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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Obstacles to the implementation of higher education quality standards from the point of view of doctoral students at Biskra University

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obstacles; higher education quality standards.

Abstract

This study aimed to identify the obstacles to the application of higher education quality standards from the point of view of doctoral students at Biskra University, and the study sample consisted of (40) male and female students, and by relying on the descriptive and analytical method, a questionnaire was designed as a tool for the study; This study reached the identification of the following obstacles: Obstacles at the training level , Obstacles at the level of material and human resources, Obstacles at the level of infrastructure ,and Obstacles at the level of distance learning. thus, the hypothesis that There are obstacles to the implementation of quality higher education from the point of view of doctoral students at Biskra University was verified. However, it neglected a very important element, namely the extent to which higher education quality standards are applied, which led to several imbalances represented by a set of fundamental problems: problems related to training and scientific research, problems related to funding and infrastructure, and problems related to the social and economic environment and context.

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1. Introduction Problem

In light of these challenges, Algeria has worked since independence to establish and develop numerous higher education institutions, providing them with various material, human, and organizational resources. As a result, Algeria's higher education system has experienced significant growth, as reflected in the expansion of the university network and the increase in student numbers, which has necessitated a series of reforms and changes to improve and develop university education. (Aamira, 2013, p9)

Doctoral students are considered a key link in the transfer of knowledge between students and professors, as they communicate and interact with both parties. They receive direct and indirect training from their professors on the one hand, and on the other hand, teaching a few extra hours at the university level enables them to acquire a range of knowledge, skills, and abilities, thereby making them a conduit for advancing the level of scientific research. They will also be familiar with the various obstacles and problems facing quality in Algerian universities. This research paper therefore seeks to identify the most significant obstacles to the implementation of quality in higher education institutions by posing the following question:

What are the obstacles to the implementation of quality in higher education in Algeria the point of view of doctoral students at the University of Biskra?

2. Study hypothesis:

- There are obstacles to the implementation of quality higher education from the point of view of doctoral students at the University of Biskra.

3. Importance of the study

- The importance of the current study lies in its attempt to highlight the most significant problems and obstacles that prevent the implementation of a quality system in Algerian higher education institutions
- Study of the most important ways to raise the level of higher education in Algeria to international standards.

4. Study objectives:

To identify the reality of quality in higher education at Algerian universities

To identify the obstacles to implementing quality in higher education in Algeria from the perspective of doctoral students at the University of Biskra

5. Defining the concepts of the study :

5.1 Obstacles: A set of administrative, financial, technical and social obstacles that hinder those responsible for implementing quality programs in higher education institutions.

5.2 Quality of higher education: A set of principles and standards that are present in all elements of the educational process, including inputs, processes and outputs, such as students, administration, facilities and environment, and the improvement of the performance of faculty members and the university as a whole, through the optimal and effective use of all human and material resources at the university.

5.3 Doctoral student: Any student who is regularly enrolled in a higher education institution in order to obtain a doctoral degree and who is studying at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Mohamed Khider University in Biskra.

6. Previous Studies :

First study: Article by researchers Miada Kessasra and Alayachi Ben Zarrouq ,(2022) :This study aimed to identify the difficulties in applying higher education quality standards at Algerian universities from the perspective of university professors. The questionnaire was distributed to a sample of (40) university professors. The study found a statistically significant correlation between the responses of university professors regarding the difficulties of applying quality standards in terms of material and human resources, infrastructure, and digital education.

Second study: An article by researchers Nour Eddine Asli, Khadidja Alakak (2019): This study aimed to identify the obstacles to the implementation of quality management in higher education institutions from the perspective of faculty members at the University of M'Sila. A questionnaire was distributed to a sample of 40 faculty members, and the results showed that there are obstacles that limit the implementation of quality management in higher education institutions, namely: obstacles at the organisational level, obstacles at the administrative level, obstacles at the human level, and obstacles at the financial level.

Third study: Doctoral thesis by researcher Regad Saliha ,(2014) : This study aimed to identify the obstacles and prospects for implementing a quality assurance system in Algerian higher education institutions. The study sample consisted of quality assurance officials in higher education institutions in eastern Algeria, and the researcher used a questionnaire. One of the most important findings of the study was the existence of a number of obstacles that limit the implementation of the quality system, related to leadership at the level of the supervisory ministry, administration and organisation at the institutional level, and the behaviour of the parties involved in its implementation. The study also revealed a number of success factors of varying importance from the perspective of quality assurance officials.

7.Theoretical aspect :

7.1 Definition of quality in higher education :

(Martin & Stella ,2007) believe that the term 'quality' is used by beneficiaries to express their views or define their own objectives. The researcher believes that there are two basic concepts of quality in higher education :

A. Respect for standards: considering that it is possible to arrive at a

A. Respect for standards: Given that it is possible to arrive at a quantitative assessment of many levels of higher education and thus apply the same standards to all programmes or institutions.

B. Compliance with the set objective: Quality relates to the achievement of set objectives, given that the tasks and objectives of institutions and programmes vary, and that evaluation is not based on common and quantifiable characteristics, but is linked to a more specific analysis of content.

There are also three meanings of quality:

- Quality is a form of excellence.
- Quality in the mission, as quality is based on achieving the set objectives.
- Added value, meaning that quality is defined by the results achieved."

7.2 Principles of Quality in Higher Education :

The comprehensive quality system in university education includes several principles that must be adhered to and complied with in order to achieve success in its implementation. The most important of these are :

- Awareness of the concept of comprehensive quality in university education among all administrative and operational bodies at the university and their conviction in the successful implementation of comprehensive quality.
- The existence of specific and clear goals for the university, which are set with the participation of all employees.
- The availability of effective leadership that is capable of developing the concept and culture of quality among university employees.
- Adopting a philosophy of error prevention, not just detection, and focusing on correcting processes.
- Respect for university employees, consideration of their rights and fulfillment of their wishes.
- Design of educational programmes and curricula, and study of the needs and requirements of the labour market.
- Achievement of integration between the educational programmes of the various departments throughout the years of study at the bachelor's, master's and postgraduate levels. (ben Alarbi and bakhti ,2017 ,p 293)

7.3 Obstacles to the implementation of higher education quality standards :

There are many obstacles that lead to the failure to implement higher education quality standards in Algeria, including:

- Weak financial support for scientific research, weak management of the concept of lifelong learning, increased teaching load, and weak library facilities. (aladadi,2012,p67)
- Weakness of information systems in higher education institutions, lack of qualified training staff in the field of total quality management in educational institutions. (tayoub and saad,2011,p75)
- The prevailing organisational culture in educational institutions is not conducive to the requirements of total quality management at the levels of leadership, structures and systems, continuous improvement and innovation. Decision-making at the university is centralised, and not all employees are involved in the implementation of total quality management. Management instability and constant change, adoption of quality management methods and techniques that are not compatible with the specific nature of the institution, difficulty in defining service quality measurement criteria, adoption of strategies, policies and systems that are not compatible with quality input, and insufficient appreciation of the importance of human resources.(boukazoula,2019,p 95)

8. Methodology and Field Procedures of the Study :

8.1 Study methodology :

The descriptive analytical methodology was used due to its suitability for studying the obstacles to implementing higher education quality standards from the perspective of doctoral students at the University of Biskra in order to determine their nature.

8.2 Scope of the Study :

Temporal scope of the Study :The study was implemented during the academic year 2024/2025.

Spatial scope of the study :The field study was conducted at Mohamed Khider University in Biskra, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

8.3 Study Population :

The study population consists of doctoral students of both sexes at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences who were enrolled in the 2020/2021 academic year.

8.4 Sample of the Study :

The study sample consisted of (40) students, including (15) male students and (25) female students at the doctoral level from various disciplines in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. They were purposively selected from the study community, and a questionnaire prepared by the researcher on the obstacles to the application of higher education quality standards was distributed.

Table 1. Population and Sample of the Study

Faculty		Doctoral Students (Males)		Doctoral Students (females)	Total Results
Humanities and Social Sciences		15		25	40
		37.5%		62.5%	100%

Source: Prepared by the researcher

8.5 The study tool :

The study tool consisted of a questionnaire designed by the researcher on the obstacles to the application of higher education quality standards from the perspective of doctoral students at the University of Biskra, based on the national reference for quality assurance in higher education in Algeria, as well as the theoretical framework and previous studies.

The questionnaire consists of (20) statements distributed across the following dimensions: Obstacles to the application of higher education quality standards at the training level: Obstacles to the application of higher education quality standards at the level of material and human resources: Obstacles to the application of higher education quality standards at the level of infrastructure: Obstacles to the application of higher education quality standards at the level of distance learning.

Table 2. Classification of Dimensions and Statements of the study questionnaire

Dimensions		Statements		Number of Statements	
Obstacles at the training level		1_5		5	
Obstacles at the level of material and human resources		6_10		5	
Obstacles at the level of infrastructure		11_15		5	
Obstacles at the level of distance learning		16_20		5	
		Total		20	

Source: Prepared by the researcher

To answer the questionnaire statements, a three-point Likert scale was used to determine doctoral students attitudes towards obstacles to the application of higher education quality standards, The following table clear that:

Table 3. The three-point Likert scale

Alternative Answers		Disagree		Neutral		Agree
three point Likert scale		1		2		3

Source: Prepared by the researcher

8.6 Psychometric characteristics of The study tool :

A. peripheral comparative validity :

This is one of the statistical methods used to calculate the validity of a questionnaire, whereby a distinction is made between the highest and lowest scores of the respondents, and then a T-test is applied to indicate the differences between two independent groups. The results are shown in the following table:

Table 4. Results of comparative validity of the study questionnaire

Groups	N	Mean	Ecart Type	T	Sig test	ddl
lowest scores of the respondents	10	42.50	8.88	-5.009	0.00	18
highest scores of the respondents	10	69.50	14.54			

Source: Prepared by the researcher from (spss25)

We observe from the results in Table (4) above that the arithmetic means and standard deviations for the lower and upper groups in the study questionnaire indicate a difference between them, which is confirmed by the T-test value,

estimated at 5.009 at a degree of freedom of 18, which is a statistically significant value at a significance level of 0.05 and a significance level of sig=0.00. This indicates that there is a difference between the lower score group and the higher score group, which shows that the questionnaire has the ability to distinguish between different categories and is therefore valid and can be used in the study.

B. Stability of The study questionnaire :

The stability of the questionnaire was calculated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, relying on statistical software (SPSS25). The stability of the questionnaire was verified, as shown in the following table :

Table 5. Stability of The study questionnaire

Questionnaire of obstacles to the implementation of higher education quality standards	Cronbach's alpha coefficient
	0.94

Source: Prepared by the researcher from (spss25)

8.7 Statistical methods :

- T-test coefficient to calculate the differences between the lower score group and the higher score group to calculate peripheral comparative validity.
- Cronbach's alpha coefficient to verify the stability of the questionnaire using (spss25) software.
- Frequencies , Mean , Standard deviation , Percentage using (spss25) software.

9. Presentation and Interpretation of Results :

The hypothesis states that " there are obstacles to the implementation of quality higher education from the point of view of doctoral students at the University of Biskra ".

Table 6. Means, Standard Deviations, Percentage , Order of priority and Levels of Agreement of the Dimensions of the study Questionnaire

Dimensions	Mean	Standard deviation	Percentage	Order of priority	Agreement degrees
Obstacles at the training level	2.54	0.40	84.67	2	High Agreement
Obstacles at the level of material and human resources	2.54	0.41	84.67	3	High Agreement
Obstacles at the level of infrastructure	2.31	0.52	77	4	Moderate Agreement
Obstacles at the level of distance learning	2.63	0.30	87.67	1	High Agreement
Total	2.50	0.24	83.33	-	High Agreement

Source: Prepared by the researcher from (spss25)

We observe from the results of Table 6 above, which shows the means, standard deviations, Percentage, and agreement degrees for each dimension of the questionnaire on " Obstacles to the implementation of higher education quality standards from the point of view of doctoral students at Biskra University".

that the means of the dimensions of the questionnaire on Obstacles to the implementation of higher education quality standards ranged between (2.31-2.63), and ranked first dimension "Obstacles at the level of distance learning " with a mean of 2.63 and a standard deviation of 0.30, with a percentage of 87.67% and a high degree of agreement,

These statistical indicators collectively demonstrate a strong consensus among students that distance learning constitutes the most significant challenge to achieving quality in higher education.

This finding can be attributed to several interconnected factors. First, distance learning in the context of the university is

still developing, and the rapid transition to online systems revealed several gaps that directly influence the quality of learning. Students frequently report difficulties in maintaining consistent academic interaction with their supervisors and teachers, a factor that is essential for advanced research-based programs such as doctoral studies. Reduced interaction does not only affect the transmission of knowledge, but also limits mentorship, feedback cycles, and scholarly debate, which are central components of quality doctoral education.

Furthermore, many of the digital platforms used for distance learning remain limited in terms of technological robustness, accessibility, and user-friendliness. Users often encounter unstable connections, insufficient technical support, and limited access to interactive features, all of which negatively impact engagement and continuity. Assessment and monitoring procedures also become more challenging in virtual settings, as instructors face difficulties ensuring academic integrity, while students feel that evaluation mechanisms do not accurately reflect their efforts or research progress. Another significant challenge is the insufficient training offered to both professors and students on the effective use of digital tools. While distance learning requires methodological, pedagogical, and technical readiness, many stakeholders still lack structured training in e-learning strategies, which ultimately restricts their ability to implement quality standards consistently.

while the first dimension, "Obstacles at the training level", ranked second with a mean of 2.54 a standard deviation of 0.40, a percentage of 84.67%, and a high degree of agreement.

These results underline a notable shortcoming in training and educational programs related to quality standards within the institution. Effective application of quality standards requires adequate awareness, skills development, and continuous professional training for both doctoral students and faculty members. However, the findings suggest that programs aimed at building capacity in areas such as quality assurance, research ethics, academic writing, evaluation methodologies, and supervision strategies are limited or unevenly implemented.

This insufficiency results in a gap between theoretical policy frameworks and practical academic implementation. When users lack proper guidance and structured training, the integration of quality standards into teaching, supervision, and research practices becomes inconsistent, thereby diminishing the overall impact of institutional quality initiatives. Consequently, quality standards risk becoming procedural requirements rather than active educational practices that shape outcomes and experiences.

The second dimension, "Obstacles at the level of material and human resources", ranked third with a mean of 2.54, a standard deviation of 0.41, a percentage of 84.67%, and a high degree of agreement.

These findings reflect students' awareness that material and human resources form the backbone of higher education quality, and that shortages in this area significantly restrict institutional capacity. Students point to insufficient laboratory equipment, outdated technological tools, and inadequate research facilities as constraints that hinder their ability to engage in high quality research.

Additionally, financial resources dedicated to research and doctoral activities are often limited reducing opportunities for conference participation, publication fees, field studies, and access to international databases. Equally important are obstacles arising from human resource challenges, such as increased teaching and administrative workloads placed on faculty members, which may limit the time available for supervising doctoral research. The lack of specialized staff, research assistance, and technical support also places added pressure on both students and professors, eventually slowing academic progress and lowering adherence to quality standards.

The third dimension, "Obstacles at the level of infrastructure", ranked fourth and last with a mean of 2.31, a standard deviation of 0.52, a percentage of 77%, and a moderate degree of agreement.

Although infrastructure appears to present fewer challenges compared to the other dimensions, the results still indicate the presence of significant concerns. Students highlight issues such as a shortage of adequately equipped lecture halls, limited access to quiet and functional study spaces, and a lack of sufficiently developed research facilities, including libraries and specialized laboratories. While these obstacles may not be perceived as critically restrictive as those related to distance learning or training, they continue to contribute to an academic environment where quality standards cannot be fully realized.

This dimension also reflects broader national and institutional challenges, where infrastructural improvements often require long-term planning and significant financial investments. As such, although infrastructure poses relatively fewer obstacles, its development remains a crucial component of long-term strategies aimed at enhancing educational quality.

As for the overall score for the dimensions of the questionnaire, the arithmetic mean was 2.50, the standard deviation was 0.24, the percentage was 83.33%, and the degree of agreement was high.

confirms that obstacles to the implementation of higher education quality standards are widely recognized by doctoral students at Biskra University. This strong level of agreement indicates that despite various initiatives and policy frameworks, the institutional environment still faces systemic challenges that restrict quality implementation.

Therefore, the findings emphasize the need for integrated institutional efforts aimed at strengthening digital learning systems, developing comprehensive training programs, improving financial and human resource allocation, and planning sustainable infrastructural upgrades. Addressing these areas collectively would create a more enabling environment for quality implementation, aligning the university's practices with national and international expectations in higher education. This indicates that the hypothesis stating that "There are obstacles to the implementation of quality higher education from the perspective of doctoral students at the University of Biskra" has been verified.

Conclusion:

This study addressed the topic of obstacles to the application of higher education quality standards from the point of view of doctoral students at Biskra University, the study sample consisted of (40) male and female students, and by relying on the descriptive and analytical method, a questionnaire was designed as a tool for the study; This study reached to: There are a number of obstacles that limit the effective implementation of higher education quality standards at the University of Biskra from the perspective of doctoral students, highlighting the continuing gap between institutional approaches to quality assurance and actual practices within the university environment. The results showed that distance learning is the most significant of these obstacles due to weak interaction and a lack of adequate training in the use of digital technologies, in addition to difficulties related to training and material and human resources that prevent the desired quality assurance from being achieved. The results also showed that infrastructure, although relatively less influential than other dimensions, still needs gradual and continuous development to ensure its alignment with the requirements of advanced scientific research.

Based on these data, it is clear that achieving quality in higher education requires comprehensive institutional intervention aimed at developing digital platforms, improving pedagogical and research services, strengthening training and continuing education programs, and providing adequate resources to enable students and professors to effectively implement quality standards.

Therefore, we can confirm the hypothesis that "there are obstacles to the application of higher education quality standards from the perspective of doctoral students at the University of Biskra." as the statistical results and their interpretations has been verified

the existence of these obstacles to varying but significant degrees, which calls for the formulation of sustainable development strategies to enhance quality and improve the outcomes of higher education.

Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted in accordance with established ethical standards for educational and social science research. Participation was entirely voluntary, and all doctoral students involved in the study were informed of the purpose and objectives of the research prior to data collection. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. Anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained, and no personally identifiable information was collected or disclosed at any stage of the research process. The data were used solely for scientific purposes and analyzed in aggregated form. As the study did not involve medical interventions or vulnerable populations, formal ethical committee approval was not required under the applicable institutional guidelines of Biskra University.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest related to this study.

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