

Exploration of Quality Culture in Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University Based on grounded Theory

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the quality culture in Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University based on grounded theory. This qualitative study was carried out by using the grounded theory method. In this research, using purposive sampling approach, the researchers selected and conducted in-depth interviews with 18 faculty members, staff, department heads, students, faculty dean and deputy at Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University. The university's strategic plan and the university's public relations e-journal also, were analyzed during three open, axial and selective coding stages of qualitative data. The results show that 154 initial conceptual propositions, with 25 subcategories and 13 main categories in the form of 6 dimensions of paradigm model. This model consists of causal conditions; "academic culture, higher education management and structural factors at university", the main phenomenon; "quality of higher education"; interventional conditions; "environmental related factors"; contextual conditions; University-specific situation, communication and interactions among members and the extent of inter-member participation in the organization ", strategies include;" Improving the university work process, university development strategies and member empowerment "and the And the outcomes include stakeholder satisfaction, organizational excellence, and accountability to community; And the relationships between them were illustrated and presented in the form of the Strauss-Corbin paradigm model.

Keywords: Quality, Quality Culture, Higher Education, Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University

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Introduction

The findings of 29 studies from 2000 to 2017 showed that the discourse of quality assurance is not possible without the formation and development of the quality culture in the higher education. These studies indicate that quality as a part of university culture is among the concerns of universities (SeyyedKalan, Zahid Bablan, Moeini Kia, & Rezaei Sharif, 2019).

Regarding the role of quality culture in improving the quality of education, research and higher education services, there is a theoretical gap in the research regarding the quality culture in a comprehensive and nascent university such as Azerbaijan Shahid Madani University, which has a special position in various aspects. The present research, which is based on the grounded theory can lead to the discovery and identification of the categories of quality culture in the form of a paradigmatic model and take a step towards institutionalizing the discourse of continuous improvement of the quality of the academic system of Azerbaijan Shahid Madani University.

Methodology

The approach of the current research is a qualitative by using grounded theory and relying on "Strauss and Corbin's paradigmatic approach"(Corbin & Strauss, 2008). For data gathering in the current research, exploratory and semi-structured interview, and strategic plan, and university public relations publication were used. In order to sampling, the purposeful criterion-based sampling method was used. The participants were professors, students, heads, heads of departments, faculties dean, vice-chancellors of faculties, managers of university education and research departments, and quality experts in higher education with at least three years of experience who had key information in this field. The information obtained was saturated in the first 15 people, but to ensure information saturation, interviews were also conducted with 3 other people. Along with the interviews, the strategic plan of the Azerbaijan Shahid Madani University, which was compiled in 2014, and the electronic publication of the university, numbers 14, 13, 10, 8, were also analyzed. Qualitative research data were analyzed through coding based on the paradigm model of Strauss and Corbin (1998) grounded theory. In this method, data analysis is done through open coding, axial coding and selective coding, and it ends with the presentation of a paradigm model.

Results

Open coding phase: included 154 initial conceptual statements.

Axial coding stage included 13 main categories and 25 subcategories as below:

1- a) Causal conditions: 1- Academic culture (strategic attitude - common values and norms among organization members - level of responsibility of members - creating internal motivation in people - sense of commitment and belonging and growth of individualism, 2- Higher education management: (the role of management and leadership - human resources management - organizational support), 3- structural factors in the university: (organizational structure - goals and mission of higher education - evaluation in higher education, paying attention to the role of educational departments)

2-b) context: 1- specific location of the university (environmental and geographical challenges of the university - brand of the university - infrastructures of the university), 2- interactions and communication (mental and psychological interaction between the professor-student and the students themselves - transfer of moral principles, character of professors and principles Professionalism to students -challenging the class by students 3_the degree of participation of members with each other (the degree of participation of members in doing team work-the degree of participation in solving problems -participation of faculty members and students in organizational decisions)

3-c) Intervening conditions: 1-factors related to environmental conditions (economic and financial factors - cultural factors - political factors - legal factors).

4- D) Strategies: 1. improving the work process of the university. 2. University development strategies (upgrading university development programs - empowering members).

5- F) Consequences: 1- Stakeholder satisfaction, 2- Excellence of the organization, 3- Responsiveness to society.

Finally The selective coding stage of the six-dimensional model included causal conditions (3 categories); main phenomenon: quality in higher education; context (3 categories); Intervening conditions (1 category); strategy (2 categories); and consequence (3 categories).

Discussion and conclusion

In the form of a narrative, it can be said that "the components of university culture, management of higher education and structural factors cause the formation of the quality of higher education in Azerbaijan Shahid Madani University. Strategies for improving university work process and university development (upgrading university programs and empowering members) are necessary to create higher education quality. that the design of these strategies is based on the factors of the specific situation of the university, communication and interactions between members and participation of members in the organization. These strategies are affected by intervening factors, such as factors related to environmental conditions (economic, financial, cultural, political and legal factors). As a result by achieving quality in Azerbaijan Shahid Madani University, we should expect consequences such as stakeholder satisfaction, organizational excellence and accountability to the society.

One of the limitations of this research is the non-responsiveness of some key informants, and the informants Conservatism, which prevented the participants from being real, so it is

possible to be biased in the interview. Azerbaijan Shahid Madani University is facing many challenges in terms of quality, which can take fundamental steps in creating and ensuring quality by establishing a quality culture. Management factors are very effective for the establishment of quality culture. High-ranking officials should help to establish a quality culture by providing meritocracy in the selection of university managers. The structure of higher education and the structure of universities should be changed in order to give more powers to universities. It is also necessary to establish a committee to evaluate and improve quality in the university. Focusing on the perception of students and other stakeholders regarding the quality of education and research and carefully examining the impact of environmental factors (political, cultural, economic, etc.) in creating quality in universities, it could be the subject of future research.

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