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INTRODUCTION

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

NEED/IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

OBJECTIVES

HYPOTHESES

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

RECOMMENDATIONS/SUGGESTIONS

CONCLUSIONS

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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APPENDIX/ANNEXURE

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STUDY ON TRADITIONAL VERSUS CONTINUOUS ACCREDIATION PROCESS & EXPLORING LEADERSHIP DISPARITY

HARINI METHUKU
LECTURER
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES
OMAN COLLEGE OF MANAGEMENT & TECHNOLOGY
BARKA, SULTANATE OF OMAN

HATIM R HUSSIEN
LECTURER
BUSINESS DEPARTMENT
HIGHER COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY
AL KUWAIR, MUSCAT, SULTANATE OF OMAN

ABSTRACT

Accreditation plays a key role in assuring quality and promoting accountability in higher education. Limited accountability exists under the traditional accreditation method, the Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality (PEAQ). In 1999, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) created the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) as an alternative method of accreditation specifically designed to address weaknesses of educational quality in traditional education. However, there has been a slow adoption of AQIP, which reflects best practices in higher education. The purpose of this non-experimental retrospective comparative design study was to examine the extent to which leadership strength and school characteristics differ based on accreditation type. Leadership strength was measured by the Leadership Practice Inventory LPI, which was developed to measure leadership strength using five subscales: (a) Modeling the Way; (b) Inspiring a Shared Vision; (c) Challenging the Process; (d) Enabling Others to Act; and (e) Encouraging the Heart. School characteristics were assessed in terms of the size of the institution, leader's tenure, institution location, institution type, and the age of the institution.

KEYWORDS

Accreditation, Academic Quality Improvement Program AQIP, Leadership, Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality PEAQ.

INTRODUCTION

Accreditation plays a key role in assuring quality and promoting accountability in higher education, while also providing a gateway to federal funding. Global competitiveness and accountability are the major challenges driving institutions of higher education (IHE) to obtain accreditation. Accreditation is used as a substitute for quality in higher education. Accreditation is a high priority for administrators, who are seeking ways to achieve quality education and report progress to meet accreditation agency requirements. Traditionally, the Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality (PEAQ), has been the accreditation method of choice. The industry of higher education faces numerous current issues, including improved accountability, increasing employer expectations, a shift between the numbers of traditional and nontraditional students, increased competition for external funding, pressures to find new and innovative delivery systems, poor retention rates, static enrollments, and increasing expectations to assess student outcomes.

Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) have to satisfy a diverse group of stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, employers, community business, government agencies, and accrediting bodies. Total Quality Management (TQM) model that was created by Deming and has been used to improve business quality and processes since 1950s. The TQM can be utilized for higher education setting with some modifications (Mullen, 1996).

The relationship between the leadership characteristics in institutions of higher education and organizational effectiveness has been examined in several studies found that the transformational leadership style of leaders positively predicated leaders' strength to articulate clearly the organization's vision and accomplishing organization's strategic plan. Transactional leaders were found to focus more on the efficiency within the organization than transformational leaders. Transformational leaders, in contrast, identified themselves as confident, less authoritarian, and more inclined to empower their employees than transactional leaders.

Two accreditation methods are used by institutions of higher education. The traditional method is the **Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality (PEAQ).** The most recent method of accreditation is the **Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP).** The PEAQ method focuses on institutional documentation and review of past performance; the AQIP method supports a continuous improvement model and is consistent with the Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education's recommendations (The Higher Learning Commission [HLC], 2007).

The PEAQ method is based on the concept of institutional self-study: the evaluation of an institution through self-study, followed up by visits from a team of trained external peer reviewers. The results of the review are then submitted to the Higher Learning Commission for authorization. The new AQIP accreditation method offers institutions a greater degree of self-direction than PEAQ (Haneline, 2006). The PEAQ method was the only option for accreditation prior to 1999. In July 1999, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) introduced an alternative method of accreditation, shifting its focus from a model of compliance to one of continuous improvement (Stewart, 2006).

The Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) represents a significant change in how higher education institutions achieve accreditation and ensure quality. By sharing their process improvements and the results of the improvements, an AQIP-accredited institution provides evidence that the Higher Learning Commission requires to make judgments about quality (Spangehl, 2004). The AQIP approach requires the institution to demonstrate to the AQIP Review Panel that its members are committed to continuous quality improvement. As part of this process, dynamic improvement projects are designed to promote learning and cultural change and respond to opportunities for improvement.

PROBLEM STATEMNET

The problem addressed in this study is the slow adoption of AQIP accreditation, which reflects best practices in higher education. Limited accountability exists under the traditional accreditation method, PEAQ (Beard, 2006). As of 2010, only few institutions of higher education had adapted the AQIP accreditation method (AQIP, 2008). The PEAQ accreditation method does not address or mention quality education in the mission of this method and adoption of AQIP accreditation has been slow (Beard, 2006). Institutions with the traditional PEAQ accreditation are only required demonstrate compliance with the standards of accreditation once in every ten year cycle and often do not maintain their quality standards after accreditation visits (Beard, 2006). Constituencies and stakeholders of higher education institutions started questioning the value and standards of the traditional accrediting process and started demanding accountability and education quality (Beard, 2006).

The literature review and associated empirical research have indicated a knowledge gap in the area of AQIP adoption while support AQIP as a better method than PEAQ for quality education and continuous improvement process.

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PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which PEAQ and AQIP accredited organizations differ based on Leadership Practices, leaders' tenure, institution size, institutional location (rural, suburban, or urban), institution type (highest degree offered), and age of the institution among institutions of higher education. Leadership strength was measured by the LPI, using five subscales: (a) Modeling the Way; (b) Inspiring a Shared Vision; (c) Challenging the Process; (d) Enabling Others to Act; and (e) Encouraging the Heart. Study examined the extent to which traditionally (PEAQ) accredited schools differ from continuous improvement accredited schools.

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

For the purposes of this study, many theories were examined to ascertain their levels of applicability. Leadership has been researched through a number of organizational, situational and behavioral theories (Yukl, 1989). Yukl identified four approaches for studying leadership: power influence, behavior, trait, and situational approach. Most theorists believe that managerial and leadership skills are different. "Leaders create and articulate vision; managers insure it is put into practice" (Syrett and Hogg, 1992, p. 5). One of the most researched and significant leadership theories is transformational leadership. Initially developed by Bass (1985), transformational leadership behaviors have been found to motivate followers to excel their own personal interests in favor of the organization.

The theoretical framework for this study involves the conceptualization of the adoption of AQIP accreditation as a form of organizational change. According to the LPI model there are five best practices of leaders: (a) Modeling the Way; (b) Inspiring a Shared Vision; (c) Challenging the Process; (d) Enabling Others to Act; and (e) Encouraging the Heart (Kouzes & Posner, 1988).

The following are the basic characteristics of any system according to the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) Council on Systemic Change (2008):

(a) Systems consist of interrelated components (a relationship exists between parts and the whole),

(b) Systems are arranged in a hierarchy (subsystems and suprasystems).

(c) Synergies among system components create a whole that is more than the sum of its parts,

(d) System boundaries are artificial: systems are components of another larger system. Systems can be open (influenced by their environment) or closed (not influenced by their environment),

(e) Systems have inputs, processes, outputs, and feedback loops,

(f) The process of homeostasis acts to bring a system back to equilibrium when it is disturbed by external forces,

(g) Unless energy is continually focused on this activity, the process of entropy causes energy within a system to dissipate and become random, (p. 6)

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyze what extent do administrators' leadership practices differ based on the institution's accreditation method
2. To evaluate the extent administrators' use modeling the way leadership practices differ based on the institution's accreditation method
3. To know administrators' use of inspiring a shared vision leadership practices differ based on the institution's accreditation method
4. To know administrators' use of challenging the process leadership practices differ based on the institution's accreditation method.
5. To analyse how the size of the institution differ based on the institution's accreditation method

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

Accreditation processes have been fluid and in progress since the inception of accrediting associations. Institutions of higher education have been held accountable to their stakeholders to ensure quality education. Even though accreditation for higher education is a voluntary, accreditation provides institutions with access to funding; credibility to stakeholders and employers, and smoother transfer of credits from one accredited institution to another. The present research may be useful to administrators of higher education who must work with the respective accreditation models, traditional method which is compliance based; the new method which is well defined and newly strengthened and based on continuous improvement model. The study will be important to the field of business administration, particularly in Higher Education settings and the accrediting agencies.

DEFINITIONS

Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP). AQIP is a program for maintaining affiliation with the HLC based on the principles of continuous improvement (HLC, 2007).

Accreditation association or commission. An accreditation association or commission is a nongovernmental body established to administer accrediting procedures (HLC, 2007).

Challenging the Process. Leaders persuade organizational systems to create new products, services, and processes. Challenging the process consists of two components: 1) searching for opportunities; and 2) experimenting and taking risks (Kouzes & Posner, 2003).

Inspiring a Shared Vision. This behavior consists of two components: envisioning the future and enlisting others. Strong leaders have a vision for the optimal functioning of their organizations. A leader's hope for the future is communicated through his or her conviction that the people in his or her organization can improve it. Enlisting others to join the leader's team and work toward accomplishing the leader's vision is a trademark of a good leader (Kouzes & Posner, 2003).

Enabling Others to Act. This practice consists of two components: 1) fostering collaboration; and 2) strengthening others. Once a leader has built a vision and enlisted others to join the mission, a good leader must get the people to work together as a team. To accomplish the vision, the leader must strengthen the team members by developing skills and letting each person know how important he or she is to the team (Kouzes & Posner, 2003).

Modeling the Way. This practice requires leaders to set the example and plan small wins. Having a vision and building support are not enough. Leaders need to lead by example (Kouzes & Posner, 2003).

Encouraging the Heart. This practice consists of two commitments: 1) recognizing individual contributions to the success of every project; and 2) celebrating team accomplishments regularly. (Kouzes & Posner, 2003).

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools that accredits degree-granting higher education organizations (HLC, 2009).

Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality (PEAQ). Often referred to as traditional accreditation, this program is based on criteria established by the HLCof the North Central Association. PEAQ utilizes periodic self-study, peer review, and final approval by the HLC as a means of evaluating academic quality and effectiveness (Beard, 2006).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Slow adoption of AQIP accreditation, which reflects best practices in higher education. Limited accountability exists under the traditional accreditation method, PEAQ (Beard, 2006). Limited accountability contributes to inconsistency in quality education and learning program success (Rothgeb, 2008). The PEAQ accreditation method does not address or mention quality education in the mission of this method (Beard, 2006). Institutions with the traditional PEAQ accreditation are only required demonstrate compliance with the standards of accreditation once in every 10 year cycle and often do not maintain their quality standards after accreditation visits (Beard, 2006). Constituencies and stakeholders of higher education institutions started questioning the value and standards of the traditional accrediting process and started demanding accountability and education quality (Beard, 2006).

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The focus of the study is to improve understanding about the factors that may contribute to the decision to adopt the AQIP method, by examining the extent to which leadership styles, leaders' tenure (CEO), size of the institution (denoted how many Full Time Equivalents), institutional location (rural, suburban, or urban), institution type (highest degree offered), and the age of the institution are associated with for adopting or not adopting the AQIP method.

QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The word quality has many definitions. Quality is degree of excellence or distinguished attribute (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2008). Sahney, Banwet, & Karunes (2006) defined quality as customer service and treating a student as a customer. The objective of Sahney, Banwet, & Karunes' study was to identify an integrated framework that would lead to quality in education. The authors concluded that quality in education is a multiple concept with varying conceptualizations and posed problem in formulating a single and comprehensive definition. Also the authors concluded that turning to TQM as a way of managing organization in global competitive market.

Zhang (2009) researched the different levels of quality of education in United States. Zhang explained that there is no clear measurement of quality. Zhang estimated the average quality of public colleges in US states based on the value added to individuals' early career earnings. The author utilized the data from National Association of State Budget Officers and National Center for Education Statistics for 2001 and 2002 graduates of all states. The data included those who have jobs and documented earnings.

Zhang concluded in the study that there considerable variation across states in the average quality. Even though Zhang associated quality with earnings, the author did not reach a quality comparison at the college level. Another point this study exposes is that although all institutions are accredited by the same accrediting agency (HLC), institutions have considerable variation. Education quality are sometimes elusive.

Nadiri, Kandampully, and Hussain (2009) explained that higher education is a fast growing service industry and faced with more globalization processes every day. Authors measured quality with student satisfaction. Six hundred questionnaires were distributed to students and 492 were returned and used for the study. The sample was from males and females, different age ranges, and from different countries (European, Asian, and African). The authors stated that their study provided higher education quality researchers with useful guidelines for future research. The authors emphasized the term quality is measured by student satisfaction. As is evident, the term quality as widely varying definitions. Zhang (2009) associated quality with earning and Nadiri etal., associated quality by student satisfaction.

Quality experts believe that that measuring customer satisfaction in higher education might be regarded by educators as one of the greatest challenges to evaluating quality (Quinn, Lemay, Larsen, & Johnson, 2009). Quinn et al. examined the most widely used quality improvement methodologies from industry that in the context of higher education: TQM, Quality Function Deployment (QFD); Six Sigma: International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 901; and the MBNQA. The authors stated that the AQIP is a continuous improvement technique used solely in higher education. The authors discussed quality in higher education in terms of three broad categories: education/instructional, administration, and auxiliary (e.g. registrar, financial aid, residence halls, etc). An examination of representative historical applications of quality techniques was conducted as well as identification of the differences and similarities surrounding quality improvement attempts. Quinn, et al. described each quality improvement methodologies:

1.	TQM is a way of managing to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, cohesiveness, flexibility, and competiveness of a business as a whole. TQM implementations include leadership, commitment, total customer satisfaction, continuous improvement, total involvement, training and education, ownership of problems, reward and recognition, error prevention and teamwork.
2.	QFD is a method used to translate customer requirements and expectations into product or service attribute and quality. QFD process includes transferring: customer requirements into product/service feature; product features into design requirements; design requirements into process requirements; and process requirements into processes/methods.
3.	Six Sigma is systemic methodology for process improvement. Six Sigma steps are: (1) define the process, (2) measure quality variables valued by customer and set improvement goals, (3) analyze the root causes of current defect levels (4)consider process change alternatives, (5) improve the process by checking and improving, and (6) control and monitor over time.
4.	ISO 9001 is an international quality standard administered through ISO. ISO certifies a process and not a particular product or service. ISO provides a set of standards for process quality improvements that includes 20 elements which include: attention to customer requirements; continuous improvement; adherence to applicable regulatory requirements; and management leadership.
5.	MBNAQ, administered by the National Institute of Standards, recognizes the best quality practices by analyzing seven factors: leadership, strategic planning, customer and market focus, measurement, analysis and knowledge management, human resources focus, process management, and business results. Organizations must complete an extensive application and selection process before being named Baldrige National Quality Award recipients.
6.	AQIP is an accreditation process that infuses the principles and benefits of continuous improvement into the culture of colleges and universities to assure and advance the quality of higher education. AQIP focuses on the following groups of processes: helping students learn, accomplishing other distinctive objectives, understanding students' and other stakeholders needs, valuing people, leading and communicating, supporting institutional operation, measuring effectiveness, planning continuous improvement, and building collaborative relationships.

Quinn, et al. concluded the study with each of the quality improvement techniques and their applicability to higher education. TQM method was the most widely used technique in higher education, which the authors speculated may be because TQM is so broad that administrators lump any quality effort under the TQM umbrella. However, TQM is used in academic/instructional domains more than in administrative or auxiliary areas. Also, the authors speculated that difficulties in implementing TQM in higher education is due to the lack of inter-departmental trust and lack of confidence in administrators' ability to manage the TQM process, especially with respect to students as customers (Quinn, et al., 2009).

The QFD quality technique was often applied in instructional settings. The authors believed that QFD can be used to improve all levels of education activity, from degree program design, to curriculum, to specific courses. To support this believe, the authors mentioned few examples that QFD used in universities.

According to the Quinn (2009) study, Six Sigma quality technique was mostly used in industry, but little used and published in higher education. Six Sigma may be applicable in higher education, but it is limited to a specific administrative setting. The authors indicated that no examples of higher education implementation of Six Sigma efforts appeared in the literature. The authors attributed the hesitation of using Six Sigma in higher education to the requirement of having a full time professional lead the quality improvement team. In industry settings, they employ certified 'Green Belt' or 'Black Belt' Six Sigma leaders to lead the effort of quality improvement (Quinn, et al., 2009).

Quinn, et al. (2009) believed that AQIP is a good fit for implementation in higher education because it was designed for the higher education settings. Most of the enthusiastic discussion about AQIP comes from its sponsor, the HLC. The authors believed that business values are replacing educational values in a rapid rate. The authors elaborated that quality and efficiency goals that lead to standardization make implementation of these standards in higher education difficult because open dialogue and disagreement are valued in higher education. The authors criticized the AQIP method because it did not have a criterion for teaching. Finally, authors claimed that the AQIP method can be promising to integrate continuous improvement in higher education; it is too new to have shown any lasting changes or quantifiable results in the literature (Quinn, et al., 2009).

The last claim by Quinn, et al. made that AQIP was too new to have shown quantifiable results in the literature. An alternative explanation for lack of quantifiable results in the literature is the slow pace of adapting AQIP as accreditation method in higher education instead utilizing the traditional accreditation method PEAQ. The authors' study published almost ten years after the creations of AQIP by HLC. The authors did not consider the possibility that only 20% of

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higher education institutions adapted the AQIP method as 2009. Most of these quality techniques included leadership role in improving quality. This researcher believes that AQIP is a more holistic approach than ISO 9001 (Quinn, et al., 2009).

ACCREDITATION - Institutions or programs have to meet minimum standards of quality through accreditation to obtain public funding or to secure federal financial aid for the students at their institution (Person, 2007). Since 1959, the federal government has relied on the accreditation process to ensure that the highest level of quality in education was being achieved throughout the country (Eaton, 2003). This section of the literature review will provide the background of accreditation in higher education, and outline the two types of evaluation for accreditation.

BACKGROUND OF ACCREDITATION - Since 1959, the federal government has relied on the accreditation process to ensure that the highest level of quality in education was being achieved throughout the country (Eaton, 2003). Eaton (2003), in conjunction with the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, wrote a report on the accountability of the accreditation process. There was a significant dispute and difference of opinion about the quality provided by accreditation and whether accreditation is meeting the needs of students, government, and the public (Eaton, 2003). As a result, the federal government created an accreditation board to carry out periodic reviews of institutions of higher education. This process, known as recognition, consists of examination of compliance with federal standards. Accrediting organizations are responsible not only for conducting reviews, but also for providing evidence that institutions and programs are performing well in general, and specifically, in student learning (Eaton, 2003). As part of the accreditation process, an institution is required to exhibit to the external review team that it is meeting the standards established by the accrediting agency (Lawrence & Dangerfield, 2001).

The purpose of accreditation is to scrutinize colleges and universities for quality assurance and quality improvement (Budaghyan, 2009). Budaghyan stated the following four purposes of accreditation:

1. **Assuring quality**
2. **Access to federal funds**
3. **Facilitating transfer of credits**
4. **Engendering employer confidence**

PEAQ ACCREDIATION METHOD

The HLC has indicated that accreditation standards and processes have changed over the past ninety years. The PEAQ is the traditional accreditation method. The HLC made major changes to the PEAQ method in the 1930s, in the 1950s, and finally in the 1970s. Even the name of the accreditation took on variations until the HLC settled on the name PEAQ as the standard accreditation method (HLC, 2007). The HLC stated the following in its handbook of accreditation:

The Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality (PEAQ), therefore, on the surface may appear simply to be traditional accreditation renamed. But the name itself, like AQIP, sets goals and objectives of the program. Moreover, by looking at traditional accreditation processes through the lens of a program, the commission is better able to raise important questions about the fit of process to broader goals. In fact, shortly after PEAQ was named, the Board of Trustees adopted as a major goal for the next four years the study of ways to make PEAQ more effective (p. 5.1-1)

PEAQ HAS FIVE CRITERIA

1. Mission and integrity, which means that the organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.
2. Preparing for the future, which means that the organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.
3. Student learning and effective teaching, which means that the organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.
4. Acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge, which means that the organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.
5. Engagement and service, which means that, as called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways that both parties value (HLC, 2007, Chapter 3.1).

The PEAQ process has been the primary course for institutional evaluation. The PEAQ methodology employs a five-step comprehensive evaluation process to determine continued accredited status.

THE EVALUATION PROCESS IS AS FOLLOWS:

(a) the organization engages in a self-study process;

(b) the HLC sends an evaluation team to the institution;

(c) the documents relating to the comprehensive visit are reviewed;

(d) the evaluation team takes action based on the documents and interviews; and

(e) the committee informs the stakeholders of the final decision (HLC, 2007).

The major processes involved in the PEAQ accreditation process are the self-study report, the evaluation of a team of trained peer reviewers, and final decision by the HLC. The self-study report is supposed to include all important and new developments, whether positive or negative, that occurred since last peer review visit. The self-study process is supposed to engage all faculty and staff within the institution (Snyder, 2006).

AQIP ACCREDIATION METHOD

In July 1999, the HLC introduced an alternative method of accreditation, one that shifted its focus from a model of compliance to one of continuous improvement. AQIP represents a significant change in how higher education institutions achieve accreditation and ensure quality. By sharing its process improvements and the results of those improvements, an AQIP-accredited institution provides evidence that the HLC requires to make judgments about quality (HLC, 2007).

AQIP HAS NINE CRITERIA:

1. Helping students learn, which identifies the shared purpose of all higher education organizations, focuses on the teaching-learning processes, and addresses how the entire organization contributes both to student learning and to overall student development.
2. Accomplishing other distinctive objectives, which addresses the processes that contribute to the achievement of an institution's major objectives that complement student learning and fulfill other portions of the institution's mission.
3. Understanding students' and other stakeholders' needs, which involves examination of how an institution works actively to understand student and other stakeholder needs.
4. Valuing people, which involves exploration of commitment to the development of faculty, staff, and administrators, since the effort of all are required for institutional success.
5. Leading and communicating, which addresses how an institution's leadership and communication structures, networks, and processes guide the institution in setting directions, making decisions, seeking future opportunities, and building and sustaining a learning environment.
6. Supporting institutional operations, which addresses the institutional support processes that help provide an environment in which learning can thrive.
7. Measuring effectiveness, which involves examination how the institution collects, analyzes, and uses information to manage itself and to drive performance improvement.
8. Planning continuous improvement, which involves examination of the institution's planning processes and how strategies and action plans are helping achieve the mission and vision.

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9.   Building collaborative relationships, which involves examination of an institution's relationships, current and potential, to analyze how they contribute to accomplishing the institution's mission (HLC, 2007, Chapter 6.4).

AQIP requires a level of trust between the accrediting body and the institution, as the institution must demonstrate to the AQIP Review Panel that the organization's members are committed to continuous quality improvement. Action projects are dynamic improvement projects that promote learning and cultural change and respond to opportunities for improvement within the institution. Within the first 3 years of participation, the institution, with broad faculty and staff participation, develops a systems portfolio, a public portfolio describing the fundamental institutional systems, covering the nine AQIP criteria, and describing the processes, results, and improvements in each system. The systems portfolio is intended to build shared understanding, consensus, and support for the institution by the institution's employees (Stewart, 2006). However, both sets of accreditation criteria are overseen by the Higher Learning Commission of the Colleges and Schools.

The main intent of AQIP is to help colleges and universities improve their performance and enhance their effectiveness. AQIP uses institutions' perspectives on processes, results, and opportunities for continuous improvement. The AQIP accreditation process assists institutions in preparing for the future and in compiling information needed for decision making. The process starts with a self-assessment of the institution's opportunities for improvement using a quality-based instrument that utilizes the nine criteria of AQIP. These opportunities, along with the feedback from external perspectives, are documented in a systems portfolio that is updated annually. The system portfolio describes the institution's fundamental system. It is created over the first three years of participation in the AQIP accreditation method. The action projects are specific improvement projects used to drive institutions' quality program. Each year, a panel of quality experts review the reports submitted by institutions to determine their progress (Pemberton, 2005).

PEAQ VERSUS AQIP

Each of the accreditation methods has broad criteria under which institutions provide patterns of evidence or provide results. The PEAQ method has five criteria and AQIP, nine criteria. Criteria for both accreditation methods overlap. The HLC attempted to align the five criteria of the traditional PEAQ accreditation and the nine criteria of the new AQIP accreditation method. For example, the HLC explained that PEAQ's criteria one "mission and integrity" is equivalent to AQIP's first criteria "helping students learn" second "accomplishing other distinctive objectives," third "understanding students' and other stakeholders' needs," fifth "learning and communicating," and eighth "planning continuous improvement" (HLC, 2007, p. 6.2-3).

However, there are many differences between the AQIP and PEAQ accreditation methods and their processes.
1.   AQIP accreditation method is only available to institutions that already have PEAQ accreditation.
2.   If an AQIP accredited institution does not exhibit continual effort to improve, the institution will be returned to PEAQ accreditation.
3.   After passing the accreditation process, a PEAQ accredited institution has eight years before starting to prepare for the next round of accreditation, but an AQDP institution has to show progress through system portfolio every year.
4.   Finally, it is important to note that the HLC acknowledged that PEAQ is less effective than AQIP and made the point stronger by saying "the creation of AQIP made that lesson clear, and it helped the Commission look afresh at the assumption and goals of the traditional process for accreditation" (HLC, 2007, p. 5.1-1).

AQIP INVOLVE THE FOLLOWING SEVEN DOMAINS

1	Leadership	including how senior leadership addresses organizational values, performance expectations, and organizational learning.
2	Strategic planning	including how the organization plans and evaluates objectives.
3	Student, stakeholder, and market focus	which involves how the organization determines stakeholder requirements and addresses stakeholder relationships.
4	Measurement, analysis, and knowledge management	which involves how knowledge assets are managed.
5	Faculty and staff focus	which involves work processes, motivation, and employee learning.
6	Process management	which refers to the evaluation of both educational and support activities.
7	Organizational performance	including the results of student learning, stakeholder satisfaction, financial, budgetary and market performance

Source: Baldrige National Quality Program, 2004, pp. 15-29

LEADERSHIP AND ACCREDIATION

This section will include a review of the literature on the importance of leadership in higher education and related studies of accreditation. In 2003, the Kellogg Foundation funded a study by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) to initiate discussions of leadership among community college administrators. Four summits were conducted to gather "opinions relating to leadership within community colleges from experts representing various community college settings" (Vincent, 2004, p. 3). These summits were planned and resulted in the formation of the AACCs Leading Forward Project (Stevenson, 2008).

First, the study was on the leadership regardless of which accreditation method. Hansman explained that HLC is a regional accrediting agency responsible for developing institutional accreditation policies and procedures, has placed an increased emphasis on effective leadership in its two accreditation methods, AQIP and PEAQ. Also, Hansman showed through a systemic review of existing literature that effective leadership can help facilitate organizational change and institutions could benefit from adoption of leadership assessment tools. Hansman cited Bass (1985), Bass and Avolio (1993), Amis, Slack, & Hinings (2004), and Adebayo (2005) as prior studies that demonstrated that individuals within organizations exhibit more transformational leadership characteristics are better able engage and successfully lead through significant organizational change.

Second, Hansman mentioned the four available leadership tools available in the study: the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI), the leader-member exchange (LMX), and the Multidimensional LMX (LMXMDM). Hansman chose MLQ leadership assessment tool over the other three tools because MLQ has been the subject of much greater scrutiny than the others. An alternative explanation of Hansman' support for the selection of MLQ may be attributed to the type of journals the researcher reviewed that used MLQ more than other three tools. One of Hansman's concerns was that MLQ is intended to provide a "description - not prescription" (p. 22).

Finally, participants in PEAQ schools more interested in MLQ assessment than this in AQIP schools. This was surprising outcome according to Hansman. An alternative explanation of this finding is might be that participants in PEAQ schools are more interested in improving leadership style to stay competitive. Hansman proposed another possible avenue for future research concerns determining what other leadership assessment instruments were in use within colleges and universities, as a handful of the research participants indicated that they were already using some sort of leadership assessment within their organization other than the MLQ.

Bennis (2007) explained that leadership, while always essential, has never been more important than it is now. Experts generally believe that College administrators have a significant impact on the success of the institution (Goldstein, 2007). Ball (2008) stated that understanding the effectiveness of today's community college leaders has long been an important factor. Ball conducted a quantitative study of 77 Chief Institutional Effectiveness Officers. Ball developed the definition of Chief Institutional Effectiveness Officer as an individual who serves as the highest level administrator, other than the position of president that is directly accountable for the institutional effectiveness of the entire institution. The study's objective was to examine to what extent presidents played a role in the implementation of institutional effectiveness as defined by the criteria of the accreditation agency. Also, were there differences in the presidential role in the implementation of institutional effectiveness based upon institution type (single campus versus multi-campus institution), size (denoted how many Full Time

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Equivalent), and institutional location (rural, suburban, or urban). The study findings indicated that the president or CEO is either often or always involved in the most indicators of the implementation of institutional effectiveness. As such, studies on the implementation of institutional effectiveness or improving institutional effectiveness may benefit from examination of characteristics of key institutional leaders. One limitation this researcher found that the distinction of CEO or President and the Chief Institutional Effectiveness Officer (CIEO). CIEO is not well defined and Ball developed the definition. Even Ball indicated in the methodology procedure that CIEO had different titles from different schools that the researcher surveyed. But did not indicate if sometimes that the CEO or President of the institution is same as CIEO. However, this researcher found institution types defined by Ball' study is beneficial to this study.

Leadership in community colleges is particularly complex. Boggs (2004) reported that on college campuses, financial resources are being stretched to the limit. Boggs also noted that employees are overworked and society has witnessed a rise in litigation. Furthermore, there is an increased need to provide evidence that justifies an institution's programs and activities (Boggs, 2004). Leaders in institutions of higher education are expected to provide a positive learning environment on campus to enhance student outcomes. This is required above and beyond the daily responsibilities of maintaining a fiscally and academically sound institution (de Yampert, 2007).

Stevenson (2008) investigated the relationship between the actual and ideal leadership practices of presidents, deans, and their subordinates at community and junior colleges in Mississippi. Each president or dean completed the self-evaluation form of the LPI. The LPI (LPI-self and LPI-observer) was developed by Kouzes and Posner in 1988 and updated by Kouzes and Posner in 1997. Two of their subordinates were randomly chosen from each school to complete the observer form of the LPI. Of the 49 leaders who assesses five leadership practices, each assessed by six statements. Leaders and observers answered six statements, first as participants relate to how leaders actually lead and second, how leaders should ideally lead. Cronbrach's alpha was used to analyze the reliabilities of the six statements for each scale in the LPI. The results of the study found that LPI-self and LPI-observer produced same results. In the current study, the LPI-self will utilized as measure of leadership strength.

Another study of leaders in Fortune 500 companies in which the LPI instrument was utilized was Mancheno-Smoak (2008). The LPI-Self was used in Mancheno-Smoak's study to assess the participants' responses regarding Kouzes and Posner's definition of a transformational leader. The study showed significant correlations between job satisfaction and transformational leadership. In the study, the LPI was utilized in a business setting and this study LPI will be utilized in education setting which may add credibility of LPI usage for leadership measurement. Also, there are five subscales for this measure that include: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. Thirty items comprise the LPI-Self. Mancheno-Smoak (2008) reported that this instrument had an internal reliability coefficient consistently above .75. The test-retest reliability coefficient was above .90, and factor analyses with the five constructs remain consistently supportive with the data over time.

SUMMARY
The review of the literature identified and summarized key themes in references on the importance of leadership in the accreditation process. The accreditation agency Higher Learning Commission (HLC) responded to higher accountability and quality education by stakeholders and introduced AQIP accreditation in 1999 as an alternative to already existing traditional PEAQ accreditation method. AQIP utilizes the Baldrige criteria for continuous improvement quality. The HLC acknowledged that PEAQ is less effective than AQIP. Yet, institutions of higher education are choosing the AQIP accreditation method as a voluntary practice. Most of the higher education institutions are still utilizing PEAQ as the accreditation method. Strong leadership styles of institutions' administrators contribute to an institution's success and effectiveness. The literature indicates that more research is needed on the comparison of the two accreditation programs, AQIP and PEAQ, in relation to leadership styles. The study provided reliability and validity for the instrument used. A study of the relationship of leadership style to AQIP and PEAQ accreditation methods will contribute much-needed data to the topic of quality improvement and accreditation in higher education.

RECOMMENDATIONS
The purpose of this study is to examine the extent to which PEAQ and AQIP accredited organizations differ based on Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) (Kouzes & Posner, 2003), leaders' tenure (CEO), institution size (denoted how many Full Time Equivalents), institutional location (rural, suburban, or urban), institution type (highest degree offered), and age of the institution among institutions of higher education.

Based on the study, recommendations are presented to aid further research in this area. Study results are expected to allow leaders of higher education institutions and Higher Learning Commission access to knowledge to select AQIP accreditation that designed as best practice method and improve the rate of AQIP accreditation method adoptions: practical recommendations and recommendation for future research.

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS
The AQIP was specifically designed to address weakness in PEAQ and is considered to reflect best practices in higher education (HLC, 2007, p. 5.1-1). The literature review and associated empirical research have indicated a knowledge gap in the factors related to AQIP adoption while support AQIP as a better method than PEAQ for quality education and continuous improvement process (Garcia, 2009; Jenkins, 2008, & Rothgeb, 2008). One recommendation is to have HLC to require all PEAQ institutions to adapt AQIP accreditation method for one cycle instead of leaving it as voluntary basis.

Many institutions may stay with AQIP accreditation and not revert to PEAQ method. Because MA and higher instructions are less likely to adopt AQIP than PEAQ, effort may be needed to understand the barriers that exist to AQIP adoption for these schools. Also, I recommend that HLC consider making these findings from this research and other related researches available to the leaders of PEAQ institutions.

FUTURE RESEARCH
Future research is needed on the accreditation method differences in leadership style utilizing both the self-LPI and observed-LPI. The data collected represent perceptions of leadership behavior versus actual leadership style (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Research encompassing perceived and actual behaviors would allow for better assessment and help in judging the accuracy of perceptual data. Future research is needed as the current study focuses on Higher Learning Commission, so results may be generalizeable to the whole population. Also, researchers of future studies may want to limit the research to the leaders of institutions that went through one cycle of accreditation. Future researchers may also wish to consider additional variables to give deeper meaning to the factors associated with AQIP addition, which may prove valuable to the institutions leaders, HLC, and stakeholders.

CONCLUSION
The problem addressed in this study is the slow adoption of AQIP accreditation, which reflects best practices in higher education. Limited accountability exists under the traditional accreditation method, PEAQ. The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which PEAQ and AQIP accredited organizations differ based on Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI), leaders' tenure (CEO), size of the institution (denoted how many Full Time Equivalent), institutional location (rural, suburban, or urban), institution type (highest degree offered), and age of the institutions among institutions of higher education. The study indicated there is a difference in the subscale of LPI "modeling the way" leadership practices based on accreditation method, with AQIP instructions evidencing higher levels than PEAQ institutions. Also, the study indicated there is a difference in the type of institution (highest degree offered) based on accreditation method. The result indicated that associate degree granting institutions were more than twice as likely to use the AQIP accreditation method. The study should be replicated and empirically verified before the study can be generalized to other regions. Conducting the study with additional variables will add to the depth of information. Expanding and gathering actual leadership behavior verses perceived leadership behavior is recommended.

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