Sudanese Secondary School Requirements for Obtaining School Accreditation in View of Contemporary International Trends

Dr. Bannaga Taha El-Zubair Hussen. Assistant Professor. Dept. of Foundations and Administration of Education. Faculty of Education. University of Khartoum – Sudan.

Dr. El-Rusheed Habboub Mohammed .Associate Professor. Dept. of Foundations and Administration of Education .Faculty of education. University of Khartoum – Sudan.

Abstract

The study aimed at answering the main general question: What are the requirements for the Sudanese Secondary School to obtain school accreditation in view of contemporary Trends. For that purpose the descriptive/ analytic method was used to describe, interpret, and analyze school requirements for obtaining accreditation in general and in the United States of America and the United Kingdom in particular. The study has come up with the following recommendations: There is a need for a call for of a national campaign for spreading the culture of quality and accreditation among the public, and more societal participation. Establishing new special units for the study of the economics of education, and others for managing change and strategic planning plans processes, and educational technology development. Accreditation standards for Sudanese secondary schools need to be revised and improved to be more related to the needs of students and society. There is also a need for regular evaluation of schools to ensure that the objectives, strategies, programmers are in line with the development requirements in the country.

KEY WORDS: School Accreditation. Contemporary International Trends.

المستخلص :

هدفت الدراسة للإجابة عن السؤال العام الرئيس: ما متطلبات حصول المدرسة الثانوية السودانية على الاعتماد المدرسي في ضوء الاتجاهات الحديثة.   لذلك الغرض استخدم المنهج العلمي الوصفي التحليلي لوصف وتفسير وتحليل متطلبات حصول المدارس على الاعتماد التربوي بصفة عامة، وفي الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية والمملكة المتحدة بصفة خاصة. اعتمدت الدراسة على المنشور من الأدبيات والدراسات السابقة في مجال الموضوع. خرجت الدراسة بعدد من التوصيات أهمها: إعداد وتنفيذ خطة قومية شاملة لتحقيق اعتماد التعليم. إنشاء وحدات لدراسة اقتصاديات التعليم وإدارة عمليات التغيير والتخطيط الاستراتيجي، والتطور التكنولوجي بالمدارس. تحديث معايير للاعتماد في التعليم الثانوي في السودان وتحسينها وتطويرها وإعادة هيكلتها لتكون أكثر التصاقاً بحاجات الطلاب والمجتمع. تنفيذ عمليات تقويم دورية للمدارس للتأكد من أن الأسس التي وضعت على أساسها الأهداف والاستراتيجيات والبرامج لكي تتواكب مع متطلبات التنمية وحاجات المجتمع.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاعتماد المدرسي؛ الاتجاهات العالمية الحديثة.

INTRODUCTION

School Accreditation (SA) is some kind of an official approval of an academic programmer or an educational institution by an external agency, as a result of certain educational procedures to ensure quality and good performance. It is some kind of an award of competence and efficacy. Such an evaluation is based on certain quality standards that eventually lead to an official resolution, which can be positive or negative for a certain period of time [1] There are two types of educational institutions` accreditation: First, the accreditation of the whole educational institution, the second, emphases the accreditation of educational programmers being offered by the particular institution. There are some conditions that have to be met before the educational institution can obtain accreditation. The institution must be up to the quality standards set by the accreditation agency. The school should have a clear vision and objectives, and at the same time must have undergone self –evaluation procedures. The (SA) mainly deals with the continuous revision of a number of standards to ensure their good general academic performance. The aspects of (SA) can be seen as follows: The philosophy of the schools with regard to their vision, mission, objectives, school management and organization, teaching staff, curricula and educational materials, student services, student guidance and counseling services, hygiene and safety, school activities, the library and resource rooms, school facilities, fiscal management and financing, and student learning assessment[2].

Thus, accreditation is concerned with both managerial and academic performance besides diagnosing the points of strength and weakness. It can be said that accreditation and quality are two sides of the same coin, as long as quality cannot be maintained

without accreditation, which always aims at good performance with a high degree of quality.

STATEMENT OF THE STUDY PROBLEM:

There are three main factors that necessitate the adoption of school accreditation system: Keenness to apply total quality management standards with all that it requires with regard to the availability of standards and specific: performance norms. The second factor is the development of the concept of education and its becoming a profession that leads to development which in turn necessitates a high degree of efficiency and rehabilitation. The third factor is the insisting necessity for targeting school reconstruction and reform. For that purpose, a very specialized institutions and agencies were established to set and apply objective standards and practical indicators, coupled with academically referenced procedures .[3]

Recently, philosophy and educational policy objectives changed considerably in Egypt. There has been a shift from making educational opportunities available for all to constructing and continuous available for all to restricting and continuous development of the educational process according to national quality standards. Maintaining quality, therefore, has been the top priority on the political level. It has also become an issue in the whole society .[4] Such developments and such lines of educational thought took place due to the general world conditions that necessitate able human resources investment for the sake of international competitiveness, in addition to that the general discontent of the society with educational institutions performance, and the poor academic performance achievement of students. There are many studies being carried out to recommend secondary school accreditation system, such like studies of (Amir

2005) and (Ahmed 2008). Based on what is said above, the problem of the study can be summarized in the following general question: What are the Sudanese Secondary School requirements for obtaining school accreditation in view of the contemporary international Trends?

Out the general question, stem the following subsidiary questions:

1. What are the requirements of the Sudanese Secondary School accreditation?

2. What are the hindrances that face the Sudanese secondary school in obtaining accreditation?

3. What are the future suggestions for enabling the Sudanese Secondary School in obtaining accreditation?

THE STUDY OBJECTIVES:

1. To specify the requirements of the Sudanese Secondary School of accreditation.
2. To highlight the hindrances that faces the Sudanese Secondary School in obtaining accreditation.
3. Making suggestions for enabling the Sudanese Secondary School obtain accreditation.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

1. It can spread awareness about the culture of school accreditation in society in general and those targeted by the educational process in particular.
2. It supports the progressing trend towards school accreditation regionally and globally.

3. It can enable the ministry of educations in overcoming secondary school problems by assuring its quality, and obtaining accreditation.

4. To support the efforts exerted by the national agency for quality assurance and accreditation to enable schools to obtain accreditation.

METHODOLOGY:

The descriptive/ analytic method was used for the purpose of describing, interoperating, and analyzing data about school accreditation in general, and school accreditation in the United States and Britain in particular. It was also used to highlight the gap between the existing realities of the Sudanese Secondary School and requirements needed for accreditation. Such use of method helped considerably in arriving at conclusions and results on which future suggestions and recommendations were made.

TERMINOLOGY:

1. Accreditation:

It is defined as a cluster of producers and operations implemented by the accreditation agency for the sake of making sure that a particular institution has met the conditions and specifications of quality set by accreditation agency.[5] Operationally, it is defined as accreditation agency declaration and certificate, that a particular educational institution; that is the Sudanese Secondary School has met the required level of quality standards and indicators set by the particular accreditation agency.

2. Contemporary Trends:

It is defined as the school accreditation system being applied in both the United State of America and Britain.

SECTION ONE: ACCREDITATION:

It is defined as an approval given by the national agency for quality assurance and accreditation for a particular educational institution if it has shown efficiency in its institutional performance and effectiveness. It can also be in the form of an approval of a certain educational programmer in compliance with the national standards or any other standards accredited by the agency. The institution should have advanced system of development and continuous reinforcement for quality [5].

REQUIREMENTS OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS` ACCREDITATION [6]

1. The educational institution specifies its educational and instructional objectives to match (ES).

2. The educational institution should have a managerial board to be responsible for independent general policies. Among the board`s member, there should other educational leaders and representatives of other educational sectors.

3. It has to have an executive head who is responsible for the performance of the educational institution. He is to be helped by a sufficient numbers of employers and clerical staff.

4. Material resources need to be made available to ensure good performance.

5. Experienced human and teaching cadres need to be made available to ensure good application of sustainable development techniques.

6. Admission policies and declared objectives need to be specified according to the levels of certificates awarded to students.

7. The educational institution should have the power of development in all administrative, financial, and academic fields.

8. Is has to have a clear financial base with some financial resources to ensure its future stability.

9. It should publish and distribute its internal statues in which its specific tuition fees, admission requirements, internal policies, guidelines of certificate award, and any other matters that of concern to students.

10. The educational institution must have a programmer for the local society service and more society participation, in addition to setting up a working team, or a special unit to be responsible for accreditation implementation.

TYBES OF SCHOOL ACCREDITATION:

1. Institutional Accreditation:

It is a comprehensive approval of a particular educational institution. It is a body responsible for an institution evaluation in respect of its mission, objectives, student service, the financial situation, and administrative effectiveness. It is wholly based on the principle that each part of the institution shares in the advertisement of the declared educational objectives, on the assumption that all units are regarded as working and integrated.

The institution should also show that it has adequately met all conditions and standards, and made available all necessary facilities, such as buildings, equipment, laboratories, training grounds, library and play grounds, in addition, it has to make available a

reasonable number of teaching and administrative staff beside other institutional characteristics such the legal and administrative authority that governs the educational institution. The stability of financial sources and interaction with the local benefiting society has also be shown.[7]

2. Academic Accreditation:

It includes a member of standards and procedures that specify the level of educational institutions` compliance with the set educational programmer's quality standards.

It is some kind of approval of academic efficiency given to educational institutions after a comprehensive and integrated evaluation of teachers and their academic qualifications and experiences, and research activities, number of students and their achievement in regular tests, student`s files, the availability of resources rooms. Academic accreditation is also associated with compliance with other quality standards and the extent to which they are applied in respect of the educational content and curricula, teacher performance, teaching methods, evaluation methods, examinations. All such measures are administered by specialist scientific and academic agencies .[8]

3. Professional Accreditation:

It is that type of accreditation which is concerned with the recognition of the quality and suitability of persons practicing various sorts of professions in view of certain standards set by professional agencies and organizations at the local, regional and international levels. Such recognition is given by certain accredited institution which is mainly established for such purposes, i.e. trade unions, syndicates, or scientific society. Such recognition is based on the idea that wherever there is a legal license for anyone to

practice any profession, there will always be a room for judging the professional practice and performance, besides, such measure keeps away those who do not belong to profession on one hand and at the same time it ensures the efficiency of all provided educational services. Educational programmers basically need two types of accreditation: A comprehensive one for accrediting the content, methods, and techniques of such programmers, and the other is a professional one to ensure the relevance of such programmers and how effective they are in acquiring the necessary professional competencies in the future [9].

4. Principles and Characteristics of School Accreditation:

The idea of accreditation is wholly based on the philosophy of total quality management and the necessity for continuous development for the sake of the achievement of the set educational goals, and in forcing the advantages and treating the disadvantages in practice as a whole. It is regarded as a way for improving the quality of education within the total quality management standards. It is a philosophy of change for more transparency and accountability. A School accreditation is a continuous process which is always aiming at creating and innovation for more quality and excellence in performance. It is meant to encourage the spirit of competition between both educational institutions and programmers. It can also be described as objective in that it is always applied according to certain external standards to check the objectivity of self-evaluation of the educational institutions. It is a comprehensive process based on transparency and the appropriate application of systematic approaches relevant to the evaluation of all educational inputs and outputs, with the aim of pinpointing the areas of strengths and

weaknesses in order to seek the appropriate ways of treatment to ensure total quality and continuous improvement of performance in all various educational a respects .[10]

SIGNIFICANCE OF SCHOOL ACCREDITATION .[11]

1. It enables the setting of general standards for measuring the effectiveness of education, and encourages the elaboration of the existing standards in use in all educational institutions.

2. It furnishes the solid base for all improvement and modernization process and the development of human and material resources to ensure the appropriate application of quality and assurance.

3. It highlights the role and reputation of educational institutions in order to attract more customers to share services on the part of student, business men and invertors.

4. It presents the necessary parameter's indicating the application certificates.

5. Is assures the reliability and credibility of services being provided. It assures customers that money being spent was widely used for the sake of achieving the approved objectives preset. It also specifics the degree of educational institutions` competence to be more eligible to receive governmental and non- governmental support.

STAGES OF SCHOOL ACCREDITATION [12].

1. Self-Study:

This stage is normally known as an internal or self-evaluation stage. Here, the educational institution needs to present a comprehensive study on their actual situation in view of the preset standards required by the accrediting body or bodies. Such study

is deemed to include all necessary information relating to the academic programmers, it administrative and financial organization, and services being provided to the local society, areas of development, future visions, and the future planning strategies. Such study has to be fully supplemented with the necessary documents, appendices and tables.

2. Site Visit:

The accreditation awarding body sets up a team of external experts in order to study the submitted documents prior to the visit of the institution asking for accreditation.

Personal interviews are also conducted with the teaching staff, administrators, and students. In addition to that, the team members are asked to inspect the available resources such as buildings, equipment, and resource rooms. Such visits are meant to pinpoint the areas of weakness for the sake of more elaboration and improvement in the future [12].

3. Final Resolution:

After the team`s visit, the accrediting agencies study all reports, observations, and recommendations made by the particular educational institution, a final resolution will be taken in proportion to the educational institution compliance with the required standards. Normally, accreditation is given to a limited period of time ranging between 2, 5, 10 years. In case of a negative resolution being issued, the institution has the right to reclaim accreditation. The final resolution can be said to have three types: An unconditional accreditation which means that particular institution has fulfilled all the conditions set by the accreditation awarding body. The second type is that in which some conditions will specified and the educational institution is asked to meet. The third one is that in which

the particular institution is deprived from accreditation for the reason that the institution does not have the minimum requirements of accreditation. It is also in the accreditation agencies right to withdraw accreditation certificates from institutions if breaches of laws and legislation are observed.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

Al–Husain (2010)][7] : aimed at realizing the existing situation of educational accreditation system in pre–University education in Egypt with regard to its history, besides realizing quality assurance and accreditation in some foreign countries in respect of their philosophy and objectives, and educational institution performance standards and evaluation systems. The researcher used the comparative method. France, the United Kingdom, and Canada were taken as models for foreign experience. The study has come with a suggested framework for improving the quality assurance and accreditation system in Egypt, which in ways reflects the unique Ren of the Egyptian society in view of the international trends.

Al–Sikhail:(2010)[15] : aimed at specifying the concept of educational accreditation, and the bases on which school reconstruction can take place in Al–Daghia Province, beside realizing the main obstacles facing such reconstruction. The researcher used the descriptive method. The study has come up with the following main results: Educational accreditation is considered to be one of the most effective means for applying total quality management globe wide. The school construction relies heavily on oneness of educational decision making, and educational projects planning. It can also achieve many of the proposed schools aims. The study has shown the school head performance is average. Other forms of performance are rated between high and average levels.

Centrality of educational administration is considered to be the main obstacle facing the application of the reconstruction plan.

lawgiving:(2010)[16] : The aim of the study was to detect if they were statistically significant differences between the poor secondary schools with light student density and the students of well off background in attaining the advanced accreditation`s standards. Beside the difference between students with regard to reading and mathematics. After an extensive quantities study and, checking tens of schools, and conducting a unified test in reading and mathematics, the study aimed to the conclusion that poor schools in comparison with rich schools are lagging behind in respect of attaining leadership and governance standards, teaching and learning, sources and supporting programmers, beneficiaries, communications and relations, use of results. It has also been concluded that there is statistically significant differences between schools with standards of rich backgrounds considerably obtain school accreditation standards.

Johnson, (2012) [17] :Titled: A Quantative Comparison between secondary school student achievement in the state of Pennsylvania with mid states association. "The main objective of the study was to find out how effective the accreditation processes in improving student academic achievement and to think of some ways of providing new educational services for students for the sake of raising the standard of educational performance and achievement. The study having applied a questionnaire directed to 152 secondary school directors, the study has come up with the following main results: The accredited schools proved to have higher statistical average that those not being accredited. An increase also has been observed regarding the number of graduates, academic achievement, and improvement in reading, writing and mathematics. Despite

the high cost of accreditation processes, it has also been observed that it has a sizable effect in improving students` achievement. It is therefore recommended data and information have to be made   available for the benefit of school directors and educational leaders in order to be able to take the right decisions.

ACCREDITATION POLICIES IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA [12]

The institution seeking accreditation need to submit an application that meets the following requirements:

1. All documents needed for accreditation should be made available during a period that does exceed 18 months as such documents normally take a longer time to be checked and sorted out especially the application is submitted for the first time. Applicants need to submit a written report on the general performance and offered programmers which should be in compliance with accreditation standards set by the awarding body or bodies.

2. The reviewing team will then pay a visit to the particular institution seeking accreditation to meet administrations, staff members, students, and some graduates to check the authenticity of documents being submitted, and all assessment processes that took place.

3. The assessing team includes some consultants of the professional agency or institution seeking accreditation.

4. A report is compiled and submitted to the responsible head of the accreditation body.

5. A final decision will be issued about granting accreditation or not.

6. If a decision of approval has been issued, which normally be in effect for 5 years, the institution seeking accreditation needs to prove that the required standards have

been adequately applied and met. The performance of the institution will be subject to revisions during a period that ranges between $5 - 10$ years. Such revisions may necessitate some revisits.

ACCREDITATION OBJECTIVES IN THE UNITED STATE OF AMERICA [12]

1. Making sure that institution seeking accreditations have met the minimum standards prescribed by the accreditation awarding bodies.

2. It is to be recognized that the educational institution is offering the required good quality education.

3. Enabling prospective students to be enrolled in desired and attractive programmers as far as lab our market is concerned.

4. Facilities students transfer from educational institution to another.

5. Protecting educational institution from any kind of negative internal or external pressures.

6. Emphasizing the right of educational institutions to governmental financing and the right to invest public and private finance.

7. Encouraging continuous self-development of all institutions and weak programmers.

8. Ensuring privacy of all educational institutions.

9. Encouraging the participation of all staff members and workers in the institution`s self-planning and evaluation.

ACCREDITATION POLICIES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM [13]

1. Regular visits are played to the educational institution seeking accreditation, beside some interviews conducted with responsible leaders.

2. The institution is asked to submit a comprehensive report describing all educational techniques used, and quality assurance procedures taken.

3. A report is written by the accreditation team about the results of the visit to the particular institution to affirm to what extent; the quality standards have been met.

4. Such report is also discussed with leaders of the particular institution.

5. Decisions will then be taken as for accreditation award. Otherwise, the institution is asked to do the requirements.

6. For a 6 month period, the institution has to apply the reset standards under regular control conditions.

OBJECTIVES OF ACCREDITATION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM [14]

1. Enabling educational institutions to develop and improve their inputs, operations, and outputs.

2. Increasing trust and credibility in educational institution locally and globally with respect to the degrees they award.

3. To make available trustworthy information for the benefit of all educational institutions partners.

4. Enabling educational institution to take decision about their development.

5. Assisting educational institutions to fully comply with principles of transparency, openers and frankness regarding their levels of performance.

6. To create a suitable administrative atmosphere and all means possible for accountability.

HINDRANCES TO SCHOOL ACCREDITATION

1. Educational institution are sometimes feel cautious about accreditation feasibility, and fear that accreditation may to lead to detect some their malpractices, or it may limit the scope of independence.

2. As education institutions mainly depend on governmental financing, they feel that accreditation procedures may lead to more additional costs.

3. School implementation needs time and effort on the part of the school administrative and the teaching staff.[5]

4. The low awareness of workers in educational institution with regard to the importance of and necessity for school accreditation beside the lack of enthusiasm and the low spirit of work in a team and outweighing the seasonal interest.

5. Accreditation standards and indicators are not clearly clarified, beside, the low degree of objecting of accreditation implementation.

6. The infrastructures are far less than required.

7. In sufficient financing due to the limited sources of finance.

8. The lack of skilled and trained manpower to affect development and improvement.

9. The centrality of educational policy making, decision taking, and routine.

10. The weak information systems in the field of education, and the lack of coordination between information sources.

11. The problems of multicity and complexities of educational regulations.

12. The lack of strategic planning for more adaptation of objectives to the requirements, beside, the lack of future plans in educational institutions.[14]

RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS:

1. There is a need for a call for a national campaign for spreading the culture of quality and accreditation among the Sudanese people, besides calling for an information initiative to raise awareness of all about societal participation.

2. Preparation and implementation of a comprehension national plan to affect school accreditation.

3. Make available funds in every educational unit for the purpose of financing school project.

4. Colleges of education need to create opportunities for workers in the educational sectors to be awarded diplomas in quality and accreditation.

5. Establishing new special units for the study of economics of education. and others for managing change and strategic planning processes, and educational technology development.

6. Appointing school teachers who are Ph.D. holders in quality and accreditation.

7. Making use of foreign countries experiences in the field of school accreditation and quality assurance.

8. There is a need for a regular evaluation of schools to ensure that the objectives, strategies, programmers are in line with development requirements in the country.

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