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Sensitizing Higher Education Teaching Staff on ISO 9001: 2015 Audit Procedures and Preparedness in the Context of Internationalization

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Abstract

ISO 9001:2015 has been a widely applied process for improving competitiveness globally, but its success has been mixed across sectors. Sensitizing higher education teaching staff on ISO 9001:2015 audit procedures and preparedness in the context of internationalization is crucial for ensuring robust quality management practices in academic institutions. This study sought to determine the current level of awareness and understanding among teaching staff regarding ISO 9001:2015 standards, audit procedures, and their relevance to internationalization; evaluate the institutional support and resources available for training, capacity building, and implementation; and assess the effectiveness of sensitization efforts in enhancing teaching staff's readiness for ISO 9001:2015 audits. Drawing on literature review and inputs from management systems certification experts, a quantitative survey was conducted at Maseno University. This paper presents findings and discusses their implications for improving quality management systems in the context of global academic competitiveness. The study also explores strategies for overcoming challenges in the adoption of ISO standards in higher education and suggests avenues for future research to foster internationalization.

Keywords: Higher Education, ISO 9001: 2015 Audit Procedures and Preparedness, Internationalization

Background Information

Evolution of ISO 9001:2015

The evolution of business dynamics has dramatically reshaped the way organizations perceive and ensure quality over time. As industries adapt to global competition, technological advancements, and changing customer expectations, the need for robust quality management systems (QMS) has become ever more pressing. Recognizing these shifts, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) has continually updated its quality management systems to reflect modern business realities. The revision of ISO 9001 in 2015 marked a significant milestone in this process, introducing a number of key changes designed to keep pace with contemporary business practices and enhance the flexibility and effectiveness of the system.

The ISO 9001 standard was first introduced in 1987 as a set of requirements for organizations looking to establish, implement, maintain, and improve their quality management systems (ISO, 2015). Over the years, the standard has undergone several revisions, each aimed at making it more applicable and practical across various sectors and industries globally. The revision of ISO 9001 in 2015 was a major step forward, driven by the need to align the standard with the growing complexities of the modern business environment. This revision emphasized several core principles of quality management, with a particular focus on customer needs, the engagement of top management, and a continuous improvement approach, which are integral to ensuring the continued relevance of the standard in today's fast-paced and competitive world.

The primary change in the 2015 revision of ISO 9001 was the integration of a more strategic approach to quality management. The revision incorporated a stronger focus on risk-based thinking, helping organizations anticipate and address challenges proactively, rather than reacting to problems as they arise (Harrison & Islam, 2016). This shift reflects the growing complexity of global business environments, where organizations face an ever-increasing range of risks—ranging from supply chain disruptions to rapidly changing customer preferences. By embedding risk-based thinking into the QMS, ISO 9001:2015 encourages organizations to identify potential risks and opportunities early and to take appropriate measures to mitigate those risks and capitalize on emerging opportunities.

ISO 9001:2015 is built on several foundational principles, with customer focus at the heart of the standard. This principle emphasizes the importance of understanding and meeting customer needs and expectations in order to enhance customer satisfaction. The standard stresses that organizations should not only deliver products and services that meet customer specifications but also continuously strive to exceed customer expectations (Sila & Ebrahimpour, 2005). This focus on customer satisfaction aligns with the growing demand for more personalized, high-quality products and services, which is crucial for sustaining competitiveness in a globalized market.

Another key principle of ISO 9001:2015 is the involvement of top management in the quality management process. This marks a departure from previous revisions, where quality management was often seen as a responsibility of specific departments or lower-level staff. In contrast, the 2015 revision calls for active participation and leadership from senior executives, ensuring that quality management is embedded within the organization's strategy and overall management systems (Dabrowski, 2019). This emphasis on leadership helps to create a culture of quality across all levels

of the organization, ensuring that quality objectives are aligned with the strategic goals and objectives of the organization as a whole.

The process approach is another important component of ISO 9001:2015. This principle encourages organizations to view their activities as interrelated processes that work together to achieve the desired outcomes. The process approach not only improves operational efficiency but also ensures that processes are continually monitored and refined. By adopting a process approach, organizations are better positioned to identify inefficiencies and make improvements that can lead to enhanced performance and reduced costs (Harrison & Islam, 2016). This is particularly important in industries where operational excellence is a key differentiator, such as manufacturing, healthcare, and logistics.

Continuous improvement, a concept embedded in ISO 9001 from its inception, remains a cornerstone of the 2015 revision. ISO 9001:2015 encourages organizations to create a culture of constant innovation, where employees at all levels are encouraged to suggest improvements and contribute to the ongoing enhancement of processes and services. This focus on continuous improvement is crucial for organizations that seek to maintain their competitiveness in a rapidly changing marketplace (Sila & Ebrahimpour, 2005). By fostering a culture of continuous improvement, organizations can drive better performance, increase efficiency, and respond more effectively to customer demands.

The adoption of ISO 9001:2015 has profound implications for organizations across a wide range of industries. For businesses seeking to enhance customer satisfaction, achieve regulatory compliance, and improve operational efficiency, the standard offers a comprehensive framework for achieving these objectives. Moreover, the standard's focus on leadership, customer satisfaction, and continuous improvement helps organizations not only meet current market demands but also position themselves for future success (Dabrowski, 2019).

ISO AUDIT PROCEDURES AND PREPAREDNESS

ISO 9001:2015 audit procedures are vital for higher education institutions (HEIs) seeking to elevate their reputation, attract global students, and forge international partnerships. These procedures focus on ensuring compliance with quality management principles, ensuring that institutions deliver high-quality, consistent educational services. Adhering to ISO 9001:2015 standards provides a clear signal to stakeholders of an institution's commitment to efficiency, transparency, and effectiveness in fulfilling its educational objectives. Regular audits play an essential role in evaluating institutional performance, ensuring that the institution meets both internal and international benchmarks, while identifying strengths and weaknesses and promoting a culture of continuous improvement (International Organization for Standardization, 2015).

The ISO 9001:2015 audit process typically involves two primary types of audits: internal and external. Internal audits are conducted by the institution itself, helping to assess compliance with the Quality Management System (QMS) and identify areas in need of improvement. These internal audits typically focus on evaluating the alignment of internal processes with the prescribed quality management principles, such as resource management, teaching methodologies, and student

satisfaction (Murray, 2017). External audits are performed by accredited certification bodies and are essential for validating compliance with ISO 9001:2015 standards. These audits evaluate a broad range of institutional functions, including administrative processes, teaching quality, student services, and resource management. The findings from both internal and external audits are used to assess performance, maintain certification, and implement corrective actions (Ali et al., 2018).

Teaching staff are at the heart of achieving ISO 9001:2015 compliance, as they directly influence the quality of educational services provided. Therefore, their involvement in audit preparedness is critical for successful implementation. Engaging teaching staff in ISO 9001:2015-related training, workshops, and continuous updates on quality standards ensures that they are equipped to actively participate in the QMS and comply with audit procedures (Dabrowski, 2019). This awareness promotes alignment with institutional objectives, creating a collaborative, quality-focused organizational culture. Teaching staff engagement in audits also ensures that any necessary corrective actions can be promptly addressed, facilitating smoother transitions when improvements are needed (Mok et al., 2014).

Audit preparedness entails a systematic approach to ensure that an institution is fully prepared for both internal and external audits. It includes documenting processes, ensuring that evidence is readily available to demonstrate compliance, and identifying any resource gaps or areas that require additional training. Audit readiness also involves conducting mock audits, where possible, to simulate real audit conditions and uncover any operational issues that may not be immediately apparent. These mock audits help to address potential shortcomings in processes or compliance measures before the formal external audit, ensuring that the institution's operations remain in line with the ISO 9001:2015 requirements (Jauhiainen & Jauhiainen, 2018). Furthermore, the process of audit preparedness goes beyond simply ensuring compliance; it fosters a continuous cycle of improvement. Institutions that prioritize ISO 9001:2015 audits view them not just as a means to obtain certification but as an opportunity to evaluate and enhance their teaching, management, and administrative practices (Murray, 2017). The results from audits provide crucial insights into operational inefficiencies, allowing institutions to make informed decisions on resource allocation, staff training, and curriculum updates. As a result, institutions can better meet the evolving demands of students, faculty, and external stakeholders.

HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS

In the 19th century, the nation-state began to assume greater responsibility over both domestic and international public affairs, with its goals increasingly framed by the ideals of Progress and Justice. This shift was underpinned by the emergence of a knowledge system that placed high value on science and rationality, marking the evolution of education as a pivotal institutional force in society (Schofer, 2003). As the reach of higher education expanded, so did its institutional influence. The sheer growth in the number of universities, the geographical spread of academic institutions, and the diversity of subjects taught signified the rise of higher education as a critical pillar for the development of society. Education, especially higher education, became central to the growth of both industrialized and non-industrialized nations, serving as a source of intellectual capital for the entire national framework (Mathooko, 2013).

As globalization continues to transform the educational landscape, countries, especially in the Global South, are witnessing significant changes in their educational systems. The demand for quality education has surged globally, with many nations investing heavily in their higher education systems to meet this demand and address the increasing competition in the global knowledge economy. In particular, the competition for students, resources, and academic prestige has made it imperative for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to focus on internationalization, not only to increase their academic quality but also to enhance their global competitiveness. As climate change impacts the global educational environment, the role of HEIs is becoming even more critical in shaping the workforce of tomorrow, fostering academic exchanges, and facilitating the transfer of knowledge across borders (King, Marginson, & Naidoo, 2011). For HEIs to remain competitive in this increasingly globalized and interconnected world, it is essential to maintain high-quality standards in their operations. The ISO 9001:2015 standard provides a crucial framework for establishing Quality Management Systems (QMS) within institutions. This standard emphasizes process optimization, continuous improvement, and customer satisfaction, which are integral for maintaining the quality of education, administrative efficiency, and overall institutional performance. By adopting ISO 9001:2015, institutions can enhance their service delivery, meet global accreditation standards, and ensure that they remain competitive in attracting both domestic and international students (Mursidi et al., 2019).

ISO 9001:2015's applicability extends beyond private enterprises to public institutions, including universities and colleges. In Kenya, where education is an essential pillar for national development, the implementation of quality management systems in higher education institutions is crucial. HEIs in Kenya are not only responsible for producing a skilled workforce but also for contributing to the intellectual and economic development of the country. Given the limited resources and the rising expectations for academic excellence, there is an urgent need for Kenyan HEIs to adopt international quality management standards. The integration of these standards allows institutions to streamline operations, reduce inefficiencies, and maintain competitiveness on a global scale (Mok, 2011).

One of the challenges faced by HEIs in the Global South, including Kenya, is the need to adapt to the demands of globalization. The migration of both students and academic staff has led to the increased movement of knowledge and the development of transnational educational models (Reid, Gill, & Sears, 2013). However, this increased globalization also brings about challenges in ensuring that educational quality is maintained across borders. As students travel to other countries for higher education, or as institutions collaborate with international partners, it is essential that quality management standards are in place to safeguard the integrity and credibility of academic offerings (King, Marginson, & Naidoo, 2011). Moreover, the role of teaching staff in this transformation cannot be overstated. As the frontline in delivering education, faculty members must be sensitized to ISO 9001:2015 audit procedures and prepared to integrate quality management practices into their teaching methods, administrative tasks, and research activities. Providing teaching staff with continuous professional development opportunities to understand and implement ISO 9001:2015 is key to ensuring the success of the quality management system within the institution. This investment in human resources helps foster a culture of continuous improvement, which is essential

for maintaining competitive advantage in an increasingly globalized and digitalized world (Mursidi et al., 2019).

The challenges that Kenyan HEIs face in implementing ISO 9001:2015 include inadequate funding for training and development, limited access to resources for infrastructural improvements, and resistance to change from traditional educational practices. Overcoming these challenges requires a collective effort from university management, government bodies, and international partners to provide the necessary support and infrastructure. By prioritizing quality management and fostering an environment of continuous improvement, Kenyan HEIs can enhance their credibility, improve their global ranking, and contribute meaningfully to the knowledge economy (Mok, 2011; Reid, Gill, & Sears, 2013).

Higher Education Institutions and Internationalization in Kenya

The evolution of higher education has played a crucial role in shaping global economic and social systems, acting as a vital component in the development of a knowledge based economy. Historically, universities and colleges emerged as centers for intellectual exploration, knowledge dissemination, and societal transformation. These institutions have become increasingly important as engines of innovation, research, and critical thinking, responding to both global and local societal needs. With the rise of globalization, higher education has expanded rapidly, with universities serving as a nexus for cultural exchange, economic development, and the creation of a highly skilled workforce (Teichler, 2004). In developing nations such as Kenya, the growth of higher education has been essential for addressing challenges posed by the increasing demand for quality education, the mobility of academic talent, and the knowledge economy. The Kenyan higher education system has evolved significantly since the establishment of its first university, the University of Nairobi, in 1970. Initially, higher education in Kenya was limited, with a few institutions providing advanced education, primarily for the elite. Over time, the system expanded, incorporating more universities and technical institutions, including both public and private establishments (Ouma, 2007). The increasing demand for higher education in Kenya, fueled by a growing youth population and greater access to secondary education, has led to the expansion of institutions aiming to offer higher-level skills and knowledge to meet both local and international labor market needs (Fusarelli et al., 2007).

The internationalization of higher education has become a critical component for Kenyan universities, particularly as they strive to attract international students and improve academic standing. This process involves aligning institutions with global standards, improving institutional capacity, and fostering collaborations with international academic and research partners (Knight, 2004). To effectively navigate the complexities of internationalization, including cross-border research collaborations, faculty exchanges, and attracting international students, Kenyan HEIs must implement quality management systems, such as ISO 9001:2015. ISO 9001:2015 provides a standardized framework for improving internal processes, enhancing service delivery, and ensuring institutions meet international expectations (Harvey, 2004). However, the implementation of ISO 9001:2015 in Kenyan HEIs faces several barriers. Financial constraints often prevent institutions from fully committing to the required infrastructure, training, and capacity building for quality

management systems (Mok, 2012). Moreover, cultural resistance within institutions, where traditional educational practices are deeply ingrained, can hinder the adoption of modern management practices (Sanchez & Zepeda, 2013). Lastly, a lack of awareness and understanding among teaching staff and administrators about the importance of these international standards further limits their adoption (Akyel et al., 2012). Despite these challenges, the benefits of internationalization such as increased global competitiveness, improved research output, and enhanced reputation make it a crucial goal for Kenyan HEIs. By aligning with ISO 9001:2015 standards, institutions can improve their ability to manage diverse student demographics, engage in international partnerships, and ensure the delivery of high-quality education.

Higher Learning Institutions ISO 9001:2015 Audit Procedures and Preparedness

The ISO 9001:2015 standard provides a comprehensive framework for the implementation of a Quality Management System (QMS) across various organizations, regardless of their industry or activity (Rebelo, Santos, & Silva, 2014). This standard has become increasingly important for higher education institutions (HEIs), particularly as they navigate the complexities of internationalization. The integration of ISO 9001:2015 audit procedures into HEIs helps to establish a transparent and participatory management system that emphasizes the efficient use of resources, accountability, and the continuous improvement of educational outcomes. Such alignment fosters adherence to global quality standards, ensuring institutions can meet the evolving needs of both local and international stakeholders (Ali et al., 2018).

Internationalization in higher education is a global trend that requires institutions to enhance their operational standards, engage in cross-border collaborations, and cater to the diverse needs of a multicultural student population. Consequently, sensitizing teaching staff to the ISO 9001:2015 audit procedures becomes crucial in maintaining the consistency and alignment of educational quality with global expectations (Akyel et al., 2012). By implementing these audit procedures, HEIs can not only improve their quality assurance systems but also address the dynamic challenges and opportunities presented by the internationalization of education (Alkhodhair et al., 2020).

The Role of Teaching Staff in ISO 9001:2015 Implementation

Teaching staff play a fundamental role in the successful implementation of ISO 9001:2015 audit procedures in HEIs. They are the primary drivers in designing curricula, delivering instructional content, and evaluating student performance. Therefore, their awareness and active participation in quality management systems are crucial for ensuring the smooth operation of the QMS and successful audit outcomes. Management must provide comprehensive training programs and resources to equip staff with the necessary skills to comply with ISO 9001:2015 standards. These programs should cover key elements of the standard, including internal auditing techniques, documentation processes, and best practices for maintaining ongoing compliance (Dabrowski, 2019).

ISO 9001:2015 audit procedures require institutions to document their processes, set clear quality objectives, and establish mechanisms for performance measurement. These requirements may

present a cultural shift for many educators, particularly those in the Global South, who may be more accustomed to traditional, less structured teaching methods. For HEIs in Kenya, where higher education is undergoing significant reforms and striving for international recognition, this shift can be particularly challenging. The need to adapt to international standards of quality management often requires institutions to re-evaluate their internal systems, such as curriculum development, teaching delivery, and student evaluation mechanisms (Murray, 2017).

Challenges in Implementing ISO 9001:2015 Standards in Kenyan HEIs

Implementing ISO 9001:2015 standards and preparing teaching staff for ISO 9001:2015 audits presents several challenges. First, there is a need for institutional commitment to quality management principles, which may necessitate significant changes in organizational culture. Many institutions in Kenya still operate under traditional models of governance and academic delivery, where quality assurance mechanisms are either weak or nonexistent (Ouma, 2018). As a result, staff may resist adopting new procedures that disrupt established routines. Additionally, the integration of ISO 9001:2015 audit procedures requires extensive documentation and a commitment to continual improvement. This could overwhelm teaching staff, particularly in institutions with limited resources for training, infrastructure, and administrative support (Soh, 2020).

A significant barrier for Kenyan HEIs is the financial constraints that limit the ability to invest in staff training and development. For many institutions, the cost of ISO certification, regular audits, and related infrastructure improvements can be prohibitive. Moreover, Kenya's HEIs often face a shortage of experienced staff in quality management, making the implementation of ISO 9001:2015 standards more complex (Njeru, 2021). The lack of resources may hinder institutions from fully embracing ISO 9001:2015 as a strategic tool for quality improvement, and in some cases, may result in a superficial application of the standard rather than a genuine commitment to quality assurance.

ISO 9001:2015 and Internationalization in Kenyan HEIs

As HEIs in Kenya work towards internationalization, ISO 9001:2015 can serve as an essential tool in enhancing the credibility and competitiveness of these institutions. Internationalization requires HEIs to not only provide high-quality education but also to engage in research, international partnerships, and student mobility programs. Adherence to global standards of quality management, such as those outlined in ISO 9001:2015, enhances the ability of institutions to meet international accreditation requirements and forge meaningful academic and research collaborations. This is particularly important for institutions looking to attract international students and faculty, as well as establish strong partnerships with universities abroad (Akyel et al., 2012).

To prepare HEIs for ISO 9001:2015 audits, the Kenyan government and university management need to provide strong leadership and support in ensuring that all staff members, particularly teaching staff, understand the significance of the audit process and their role in ensuring compliance. Management should foster a culture of continuous improvement by incentivizing staff participation in quality management initiatives and audits (Jauhiainen & Jauhiainen, 2018).

Furthermore, the development of partnerships with international accrediting bodies and professional organizations could provide Kenyan HEIs with the necessary guidance and support to navigate the complexities of ISO 9001:2015 implementation and auditing (Ouma, 2018).

Methodology

Research design is a critical component of any study as it outlines the methods for data collection and provides a clear framework for addressing the research question. Weathington et al. (2010) define research design as a strategy that details the methods used to collect data to decisively answer the research question. In a similar vein, Saunders et al. (2009) describe methodology as the underlying theory that guides how research should be conducted. For the current study, a quantitative research design approach was chosen to collect numerical data from a population consisting of teaching staff from higher education institutions (HEIs) in Western Kenya. This approach is particularly appropriate as it enables the researcher to quantify responses, identify patterns, and draw statistical inferences.

The study focuses on the role of teaching staff in the sensitization efforts related to Quality Management Systems (QMS), specifically ISO 9001:2015, within the context of higher education. Quantitative data was analyzed using statistical methods, which facilitate the measurement of attitudes, perceptions, and knowledge about QMS implementation. Additionally, secondary data, including policy documents and relevant institutional reports, was reviewed to supplement and support the primary data (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2014; Saunders et al., 2009; Weathington et al., 2010).

Results

Out of the 51 teaching staff expected to provide feedback on the subject, 48 respondents promptly completed the survey. The questionnaire was designed using a Likert scale, ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 indicated "strongly disagree" and 5 represented "strongly agree." This scale enabled a structured approach to assess the respondents' views on various aspects related to ISO 9001:2015 and its audit procedures. The findings, including mean scores and standard deviations, are presented in Table 1 below. These statistics provide valuable insights into the levels of awareness, preparedness, and support for ISO 9001:2015 audit procedures among the teaching staff in the institution.

No	Statements	Mean	Std
	Concept of ISO 9001:2015 QMS		
1	I am aware of the ISO 9001:2015 QMS requirements	3.53	.617
2	My institution provides adequate support and resources for capacity building related to ISO 9001:2015	3.60	.610
3	I actively contribute to ISO 9001:2015 compliance within my department	3.67	.559
	Concept of ISO 9001:2015 Audit procedures and preparedness		

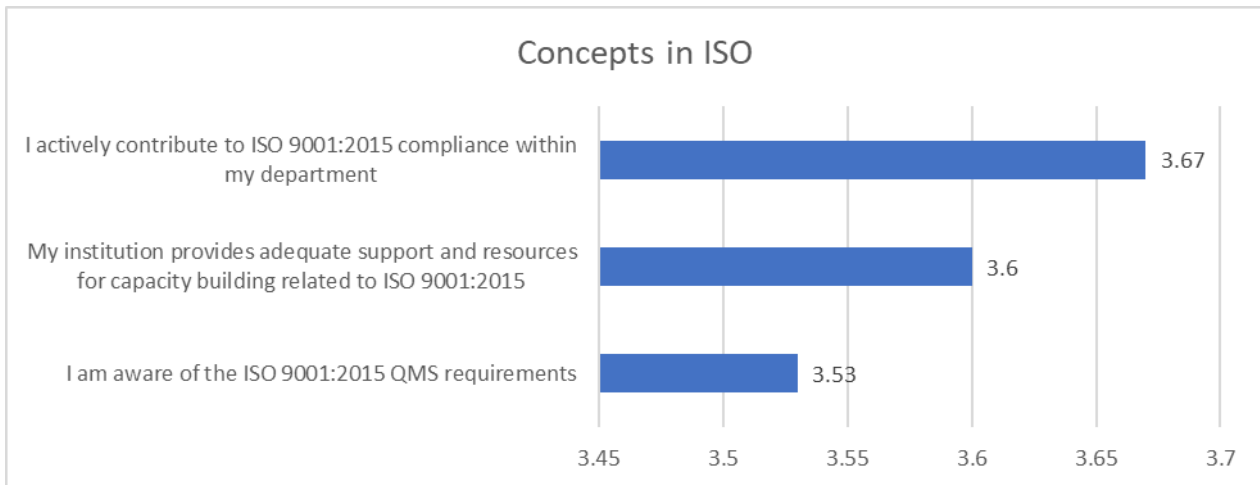
1	I am familiar with the ISO 9001:2015 Audit procedures and preparedness	3.69	.468
2	Sensitization efforts conducted by my institution has enhanced my readiness for ISO 9001:2015 audits	3.69	.589
3	I have received adequate training and support to integrate ISO 9001:2015 Audit procedures and preparedness into my teaching practice	3.60	.574
4	The institutions internal ISO 9001:2015 Audit process effectively identifies areas for improvement in the organizations quality management system	3.65	.526
5	The University has given me additional support or resources helpful in overcoming ISO 9001:2015 Audit Procedures and preparedness challenges and barriers	3.81	.394
Concept of internationalization			
1	As a teaching staff I do understand the concept of internationalization in Higher Education	3.21	.743
2	Financial constraints limit my ability to implement internationalization initiatives	3.23	.692
3	Faculty members are actively involved in international research collaboration and partnership	3.33	.519
4	My institution is well positioned in addressing the key challenges and opportunities of internationalization	3.37	.672
5	There is a clear ISO 9001:2015 Audit Procedures and preparedness in the context of Internationalization	3.27	.536

Concept of ISO 9001:2015 QMS

The findings on awareness of the concept of ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System (QMS) revealed positive results. The staff exhibited a high level of understanding regarding the requirements of ISO 9001:2015, with a mean rating of 3.53 (STD = 0.617). This suggests that the teaching staffs are well-informed about the core principles of the ISO 9001:2015 standard, contributing to their overall preparedness for implementation. Additionally, the provision of adequate support and resources for capacity building received a favorable rating of 3.60 (STD = 0.610), indicating that the institution has made a concerted effort to provide the necessary tools and resources to enhance faculty readiness for ISO 9001:2015 adoption.

Furthermore, the study found that staff actively contribute to the departmental efforts in implementing ISO 9001:2015, with a mean rating of 3.67 (STD = 0.559). This reflects a strong sense of engagement and commitment to aligning departmental activities with the standards set by the ISO framework. These findings underscore the institution's success in fostering awareness,

providing support for capacity building, and encouraging active involvement in quality management initiatives, as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

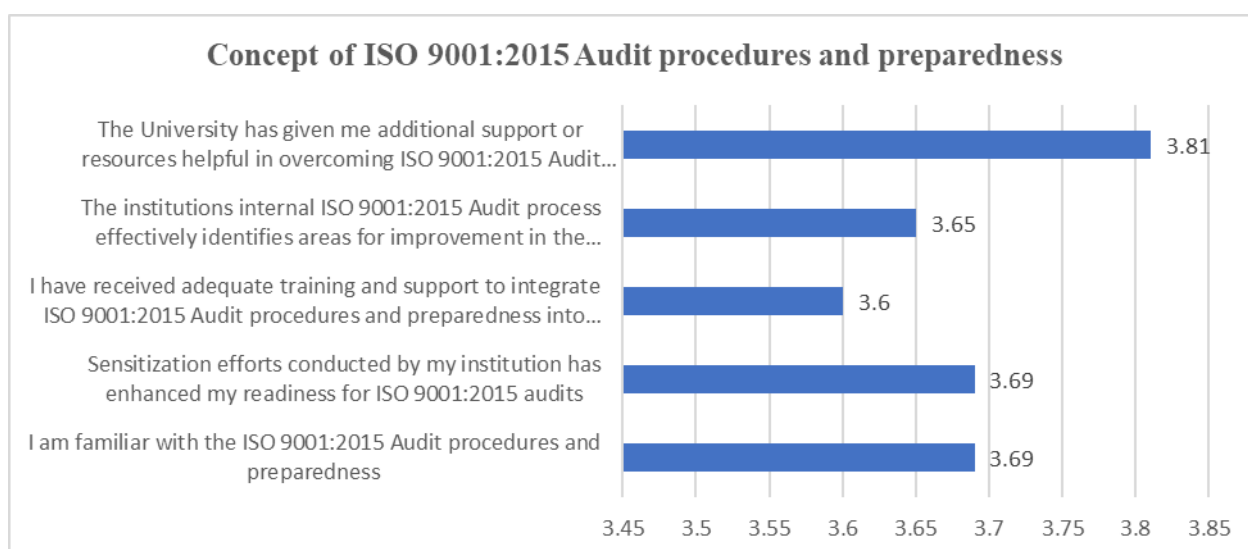


Concept of ISO 9001:2015 Audit procedures and preparedness

The study revealed that teaching staff's familiarity with the ISO 9001:2015 audit procedures and preparedness gained a high rating, with a mean score of 3.69 (STD = 0.468). This indicates a strong understanding and readiness for ISO audits within the institution. The efforts made by the institution to enhance staff awareness and readiness for ISO 9001:2015 audits also received a high mean rating, confirming the institution's commitment to implementing the standard effectively. Furthermore, the findings show that the institution's internal ISO 9001:2015 audit process has been effective in identifying areas for improvement in the organization's quality management system, as indicated by a mean score of 3.65 (STD = 0.526). This suggests that the internal audits are helping to assess the institution's compliance and drive continuous improvement in quality management.

Respondents also reported receiving adequate training and support to integrate ISO 9001:2015 audit procedures and preparedness into their teaching practices, with a mean score of 3.60 (STD = 0.574). This reflects a strong institutional focus on equipping faculty with the necessary tools and knowledge to comply with ISO standards.

Finally, the study found that the university has provided additional support and resources to help overcome challenges and barriers related to ISO 9001:2015 audit procedures, with a mean score of 3.81 (STD = 0.394). This demonstrates the institution's dedication to addressing any obstacles in implementing the ISO 9001:2015 standard effectively. These findings are further presented in Figure 2 below.

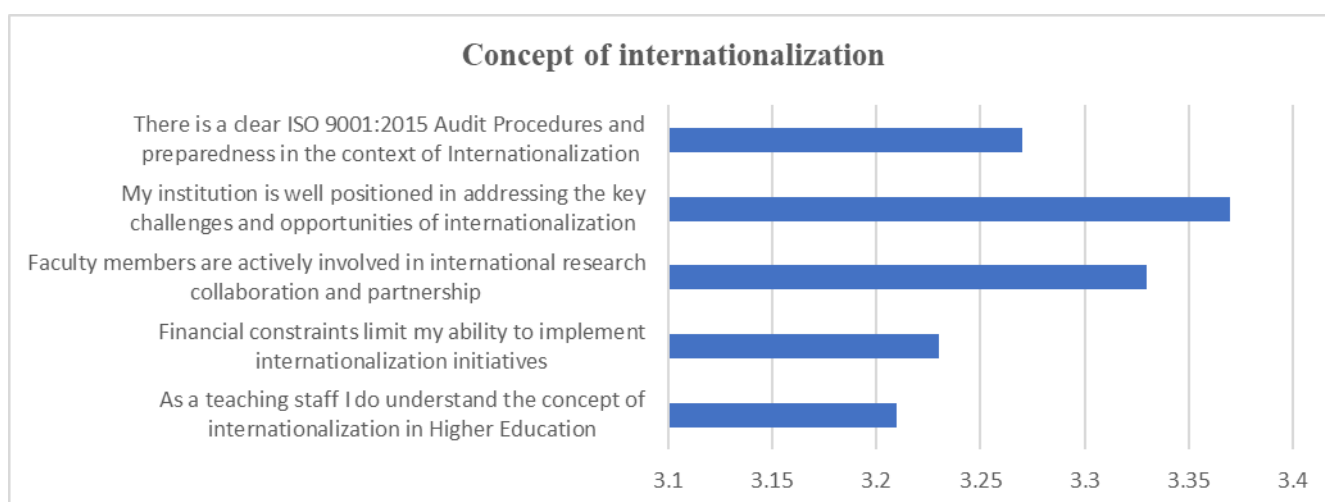


Concept of internationalization

From the findings, it was established that teaching staff have a moderate understanding of the concept of internationalization in Higher Education, with a mean score of 3.21 (STD = 0.743). This indicates that while faculty members are aware of internationalization, there is room for deeper understanding and more comprehensive training. However, financial constraints remain a significant challenge, as evidenced by the mean score of 3.23 (STD = 0.692). These limitations often hinder institutions from fully embracing internationalization opportunities, including cross-border collaborations and partnerships.

Faculty members are actively involved in international research collaboration and partnerships, with a higher mean score of 3.33 (STD = 0.519), reflecting a strong commitment to global academic exchange. This is a positive indicator of the institution's engagement with the international academic community. Additionally, the institution is somewhat positioned to address the key challenges and opportunities of internationalization, with a mean score of 3.37 (STD = 0.672), suggesting that while progress is being made, further strategic initiatives are needed to enhance the institution's international presence.

Finally, the study found that there is a clear understanding of ISO 9001:2015 audit procedures and preparedness in the context of internationalization, with a mean score of 3.27 (STD = 0.536). This indicates that although the basic framework is in place, more efforts should be made to improve awareness and implementation, especially in aligning ISO standards with the institution's internationalization goals. The findings are further illustrated in Figure 3 below.



Conclusion

In conclusion, the study found that the sensitization of higher education teaching staff on ISO 9001:2015 audit procedures and preparedness within the context of internationalization has been undertaken to a moderate extent. While there has been some level of awareness and understanding, the findings indicate that there is still significant work to be done. This is evident from the moderate ratings across several key areas; including the concept of ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management Systems (QMS), the concept of ISO 9001:2015 audit procedures and preparedness, and the understanding of internationalization. The data suggests that while the foundational elements of these concepts are acknowledged, there is a need for more comprehensive training, clearer communication, and greater involvement of teaching staff in QMS processes. As institutions continue to strive for internationalization, a more robust approach to sensitizing and preparing staff for ISO 9001:2015 audit procedures is essential. This will ensure better alignment with global standards, foster a culture of continuous improvement, and enhance the institution's competitiveness in the global education sector. Further efforts should focus on increasing awareness and integrating these principles into the daily operations of the institutions.

Recommendations

The study recommends that institutions of higher learning should undertake further sensitization on the concepts of ISO 9001:2015, particularly focusing on its quality management principles, audit procedures, and preparedness. By enhancing understanding and engagement with these concepts, institutions can improve their service delivery, align with international standards, and foster a culture of continuous improvement. This will not only strengthen internal processes but also increase institutional competitiveness in the global education landscape, supporting the goals of internationalization and quality assurance.

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