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The Practice on Quality Enhancement of Nursing Education in Namibia - Reflective Perspective

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Abstract: This article explores the practice on quality enhancement in nursing education in Namibia from reflective perspective. We interrogated on the concept's quality development, enhancement, and assurance in relation to teaching and learning and assessment in higher education as part of Quality Assurance (QA) in nursing education. By applying the critical reflection, we examined the quality of nursing lecturers in Higher Education and focused on the evaluation of students' training quality as the core in enhancement of quality nursing education; explored the comprehensive quality and pursuit of excellence; examined the collaboration with other stakeholders to enhance quality; We argued that with huge influx of nursing students due to massification and democratization in higher education should be guided by sociocultural teaching and student-centred learning approaches as an appropriate model that would facilitate quality teaching and learning in huge diversity classes, and address all student challenges. We also discussed on the professionalism and assessment by arguing that different types of assessment should be used to address the student diversity and hence improve the quality of learning and teaching while maintaining maximum professionalism. However, any type of curriculum should be aligned with curriculum. In addition, the discussion and conclusion were also provided.

Keywords: Enhancement, Nursing, Quality, Reflective, Massification.

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INTRODUCTION

Democratization and massification in higher education in Namibia have caused constant influx and, consequent increase in numbers of nursing students in Higher Education (HE) has brought challenges in teaching and learning. Admission of large number of nursing students in higher learning institutions will cause production of graduates of poor quality who cannot be absorbed in the global workforce or students who are not competent and innovative (Van de Putte *et al.*, 2018). This is happening because of the diversity of students, structural and cultural values, expectations, and level of preparedness from secondary school. The incorporation of remedial support in the teaching programme and teacher-centred approaches were not seen as an appropriate approach to address student diversity and quality. On the contrary, sociocultural teaching and student-centred learning approaches have been seen as an appropriate model that would facilitate quality teaching and learning in an unfamiliar knowledge community and address all student challenges (Northedge, 2003).

A student nurses in HE are adult student, and it is imperative to understand these adult students at the individual level through the context in which the learning process is taking place. Changing of context in HE facilitates and enhance student nurse to contextualize their thinking in the frame of social, political, cultural, and economic contexts (Rusu, 2018).

Enhancement of quality nursing education is an imperative factor to take care of societal change. Nurse graduates are expected to work according to their scope of practice and regulations for their country, and they are also guided by economic infrastructure and knowledge (Kukkonen *et al.*, 2020). They are expected to work according to changes in the scientific, technological, economic, social and provision of health care environment (Page *et al.*, 2019).. The quality of nursing education is monitored and regulated by different entities such as the National Qualifications Authority (NQA) Act of 2003, Health Professional Council of Namibia (HPCN) and National Council for Higher Education (NCHE). Act of 1996 and quality assurance policies of different higher learning institutions.

Emancipation would also be bringing personal development among graduates and students in the sense that the graduates will be able to innovate and employ critical thinking to solve problems that they will encounter in their daily life, be it at personal and at social level (Mendoza, 2020) . The HE institution must produce graduates who can contribute actively to improving the economy of the country. This can only be materialized when quality in nursing education has been enhanced throughout nursing courses which is supported by quality assurance centers and departmental communities of practice. Quality assurance extends the focus of outcomes on the curriculum, teaching and assessments (Shalyefu, 2017).

However, the quality assurance center at the HE institutions and national levels are being mandated to evaluate and guarantee that all graduates that are being produced, are being absorbed in the terms of employment for the HE to accomplish its mission and vision. But this quality assurance centers, being internal or at an external level, must be mandated to ensure that all students are being employed after graduation and have a way forward in case they are not being employed. All graduates must be skilled and equipped with the knowledge that would allow them to be innovative, motivated, and initiate their private business without failing. The way students are learning, skills to be achieved, the effective strategies to achieve those skills, venue of learning activities, number of students and educators. Types of resources needed to achieve intended outcomes, suitable teaching and learning, factors that enable or constrain the learning process.

There are various teaching strategies that a lecturer could use to achieve the intended outcomes of the curriculum such as lecture, demonstration, group discussion, problem-solving, seminars, tutorial, symposium, role-play, web-based, blended learning, assignment, project, and simulation which involving learning games and field trips (Horntvedt *et al.*, 2018). The common methods that lecturers utilize are lecturing, case studies, group discussions, problem solving and projects for theoretical components. Demonstration can be used concurrently with group discussion in the practical component. Blended learning is now a new teaching concept due to Covid-19 pandemic. Despite all those new teaching strategies, few nursing lecturers in Namibia, prefer to utilize case studies and group discussions more often. In professional opinion, case studies and group discussions facilitate critical thinking and enhance the quality in the nursing education learning to achieve the intended outcome of the curriculum. Application of these techniques, it really enhances diverse knowledge among diverse students and promotes a sense of ownership among students. It also enhances the student-centered approach. Consequently, the teacher learning center only involves an educator and students are passive participants whilst a student-centered approach enables students to be in charge of their own learning and educators' function in the role of facilitators.

METHODS

Critical reflection was used to help authors of this article reflect on experience and action to engage in a process of continuous learning and quality enhancement of nursing education.

DISCUSSION

Quality assurance in Higher Education (HE) is perceived as a key driver of the institution to achieve its academic excellence. It is reflected by good services which are offered by institutions with quality at

affordable prices. Hence, HE plays a critical role in social, economic, and political development in any given nation. Quality assurance activities have existed in HE to increase demand for greater accountability and efficiency in the use of public funds (Harvey & Williams, 2010). Quality teaching has become an imperative issue in the higher education landscape. Despite this, it has been facing continuous changes and challenges due increased international competition, social and geographical diversity of the student body, increasing demands of value for money and introduction of information technologies (Kadhila & Likando, 2019). Concept of quality has been defined, with enormous definition, but it depends on the organization product whereby quality activities have been taking place (Bologna *et al.*, 2004) Nowadays, there are bodies exist worldwide to guarantee quality assurance at institutional, national, and global levels. Graduate attributes are also playing an important role in the quality assurance because it determines the employability status of the graduates. Under discussion section, we begin with critical engagement with concepts of quality development, enhancement, and assurance in relation to teaching and learning and their implication in higher education as part of Quality Assurance (QA). The role of quality assurance committee which guarantee the implementation of quality assurance at national and institutional level in HE and towards curriculum, teaching and learning, and assessment in HE institutions. We also discuss the role of structure, culture, and agency in quality assurance implementation. Finally, we conclude as lecturers, what is the role in relation to enhancement and development of quality in curriculum, teaching learning, and assessment in my context. It should be understood that quality development is a strategy that eradicates pressure among stakeholders in the institution by enhancing QA. It also integrates the enhancement of learning and teaching with quality and standards monitoring processes. Quality development is taking place during development, implementation, and evaluation during curriculum development. It is regarded as part of continuous professional development by providing advice and guidance among educators. It also forms links between curriculum development and QA (Gosling & D'Andrea, 2001). Quality development is materialized through integration of technology into teaching and learning by conducting digital classrooms to enhance technology and introduce the 4th industrial revolution. Quality in teaching is also conducted during curriculum transformation to respond to emerging issues. The main aim of quality development in education is to achieve common goals in higher education to improve quality teaching and learning activities. However, some of the educators in HE might perceive quality assurance as the enemy of their academic progress. This is happening for the reason that they might not want to embrace new development such as technology integration and curriculum transformation. Consequently, they are

resistant to change, they would want to keep their traditional way of teaching and learning which may compromise quality in teaching and learning. To avoid an intruder in curriculum development, quality assurance must create awareness among educators. So that educator might take curriculum development in a positive manner to improve quality teaching and learning.

Quality enhancement (QE) is the process in education services of improving academic practice to deliver quality products. Therefore, quality enhancement is being achieved through quality assurance (Williams, 2014). Thus, QE are striving toward quality improvement and QE involves a multitude of activities. Both concepts are integrated and interactive processes in the improvement of an institution's teaching and learning. QE is more transformative and regarded as a treatment tool and process to develop and eradicate the limitations discovered during QA. QE concentrates on the continuing improvement of teaching at an institution. On the other hand, QE is concerned with the improvement of learning and teaching experiences, meeting internal standards, formative process, qualitative performance, moves from lower to top level and stakeholder are having more autonomy (Elassy, 2015). In nursing education quality enhancement is a continuing process, whereby all educators are trained to improve on their teaching and learning through in-service training on the teaching and learning activities. In-service training enlightens the educator with new teaching knowledge and skills in response to emerging situations and student needs to suit the realities. Training is conducted by the quality assurance department to maintain quality in the subject matter by an expert of the programmer. In-service training is conducted in response to needs identified through lecture self-assessment, peer reviewer, student-lecture evaluation, and feedback from stakeholders. In-service training is being conducted to relevant stakeholders via an online platform by the Codel department. The main purpose is to enhance quality teaching and teaching, guarantee academic excellency by enhancing good teaching practice. The in-service training needs is being identified through peer observation of teaching and student evaluation of teaching. Evaluation results are empowering educators to evaluate their practice and improve on their quality of teaching. An in-service training programme is aimed to improve the quality of teaching and learning, research, and community services activities. Quality Assurance (QA) has a broad definition in HE, it has been defined as a strategy of preventing mistakes, avoiding problems, and ensuring high desired level standards. QA is the process of measuring quality of the product and guaranteeing the standard of a specific product has been met. It is the process of checking the quality of the process and outcomes. The aim of quality assurance is to comply, control, accountable and enhance education quality and

outcomes. QA plays a vital role in the HE policy and it comprises three variety paradigms of QA in education, they are such as: internal, interface and future quality waves. These three paradigms have identified the implications of QA in higher education. The internal QA is the mechanism that focuses on improving the internal environment and processes. It serves as a guarantee that effective learning and teaching must be conducted to achieve the planned goals. The interface QA is guaranteed that teaching and learning activities are satisfying the needs of stakeholders and it is accountable to the public and graduate attributes. The future QA focuses on the alignment of education and the curriculum to guarantee and secure the future of new generations. The interface is the second paradigm which indicates quality as the conformance to standards in the first approach and the third approach is indicating quality as an effective way of achieving institutional goals. Whereas the second approach indicates the relationship in the conception of education quality and satisfaction of stakeholders within a specific curriculum (Bologna *et al.*, 2004). Quality assurance is regarded as a diagnostic tool in teaching and learning environments. Henceforth QA focuses on the effectiveness of the educational process. QA also involves on two concepts, which are retrospective and prospective. The retrospective approach focuses more on accountability, whereas the prospective approach concerns improvement, focusing on current teaching and learning in the future and continuing to fit the purpose of an institution (Elassy, 2015). The retrospective looks back at what has already been done and evaluates summative judgement against external standards. It focuses more on the management rather than academics. This instrument is used by external evaluation through a checklist to determine standard in the specific quality being evaluated. QA measures the quality of the education curriculum, outcomes, teaching and learning activities and assessment to ensure a high standard regarding attributes of the nursing graduates. Students have to comply with the assessment as stipulated in the assessment policy. However, sometimes the quality of assessment has been compromised. Because of online assessment, students were not prepared and trained to be assessed online, but they were assessed during remote teaching. Personally, I have experienced the problem of online cheating, and the students were cheating because there were no effective measures in place to prevent cheating during assessment. This happened because no training was provided to eradicate cheating during assessment. I am therefore advocating effective preventative measures to be implemented to reduce cheating because it is compromising the quality of teaching and graduate attributes. Therefore, appropriate training for online assessment should be provided to lecturers by the university. I prefer to assess students with case studies that would trigger the student's mind to think critically rather than giving them short questions whereby the student would look for answers in the notes, books and

from online sources. Quality Assurance is the process of checking the quality of the process and outcomes of curriculum in nursing education. Quality assurance is aimed to comply, control, accountable and enhance education quality and outcomes of the product (Bologna *et al.*, 2004). Constructive alignment in the assessment is enhancing quality in assessment and determines the relationship between expected outcome, teaching and learning strategies and assessment. The expected outcome is relating to knowledge, skills, and attitude. The teaching and learning strategies are based on the teaching activities conducted by an educator and carried out by students to facilitate and promote a learning environment among students. Assessment is based on how students would be evaluated to determine if they have achieved the intended outcomes of the program (Loughlin *et al.*, 2021).

CONCLUSION

Evaluation is an important diagnostic tool to improve teaching strategies and respond to social needs to suit the realities. Quality of education is enhanced and achieved through balance alignment between, teaching and learning activities, curriculum content, and assessment. Quality excellence could enhance nurse graduate to practice as an independent nurse practitioner at the local and global levels in a professional manner. Thus, would improve patient quality care and improve quality of life in society at large. This can be achieved if there is constructive alignment in teaching and learning activities, curriculum, and assessment. This professionalism will have an impact to eradicate all public complaints regarding the quality of nursing care offered to patients by nurse graduates. It prepares nursing graduates to care for patients with competence, commitment, dedication, honesty, integrity, open communication, and justice.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest regarding publication of this paper

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