



## EXAMINATION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISM IN HIGHER EDUCATION: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF HIGHER EDUCATION FRAMEWORKS IN SOUTH KOREA AND MALAYSIA

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### Abstract:

The Quality Assurance Agency plays a pivotal role in upholding the standards and quality of education worldwide. This systematic review, classified as a secondary study, undertook a rigorous content analysis of qualitatively obtained data. Additionally, it utilized a comparative analysis approach to scrutinize the intricacies of quality requirements and benchmarks for tertiary education set forth by leading governmental bodies across various nations, focusing particularly on South Korea and Malaysia. The study aimed to examine the frameworks, protocols, and methodologies employed by prominent state entities within educational institutions to supervise, evaluate, and improve quality standards in higher education. This endeavor will significantly contribute to advancing quality and standards in accordance with national development strategies, thus serving as a cornerstone for ongoing developmental efforts within the country.

**Keywords:** higher education, Korean Council for University Education, Malaysian Qualification Agency, quality assurance, quality standards

### 1. Introduction

South Korea's education system has been found to be relatively modernized and has undergone clear reforms. South Korea restructured the Ministry of Education in 2001,

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renaming it the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, with authority spanning from school education to lifelong learning across all sectors of society (Kim & Lee, 2018). The structure comprises two main parts: the central ministry and regional education offices in various provinces (Park, 2016).

The Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development has a policy-level Advisory Council for Education and Human Resources Development Policy, advising the president, and a Central Council on Education, advising the prime minister and the minister of education (Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, 2020). Additionally, the education curriculum includes both core curriculum and school-specific curriculum, tailored to each school's characteristics and purposes, aligned with societal changes (Choi *et al.*, 2019), which mainly aims to develop future learners who are self-directed, creative, career-oriented, community-oriented, and democratic (Han & Jung, 2017). This curriculum serves as both educational standards and a guide for teaching, with a focus on producing high-quality human resources to meet industry demands, setting benchmarks for international standards (Lee & Park, 2020). Moreover, South Korea aims to enhance university excellence, diversity, and expertise in the 21st century, with universities competing to improve education quality, research and development, and workforce production (Kim *et al.*, 2019). The government has abolished various regulations to strengthen university quality, grant autonomy, ensure accountability, flexibility, and adaptability to changes (Ministry of Education, 2021), focusing on educational efficiency and management improvement (Song & Choi, 2018), fostering innovation to enhance student capabilities to international standards (Yang & Kim, 2017), emphasizing boundaryless learning to adapt to societal changes and developments in the new global society (Jung & Yoon, 2019). Students, therefore, need to seek new knowledge and possess additional foreign language skills (Choi & Park, 2016).

Compared with the Malaysian system, this is one of the ASEAN nations that has adapted and formulated education policies systematically from the pre-primary to tertiary levels (Tan, 2019). The education management system in Malaysia is divided into five levels of administration: national, state, district, group of schools, and school levels (Chong & Othman, 2017). The national-level education management falls under the responsibility of the Federal Government, with two main agencies overseeing education: the Ministry of Education (MOE) for primary, secondary, and pre-university education, and the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) for tertiary education, particularly higher education (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2021). The management of tertiary education in Malaysia has explicit policies for adapting to rapidly changing labor markets (Abdullah & Tan, 2018). Key principles include focusing on cultivating entrepreneurial thinking in the higher education curriculum nationwide (Rasul & Cheong, 2019), creating a system that produces graduates ready for employment beyond mere job-seeking (Lim & Kaur, 2016), establishing a system that does not emphasize traditional academic pathways and provides equal value to technical training institutions (Mohamad, 2020), and emphasizing innovation to meet current and future student needs while facilitating greater flexibility for students to customize their learning experiences (Abdul Rahim &

Othman, 2018). The collaboration between private and public institutions is encouraged, with oversight and regulation shifting from a centralized, strict oversight model for all Higher Learning Institutions (HLIs) to a framework based on internal governance within the framework of oversight (Mohamed & Ismail, 2017), ensuring financial sustainability of the higher education system by reducing reliance on state resources (Ibrahim & Yap, 2020) and ensuring that all stakeholders directly benefit from the system (Wong & Chan, 2018).

However, the rapid change in the current global environment is a pressing need for accelerated technological development. This involves integrating knowledge from various disciplines and embracing disruptive technologies that have wide-ranging economic and social impacts, leading to improved quality of life, the emergence of new production and service paradigms, the creation of new professions and job formats, and the potential displacement of traditional labor models. Consequently, these factors inevitably affect educational institutions, necessitating elevated operational standards and preparedness to address future changes. Higher education standard agencies in each country play a crucial role as a key agency in governing the quality and standards of higher education, aiming to accelerate the development of quality and internationally comparable standards for higher education, continuously adapting various standards to remain relevant. This is vital to driving intellectual and labor development for the nation in the foreseeable future. This research, therefore, purposively examines only the systems and agencies related in these two countries, South Korea and Malaysia, in comparison to investigate three primary aims:

- To scrutinize the intricacies of quality prerequisites and benchmarks for tertiary education as outlined by prominent governmental bodies across diverse nations.
- To examine the frameworks, protocols, and methodologies employed by leading state entities within educational institutions to supervise, assess, and enhance quality standards in higher education.
- To formulate policy suggestions aimed at furnishing valuable insights for enhancing the quality and standards of tertiary education to harmonize with the dynamic global landscape.

## **2. Research Framework**

The study has been conducted through a systematic review focusing on the following research framework:

- Study and analyse the philosophy/aims of higher education management of each country.
- Study the details of quality requirements and standards for higher education by the respective state agencies, including guidelines/recommendations for quality and standard aspects for new educational management directions, such as collaboration with businesses or external organizations, education management

via information technology systems, research-only education, and lifelong learning-supporting education.

- Study and analyse the structure of systems, mechanisms, and practices for overseeing the quality and standards of higher education by state agencies operating within educational institutions.
- Study and analyse the structure of systems, mechanisms, and practices for tracking, auditing, and evaluating the quality and standards of higher education by state agencies operating within educational institutions, as well as state practices if they do not meet the quality and standards.
- Study systems, mechanisms, and practices for promoting educational management and quality assurance by state agencies provided to educational institutions.
- Provide policy recommendations as informative inputs for updating the quality and standards for other higher education institutions to meet the changing global landscape.

### **3. Methodology**

This research employed a systematic review approach, which was characterized as a secondary study according to guidelines provided by Vardell and Malloy (2013). The methodological framework involves qualitative content analysis of gathered data, followed by comparative analysis to discern key components. The study's scope is delimited to policies introduced by select governments, encompassing papers published between 2013 and 2024. A comprehensive search on Google Scholar yielded 425 documents using specified keywords such as 'philosophy of higher education,' 'quality and standards of higher education,' 'higher education system,' 'quality assurance system,' 'university accreditation,' 'qualifications framework,' and 'qualifications agency.' After screening, 273 papers were excluded for not meeting the predefined criteria. Of the remaining 152 papers, only 103 were deemed relevant to the research framework focused on the purposive sampling countries, namely Malaysia and South Korea. All selected papers were required to be in English or Malaysian, without restrictions on research type or academic discipline. Additionally, discursive papers, including review papers, were incorporated to enhance understanding of the topic.

### **4. Results and Discussion**

#### **4.1 The Education System in South Korea in Its Contemporary Era**

The implementation of a New Education System signifies South Korea's transition towards the Information Age and a globally interconnected society Kim (2002). This initiative aims to foster a welfare state in education, promoting an inclusive and perpetual learning environment accessible to all Korean citizens regardless of time and location (Park, 2007). Within this educational framework, the government has reorganized

vocational and technical education, allowing for flexible credit transfers across educational institutions, thereby facilitating youths' adaptation to the Information Age (Kim, 2013). Consequently, the contemporary South Korean education system prioritizes learner-centered methodologies, offering a plethora of educational institutions and pathways to accommodate diverse societal strata and individual interests (Lee, 2016), and schools are encouraged to collaborate closely with communities and parents, leveraging modern information technology and multimedia resources to provide ubiquitous learning opportunities (Lee *et al.*, 2019). Furthermore, the establishment of professional graduate schools aims to bolster career advancement in the Information Age (Ministry of Education, 2017). South Korea essentially has crafted an education system geared towards fostering an information network for a knowledge-based society, nurturing a culture of lifelong learning to equip individuals with knowledge, skills, modernity, and ethical values (Korea Council for University Education, 2020). Universities or higher education institutions are categorized into various types, including four-year institutions, Industrial Universities, Teacher Training Universities, Junior Colleges, Aviation Colleges, Communication Colleges, Cyber Colleges, Technical Colleges, and others offering undergraduate programs (Higher Education Act, 2020). This legislation, therefore, mandates both state and local governments to oversee educational management and establish educational systems to address essential educational matters (Higher Education Act, 2020).

#### **4.2 The Educational Reform Strategy of South Korea**

South Korea initiated its first educational reform in 1995 to accommodate a learning society and the competitive landscape of the 21st century. The key strategies of South Korea's educational reform include restructuring the Ministry of Education Korea restructured the Ministry of Education in 2001, renaming it the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development. This ministry holds jurisdiction over education from school to lifelong learning in all sectors of society. The structure comprises a central ministry and education district offices located in various provinces. The ministry decentralizes administrative authority and budget allocations to local agencies. It also includes a Policy Advisory Council for Education and Human Resources Development, advising the President, and a Central Council on Education, advising the Prime Minister and the Minister of Education. Additionally, curriculum reform: Defining Future Learner Profiles Educational curriculum consists of core curricula and school-specific curricula that schools and teachers can tailor to the characteristics and goals of each institution, aligning with societal changes. The 7th curriculum reform in 1997 defined future learner profiles emphasizing self-directed learning, creativity, critical thinking, career development, community contribution, and democratic citizenship. The curriculum serves as both the education standard and a framework for learning development and teacher guidance. Reforming Higher Education for Excellence in the Knowledge-Based Society: The Korean government aims to elevate universities to world-class status in the 21st century to meet the demands of a knowledge-based society. Universities compete to

enhance educational quality to keep pace with the knowledge society and become leading institutions. Strategies involve quality improvement, management reforms, research and development, and producing a workforce aligned with industry needs. The government sets benchmarks for producing high-quality human resources, removes regulations to strengthen university autonomy, ensures accountability, and fosters flexibility to adapt to changes. It emphasizes the efficiency of higher education, management improvement, and innovation development to raise students' international competitiveness, focusing on borderless learning to keep up with changes and developments in the new global society. The curriculum emphasizes learning new things that surpass the era in the knowledge-based society. Students need to have the ability to seek information and have foreign language skills (Higher Education Act, 2020).

### **4.3 The Quality Standards of Higher Education in South Korea**

The quality standards of higher education in South Korea are governed by The Korean Council for University Education (KCUE) and the Korean University Accreditation Institute (KUAI). KCUE, an advisory body, is comprised of four-year universities that develop tertiary education and is responsible for accrediting four-year universities. Its primary responsibilities include (1) establishing an efficient student admission system, (2) enhancing the university quality assessment system for international recognition, (3) conducting research on factors influencing universities and proposing relevant policies, (4) organizing various training courses to develop educational personnel, (5) promoting international cooperation and supporting student exchanges with foreign educational institutions (Ministry of Education, 2020). On the contrary, KUAI, an independent body separate from KCUE, ensures fair and credible university assessments. Its primary task is quality assurance through accreditation. The main objectives are to promote transparent and rigorous certification for Korean universities, thereby enhancing their autonomy and fostering responsibility. The accreditation aims to prepare higher education institutions (HEIs) toward collaborative pathways with minimum requirements and certification standards to enhance the quality of tertiary education (Higher Education Act, 2020). The main roles of quality assurance in Korean higher education institutions, specifically by KUAI, include certification and improvement of university education quality, strengthening university accountability by expanding institutional autonomy, generating public satisfaction in understanding university education quality, and enhancing international acceptance of the evaluation system.

The operational criteria for quality assurance in Korean HEIs consist of four stages:

#### **A. Preparation stage:**

- Institutional preparation for self-assessment.
- Data organization for self-assessment reports.
- Familiarization with assessment and quality assurance for universities.
- Statistical data review of the Korean University Accreditation Institute (KUAI).
- Participation in operational meetings by university representatives.
- Consultation feedback to promote self-assessment.

- Review/reporting of previous self-assessment.

**B. Planning and organizational management stage:**

- Development of decision-making systems for self-assessment.
- Planning schedule for self-assessment reports.
- Budget planning/procurement for operational planning.
- Organizational structure development and operation for self-assessment.
- Assessment methodology establishment.
- Development of applied plans for assessment results.
- Complete reporting guidelines for self-assessment.
- Role and responsibility designation for committees.
- Collaboration chain formation between departments.

**C. Assessment stage:**

- Overall review of operational plans.
- Detailed review of assessment, assessment criteria, and quality assurance decisions.
- Data collection/analysis.
- Committee assessment.
- Preparation of self-assessment reports.
- Consultation feedback from self-assessment reports.
- Suggestions for self-assessment.

**D. Application for assessment stage:**

- Submission of self-assessment reports to the Korean University Accreditation Institute (KUAI).
- Application for final assessment results for specific purposes.
- Reflection on final assessment results for future development (Higher Education Act, 2020).

#### **4.4 The General Guidelines for Managing the Quality of Higher Education in South Korea**

- The general guidelines for managing the quality of education in universities include the following aspects (Korean Council for University Education, 2024):
- Continuous quality assurance and improvement of university education.
- Reviewing compliance with accreditation criteria according to documented practices within specified timeframes.
- Annual review of adherence to quantity-oriented indicator standards; providing recommendations.
- Enhanced scrutiny to ensure that universities maintain standards post-accreditation.
- Augmenting the university's role in education and societal responsibility.
- Establishing evaluation criteria for universities regarding institutional performance and societal responsibility.

- Disseminating assessment results/accreditation quality assurance processes and enhancing promotional efforts.
- Interpreting outcomes in the context of governmental accreditation of higher education institutions.
- Enhancing competitiveness and expertise promotion of universities.
- Evaluating if university operations align with stated educational objectives and philosophies.
- Conducting comprehensive evaluations according to specified goals.
- Identifying and sharing case study models.
- International harmonization of university education.
- Strengthening collaboration with global quality assurance organizations in higher education, such as APQN and INQAAHE.
- Elevating global educational cooperation systems by collaborating with international quality assessment and accreditation organizations.
- Establishing national-level educational accreditation data centers.

#### **4.5 Monitoring, Reviewing, and Assessing the Quality and Standards of Higher Education Institutions in South Korea**

In monitoring, reviewing, and assessing the quality and standards of higher education institutions, the Korean University Accreditation Institute (KUAI) adheres to the following standards (Korean University Accreditation Institute, 2024):

##### **A. Criteria for assessment decisions:**

- Assessments are based on 1) input factors (educational conditions and environment) that assure educational quality, 2) process factors (delivery of educational activities and university management), and 3) outcome factors (satisfaction with education or educational outcomes reflecting educational goals).
- Assessment criteria: Comply with minimum requirements set by the Korean University Accreditation Institute, including consistency with criteria, preparation of supporting evidence, and credibility of evidence provided.

##### **B. Key assessment criteria:**

- Key assessment criteria are evaluated with a “pass (P)” or “fail (F)” rating based on performance levels higher or lower than the minimum standards.
- Universities meeting all six critical criteria are confirmed eligible for evaluation.
- Universities failing to meet at least one of the six key criteria have their qualifications assessed after undergoing a quality certification review.

The Korean University Accreditation Institute's management committee stipulates that universities unable to meet minimum requirements must provide reasons for non-compliance when submitting applications.



#### **4.6 Promotion and Support of Education Management and Quality Assurance for Higher Education in South Korea**

Universities accredited by the Korean Ministry of Education are supported by the Korean Council on University Education (KCUE) and the Korean Association of University Education (KAUE), which continuously engage in research and support the development of university admissions in Korea. They announce general admission criteria and timelines, which university members must adhere to, and are subject to scrutiny if these criteria are violated (Korean Council on University Education, 2024).

Decisions made by member universities follow and filter violations of these criteria through the management of faculty advisory groups for university admissions and annual university admissions information sessions. The council works to inform both members and the public about university admission standards and processes. Additionally, they organize University Life Programs (ULPs) to provide opportunities for high school students to earn university credits before completing secondary education (Korean Council on University Education, 2024).

The Ministry of Education supports financial reforms and restructuring through financial aid. State support for universities and students is limited, with only 3% coming from central government funding, while the remainder receives support from private sector funds. State expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP is very low, at only 0.3%, compared to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) mean of 1.1%. The proportion of government funding to total university revenue is restricted to 22.7%, which is significantly lower than the OECD average of 78.1% (Korean Ministry of Education, 2024).

Government scholarships are provided to students studying at Korean universities, including:

- 1) The Global Korea Scholarship, which aims to facilitate advanced education for international students in higher-level programs beyond undergraduate and undergraduate degrees at Korea's top-tier universities to promote international exchange in education and relationships between countries.
- 2) Government-supported international student exchange programs provide meaningful experiences for exchange students in Korean culture and education to enhance the global competitiveness of Korean universities.
- 3) The Support Program for Self-financed Students, designed to raise awareness of the benefits of studying in Korea and to financially incentivize outstanding students by providing financial assistance.
- 4) The Government Scholarship for Overseas Study (for Korean citizens), aimed at promoting educational development balance by promoting global human resources in areas necessary for national development. It provides financial support for basic education branches.
- 5) The Korea-Japan Joint Higher Education Student Exchange Program, aimed at cultivating high-level human resources for future relationships and promoting

friendship through student exchanges between Korean and Japanese universities (Korean Ministry of Education, 2024).

#### 4.7 The Education System of Malaysia Under the “Vision 2020”

Under the 'Vision 2020' initiative, mandated by the Malaysian government to become a high-income nation by the year 2020, one of the strategies to achieve this goal is to prioritize education and the development of quality graduates, with a target enrollment rate in tertiary education of 40% (Lee, 1999). This ambitious target underscores the government's commitment to enhancing the quality of education and producing a skilled workforce capable of contributing to Malaysia's economic growth and competitiveness in the global arena (Grapragasem & Mansor, 2014).

Malaysia has placed significant emphasis on the development of both the quality and quantity of research in its major universities. Presently, the country allocates 1% of its GDP towards research and development, resulting in five universities out of 65 being designated as "research universities" (Sirat & Wan, 2022). This status affords them additional funding from the government and increased autonomy, so that the Malaysian government has established agencies to oversee and maintain the quality standards of higher education. One such agency is the Malaysia Qualifications Agency (MQA), operating under the Ministry of Education. MQA is defined as a "*global-level agency for quality assurance in higher education*," with its primary mission being to "*establish a quality assurance system aligned with internationally accepted practices*" (MQA, 2020). The role of MQA is crucial in implementing the National Qualification Framework (NQF) to ensure the highest quality and internationally recognized education across all public and private higher education institutions in Malaysia.

Malaysia, therefore, has outlined key objectives in its higher education management policies, aiming to:

- Foster entrepreneurial thinking throughout the country's higher education curriculum and produce graduates capable of not only seeking but also creating employment opportunities.
- Develop a system that values technical and vocational training institutions equally with traditional academic pathways, promoting inclusivity in educational offerings.
- Shift the focus from imported factors to outcomes and actively track technological and innovative advancements to better meet the needs of current and future students.
- Foster collaboration between private and public educational institutions, transitioning from centralized governance to a more decentralized framework to enhance institutional autonomy.
- Ensure the financial sustainability of the higher education system by reducing reliance on state resources and encouraging all beneficiaries of the system to contribute.

#### **4.8 Malaysian Higher Education Quality Standards**

Malaysian university quality standards and qualifications frameworks have been established to guide learning outcomes at each level of education. These frameworks encompass eight key areas, including knowledge, practical skills, social skills, professional values, communication, critical thinking, lifelong learning, and managerial skills (MQA, 2020). Additionally, efforts have been made to recognize prior experiential learning through programs such as the Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL), providing opportunities for individuals to progress through various levels of education based on their competencies and experiences.

Overall, Malaysia's educational policies and frameworks aim to ensure relevance, currency, and inclusivity in its higher education system, aligning with global trends and the evolving needs of its diverse student population.

These quality assurance and standards in higher education are crucial aspects of educational governance in both Thailand and Malaysia. In Malaysia, these standards are governed by legislation, specifically under the control of the Ministerial Cabinet, which sets policy directions and decisions related to qualifications frameworks, standards setting, quality assurance, and financial management for higher education institutions. The Cabinet comprises a chairman and 16 members, including high-ranking officials representing various ministries, state, and private higher education institutions, as well as professionals appointed by the Minister of Higher Education for a term of three years (Ministry of Higher Education: HE) and the provisions outlined in Section 12(1) of the legislation state the following:

- 1) Approval of plans and policies for the management of higher education institutions.
- 2) Approval of amendments and updates to the qualification framework of Malaysian higher education.
- 3) Adoption of policies and guidelines regarding the accreditation and certification processes of programs, qualifications, and higher education courses (HEPs).
- 4) Receipt and monitoring of reports, performance results, statements, and other relevant data related to the accreditation, evaluation, and assessment of institutions.
- 5) Continuous guidance to institutions acting as quality assurance agencies and undertaking necessary tasks under the legislation (MQA, 2020).

#### **4.9 Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA)**

The Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) serves as the primary body responsible for evaluating and assessing the quality and standards of higher education. It establishes committees for various purposes, including providing policy-oriented decision-making information. These committees include the Unit Accreditation Committees, which oversee the accreditation of arts and social sciences and science units, respectively. They are responsible for evaluating and analyzing externally assessed course reports and deciding on the accreditation of educational service providers for the certification of

courses and temporary and full accreditation qualifications. Reports prepared by evaluation committees are presented in table format and considered at accreditation committee meetings, chaired by the head of the Malaysian Qualifications Agency, along with expert members in relevant fields. And there are committees responsible for equivalence assessment, assessing the equivalency of courses and qualifications against the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) levels. The qualifications proposed in Malaysia must define the MQF qualification framework level as there are qualifications both domestically and internationally that are unclear in their qualification levels and thus require clarification. Furthermore, there is a self-accreditation committee responsible for receiving inspection reports of universities invited for assessment. This committee conducts two reviews annually and must self-accredit every five years. The committee comprises members from the council, two accreditation committee members, vice-chancellors or presidents of public and private universities, and senior officials from the Ministry of Higher Education (MQA, 2021).

This quality assurance consists of internal and external quality assessments and decisions on the quality of course assessments. Internal quality assessment involves self-assessment and is the responsibility of each faculty, including reviewing the quality of courses concerning data collection, identifying strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities, strategic planning to support sustainable strengths, and problem-solving suggestions for quality improvement. The self-assessment results serve as a self-contained educational database covering nine standards, including vision, mission, educational objectives, and learning outcomes, curriculum design and delivery, student assessment, student selection and support services, academic staff, educational resources, course quality monitoring and review, leadership, governance, management, and continuous quality improvement.

Prior to the external assessment, each faculty at a university in Malaysia conducts internal quality assurance practices. These practices include:

- a) Appointing a coordinator, particularly a database coordinator, who serves as the key liaison between the institution and the quality assurance committee. Deans should inform the quality assurance unit about the coordinator's details. Additionally, each faculty should establish a committee to organize matters related to the assessment, such as opening and closing ceremonies, travel arrangements, and preparation of brochures, souvenirs, etc.
- b) Preparing documents and additional evidence to support the accuracy of facts and figures in the database and self-assessment reports. Documents supporting the standards should be systematically arranged and stored in the dean's office for review or consideration by the assessing committee. Computers and printers should be made available in the dean's office.
- c) Preparing PowerPoint slides summarizing the content of each of the 9 standards in the database to be presented by the dean during the curriculum summary lecture.

- d) Selecting student representatives for each academic year. Selection criteria should include academic proficiency (gender and ethnicity), and students should be briefed informally about their role during the unofficial discussion with the assessing committee. Student representatives should inform the assessing committee about the purpose of their visit for feedback, including quality and suitability of the curriculum, academic and personal counseling, health services and financial aid, student involvement in policy advocacy and institution services. Moreover, students should recommend the assessing committee during the tour of teaching facilities such as the library, lecture halls, and laboratories.
- e) Selecting academic staff representatives to ensure a balance between senior and junior staff, and subject coordinators. Briefly explaining the roles between the unofficial discussion with the assessing committee. Academic staff representatives and subject coordinators should be informed of the purpose of their visit for feedback, including, staff development, promotion opportunities, training, and development, management and leadership, duties and responsibilities, and financial allocation.
- f) Notifying other relevant centers within the university about the purpose of the assessing committee's visit and the possibility of being selected to visit by the faculty. These centers include the Information Technology Center, the main library, the counseling department, student health clinics, and university accommodations. Inviting senior university administrators, particularly the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Internationalization), the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students and Alumni Relations), the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation), the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Development), registrar staff, secretaries, and library heads, to attend meetings with the assessing committee for discussions on topics such as academic staff recruitment process, promotion, training, and development opportunities, management and leadership, duties and responsibilities, and financial allocation (Mohd Hussaini & Yaacob, 2012).

#### **4.10 Promotion and Support of Education Management and Quality Assurance for Higher Education in Malaysia**

The promotion and support of educational management and quality assurance are integral aspects of the educational framework in Malaysia. The Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA), which operates autonomously under the purview of the Ministry of Higher Education, not only sets directions and evaluates quality but also actively promotes educational quality through its quality assurance structure. This framework includes policies, guidelines for prior learning recognition, and outcome-based learning at various levels. Under this framework, lifelong learning is compared with formal education at all levels through the Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) or Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), encompassing both formal and informal learning experiences. The process of accrediting prior learning is conducted by educational

institutions admitting learners and assessing evidence of prior learning, which may include non-formal and workplace training. While no specific courses are mandated, the framework outlines the methods for assessing prior learning broadly, based on evidence such as work reports, research reports, publications, work portfolios, letters of recommendation, or assessments in the absence of evidence, possibly through examinations to gauge levels and abilities (Malaysian Qualifications Agency, 2021).

## 5. Conclusion

Regarding quality assurance in higher education, the Korean University Accreditation Institute (KUAI) is the main agency responsible, operating independently from the Korean Council for University Education (KCUE) (Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, 2020). KUAI's primary role is to ensure fair and credible university evaluations, focusing on quality assurance (Korean University Accreditation Institute, 2018). Meanwhile, KCUE advises certified universities (Kim & Choi, 2020). KUAI evaluates universities based on import factors (educational conditions and environments), process factors (education activities delivery and university management), and outcome factors (satisfaction with education or education outcomes reflecting educational goals) (Korean University Accreditation Institute, 2018).

In terms of qualification framework requirements, South Korea's education system has established standards for learning at each level, divided into two main criteria: Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes (KSA) and Autonomy (Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, 2020). Each level has summarized standards as follows (Kim & Park, 2019). Similarly, The Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) is a legally mandated organization under the Ministry of Education responsible for quality assurance and control in higher education (Malaysia Qualifications Agency, 2020). The MQA defines itself as a "*globally recognized quality assurance agency for tertiary education*," with its main mission being to establish a quality assurance system aligned with internationally accepted practices (Malaysia Qualifications Agency, 2020).

The quality assurance efforts in Malaysia aim to integrate transparent quality assurance bodies from both the public and private sectors (Ong & Lee, 2019) and are responsible for the National Qualification Framework (NQF) structure to ensure confidence in the quality of education (Malaysia Qualifications Agency, 2020). The components of the education quality assessment framework include internal quality assessment, which includes self-assessment and is the responsibility of each faculty (Chua & Ng, 2018), and external quality assessment or expert assessment conducted by individuals or organizations outside the institution (Tan & Lim, 2017). In terms of qualification framework standards for higher education in Malaysia, clear guidelines have been established, divided into three fields of study and eight levels of qualification (Lim & Tan, 2021). However, this framework does not cover honorary degrees and certificates of participation in learning (Chin & Goh, 2019). For professional skills training, besides following the guidelines of the National Qualification Framework,

education management must also comply with the standards for each profession, as defined by the National Occupational Skills Standards (NOSS) (Ng & Wong, 2020). Malaysia's qualification framework defines the learning outcomes for each level broadly across eight key areas (Kong & Cheah, 2018): Knowledge, Psychomotor/Practical/Technical Skills, Social Skills and Responsibility, Professional Values, Attitudes, and Ethics, Communication & Team Skills, Critical Thinking & Scientific Approach, Lifelong Learning & Information Management, and Managerial & Entrepreneurial Skills (Malaysia Qualifications Agency, 2020).

### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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