elicited from the interviews were analysed qualitatively via Nvivo for thematic coding whilst the questionnaires were directly analysed for frequency in Google Forms and data are reported in percentages. The resulting categories of the interviews were inventoried in a questionnaire as sub-statements to be checked, see Appendix 2. For the analyses of checkpoint statements, the responses for each were considered as either yes if ticked or no if unticked.

3. Results and Discussion

The thematic analysis of the qualitative data in the first stage resulted in 27 themes. These are written in the questionnaire checkbox as statements or sub statements. Hence, this section presents each qualitative theme, yet with the quantitative frequency.

This section is organised into five main sub-sections: moral and financial support for developing and supporting course contents, teaching context and environment, nature of teacher-student interaction with text, active role of teacher in monitoring their own performance, and alignment to institutional vision, mission and values. Each code will be discussed below with reference to the questionnaire data.

3.1 Support on Course-level

With regards to implementing quality improvements of the courses, the qualitative interviews revealed five themes that highlight the need for practices in key areas where teachers should feel empowered to enact change at the course level, namely: teachers voice, adequate resources, continuous upgrading of teaching methods, content-assessment alignment and peer involvement in course teaching, see Table 1.

Table 1. Quality improvements on courses

Items	<i>N</i>	Mean	Std. Deviation
My voice regarding courses is heard	154	.3896	.48925
The course is adequately resourced	154	.3377	.47446
I am requested to update teaching methods	154	.3506	.47873

I am asked to align content with assessment	154	.5844	.49443
There is positive peer support on the course	154	.3896	.48925

The courses are not adequately resourced as it is low at mean (0.33), while other aspects are at medium level (ranging between mean = 0.35 to 0.58). This indicates better systematic structure is needed for inducing quality improvements in the courses. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future asserted the need of teacher support and preparation (Hammond, 1997). To counter this, Biggs (2001) urges institutions to provide incentives and support structures for teachers to enhance their teaching and involve them in QA processes.

Table 2. Work environment that support quality teaching

Descriptive Statistics	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
⅓ of teachers share materials	154	.4221	.49550
Evenly distributed responsibilities	154	.3442	.47664
⅓ of teachers take part in initiatives	154	.3442	.47664
⅓ of teachers take part in mandatory department activities	154	.6364	.48262
Positive climate in department	154	.4545	.49955
None of above	154	.2013	.40228

Regarding the work environment, the qualitative interviews revealed five themes as indicated in Table 2. The statistical analysis shows there is a medium-level mean for the work environment. Work environment in higher education is widely acknowledged to be important to productivity; for instance, Elci and Alpkan (2009) found that “team interest, social responsibility, and principled climates” have a positive correlation with staff satisfaction (as cited in Narayanana et al. 2012, p. 24). Furthermore, in a study conducted in Oman, a strong correlation was found between work environment and teacher performance, i.e effective teaching (Narayanana et al. 2012), suggesting that more teacher involvement is required. Findings on the work environment suggest a greater need to share good practice on teaching style.

3.2 Teaching Style

Table 3. Teaching Style

Variable/Descriptive Statistics	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
PowerPoint presentations	154	.0260	.15958
Student presentation	154	.2922	.45626
Hands on task	154	.4156	.49443
Critical thinking	154	.5714	.49649
Q & A style	154	.4286	.49649

Contextualise learning content	154	.5325	.50057
Mixture	154	.6234	.48612

With regards to teaching style, there are varied styles as can be noted in Table 3. The statistical mean analysis is at a medium level for hands on task (at 0.4); it is slightly higher for involving critical thinking skills (at 0.57), contextualising learning to real life of the learners at 0.53 score, and slightly higher medium (0.62) for the use of mixture of teaching styles. Despite a variety of teaching styles, Akerlind (2004) explicates that the main roles assumed by teachers are either knowledge transmission or supporting understanding, whatever different teaching styles are used.

3.3 Alignment of learning outcome

Table 4. Achievement of learning Objectives (LO)

Descriptive Statistics	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Monitoring LO	154	.5909	.49327
Adhering to course description	154	.5909	.49327
Aligning exam with LO	154	.5130	.50146
Coordinator checking LO alignment	154	.4870	.50146
GA monitoring	154	.3571	.48072
None of above, unneeded	154	.1039	.30612
Not of above, not teachers responsibility	150	.0533	.22545

With regards to aligning teaching with learning outcomes, there appears to be relatively good practice in teaching, assessment and monitoring at medium level ranging from 0.3 to 59. This finding chimes with Saunders and Saunders (1993) who stated that learning outcomes are considered as a judgmental factor for quality teaching (as cited in Roger, 1993). Boore (1993) also argued that achieving quality would be facilitated if teachers select appropriate teaching methods that would support achieving the learning outcomes (as cited in Roger, 1993).

3.4 Self monitoring of performance

As part of the QA process in the institution, different assessment tools were shouldered to monitor teachers' performance, among which are teacher self-evaluation form, peer evaluation, student evaluation form and staff appraisal form, see Table 5.

Table 5. Types of evaluation for teacher development

Descriptive Statistics	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
teacher_self_evaluation	154	.2857	.45323
peer_evaluation	154	.1494	35760
student_feedback	154.	.4481	.49892

staff_appraisal	154	.2792	.45008
none_have_impact	154	.3701	.48441

When the participants were asked whether they take different feedback forms seriously to improve their teaching, the results show: teacher self-evaluation form (low mean at 0.2), peer evaluation (low mean at 0.14), student evaluation form (medium at 0.4) and staff appraisal form (low at 0.2). This low uptake contradicts expected outcomes as self-evaluation is considered at the 'heart' of quality enhancement (Wilkinson, 2003, pp. 239–40 as cited Jacobs and Toits, 2006). It is obvious that teachers care relatively more about their students' feedback than other forms of feedback. Peer evaluation seems less popular among teachers which might be justified in light of improper schemes and negative attitudes where staff might not appreciate such feedback (Lomas & Nicholls, 2005). Strikingly, a relatively medium mean figure (at about 0.37) among participants points to a lack of value or willingness to accommodate the given feedback, which might be attributed to receiving them at the end of the year.

Table 6. Impact of student feedback in improving quality teaching

Descriptive Statistics	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Student feedback is effective.	154	.6104	1.61007
Student feedback is constructive.	154	.6558	1.76153
Student feedback is inappropriately conducted.	154	.3247	.46978
It is invalid as students do not care to give valid feedback.	154	.6364	1.76316
It is conducted for administrative purposes.	154	.4481	.49892
Timing of obtaining feedback should be earlier than the end of semester.	154	.3766	.48612
It should be excluded from teacher appraisal protocol.	154	.5260	.50095
It should be locally managed.	151	.4901	.50156

With regards to employing students' feedback on teaching, there is a relatively medium level for the quality of student feedback as the means are medium for effectiveness and constructiveness of student feedback on teaching. Yet, student feedback was reported as also problematic with several constraints highlighted in terms of how it was written and delivered regarding inappropriately conducted, invalid and decentralised (at medium levels). To address these constraints, Chen & Hoshower (2003) asserted that student evaluation surveys should be designed so that students feel that they provide meaningful feedback to their teachers so that students feel that they provide meaningful feedback to their teachers (as cited in Anderson, 2006). Therefore, teachers are likely to be well-placed to improve the design of surveys for collecting student feedback on quality teaching.

3.5 Teacher quality-related practices

Table 7. Teacher role in quality teaching

Descriptive Statistics	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Apply QA concepts in profession	154	.5779	.49550
Follow institutional policies	154	.4740	.50095
Benchmark teaching with colleagues	154	.5000	.50163
Carry critical self reflection	154	.4481	.49892
None of above, there is not enough time	154	.0714	.25838
None of above, unnecessary	154	.1039	.30612

When teachers were asked about the impact of quality assurance initiatives on their own practices (see Table 7), teachers perceived these at a medium level ranging from 0.44 to 0.57. This shows that teachers have good drive and uptake for quality teaching which can be better utilised for taking positive control of their own approaches for quality teaching. This result supports Jones and Saram's (2006) argument that teachers' attitude towards quality activities can be heightened by staff empowerment and embracing the quality culture. When this is not the case, Mcinnis (2000) argues that teachers may feel that stakeholders are not concerned about the everyday practices, which might hinder their teaching.

3.6 Initiatives of PD

PD initiatives are divided into three main categories: local and international workshops and conferences, relevance and usefulness of college-level initiatives, and research undertaken as part of personal PD, see Table 8.

Table 8. Professional development impact on quality teaching

Descriptive Statistics	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Attending local PD workshops/conferences	154	.6688	.47217
Attending international PD workshops/ conferences	154	.4286	.49649
Personally paying for local conferences	154	.5195	.50125
Personally paying for international conferences	154	.3766	.48612
None of above	154	.0260	.15958
College workshops are linked to quality teaching	154	.3182	.46729
They helped understand teaching requirements.	154	.3182	.46729

They better changed my teaching practices.	1+-54	.2532	.43629
They elevated my teaching standards.	154	.2987	.45918
They were practical and contextual.	154	.3442	.47664
They highly contributed to quality teaching.	154	.2468	.43253
They were not useful.	154	.2597	.43992
I conducted research paper for developing teacher identity	154	.5519	.49892
I conducted a research paper for annual appraisal.	154	.5974	.49202
I conducted a research paper to develop my teaching quality.	154	.4545	.49955
I conducted a research paper to achieve institutional VMV (vision, mission, values)	154	.2468	.43253
Nothing of the above	154	.0260	.15958

At the conferences and workshop level, medium mean level is associated with attendance both locally (0.66), internationally (0.42), personal funding both locally (mean = 0.5) and internationally (mean =0.37). However, the level of the impact of the college-level PD initiatives on teaching quality was reported at low mean. Those college PD initiatives did not change teaching practices, elevated teaching standards, or improve quality teaching. With regards to conducting research papers, it was linked higher with personal development and appraisal at medium means (0.55 and 0.59 respectively), than with the institutional orientation (low mean at 0.24). It is worthwhile to cite Imrie (1998) who discussed various studies which showed that PD was a weak point in many higher education institutions as academics are not provided with training to practise their core tasks. Thus, Hammoud (1997) rightly argued that the kind and quality of PD activities really matter and the PD activities which are related to the curriculum are more likely to report reform practices.

Overall, the results show that there are positive perceptions towards concepts of quality assurance in the area of teaching quality, yet low impact regarding internal processes of the main parameters of teaching quality, namely; monitoring, teaching content and achieving learning outcomes, and PD activities. This may be attributed to classifying or branding quality practices as quality-related not relating to teachers' duties.

4. Recommendations

The present study urges a conceptual reconfiguration of quality teaching towards a more teacher-oriented approach via the teachers themselves as active agents. Hence, teachers are not only the prime factor (Biggs, 2001), but – more importantly – actively shape the process and outcomes in quality teaching measures. In this way, the desired professional growth can be achieved through the different PD activities, reflection, monitoring, and informed teaching style (see Figure 1).

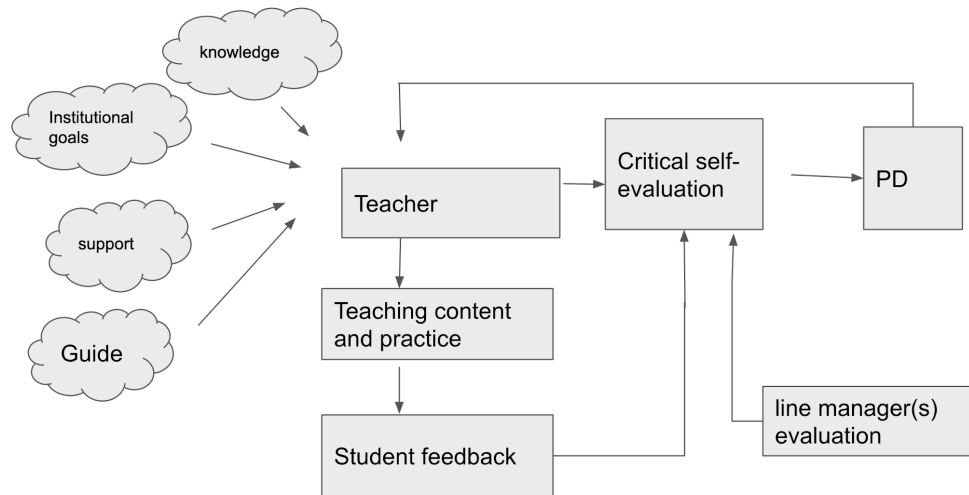


Figure1. Model of internally driven teaching quality

As depicted in Figure 1, factors related to quality teaching should be driven by the teachers themselves. Hence, all elements perceived by top management to be part of quality teaching such as forms of feedback, PD, and updated teaching methodologies, should be addressed and evaluated internally by the teacher prior to any endeavour for institution-wide evaluation. Teachers, as shown in this study, have higher ability and aptitude to take part in the quality processes, particularly for self development. Yet, different studies show their dissatisfaction with the top-down processes and management for controlling quality teaching (Anderson, 2006; Huusko and Ursin, 2010; and Tavares et al., 2017). In line with Archibald et al. (2011) who put forward active teacher learning as a key principle of effective PD, this study reveals the importance of giving greater emphasis to teachers in taking part in their own professional growth. Hence, placing all different forms of feedback at the centre of teacher reflection would improve the teacher learning. Concurrently, other forms of evaluation that are conducted externally such as through students and line managers should undergo personal evaluation in order to assess their impact regarding teaching quality. Hoban (2010) demonstrated that teachers were able to identify different teaching practices when screening recorded interviews of students' feedback, which is confirmed in this study. Effectively embedding peer evaluation can also provide teachers with valuable guidance and support to enhance quality teaching (Lomas & Nicholls, 2005). This monitoring performance system should not be an end by itself but should provide the needed input for further professional development activities, facilitating teacher empowerment. Hence, the external evaluation of teaching quality should be on the progress made via different forms, not as currently practised via forms. Indeed the shift would be from evaluation per se to the inherent concept of teaching, as argued by Biggs (2001), as a growing profession.

5. Conclusion

Overall, the present study attempted to explore the teacher-related factors that drive teaching quality in the Omani context. Previous studies exhibited a high rate of teacher dissatisfaction towards multiple monitoring methods which were conducted externally by the institution. As a result, ambivalent reactions towards quality teaching were seen. The present study focused on teachers' introspective interpretations of quality assurance. The analysis of the results showed that there is no significant impact of the followed QA measures on quality teaching. It also indicates that teachers are not satisfied with the top-down mechanism and would prefer to be more involved in the evaluation process. The evaluation forms have to be processed by the teacher internally who would decide and prioritise any professional development activity to undertake. Furthermore, the present study proposes a model that depicts several quality teaching elements which need to be given prominence and also linked in well-defined stages as currently each form stands alone. The current study is preliminary to future studies that empower teachers to determine their own quality teaching needs and develop their own profession accordingly. Our present study has some limitations including its focus on the current practices in Rustaq College which might make it difficult to be generalised to other contexts. Also, the themes for the survey might not be comprehensive as they came solely

from academic staff without injecting the voice of decision makers. However, the analysis of the results did not show any significant differences with what is mentioned in the literature as it clearly indicates that the QA procedures do not have a clear impact on the quality of teaching. It also devalues the use of top-down strategy on teacher evaluation which imposes changes on teachers, whilst acknowledging the high value of bottom-up strategies which meaningfully engage teachers.

References

- Åkerlind, G. S. (2004). A new dimension to understanding university teaching. *Teaching in higher education*, 9(3), 363-375.
- Al Barwani, T., & Osman, M. E. (2010). Academic development and quality in Oman: mapping the terrain. In *Leadership and Management of Quality in Higher Education* (pp. 147-166). Chandos Publishing.
- Ali, H. I. H., & Al Ajmi, A. A. S. (2013). Exploring Non-Instructional Factors in Student Evaluations. *Higher Education Studies*, 3(5), 81-93.
- Al-Hinai, N. S. (2011). *Effective college teaching and students' ratings of teachers: what students think, what faculty believe, and what actual ratings show: implications for policy and practice in quality teaching assurance and control in higher education in Oman* (Doctoral dissertation, Durham University).
- Anderson, G. (2006). Assuring quality/resisting quality assurance: Academics' responses to 'quality' in some Australian universities. *Quality in higher education*, 12(2), 161-173.
- Archibald, S., Cogshall, J. G., Croft, A., & Goe, L. (2011). High-Quality Professional Development for All Teachers: Effectively Allocating Resources. Research & Policy Brief. *National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality*.
- Biggs, J. (2001) The reflective institution: Assuring and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. *Higher Education* 41, no. 3: 221-238.
- Biggs, J. (2003). *Teaching for Quality Learning at University* Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press, ISBN 0-335-21168-2.
- Carroll, M., Razvi, S., Goodliffe, T., & Al-Habsi, F. (2009). Progress in developing a national quality management system for higher education in Oman. *Quality in Higher Education*, 15(1), 17-27.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (1997). *Doing what matters most: Investing in quality teaching*. New York: National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, Fourie, M., and Alt, H. 2000. "Challenges to Sustaining and Enhancing the Quality of Teaching and Learning in South African Universities'." *Quality in Higher Education* 6 (2): 115-124.
- Goos, M. and Salmons, A. 2016. Measuring quality teaching in higher education: assessing selection bias in course evaluations. *Research in High Education*. 58, 341-364.
- Hénard, F. (2010). Learning Our Lesson: Review of Quality Teaching in Higher Education. OECD Publishing [Online 10.1787/9789264079281-en. accessed 18th July 2020].
- Hoban, G. (2000). Making practice problematic: Listening to student interviews as a catalyst for teacher reflection. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 28(2), 133-147.
- Huson, N. (2015). Oman. Quality Culture in Higher Education A Good-Practice Example. *Zeitschrift für Interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterricht*, 20(2).
- Huusko, M., and J. Ursin. 2010. Why (Not) Assess? Views from the Academic Departments of Finnish Universities. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education* 35 (7): 859-869.
- Imrie, B. (1998) Professional Development is Quality Assurance: Now and Zen, *Quality in Higher Education*, 4 (3), 215-227.
- Jacos, G. and Toit, A. 2006. Contrasting Faculty Quality Views and Practices over a Five-year Interval. *Quality in Higher Education*, 12 (3), 303-314.
- Jones, J. & Saram, D. D. (2005) Academic staff views of quality systems for teaching and learning: a Hong Kong case study, *Quality in Higher Education*. 11 (1), 47-58.
- Lomas, L. & Nicholls, G. (2005) Enhancing quality teaching through peer review of teaching, *Quality in Higher Education*, 11 (2), 137-149.
- Carroll, M. , Razvi, S., Goodliffe, T., & Al-Habsi, F. (2009). Progress in Developing a National Quality Management System for Higher Education in Oman, *Quality in Higher Education*, 15:1, 17-27, DOI: 10.1080/13538320902731328
- Mcinnis, C. (2000) Changing Academic Work Roles: The everyday realities challenging quality in teaching, *Quality in Higher Education*, 6 (2), 143-152.
- Mengel, F., Sauermann, J., & Zöllitz, U. (2018). Gender bias in teaching evaluations. *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 17(2), 535-566.

- Oman Academic Accreditation Authority. (2020 July 10). Retrieved from:
<http://www.oaaa.gov.om/ar/Default.aspx>
- OAAA. (2016) Institutional Standards Assessment Standards Assessment Manual Institutional Standards Institutional Accreditation: Stage 2. Oman Academic Accreditation Authority.
- Narayanan, S. S., Umasevi, M., & Hussein, M. I. (2012). Quality of work life and its impact on behavioural outcomes of teaching faculty: an empirical study in Oman higher education context. *Skyline Business Journal*, 8(1), 23-29.
- Schoenfeld, A. 1998. Toward a Theory of Teaching-in-Context. *Issues in Education*. 4 (1), 1-94.
- Scott, D. E., & Scott, S. (2016). Leadership for quality university teaching: How bottom-up academic insights can inform top-down leadership. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 44 (3), 511-531.
- Sturm, J., Marckel, J., S., Boyles, J. L., Cantor, D., Fales-Williams, A., Martin, R., & Schenck, H. (2019). *Joint Task Force on Teaching Assessment and Evaluation Recommendations* April 23, 2019.
- Tavares, O., Sin, C., Videira, P., & Amaral, A. (2017). Academics' perceptions of the impact of internal quality assurance on teaching and learning. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 42 (8), 1293-1305.
- Oon, P. T., Spencer, B., & Kam, C. C. S. (2017). Psychometric quality of a student evaluation of teaching survey in higher education. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 42 (5), 788-800.
- Zerihun, Z., Beishuizen, J. and Os, W. 2011. Conception and practices in teaching and learning: implications for the evaluation of teaching quality. *Quality in Higher Education*. 17 (2), 151-161.

Appendix: 1 Semi structured Interview Questions

- 1- Please state your professional background.
- 2- Are you familiar with teaching quality?
- 3- What forms of feedback does your institution use for evaluating teaching quality? (prompts: students' survey? Any other?)
- 4- Do you use these feedback forms to reflect on your teaching? How
- 5- In what manner have Quality Assurance practices had an impact on you as a teacher?
- 6- Can you describe your teaching methods? How do you aim for supporting learners' learning process?
- 7- What role do you play in designing, updating, or achieving course objectives/ graduate attributes?
- 8- What professional development activities have you undertaken locally, internationally?

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

<p>ادوار المعلمين في تحسين جودة التدريس Teachers' roles in Enhancing Quality Teaching</p> <p>We are currently conducting a study on the roles and responsibilities of teachers in ensuring that teaching responds to Quality Assurance standards and processes. The questionnaire will take you approximately 15 minutes. Your responses will be kept confidential and used for research purposes only.</p> <p>يقوم الباحثون بعمل دراسة حول أدوار ومسؤوليات المعلمين في تحسين جودة التدريس استجابة لمعايير وعمليات ضمان الجودة . سيأخذ منك هذا الاستبيان مدة لا تتجاوز ١٥ دقيقة. كما سيتم معاملة اجاباتك بسرية واستخدامها لأغراض البحث فقط</p>
<p>Section 1:</p> <p>Do you grant us your kind permission to anonymously use your answers to the questions below for research purposes? هل توافق على استخدام اجاباتك لأسئلة هذه الاستبانة لأغراض البحث بصفة سرية؟</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Yes نعم <input type="radio"/> No لا</p>
<p>You are: هل انت:</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B an Omani male staff member أكاديمي عماني <input type="radio"/> B an Omani female staff member أكاديمية عمانية <input type="radio"/> B an expat male staff member اكاديمي غير عماني <input type="radio"/> B an expat female staff member أكاديمية غير عمانية</p>
<p>You have been working in this College for.. مدة عملك في هذه الكلية هي</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B 0-2 years سنة ٠-٢ <input type="radio"/> B 2-4 years سنة ٢-٤ <input type="radio"/> B 4-8 years سنة ٤-٨ <input type="radio"/> B more than 8 years أكثر من ٨ سنوات</p>
<p>Please, write your email for further contact (optional) لطفا اكتب ايميلك هنا للتواصل معك لاحقا -اختياري</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>Section 2: Perceptions of the QA-teaching relationship وجهة نظر لعلاقة ضمان الجودة بالتعليم</p> <p>We would like to know whether QA processes and procedures have a profound impact on teaching in HEIs in the Sultanate. نرغب بمعرفة إذا كانت لعمليات ضمان الجودة تأثير مباشر على التعليم في مؤسسات التعليم العالي بسلطنة عمان</p>
<p>2.1 The QA process in my College has had an impact on my teaching. As a result of it, ... عملية ضمان الجودةعلى النحو الآتي في الكلية أثرت على طرق تدريسي [check all boxes that apply]</p>

- my voice (opinion) has been heard regarding the needs of my courses and students. لقد كان رأي مسموع بما يتعلق باحتياجات المقرر الذي ادرسه والطلاب
- my course has been adequately resourced (e.g. in terms of materials, hours, internet access, etc.) تم تزويد المقرر الذي ادرسه بالمصادر المناسبة من مواد تعليمية وساعات مناسبة والولوج للانترنت بطريقة تم الطلب مني تحديث طرق تدريسي.
- I have been requested to update my teaching methods on a regular basis. مستمرة
- I have been asked to consider the course learning objectives in teaching and exams. تم الطلب مني موائمة كل من الاختيارات والتدريس مع أهداف المقرر
- I have had positive peer support with regards to creating materials and delivering my courses. لقد كان لمساندة زملائي في القسم تأثير ايجابي علي تدريسي
- Other, please specify
-
-
-

2.2 I take feedback forms seriously in order to improve teaching, especially the following forms: انا اخذ التغذية الراجعة بجدية من أجل تحسين التدريس، من أهم الطرق لتغذية المفيدة لي هي
[check all boxes that apply]

- Teacher Self-Evaluation form استمارة التقييم الذاتي
- Peer Evaluation form استمارة تقييم الزميل
- Student Evaluation surveys استبانة الطلاب لتقييم المقرر
- Staff Appraisal form استمارة تقييم من المسؤول المباشر
- none of the above have impacted the way I teach (e.g. because I only receive feedback at the end of the year). ليس لأي استمارة علاقة بأدائي داخل الصف الدراسي لأنني استلم التقييم على نهاية السنة الدراسية.
- Other, please specify
-
-

2.3 Since we started concentrating on QA, ... منذ بدء عمل الكلية في نظم ضمان الجودة ...
[check all boxes that apply]

- two-thirds of the teachers have generally been willing to share their teaching materials with colleagues. أكثر من ثلثي المدرسين كانوا متعاونين في مشاركة المواد التعليمية مع زملائهم
- the work has generally been well organized, and duties are distributed fairly and equitably among all the staff. العمل في القسم منظم ويتم تقسيم المهام بالمساواة.
- two-thirds of the staff members have generally volunteered to organize and facilitate different types of initiatives. تقريبا ثلثي الأكاديميين تطوعوا لتنظيم مبادرات متنوعة.
- two-thirds of the staff members have participated in all mandatory departmental activities (e.g. the compulsory monthly meetings of the Department Council) حوالي ثلثي الأكاديميين شاركوا في أنشطة القسم الإجبارية (كاجتماعات القسم)
- the work climate at the Department has generally been positive because two-thirds of the staff seem to have fully embraced their role and duties as educators and academics. جو العمل في قسمي مريح حيث الجميع يعمل على إنجاز المهام المنوطة له
- none of the above seems to have been happening. ليس من المذكور أعلاه
- Other, please specify
-
-

2.4 Teachers' teaching style can both contribute to and hinder the provision of qualitatively-good educational services at my Department. In my case, I would describe my teaching style since the start of our QA activities as follows. يمكن أن يسهم أسلوب تدريس المعلمين في تقديم خدمات تعليمية جيدة النوعية في القسم الخاص بي أو يمكن أن يعيق ذلك. في حالتي، أود أن أصف أسلوب التدريس الخاص بي منذ بدء أنشطة ضمان الجودة لدينا على النحو التالي
[check all boxes that apply]

- I have taught my course mostly by using PowerPoint Presentations and lecturing based on them. انا استخدم عروض الباوربوينت و أسلوب المحاضرة في التدريس

B I have allowed my students to choose some of the course materials and to prepare presentations about them.

طلبت من طلابي اختيار جزء من المادة العلمية وتقديمها لزملائهم

B I have taught mostly interactively, and students have appropriated new knowledge or skills by means of

لقد درست بأسلوب تفاعلي بحيث يتعلم الطالب بالتدريب العملي

B I have tried to trigger critical thinking by asking challenging questions and including discussions in the

لقد حاولت ادراج التفكير النقدي في المادة العلمية عن طريق إدراج أسئلة تتطلب المناقشة

B I have mostly taught on the basis of questions and answers (the Socratic method). الغالب

على أساس الأسئلة والأجوبة (الطريقة السقراطية)

B I have mostly guided my students through the textbook, linking it to concrete examples from real life

لقد ربطت المادة العلمية بحياة الطالب

(especially schools), and helped them to summarize and take notes in class. الحقيقية ومساعدته بمهارات التلخيص وأخذ الملاحظات

B I mix all of above methods depending on needs and levels of students استخدمت مزيج من طرق التدريس المتنوعة

المذكورة أعلاه

B Other, please specify -----

Section 3: Monitoring performance ضبط وقياس الأداء

We would like to know to what extent QA-related activities have impacted teachers' performance. نرغب بمعرفة

مدى تأثير عملية ضمان الجودة على أداء المدرس

3.1 The QA process has impacted my work as a teacher as follows:

[check all boxes that apply]

اثرت عملية ضمان الجودة على عملي كمدرس على النحو التالي

B being aware of the need to monitor, analyze, and revise

اصبحت ادرك الحاجة للرصد والتحليل والمراجعة

B no much change - neither for the better or worse

لا يوجد تأثير - ليس للافضل او للاقول

B frustration due to QA duties taken me away from teaching

الإحباط بسبب واجبات ضمان الجودة أخذني بعيداً عن التدريس

B extra committees at college level

اللجان الإضافية على مستوى الكلية

B doing someone else's work

القيام بعمل شخص آخر

B little or no time left to keep my teaching up-to-date

لم يبق سوى القليل من الوقت أو لم يبق من وقت لأبقى تعليمي محدثاً

B no improvements as results of the QA process

لا توجد تحسينات نتيجة لعملية ضمان الجودة

B different parts of our College are not in sync

أجزاء مختلفة من كليتنا ليست متزامنة في انجاز مهام

B Other, please specify-----

3.2 Students' feedback is a key component in the QA process. It (is):

[check all boxes that apply]

ملاحظات الطلاب هي مكون رئيسي في عملية ضمان الجودة. أنه:

B done in an efficient and effective way.

بطريقة فعالة وفعالة.

B constructive and used to improve my teaching.

بناءة وتستخدم لتحسين تدريسي.

B but not done appropriately.

يتم ذلك ولكن لم يتم بشكل مناسب.

B invalid, as students are not interested in quality education.

غير صالح ، لأن الطلاب ليسوا مهتمين بجودة التعليم

B done for administrative purposes only.

يتم لأغراض إدارية فقط.

B should be done earlier than at the end of the semester.

<p>يجب جمعها في وقت سابق من نهاية الفصل الدراسي. B should not be part of appraisal protocol. لا ينبغي أن يكون جزءا من بروتوكول التقييم. B needs to be managed locally, not at the Ministry. يجب إدارتها محليًا ، وليس في الوزارة. B Other, please add ----- -----</p>
<p>3.3 I play role in quality teaching by ألعب دور في جودة التدريس بها [check all boxes that apply]</p> <p>B applying concepts of QA تطبيق مفاهيم ضمان الجودة B applying all institutional procedures, policies, Vision, Mission, Values تطبيق جميع الإجراءات والسياسات المؤسسية وقيم رؤية المهمة B keeping myself abreast of the latest teaching approaches مواكبة أحدث أساليب التدريس B benchmarking my current teaching with a peer قياس تدريسي الحالي مع الأقران B checking my teaching effectiveness through critical self evaluation التحقق من فعالية تدريسي من خلال التقييم الذاتي النقدي B non, I don't have time لا ، ليس لدي وقت B none, I don't need this. لا شيء ، لست بحاجة إلى هذا. B Other, please specify ----- -----</p>
<p>3.4 Goals and learning objectives of the course that I teach are achieved through.. [check all boxes that apply] .. يتم تحقيق الأهداف والأهداف التعليمية للدورة التي أقوم بتدريسها من خلال ..</p> <p>B monitoring learning objectives weekly رصد أهداف التعلم أسبوعيا B adhering to course description الالتزام بوصف الدورة B exam questions alignment with learning objectives محاذاة أسئلة الامتحان مع أهداف التعلم B checking exam questions alignment with course objectives by a coordinator التحقق من توافق أسئلة الامتحان مع أهداف الدورة من قبل منسق B achieving Graduates Attributes (GA) is monitored systematically يتم رصد تحقيق سمات الخريجين بشكل منهجي B none of the above as these are not my responsibility ليس ما سبق لأن هذه ليست مسؤوليتي B Other, please specify ----- -----</p>
<p>Section 4: Professional Development التطوير المهني We would like to know whether professional development has gained importance since the start of the QA process. نرغب بمعرفة تأثير ضمان الجودة على الإهتمام الموجة للتطوير المهني</p>
<p>4.1 In order to develop myself professionally, I have من أجل تطوير نفسي مهنيًا ، لقد قمت [check all boxes that apply]</p> <p>B participated in the college-wise workshops بالمشاركة في ورش عمل الكلية B personally paid for local workshops/conferences بالدفع شخصيا لورش العمل / المؤتمرات المحلية B personally paid for international workshops/conferences بالدفع شخصيا لورش العمل / المؤتمرات الدولية B none of above لا شيء مما سبق B Other, please specify ----- -----</p>

4.2 The workshops I attend at the college can be described as follows: يمكن وصف ورش العمل التي أحضرها في الكلية بأنها

[check all boxes that apply]

- directly linked to my teaching expertise مرتبطة مباشرة بخبرتي التعليمية
- have helped understand course requirements ساعدت في فهم متطلبات الدورة
- changed the way I teach غيرت طريقة التدريس
- elevated teaching standards معايير تدريس مرتفعة
- are practical and draw on real context عملية وتستند إلى السياق الحقيقي
- contributed to teaching quality ساهم في جودة التدريس
- none of the above لا شيء مما بالأعلى
- other, please specify

4.3 I have worked on a research paper because لقد عملت على ورقة بحثية لأن

[check all boxes that apply]

- part of my identity as a teacher جزء من هويتي كمعلم
- part of my annual appraisal جزء من تقييمي السنوي
- to develop my teaching لتطوير تدريسي
- to achieve my institution's Vision, Mission, and Values لتحقيق رؤية مؤسستي ورسالتها وقيمها
- none of the above لا شيء مما بالأعلى
- Other please specify

Section 5:

5.1 In order to enhance my teaching quality, I need more support (please complete)

من أجل تحسين جودة التدريس ، أحتاج إلى مزيد من الدعم (اكمل)

Thank you for your valuable time.

شكرا لوقتكم الثمين.