



Quality Control, Employee Participation, Quality Assurance Implementation and Administrative Responsibilities in Universities within Developing Countries

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Abstract: Quality control consists of several multifaceted responsibilities and roles that are critical in measuring and testing to determine product quality. It requires statistical data to be recorded during the production process. Quality control uses specific research tools to accomplish fact-finding processes and conduct analyses. It is the role of a quality control professional to analyse these measures against some standards put in place to determine the quality of products. The standards depend on the quality management department, company policies, and industrial regulatory bodies. Based on this evidence-gathering, the quality control department will recommend changes. The role of administrators and managers in industries is to monitor the performance of employees effectively to ensure they are completing tasks according to company procedures. The department reviews data to identify and resolve risks to the organisation's quality standards. To provide training to employees on quality assurance principles and practices. The role of a quality assurance administrator is to create the documentation for the quality processes of an organisation. Their job is to collect and analyse data and create metrics to measure the results and efficiency of quality assurance procedures. With the rise of global competitiveness and the growing need for higher education institutions to meet international standards, QA frameworks have become essential. In developing countries, however, challenges arise from resource constraints, limited employee engagement, and often unstructured governance. The existing studies reveal that cognitive information is lacking hence there is a situation where university employees fail to significantly identify the roles of quality assurance directors in Ugandan universities. The findings contribute to improving higher education institutions' internal processes, policy formulation, and employee empowerment strategies, ensuring sustainable quality outcomes. This article further aims to share the roles and importance of the directorate of quality assurance in universities and other organisations.

Keywords: quality control, Quality Audit, product quality, quality assurance and management.

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Introduction

Quality control refers to the systematic processes through which an organization ensures that its outputs meet the established standards. In universities, quality control mechanisms are critical to maintaining academic excellence, operational efficiency, and adherence to institutional policies (MUST, 2022). The introduction of standardized assessment criteria, regular monitoring, and feedback loops are essential in aligning institutional performance with national and international benchmarks (Kusek & Rist, 2004). In developing countries, where resource constraints may hinder comprehensive QA practices, quality control mechanisms must be tailored to the specific needs and limitations of the institution while remaining effective (Hopper, 2007). Universities face several

challenges such as; inadequate financing, lack of capacity in terms of adequate qualified and experienced human resources to undertake quality assurance functions, lack of clear and viable quality assurance policies, lack of awareness on quality assurance issues, and lack of academic leadership (Mgaiwa & Ishengoma, 2017).

The role of top management is ensure a supportive and facilitative implementation program of QA systems in the university (Makerere, 2007). Top management learns about and decides to commit to Total Quality Management (TQM). TQM is identified as one of the organization's strategies that helps clients to be served with comparably high-quality products of goods and services. The organization assesses current culture, customer satisfaction, and quality management systems. Top management identifies core

values and principles to be used and communicates them to the employees for implementation. Total Quality Management (TQM) is an important strategy for modern organizations to improve the continual processes that reduce and eliminate manufacturing errors. It focuses on improving customer service, training employees to work effectively and increasing customer satisfaction (Snongtaweepon, Siribensong, kngsong & Channuwong, 2020). Total quality management emphasizes management to use micro-supervision where progress is monitored and audit is captured for future review and planning. The monitoring and auditing of quality assurance processes to ensure compliance and effectiveness has set regulations and policies in place. The set policies are the established standards sometimes known as institutional policies. Audit is a process of identifying and ensuring that appropriate internal quality assurance processes are in place and operational (Makerere, 2007). They may conduct regular inspections, audits, or reviews to assess the effectiveness of quality control measures and identify areas for improvement.

The relationship between quality control mechanisms and the successful realization of QA standards in universities is the role of top management in building teamwork spirit among employees (Ahmed & Ahmad, 2022). A quality system is defined as the organizational structure, responsibilities, processes, procedures and resources for implementing quality management (Manghani, 2012). Employee engagement and assurance implementation is crucial for the effective functioning of universities and other tertiary institutions in Higher Education (Mwesigye & Kibalarwandi, 2024). Employee engagement is a human resources (HR) concept that describes the level of enthusiasm and dedication a worker feels toward their job. Engaged employees care about their work and employees' performance of the company, and feel that their efforts make a difference (Osborne & Hammoud, 2017). This article has been guided by three objectives that originate from research questions;

1. To examine the influence of employee participation on the implementation of Quality Assurance (QA) policies in universities within developing countries.
2. To assess the role of top management's administrative responsibilities in facilitating the implementation of QA systems.
3. To explore the relationship between quality control mechanisms and the successful realization of QA standards in universities.

Methodology

A descriptive survey design employing both quantitative and qualitative data has been used. The data from the field where 182 participants were enrolled for the doctoral study has remained significant for application in research and publication of the findings. The approved study reference SS-4248 of UNCST, (2017) is for managerial reforms and quality enhancement in institutions of higher education and manufacturing industry management. The knowledge here is underpinned by Total Quality Management (TQM) and Participatory Management Theories.

Globally, the Quality Assurance system in higher education has been adopted based on industrial models aiming at continuous improvement in the quality of products (Ferreira, 2003; Karapetrovic, 1998). Total Quality Management (TQM) originated from industry, TQM emphasizes continuous improvement, customer satisfaction, and collective responsibility for quality within an organization (Kibalarwandi, 2024). When applied to

education, TQM underscores the need for universities to engage all stakeholders—students, faculty, staff, and management—in processes that enhance quality assurance (Geresoma, 2024). The principles of TQM highlight the importance of systematic control mechanisms and comprehensive administrative oversight in achieving sustained quality (Manghani, 2012).

Participatory Management Theory supports the active involvement of employees in decision-making processes (Shaed, 2018). Rensis Likert an American organisational psychologist introduced the concept in his work on management styles and organisational development during the mid-20th century. The participatory theory is a vision or conceptual framework that attempts to bridge the subject-object distinction. According to Jorge Ferrer, "the kernel of this participatory vision is a turn from intra-subjective experiences to participatory events in our understanding of transpersonal and spiritual phenomena (Ferrer, 2011)". It posits that when employees are included in the design, development, and implementation of quality assurance measures, they are more likely to be committed to achieving institutional objectives (Wang, 2022; Ferrer, 2011). In the university setting, participatory management emphasizes shared leadership and collaborative governance as a means of ensuring the successful implementation of QA policies (Mwesigye & Kibalarwandi, 2024). Employees have been recognized more and more as an organization's most valuable asset in recent years. In order to be successful, managers need to rely on everyone's ability to think up novel ideas and approaches to completing tasks in order to stand out from other businesses in their industry (Akhimien, 2023). Principles of participatory management consist of fundamental ideas that seek to empower and enhance the employee's understanding of problems so as to explore and generate the greatest potential solutions embodying the ideals of democratic inclusion and participation (Wang, 2022). Participatory management is a shift in the management paradigm from a top-down approach to a more self-facilitated and self-sustained approach (Semeraro, 2020). Employees are given the freedom and responsibility, accompanied by all the necessary tools needed to delegate decision-making, authority and evaluations of existing and foreseeable/unforeseeable problems (Ugwu, Okoroji & Chukwu, 2019).

Results and Discussion

The quality of education in universities is of critical importance in shaping the social and economic development of a country (Mantashyan, 2021). In developing countries, universities face unique challenges in implementing Quality Assurance (QA) policies due to limited resources, infrastructure, and administrative capacity (Kibalarwandi & Mwesigye, 2020). These challenges often impede the full realization of educational goals and compromise international competitiveness (Mgaiwa & Ishangoma, 2017). In this context, effective quality control mechanisms, active employee participation, and the strategic involvement of top management play crucial roles in improving QA implementation. This study investigates these components and their interplay to understand how developing countries can enhance their QA practices in higher education (Ugwu, Koroji & Chukwu, 2019). The participatory management theory posits participatory management approach, where decision-making is decentralized and employees at all levels are involved in the process. The theory emphasizes collaboration, employee involvement, and the belief that workers' input can improve organisational performance and satisfaction.

Table 1: Show results of negotiation between staff and top administration.

Item	Strongly agree	agree	Moderately agree	disagree	Strongly disagree
The working environment has improved, and staff can execute their duties	25.5%	34.8%	28.4%	10.6%	7%
Staff involvement in decision-making at all levels is encouraged	9.9%	32.6%	34.8%	17%	5.7%
Employee recognition by management is highly satisfying	12.1%	27.0%	36.2%	19.9%	5%
Promotion in professional ranks is well articulated in the HR manual	22.0%	33.3%	20.6%	20.6%	3.5%
This institution does not ensure job security for employees	18.4%	32.6%	27%	15.6%	6.4%

Sources: Kibaliwandu, 2024

Management has increased the level of negotiation which has improved working conditions that involve salaries and allowances. It is accepted that 60.3% agree, 28.4% moderately agree and 17.6% reject or disagree with the item statement in Table 1 above, which states, "working environment has improved, staff can execute their duty". The statement that, staff involvement in decisions is supported by 42.7% agree, 34.8% moderately agree and 22.7% reject. This means that 77.5% agree that some percentage of the university policies are formulated with staff engagement. Some university management has increased employees' recognition by promotion in academic ranks like appointment as senior lecturers, associate professors, and professors and even rewarding active lecturers in publication with financial incentives. It was further discovered that all participating universities had human resource handbooks that provided procedures of how an employee is recruited, promoted in ranks, and rewarded for excellent performance in research.

Participants reported that quality assurance policy implementation is not a single policy but a codification of several policy reforms that include; human resources, academics, research policy, financial and patents. The participants agree that university employees are committed as they execute the three core activities that distinguish universities and other academic institutions. Research and publication, teaching, and community outreach are performed by academic staff hence students directly benefit from such engagement. The procedure of implementing tasks is documented and evaluation of project performance is considered when auditing the progress may be known as quality control.

Quality control refers to the systematic processes through which an organization ensures that its outputs meet the established standards (Mgaiwa & Ishengoma, 2017). In universities, quality control mechanisms are critical to maintaining academic excellence, operational efficiency, and adherence to institutional policies. The introduction of standardized assessment criteria, regular monitoring, and feedback loops are essential in aligning institutional performance with national and international benchmarks (Ahmed & Ahmad, 2022). In developing countries, where resource constraints may hinder comprehensive QA practices, quality control mechanisms must be tailored to the specific needs and limitations of the institution while remaining effective (Geresoma & Hazarika, 2024).

Table 2 shows the observation ranking taken from tools 2 in appendix 02.

Items (in tool #2 in the appendix) scores	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	∑	%	Rank
University Marked A	4	6	6	5	5	6	4	36	73.4	2
B	6	6	5	3	4	4	4	32	65.0	4
C	6	5	5	5	2	3	4	30	61.2	6
D	6	5	6	6	5	5	5	38	77.5	1
E	6	5	5	5	3	4	5	33	67.3	3
G	4	4	5	4	4	5	5	31	62.3	5
Generalized Verdict for Universities in Uganda									70.4	

The quality of the different aspects (score Items) of the program was assessed on a scale of 1-7.

01. Policy procedures
02. Periodical review of the program
03. Quality assurance facilities
04. Self-assessment
05. Information system

06. Public information

07. QA handbooks

Interpretation/ranking of Marks:

1 = absolutely inadequate; immediate improvements must be made

2 = inadequate, improvements necessary

3 = inadequate, but minor improvements will make it adequate

4 = adequate as expected

5 = better than adequate

6 = example of good practice

7 = excellent

The key to the interpretation of status

Below 33 %	means	low;	between 34% & 66%	average
Between 67% & 80%		good;	between 81% & 100%	Excellent

The National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) has set standards for universities to follow. The guidelines provide instructions on how quality assurance policy can be implemented. Table 1 above shows that all universities had policy procedures that are adequate as expected. The results show that several policies of the universities before 2018 were working documents without a date of approval by the university council. The preliminary results of the research, and several universities are able to show now (2024) the date of the University council meeting and reference for the ratification of the identified policy documents. Table 1. Shows six participating universities whose scores provide 70.4%. As mentioned, policy procedures were lacking, hence average was 5.33 equivalent to 76.2% success. The periodical review of programs was ranked at 5.16 equivalent to 73.8%. The quality assurance facilities ranked at 76.2%, self-assessment was ranked at 4 with 57.1%, information system was ranked at 42.8%, public information was ranked at 64.3%, and quality assurance handbooks were ranked at 64.3%.

Therefore, the results are in agreement with, the findings The findings revealed that personal attributes of leaders such as understanding of QA, attitude towards QA and practices shape leadership style either as transformational or compliance leader. The transformational leader implements QA procedures with the intention of bringing improvement in teaching learning and research quality” (Ahmed & Ahmad, 2023). The Vice Chancellors (Rectorate) of Ugandan universities are ranked as transformational leaders in implementing quality assurance policy/programmes.

Table 3: Empowerment of Staff for Quality assurance Implementation

Item	Strongly Agree	agree	Moderately agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Delegation has improved and leadership team is observed within	18.4%	34.0%	33.3%	11.3%	2.1%
At the Department, faculty and institutional level team spirit do exist	27.7%	34.8%	25.5%	6.4%	5.0%
There is a clear recruitment procedure for employees in this Institution	28.4%	34.8%	21.3%	11.3%	4.3%

Sources: (Kibalarwandi, 2024)

Employee participation in QA implementation refers to the extent to which academic and non-academic staff are involved in the processes that ensure the quality of educational programs, services, and administrative functions (Mwesigye & Kibalarwandi, 2024). Studies have shown that active involvement in QA policy development and execution fosters a sense of ownership and accountability among staff, which can lead to improved performance. However, in developing countries, hierarchical structures, bureaucratic obstacles, and limited capacity-building initiatives may undermine employee engagement. By addressing these barriers, universities can harness the collective expertise of their employees to improve QA outcomes.

Table 3 shows that, quality assurance system has improved “Delegation has improved and leadership team is observed within” 52.4% of participants agree with the item sentence, 33.3% moderately agree and only 13.4% participants don't agree that delegation has improved because of quality assurance policy implementation. The team spirit has improved at the departmental, faculty and institutional level. Item shows that 62.2% agree, 25.5% moderately agree and only 11.4% disagree. The third item in Table 2 above shows that 63.2% agree, 21.3% moderately agree and only 15.6% disagree that "There is clear recruitment procedure for employees in this Institution”.

Employees' participation accounts for 68.5% successful implementation of quality assurance policy which is a sign of employees' commitment at work. The institutions having 70.4% compliance are also evidence transformation leadership in Ugandan universities. The success of quality

assurance policy is highly influenced by employees, while the other percentage is accounted for by other factors like governance, students, and other stakeholders. The governance includes financial autonomy and accountability.

Table 4. Activities done by staff in pursuit of implementing quality assurance in Ugandan universities

Teaching/learning	Research	Community Outreach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesson preparation, continuous assessment tests (CAT), setting tests and examinations, preparing blueprints (examination answer guides or answer keys), marking examinations, posting grades on examination electronic registration management system (erms), invigilation of examinations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guiding students in research Supervising research projects (candidates) Participating in Interdisciplinary research projects Writing and publishing with students Editorial service to students' research work Research & Publication Writing books, or book chapters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervising industry attachment in the field for hands-on and community engagement School practice and other attachment Consultation service

Source: (Kibalirwandi, 2024)

The engagement of academicians in these activities highlighted in Table 4 above, makes a package for which an employee is hired in Ugandan universities. However, the workload was calculated by the three core activities as full-time employees to 40 hours per week. The teaching load was being given 18-24 hours and the remaining hours 16-22 hours for research and community outreach. The performance appraisal should be able to report hours spent on the other two activities. Besides reporting through performance appraisal, published papers are evident for each lecturer to have a minimum of 3 articles or book chapters per year. This would improve the university performance ranking since it compares publications within the past five years. The community outreach appears in the activity report with pictures to show the university giving back to the community through students' and community members' engagement.

The results show activities done by teaching staff and non-teaching staff. The three core activities are; teaching, research, and community outreach. Research has been identified as very significant in quality assurance implementation. One participant defined quality assurance as, "Quality assurance is to prepare, prepare and prepare". Students are global and they access open resource materials from the internet. If a lecturer does not give time to prepare then teaching will not be appreciated by learners" (Kibalirwandi, 2024). This implies that through research lecturers and professors should prepare for the learners. Lecturers should use anthropoanagogy to inspire learners into the field of research. The scenarios of recruitment conflicts like Dr Stella Nyanzi's misconduct on 16/04/2016 as the claim was, I was hired as a research fellow, not a teacher and I see no reason for closing the door of my office. The partial constituency was to investigate the issue from participants to be students, academic staff and management. This provides silent evidence that university quality is within the engagement of students, academics and management or administration. Also it should be noted that students evaluation reports and written institutional policies were analysed by the researcher as secondary data. The top management especially the Rectorate office provided verification and key information to create triangulation which reduces research data bias (Burnard, 2008).

The administrative responsibilities of top management are central to the effective implementation of QA systems (Mgaiwa &

Ishengoma, 2017). University leaders are responsible for creating an enabling environment for QA by allocating resources, developing policies, and setting strategic priorities (Makerere, 2007). Their role includes fostering a culture of quality, ensuring transparency in decision-making, and encouraging employee participation (Kusek & Rist, 2004). In developing countries, university leadership must also navigate external pressures such as government oversight, accreditation demands, and funding constraints (Snongtaweepon, Siribongsong, Kongsong & Channuwong, 2020). Effective leadership, therefore, requires balancing these competing demands while ensuring that quality assurance remains a top priority.

Conclusion

In the context of developing countries, the implementation of QA in universities is influenced by a combination of quality control mechanisms, employee participation, and the administrative responsibilities of top management. By adopting a holistic approach that incorporates these factors, universities can overcome the challenges posed by resource constraints and institutional inefficiencies. This paper argues for a more integrated and participatory model of QA implementation that leverages the strengths of both employees and top management to ensure sustainable improvements in higher education quality.

The results show that research question one, in institutions of higher education, three major activities are exclusively important for performance evaluation; teaching, research and community outreach. Employee participation affects the implementation of Quality Assurance policies in universities within developing countries. Employees' contributions account for 68.5% towards successful quality assurance policy implementation (Kibalirwandi, 2024). Teaching accounts for 37.5%, research accounts for 37.5%, citation accounts for 15%, industry income 2.5% and international outlook accounts for 7.5% (Times Higher Education, 2014). The teaching of learners requires research work by academic staff and students, citation is associated with research and impact in the knowledge sharing. Therefore, employees contribute towards the ranking position of any university because 90% of what qualifies an institution to be ranked high is a contribution to employees in their task completion. This demonstrates the essential role of

academic staff and their contribution to knowledge creation and dissemination.

The results have shown research question two, “the role of top management in ensuring the effective implementation of Quality Assurance systems in universities”. Top management has displayed transformational leadership which accounts for 70.4% compliance with the QA policy implementation. The synergy of employees' contribution, and top management transformational leadership in support of financing employees' activities is crucial to performance appraisal. Issues to do with research dissemination, field trips, industrial attachment, and planning and presentation of the university budget are some of the significant roles of top management in support of quality assurance policy implementation. The guidance and effective collaboration between the university council and government entities is critical for policy implementation.

The third research question has been answered by, “Quality control mechanisms contribute to the successful implementation of Quality Assurance standards in universities?” and activities are shown to cover the three core activities of a university; teaching, research and community outreach. Top management helps staff to prepare for the audit process because universities undergo periodic accreditation processes by the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), or international accrediting bodies like the Adventists Accreditation Agency (AAA). It was found that the quality assurance directorate was in charge of ensuring that such preparations were done under the guidance of the Vice Chancellor's office in all Ugandan universities. These audits assess whether the institution meets predefined standards of educational quality, governance, and research productivity (Duarte & Vardasce, 2023). External reviews ensure that academic programs are updated, relevant, and capable of producing competent graduates. The bi-annual quality assurance report submitted to the quality assurance department of the NCHE, the external peer review processes in universities, external moderation of examinations and internal quality assessment make the quality control mechanism effective in Ugandan universities.

Finally, it is accepted that Ugandan universities have made substantial progress in quality assurance policy implementation, with academic staff contributing 68.5% to its success. The management's compliance with the quality assurance framework is notably high, reaching 70.4%. Moreover, top management leadership plays a pivotal role in fostering collaboration between staff and the quality assurance directorate, ensuring universities are well-prepared for periodic accreditation processes. These findings underscore the need for continued engagement of staff in quality control efforts and for strong leadership in maintaining institutional quality standards. As developing countries work towards improving their higher education systems, this model of collaborative quality assurance implementation can be a cornerstone for future development.

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