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Challenges and Strategic Integration in Quality Management for Higher Education Institutions (HEIS)

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ABSTRACT

This study employed a qualitative methodology through phenomenological research design to collect data via spoken testimonies and narratives. The participants of the study were middle-level managers of selected public HEIs in Oriental Mindoro for the academic year 2023-2024. Middle-level manager-respondents of the study will be limited to the Vice Presidents, Campus Executive Directors, Unit Directors, Deans, Coordinators and Program Chairs/ Heads of the HEIs in Oriental Mindoro. The participants were chosen through purposive sampling. An interview guide was the study's main instrument. Results showed that middle-level managers in HEIs face challenges such as resistance to change, budget constraints, resource allocation, and maintaining interdisciplinary collaboration and partnerships. Integrating strategic planning with quality management practices ensures long-term sustainability and continuous improvement through goal alignment, stakeholder involvement, regular plan updates, performance monitoring, and dedicated resources. To the quality assurance office, a process optimization program for middle-level managers may be conducted. The program should cover topics such as understanding and optimizing processes, continuous improvement, data analysis, project management, risk management, compliance, standardization, documentation, stakeholder management, collaboration, and cultural competence. Meanwhile, to the research and development office, a continuous improvement program for middle-level managers may be implemented. The program should cover topics such as prevention-based problem-solving, the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle, information and training provision, and the goal of continual betterment. The program can be delivered through workshops, seminars, and on-the-job training.

INTRODUCTION

Everyone wants quality, but different people define quality differently. Some individuals see it through the eyes of the leaders, while others see it through the eyes of the members. In essence, quality is defined as a perception that fits the demands of the person seeking it. Leaders must take steps after defining quality to ensure the successful implementation and maintenance of their quality process. A successful implementation will be aided by committing to, investing in, and maintaining a quality process that directly involves personnel inside the organization.

According to Martin *et al.* (2021), quality management is defined as a management approach that systematically facilitates the continuous quality improvement of products and services in organisations. Continuous quality improvement is achieved by employing a systematised set of quality management practices and techniques, in order to accomplish the quality management principles of customer focus, continuous improvement and teamwork. In relation to quality management competencies of managers, Moss-Gransberry (2019) stated that as the world becomes complex it does not stick with the traditional management style that focuses on command and control, however it changes to facilitative managers which is open for everyone and team oriented. According

to Llopis (2019) leaders of quality management can be defined through various characteristics that he gained from his interview with Almeida. He shared that leaders in modern society are able to clearly see opportunities and maximize them. Due to the changes of the modern world, people started to value the significance of quality management. Northeastern University Graduate Programs Staff (2019) claimed that secured management is in demand in current society that is why it is important to hone the leadership competencies of individuals that will give them competitive edge.

Quality management isn't just about following checklists; it's a dynamic philosophy woven into the fabric of an organization. Imagine a constant feedback loop: customer focus guides your vision, leadership empowers your team, engaged people execute well-defined processes, seeking continuous improvement based on evidence-driven decisions. Strong relationships with suppliers and partners further solidify this foundation. This interconnected approach fosters a culture of excellence, where everyone takes ownership, problems become learning opportunities, and quality isn't an ending, but a continuous journey.

In the context of quality management of leaders in higher education, Eastwood (2020), proposed eight essential traits that an effective leader in higher institution should

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possess. These traits include literacy in handling financial matters, ability to collaborate with internal and external partnerships, capability to develop and produce new leaders/managers, good communication skills, strategic planning ability, responsive to a dynamic environment, awareness on the diversity of the population of students and stakeholders, and has the willingness to learn continuously amidst challenges.

In connection with the concept of having managerial competencies in leading higher education institutions, Post University (2021) emphasized in its article that possessing managerial competency is helpful in the success of almost all fields, but it is by far crucial in higher institutions and establishments. One of the seemingly most important competencies is the manager's ability to provide and establish short-term and long-term goals that would be fundamental to the welfare of the establishment in the long run. Align to this is the capability of the manager to think outside the box and to display bravery in taking risks in the midst of uncertainties. In agreement to this, the result of the study conducted by Leithwood *et al.* (2021) reiterates that today's education foster great challenge to the leaders and managers of higher education institutions which has led to the necessity for them to develop skills that will aid them in envisioning a new promising future to students, teachers, staffs, and stakeholders.

Conforming to the analysis of Ruben *et al.* (2023), it revealed that higher education, nowadays, needs a new set of competencies to be possessed by institutional leaders as they adhere and response to big challenges that the new academe faces brought about by an ever-changing world. These competencies are sometimes neglected but they considered as the foundation of the abilities known to be the most common. While previous research has frequently focused on specific facets of quality management, such as financial literacy (Eastwood, 2020) or customer focus (Llopis, 2019), this study offers a thorough analysis across four crucial domains: instruction and curriculum, research, extension and linkages, and resource management. This comprehensive strategy makes it possible to comprehend the interrelated opportunities and problems inside HEIs on a deeper level. Likewise, previous research has underlined the need of quality management and strategic planning independently. For example, McLean (2019) examined the need for visionary leadership in education, and Post University (2021) emphasized the need of defining goals and taking chances. In order to establish a long-lasting and constantly developing quality culture within HEIs, this study intends to bridge these ideas by investigating how strategic planning can be successfully integrated with quality management techniques..

Thus, this study aims to explore the challenges encountered by Middle-Level Managers within HEIs in fostering a culture of quality management in relation to instruction and curriculum, research, extension and linkages, and management of resources. likewise, it determines the integration of strategic planning with

quality management practices to ensure the long-term sustainability and continuous improvement of quality within the institution

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed a qualitative methodology through phenomenological research design to collect data via spoken testimonies and narratives. The chosen research design is descriptive phenomenology, as it seeks to delve into the challenges encountered by middle-level managers within HEIs in fostering a culture of quality management in relation to instruction and curriculum, research, extension and linkages, and management of resources and how HEIs can integrate strategic planning with quality management practices to ensure the long-term sustainability and continuous improvement of quality within the institution. The goal is to develop reflective interpretations based on these perceptions. Data collection was done through individual, semi-structured interviews. According to Pagana (2024) descriptive phenomenology is used to describe how human beings experience a certain phenomenon. This experience may involve perception, thought, memory, imagination, and emotion or feeling.

The participants of the study were middle-level managers of selected public HEIs in Oriental Mindoro for the academic year 2023-2024. Middle-level manager-respondents of the study will be limited to the Vice Presidents, Campus Executive Directors, Unit Directors, Deans, Coordinators and Program Chairs/Heads of the HEIs in Oriental Mindoro. The participants were chosen through purposive sampling based on specific criteria: role-based factors such as titles related to middle management in quality (e.g, Quality Assurance Manager, Vice Presidents), responsibilities in implementing quality improvement initiatives, and decision-making authority in quality matters. Additionally, experts were selected based on experience and expertise, including a minimum number of years in management, relevant certifications, and knowledge of quality management principles like ISO standards. Performance and achievements were also considered, including a track record of successful quality improvements, recognition or awards, and positive performance evaluations.

An interview guide was the study's main instrument. Respect was shown by the researcher for the rights, desires, values, and preferences of the subjects. When doing studies that entail the gathering and use of personal data, researchers must abide by the rules and guidelines set forth by the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173). The National Teachers' College and the responders provided the researcher with the required consents before the study could continue. The Data Privacy Act was included into the survey, and respondents' confidentiality was safeguarded. The researcher provided the consent form and data privacy notice, which will outline the study's objectives in the questionnaire's opening section. In order to guarantee that respondents

are fully informed and give their informed consent before to participation in the study, a consent form is included with the research questionnaire. The respondents' identities and the data gathered were treated with the utmost confidentiality and will not be disclosed to third parties beyond the parameters of this investigation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Challenges Encountered by Middle-Level Managers within HEIs in fostering a Culture of Quality Management in relation to instruction and curriculum, research, extension and linkages, and management of resources

In terms of instruction, the participants acknowledged the difficulty in garnering support from all faculty members for new quality management initiatives. They may have experienced situations where faculty members were resistant to changes in instructional methods or skeptical about the benefits of implementing new practices. When introducing a new assessment framework aimed at improving student learning outcomes, some faculty members might resist adopting it due to concerns about increased workload or perceived effectiveness.

Participant 1

"One challenge we often face is ensuring buy-in from all faculty members when implementing new quality management initiatives in instruction."

Likewise, another participant denotes the challenge of maintaining alignment among faculty members regarding the significance of quality management practices.

Participant 2

"Keeping everyone on the same page regarding the importance of quality management practices can be a struggle."

They have encountered situations where differing opinions or priorities among faculty members led to conflicting approaches to instruction. When discussing the adoption of a new pedagogical approach aimed at enhancing student engagement, some faculty members question its relevance or effectiveness, leading to disagreements and challenges in implementation.

Participant 3

"Sometimes, there's resistance to change, especially when it comes to modifying existing curriculum or teaching methodologies."

A participant identifies resistance to change as a common obstacle in fostering a culture of quality management in instruction. They have faced challenges when attempting to introduce innovative teaching methods or revise curriculum structures to better meet student needs. When proposing a shift towards active learning strategies in classrooms, some faculty members resist departing from traditional lecture-based approaches due to concerns about their own comfort levels or the perceived efficacy of new methods.

Participant 4

"Budget constraints can hinder our ability to provide adequate resources and training opportunities for faculty members to improve their instructional quality."

The impact of budget limitations on the provision of resources and training opportunities for faculty development was pointed out. They have encountered situations where insufficient funding restricted their ability to offer professional development workshops or invest in instructional technology upgrades. When planning a faculty training program on incorporating digital tools into teaching practices, budget constraints limit the scope or frequency of such initiatives, hindering faculty members' ability to enhance their instructional quality.

Participant 5:

Aligning our curriculum with industry standards while also meeting academic requirements can be a balancing act."

The challenge of aligning curriculum design with both industry expectations and academic standards. They have experienced difficulties in updating course content or learning outcomes to reflect evolving industry trends while ensuring compliance with accreditation requirements. When revising a business program curriculum to incorporate emerging industry practices, they encounter challenges in balancing the need for practical relevance with maintaining academic rigor, leading to tensions among faculty members.

Participant 6

"Balancing the need for innovation in teaching methods with the need to maintain consistency and stability in our programs poses a challenge."

A participant acknowledges the delicate balance required between fostering innovation in teaching methods and preserving program stability. They have encountered situations where introducing new instructional approaches or technologies disrupted established practices, causing concerns among faculty members about consistency and continuity. When proposing a shift towards blended learning models, some faculty members express reservations about the potential impact on course coherence or student learning outcomes, highlighting the challenge of reconciling innovation with stability.

Participant 7

"Ensuring that faculty members have the time and resources to participate in professional development activities can be difficult, given their busy schedules."

A participant recognizes the challenge of accommodating faculty members' busy schedules in facilitating their participation in professional development activities. They have faced difficulties in scheduling workshops or seminars at times convenient for all faculty members, leading to low attendance or engagement. When organizing a faculty training session on inclusive teaching

practices, conflicting teaching schedules or research commitments limit participation, hindering efforts to improve instructional quality.

Participant 8

“Addressing the varying levels of expertise and experience among faculty members in adopting quality management practices can be challenging.”

The participant acknowledges the diversity of expertise and experience among faculty members as a challenge in promoting the adoption of quality management practices. They have encountered situations where faculty members with different backgrounds or teaching philosophies required tailored support or guidance in implementing new instructional strategies. When introducing a faculty mentoring program on effective assessment methods, participants with limited experience in assessment design require additional coaching or resources to build their skills and confidence.

Participant 9

“Encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration among faculty members, especially in large institutions, can be a logistical challenge.”

The participant highlights the logistical complexities involved in fostering interdisciplinary collaboration among faculty members, particularly in large institutions. They have experienced difficulties in facilitating communication and coordination across diverse academic departments or research centers, leading to siloed approaches to instruction. When organizing a cross-disciplinary teaching workshop, coordinating schedules and aligning objectives among participants from different disciplines might prove challenging, impeding efforts to promote collaborative instructional practices.

Participant 10

“Maintaining momentum and enthusiasm for quality management initiatives over the long term can be challenging, particularly when other priorities compete for attention.”

The participant acknowledges the difficulty in sustaining momentum and enthusiasm for quality management initiatives amidst competing institutional priorities. They have encountered situations where changing leadership or shifting institutional focus led to fluctuations in support for ongoing quality improvement efforts. When transitioning to a new strategic plan emphasizing research excellence, initiatives aimed at enhancing instructional quality might receive reduced emphasis or resources, undermining their long-term sustainability.

Participant 11

“Dealing with resistance or skepticism from some faculty members who may question the value or relevance of quality management practices can slow down progress.”

The participant acknowledges the presence of resistance or skepticism among some faculty members towards

quality management practices, which can impede progress. They have faced challenges in persuading reluctant colleagues to embrace new instructional approaches or assessment methods due to perceived inefficacy or lack of alignment with disciplinary norms. When proposing the adoption of student-centered learning pedagogies, faculty members entrenched in traditional teaching paradigms express skepticism about their effectiveness, leading to delays in implementation and adoption.

Participant 12

“Finding effective ways to communicate the benefits of quality management practices to faculty members and getting them fully onboard can be a hurdle.”

The participant recognizes the importance of effective communication in promoting faculty buy-in and engagement with quality management practices. They have encountered difficulties in articulating the tangible benefits of adopting new instructional strategies or assessment tools to skeptical colleagues. When advocating for the implementation of peer observation programs to enhance teaching effectiveness, faculty members require clear evidence of the program’s impact on student learning outcomes and faculty development, denoting the need for persuasive communication strategies to overcome resistance and foster adoption.

In terms of research, the participants faces situations where faculty members, despite being provided with resources and support, do not fully utilize them due to lack of awareness or understanding. They have allocated funds for research projects or professional development opportunities, but some faculty members are not aware of these opportunities or how to access them. This result in underutilization of resources and missed opportunities for research and academic growth.

Participant 1

“One challenge we face is ensuring that faculty members effectively utilize the funding and support provided for research activities, as some may not be aware of all available opportunities.”

On the other hand, other HEIs encounters situations where staying updated with the latest research methodologies and technologies poses a challenge.

Participant 2

“Keeping up with the rapidly evolving landscape of research methodologies and technologies can be quite daunting.”

They need to continuously adapt their research methods and techniques to keep pace with advancements in their field. This involve learning new software tools, experimental techniques, or data analysis methods, which is time-consuming and require ongoing professional development efforts.

Participant 3

“Engaging with industry professionals and conducting

surveys to identify areas for improvement requires significant time and resources.”

HEIs find it challenging to engage with industry professionals and conduct surveys to gather feedback for improvement. They need to organize meetings, interviews, or focus groups with industry stakeholders, which require substantial time and effort. Additionally, conducting comprehensive surveys or market research studies to identify areas for improvement involve significant financial resources to cover expenses such as survey administration, data analysis, and report generation.

Further, some HEIs faces hurdles in establishing interdisciplinary research centers or institutes within their institution.

Participant 4

“Establishing interdisciplinary research centers and institutes involves navigating bureaucratic processes and securing funding, which can be quite challenging.”

They encounter bureaucratic red tape or administrative hurdles when seeking approvals or funding for these initiatives. Additionally, securing external funding or forming partnerships with other institutions or organizations require going through complex bureaucratic processes and competing priorities, which is time-consuming and challenging.

Meanwhile, other HEIs struggle to facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration and coordination for research projects addressing pressing societal issues. They need to bring together researchers from different disciplines or departments to work on a common project, which involve overcoming disciplinary barriers and showing effective communication and collaboration.

Participant 5

“Conducting research projects on pressing societal issues requires interdisciplinary collaboration and coordination, which can sometimes be difficult to facilitate.”

Additionally, coordinating research activities across multiple teams or organizations require careful planning and management to ensure alignment with project goals and timelines.

Other HEIs encounter challenges in promoting a culture of innovation and inquiry within their institution. They need to encourage faculty members and students to take risks, explore new ideas, and experiment with novel approaches to teaching and research. This involve providing mentorship, recognition, and resources to support innovative projects or initiatives, which require sustained effort and commitment. In the study, Beach (2020) concluded that practicing quality leadership would be essential to students’ achievements and transforming schools into more productive organizations. He also pointed out that effective leadership would prepare the students to transition to formal education and the workplace.

Participant 6

“Promoting a culture of innovation and inquiry among faculty and students requires continuous encouragement and support.”

Some asserts that they face complexities in ensuring compliance with ethical guidelines and protocols for research projects. They need to go through Institutional Review Board (IRB) processes, obtain informed consent from participants, and adhere to ethical standards for data collection, analysis, and reporting. This involve implementing robust systems and procedures to monitor and enforce ethical standards throughout the research process.

Participant 7

“Ensuring compliance with rigorous ethical guidelines and protocols adds another layer of complexity to research management.”

Some HEIs encounter difficulties in facilitating collaboration and interdisciplinary research initiatives. They need to coordinate activities across multiple research teams or departments, each with its own priorities and objectives. This involve establishing clear communication channels, setting common goals, and resolving conflicts or disagreements to ensure successful collaboration and knowledge exchange.

Participant 8

“Facilitating collaboration and interdisciplinary research initiatives both within and outside the institution requires effective communication and coordination.”

HEIs also struggle to provide access to funding opportunities and research databases for faculty members and researchers. They need to continuously monitor funding sources, grant opportunities, and database subscriptions to ensure they meet the needs and interests of researchers. This involve regularly updating funding databases, disseminating funding announcements, and providing guidance or support to researchers in accessing available resources. Macadatar (2020) states that managing and supervising a university or a school, as a whole, requires resiliency and firm effort.

Participant 9

“Providing access to funding opportunities and research databases requires ongoing monitoring and updating to ensure relevance and accessibility.”

Likewise, there are challenges in maintaining and upgrading research infrastructure within their institution. They need to secure funding for equipment purchases, facility renovations, or technology upgrades to support ongoing research activities. This involve developing long-term investment plans, prioritizing infrastructure needs, and advocating for resources to support infrastructure development and maintenance.

Participant 10

“Maintaining and upgrading research infrastructure, such as laboratories and computing facilities, requires significant financial investment and planning.”

HEIs find it challenging to motivate faculty members and students to participate in research activities. They need to provide incentives such as research grants, awards, or professional development opportunities to encourage participation and recognize contributions. Additionally, they need to create a supportive research environment that values and rewards research excellence, which may require cultural and organizational changes within the institution. According to Daumiller *et al.* (2020), compared to many other higher education and professional demographics, faculty motivation has received less research attention to far.

Participant 11

“Encouraging faculty members and students to actively engage in research activities requires providing incentives and recognition for their contributions.”

A participant denoted that they encounters challenges in balancing the diverse needs and priorities of researchers within their institution.

Participant 12

“Balancing the diverse needs and priorities of researchers while ensuring equitable access to resources can be a delicate balancing act.”

They need to allocate resources such as funding, equipment, or laboratory space among competing research groups or projects. This involve assessing the relative importance and impact of different research activities, negotiating resource allocations, and resolving conflicts or disputes to ensure fairness and equity in resource distribution.

In terms of extension and linkage, getting support from stakeholders is essential but difficult because various groups frequently have different priorities. A university extension program targeted at nearby farmers sometimes find it difficult to balance the institution’s long-term research objectives with the farmers’ urgent need for workable answers.

Participant 1

“One of the challenges we face is securing buy-in and active participation from all stakeholders, as aligning everyone’s priorities and interests can sometimes be a complex process.”

Securing support from stakeholders, bureaucratic processes, carrying out in-depth needs assessments, maintaining partnerships, juggling resource limitations, adjusting to shifting circumstances, assessing effectiveness, attending to capacity-building needs, advancing sustainable development, facilitating knowledge transfer, soliciting input from stakeholders, and upholding accountability and transparency are some of the challenges in terms of extension and linkage.

Participant 2

“Navigating the bureaucratic procedures and paperwork involved in establishing partnerships and Memorandum of Agreements (MOAs) with external organizations can be quite time-consuming.”

Establishing formal partnerships is often bogged down by extensive bureaucratic processes. Working on a partnership with a local health department to provide medical services spend several months dealing with legal reviews, compliance checks, and multiple layers of approval, delaying the implementation of beneficial programs.

Participant 3

“Ensuring that our extension programs effectively address the diverse needs and priorities of the communities we serve requires thorough needs assessments and consultations, which can be resource-intensive.”

Thorough needs assessments are essential but can be resource-draining. A university need to conduct detailed surveys, focus groups, and interviews across multiple communities to understand specific local issues and tailor programs accordingly. This process requires significant time, manpower, and financial investment.

Participant 4

“Maintaining strong partnerships requires continuous communication, collaboration, and relationship-building efforts, which can be challenging to sustain over the long term.”

Sustaining long-term partnerships necessitates ongoing engagement. HEIs need to regularly update partner organizations, address their concerns, and ensure mutual benefits are being realized, which requires continuous effort and effective communication strategies.

Participant 5

“Balancing the demands of our extension activities with the limited resources available can sometimes pose a significant challenge.”

Resource constraints often limit the scope of extension activities. HEIs face difficulties when trying to expand educational programs due to budget cuts, leading to tough decisions about which initiatives to prioritize and which to scale back.

Participant 6

“Adapting our extension programs to the ever-changing social, economic, and environmental contexts of the communities we serve requires flexibility and agility.”

Flexibility is crucial for adapting programs to dynamic environments. A community hit by a sudden economic downturn require the university to shift its focus from long-term development projects to immediate relief and support, requiring quick adaptation and reallocation of resources.

Participant 7

“Measuring the effectiveness and impact of our extension initiatives can be challenging, as it often involves collecting and analyzing data from diverse sources.”

Effective measurement of impact involves complex data collection and analysis. HEIs need to gather data from multiple community stakeholders, track various metrics, and analyze this data to evaluate program success, often facing challenges in ensuring data accuracy and relevance.

Participant 8

“Addressing the capacity-building needs of both individuals and communities requires tailored approaches and ongoing support, which can strain our resources.”

Tailored capacity-building requires significant resources. A program aimed at improving agricultural practices might need specialized training for farmers, ongoing technical support, and continuous follow-up, which is resource-intensive and challenging to sustain.

Participant 9

“Ensuring that our extension activities promote sustainable development and long-term solutions rather than just providing short-term fixes requires careful planning and implementation.”

Promoting sustainable development requires strategic planning. A university’s environmental program might focus on long-term conservation efforts rather than quick fixes, necessitating detailed planning, sustained funding, and consistent community engagement.

Participant 10

“Facilitating knowledge transfer and technology transfer initiatives requires staying up-to-date with the latest developments and innovations in our field, which can be time-consuming.”

Keeping abreast of the latest developments to facilitate effective knowledge transfer is time-consuming. A faculty member need to continuously research emerging technologies, update training programs, and ensure that extension staff are proficient in these new areas, requiring ongoing professional development and investment.

Participant 11

“Engaging with stakeholders and beneficiaries to gather feedback and incorporate it into program improvements requires effective communication and outreach strategies.”

Effective stakeholder engagement for feedback requires robust communication strategies. A university need to hold regular community meetings, conduct surveys, and maintain open lines of communication to gather feedback and make informed adjustments to their programs, which is logistically challenging.

Participant 12

“Maintaining accountability and transparency in our extension activities, particularly in terms of resource utilization and program outcomes, requires robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.”

Ensuring accountability and transparency necessitates comprehensive monitoring and evaluation. A faculty member need to implement detailed reporting systems, regular audits, and transparent communication practices to demonstrate how resources are being used and what outcomes are being achieved, often requiring additional administrative support and oversight.

In terms of management of resources, HEIs encountered situations where they need to distribute resources such as funding, personnel, or equipment among various departments and research areas. This involve addressing competing demands and priorities while ensuring fairness and transparency in the allocation process. They need to balance requests for funding from departments with different sizes or research focuses, ensuring that each receives an equitable share based on their needs and objectives.

Participant 1

“One of the challenges we face is ensuring that our resource allocation processes remain transparent and equitable, considering the diverse needs and priorities across different academic departments and research areas.”

A participant also faces the challenge of reconciling short-term efficiency gains with long-term sustainability objectives in resource management.

Participant 2

“Balancing the need for efficiency with the demand for sustainability can be a delicate task, as sometimes what is most efficient may not align perfectly with long-term sustainability goals.”

They need to make decisions about resource use or allocation that optimize immediate productivity or cost-effectiveness while also considering the environmental or social impacts over time. This involve evaluating trade-offs between efficiency and sustainability, such as investing in energy-efficient technologies that have higher upfront costs but lower long-term environmental impact.

Participant 3

“Identifying areas for improvement through regular audits and assessments is essential, but implementing changes based on these findings can sometimes be met with resistance from stakeholders accustomed to existing processes.”

Another participant encounters resistance from stakeholders when implementing changes based on audit or assessment findings in resource management. They conduct regular audits to identify inefficiencies or areas for improvement in resource allocation or utilization. However, stakeholders accustomed to existing processes may resist changes that disrupt their established routines or practices, even if the changes are intended to improve efficiency or effectiveness. Overcoming this resistance require effective communication, stakeholder engagement, and change management strategies.

Participant 4

“While investing in infrastructure upgrades and technology enhancements is crucial, securing the necessary funds and resources for these projects can be a complex and time-consuming process.”

A participant faces challenges in securing funding for infrastructure upgrades and technology enhancements. They need to develop proposals, business cases, or grant applications to secure funding from internal or external sources. This involves bureaucratic processes, competing for limited resources, and demonstrating the potential benefits or return on investment of the proposed projects. Additionally, securing funding for long-term capital investments such as infrastructure upgrades require planning and coordination across multiple budget cycles, which can be time-consuming and challenging.

Participant 5

“Allocating funds in response to growing demand for course programs requires careful consideration of budget constraints and competing priorities, which can be challenging to navigate.”

Likewise, a participant faced challenges in allocating funds to meet the growing demand for course programs within their institution. They need to prioritize budget allocations among competing demands such as faculty salaries, student scholarships, facility maintenance, and program development. This involves assessing the relative importance and impact of different programs or initiatives, identifying opportunities for cost savings or reallocation, and making difficult trade-offs to ensure that limited resources are used effectively and efficiently.

Participant 6

“Implementing budgeting and financial management systems to ensure accountability is essential, but ensuring widespread adherence to these systems among faculty and staff members can be an ongoing challenge.”

HEIs encounter difficulties in ensuring widespread adherence to budgeting and financial management systems within their institution. They implement systems or procedures to track expenses, monitor budgets, and enforce financial controls. However, ensuring that faculty and staff members across departments or units adhere to these systems may require ongoing training, communication, and enforcement efforts. This involves addressing resistance to change, overcoming cultural or organizational barriers, and providing support and guidance to facilitate compliance with financial policies and procedures.

Participant 7

“Overseeing resource allocation to ensure optimal efficiency and sustainability requires constant vigilance and adaptation to changing circumstances, which can be demanding in a dynamic academic environment.”

A participant faces challenges in overseeing resource allocation to ensure efficiency and sustainability within

their institution. They need to monitor resource utilization, track performance metrics, and adjust allocations based on changing priorities or circumstances. This involves responding to fluctuations in funding levels, shifts in research priorities, or unexpected changes in demand for academic programs or services. Additionally, ensuring that resource allocations align with strategic objectives and long-term sustainability goals may require continuous evaluation, adjustment, and adaptation to changing conditions.

Participant 8

“Investing in state-of-the-art facilities and technology is essential for enhancing the learning environment, but staying abreast of rapidly evolving technological advancements can pose logistical and financial challenges.” HEIs also face challenges in staying updated with rapidly evolving technological advancements while investing in state-of-the-art facilities and technology within their institution. They need to assess emerging technologies, evaluate their potential benefits or applications, and make informed decisions about investments in infrastructure or equipment upgrades. This involves conducting market research, consulting with experts, and forecasting future trends to ensure that investments align with academic or research needs and support the institution’s strategic objectives.

Integration of strategic planning with Quality Management Practices to Ensure the Long-Term Sustainability and Continuous Improvement of Quality within the Institution

The integration of strategic planning with quality management practices aims to ensure the long-term sustainability and continuous improvement of quality within the institution.

Participant 1

“So, um, one way we can integrate strategic planning with quality management practices is by establishing clear goals and objectives that align with the institution’s mission and vision.”

The participants recognized the importance of aligning strategic goals with the institution’s overarching mission and vision. They encourage developing strategic plans that articulate specific, measurable objectives that reflect the institution’s values and long-term aspirations. They emphasize the need to prioritize initiatives that support the institution’s core mission of academic excellence and student success. This is also evident in the statement below:

Participant 2

“Well, um, we can, like, develop a comprehensive strategic plan that outlines specific initiatives and action steps to improve quality across various areas of the institution.” This denotes the importance of developing comprehensive strategic plans that address various

aspects of quality improvement within the institution. They encourage for creating detailed action plans that outline specific initiatives, timelines, and responsible parties for implementing quality improvement measures. They propose initiatives to enhance teaching and learning, research excellence, student support services, and institutional effectiveness.

Participant 3

“Hmm, you know, we should, like, involve key stakeholders from different departments and levels of the organization in the strategic planning process to ensure buy-in and collaboration.”

This asserts the importance of involving key stakeholders in the strategic planning process to ensure broad-based support and collaboration. They encourage for engaging faculty, staff, students, administrators, and external partners in strategic discussions and decision-making. They organize strategic planning workshops, focus groups, or town hall meetings to gather input and feedback from diverse stakeholders on priority areas for quality improvement.

Participant 4

“Uh, I guess we can, like, regularly review and update our strategic plan to adapt to changing internal and external factors and emerging trends in higher education.”

HEIs also need regular review and updating of the strategic plan to ensure its relevance and responsiveness to changing circumstances. They emphasize the importance of monitoring progress, evaluating outcomes, and adjusting strategies as needed to address evolving challenges and opportunities. They encourage for conducting annual or biennial strategic plan reviews to assess performance against established goals and identify areas for refinement or realignment.

Participant 5

“So, like, we need to integrate quality management principles into our strategic planning framework to ensure that quality improvement initiatives are prioritized and resourced appropriately.”

The importance of integrating quality management principles into the strategic planning process to ensure that quality improvement efforts receive adequate attention and resources was asserted. They encourage for embedding quality improvement goals and metrics into the strategic plan’s objectives and performance measures. They propose incorporating key performance indicators (KPIs) related to teaching effectiveness, research productivity, student satisfaction, and institutional effectiveness into the strategic plan’s monitoring and evaluation framework.

Participant 6

“Basically, we should, um, establish performance metrics and indicators to measure the effectiveness and impact of our quality management practices over time.”

The need for establishing performance metrics and indicators to track the effectiveness and impact of quality management practices over time. They encourage for defining clear benchmarks and targets for assessing progress towards quality improvement goals. They propose tracking metrics such as graduation rates, student retention rates, faculty research output, accreditation outcomes, and stakeholder satisfaction scores to gauge the institution’s performance in key areas of quality management.

Participant 7

“Seriously, we need to, like, foster a culture of continuous improvement and innovation within the institution by encouraging feedback, experimentation, and learning from both successes and failures.”

The importance of illustrating a culture of continuous improvement and innovation within the institution. They encourage for creating an environment where faculty, staff, and students feel empowered to provide feedback, experiment with new ideas, and learn from both successes and failures. They propose initiatives such as quality circles, innovation hubs, and learning communities to promote collaboration, creativity, and continuous learning across the institution.

Participant 8

“Literally, um, we can allocate dedicated resources and funding for quality improvement projects identified through the strategic planning process.”

This suggests allocating dedicated resources and funding for quality improvement projects identified through the strategic planning process. They encourage for establishing dedicated budget lines or funding pools specifically earmarked for initiatives aimed at enhancing quality across various areas of the institution. They propose setting aside funds for faculty development programs, research grants, student support services, and technology upgrades aligned with the institution’s strategic priorities for quality improvement.

Participant 9

“Totally, you know, we should provide training and professional development opportunities for faculty and staff to enhance their knowledge and skills in quality management practices.”

The fundamental of providing training and professional development opportunities for faculty and staff to enhance their knowledge and skills in quality management practices. They encourage for offering workshops, seminars, webinars, and certificate programs focused on quality improvement methodologies, tools, and best practices. They propose training sessions on topics such as Total Quality Management (TQM), Six Sigma, Lean Management, Continuous Improvement (CI), and Quality Assurance (QA) to equip faculty and staff with the necessary competencies to drive quality improvement initiatives within their respective areas of responsibility.

Participant 10

“Clearly, we need to establish accountability mechanisms and responsibilities for monitoring and evaluating progress towards quality improvement goals.”

The fundamental of establishing accountability mechanisms and responsibilities for monitoring and evaluating progress towards quality improvement goals. They encourage for assigning clear roles and responsibilities to individuals or committees tasked with overseeing the implementation of quality improvement initiatives. They propose creating quality improvement teams, task forces, or steering committees responsible for tracking performance, identifying barriers, and recommending corrective actions to ensure that quality improvement goals are achieved effectively and efficiently.

Participant 11

“You see, like, regular communication and transparency about the strategic planning process and quality management initiatives are essential to engage stakeholders and build trust.”

The necessity of regular communication and transparency about the strategic planning process and quality management initiatives to engage stakeholders and build trust. They encourage for establishing open channels of communication, such as newsletters, town hall meetings, and online forums, to keep stakeholders informed and engaged throughout the planning and implementation phases. They propose creating a dedicated website or portal where stakeholders can access information about the strategic plan, quality improvement projects, progress reports, and feedback mechanisms to facilitate transparency and accountability.

Participant 12

“You know what I mean? We should celebrate achievements and milestones in quality improvement to maintain motivation and momentum for ongoing efforts.”

This suggests celebrating achievements and milestones in quality improvement to maintain motivation and momentum for ongoing efforts. They encourage for recognizing and rewarding individuals or teams that contribute to the success of quality improvement initiatives through awards, incentives, or public acknowledgments. They propose organizing recognition ceremonies, appreciation events, or publication showcases to showcase the achievements of faculty, staff, and students involved in quality improvement projects.

Several strategies are involved in the integration of strategic planning with quality management techniques to guarantee the institution’s long-term viability and ongoing quality improvement. To begin with, it is crucial to set definite goals and objectives that correspond with the institution’s mission and vision. This will guarantee that efforts to improve quality are intentional and focused on broad goals.

Systematic quality improvement activities are facilitated

by the development of detailed strategic plans that specify specific projects and action stages across multiple areas of the institution. Involving important stakeholders from many departments and organizational levels in the strategic planning process also guarantees widespread support and cooperation, which promotes a feeling of ownership and dedication to quality improvement projects.

The strategic plan must be reviewed and updated on a regular basis in order to accommodate shifting external and internal variables as well as new developments in higher education. By incorporating quality management concepts into the framework for strategic planning, an organization can establish a culture of quality by properly prioritizing and funding quality improvement projects. By establishing performance measurements and indicators, one may monitor efficacy and impact over time and gain important insights into how quality management procedures are developing.

Encouraging feedback, experimentation, and learning via the establishment of a culture of continuous improvement creates an atmosphere that is favorable to excellence and innovation. Sustained support for quality enhancement activities is ensured by allocating specific resources and financing to quality improvement projects that are identified through the strategic planning process. Offering faculty and staff members chances for training and development expands their knowledge and proficiency in quality management techniques. Ensuring effective implementation and outcomes requires establishing accountability mechanisms and responsibilities for tracking and evaluating progress towards quality improvement targets.

Building trust and engaging stakeholders through open and honest communication regarding quality management activities and the strategic planning process encourages cooperation and alignment toward common goals. Finally, acknowledging successes and turning points in quality improvement keeps the institution’s dedication to excellence strong and provides momentum and inspiration for continued work.

CONCLUSIONS

Middle-level managers in HEIs face challenges such as resistance to change, budget constraints, resource allocation, and maintaining interdisciplinary collaboration and partnerships. Integrating strategic planning with quality management practices ensures long-term sustainability and continuous improvement through goal alignment, stakeholder involvement, regular plan updates, performance monitoring, and dedicated resources.

To the quality assurance office, a process optimization program for middle-level managers may be conducted. The program should cover topics such as understanding and optimizing processes, continuous improvement, data analysis, project management, risk management, compliance, standardization, documentation, stakeholder management, collaboration, and cultural competence.

Meanwhile, to the research and development office, a continuous improvement program for middle-level managers may be implemented. The program should cover topics such as prevention-based problem-solving, the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle, information and training provision, and the goal of continual betterment. The program can be delivered through workshops, seminars, and on-the-job training.

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