Challenges in Implementing Academic Accreditation in Higher Education in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to assess the extent of difficulties encountered in the implementation of academic accreditation in higher education in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, it seeks to assess the significance of statistical discrepancies in the difficulties encountered when adopting academic accreditation for various genders and academic ranks. The researcher employed a descriptive research design and quantitative methodology, utilizing a questionnaire as the primary instrument for data collection, in order to accomplish the study's objectives. The study collected data from a group of 1895 academic members who are associated with KKU. The findings of this study suggest that the level of difficulty in implementing academic accreditation is influenced by various factors, including adherence to barriers associated with learning and teaching, barriers associated with the quality of scientific research, and barriers associated with the quality of institutional engagement with society. The findings suggest that there is no statistically significant disparity in the amount of difficulties encountered in the implementation of academic accreditation when taking into account the variables of gender and level of qualification.

Keywords: Challenges in implementing academic accreditation, higher education, Saudi Arabia, KKU.

1. Introduction

The university is the highest level of education in society and has a significant role in developing the human capital within it. The institution endeavors to fulfill its objective by cultivating a highly skilled workforce that shapes the future of the nation through intellectual prowess, practical application, and a strong sense of national identity (Addas, 2018). Young individuals are the ones who give rise to community leaders in diverse scientific, economic, social, and political domains. Culture and administration are two key aspects that society relies on to advance and grow. Universities are increasingly interested in enhancing their connections with their communities, aiming to establish a close contact between university education and the lives, issues, requirements, and aspirations of individuals. Universities have a primary objective of advancing society and pushing it to the highest level in all areas (Khojah & Shousha, 2020). One of the significant changes in the twenty-first century is the focus on providing higher education that meets high standards of excellence, quality control, and academic accreditation. Consequently, academic accreditation institutions were established worldwide to grant academic

accreditation to universities. They do so by establishing a set of standards and indicators that allow departments and decision makers to identify the strengths and weaknesses of educational institutions (Almurayh et al., 2022).

The Ministry of Education in the Kingdom has embraced the concept of accreditation as a necessary means to assess the performance of higher education institutions and validate their efficacy. Consequently, accreditation has garnered significant attention from numerous higher education institutions worldwide (Bougherira & Elasmar, 2023). Academic accreditation is now a crucial prerequisite for universities worldwide. It ensures that universities maintain high standards in their administrative and academic processes, leading to excellent educational outcomes that benefit society. Accreditation also boosts a university's competitiveness and helps it achieve a global ranking in international university classifications. Saudi universities want to attain academic certification (Alkathiri, 2020). The National Authority for Academic Accreditation and Evaluation was founded in 2004 in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as an autonomous organization. Its purpose is to oversee the accreditation of academic programs in higher education institutions inside the Kingdom. The system was created to verify accreditation, encompassing the criteria and metrics used to assess all aspects of university activities, documents, evidence, performance indicators, and review processes. Its purpose is to guarantee that the quality of education in the Kingdom meets international standards and is widely acknowledged in the global academic and professional spheres (Al-Eyadhy & Alenezi, 2021).

Implementing academic certification has become a pressing issue and a standard for ensuring trust in universities and evaluating their overall performance in society. King Khalid University has consistently worked towards improving its administrative and academic performance in order to meet its academic accreditation standards (Al Shawan, 2021). This has been achieved through the implementation of a strategic plan, which aims to obtain academic accreditation from recognized bodies both domestically and internationally within a specific timeframe. The university's overall strategic plan includes this provision, but there are certain challenges that need to be addressed (Kuwaiti & Al Muhanna, 2020). This necessitates conducting research on the topic, as well as the absence of prior studies conducted in the research area that demonstrate the barriers to achieving institutional and programmatic academic accreditation. Hence, this research came to identify these obstacles facing King Khalid University in applying academic accreditation standards from the point of view of faculty members.

Research questions

The aim of this research is to address the following inquiries.

1. What are the obstacles to applying institutional academic accreditation standards at King Khalid University from the point of view of faculty members?

2. Are there differences between the responses of faculty members in identifying obstacles to applying institutional academic accreditation at King Khalid University, according to the variables of gender and academic rank?

2. Literature Review

Accreditation is the formal acknowledgment of an educational institution's ability to carry out its responsibilities, having fulfilled the necessary criteria and standards, and being capable of achieving its objectives with the required level of quality in all its specialized academic programs, while also being able to sustain growth and progress (Alghamdi et al., 2020). Abubakar et al. (2020) defined academic accreditation as the acknowledgement that a certain educational program or institution has met a predetermined degree of quality. According to Hariri (2021), it is a process that starts with the institution evaluating itself, either as a whole or as individual parts, and then comparing this evaluation with an external evaluation conducted by committees consisting of specialized experts. This process is conducted based on pre-established criteria. The National Authority for Academic Accreditation and Evaluation in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (2015) defines it as official certificates issued by an authorized organization to attest that an educational program or institution satisfies the necessary standards. There are two types of accreditation: institutional academic accreditation, which assesses the entire educational institution, and programmatic academic accreditation, which assesses specific academic programs.

The proliferation of educational institutions in the United States of America gave rise to the concept of academic accreditation in 1871. During this time, a delegation from the University of Michigan visited secondary educational institutions to verify their quality and ensure that their graduates would be eligible for university admission without having to undergo entrance exams. In order to address the challenges related to admission criteria, administrators of secondary educational institutions in the state of New England and other areas initiated the establishment of regional accreditation bodies (Allam, 2020). Consequently, the first accrediting organization, named the New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Educational Institutions, was established in 1885. The concept of collaborative voluntary cooperation between universities and educational institutions emerged, aiming to enhance the educational landscape. This led to the formation of regional associations for academic accreditation, involving many states. The inaugural association was founded in the central American states in 1887 with a primary focus on assessing and accrediting secondary educational programs. In early 1913, it shifted its focus to the assessment and accreditation of higher education programs and institutions, as well as establishing criteria to measure the effectiveness of their academic offerings. Subsequently, other local committees were established in various central, northern, southern, and western states to ensure accreditation and maintain the quality of education (Al-Bargi, 2019).

Subsequently, the concept of academic accreditation transitioned to Europe, leading to the proliferation of accreditation practices in numerous developed and developing nations. Educational institutions then embarked on enhancing their systems and programs to align with established benchmarks, aiming to secure academic accreditation from both local and international accrediting bodies (Al-Azmi et al., 2021). The implementation of certification systems at the national level in Arab countries is a new development, with several governments still to take concrete steps towards their implementation. UNESCO has categorized Arab countries into three tiers: Jordan, which has completed the preparatory stage and is now in the phase of actual implementation, and other Arab countries that are now in the process of

implementation. The nations that have already initiated implementation processes are the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Sultanate of Oman, Palestine, Lebanon, and the United Arab Emirates. Additionally, there are other countries that have not yet commenced their implementation processes (Abdelhadi, 2020).

Academic accreditation aims to accomplish overarching objectives that are shared throughout all accreditation procedures. However, there are specific objectives that vary based on the program undergoing the certification process. The primary objectives of academic accreditation can be succinctly described as the verification of an institution or program's adherence to predetermined quality standards, as well as its capacity to fulfill its educational mission and maintain credibility (Alaskar et al., 2019). Additionally, accreditation aims to foster the ability of higher education programs and institutions to engage in self-evaluation, thereby ensuring continuous improvement. By accrediting universities, it provides assurance to the educational community and the public that these institutions have well-defined goals and the necessary conditions to achieve them. Furthermore, accreditation bestows a distinguished status upon accredited universities and programs within their respective societies. Furthermore, it aims to safeguard the university's global standing by upholding the excellence, level, and benchmarks of its educational offerings, in comparison to other academic institutions (Alshehri & Alrafayia, 2023).

Diverse perspectives exist on the categorization of academic accreditation into multiple forms. Accreditation can be categorized into three sections: initial accreditation (which applies to the institution as a whole), programmatic academic accreditation, and professional accreditation. One aspect of academic accreditation is the division into two parts: general accreditation for the institution (institutional) (Al-Shareef et al., 2023). In order to incorporate academic programming accreditation into this section, it is important to note that the institution's accreditation serves as a validation of the high quality of the educational programs offered to students, the second sort of accreditation is professional accreditation (Bougherira et al., 2024).

The subsequent text provides a concise elucidation of the categories endorsed by the National Authority for Academic Accreditation and Evaluation:

1. Institutional accreditation refers to the comprehensive evaluation and approval of institutions based on certain criteria that determine the appropriateness of their facilities and resources. This includes the school's faculty, the provision of academic and student support services, the educational programs, and the levels of student achievement in both academic and non-academic areas of the educational institution (Bougherira et al., 2024).

2. Programmatic accreditation is the process of evaluating specialized programs within an institution to ensure their quality and acceptability for the level of certification they offer (Fishman, 2024).

3. Professional accreditation is the recognition of the approved practices of a profession in society, based on the standards set by specialized bodies and organizations at the local, regional, or worldwide level. For instance, this could involve the requirement of acquiring a license in order to pursue a career as a teacher (Duarte & Vardasca, 2023).

In the previous century, many Saudi state universities initiated the implementation of quality assurance systems in their programs by collaboration and cooperation with international institutions to get accreditation for degrees in specific professional domains. In the 1990s, certain universities, like King Abdulaziz University, built quality control centers, which subsequently underwent further development. In order to enhance academic progress, the Kingdom implemented a new strategy at the start of the 21st century (Aljarallah & Dutta, 2022). This strategy involved the establishment of the National Center for Measurement and Evaluation and the National Authority for Academic Evaluation and Accreditation. These institutions were created in 2003, following the approval of the Higher Education Council's decision. This entity possesses legal personhood and operates with administrative and financial autonomy, overseen by the Higher Education Council. The Council is responsible for overseeing academic accreditation matters in post-secondary educational institutions, excluding military education. Its primary objectives are to enhance the quality of both private and public higher education, ensure transparency and clarity, and establish standardized benchmarks for academic achievement (Khojah & Shousha, 2020).

Academic certification standards differ among countries and are influenced by the purpose of accreditation bodies and the prevailing social and cultural factors. Academic certification standards differ among countries and are contingent upon the purpose for which accreditation committees were formed, as well as the prevailing social and cultural circumstances (Albdr, 2020). The National Authority for Academic Accreditation and Evaluation (2011) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has set forth eleven criteria for assessing the quality and academic accreditation of institutions and programs. These criteria are applicable to both institutions and programs, although there may be variations in their application depending on the type of evaluation. The standards are displayed or showcased. Each accrediting standard is composed of several standards, performance indicators, and evidence, which are organized into five sections (Refaiah, 2020). Presented below is a concise overview of the three institutional academic criteria that pertain to this research.

1. Standard of learning and teaching: The key requirements of this standard include institutional supervision of the quality of education and instruction, assessment of student learning outcomes, procedures for program development, processes for program review and evaluation, student assessment, educational support for students, quality of instruction, provision of assistance for enhancing instructional quality, qualifications and expertise of faculty members, practical experience activities, and collaboration agreements with other institutions (Al-Samhan, 2021). Regarding performance indicators and evidence, the quality of learning and teaching can be assessed by evaluating students, graduates, and employers. This evaluation includes assessing the quality of programs, analyzing statistics on program and course completion, examining graduate employment outcomes, and considering the student-to-faculty ratio. Independent experts' input on the credentials of teaching personnel is a crucial source of evidence regarding the appropriateness of teaching practices and examinations for different educational themes in the National Credentials Framework. It is important to have evidence that may be used to compare levels of learning outcomes with suitable external benchmarks (Hussein et al., 2023). There are other methods to accomplish this, such as assessing student work samples and conducting independent evaluations of the criteria for test questions and student responses.

Selecting performance indicators for assessing the quality of education and instruction necessitates utilizing quantifiable data that may be employed to make comparisons among this institution, other institutions, and previous performance (AL-Mekhlafi, 2020).

2. Scientific research standard: The key prerequisites of this criterion encompass institutional research policies, active involvement of faculty members and students in research activities, the monetization of research outcomes, and the provision of research facilities and equipment. Regarding performance indicators and evidence, documentation such as the research development plan and evaluation criteria can provide evidence of the institution's research strategies. Topics covered include academic promotion, procedures for marketing research, intellectual property, and the level of collaboration with industrial entities and other institutions (Al-Bargi, 2019). Additional evidence can be acquired through the examination of agreements pertaining to collaboration in research or the shared utilization of essential equipment. Faculty and student surveys might offer substantiation about the sufficiency of the availability of research facilities and equipment. Research performance indicators often rely on statistics such as the quantity of research publications per faculty member, the percentage of faculty members engaged in research, and the number of research citations. These figures are then compared to those of comparable institutions. Institutions that prioritize community service or research contributions may consider including indicators to measure the practical applications of their research and scholarly activities in academic or professional fields, notwithstanding the challenges in quantifying such impact (Hail et al., 2019).

3. Standard of institutional relationship with society: The primary criteria of this standard encompass the institutional policies pertaining to the association with society, engagement with society, and the standing of the educational institution. Performance indicators and evidence regarding the quality of the relationship with the community can be determined by examining various documents (Algethami, 2021). These documents include descriptions of community service policies, criteria for evaluating faculty members that incorporate community service, evidence and procedures for promoting the institution through the media, official statements released by the institution, and media coverage about the institution (Al-Samhan, 2021). Community relations reports encompass a range of topics, including the utilization of institutional facilities by the community, staff involvement in community committees or development projects, and interactions with schools and other agencies. These reports can offer valuable insights into the community's perception of the institution's quality and its standing as a respected member of the community. Opinion polls can be conducted to gather specific feedback from the community (Refaiah, 2020).

The researcher did a comprehensive review of many studies and research pertaining to the topic of barriers to implementing academic accreditation. The findings of these studies will be reported in the subsequent section.

Previous studies

Hail et al. (2019) examined faculty members' perspectives on the academic accreditation of teacher preparation programs by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), and its effects on resources, such as human resources, and teachers' morale. A total of

54 individuals took part in the activity from Staff members employed by the American University located in the Midwest region. The study employed questionnaires and interviews. The participants expressed that the academic accreditation process is crucial for improving the academic status and prestige of the school, however many questioned its effectiveness in driving change. Additionally, they stated that the faculty member's workload is a hindrance unless they receive appropriate compensation for it.

Maqableh (2019) explored the barriers to meeting academic accreditation criteria in postgraduate programs in Jordanian universities, and proposed strategies to address these difficulties as perceived by academic leaders. Additionally, it sought to identify the suggested methods that contribute to meeting academic accreditation criteria. The study sample comprised 240 academic leaders from Jordanian institutions during the summer semester of the year 2018/2019. In order to fulfill the study's goals, a questionnaire of 30 items was created. Additionally, a personal interview was conducted to discover potential methods that could aid in meeting academic accreditation standards in study programs. The study findings indicated that the participants' assessments of the existence of barriers were of a moderate nature. The results indicated that there were no statistically significant variations in the estimates of the study sample members related to the college variable. Similarly, no statistically significant differences were observed in relation to the university variable, except for the field of obstacles related to faculty members, which favored private universities. Additionally, statistically significant differences were found in the arithmetic averages for the job title variable, favoring the position of Deputy Dean.

Al-Ghamdi (2021) examined the difficulties encountered in implementing academic accreditation standards at Imam Abdul Rahman bin Faisal University, as perceived by the faculty members. Additionally, the study aimed to determine the variations in their perceptions based on gender, academic rank, and years of experience. To achieve these objectives, the researcher employed a descriptive methodology. The study included a total of 491 faculty members from Imam Abdul Rahman bin Faisal University. The study findings indicated that the challenges related to the implementation of academic accreditation standards at the university were of moderate intensity. Furthermore, there were no statistically significant variations in the perceptions of the study participants regarding these challenges based on different variables such as gender, academic rank, and years of experience.

Alzahem and Aljamaan (2022) examined the influence of the institutional academic accreditation procedure on ongoing quality enhancement and tackled the obstacles encountered during the accreditation process. Data on the impact of accreditation was collected through focus group talks with members of the standards committees, using a cross-sectional poll. The interview was conducted using a structured framework based on the self-evaluation scale format. The acquired data were processed and analyzed using descriptive methods. The accrediting procedure had a favorable impact on the quality of education. Various components of education, such as program descriptions and reports, assessment, evaluation, academic counseling, and student support, underwent considerable enhancements. Additionally, automation was implemented to promote and ensure high quality. The primary obstacles encountered during the accreditation process were the establishment of cohesive control over institutional resources and the formation of community partnerships. The researcher did a comprehensive assessment of many studies and

research related to the topic of barriers to implementing academic accreditation. The findings of these studies will be reported in the following section.

3. Method

This study employed quantitative approaches and descriptive research to provide a comprehensive, precise, and methodical analysis of the characteristics and data pertaining to the population being studied. Descriptive quantitative research, as defined by Saunders et al. (2016), seeks to comprehensively delineate and elucidate all the various facets of the subject or domain under investigation. The processed data is then displayed.

Population and Sample

During the second half of the 2024–25 school year, 3,588 professors and lecturers from King Khalid University participated in a study. Statistics given by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) indicate that a sample size of 275 is adequate for accurately representing the population. To make sure the sample was representative of the whole community, the major goal of the study was to conduct a comprehensive survey among the academics. Moreover, the study's overarching goal was to minimize bias in the findings while collecting a large amount of participant data (Blumberg et al., 2014). We used a digital distribution approach to make sure that all faculty members could access the survey. A grand number of 2100 surveys were found. From the study, 205 surveys were excluded due to a high percentage of unanswered questions; these surveys made up over half of the total, according to Hair et al. (2010). A total of 1,895 surveys were found to be genuine and credible in the research.

Research Instrument

Researchers utilized the results of a previous study by Al-Ghamdi (2021) to inform the creation of the questionnaire that would serve as the primary instrument for this study, allowing them to accomplish their research objectives. Two separate parts made up the survey. The first part of the survey asks people to identify their "gender" and their "academic ranking." In Section 2, we laid up a comprehensive set of 20 criteria for assessing the challenges of academic accreditation. A Likert scale, with a range of "1" (very low) to "5" (very high), was used to evaluate the questionnaire items.

Instrument Validity

A team of 10 education specialists, who are associated with Saudi Arabian universities and have competence in language development, scientific accuracy, and clarity, were tasked with evaluating the reliability of the research tool. According to professional evaluations, it has been determined that all elements are acceptable, but with slight linguistic modifications.

Instrument Reliability

One generally used technique to evaluate the dependability of measurement involves analyzing the coherence of outcomes by utilizing similar samples and devices, while keeping all other factors unchanged. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was employed to evaluate the reliability of

the responses. According to Saunders et al. (2016), the reliability of a survey is established by its credibility, which is considered to be achieved when it reaches or surpasses a minimum threshold of 60%.

Table 1: Cronbach Alpha Test

Variables	Value
Obstacles related to learning and teaching	0.853
Obstacles related to the standard of scientific research	0.861
Obstacles related to the standard of institutional relationship with society	0.870
Total	0.856

The data displayed in Table 1 demonstrate a high degree of consistency in the study, as seen by their alignment falling within the range of 0.853 to 0.870. Furthermore, it is essential to acknowledge that each section of the survey yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient exceeding 0.60, indicating a significant degree of dependability. Consequently, no inconsistencies were detected across the different components of the research instruments.

Data Analysis

The study's research topics were examined using SPSS software to compute the means, execute the independent sample t-test, and carry out a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Cuevas et al. (2004) suggest using the ANOVA One-Way test as a substitute for the independent sample t-test when comparing three or more means. The following explanation pertains to the results acquired using the utilized methods for their characterization. The item's average score is 2.33 or lower, suggesting a low grade. The item's mean score ranges from 2.34 to 3.67, suggesting a moderate degree of performance. The item's mean score is 3.68 or above, indicating a high grade.

4. Findings and Discussion

The study utilized descriptive analysis to offer a comprehensive portrayal of the characteristics of the participants, focusing specifically on their "gender" and "academic ranking." The survey results indicate that a substantial proportion of participants, precisely 68.7%, classified themselves as male. Conversely, the sample included just 31.3% female respondents, indicating that male respondents constituted the majority. According to Table 2, the majority of participants (55.9%) held the position of assistant professors. This was followed by associate professors (27.4%), professors (10.3%), and lecturers (6.4%).

Table 1: The respondents profile

The variable	Categories	N	%
Gender	Male	1302	68.7
	Female	593	31.3
Academic ranking	Lecturer	121	6.4
	Assistant Professor	1059	55.9
	Associate Professor	520	27.4
	Professor	195	10.3

In order to address the first research question, the means and standard deviations of the challenges faced by faculty members in adopting institutional academic accreditation standards at King Khalid University were computed.

Table 3. Means and standard deviation

N	Items	Means	St.devs	Results
	Obstacles related to learning and teaching			
1	Not taking into account the inclinations and opinions of students when they are accepted to the university	4.43	0.42	A
2	Lack of use of critical thinking skills in academic courses	4.08	0.51	A
3	Use the prescribed university textbook without diversifying the scientific references	3.88	0.58	A
4	Poor communication with labor market authorities to know their needs	4.06	0.50	A
5	Weak efforts made to review and develop university courses	4.23	0.53	A
6	The courses are not linked to modern trends in the field of specialization	4.18	0.48	A
7	Weak connection between the specific specialization of a faculty member and the courses he teaches	4.33	0.43	A
	Total	4.17	0.32	A
	Obstacles related to the standard of scientific research			
8	The large number of burdens placed on the faculty member	4.03	0.45	A
9	Weak participation of faculty members in partnerships with international and local research centers	4.18	0.40	A
10	Procedures for obtaining sabbatical leaves for scientific research are complicated	4.29	0.41	A
11	Weak scientific research activity of teaching staff	4.09	0.48	A
12	Inadequate standards for evaluating scientific research	4.13	0.44	A
13	Scarcity of opportunities for external scientific communication	4.39	0.41	A
14	Lack of a policy for marketing scientific research results	3.98	0.49	A
	Total	4.16	0.34	A
	Obstacles related to the standard of institutional relationship with society			
15	The widening gap between what the university offers and the actual needs of society	3.95	0.45	A
16	The prevailing impression among business organizations in the surrounding community of the university is that it is only an academic institution	4.40	0.40	A
17	There are some restrictions facing teaching members when they provide constructive criticism of societal conditions	4.20	0.42	A
18	Lack of tools designed to measure community satisfaction with the services provided by the university	4.26	0.43	A
19	Weak interest among local community members in benefiting from available university services	4.13	041	A
20	Community dissatisfaction with the academic programs provided by colleges	4.07	0.45	A
	Total	4.17	0.32	A
	All instrument	4.17	0.26	A

Based on the information shown in Table 3, the mean score of all variables pertaining to the challenges faced by faculty members in adopting institutional academic accreditation standards at King Khalid University was found to be 4.17, with a standard deviation of 0.26. This discovery is consistent with the investigations carried out by Hail et al. (2019), Maqableh (2019), Al-Ghamdi (2021), and Alzahem and Aljamaan (2022). In addition, obstacles related to learning and teaching was found to be 4.17, with a standard deviation of 0.32. The item labeled as "Not taking into account the inclinations and opinions of students when they are accepted to the university" (item 1) has the highest mean value among all the aspects related to the obstacles related to learning and teaching, with a score of 4.43. The mean score for item 4, which represents the statement "Poor communication with labor market authorities to know their needs", has the lowest value compared to all other items, measuring at 4.06. This could be attributed to the university's selection process, which grants students with high grades the privilege of choosing their desired specialization. Conversely, students with lower grades, regardless of their distinction or lack thereof, are offered alternative options within specializations that may not align with their inclinations and aspirations. This could be attributed to the prevalence of conventional teaching methods, indoctrination, and rote memorization in the majority of Arab colleges, which often overlook the cultivation of knowledge acquisition skills and lifelong self-learning among students. Furthermore, the university continues to employ traditional teaching methods without incorporating information technology. There is a notable absence of technology

in university teaching, as well as a lack of training courses for faculty members, both new and experienced, on utilizing these technologies. Additionally, there is a lack of emphasis on providing the necessary resources for the educational process to a significant degree. The presence of difficulties in this criterion significantly affects the faculty members' motivation and satisfaction in university teaching, as observed in this research on academic accreditation requirements.

In addition, the data presented in Table 3 demonstrates that obstacles related to the standard of scientific research has an average value of 4.16 and a standard deviation of 0.34. Item 13 has the highest average score among the components included in the obstacles related to the standard of scientific research. This specific item claims "Scarcity of opportunities for external scientific communication", and it has achieved an average rating of 4.39. Out of all the questions, Item 14, which relates to "Lack of a policy for marketing scientific research results", obtained the lowest average score of 3.98. This could be attributed to the extensive array of responsibilities imposed on the faculty member, which frequently encompass administrative tasks, resulting in a significant drain on their energy and time. Consequently, this hinders their ability to fulfill their projected research duties. This could be attributed to the inadequate support provided for research capabilities, which fails to meet the actual requirements of faculty members engaged in scientific research. This can be attributed to the absence of a research plan at the university, as well as the lack of substantial financial support for faculty members in scientific research during the first decade of its establishment. Additionally, the lack of enthusiasm among faculty members for scientific research, coupled with the absence of incentives and insufficient emphasis on scientific promotion, where scientific research is a prerequisite for advancement, further contributes to this issue. Similarly, the organizational guidelines for faculty members, which lack disciplinary protocols, suggest that the non-compliance of a faculty member to Failure of the faculty member to engage in scientific research during their academic tenure will result in their being held responsible for any lack of scientific output during that period.

lastly, the data provided in Table 3 illustrates that obstacles related to the standard of institutional relationship with society has a mean value of 4.17 and a standard deviation of 0.32. One of the components encompassed by the construct of obstacles related to the standard of institutional relationship with society that demonstrates the most elevated average score is item 16. This particular item asserts "The prevailing impression among business organizations in the surrounding community of the university is that it is only an academic institution", and it has received a mean score of 4.40. Among all the questions, Item 15, which pertains to "The widening gap between what the university offers and the actual needs of society", received the lowest mean score of 3.95. This could be attributed to the dearth of research and surveys that ascertain the future aspirations and genuine requirements of society. This could be attributed to the restricted focus of faculty members on academic tasks and a lack of recognition of the significance of community engagement. This could be attributed to the existing societal perception of the constraints of contemporary instructional technologies employed in universities, as well as the dependence on conventional approaches. The researcher attributes the presence of these barriers mostly to the insufficient level of interaction between the university and the local community, which falls short of the norms set by academic accreditation bodies. The university's lack of service programs for the community can be attributed to its focus on

establishing and expanding colleges, the failure to complete building requirements for certain structures, and the failure to activate community partnership programs with civil society institutions. Although there are some connections between certain colleges and community institutions, such as the College of Education and Medicine, there is a lack of plans to actively serve the local community. Additionally, there is a shortage of academic expertise and the appointment of recent graduates as academic leaders. They are in a position of responsibility without any prior training or experience in their field of work, resulting in their performance being limited to trial and error. Additionally, they are overwhelmed by the administrative duties associated with their employment.

The independent sample t-test and one-way analysis of variance were employed to determine if there were significant variations in the hurdles encountered by faculty members at KKU while obtaining for academic accreditation, based on their gender and academic ranking.

Table 3. T- test

Variables	N	Mean	St.dev	df	t	Sig
Male	1302	3.91	0.46	1893	0.998	0.350
Female	593	3.89	0.44			

Based on the data shown in Table 3, males had an average rating of 3.91, whereas females had an average rating of 3.89. Furthermore, the Sig value for both gender groups is 0.350, suggesting that gender does not have a major impact on the barriers to obtaining institutional academic accreditation at King Khalid University.

Table 4. ANOVA

Variable	Gropus	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Academic ranking	Between groups	0.243	3	0.081	0.780	0.530
	Within groups	174.064	1892	0.092		
	Total	174.307	1895			

Table 4 indicates that there were no discernible distinctions between the groups when considering academic ranking. The academic ranking of King Khalid University does not have a statistically significant impact on the hurdles to acquiring institutional academic accreditation in the long term, as indicated by the p-value of 0.530.

5. Conclusion

The primary aim of this study was to examine the difficulties encountered in the implementation of academic accreditation at KKU, as seen by faculty members. The research findings suggest that there are challenges in implementing institutional academic accreditation criteria at King Khaled University. The existence of these barriers is mostly due to the inadequate level of contact between the institution and the local community, which does not meet the standards established by academic accreditation authorities. The faculty members' lack of excitement for scientific research, combined with the absence of incentives and inadequate emphasis on scientific promotion, where scientific research is a need for development, exacerbates this problem. The majority of Arab institutions commonly rely on conventional teaching methods, indoctrination,

and rote memorization, while often neglecting to foster the development of information acquisition abilities and lifelong self-learning among students.

Acknowledgments

The authors extend their appreciation to the Deanship of Scientific Research at King Khalid University for funding this work through Large Research Groups under grant number (RGP2/71/45)

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