





International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research
Vol. 22, No. 11, pp. 36-58, November 2023
<https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.22.11.3>
Received Sep 22, 2023; Revised Nov 12, 2023; Accepted Nov 14, 2023

Challenges Facing Enforcement of University Quality Assurance Standards in Fostering Compliance in Tanzania

Daudi Mrema , Irénée Ndayambaje , Philothère Ntawiha  and
Eugene Ndabaga 
University of Rwanda-College of Education (UR-CE),
School of Education, Rwanda

Abstract. Compliance with quality assurance standards worldwide requires universities to be strongly enforced by external and internal quality assurance bodies. Tanzania, as in the case of other countries, enforces quality assurance standards through national and institutional quality assurance bodies. Despite such efforts, non-compliance cases are still found at various university stakeholders' levels. This study explored the challenges in enforcing quality assurance standards to foster universities' compliance in Tanzania. The qualitative approach and multiple embedded case study design informed the study. Data was collected from the four public and private universities involving 46 participants who were purposively selected. In addition, data was gathered through focus group discussions, individual interviews and documentary reviews and then analyzed by content analysis. The study found that academics' resistance to quality monitoring of teaching, financial challenges, inadequate quality assurance awareness, quality assurance officers acting as police officers, underestimating the quality of tests, and lack of detailed national guidelines for some enforcement initiatives were the challenges encountered in enforcing quality assurance standards. Such challenges impede the successful enforcement of quality assurance standards. Therefore, they contribute to the universities' non-compliance cases. As such, this study recommends that national and institutional quality assurance bodies continue educating and guiding their stakeholders about the essence of quality assurance standards and how to implement each enforcement initiative to foster compliance. Also, universities must keep searching for multiple sources of funds to enhance their financial stability and sustain quality assurance standards.

Keywords: challenges; enforcement; quality assurance standards; university compliance

1. Introduction

The quality or academic capability of university graduates can be attained when the university quality assurance (QA) systems are set, enforced, and comply with effective QA standards. Therefore, compliance with QA standards worldwide requires universities to be strongly enforced by both external (national and cross-national) and internal (institutional) QA bodies (Mgaiwa, 2018, 2021). While the national QA bodies are mandating their respective universities (i.e., top university administrators) to comply with national QA standards, the institutional QA bodies are requiring their respective internal stakeholders (i.e., academics, students, and graduates) to comply with institutional QA standards (Machumu & Kisanga, 2014; Mgaiwa & Ishengoma, 2017). However, some scholars (Ince & Gounko, 2014; Kadhila & Iipumbu, 2019) hold that once there are strong and functional internal QA systems in place, the external QA systems are less important in enforcing universities' compliance.

Although the main thesis of this study is not to define key concepts, in the context of this study, the university QA enforcement is used to refer to the process of enlightening and mandating the university stakeholders (i.e., university administrators, academics, students, and graduates) to comply with the existing QA standards for improving the university education quality (Mgaiwa, 2018, 2021). In such a process, various technical and administrative QA enforcement initiatives (QAEIs) have been employed by the QA bodies. The technical initiatives include quality monitoring and evaluation (M&E), students' evaluations of the courses and instructors (SECI), examination moderation (EM), strict examination invigilation (SEI), internal independent examiners (IIEs) and external examiners (EEs), university self-assessment, academic audits (AAs), and accreditations (Kadhila & Iipumbu, 2019; Mgaiwa, 2018; Odhiambo, 2014, 2018; Rahnuma, 2020). The administrative initiatives include raising the levels of QA stakeholders' involvement and awareness (QASIA), increasing QA staff motivation and capacity (QASMC) (i.e., their number and competence), and developing an effective QA leadership system (EQALS) (Machumu & Kisanga, 2014; Mgaiwa & Ishengoma, 2017). Also, university compliance refers to the state of university stakeholders' conforming to the existing QA standards (Mgaiwa, 2018).

The empirical studies around Africa have noted the existence of some challenges in enforcing QA standards. Such challenges are the irregular and infrequent conduct of quality audits and corresponding punitive measures by national QA bodies (Mrema et al., 2023), universities' cheating practices (by hiring learning materials for academic auditors' inspection) (Asiyai, 2020), incompetency and inadequacy of QA staff to conduct quality M&E (Machumu & Kisanga, 2014), unsatisfactory levels of awareness of QA stakeholders that limit their voluntary compliance (Wissam & Amina, 2022), and inadequate financial resources (Akalu, 2017). Consequently, some African university stakeholders exhibit little regard for the existing QA standards, which leads to the deterioration of higher education (HE) quality, thereby jeopardizing graduates' prospects. For example, only 11 and 33 African

universities are found out of the top (high quality) 1000 world universities from the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) and Times Higher Education (THE) university rankings of 2023, respectively (THE, 2023; Top Universities, 2023). The theory “X” by Douglas McGregor states that humans are essentially indolent and passive; thus, close supervision and enforcement are inevitable for attaining desired behavior (Kondalkar, 2007, p. 108). Likewise, to attain universities’ compliance, strong QA enforcement from both external and internal QA bodies to university stakeholders is inevitable.

In East Africa, the national QA bodies and universities have been reported to employ various QAELs such as AAs and their corresponding punitive measures, quality M&E of teaching, SECI, EM, EE, self-assessment, accreditation and reaccreditation, as well as raising QASIA for promoting universities’ compliance (Mrema et al, 2023; National Council for Higher Education [NCHE], 2023; Odhiambo, 2014, 2018). Despite the application of such initiatives, low to extreme non-compliance cases in some East African universities still exist. For example, non-compliance cases such as inadequate university resources, operation of unaccredited universities and academic programs, university examination irregularities, admission of unqualified students, and provision of degree equivalence letters from forged academic certificates have been reported in Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda, up to the year 2023 (Mrema et al., 2023; NCHE, 2023). Such cases could be associated with challenges that negatively affect the enforcement of QA standards in fostering universities’ compliance in East African countries.

In Tanzania, the process of developing and enforcing the national QA standards for universities is managed by the Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU). The TCU is the national regulatory, advisory and supportive body for the education quality of 54 public and private universities, campuses, centers, institutes, and university colleges registered in the country up to March 2023 (TCU, 2019a; 2023). Currently, it enforces the implementation of the national QA guidebook that was published in December 2019 as a third edition (TCU, 2019a). As part of its regulatory function, in a span of seven years (i.e., from 2015 to 2022), about 28, 12, and 34 university institutions were deregistered, closed, and barred from admitting new students, respectively, for their non-compliance cases related to input, process and output QA standards (Mgaiwa, 2018; Mrema et al., 2023). Also, the admission and registration of about 832 university students were disapproved by the TCU for not attaining the required principal passes in their secondary education certificate examinations (Mgaiwa & Poncian, 2016; Mrema et al., 2023). Additionally, 107 students had to discontinue their university studies for examination irregularities between 2012 and 2018 (TCU, 2019c). The question is: *To what extent has the application of QAELs been facing challenges that constrain compliance in the public and private universities (PPUs) of Tanzania?* Thus, this study explored the challenges in enforcing QA standards to foster compliance in the PPU of Tanzania. It assumes

that the existing universities' non-compliance cases in Tanzania can be attributed to the several challenges facing the enforcement of QA standards.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Challenges Facing Enforcement of University Quality Assurance Standards

Several studies have shown that the QAEIs have encountered challenges that constrain external and internal QA bodies in attaining universities' and internal stakeholders' compliance, respectively.

Komba et al. (2013) found that the senior academics at the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), Tanzania, have been uncomfortable and dissatisfied with being monitored and evaluated by QA officers and students on how they are teaching. In cases where academic freedom is granted in the lecture room and is misused by academics, the quality of teaching may be in question. Further, Otara (2015) found that the absence of QA officers from each academic unit constrains the effectiveness of M&E in the teaching activity of some Rwandan universities. Also, the SECI, as part of M&E in teaching, has been found to produce unreliable feedback due to inadequate students' awareness about the essence of the exercise in some Kenyan public universities (PUs) (Odhiambo, 2014). As such, what constitutes quality teaching/instruction differs according to the students' and the university's perspectives (Odhiambo, 2014). Consequently, halo, horn, central tendency, and spillover effects, as well as gender- or racial-based ratings are found in the student evaluation reports of France, the USA and Kenya, hence limiting meaningful feedback (Boring, 2017; Chavez & Mitchell, 2020; Odhiambo, 2014). Therefore, the absence or incorrect application of the M&E in teaching makes academics' conformity with the teaching and learning quality standards a choice rather than an obligation.

While university examinations (UEs) are expected to be moderated rigorously to ensure their quality before being administered to candidates, some universities and academics in Kenya have placed less priority on EM. This practice has led to the administration of substandard examinations (with less consideration of the table of specifications, Bloom's taxonomy, accuracy or clarity) (Odhiambo, 2018). Moreover, the examination that ought to be administered to the students and strictly invigilated has been affected by students' cheating practices, the leniency of the academics in invigilation, and overcrowded examination venues in some Nigerian universities (Adie & Oko, 2016). Furthermore, the process of reevaluating the students' examination scripts by EEs in some Kenyan universities was found to be constrained by the limited financial resources, while some universities are not using EEs at all, and others are not using these annually or in all courses (Odhiambo, 2018). Consequently, the EEs recommend that some students repeat the examination or a course when they have already graduated (Odhiambo, 2018). In addition, when IIEs and EEs want to assess the originality of the students' research works by using plagiarism software, some universities have neither an anti-plagiarism policy or software since they are unable to afford the subscription fees (Odhiambo, 2018;

Sibomana et al., 2018). Consequently, academics and students' conformity to the examination standards is jeopardized. Such non-compliance leads to graduates' capabilities being questioned.

Furthermore, the application of regular external AAs in Nigeria was found to lead to university cheating. Some universities borrow learning materials upon receiving arrival notification from quality auditors (Asiyai, 2020). Consequently, the accreditation agencies grant accreditation certificates to unqualified universities, resulting in the provision of substandard HE. Moreover, Machumu and Kisanga (2014) found that most African universities have incompetent or very few QA officers to enforce their QA standards. Similarly, Alzafari and Kratzer (2019) found that the main challenge that constrains the enforcement of QA standards in European universities is the inadequate funding for training and employing an adequate number of QA personnel. In Tanzania, the issues of inadequate financial resources, shortage of QA staff and senior academics, and inadequate QA awareness of university stakeholders were reported to be the main reasons for most PRUs lacking self-assessment, internal AAs and graduate tracer studies (GTS) (Mgaiwa, 2018; Mgaiwa & Ishengoma, 2017).

In Algeria, Wissam and Amina (2022) found that the inadequate involvement and awareness of key QA stakeholders have affected voluntary compliance with university QA standards. Likewise, Mgaiwa and Ishengoma (2017) found that inadequate university stakeholders' awareness of QA matters leads to their reluctance during the implementation in most PRUs of Tanzania. In terms of QA leadership, Alzafari and Kratzer (2019) observed that QA leadership in most European universities is affected by the limited leadership skills related to harmonizing the university stakeholders' interests, persuasion, developing trust and transparency, allocating resources effectively, motivating, developing and communicating effective QA policies, listening, cooperating, and supporting. Similarly, Mgaiwa and Ishengoma (2017) found that the QA systems of most PRUs in Tanzania lack effective QA leadership because of an inadequate number of senior academics.

Furthermore, Alzafari and Kratzer (2019) observed that European governments as external university stakeholders were barriers to enforcing universities' compliance with the existing QA mechanisms. They further reported that some governments have been intervening in the autonomy of QA agencies through funding and its underlying conditions, which may be contrary to the established QA standards. As such, Akalu (2017) reported that in Ethiopia, the Ministry of Education is participating in the admission of many students beyond the maximum limit, with some unqualified students succeeding in being admitted to universities. Consequently, the teaching workload is increasing owing to the high academic-student ratio. Ultimately, universities fail to enforce and comply with other QA standards such as the use of a learner-centered teaching approach, quality marking processes, one-to-one academic-student consultations, inclusive education,

conducting seminars, and developing practical skills (Odhiambo, 2014; Otara, 2015; Peter, 2018). Owing to these challenges, Odhiambo (2014) calls for independent national QA agencies to use universities' registration fees as is the practice in Australia and the UK. This will promote the freedom to make correct QA decisions without government or external funders' influence.

The literature review has shown that while much is known about the challenges affecting the administrative and technical QAEIs from abroad, very little is known in Tanzania. The studies by Mgaiwa (2018) and Mgaiwa and Ishengoma (2017) pointed out very few challenges from the academics' perspective in the PRUs of Tanzania. Therefore, the critical question remains: *To what extent has the application of QAEIs been facing challenges that constrain compliance (at various university stakeholders' levels) in the PPU's of Tanzania?* This study planned to fill that gap by exploring the challenges facing the enforcement of QA standards to promote compliance in the PPU's of Tanzania. This study contributes to alerting the TCU, universities, researchers and other practitioners about the salient challenges in enforcing QA standards in the PPU's of Tanzania and making possible interventions in addressing existing non-compliance cases.

2.2. Theoretical framework

The capability theory of education, which draws inspiration from Sen's (1993) capability approach to human development, is the theory that informed this study. The theory holds that any efforts to develop individuals intellectually should be directed toward enabling them to fulfill their desire to be someone and to perform their work duties excellently (Mtawa & Nkhoma, 2020). As a result, the training of individuals must consider their desired academic capabilities (Mtawa & Nkhoma, 2020). Humans have inherent aspirations, freedoms, and inclinations to pursue particular university programs (Robeyns, 2017). Once graduates possess academic capabilities, achievement awards will be more meaningful (Vaughan & Walker, 2012). Understanding student goals and serving as a bridge are critical roles of the university in accomplishing these goals (Vaughan & Walker, 2012). Such theoretical ideals can be achieved by setting, enforcing, and evaluating the effectiveness of QA standards in enhancing meaningful teaching and learning as well as the capabilities of students. Since achieving academic capability is highly dependent on universities' conformity to QA standards, the challenges in applying QAEIs must be understood and curbed accordingly.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research approach and design

For a deeper understanding of the challenges facing the enforcement of QA standards in fostering PPU's compliance, this study used a qualitative approach, which involved exploring, analyzing, interpreting, and concluding the ideas and experiences of the key HE stakeholders as prescribed by Ary et al. (2018). Additionally, to gain a thorough knowledge of the phenomenon mentioned above, the multiple embedded case study design was employed to guide such an inquiry

through several units of analysis (four cases) and subunits of analysis (four sub-cases) within each unit according to the ideas of Yin (2014). The selected cases are four anonymized universities (1 and 4 [PUs] and 2 and 3 [PRUs]) located in the Dar es Salaam, Dodoma, and Mwanza cities of Tanzania. At the same time, sub-cases are student cabinet members (SCMs), academics, senior quality assurance officers (SQAOs), and quality assurance directors (QADs) from each of the four universities.

3.2. The target population, sampling, and sample size

The members of Tanzanian QA directorates, academic staff, and students from accredited PPU were the study's targeted population. The purposive sampling technique, which emphasizes the key qualities of the samples, such as being knowledgeable, most relevant, and information-rich, were the inclusion criteria that influenced the selection of both universities and participants, which was anchored on the idea of Leavy (2017). The four universities were chosen based on being most (university 1 and 3) and least (university 2 and 4) reported and punished by the TCU for extreme non-compliance indicators from year 2015 to 2022 (Mrema et al., 2023). This selection indicates that PPU were included in each category to obtain balanced information. Furthermore, the QADs (one from each university) were chosen owing to their being in charge of all QA efforts. The selection of the SQAOs (two [SQA0-i and ii] from each university) was based on their seniority (i.e., longer working experience [at least four years] than other members of the QA directorate) in carrying out QA tasks. Two to three academics from each university were the two most senior academics (academic-ii and iii) in terms of qualification ranks (at least from lecturer) with a focus on HE quality, and one academic (i.e., academic-i) who is the chairperson of the academic staff assembly, available only in PUs. The SCMs (six from each university) were retired and current presidents, ministers, and deputy ministers of academic affairs. These make a sample size of 46, as displayed in Table 1:

Table 1: The sample composition

Categories of Participants	Universities				Total
	1	2	3	4	
QADs	01	01	01	01	04
SQA0s	02	02	02	02	08
Academics	03	02	02	03	10
SCMs	06	06	06	06	24
Total	12	11	11	12	46

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Legend: QADs = Quality assurance directors, SQA0s = Senior quality assurance officers, and SCMs = Student cabinet members

3.3. Data collection tools

This study employed three main research tools, which are an individual interview schedule (see **Appendix 1**), a focus group discussion (FGD) schedule (see **Appendix 2**), and a documentary review guide (see **Appendix 3**) for collecting data to obtain

an in-depth understanding of the challenges facing the enforcement of QA standards from the key HE quality stakeholders (QADs, SQAOs, students, and academics). Three experts in HE quality initially reviewed all the research tools. Then, before the actual collection of data, a pilot study of these tools was conducted in one university to promote the trustworthiness of the findings, as suggested by Denscombe (2017).

The individual interview and FGD tools were designed and employed as semi-structured schedules to enable researchers to probe and rearrange the order of question where required, as advocated by Leavy (2017). The QADs, SQAOs, and academics participated in individual interviews lasting between 40 to 60 minutes. In addition, at each university, the SCMs underwent an hour-long FGD. Both face-to-face and telephone interviews were conducted as well as FGDs. In addition, the interview and FGD data were recorded using a notebook and an audio recorder (with the participants' consent). Additionally, a review of national QA documents (TCU guidebook, 2019) and reports (2019 and 2022) was conducted while considering the details related to the challenges facing the application of QAEIs in Tanzanian PPUUs.

For further improvement of the dependability and credibility of the findings, during data collection, analysis, interpretation, and presentation, the data types, participants, and methods were triangulated. Furthermore, during data analysis, the datasets were inter-coded and intra-coded by two coders, as suggested by Denscombe (2017).

3.4. Data analysis

Before data analysis, the individual interviews and FGDs' audio recordings were transcribed verbatim to capture the participants' original responses and meanings. During data analysis, the researchers used a five-step content analysis approach that fits best in interviews, FGDs and documentary review datasets, as advocated by Leavy (2017). The first step was immersion into the datasets, reading to understand the datasets. The second step was identifying analysis units, where paragraphs and sentences were selected to guide the dataset's analysis. The third step comprised deductive coding. This entailed developing an initial codebook, then assigning relevant labels to the datasets, and finally, developing the improved codebook. The fourth step involved analyzing the frequencies of codes, where the most related and frequent codes from the datasets formed categories, which in turn formed themes that responded to the research question. The last step consisted of interpreting and presenting the results, where the interview and FGD themes were interpreted based on the frequency of their appearance across different categories of participants. In contrast, documentary review themes were interpreted based on their strengths in responding to the research question. Moreover, the presentation of data followed a textual mode, which was supported by the corresponding extracts.

3.5. Ethical considerations

In this study, the protocols for obtaining research permits from the national level up to the participants, written informed consent from each participant, participant and institution anonymity, and data confidentiality were strictly complied with for ethical assurance based on the recommendation of Denscombe (2017).

4. Findings

The study collected data based on the guiding question to all participants: *To what extent has the application of QAEIs been facing challenges that constrain compliance (at various university stakeholders' levels) in your university?* The participants were guided to provide the existing challenges along both technical and administrative QAEIs. Such QAEIs are quality M&E, SECI, EM, SEI, IIEs, EEs, self-assessment, AAs, accreditations, raising QASIA, increasing QASMC, and improving EQALS. The findings of the study thematically highlighted the following challenges:

4.1. Academics' resistance to quality M&E in teaching

Although the TCU requires all university QA bodies in the country to conduct quality M&E in teaching for the main purpose of "improving the quality of education and training" (TCU, 2019a, p. 47), the study found that some academics have been resisting quality M&E in teaching based on the perception that the applied approach interferes with their academic freedom and undermines their confidence in the lecture rooms. Furthermore, some academics claimed that students had incorrectly rated them through SECI. This challenge was raised by all participants (QAD, SQAOs, academics and students) from University 4 with three rounds of quality M&E in teaching per semester. Such rounds are conducted by the QA officers, heads of department (HoDs) and students where course relevance, the teaching process, academic teaching performance, and physical conditions of the lecture rooms are evaluated. The members of QA directorates (QAD and SQAOs) indicated that while implementing quality M&E in teaching as requested by the TCU, some academics have been attacking and resisting the QA officers when carrying out their responsibility. The academics involved reported that some very senior academics, such as professors, feel very uncomfortable having junior academics (QA officers) or students evaluate the way they are teaching. Also, some junior academics have been resisting some QA officers because of their double standards, such as not reporting non-compliance cases of some very close friends, or senior or rude academics. The students stated that they have observed academics' moods change immediately once they notice the QA officers entering their lecture rooms. They further reported that some academics mistreat some QA officers. The excerpts below were quoted from the participants' statements to support the claim that academics' resistance to quality M&E of teaching has been a challenge in enforcing QA standards:

As we conduct M&E in teaching, some very senior academics and a few junior academics have been resisting the process to the extent that sometimes our fellow QA officers are intimidated to do their QA tasks equally to all academics. Also,

some academics are complaining that they have been evaluated poorly by students because of being very strict in class. (SQAO-i, University 4)

As a chairperson of the academic staff assembly, I have received complaints from some professors about their dissatisfaction with initiatives such as internal M&E in teaching by QA officers and HoDs. Some of them claim that they have teaching experience of over 40 years and yet are not trusted with the way they are teaching, and bad enough, the junior academics are the ones who rate their teaching. They complain about how students can rate a full professor. However, other academics have no problem with it. (Academic-i, University 4)

The resistance of M&E is common for very senior academics. Also, other academics have been resisting due to the feeling that the exercise is unfair because some QA officers are not reporting the malpractice of professors and their close friends. They only report malpractices of the labeled academics. (Academic-iii, University 4)

One day, when a QA officer came to the class, we heard our teacher tell us an intruder had visited the class. He paused for some seconds, and then he proceeded with the lesson. (SCMs, University 4)

In other universities (1, 2 and 3), academics' resistance to quality M&E in teaching was not an issue because none of these three universities have M&E in teaching by QA officers and HoDs in the lecture rooms. The kind of M&E in those universities is done through QA officers who check academics' attendance in the class at the beginning of the semester and through SECI at the end of the semester. However, some participants said that if they were to have M&E in the lecture rooms, it could lead to academics' resistance. One of the academics said: "*Although it is good practice to know what is going on in the class if QA officers could evaluate teaching by entering lecture rooms, it could attract serious resistance.*" (Academic-ii, University 2)

4.2. Financial challenges

TCU (2019b) reported that most universities in the country were failing to enforce QA standards due to their financial incapacity. Consequently, those with prolonged cases of financial incapacity have been deregistered by the TCU. Also, the TCU (2019c) reported that most PRUs have had very few senior academics due to their financial inability to employ and retain them. Such a shortage of senior academics negatively affects the effective operation of internal QA activities.

The financial challenge was also highlighted in all four universities. The participants indicated that inadequate funds constrain the successful application of QAEIs such as SEI (as examination venues are very few and overcrowded), IIEs, EEs, internal AAs, self-assessment, accreditation and reaccreditation (e.g., GTS, stakeholders' meetings, needs assessment, market survey, and employing instructors before applying for new program accreditation), selection of QA representatives for each academic unit, employing and retaining adequate senior academics (who will also help in internal AAs and self-assessment) and regular QA capacity building of internal university stakeholders (i.e. academics and students). Consequently, while

the use of IIEs and EEs for UEs, internal AAs, self-assessment, the selection of QA representatives for each academic unit and frequent QA capacity building to internal university stakeholders are not complied with in universities 2 and 3, the costs of accreditation and reaccreditation requirements cause delays in accrediting and reaccrediting academic programs and universities from all four universities. The participants reported the following:

Our university is financially weak, so we have faced TCU's punitive measures several times. Imagine such QA enforcement initiatives as internal audits, self-assessment, accreditation requirements, and selection of QA representatives for each academic unit; how can we comply without adequate financial resources? (QAD, University 3)

The common challenge is inadequate resources such as finance, human, and physical, as well as time because we have other teaching and research duties that take our time....Our venues are not enough for strict examination invigilation.... However, the key one is inadequate funds. Also, as you know, this very big PU depends highly on government subsidies and tuition fees, which are not enough to run its activities. (QAD, University 1)

...as you know, resources are always scarce, and under such scarcity, priorities matter in resource allocation. Likewise, in our university, a huge budget has been dedicated to the construction and improvement of teaching and learning infrastructures. So, some QA activities, such as accreditation and reaccreditation processes, undergo financial hardship, which limits them from being done successfully and on time. (SQA0-i, University 4)

4.3. Inadequate QA awareness for university stakeholders

The TCU (2019b) revealed that universities' QA systems in the country have been lacking in adequate awareness of conducting institutional self-assessments. Consequently, most universities are not conducting self-assessments as the TCU requires. In response, the TCU has been conducting training for the members of QA systems. Among the successes is the voluntary request of the individual universities to the TCU to deregister or suspend their university institutions or academic programs for failing to meet the required QA standards. Moreover, the TCU (2022) reported that most universities in the country are not conducting GTS (as a requirement in academic program reaccreditations) because they lack the necessary knowledge. Also, those conducting GTS are not doing it as intensively as the experts require. Consequently, TCU has organized capacity-building seminars for universities' QA officers and leaders.

Moreover, the participants from the universities involved revealed that internal stakeholders (academics and students) have limited awareness of QA activities. Some stakeholders consider that ensuring university quality is the responsibility of the QA office only. In addition, other stakeholders do not comply because they are unaware of how best to go about it. For instance, while very few students were turning up for QA seminar invitations, most students were unaware of what quality teaching is. Consequently, the SECIs were found to have halo, horn and spillover

rating effects. Such cases were reported in all four universities. According to the student leaders, such student ratings are done either consciously or unconsciously. The following are excerpts from the participants' statements:

There is a problem of inadequate awareness of QA issues among students. For example, if you see how students fill out the evaluation form for instructors and courses, you will find open bias or unserious ratings. You can see a student rating the highest or lowest scores for all items, which is impossible. Bad enough if you invite them to attend QA seminars, most students do not turn up. (SQA0-i, University 2)

If the students are not well educated about what quality or meaningful teaching is, there is no need for SECI. As it has been very common, if your students score the lowest coursework, expect your evaluation forms to have the lowest scores. Also, if you are too lenient to give the highest coursework, they will reciprocate positively in your evaluation forms. (Academic-ii, University 4)

Being a student is a very complicated stage. Based on discussions we have in our lecture rooms and WhatsApp groups, such rating errors occur both intentionally and unintentionally. For example, some students do not like to fill out evaluation forms because they see no value addition, so they may rate quickly without reading the items. Other students use such forms for punishments or rewards to their instructors. Also, other students are very punctual in rating fairly. In this last group, they may vary in their ratings because of their different understanding of what constitutes quality teaching/instructors. (SCMs, University 1)

The QA office reported that the academics lack adequate awareness of how to set quality examination papers while considering Bloom's taxonomy and table of specifications. Consequently, substandard examinations are administered despite initially having been moderated. Such cases were mostly reported in Universities 2 and 3. This study found such substandard examinations exist at those two universities because they only have one round of EM. In comparison, the other two universities (1 and 4) have at least two rounds of EM, which can monitor instructors' changes based on the first round of EM. Moreover, some academics were reported to be less informed about using a learner-centered teaching approach as required by the TCU. The participants explained as follows:

We have another challenge for our academics who fail to use a learner-centered approach or set quality examination papers with consideration of Bloom's taxonomy and table of specifications. This challenge is common to those academics with no teaching background. We have been training in those areas, but some academics are not attending. We have planned to train them twice yearly and intensify EM rounds. (SQA0-i, University 2)

.....our academics are missing adequate awareness of how to set high-quality university examinations. Since the HoD office supervises the moderation exercise, you may find that when we look at the final examinations, they are not of the required standards. We are still discussing how we can make improvements. (QAD, University 3)

...examination errors are more common in tests than UEs...for the tests, the instructor may come to rectify, but for UEs, we are told to do as it is. (SCMs, University 2)

4.4. The tendency of QA officers to act as police officers

The study found that University 4 academics claim that the QA officers act as police officers when executing their QA duties. These academics were dissatisfied with the approach used by the QA officers in conducting M&E in both teaching and invigilation. They submit that such an approach was not friendly as QA officers used to enter lecture and examination rooms silently and with very serious facial expressions as if they were hunting criminals. They further indicated that their communication to instructors about their non-compliance cases bordered on imperiousness and arrogance. The members of the QA directorate admitted to have received such concerns from the academics. However, they were of the opinion that such claims were invalid since they employed an impromptu approach to quality M&E. Consequently, some academics comply out of fear of QA officers and not because of a genuine concern for HE quality. Other academics resisted complying owing to their dissatisfaction with the QA officers' enforcement approach. During the interviews, the participants elaborated on the following:

We also hate some QA officers in our university who have been acting like police officers when conducting M&E in teaching or invigilation activities. They come silently and portray seriousness to the extent of intimidating academics to conduct their duties confidently. Imagine you may find when a QA officer has arrived and finds an academic was doing any prohibited issue; their eye contact sounds completely unprofessional and unethical. Bad enough, some QA officers are very junior by age and academic rank. Some senior academics try even to be defensive with such an enforcement approach before the students. (Academic-iii, University 4)

.... How can academics accept and learn from their mistakes if the QA officers approach them like students? Effective communication matters a lot in the enforcement of QA standards. Our QA officers try to treat the university as an authoritarian bureaucratic organization like the military instead of a professional bureaucratic organization where discussions and two-way communication are permitted to the members of different ranks. (Academic-ii, University 4)

Again, I have been receiving complaints and witnessing the practice of our QA officers sounding rude, like police officers, when conducting M&E for invigilation and teaching. It is unacceptable given the fact that this is a higher learning institution and they are dealing with very adult workers. My role has been to report such cases and the names of such QA officers in the relevant university academic meetings for interventions. (Academic-i, University 4)

We have been receiving such complaints, but we see they are invalid because we have been using an impromptu approach to M&E to see the real practice of the academics in our absence. (QAD, University 4)

In the remaining universities (1, 2 and 3), the problem of QA officers acting as police officers was not a significant issue because their impromptu approach and internal M&E in teaching by QA officers were neither serious nor relevant issues when compared to University 4.

4.5. Overemphasizing the quality of UEs than tests and UEs

While test assignments as formative assessments contribute to the students' coursework (which is 40% or 50%) and UEs accumulate the remaining marks (60% or 50%) to attain a total of 100% marks per course, this study found QAEIs related to EM and SEI, as well as quality M&E in invigilation, have been overemphasized and underestimated in UEs and tests, respectively, for all four universities. Such underestimation in tests includes the absence of special EM conducted for tests, while the invigilation of tests is not strictly observed as some university examination rules are not followed. For example, one instructor alone has to invigilate many students. Also, there is no serious M&E in test invigilation. Consequently, non-compliance cases among academics are the order of the day while substandard tests (containing grammatical and semantic [ambiguity] errors) are set and administered to students. The students also take advantage of poor invigilation to conduct examination irregularities. The participants revealed the following:

There is lenience in test moderation and invigilation in our university; we have been treating tests as less important assessments, which is incorrect. (Academic-ii, University 4)

...examination errors are more common in tests than UEs...for the tests, the instructor may come to rectify, but for UEs, we are told to do as it is. (SCMs, University 2)

In this university, the instructors can only tolerate minor invigilation cases from the tests but not the UEs. You need to be very smart to succeed in cheating in the UEs; as for the smallest room, you will find at least two invigilators. (SCMs, University 3)

4.6. Lack of detailed national guidelines for implementing some QAEIs

The national QA guidebook has specified the required university QA standards, QA enforcement methods, and guidelines for implementation (TCU, 2019a). However, this study found that some required QAEIs are missing detailed guidelines for effective and harmonized implementation. Such QAEIs are quality M&E, SECI, EM, SEI, IIEs, EEs, GTS in academic programs' reaccreditations and the promotion of QASIA. Consequently, these universities apply such initiatives differently. The statements below are excerpts from the participants' statements during interviews:

Also, there are enforcement approaches we have decided to devise our ways to implement because there are no detailed national guidelines, for example, the M&E, SECI, EM, IIEs, and EEs. You will observe different practices as you study at other universities. (QAD, University 2)

There is no need for TCU to provide detailed guidelines for implementing each QA standard. The TCU can specify the key components that should exist in the implementation, and we, in the internal QA systems, can design our guidelines by accommodating TCU requirements and the practices of foreign universities. (QAD, University 4)

Regarding the case of GTS, the TCU report stated that:

"...since [TCU] launched various training on tracer studies in various universities that lacked the know-how and expertise in the area...was a catalyst for more institutions to have a chance to start conducting the studies to help reduce the skills gap as per the government's directives" (TCU, 2022, p. 66).

Such an inability to conduct GTS indicates that the TCU has no written (step-by-step) guidelines on how universities should conduct GTS for programs' reaccreditations.

5. Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that enforcement of QA standards in the four universities faces challenges such as academics' resistance to quality M&E in teaching, financial challenges, inadequate university stakeholders' QA awareness, the tendency of QA officers to act as police officers, overemphasizing the quality of UEs above that of both tests and UEs, and a lack of the detailed national guidelines for implementing some QAEIs. These challenges constrain the successful enforcement of QA standards and compliance in the selected universities.

The academics' resistance to M&E in teaching was found in University 4, with internal M&E in teaching conducted by QA officers and HoDs. The senior academics, with longer working experience feel uncomfortable being evaluated by QA officers who are junior academics. Moreover, due to such senior academics' resistance, it was found that some QA officers have developed biases by favoring senior academics and reporting teaching malpractices of junior academics, which causes some junior academics to fear them and resist such M&E in teaching. Although the argument of the senior academics do make some sense regarding how junior academics (QA officers) evaluate a professor with considerable teaching experience, there is some mistrust that those professors will misuse such trust and freedom. In some Tanzanian universities there has been a tendency of some professors who are retired or close to retirement to waste much time on irrelevant reflections on their careers at the expense of valuable teaching time. Who can monitor and evaluate that, if not the QA officers and HoDs?

Furthermore, most students are not bold enough to report the malpractice of very senior academics for fear of being punished academically. Moreover, the findings from this study reveal a lack of common understanding in University 4 concerning who should undertake quality M&E, to whom there should be accountability and how quality M&E should be undertaken. The TCU quality guidebook has no detailed answers to those questions (TCU, 2019a). This could be the reason why the

other three universities have different forms of M&E that have not attracted such resistance. The absence of a national guideline may also be the underlying justification for academics resisting such a form of quality M&E. Although 10 years have passed, that challenge concurs with Komba et al.'s (2013) study, which found that the professors at the UDSM, Tanzania, have been uncomfortable and dissatisfied with being evaluated by QA officers and students on how they are teaching. These findings signify that academic resistance to M&E in universities with internal M&E is still valid. Consequently, such resistance interferes with the freedom and responsibilities of QA officers in conducting quality M&E.

The issue of universities' financial challenges is not new in the literature of Tanzania. Mgaiwa (2018), Mgaiwa and Ishengoma (2017), and Peter (2018) reported that the problem of inadequate university funding is dominant in the PRUs of Tanzania. This study found that financial problems exist in all four PPU to varying degrees. In enforcing QA standards, the PUs (1 and 4) have been less affected by inadequate funding than PRUs (2 and 3). This difference might be caused by the fact that the PUs have many sources of university funds, namely from tuition fees, monthly government payments of workers' salaries, annual government subsidies, and donors. The PRUs depend mainly on tuition fees and donor funds. Consequently, the financial challenge affects the operations of university activities. For instance, the current study found all four universities fail to employ some QAEIs effectively such as SEI, IIEs, EEs, internal AAs, self-assessment, accreditation and reaccreditation, selection of QA representatives for each academic unit, employing and retaining adequate senior academics, and frequent QA capacity building to internal university stakeholders. Such failure leads to the domination of non-compliance cases at both student and academics levels, hence jeopardizing the academic capabilities and progress of students. Odhiambo (2018) reported that owing to the failure of some Kenyan universities to use EEs annually for financial reasons, EEs recommend that some students are supposed to repeat an examination or course when they have already graduated.

Furthermore, the study found that university stakeholders' inadequate QA awareness of and their unwillingness to attend QA seminars constrain the enforcement of and compliance with QA standards in the four universities. For instance, some students are unaware of what constitutes quality teaching in order to fill out SECI forms correctly. Consequently, halo, horn, central tendency and spillover rating effects are found when analyzing the data. These findings are in line with the findings of other scholars (Boring, 2017; Chavez & Mitchell, 2020; Odhiambo, 2014) from France, the USA and Kenya, who found that the SECI has been negatively affected by the inadequate students' awareness of the essence of that exercise and what constitutes quality teaching/instructors are different from students' and university perspectives. Consequently, the gender and racial-based ratings are found in the SECI reports, hence no meaningful feedback. This study also found that some students have lost interest in filling in such evaluation forms since they do not see their value addition. The universities' hesitation in using such

evaluation reports with rating errors for accountability and improvement might be the reason for the absence of value addition. Besides, some academics with non-teaching backgrounds lack adequate awareness of how to apply a learner-centered teaching approach or to set high-quality examinations. Consequently, insufficiently prepared graduates (i.e., with inadequate academic capabilities) are produced by universities owing to rote learning and substandard examinations. Odhiambo (2018) found that due to poor examination setting and moderation in some Kenyan universities, substandard examinations have been administered to students, which jeopardizes the future capability of graduates.

While the key role of police officers is to enforce the national laws, this study found that some QA officers have been acting as police officers in enforcing QA standards. Such a tendency intimidates academics in the performance of their academic duties. Since some QA officers have been unapproachable, the academics lose confidence in executing their duties. This attitude of QA officers makes some academics resist such an enforcement approach while others accept it out of fear. Those who fearfully accept this then fail to seek more clarification from the unapproachable QA officers, and subsequently continue making the same QA mistakes. Since the impromptu AA and M&E are useful for understanding the real practices of the universities and academics, respectively (Mrema et al., 2023; TCU, 2019a), their handling needs great care to avoid possible individual conflicts. The communication styles in AAs or M&E can influence or limit the positive cooperation from the targeted individuals and, more importantly, prevent achieving the ultimate goal of quality improvement through individual changes. Moreover, the weakness of the QA officers in executing their duties professionally at some points has implications for the lack of EQALS, as QA directors have to guide their subordinates in the right QA conduct. Likewise, Mgaiwa and Ishengoma (2017) pointed out that a lack of academic QA leadership is one of the institutional constraints for the success of QA in the PRUs of Tanzania.

Overemphasizing the quality aspects of UEs over both tests and UEs has several quality implications. The underestimated tests' moderation leads to, first, domination of examination errors (grammatical and semantic) as well as substandard tests, hence contributing to possible failure of students. Second, simplifying test setting and marking by prioritizing past and objective questions, respectively, becomes a fashion in Tanzania; hence, the attainment of students' capabilities becomes questionable (Milinga et al., 2022). Besides, the underestimated tests' invigilation and monitoring of such tests' invigilation in overcrowded venues provide loopholes for the students to commit examination irregularities. As such, the TCU (2019c) found that from the year 2012 to 2018, a total of 107 students in Tanzania had to discontinue their university studies on account of serious examination irregularities.

Furthermore, the study has observed that the absence of detailed national guidelines for QA implementation inhibits the harmonized application of QA EIs

across universities. The scholars Imaniriho (2020) and Oanda and Matiang'i (2018) assert that for universities to have harmonized QA practices, there should be external QA guidelines to guide universities' undertakings. Without such guidelines, it is difficult to establish a basis for measuring compliance accuracy levels in universities, as each university will opt for the easiest or cheapest way. This study acknowledges that despite some separate QA guidelines, such as accreditation and reaccreditation for promoting harmonization, the current TCU quality guidebook serves as a one-stop resource for university QA standards and guidelines in Tanzania. However, separate QA guidelines could be more useful if extended to other QA requirements observed to have different applications across universities.

6. Contribution of the Study

The current study contributes to both academia and the body of literature as it has highlighted several challenges in enforcing QA standards in universities. Understanding these challenges is important for reflecting on the enforcement of QA standards and guiding the TCU, universities, researchers and other practitioners in taking necessary intervention measures to curb those challenges for improving universities' compliance and assuring future graduates' capabilities.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of the study was to explore the challenges that impede the enforcement of QA standards in fostering compliance in the PPUs of Tanzania. The study found challenges such as academics' resistance to quality M&E in teaching, financial challenges, inadequate QA awareness for university stakeholders, the tendency of QA officers to act as police officers, overemphasizing the quality of UEs rather than both UEs and tests, and a lack of the detailed national guidelines for implementing some QAEIs. These all impede the enforcement of QA standards in the four selected universities. The study concludes that, since such challenges impede the successful enforcement of QA standards, they contribute to the existing non-compliance cases at various levels of university stakeholders (top administrators, academics and students).

This study recommends that TCU and universities keep educating their stakeholders about the essence of, and how to implement, each enforcement initiative to foster compliance. The universities must keep searching for multiple sources of funds to enhance their financial stability and sustain quality assurance standards. In addition, the TCU has to issue detailed guidelines for implementing QAEIs, attracting different applications across universities. These guidelines will promote harmonized QA practices and reduce training costs for all universities in the country, as such guidelines will act as manual guiding implementations. Lastly, using impromptu M&E should not intimidate stakeholders but rather identify the real QA weaknesses and correct them collaboratively.

8. References

- Adie, R. I., & Oko, S. U. (2016). Examination malpractice: Causes, effects and possible ways of curbing the menace. A study of Cross River University of Technology. *International Journal of Managerial Studies and Research*, 4(1), 59-65. <https://www.arcjournals.org/pdfs/ijmsr/v4-i1/6.pdf>
- Akalu, G. A. (2017). Higher education 'massification' and challenges to the professoriate: Do academics' conceptions of quality matter? *Quality in Higher Education*, 22(3), 260-276. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13538322.2016.1266230>
- Alzafari, K., & Kratzer, J. (2019). Challenges of implementing quality in European higher education: An expert perspective. *Quality in Higher Education*, 25(3), 261-288. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13538322.2019.1676963>
- Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., Sorensen, C. K., & Walker, D. (2018). *Introduction to research in education*. Cengage Learning. <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=X69EDwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&num=100>
- Asiyai, R. I. (2020). Best practices for quality assurance in higher education: Implications for educational administration. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2019.1710569>
- Boring, A. (2017). Gender biases in student evaluations of teaching. *Journal of Public Economics*, 145, 27-41. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.JPUBECO.2016.11.006>
- Chávez, K., & Mitchell, K. M. (2020). Exploring bias in student evaluations: Gender, race, and ethnicity. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 53(2), 270-274. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096519001744>
- Denscombe, M. (2017). *The good research guide for small-scale social research projects*. McGraw-Hill Education. <https://mhebooklibrary.com/doi/book/10.1036/9780335226870?contentTab=true>
- Imaniriho, D. (2020). Collaboration in quality assurance in Rwandan higher education: Realities, issues, approaches, and challenges. *African Multi-disciplinary Journal of Research*, Special issue, 1-6. <https://journals1.spu.ac.ke/index.php/amjr/article/view/64>
- Ince, S. B., & Gounko, T. (2014). Quality assurance in Turkish higher education. *European Journal of Higher Education*, 4(2), 184-196. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21568235.2014.890523>
- Kadhila, N., & Iipumbu, N. (2019). Strengthening internal quality assurance as a lever for enhancing student learning experiences and academic success: Lessons from Namibia. *Quality in Higher Education*, 25(1), 4-20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13538322.2019.1597424>
- Komba, W. L., Anangisye, W. A., & Katabaro, J. K. (2013). Teacher professional identity and quality assurance in Tanzania: The case of the University of Dar es Salaam. *Journal of International Cooperation in Education*, 15(3), 187-204. <https://cice.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/5-3-5.pdf>
- Kondalkar, V. G. (2007). *Organizational behavior*. New Age International.
- Leavy, P. (2017). *Research design: Quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, arts-based, and community-based participatory research approaches*. The Guilford Press. <https://www.guilford.com/books/Research-Design/Patricia-Leavy/9781462514380>

- Machumu, H. J., & Kisanga, S. H. (2014). Quality assurance practices in higher education institutions: Lesson from Africa. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 5(16), 144-156. <https://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JEP/article/view/13086>
- Mgaiwa, S. J. (2018). Operationalizing quality assurance processes in Tanzanian higher education: Academics' perceptions from selected private universities. *Creative Education*, 9(6), 901-918. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ce.2018.96066>
- Mgaiwa, S. J. (2021). Leadership initiatives in response to institutional quality assurance challenges in Tanzania's private universities. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 45(9), 1206-1223. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2020.1860203>
- Mgaiwa, S. J., & Ishengoma, J. M. (2017). Institutional constraints affecting quality assurance processes in Tanzania's private universities. *Journal of Higher Education in Africa*, 15(1), 57-67. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/129922366.pdf>
- Mgaiwa, S. J., & Poncian, J. (2016). Public-private partnership in higher education provision in Tanzania: Implications for access to and quality of education. *Bandung: Journal of the Global South*, 3(6), 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40728-016-0036-z>
- Milinga, J. R., Kibonde, E. A., Mallya, V. P., & Mwakifuna, M. A. (2022). Addressing the social loafing problem in assessment practices from the perspectives of pre-service teachers. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 47(6), 1-18. <https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ajte/vol47/iss6/1>
- Mrema, D., Ndayambaje, I., Ntawiha, P., & Ndabaga, E. (2023). Punitive measures against non-compliance with quality mechanisms in East African higher education institutions. *East African Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 4(2), 32-44. <https://doi.org/10.46606/eajess2023v04i02.0273>
- Mtawa, N. N., & Nkhoma, N. M. (2020). Service-learning as a higher education pedagogy for advancing citizenship, conscientization and civic agency: A capability informed view. *Higher Education Pedagogies*, 5(1), 110-131. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23752696.2020.1788969>
- National Council for Higher Education. (2023). *Public Notice*. <https://unche.or.ug/public-notice/>
- Oanda, I. O., & Matiang'i, F. (2018). The East African higher education area: A global or regional higher education space? *FIRE: Forum For International Research in Education*, 4(3), 56-76. <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1199141.pdf>
- Odhiambo, G. O. (2014). Quality assurance for public higher education: Context, strategies, and challenges in Kenya. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 33(5), 978-991. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2014.890578>
- Odhiambo, G. O. (2018). The role of Kenyan universities in national development. *FIRE: Forum for International Research in Education*, 4(3), 191-209. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1199163.pdf>
- Otara, A. (2015). Internal quality assurance in higher education from instructors' perspectives in Rwanda: A mirage or reality. *Journal of Education and Human Development*, 4(2), 168-174. <https://doi.org/10.15640/jehd.v4n2a20>
- Peter, S. (2018). Academic staff capacity in private universities in Tanzania. *Papers in Education and Development*, (32). <https://journals.udsm.ac.tz/index.php/ped/article/download/1474/1380>
- Rahnuma, N. (2020). The Bangladeshi higher education quality assurance framework: A pathway for transformation. *Quality in Higher Education*, 26(1), 14-31. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13538322.2020.1729309>

- Robeyns, I. (2017). *Well-being, freedom and social justice: The capability approach re-examined*. Open Book Publishers. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1zkjxgc>
- Sen, A. (1993). Capability and well-being. *The Quality of Life*, 30, 1-3. <https://doi.org/10.1093/0198287976.003.0003>
- Sibomana, E., Ndayambaje, I., & Uwambayinema, E. (2018). Plagiarism in higher education environment: Causes and solutions. *Rwandan Journal of Education*, 4(2), 15-23. <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/rje/article/view/175119/164506>
- Tanzania Commission for Universities. (2019a). *Handbook for standards and guidelines for university education in Tanzania* (3rd ed.). TCU. <https://www.tcu.go.tz/sites/default/files/Handbook%20for%20Standards%20and%20Guidelines%20for%20University%20Education%20in%20Tanzania%20%203rd%20Edition.pdf>
- Tanzania Commission for Universities. (2019b, December). TCU magazine July-December 2019.
- Tanzania Commission for Universities, (1), 1-40. https://www.tcu.go.tz/sites/default/files/TCU_Magazine_issue_1.pdf
- Tanzania Commission for Universities. (2019c). *State of university education in Tanzania 2018*. TCU. <https://www.tcu.go.tz/sites/default/files/The%20State%20of%20Higher%20Education.%202019.pdf>
- Tanzania Commission for Universities. (2022). TCU magazine July-December 2022. *Tanzania Commission for Universities*, (7), 1-107. <https://www.tcu.go.tz/sites/default/files/TCU%20MAGAZINE%20-%20ISSUE%20No.%2007.pdf>
- Tanzania Commission for Universities. (2023). *List of approved university institutions in Tanzania as of March 03, 2023*. TCU. <https://www.tcu.go.tz/sites/default/files/LIST%20OF%20UNIVERSITY%20INSTITUTIONS%20IN%20TZ%20AS%20OF%20%203%20MARCH,%202023.pdf>
- Times Higher Education. (2023). *World university rankings 2023*. https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2023/world-ranking#!/length/-1/sort_by/scores_overall/sort_order/asc/cols/scores
- Top Universities. (2023). *QS world university rankings 2023*. <https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/world-university-rankings/2023>
- Vaughan, R. P., & Walker, M. (2012). Capabilities, values, and education policy. *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities: A Multi-Disciplinary Journal for People-Centred Development*, 13(3), 495-512. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19452829.2012.679648>
- Wissam, B., & Amina, C. (2022). Academics' perceptions of constraints to quality assurance implementation in higher education in Algeria. *Economics and Culture*, 19(1), 17-29. <https://doi.org/10.2478/jec-2022-0002>
- Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). Sage Publications. https://books.google.com/books/about/Case_Study_Research.html?id=FzawIAdilHkC

Appendix-1: Semi-Structured Individual Interview Schedule for QADs, SQAOs, and Academics

General Information:

Date: / /, University & participant identity: _____, Sex: Male () Female (), Participant highest qualification: _____, Participant academic specialization: _____, Participant academic rank _____, participant administrative position: _____, Years of experience in the current administrative position: _____, Years of experience in the university: _____.

Questions:

1. How far the application of technical and administrative QAEIs has been facing challenges that constrain compliance at various university stakeholders' levels in your university?
2. What can you suggest in addressing those challenges for improving the enforcement of QA standards in your university?

Thank you for your cooperation.

Appendix-2: Semi-Structured Focus Group Discussion Schedule for SCMs

General Information:

Date: / /, University & participant identity: 1D () 2D () 3D () 4D (), Sex proportion: Male () Female (), Years of Study: (i) _____ (ii) _____ (iii) _____ (iv) _____ (v) _____ (vi) _____. Degree programs: (i) _____ (ii) _____ (iii) _____ (iv) _____ (v) _____ (vi) _____.

Questions:

1. How far the application of technical and administrative QAEIs has been facing challenges that constrain compliance at various university stakeholders' levels in your university?
2. What can you suggest in addressing those challenges for improving the enforcement of QA standards in your university?

Thank you for your cooperation.

Appendix-3: Documentary Review Guide

S/N	List of Documents	Information Sought	Themes	Extracts
1.	TCU Quality Assurance Guidebook (2019)	Challenges facing the application of QAELs in Tanzanian PPU's		
2.	TCU Magazine (2019)			
3.	TCU Magazine (2022)			
4.	Other relevant QA documents (from TCU and involved universities)			