Complying Quality Management System ISO 9000 Requirements Within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Muslim Countries

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Abstract: Malaysia is acknowledged by other Muslim countries and referred to as being the most developed and progressive Muslim country in respect of politics, administration, economics and social development. Malaysia nowadays is considered as a model among Muslim countries in implementing quality systems in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The aim of this paper is to investigate how Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Malaysia are complying with quality management system ISO 9000 requirements. This paper also discusses the elements of organisational culture that are involved in ISO 9000 implementation and maintenance. A qualitative approach and case study strategy was used to investigate the phenomenon in one ISO 9000 certified university in Malaysia. Interviews were employed as the main data collection to obtain in-depth information in respect of the subject investigated. The study found that many activities were undertaken to fulfill ISO 9000 requirements. It was also discovered that there are elements of organisational culture involved in ISO 9000 implementation. This study adds to the knowledge of ISO 9000 implementation within HEIs in Muslim countries. The findings from this paper can be employed by managers in HEIs in Muslim countries as a guideline in their endeavour to implement effective quality programmes. This is crucial as Muslim countries are currently putting tremendous efforts into improving the quality of their respective HEIs. Quality improvement is paramount to locate HEIs in Muslim countries on the global map on a par with HEIs in Western countries.

Key words: Quality system • ISO 9000 • Muslim countries • Higher education institution • Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is acknowledged by other Muslim countries and referred to as being the most developed and progressive Muslim country in respect of politics, administration, economics and social development. Malaysia is also well known internationally as being among the few Muslim countries that have introduced and established an Islamic financial system. History is being created again as, nowadays, Malaysia is seen as a model among Muslim countries in implementing quality systems in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The objective of this paper is to investigate how Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Malaysia are complying with the requirements of quality management system ISO 9000, i.e., quality management system, management commitment, resource management, product realisation and continuous improvement. This paper also discusses the elements of organisational culture involved in ISO 9000 implementation and maintenance.

Malaysia is situated in South East Asia and its population is 27.468 million. In 2009, the economic growth was 5.7% [1]. The major production and exports of Malaysia are crude petroleum, palm oil, rubber, sawn logs, tin, black pepper, liquefied natural gas (LNG) and natural gas [2]. Malaysia boasts one of South East Asia’s most vibrant economies, the fruit of decades of industrial growth and political stability. Its multi-ethnic, multi-religious society encompasses a majority Muslim population in most of its states [3]. The Malaysian constitution guarantees freedom of religion while making Islam the state religion. According to the Population and Housing Census 2000 figures, ethnicity and religious beliefs correlate highly. Approximately 60.4% of the population are practicing Islam; 19.2% Buddhist; 9.1% Christianity; 6.3% Hinduism; and 2.6% practice Confucianism, Taoism and other traditional Chinese religions [4].

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