

QUALITY ASSURANCE TRAINING: CULTURE OR CALAMITY?

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ABSTRACT

Pandemics of quality normally call for building a quality culture that ensures quality to be successful. Building quality culture, though a key factor of successful quality practices, should be an inherent predisposition of academics, rather than acquired quality culture through training. A key research question is whether training is related to a culture that pertains to quality and performance. This paper studies the assessors' training in quality assessment, perceived improvements in two main dimensions of knowledge, use of quality system, and the knowledge and skills enhancement in relation to human, system and cultural factors. Participants were given written post-training assignments. Results of the perceived improvements were significant but the written assignments showed otherwise. Based on the results, this paper provides an in-depth discussion of factors that can affect quality training in relation to human, system and cultural factors. Results obtained will be used to develop a set of recommendations based on time, environment, interest, motivations, culture and mindset domains which are key factors that affect the culture of quality improvements and training.

Keywords: Training, Performance, Quality assurance, Culture and human factors

Introduction

Quality is synonymous with performance. Quality creation and delivery leads to performance achievements. This would implicitly mean that quality management leads to performance management. Armstrong and Baron (pp. 25, 1998) stated that "If you cannot define performance, you cannot manage it". Performance, which is a multi-dimensional construct (Otley, 1999; Fitzgerald and Moon, 1996; Rogers, 1994), can be defined as "doing work and achieving results or outcomes of work which has the strongest links to the strategic goals of the organization". As such, performance is both an outcome (the results/outputs) and behavior (the process). Campbell (1999) describes that performance is behavior as outcomes can be contaminated by system factors which should be controlled in order to measure performance. On the other hand, Edis (1995) argues that performance is something that the person leaves behind and is independent of its purpose.

In reality, the person works within the system environment with a purpose or aim, and this paper supports Bromwich's (1990), Armstrong's and Baron's (1998) views that performance embraces the three inter-related variables of behavior (processes), outputs and outcomes (value added or impact). As noted by Armstrong and Baron (1998): Personal factors – the individual's skill, confidence, motivation and commitment; leadership factors – the quality of encouragement, guidance and support provided by the managers and team leaders; team factors – the quality of support provided by colleagues; system factors – the system of work and facilities (instruments of labor) provided by the organization; and contextual (situational) factors – internal and external environmental pressures and changes.

Culture and Performance

Since performance is "behavioral", this would touch on the several key elements of the "human factor", the "culture factor" as well as the cultural and systems environment noted above. Culture has been widely discussed, studied and interpreted leading to diverse definitions (Bodley, 1994 and 2000): topical (list of topics or categories for social organization, religion or economy), historical (social heritage or tradition that is passed on to future generations), behavioral (shared, learned human behavior, a way of life), normative (ideals, values or rules for living), functional (human solving of

problems and adaptation to environment to live together), mental (ideas or learned habits), structural (patterned and interrelated ideas, symbols or behaviors) and symbolic (arbitrarily assigned meaning as shared by society).

Geertz (1973) anthropological work emphasized the symbolic meaning of culture; as compared to Matthew Arnold's (1869) "high culture" transitions to Raymond William's "ordinary culture" (cited McKenzie, 1958). This leads to a baseline definition whereby people learn culture as a set of behavior with a system of meanings and symbols that have a process of learning and relationships which are a relativistic way of describing culture. This stream defines the "character and experience" of the organization i.e., what the organization "is, the "culture as metaphor" as opposed to what the organization "has" whereby "culture is an "attribute" (Scott, et. al. 2003). The view of culture as an attribute is more widely used in the management literature as it can be interpreted and manipulated as an independent variable or as a means to achieve the ends which is the satisfaction of the organization's objectives. As a means, this constitutes the "processes – the means" or range of activities that can be re-engineered to "create and deliver value – the ends".

Another component of culture is the values (differentiating between right and wrong feelings, thinking and behavior) and beliefs (that involves stories, myths when interpreted give insight to the feeling, thinking and behavioral side of the human) system. Some studies suggested that culture is an important factor associated with the effectiveness of an organization (Cameron and Freeman, 1991; Driscoll and Morris, 2001; Kotter and Heskett, 1992). In addition, Allen, F., and Kraft C., (1982), Deal, T., and Kennedy, A., (1982), Peters, T., and Waterman, R.H., (1982) publications and studies have highlighted that culture is a critical determinant of organizational performance.

Human Factors and Performance

Patterson et.al, (1998) stated that "the effectiveness with which the organization manage, develop, motivate, involve and engage the human's contribution is a key determinant of organizational performance" whereby the people management practices have a powerful impact on performance in terms of productivity or profitability. The "psychological contract" between the organization and the people is fundamental to improving performance.

This means that the behavioral side of the human factor which is the people's attitudes affects performance. This represents the importance of people management practices which are evidenced in the study of Patterson et.al., (1998) as: 1) employee's attitude are related to performance, 2) importance of organization culture in relation to performance, 3) human resource management (HRM) that affects productivity and profitability. These HRM practices are echoed by the researches of Bailey, (1993); Guest, (1997) and Huselid, (1995) through 1) increasing employee skills and abilities, 2) promoting positive attitudes and increasing motivation, and 3) providing employees with expanded responsibility to make use of their skills and abilities.

At the individual level, achieving the organizational objectives requires three cultural values of innovation, attention to detail and outcomes (O'Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991) and Schuler and Jackson (1987) proposed that the HRM strategies in organizations should support these three competitive performance outcomes. The study of Miron, Erez, and Naveh, (2004) suggested that the three cultural values are independent yet complement each other as opposed to competing with each other. In addition, some studies (Schneider, 1975 and 1987; Michel, 1977) and in the Fit Model of Schneider (2001) proposed that individuals actualize their potential when the organizational culture is congruent with their personal work values, interests and capabilities. This would mean that in a quality focused environment, not all would adhere to it as people differ in their preferences for paying attention to details and, complying with rules (Chan, 1996; Kirton, 1994) and individual characteristics affect performance quality (Miron, Erez, and Naveh, 2004).

The cultural, human and system factors that relate to quality and performance are best described in Sursock's (2011) paper that identified key factors within the institution that can promote effective quality cultures:

- the university should be located in an "open" environment that is not overly regulated and enjoys a high level of public trust;
- the university should be self-confident and does not limit itself to definitions of quality processes set by its national QA agency;
- the institutional culture stresses democracy and debate and values the voice of students and staff equally;
- the definition of academic professional roles stresses good teaching rather than only academic expertise and research strength;

- Quality assurance processes are grounded in academic values while giving due attention to the necessary administrative processes.

Case study of the Assessors' Training

To look at the human, cultural and system factors, a case study of the ABC – QMS (ABC University Quality Management System) assessors training was used to understand the mentioned factors using a qualitative and a deductive approach (basic cultural, human management practices and system factors that have been widely reviewed from the academic literature. This approach is used to identify “latent factors” that are inherent in these literatures but have not been recognized yet could be used to improve on the nature and culture of future trainings.

The training for 60 assessors (divided into 3 groups) was held over a period of 3 weeks in the months of March 10 – 13, 2012; 17 – 20, 2012 and April 7 – 10, 2012. Each assessor underwent a 2 hour-session per week for a total of 6 hours spanning the whole program. The aim was to train the “members of the Board of Assessors for the ABC – QMS” and to ensure that:

- The potential assessors are equipped with the knowledge and skills of the ABC – QMS for the audit and assessment of a college or program as an impartial and independent assessor.
- The potential assessors are capable of conducting a full scale audit and assessment of a college or program and provide feedbacks that add value to the further development of the college or program.

General conclusions based on the statistics and assignments provided at the end of the training can be summarized as:

- The “assessors – to – be” appeared to have gained in the knowledge and skills of the ABC – QMS (based on those who appeared for training for some of the training sessions) as noted in the difference of means analysis of the pre- and post-training perception questionnaires. Though planned for a workshop style program, the 6 hours’ time frame (as noted above) was inadequate to include both theoretical and practical work.
- Even though the perceived improvement in the understanding and use, and knowledge and skills attained of the ABC – QMS is significant, the “assessors – to – be” needs more in-depth practical

training to ensure that they are well-versed to perform the role of a qualified assessor (based on the assignments submitted by some of the participants).

Results of training in ABC – QMS

A set of Pre- and Post-Training perception type questionnaires were given to the participants to determine their perceived improvements in the 3 areas as summarized in the Table 1 below.

TABLE 1: Summarized results of significance of survey items of the 3 areas

Key Factors and Variables	P-Value and significance at 95%
Table 3: Understanding and Use of NQA	P-Value of 4 of 6 items were significant at $P < 0.05$
Table 4: Understanding and Use of ABC – QMS	P-Value of 5 of 6 items were significant at $P < 0.05$
Table 5: Knowledge and Skills of ABC – QMS	P-Value of 9 of 9 items were significant at $P < 0.05$

Note: Discussion of the key variables of each of the Tables 2 to 4 were in Appendix 1.

TABLE 2: Over-all Comments of the Training (Valid %)

Overall comments	LOW HIGH →				
	1	2	3	4	5
Knowledge and skills acquired in using ABC – QMS for assessment	0	4.4	31.1	46.7	17.8
Instructional and delivery method used	0	4.4	20.0	51.1	24.4
Usefulness of training materials	0	2.2	17.8	46.7	33.3
Competency of trainer	0	2.2	17.8	26.7	53.3
Confidence of yourself as a trainer for others	0	6.7	35.6	46.7	11.1
Confidence of yourself as an auditor and assessor	0	4.4	35.6	35.6	24.4
Usefulness of exercise	0	2.2	40.0	33.3	24.4
Adequacy of Duration of 6 hours training	24.4	26.7	28.9	11.1	8.9

Details of tables 2 to 4 and its key variables show that the perceived understanding and use of the NQA (National Quality Agency) and ABC – QMS were significant with the exception of the “frequency of reading the NQA and ABC – QMS manuals” and the “Understanding of the general requirements of NQA”. This could mean that the participants do not have much time and/or interest in reading and understanding of the NQA, although there is a better understanding of the ABC – QMS through the training. It is also apparent that the perceived knowledge and skills improvements of the ABC – QMS in terms of the requirements, knowledge and skills of use towards quality management and use of the scoring system

were significant at the 95% confidence level.

Though there was quite a percentage of interest and quest for knowledge of development as quality assurance professional by taking up the rigor and challenges of being a member of the ABC Board of Assessor for the QMS, certain areas can be improved based on the written assignments and the discussion of the shortfalls of the workshop. Based on the overall comments from the participants (Table 2), it appeared that they perceived a high level of satisfaction in most aspects except for the “adequacy of duration of 6 hours of training” of which about 80% made an observation that the training should cover a longer period to facilitate more in-room practices and exercises.

Comments on the written assignments

Some participants made an effort to submit individual assignments which was commendable for their quest to learn and share as this was a very important “first step” taken to be an assessor. A total of 20 out of the 49 individual work submissions and 6 group work submissions were received. This was an important “first step” that underlies the huge responsibilities of an assessor. Basically the key comments were on the style and skills gained from the training in providing feedback value – added comments which can be summarized as:

- A lack of understanding of the requirements of the standard, criteria and items as the basis of auditing and assessment were evident.
- Providing value-added feedbacks by using the templates within the criteria requirements were clearly not evident.
- The written assignment did not support the claim of understanding of assessment requirements and the pragmatics of what constitute “good practices” of assessment and value-added feedback.

Details of the comments revealed the following:

- It appeared that the “assessors to be” are writing the feedback comments from the perspectives of a person who was writing an SSR rather than an assessor who should be skilled in providing value – added feedback in addressing and meeting the criteria requirements. The format and technique used in describing the “strengths” and “OFI” were not based on the “guidelines and guiding templates” required of an assessor as discussed in the

training sessions, as the templates provided samples and guidance in writing appropriate value – added feedbacks were not used. This was the crux of the assessor's key role "To provide a Value-added report" based on meeting the requirements. It also appeared that some of the assessors were writing beyond the criteria requirements and the scope of the evidence provided.

- There were common quality terminologies like "opportunities for improvements" and "scoring guidelines statement" and "key comments writing techniques" that could be used in providing "value – added" feedback which needed improvement by the assessors to be. The techniques used in the assignments in writing feedback comments showed minimal degree of application in knowledge or skills acquisition in the training sessions or with the support materials, which appeared was not thoroughly read and understood.

Some shortfalls in the system factors related to the organization and training of the assessors:

- The selection and mix of the participants was inadequate and showed inappropriate selection and management's interest, knowledge or commitment in quality assurance as the diversity of the participants had different levels in terms of:
 - o Basic knowledge of the basics and fundamentals of NQA requirements and of the acronyms of NQA, SSR (Self-Study Report) or ABC (ABC University) as they need to ask the meaning of such acronyms during the training that showed lack of interest, motivation on basic fundamentals in quality management.
 - o Being on their college or program committee writing the SSR, and this could give rise to "conflict of interest" and "proficiency of assessment of SSR in questionable" as the participants are more tuned into the NQA mindset of writing (just getting the accreditation) the SSR as opposed to assessing the SSR (for continuous improvements).
 - o The interest and motivation as shown by the high rate of absentees and the number of participants who attended all the sessions, with quite a number missing some sessions due to personal factors, time and efforts, motivations or interest. This

affected the continuity of knowledge to be acquired in each session and that affected the next session.

- o The level of preparation in reading and understanding the NQA or ABC – QMS requirements that can impede their knowledge and skills as an assessor.

- The time and place arrangement inadequacy and inappropriateness for workshop sessions is noted by the participants. The duration is too short to capitalize on the in-class and in-depths practical required to train an assessor within an inappropriate “fixed meeting room style” arrangement.

Implications and Recommendations

Daniellou et al. (2009: 103) argued that the degree of engagement of both management and staff underlies 4 cultural types and determines whether a safety culture (Figure 1) exists:

- when engagement of both management and staff is weak, the approach is ineffective and fatalistic (Type A);
- when safety is implicit and embedded in professional roles and implication of management is weak, there is a certain degree of security but no security culture (Type B);
- when management involvement is high and staff involvement is low, the safety process is managerial (Type C); when both management and staff involvement is high, one can speak of a genuine safety culture (Type D).

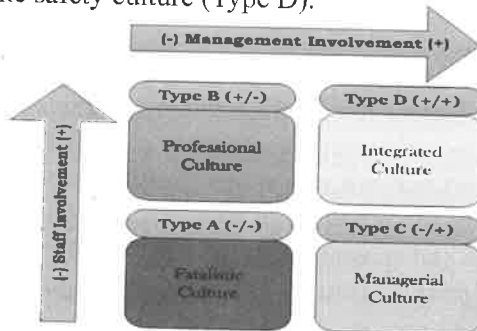


FIGURE 1: Cultural Types

Source: Daniellou, F., M. Simard and I. Boissières (2009)

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Using the cultural types framework above (Figure 1), the assessor training based on cited literature would fall into Type A which is the fatalistic culture as both dimensions of the staff's and the management's involvement were negative. The above model and the literature that was identified earlier were used as the "discussion framework" to identify and explain the results of the survey and written assignment. Based on this, this fatalistic culture of the Assessors' training that can affect the quality management and performance achievements could be attributed to:

- **Systems and Environment:** Though the training's aims were defined, systems factors that point to the selection and expectations of the participants, the training room environment, timing and training specifications requirements are not optimum. In the selection, it was a mixture of novices to full-fledged practitioners of quality practitioners who are knowledgeable and skilled, with most of them leaning to be SSR writers than assessors. Time and efforts given by the participants in their preparation to learn and share was not evidenced as most of them do not even have a manual, while those who do have did not bothered to read the manual and understand the standards and criteria requirements. The expectations of the participants were hands-on practical with discussion but the room fixings and environment was for lecture style training in a VIP fitted room. It was not an environment conducive to practical training, nor was it appropriate for an intensive assessor training aimed at developing the skills of a potential assessor. Most participants claim that they have a lot of work at their schools, which makes them miss some days of the training and taking the time to fully concentrate on the in-class discussions especially on the written assignments. The level of quality of the assignment was a show of "something that needs to be completed and got out of way" attitude that underscores the spirit of learning a new skill or a learning culture required of a professional and an academic attuned to quality and performance.
- **Organizational Culture:** The quality culture as part of the university culture, as seen in other institutions also, was a key inherent obstacle, as culture in itself has different interpretations and meanings for different groups of stakeholders coming from different and diverse backgrounds, values systems and beliefs.

There is as yet a singular or defined organization culture of “the way we do things here, this is who we are and this is what we value” which is the key “glue” to coherently and consistently to bring together a diverse group under a unifying university culture that pertains to quality and performance. Since this is not evident in the case study, it is an open system that defies a unified approach towards quality management and performance achievement. It became a “free for all” to contain and maintain their “turfs” where each tribe rules in its own way of life and practices its own beliefs and values systems which are contrary in achieving the university’s strategic direction and aims. This is evidenced in the case study here as the institution’s organizational culture is undefined in itself that apparently and ultimately defines the culture of quality management and performance achievements requisites of the institution to forward the quality and performance aims of the institution, schools and programs. Without such culture at all levels, the understanding and commitment to maintain and sustain quality practices and performance achievements are undermined and sabotaged for the lack of a unified culture.

Human Management: The selection of the assessors were not systematically selected based on a set of criteria that defines the “qualifications and expectations” of an auditor and assessor. This was evidenced in the QA practices from the deanship itself which was not clear in the definition of such, leading to the schools’ recommendations of a group of people “not qualified, not interested, not motivated” and clearly not suited to be assessors. Even the roles and responsibilities of the assessors were not defined from the university QA context and requirements to maintain and sustain a continuous improvements program or system at the levels of the programs, schools and university. It was just training for the sake of training without specific aims defined or outcomes expectations. This represents the “artificial systems and mechanisms” devised to improve on the “physical needs and allegedly the psychological needs” of the human through HRM practices of motivations and recognitions, system supports, job designs, employees’ satisfactions and engagements and developmental practices to enhance the knowledge and skills to achieve the institutions’ aims and objectives. This is evidenced in

incentives of just getting a training certificate, monetary incentives as an assessor and the prestige attached to the coveted title and privileges accorded to an assessor and being appointed to the Board of Assessors.

- **Personal Characteristics and Culture:** Moving from the organization culture to the individual culture and personal characteristics is even more complicated and complex as we ventured into the personal domain, idiosyncrasies, beliefs and values system, behavior and actions that are fathomless and incomprehensible regardless of all the theories, frameworks, research and studies to understand the human factor. Inadvertently, it is the individual that makes the “herd” that either supports or defeats or defies good or bad practices in quality management and performance achievements. The personal characteristics and culture goes into the realm of the “individual psychological needs” as opposed to the individual’s needs of the knowledge, skills and competencies that supports or conform to a set of beliefs and values that constitute the cultural aspects affecting quality and performance. This is evidenced in the personal desire of an appointment as an assessor and needs of recognition rather than professionally and ethically carrying a simple just and honest assessment as a “mirror” to identify opportunities for improvements to benefit others. Ultimately this boils down to the “unknown and unseen motives and desires” of the individual for the betterment and benefits of oneself or the whole which is the community and society and stakeholders at large. It is a matter of the “white or the dark” side of the human nature and personality, which are beyond the control of others but can be controlled and managed individually if one opts or decide to.

The Fatalistic Culture of the assessors’ training that leans towards “calamity” could be improved on in the future trainings and should be moved to the “Integrated Culture” whereby the staffs’ and management’s involvement and engagement moves into the positive side through the following recommendations:

1. **Systems Change** –The University is an open and evolving system with key sub-systems interlinked together and should be managed as a “whole” based on “sum of the total is more effective than sum

of the parts". The "whole" ranges from the structural, physical continuum to the cultural, behavioral and temporal realms of an organization which should be balanced and managed. Succinctly, it is the organization and human "capability and capacity" that must be managed (Teay, 2012) to ensure successful strategic implementations and changes. The institution has a choice of "building" or "buying" the capability which represents the internal core competence embedded in the human factor of the organization. The change based on "building" the capability is more sustainable than "buying" and has a longer term implications of embedded competence internal to the organization. Effective integrated culture would mean changes to the "capability and capacity" aspects of the staff and management dimensions that calls for changes in the operational sub-systems supporting the quality management and performance achievements. This includes the capacity and capability in building relationship to learn and share.

2.

Culture Change – Some of the strategies that are widely practiced (Scott, et.al., 2003) are:

- a. The Structural Dimension – Diagnosis of a cultural audit to understand the root cause is the key word as opposed just "prescription" (Brooks and Bate, 1992; Bates, 1999) as not knowing the cause or the nature of the problem will lead to the prescribing of an inappropriate set of action.
- b. The Process Dimension – one would need to identify the current trend or the current "wave" as called by Bates, (1999), which needs to be understood to determine whether to 1) deflect the wave using its own momentum (re-framing strategies), 2) wait out the wave until a new wave goes in a desired strategic direction and "hitch a ride" (opportunistic strategies), or 3) wait until the most power wave has subsided and then create a new wave (new wave strategies).
- c. The Contextual Dimension – Need to assess a "fit" between the culture and its wider environment that involves a "cultural lag" or "strategic drift" (Johnson, 1984) to gauge the gap between "what is the needed culture" and the "culture in use".
- d. The Relationship Dimension – Culture deals with human which is a social animal and strives on social and communal inter and intra relationship. As such, the relationship between and across

all human factors which is amicable can foster healthier and more beneficial outputs and outcomes in quality and performance.

3. **Resistance to Change** – It is widely accepted that there is always resistance to change which can be managed through the following:
 - a. **Ownership** – The employees must “buy” into the change in order for them to “unfreeze or unlearn” to discard the old shackles and then “re-freeze or re-learn” and accept the new bonding.
 - b. **Complexity** – Culture cannot be changed overnight and when transmitted through various media or mechanism like new work procedures and practices (e.g., rewards, ceremonies, exemplary leaders, documentation, new spaces, new work or social pattern, professional changes) and new requirements, these needs to be managed over a time period.
 - c. **Diversity** – Culture affects and impacts different groups, different stakeholders differently which should be heeded and managed differently and appropriately.
 - d. **Dysfunctional consequences** – Changes could be counter beneficial and as such should be managed, e.g., quality is important in education, but academics think that quality is only paper work and increased monitoring and interference, that calls for a balance of “what is needed and necessary” and “what is extra and can be reduced”.
4. **Leadership Change** – Waldman (1993) proposed a model of culture, leadership and TQM which posited that leadership affects TQM policies and behavior which results in quality outcomes. Avolio (1994) stated that 9 of Deming’s 14 points involved leadership whereby 5 were reconfirmed by Sosik and Dionne (1997), which were: change agency, teamwork, continuous improvements, trust-building and short-term goal eradication. Leadership plays a central role in managing organizational changes as they guide the efforts to change through different phases of : 1) organizational needs for change 2) re-engineering structures, processes, procedures and policies 3) creating a shared vision, mission, strategic goals and objectives to ensure a common direction 3) fostering communication, understanding and commitment and 5) reinforcing change (Kanter, et. al., 1992;

Schermerhorn, et. al., 1991). Leadership is important to effective team functioning, address team members' differences and providing task and socio-economical and socio-emotional support (Hackman, 1990) and trust building through establishing respect and instilling faith based on the leader's openness, honesty and integrity (Conger, 1989; Covey, 1991) which is the notion of a transformational leader (Sims and Lorenzi, 1992). Leadership is also about being visionary and set the strategic directions though longer-term goals and performance results.

5. **Human Management Change** – Organization with positive employee attitudes and commitment shows increased profitability and productivity (Patterson et.al. 1997), and organization with defined organizational culture and climate brings about more positive performance (Rousseau, 1988; Woodman and Pasmore, 1991). As such, the HRM practices of increasing faculty skills and skills flexibility and abilities, promoting positive attitudes and increasing motivations, and providing faculty with expanded responsibilities to make use of their skills, knowledge and abilities are important to quality management and performance achievements. This includes the plethora of motivational factors that affects satisfaction and engagement and organization climate that affects team working.

6. **Personal Characteristics Change** – “Conformity has a positive effect on performance quality” (Miron, Erez and Naveh, 2004), and conformance is about adherence to rules, requirements and group norms which is culture. As part of the “herd” the personal culture of and individual should conform to the “herd’s culture in order to be a member of the herd, which becomes the “herd’s culture”. Conformity interacts in a culture of attention-to-detail, whereby if there is a set of guidelines, there is a little difference between conformist and non-conformists, which supports Michel’s (1977) theory of weak and strong situation. A culture of low attention-to-detail represents a weak situation where there is little structure of how much attention should be allocated to task details which is a requirement of quality performance. As such, process and procedures guidelines that is clearly specified and conformed to will bring about improved quality and performance. This would be in line with the person-organization fit model (Schneider, 1987;

Van Vianen, 2000; Kristof, 1996) whereby the organizational culture that promotes outcome orientation is an open and fertile environment for quality and performance by conscientious people. Therefore, personal culture should be congruent with the organizational culture in order to advance the individual performance and to actualize their potential.

Conclusion

Though the training of assessors would seem a small and trivial program that is easily affected, the effectiveness and efficiency in getting the most is imperatives in its success. Using the basic data derived from a training program in ABC University, key factors were identified as causes of the ineffectiveness of the training. With the causes identified, a set of recommendations was provided to ensure that the key factors of managing a training program are addressed to ensure a more successful training program. This papers covers more than the most overlooked factors that includes the organizational and personal cultural dimensions, the organizational and leadership dimensions, the change dimensions, the systems dimensions and the personal characteristics and human management dimensions that has an impact on quality management and performance achievements. These could equally apply to the betterment of training programs that could directly and indirectly affects quality management and performance achievements.

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Appendix 1

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

PARAMETER	FREQUENCY [VALID (%)]
Gender (M/F)	40 (81.6)/ 9 (18.4)
Title	
- Lecturer	8 (16.3)
- Assistant Professor	19 (38.8)
- Associate Professor	16 (32.7)
- Professor	6 (8.7)
Teaching Experience	
- ≤ 4 years	0 (0)
- 4-7 years	9 (18.4)
- 8-12 years	15 (30.6)
- > 12 years	25 (51.0)
Quality Experience	
- 0-3 years	22 (44.9)
- 4-7 years	16 (32.7)
- 8-12 years	7 (14.3)
- > 12 years	4 (8.2)
Involvement in Quality Work in KSU	
- No involvement at all	0 (0)
- Interested but not involved in ABC Quality	3 (6.1)
- Part of the Quality Committee	43 (87.8)
- Part of the SSR Writing Team	3 (6.1)
Materials Possessed	
- NQA Handbooks	31 (96.9)
- ABC – QMS Manual	1 (3.1)

Table 3: Understanding the Use of NQA

	Pre-	Post-	P-Value
Frequency of Reading of NQA Handbooks	2.8 ± 0.9	3.4 ± 0.9	0.023
Understanding of the general requirements of NQA	3.5 ± 0.8	3.8 ± 0.7	0.119
Understanding of the Standards, Sub-Standards and Sub-Sub-Standards	3.3 ± 0.8	3.9 ± 0.6	0.003
Application of the Standards, Sub-Standards and Sub-Sub-Standards towards Accreditation	3.2 ± 0.6	3.7 ± 0.8	0.013
Use of the Standards, Sub-Standards and Sub-Sub-Standards as part of the daily quality accomplishment	3.2 ± 0.5	3.6 ± 0.2	0.031
<u>Scoring using the Star system (understanding and use)</u>	3.5 ± 0.9	3.7 ± 0.8	0.228

Note: Significant at $P < 0.05$.

For the understanding and use of the NQA, with the exception of the frequency of reading of NQA Handbooks" and "understanding of the general requirements of NQA of which there is no significance in the perceived improvements from the training sessions, there appeared to be a minor increase of 0.2 difference in the other variables attained through the training. But compared to the NQA, there appear to be perceived improvements of a "1" point difference for the understanding and use of the ABC – QMS, and the knowledge and skill of the ABC– QMS as shown in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 4: Understanding and Use of ABC – QMS

	Pre-	Post-	P-Value
Frequency of Reading of ABC – QMS	3.4 ± 6.1	3.2 ± 1.1	0.923
Understanding of the general requirements of ABC – QMS	2.4 ± 0.9	3.5 ± 0.8	< 0.001
Understanding of the Standards, Criteria and Items	2.4 ± 1.0	3.8 ± 0.7	< 0.011
Application of the Standards, Standards, Criteria and Items towards Quality Management	2.4 ± 0.9	3.6 ± 0.7	< 0.001
Use of the Standards, Standards, Criteria and Items as part of the daily quality accomplishment	2.3 ± 0.9	3.5 ± 0.7	< 0.001
Scoring using the Scoring system (understanding and use)	2.2 ± 1.0	3.5 ± 0.8	< 0.001

Note: Significant at $P < 0.05$.

For the understanding and use of the ABC – QMS, with the exception of "frequency of reading", all the other variables show a perceived improvement of "1" point in the mean average difference of the pre and post training sessions which is significant at the 95% confidence level. This does show that the participants perceived that there is an improvement in their understanding of the requirements of the standards and criteria and its use towards quality management and for accomplishing daily quality activities.

Table 5: Knowledge and Skills of ABC – QMS

	Pre-	Post-	P-Value
Preparation for the ABC – QMS Training	2.4 ± 0.9	3.5 ± 0.9	< 0.001
Understanding of the need and use of the ABC – QMS	2.5 ± 0.8	3.9 ± 0.8	< 0.001
Knowledge of the use of general requirements of ABC – QMS	2.4 ± 0.8	3.6 ± 0.6	< 0.001

Knowledge of the use of the Standards, Criteria and Items	2.4 ± 1.0	3.7 ± 0.9	< 0.001
Skills in the use of the Standards, Criteria and Items	2.4 ± 1.0	3.6 ± 0.6	< 0.001
Knowledge and skills of the use of Standards, Criteria and Items towards Quality Management	2.5 ± 0.9	3.6 ± 0.8	< 0.001
Desire in the use of the Standards, Standards, Criteria and Items as part of the daily quality accomplishment	3.1 ± 1.1	4.0 ± 0.8	0.001
Knowledge of performance scoring using the Scoring system	2.5 ± 0.8	3.6 ± 0.8	< 0.001
Skill in performance scoring using the Scoring system	2.5 ± 0.9	3.5 ± 0.9	< 0.001

Note: Significant at $P < 0.05$.

For the perceived improvements of all the variable of the factor of knowledge and skills of the ABC – QMS, there is a perceived “1” point difference of means average improvement which is significant at the 95% confidence level. This can be interpreted to mean that the participants perceived that the training session have brought about perceived improvements in their understanding of the requirements of the standards and criteria and its use towards quality management and for accomplishing daily quality activities.