

Capacity building of internal and external auditors in the complex adaptive system of Higher Education in Việt Nam.

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Abstract

Purpose- The question answered in this paper is: *What is needed in the complex adaptive system of higher education to make professionals more receptive to internal and external review in Việt Nam and how can we achieve that?* The purpose is to improve the effects of an accreditation system in general and the audits or reviews as we call them in particular.

Design/methodology/approach- The findings are gathered through a dynamic orientation in scientific literature using the berry-picking method (Bates, 1989). Bates' model integrated a biological and a socio-cultural perspective to argue that, in practice, information seeking does not follow a systematic search process but more commonly takes the form of “berry picking” or finding information bit by bit using a range of sources. The result -regarding the development of quality management in Việt Nam in general and regarding accreditation specifically- has been analyzed using the four paradigms of quality management (Van Kemenade & Hardjono, 2019).

Findings – The results stress that the accreditation process in higher education is more effective, if the interviewees are willing to be open and show the strengths and weaknesses of the organization. If they are not afraid or nervous engaging in the survey. If they do not perform dramaturgical compliance or if there is no sign of a Hawthorne effect. That requires a specific auditor attitude. Seven auditor attitudes are presented. These are expected to be of critical value for the development of the Vietnamese audit process as well. Suggestions are presented how such a development could be achieved using the emergence paradigm.

Research limitations/implications – The Vietnamese situation has been studied from an outsider perspective by the analysis of a limited amount of articles. That might have created bias.

Practical implications- Reviewers in accreditation processes need to be trained, initially and continuously. In the training their attitude should occupy an important place.

Originality/value- There is a limited amount of literature on attitudes of a reviewer, auditor, assessor or inspector.

Keywords- reviewer training, reviewer attitude, quality paradigms, emergent paradigm

Paper type- literature review

Introduction

Higher Education (HEd) all over the world has many challenges like the growing demand and the increasing competition worldwide. Blended and online education is booming, especially in these Corona-times. These developments put quality under pressure.

Maintaining quality in Higher Education Institutes is a challenge. The solution that is chosen in most countries is accreditation. However, the development and implementation of a Quality Assurance system again is not easy. One of the roadblocks is resistance from academics.

Stemming from forty years of experiences all over the world this article suggests three topics to pay attention to in the further development of a QA system specifically in Việt Nam: continuing capacity building of external auditors¹, the establishment of an internal audit system within each Higher Education Institute (HEI) and emergent implementation of the QA system. Before going into these suggestions three paradigms of quality management are presented that can be recognized in Higher Education: the reflective, the reference and the empirical paradigm. These paradigms clarify the state quality assurance is in. Later a fourth, future oriented paradigm, the Emergence Paradigm, is added.

Quality paradigms

When you look at quality management Van Kemenade and Hardjono (2019) discern different quality paradigms, different lenses to look at quality: the Reflective Paradigm, the Empirical Paradigm and the Referential Paradigm. We shortly describe the quality paradigms each with their own definition of quality and their characteristics. Presence of the paradigms in Vietnamese Higher education is suggested.

The Reflective paradigm: Quality is subjective

Vinkenburg (2006) introduced what we call the Reflective Paradigm. In the *Reflective Paradigm* everyone has his own reality that can be different tomorrow from today. This paradigm looks for the difference, makes it explicit and reflects on it. Knowledge is gathered (inductive) by telling and listening to stories, by conversations, group meetings, inner conversations. This paradigm reflects and philosophizes: What did I do well and what did I do wrong and why? In its research we recognize the philosophy of subjectivism.

In the Corona crisis, the reflective paradigm would be the example of the Dutch government: intelligent lockdown. Only a few rules (1,5, meters distance, wash your hands; stay at home if you are sick) and no legal enforcement. It is up to the people, how to handle the specific situation. The Reflective Paradigm is subjective. This is where the lecturer is ‘king in the classroom’, where only he or she knows what is best in the discipline, the curriculum.

Lecturing for hundreds of students, students that are considered the last to be able to evaluate the quality of one’s education. At his best quality is discussed between colleagues. The lecturer might reflect on his performance and even he might ask at the end of a course what went well and what did not. Hopefully he also takes action, although we often see that the power points that were unreadable are used next year again, because... the lecturer did not have the time to adjust. In the Higher Education of the past we recognize this paradigm worldwide also in Việt Nam.

¹ In this article the term auditor is used. We do not refer to financial auditing, but to the peer review and site visit process in higher education (internal and external). Other terms used are reviewers, surveyors or assessors.

The Reference paradigm: Quality is fitness for use

Of course, in the long run the situation described above is not sustainable. It is logical, that surely when the HEd sector grows and external (international) players get into the field, more influence on the quality is needed. Influence from governmental agencies increases, some innovative Higher Education Institutes take their own responsibility for quality. To achieve this quality models were designed, frameworks of reference in which criteria or areas to address are mentioned. We call it the Paradigm of Reference. In its research we recognize the constructivism philosophy. This paradigm prescribes what standards need to be met or what score one should achieve to get an award or certificate. The quality knowledge is gathered (deductive) searching for observable, real cases that prove that the organisation meets the standards. Theoretically quality can be defined as fitness for purpose or fitness for use (Juran, 1951).

The Paradigm of Reference values, certifies and accredits using models like the ISO9000-series, Joint Commission International Accreditation in Healthcare, the Balanced Score Card, the EFQM Excellence model or the National Malcolm Baldrige Quality Award. National Awards were installed all over the world to motivate companies to keep improving. This is where the TQM paradigm fits in. Quality management in this paradigm is focused on quality improvement.

Unfortunately, there is no model to cope with the Corona-crises. Countries respond differently with different success. We do recognise the Referential Paradigm e.g. in the ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework for Higher Education and in systems of Quality Control like national accreditation. HEI's write self-evaluation reports, reviewers come and perform in site visits. We have seen this development in HEd all over the world, also in Việt Nam.

The Empirical Paradigm: Quality is what can be measured

In the Netherlands the governmental accreditation system that started as an open system with autonomy for HEI's to focus on specific quality issues along the way got further and further detailed and standardised in its requirements. We see the occurrence of the Empirical Paradigm. The Empirical Paradigm derives its name from its methodology. In its research we recognize positivism as its philosophy. Knowledge about the reality is gained by experiencing here and now, by sensory perception. It is evidence based. Knowledge is gathered (inductive) by measurements and its objective results are expressed in quantities like sizes and numbers. The Empirical Paradigm lives on rules. The Empirical Paradigm works top down. It registers and controls: to measure is to know.

In Corona crisis an ‘empirical solution’ would be: immediate top down enforced total lockdown. You can recognize the empirical paradigm in the use of wordings like assessment, measurement, quality assurance. Quality in Higher Education becomes ticking boxes. External reviewers become inspectors. Standards are undebatable. We have seen this development from the reference to the empirical paradigm in many Western countries. If this has not happened in Việt Nam yet, there always is a risk it will.

The situation in Việt Nam

As a trainer and consultant, I have worked in Việt Nam from 2004 till 2009. I started capacity building in quality and especially in quality management systems at Can Tho University. Together with Do van Xe, vice rector at the time, the model that was developed by seven Higher Education Institutes in the Netherlands, based on the Excellence Model from the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) was translated into Vietnamese (Van Kemenade & Van Xe, 2004). Later I was one of the consultants active in the Profqim project that helped five Vietnamese Universities to build their Quality Assurance Centre. I was assigned to Thai Nguyen University and besides trained people responsible for quality in all five universities within the project as well as from MOET. I helped to develop the first accreditation standards in Vietnam and to train the first Vietnamese reviewers and higher education leadership. In 2009 however MOET (2009) stated: “While Việt Nam higher education system is developing rapidly and on a large scale, the education Ministry’s management is failing to keep pace and higher education management is lagging behind.” In general one can state that the accreditation system in Việt Nam fits within the empirical paradigm of control and measurement. Hayden and Lam (2007) state that a culture of centralized planning and bureaucratic decision-making is deeply rooted across most areas of public service provision in Việt Nam. They do report a desire by the central government to decentralize decision-making accountability to Higher Education Institutions for the purposes of achieving greater efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources; and on the other hand, there is also a desire by the central government to retain control of the socialist orientation of higher education and of the deployment of the sector within a framework of centralized national economic management. Result is, as Ho and Berg state in 2010, that “in Việt Nam, the activities of accreditation and quality assurance are not so much for the purpose of institutional assistance in their efforts toward improvement but rather represent a process of identifying and ranking good institutions versus poor institutions”.

Since then a lot appears to have been achieved. Nguyen and Ta (2017) argue that the influence of accreditation contributes significantly to enhancing the university’s quality of teaching, learning, research and management. They state that the implementation of the national compulsory accreditation scheme has encouraged the investigated institution and programmes to implement management processes designed to improve quality. Nguyen (2017) adds that the accreditation process has created significant improvements in the University’s management of study programmes, teaching activities, lecturers and staff, students and student support, and facilities. The involvements of overseas accreditation agencies have had positive impacts on the local quality assurance system in Việt Nam. Nguyen et al. (2017) mention five lessons learned:

- Lesson 1: External quality assurance agencies should be independent from the Ministry of Education and Training.
- Lesson 2: International collaboration is necessary for every stage in the development of the quality assurance system.
- Lesson 3: Human resources development in quality assurance should always be a great concern.
- Lesson 4: Professional development and capacity building for quality assurance staff play an important part in the sustainable development of higher education quality assurance.
- Lesson 5: Building quality culture and developing internal quality assurance system are crucial for institution’s quality enhancement.

Nguyen concluded in 2018 that the quality assurance mechanism has not been finalised. He mentions the following issues: inadequate human resources for higher education accreditation

system, unsatisfactory self-evaluation reports and lack of qualification and experience of many auditors. The focus should be on human resources development and capacity building in higher education accreditation, particularly at macro (national) level (Nguyen, Evers and Marshal. 2017). Later Pham (2018) states that lack of any attempts to improve quality of higher competence of the review team were barriers to education in VietNam.

My conclusion is that all these years Vietnamese Higher Education was very much controlled, very much led by the Empirical Paradigm, mentioned above and that auditors were trained in that way of thinking.

In Van Kemenade et al (2009) we tried to understand what was happening and presented five lessons learned from the Profqim project in the form of recommendations:

1. Encourage strong leadership
2. Create a climate of trust based on transparency
3. Take advantage of the Profqim's unique national network.
4. Link with student learning outcomes and graduate profiles
5. Ensure institutional autonomy

To elaborate on the last lesson learned of the Profqim project that autonomy should be ensured, I quote: "Quality assurance is focused on a process of continuous improvement within an institution through internal and external assessments. Therefore another necessary aspect to the success of the Quality Assurance Centers sustainability is to guarantee enough autonomy and self-regulatory capacity within the HE institutions. (underlining by me, EvK) If, -after getting externally assessed and evaluated- the HE institution is unable to follow up the results and recommendations of the external evaluation there is no point to even start the Quality Assurance process" (Van Kemenade et al, 2009, page 7). Self-regulation cannot be forced upon. It is a learning process, an emerging process in a complex environment. It is amazing what emerges (unplanned) from the uncertainty and un-order. We can conclude intermediary that Higher Education in Việt Nam is a Complex Adaptive System (CAS).

The Emergence Paradigm

In the first paragraphs of this article three quality paradigms were presented. However, there is a fourth paradigm, the emergence paradigm, that fits quality management specifically in complex adaptive environments, when the situation is unplanned and uncertain (see figure 1).

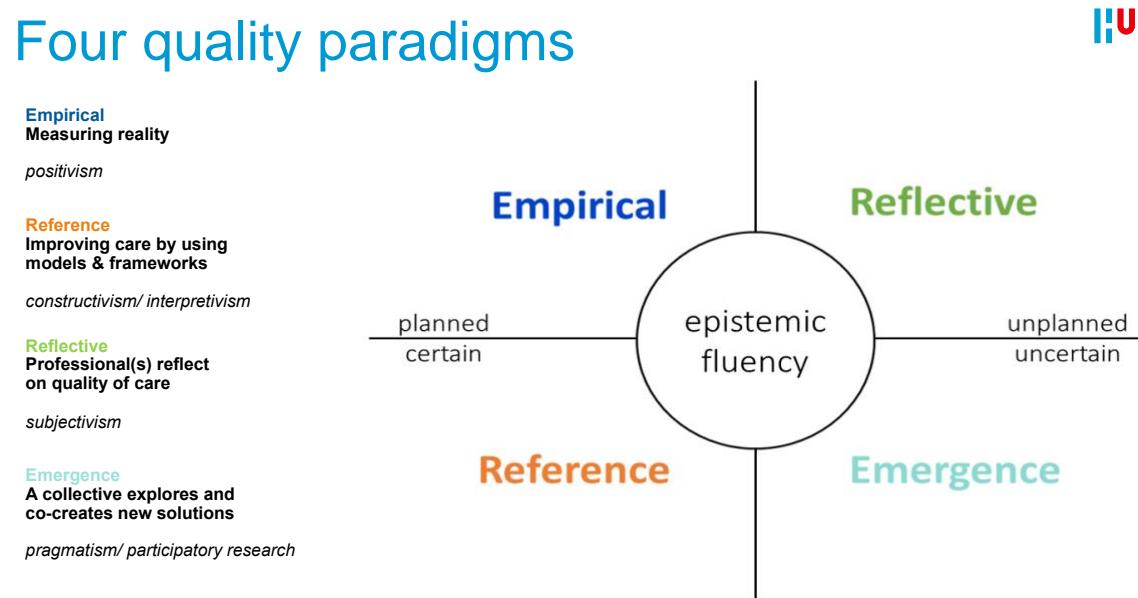


Figure 1: The four quality paradigms

The *Emergence Paradigm* has the potential to prevent quality management programs to fail. This quality paradigm fits in the current era of continuous change and complexity (as Miller and Cangemi, 1993 request). It has pragmatism as its research philosophy, using participatory and action research methods. Emergence is a concept from systems theory. It relates to the development of complex organised systems, that have characteristics that are not visible by reduction of the composing parts. “While some experts are familiar with developments in one field, such as artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, big data or genetics, no one is an expert on everything. No one is there for capable of connecting all the dots and seeing the full picture“ (Harari, 2015). Emergence is the process where new characteristics come to existence *through interaction between simple, small entities that do not have these characteristics* like the self-organisation of ants. Many ants together show a collective intelligence that individual ants do not possess. Another example is [a swarm of starlings](#). Each starling in a swarm follows simple rules: stay at a distance from one another, stay in contact with seven other colleagues and interact with these. Emergence provides greater buy-in by employees and it continuously relates to the context, so it will offer context specific designs (as Asif et al, 2009 request).

Lifvergen et al. 2011 make a fundamental distinction between planned change and emergent unplanned change (see table 1).

Planned change	Emergent change
Almost always accompanied by unexpected consequences	The outcome is not the preconceived solution, but the development of the most appropriate solution for the stakeholders concerned
Appropriate for structural changes	Appropriate for cultural changes
Appropriate for economic-based change	Appropriate for organizational capacity building
Appropriate for new organizational structures	Appropriate for change process targeting work processes

Table 1: Planned change versus emergent change according to Lifvergen et al. (2011).

In the Corona-crisis the emergence paradigm would bring together experts from all fields of society (doctors, nurses, economics, artists etc.) to have a continuous dialogue on what is needed when and where. All sorts of novelty would occur. An ice truck becomes a morgue. An ATM leads to a free rice machine. In Higher Education before Corona e-learning was hard to implement, now it is booming and will be used more than ever, also after the Corona-crisis. Everyone has meetings in Microsoft Teams or Zooms. Working from home is and will be more applied, leading to less pressure on the traffic and our environment. Conferences are online. It is the Higher Education collective that co-creates new solutions.

Focus on audit

In this article I'd like to focus on the exemplary topic of reviews in the accreditation system. Van Kemenade (2009) describes the willingness of professionals in Higher Education in the Netherlands and Dutch speaking Belgium to contribute to a compulsory accreditation system. In general, academics state to feel outsiders in the accreditation process and its development. This is confirmed e.g by Rosa et al (2019): “This analysis reveals a moderately positive attitude of academics towards accreditation, reflected in an only moderate knowledge of the process as well as in a mild agreement with its characteristics and implementation features.

This suggests that there is room for improvement to bring this quality assurance mechanism closer to academics”.

In Van Kemenade (2019) the actors and several instruments are mentioned that can be used to create the required change process towards better acceptance of the accreditation system. Instead of control, force, the empirical paradigm, we'd like to promote the emergence paradigm as philosophy for change. The next paragraph relates to the actors to bring into the field, the following is about instruments used.

Emergence and the actors.

Emergence occurs if the actors are interdependent (Palmberg, 2009a,b; Ellis and Herbert, 2011; Bratman, 2014). In the Emergence Paradigm one would organize interaction between all stakeholders within HEI's, MOET, GDETA, the World of Work, students, international organisations and experts.

Emergence occurs by diversity of the elements or actors. Emergence is also enhanced by diversity because of the greater interaction and richer patterns (Holden, 2005). Juriado and Gustafsson (2007) state that the emergent communities of practice in their case study emerged by “diversity, the number and the fluidity of the individuals and organisations involved.” This requires a deep study of the participation of experts in the audit teams.

Emergence and instruments

Emergence is fostered by improvisation. Haenisch (2011): [T]he term [emergence] points to the characteristics of a collective creativity that cannot be understood in terms of individual accomplishment or ability, but instead as a social practice in which the central authority of artistic authorship is transformed into an aesthetic collaboration, one that is not reducible to a simple “sum” or chain of individual creative contributions, but that brings about an additional value, thus contributing to an improvisation’s success (p. 187). Within audit teams improvisation need to be supported.

McBeth (2002) talks about the need for creative discourse as a means for emergence. Snowden and Boone (2007) call it ‘dissent and formal debate’. Leaders must create the conditions: ‘they have to probe, sense and respond.’ “Because outcomes are unpredictable in a complex context, leaders need to focus on creating an environment from which good things can emerge, rather than trying to bring about predetermined results and possibly missing opportunities that arise unexpectedly” (Snowden and Boone, 2007). Ellis and Herbert (2011) advise management to ensure that lines of communication flow across the network. Fundin et al. (2019) stress the importance of creativity. Van Kemenade and Hardjono (2019) prefer to talk about the creative dialogue. Kelly (1994, p. 469) mentions ‘growth by chunking’: “The only way to make a complex system that works is to begin with a simple system that works. Attempts to instantly install highly complex organization – such as intelligence or a market economy – without growing it, inevitably leads to failure.” Auditors within an audit team need to create such a creative dialogue with academics and management of the HED institutes.

Ellis and Herbert (2011) suggest applying simple design principles, because they turn into rules. Palmberg (2009) quotes Zimmerman *et al.* (1998, p. 26) who state: “It does show that simple rules – minimum specifications – can lead to complex behaviors. These complex behaviors emerge from the interactions among agents, rather than being imposed upon the CAS by an outside agent or explicit, detailed description”. Many accreditation systems have a lot of accreditation standards and audits have to follow up the conformance to each of them. That might not be the best way to go ahead.

Auditor

Van Kemenade (2009) puts emphasis in this respect on the quality of the auditor in an accreditation process, just like Nguyen (2018) wants. The conclusions of Van Kemenade's research are that professionals are willing to contribute to an accreditation process, because they agree accreditation has added value. They have the conviction specifically that the review could contribute to quality improvement. However, there are impediments to this willingness within the accreditation process, the professional himself and in the organization (see figure 2). If the process is not motivating or if the professional is not loyal to the organization or if the organization does not give enough management support, the accreditation process might not be successful. In the respect of our research question regarding acceptance of the accreditation system by professionals, the impediments in the accreditation process and especially regarding the auditor are interesting. One of the conclusions of the Delphi-study was, that the auditor should not have control as dominant value. The behavior of auditors is according to the participants in the Delphi study too often unpredictable. Members of the team have different interpretations of the standards. Some auditors have an offensive attitude that makes that interviewees do not dare to be vulnerable and open their mind for feedback. Auditors can easily be the cause of resistance.

Professionals prefer to have a dialogue with peers who received additional training in the accreditation process. In fact, this implicates that a auditor should not just deliver an output like a concise and clear report, but that he also has a responsibility towards the outcome of his intervention: what the receiving professionals actually do with the information and to what extent that really leads to improvement. The auditor needs to realize that he has an impact on the professionals. The success of an accreditation system depends on the acceptance of the review and of the auditor. Bad performance of auditors can have great consequences for the acceptance of the accreditation system and that performance largely depends on way the auditor behaves. Especially when the dominant value of a auditor is to control (especially, if he works from the empirical paradigm), resistance occurs. A bad auditor may result in what Barrows (1999) calls —dramaturgical compliance: the interviewee performs in a play and tells the auditor, not the truth, but what he wants to hear.

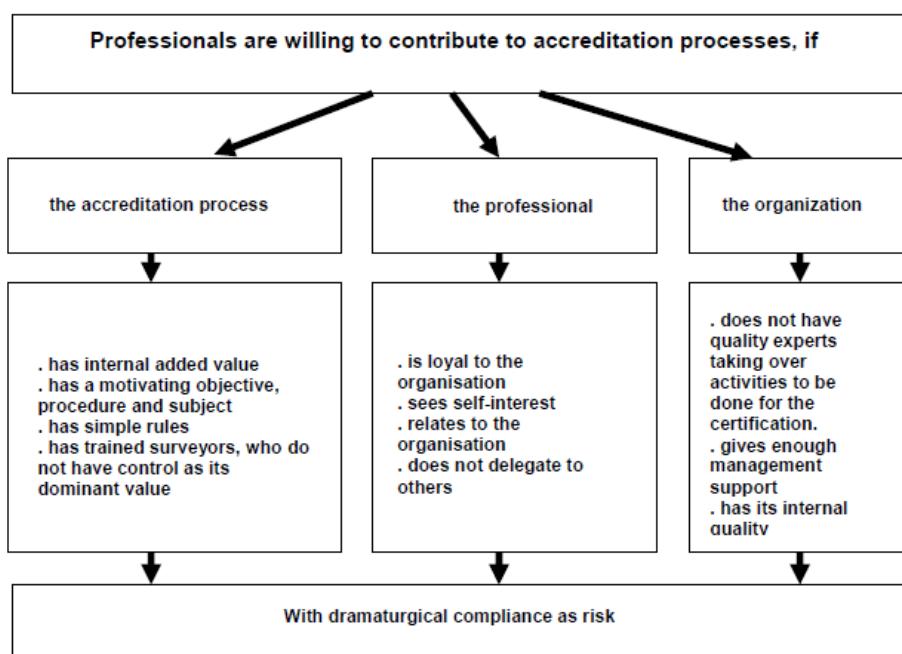


Figure2. Willingness of Professionals to Contribute to a Mandatory Accreditation System

Auditor Competences

On competences for reviewers (or assessors, inspectors or auditors) again there is not much literature. Lancaster et al (2010) studied the extent to which auditor training and active involvement in accrediting other facilities translates as a value-added resource for the auditor in her or his usual professional role or for the facility in which an auditor is regularly employed. They did not pay attention to the content of the training. Shaw (2000) showed that a auditor should be selected on the basis of identification and definition of the components of employment, and taking advantage of a set of competencies and qualifications, but does not specify what these should be. Teymourzadeh et al (2016) held interviews with auditors in Iran to study the auditor selection, training, support, and stimulation, which they called the auditor management accreditation program. Important conclusions by the respondents were that the first motivator for auditors was financial and that in the case under study the auditors were neither well selected, nor properly trained. Some of the main personality-behavioral characteristics considered by the respondents of the research done by Teymourzadeh et al. (2016) included for the training program and for use as a reference document when preparing for or taking part in a survey. Little is said about what exactly the required competences are. Cuang and Inder (2009) mention that Tan et al. (2002) suggested that when assigning auditors to highly complex tasks, it should be ensured that the reviewers have the requisite knowledge as well as the appropriate motivational level. Reviewers assigned to significant review responsibilities should possess the knowledge, skill, and ability to effectively complete those tasks. Teymourzadeh et al (2016) included communication skills, flexibility, confidence, accountability, honesty, open-mindedness, and impartiality. Lee et al (2016) focus on self-efficacy. They conclude that high self-efficacy typically leads to higher audit quality, and self-efficacy has immense effects on an individual's motivation, effort, persistence and performance. Professional development and audit quality have found to have a positive correlation. High profession growth typically leads to higher audit quality. Therefore, self-efficacy and professional development affects audit quality.

Attitude

In training often, a distinction is made between knowledge, skills and attitude. To improve the quality of interaction Maas (2000) stresses the importance of attitude. Attitude is most important to overcome fear and nervousness on the one hand and to prevent dramaturgical compliance and a Hawthorne effect. An attitude is, according to Eagly and Chaiken (1993) a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor. An attitude has a affective component (how we feel about something or somebody), a cognitive component (how you think, what you believe about the something or somebody) and a behavioral component (how we behave accordingly). However, there is evidence that the cognitive and affective components of an attitude do not always match with behavior.

Van Kemenade and Al-Salmani (2019) defined seven attitudes that make the difference for auditors:

1. Intention
2. Justice
3. Sincerity
4. Conscious of self-improvement
5. Trust
6. Trustfulness
7. Patience

Capacity building of reviewers , especially regarding their attitude can largely influence the effectiveness of an accreditation system, also in Việt Nam. Besides, experiences all over the world confirm that internal auditing and training of internal auditors can have an immense effect on the establishment of a quality culture within HEI's (Lesson 5 mentioned above in Nguyen et al,2017). Especially when the external auditing is expanded with an internal audit equivalent.

Conclusions

The accreditation process, in Higher Education is more effective, if academics are willing to be open and show the strengths and weaknesses of the organization. If they are not afraid or nervous engaging in the review. If they do not perform dramaturgical compliance or if there is no sign of a Hawthorne effect. That requires specific reviewer' attitudes and a specific audit system.

Our research from a literature review brought us to 7 attitudes. The attitude of the reviewers is a critical success factor for accreditation. However, the success of the review and the feedback given, depend on more than just the attitude of the auditor. When we look at the auditor, personal characteristics, education, audit experience and audit training can influence the quality of an auditor. And the success depends on the strength of the survey team as a whole.

Furthermore, the quality of the standards and the scoring system, the organization of the site visit have an impact on the outcome. The success also depends on the way the interviewees are able (and trained) to accept feedback. And the outcome of a survey stays in the first place the responsibility of the organization itself. The audit system should be expanded towards internal audits in every university. The power of an internal audit is a catalyst for the establishment of a quality culture. But the reviewer has an important role in the improvement process of an organization that is to be accredited.

Discussion: The emergent way forward

Improving the quality of the on-site review system is crucial for the effectiveness of accreditation. One could try to implement the required change towards an improved system of internal and external review from each of these mindsets. If you would apply the Reflective Paradigm one could try to organize sessions with professionals all over the country, organize conferences and workshops like this to discuss the needs together and learn from each other's experiences with auditing. There is nothing wrong with that, but that will not bring the breakthrough that is needed. One could further develop the existing audit model using national and international experts (lesson 2, Nguyen et al, 2017). That perspective from the Reference Paradigm perspective might help. If you would apply the Empirical Paradigm one would define the knowledge, skills and attitudes that an auditor (more likely an inspector in that mindset) needs, one would develop a training program and cascade that from the top e.g. the Ministry, down to every organization. However, the question is if that would really create the breakthrough needed. Dao (2015) did a case study and concludes: "Despite an appreciation of the need for reform, and the desire of many individual actors to pursue reform, the imprint of State control and top-down management, together with a very depleted institutional financial capacity and a lack of proper appreciation of the nature of institutional quality assurance, meant that not much at the University could be changed. This conclusion seems likely to apply also to the whole of the public higher education system in Việt Nam" (page 259). Madden (2013) did a policy document analysis and key informant interviews that show that the implementation of QA policies in Việt Nam is an example of how one developing country walks the line between state-centric values and neoliberal principles. Nguyen and Robinson (2015) identified the cultural conditions that

have most shaped, and continue to shape, the management of continuous improvement in Việt Nam. They do confirm that a very strong top-down management approach seems to be necessary. But, as they say, mainly to jump-start continuous improvement in Vietnamese organizations. Madden (2013) concludes: “*The ASEAN way may provide a pragmatic approach to QA that blends a limited fitness for purpose definition of quality with standards-based quality management*”. And: *Institutional differentiation and institutional autonomy could be approached in the ways in which public universities can carve out their unique roles in driving the economic development of the country*” (Madden, 2013, page 202).

That is what we call ‘epistemic fluency’(see figure 1), the capacity to understand, combine and switch from the different paradigms, when needed. The emergent paradigm could be the next step for this moment, giving way for the autonomy of the HEI’s in Việt Nam (since it focuses on self-organization) and more influence of the academics as well (Van Kemenade, 2009; Rosa et al., 2019). It would mean a breakthrough in the way Higher Education is led. It would be the collective that co-creates new solutions.

The Vietnamese situation has been studied from an outsider perspective by the analysis of a limited amount of articles. That might have created bias.

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