Implementation and Impact of CEA Accreditation Standards for Quality Assurance and Improvement: A Comparative Analysis of US and Select Saudi Arabian Educational Institutions

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to explore, review, and assess the standards set by the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA). Additionally, it aims at finding what steps have been taken for applying those 11 standards for ensuring quality assurance, improvement, and sustainable change brought in with deliberate effort to align status with those standards and substandards of CEA. Through collaboration with an accredited American institute at a prestigious and well recognized university in the U.S. and other CEA-accredited institutions there, this study will be an effort for examining if there is an alignment of CEA standards with the cultural and environmental needs of Saudi English language institutions. By utilizing mixed methods, including interviews, content analysis, and surveys, the research provided actionable insights for enhancing English language programmes in Saudi Arabia, particularly at the educational institutions located in the Eastern Region. The results showed that the majority of U.S. respondents (89%) reported that CEA accreditation had an impact of English language on education of English language programmes in Saudi Arabia while 68% of the Saudi responses viewed that there was impact of CEA on English education in Saudi Arabia. The results also showed that implementing CEA standards in Saudi institutions will entail a range of challenges, with resource constraints and cultural misalignment being the most significant ones. The findings also pointed out need of some strategies that could be used to better implement the CEA standards including enhancing faculty training programmes, localizing curriculum and adopting culturally contextual pedagogies relevant to Saudi environment. The findings revealed that getting CEA accreditation offers several long-term benefits in student success and achievement, programme quality improvement, and faculty development. These findings also contributed to professional development, curriculum reform, and institutional improvements in line with Vision 2030, ensuring that language programmes in Saudi Arabia are better formulated and equipped to address the needs of the industrial and academic sectors in.

Keywords: CEA Accreditation Standards, culture contextual, comparative analysis, impact,

implementation, US and Saudi Arabia.

1. Introduction

In the opinion of Makhoul (2019), there is need for integration of the 11 CEA standards and 44 substandards into English language programmes as such integration plays a pivotal role in various ways: (a) in shaping the quality of education; (ii) ensuring consistency in teaching methodologies; and (iii) achieving accreditation goals (Makhoul, 2019). The author adds that several studies were made which had explored the role of accreditation standards in improving English language education. Research made by DeMarco et al (2015) brought to light the positive impact of international accreditation on organizational change in higher education. Al-Bargi (2019) referred in his study the result of implementing the 11 CEA standards such as mission, curriculum, faculty, student achievement and student services at King Abdul Aziz University which helped in enhancing quality of English language education. The author states that a gap remains in the literature as the adaptation of these standards don't suit the cultural and educational needs of the Gulf region, particularly in Saudi Arabia. Reeves (2019) stated with an emphasis that there was growing demand for quality assurance in foreign language education. He adds that local contexts will need to be included to smoothen the process of integration on this count in international accreditation frameworks.

The current trend is that educational programmes across the globe are framed by accreditation standards, which are crucial and significant for quality assurance and uniformity. English language programmes are expected to maintain high standards in all its aspects: ranging from teaching, curriculum design, and program administration and this can be done by setting benchmarks by the Commission on English Language Programme Accreditation (CEA). Studies have been conducted and scholarly writings have appeared in great measure on the effects of accreditation, particularly that obtained through CEA. These writings have drawn attention to the pros and cons of applying these standards in different types of schools.

In the countries in which English is not the language that the natives speak, a study was done by

Reeves (2019), and she brought forth the increasing need for quality assurance in ESL programmes. As per trend, generated by globalisation process opening up increasing opportunities to seek employment in foreign lands, equally strong need is felt by the youth everywhere to get globally recognized diplomas/degrees. As global mobility is seen rising, requirement for approved educational programmes is rising too with guarantee of high-quality education satisfying international standards, thus presenting highly pronounced criticality and urgency to educators and administrators. According to Reeves, anxiety for accreditation has spread like infection to the Middle East countries struggling to join the main stream education for participation at the global level. The institutions showing keenness to collaborate in this field are mostly from American groups like CEA, as schools there strive to meet both international and regional standards formulating compatible syllabi/curricula.

This study can be considered as significant for the effort going into it to highlight its findings relevant and serving as guidelines for meeting challenges and opportunities in applying CEA

standards in the US and Saudi Arabia with different cultural contexts, which means applying the standards in different educational institutions, operating in different social/cultural contexts. This defines the study's expected role in making practical recommendations for improving English language programmes in Saudi Arabia in alignment with Vision 2030, emphasizing strengthening initiatives for human capacity development. The strategy suggested in this study for achieving this aim will be collaboration with institutions and professionals in the US which have obtained CEA-accreditation and are ensuring consistency in maintaining the CEA standards. So, this research will make contribution to the broader goal of improving language education standards in the Kingdom, supporting the academic and professional development of students and faculty alike.

The focus of this research is related to reviewing and analysing CEA standards as applied in Saudi and US educational institution where the objective is to know how these standards can be adapted to institutions operating in different cultural contexts. Special attention is directed in this study to the English language programmes in Saudi Arabia with the aim of bringing lasting improvements to curriculum development, teaching practices, and professional training for instructors to address the requirement for adopting CEA standards. This study, again, will be a source to encourage institutions to hasten up the process of partnering for preparing students for availing international academic opportunities by improving their English language proficiency to meet industry standards.

Addressing the knowledge vacuum in available literature is the purpose of this study, apart from the above objectives, and this will be done through process of investigating potential modifications that could be done to CEA standards to enhance English language instruction in Saudi Arabian institutions by catering to local culture as well as academic requirements.

2. Research Questions

The following research questions have been formulated for finding their answers in this study:

1.   How do CEA accreditation standards influence the quality of English language education in U.S. and Saudi institutions?

2.   What challenges do Saudi institutions face while implementing CEA standards, and how can these be overcome?

3.   How can CEA standards be adapted to better fit the cultural and organizational contexts of Saudi educational institutions?

4.   What are the long-term benefits of CEA accreditation in terms of faculty development, student success, and institutional reputation?

3. Literature Review

In the opinion of Algethami (2021), methods of teaching and results of student learning are both enhanced when schools are accredited by CEA. Standards dictate adherence to parameters laid

down, and people accept standards as quality. Quality assurance is important in all matters, education no exception.

Al-Bargi, 2019; Dharmawan et al (2021); Hou et al (2013); Makhoul (2019); as also Miller & O'Rourke (2023) made studies on this subject and came out with their observation that applying international certification standards in culturally different locations presents unique obstacles, which have been the subject of several studies. In inter-community communication, culture plays significant role. Communication in different culture-countries also is important factor to be borne in mind.

As an example, Hou et al (2013) addressed the challenges faced when EMI standards were being implemented in the Asian nations where native language was not English. They suggest in their report that institutions should tailor the EMI formulated criteria to local educational practices and student expectations even if those criteria assist in improving education quality. The authors have stressed upon the need to integrate local context and culture in implementing EMI criteria.

According to the views of Stensaker (2011), there are common problems with institutional autonomy and cultural differences. These surface when institutions start using accrediting methods developed by other institution. Johnson (2021) reported in his study that CEA accreditation acts as a driving force for bringing about institutional transformation. The CEA frameworks as these exist currently aid and support promoting pedagogy, course content offerings, and management evaluation as also development by innovations, thus aligning institutions with worldwide educational standards.

Lee and Kim (2023) did their study and investigated the culturally diverse social and educational culture which is accommodated in the international accreditation requirements. The Universities in East Asian countries have perforce to struggle in an effort to apply western certification standards but these Institutions of higher learning cannot forsake the local context and culture which is the core of society in which they function; they raise their need for accommodating these contextual environmental pressures into the CEA standards.

Patel (2022) made a study with a view to investigating CEA standards in Saudi Arabian educational institutions. He noted that following the guidelines emanating from CEA standard help in increasing quality. However, he author has noticed in his research the challenge of matching those guidelines with local cultural norms; he makes recommendation to include regional changes. This, he says, strengthens both quality education and institutions.

In the opinion of DeMarco et al (2015), when schools make effort to achieve worldwide teaching standards, accreditation often results in better chances for faculty members' professional growth. The authors further say that accredited schools are more likely to put resources into teachers' professional development (skill advancement), revisiting course design, and taking benefit of technological advancements by application in the classroom, guaranteeing that students get excellent education.

Accreditation in gulf countries

Reeves (2019) pointed out that to accommodate the distinct cultural and educational requirements of Gulf area schools, it was thought essential to modify CEA standards. She agreed

that certification standards are intended to be applicable worldwide; but, the guidelines of CEA sometimes need regional adaptations for effective application. With a view to making certification relevant to local situations, preserving CEA's integrity is important and thus the adaption process is vital.

As per Al-Bargi (2019), the English language programme at Saudi Arabia's King Abdulaziz University was much enhanced after using CEA standards. Results showed that using CEA's standards improved pedagogy, student evaluation, and curriculum's richness. In addition, the study's findings showed that the universities were held accountable because of accreditation, which in turn encouraged them to bring their programmes in line with global norms (standard). In the opinion of Al-Bargi (2019), it is important and unavoidable to consider local cultural and organizational norms while adopting CEA standards in non-Western educational environments like that in Saudi Arabia.

Barnawi (2022) added that the CEA standards were helpful but they needed to be adjusted to fit the region's unique requirements. They should take into account things like institutional frameworks, cultural norms, and language variations. For improving the quality of English language programmes, certification is crucial, according to the relevant literature. This is true especially when it comes to using CEA criteria. It stresses how these norms must be modified to fit various cultural and educational settings.

The institutions in non-Western nations, such as Saudi Arabia, may completely reap the advantages of accreditation. Accreditation includes organizational reform and improved programme quality. The institutions must tackle unique local difficulties (social & cultural settings, organizational and other location factors).

4. Methods

Research Design

The present study used a mixed-method approach. Its aim was to examine the CEA certification requirements and their impact on English language programmes in Saudi Arabia. The study used both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The study took place in two settings: (i) Saudi Arabia, and (ii) in the United States. The study was conducted in the academic year 2024/1446 AH.

Respondents

As the study was aimed at question of including contextual and culture plus other location situations and orgnisational setting, it was thought prudent and essential to form two distinct groups of participants. Therefore, this study engaged a diverse group of participants from two different countries—Saudi Arabia (N=8, and the United States (N=26), and who are involved in the implementation and administration of English language programmes accredited by CEA. The participants primarily included were faculty members, administrators, program directors and self-study coordinators from these institutions, providing insights from various levels of involvement with CEA standards. In Saudi Arabia, the focus was on educators and administrators

from institutions affiliated with the English language institutions, where English language programmes were being developed to align with Vision 2030's goals. The U.S. participants came from CEA-accredited institutions, particularly those recognized for their extensive experience with accreditation processes, such as the accredited American institute with whom the present researcher was collaborating under the supervision of a well recognized university. Their involvement offered a comparative perspective on how CEA standards were implemented in different cultural and educational contexts. Through interviews, surveys, and content analysis, these participants provided valuable data on the challenges, successes, and contextual adaptations of CEA accreditation across different educational systems.

Instruments Used

A questionnaire was sent to (N=34) CEA accredited programme coordinators, administrators, and program directors, and self-study coordinators to assess their performance. The objective of the research was to get numerical data on CEA standards and the perspectives of the participants on those criteria. Survey respondents offered critiques on the efficacy, challenges, and resources included in the certification procedure. The questionnaire included 6 categories with different scales with the following numbers of items: Demographic Information (4 questions), familiarity with CEA standards (2items), implementation of CEA standards (2 items), impact of CEA accreditation (7 items), implementation of CEA standards (2 items), and additional impact of CEA accreditation (additional 3 items).

Second, an interview was conducted with programme directors, administrators, self-study coordinators, and faculty members from CEA-accredited institutions in the United States and Saudi Arabia. The objective of this study was to examine the criteria and challenges of the certification process in culturally diverse environments. Participants with diverse viewpoints and employed in various institutions as professionals were selected via deliberate/convenience sampling. The interview included mixed questions (open and closed) under the following categories: Implementation of CEA Standards, impact of CEA accreditation, understanding the context, personal insights, institutional changes, comparative analysis (US vs. Saudi Arabia), and recommendations.

Content Analysis of accrediting materials from institutions in the United States and Saudi Arabia was conducted to determine the procedures for applying for accreditation to the CEA. Reviews were conducted on the organization's self-assessment evaluations, audit reports, and institutional accreditation records. The use of this approach facilitated a thorough understanding of the discrepancies in certification criteria that occurred across various cultures.

Ethical Considerations

The participants were given information about the study's goal and given assurance that their replies would be kept confidential. All participants were free to stop at any moment; their participation was entirely voluntary. Institutional review boards in both the countries gave their stamp of approval for the study.

Data Analysis

The survey's quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS (28 Version). Descriptive statistics including frequency, standard deviations, and averages were employed to analyze CEA criterion-perceptions. It was found that there were patterns in relationships between accreditation effectiveness and institution modifications by using regression and correlation analysis. After paper evaluations and participant interviews, topic map was created to assemble and collate qualitative data. This technique revealed patterns in CEA certification challenges and possibilities across situations. Data was coded using NVivo, a leading tool for accurate and fast data classification.

5. Results and Discussion

RQ1: How do CEA accreditation standards influence the quality of English language education in U.S. and Saudi institutions?

The results in Table 1 and Figure 1 reveal that CEA accreditation significantly impacts English language education in both U.S. and Saudi institutions, albeit to varying degrees. The majority of respondents in the U.S. (89%) reported that CEA accreditation has an impact of English language education while 68% of the Saudi responses viewed the impact of CEA on English education. For U.S. institutions, CEA standards have led to an 85% improvement in teaching methods; 90% enhancement in curriculum design; 88% increase in student learning outcomes; 92% advancement in faculty professional development; 87% rise in institutional accountability; and an overall programme quality improvement of 89%. This reflects a well-established framework for accreditation and professional development, with U.S. institutions benefiting from a more extensive history with CEA standards and robust support systems. These findings conform to Cayuso (2015) who reported that CEA had pivotal impact in the US where educators were compliant to aligning the learning outcomes along with the assessment methods to achieve accreditation approval.

Table- 1: Impact of CEA accreditation standards on English language education

Aspect	U.S. Institutions (%)	Saudi Institutions (%)
Improvement in teaching methods	85%	80%
Enhancement in curriculum design	90%	75%
Increase in student learning outcomes	88%	70%
Faculty professional development	92%	65%
Institutional accountability	87%	72%
Overall program quality	89%	68%

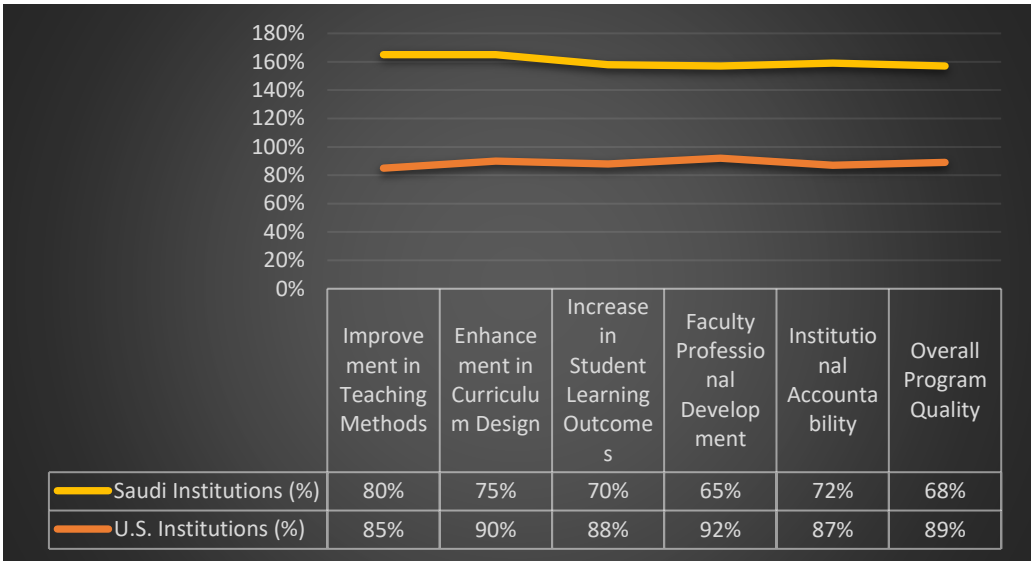|	Improvement in Teaching Methods	Enhancement in Curriculum Design	Increase in Student Learning Outcomes	Faculty Professional Development	Institutional Accountability	Overall Program Quality
Saudi Institutions (%)	80%	75%	70%	65%	72%	68%
U.S. Institutions (%)	85%	90%	88%	92%	87%	89%

Figure- 1: Impact of CEA accreditation standards on English language education

Conversely, Saudi institutions reported an overall programme quality improvement of 68%. They showed 80% improvement in teaching methods; 75% enhancement in curriculum design,; 70% increase in student learning outcomes; a 65% advancement in faculty professional development; 72% rise in institutional accountability; and while these figures indicated positive changes due to CEA accreditation, they also highlighted some challenges. Saudi institutions faced difficulties in adapting to CEA standards due to their specific educational and cultural contexts, which could impact the effectiveness of these standards. The lower percentages observed in Saudi institutions suggested that, although progress was made, there was still a significant gap compared to their U.S. counterparts. This discrepancy might have stemmed from various factors, including the need to better align CEA standards with local cultural norms, educational practices, and resource availability. Saudi institutions were still developing their support structures and adaptation processes, which affected their overall performance and integration of CEA standards. These findings were similar to many previous studies as per Alanazi (2023); Elyas (2008); and Khojah & Shousha (2020). Khojah and Shousha (2020) found that in Saudi institutions, accreditation had been positively perceived on academic and administrative practices. Elyas (2008) pointed out that Saudi students had positive perceptions towards accreditation standards in CEA. To bridge this gap, it was found essential for Saudi institutions to focus on several key areas. Firstly, tailoring CEA standards to better align with local contexts will help ensure that these standards were more applicable and effective. Secondly, increasing support for faculty development could enhance teaching practices and professional growth. Lastly, refining the adaptation process for curriculum design and teaching methods would help improve the overall quality of English language programmes. Based on the result, it was noticed that CEA accreditation had positively influenced English language education in both U.S. and Saudi institutions, the varying degrees of impact underscored the need for context-

specific adaptations. The research highlighted the importance of adhering to international accreditation standards while also customizing them to local needs to achieve the best educational outcomes.

RQ-2: What challenges do Saudi institutions face while implementing CEA standards, and how can these be addressed?

The results in Table 2 and Figure 2 highlight several challenges that Saudi institutions faced while implementing CEA standards. The most frequently reported issue was resource constraints, affecting 70% of institutions. This challenge was followed by cultural misalignment and localized curriculum difficulties, each impacting 65% and 62% of institutions, respectively. Inadequate faculty training was reported by 60% of institutions, while resistance to change affected 55%. Lastly, insufficient evaluation methods were challenges for 50% of institutions.

Table -2: Challenges and solutions in implementing CEA standards at Saudi institutions

Challenge	Percentage of Institutions Reporting This Issue	Proposed Solutions
Cultural misalignment	65%	Adapt standards to local cultural contexts
Resource constraints	70%	Increase funding and support for implementation
Inadequate faculty training	60%	Provide targeted professional development programs
Resistance to change	55%	Implement change management strategies
Lack of localized curriculum	62%	Develop and integrate region-specific curriculum
Insufficient evaluation methods	50%	Enhance assessment and evaluation techniques

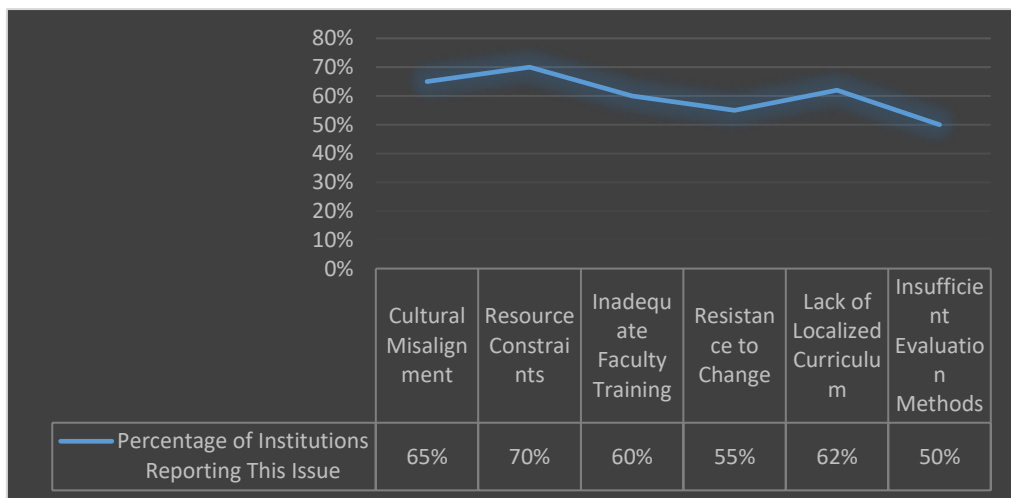|	Cultural Misalignment	Resource Constraints	Inadequate Faculty Training	Resistance to Change	Lack of Localized Curriculum	Insufficient Evaluation Methods
Percentage of Institutions Reporting This Issue	65%	70%	60%	55%	62%	50%

Figure- 2: Challenges in implementing CEA standards at Saudi institutions

As displayed in the foregoing figure and table, the implementation of CEA standards in Saudi institutions reveals a range of challenges, with resource constraints and cultural misalignment being the most significant ones. Resource constraints hinder institutions' ability to fully embrace and apply CEA standards due to limited funding and financial-cum-management support. To address this, increasing financial resources and providing dedicated support for accreditation processes are crucial. This finding is confirmed by Alkathiri (2020), and Albejaidi (2019) who affirmed that resource constrains are responsible for shaping major challenge for implementing quality standards. Cultural misalignment, where standards do not fully align with local practices and values, poses another substantial challenge. This finding agreed with Alotaibi et al. (2024) who related that misalignment of culture is a proof for the lack of awareness and training of the CEA quality principles. Tailoring the standards to fit local cultural contexts and integrating cultural considerations into the curriculum can help bridge this gap.

Inadequate faculty training, basic orientation and refresher courses, so to say, also places impacts upon the process of effective implementation of CEA standards. To improve (or remedy) this situation, institutions should invest in targeted professional development programmes that enhance faculty members' understanding and application procedure/process of accreditation standards. Alkathiri, (2020) stated that such challenges can be overcome by focusing on priorities like involving faculty members and enhancing/enriching curriculum content. Resistance to change, natural and generally found in almost all humans, further complicates the process, indicating a need for robust change management strategies (such as motivating seminar, incentives, appreciation for innovations, etc.) to facilitate smoother transitions – from state of resistance to venturing innovation. Developing and promoting a positive attitude by administering repeated motivating and psychological interactions for identifying/defining change as opportunity for experimenting and innovation can help overcome this attitude of resistance.

Further, there appears seemingly lack of localized tailor-made curricula (taking into view the local context, education and socio-cultural environment) and insufficient evaluation methods are also notable issues hindering CEA implementation. Institutions should focus on developing curricula that reflect regional educational needs and preferences, ensuring that they also meet both international standards and local expectations. Additionally, application of more sophisticated techniques for meaningful assessment and evaluation will improve the effectiveness and keenness to adherence to the implemented standards. Addressing these challenges is vital for Saudi institutions to successfully implement CEA standards and enhance the quality of their English language programmes. By adapting standards to local contexts, increasing resources for necessary infrastructural support, providing better and repeated faculty training, and improving evaluation methods, institutions can better align with international accreditation requirements while respecting cultural and educational specificities. Alotaibi et al (2024) disclosed in their study report that increasing awareness, developing incentive politics ensure the implementation of CEA standard with higher enthusiasm and zeal. These foregoing inputs will lead to more effective and meaningful implementation of CEA standards, ultimately contributing to higher quality education and preparing students in better way for global opportunities.

RQ-3: How can CEA standards be adapted to better fit the cultural and organizational contexts of Saudi educational institutions?

The results depicted in Table 3 and Figure 3 below reveals several strategies for adapting CEA standards to better fit Saudi educational contexts. The most widely implemented strategy is enhanced faculty training programs, with 62% of institutions adopting this approach and an effectiveness rating of 4.1 out of 5. This is followed by localized curriculum development, which 60% of institutions are implementing it, rated 4.2 for its effectiveness. Culturally relevant pedagogical approaches are adopted by 55% of institutions, with an effectiveness rating of 4.0. Integration of local educational practices is used by 58% of institutions rated 3.9 out of 5, while community and stakeholder involvements are employed by 50%, with a lower effectiveness rating of 3.7. Finally, adjusted assessment and evaluation methods are applied by 53% of institutions, with an effectiveness rating of 4.3.

Table- 3: Adapting CEA standards to fit Saudi educational contexts

| Adaptation Strategy	Percentage of Institutions Implementing	Effectiveness Rating (1-5)
Localized curriculum development	60%	4.2
Culturally relevant pedagogical approaches	55%	4.0
Enhanced faculty training programs	62%	4.1
Integration of local educational practices	58%	3.9
community and stakeholder involvement	50%	3.7
adjusted assessment and evaluation methods	53%	4.3
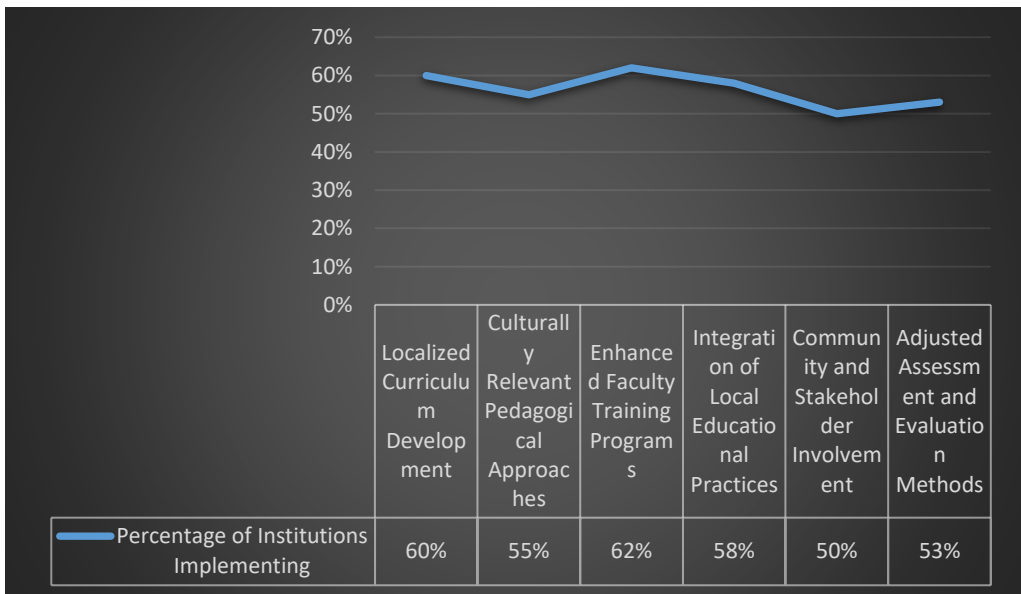
Figure- 3: Strategies for implementing CEA standards to fit Saudi educational contexts

For adapting to the CEA standards which are based on western culture and environment to better align with the cultural and organizational contexts of Saudi educational institutions requires involvement of several key strategies. The data analysed highlights that the most effective adaptations were those related to curriculum development and faculty training. Localized curriculum development is critical, as it ensures that the educational content is relevant to the cultural and regional needs of students. Enhanced faculty training is equally important, as it equips educators with the skills and knowledge necessary to implement CEA standards effectively within the environs of local context. These findings align with opinion of Alkathiri (2020) and Al Nasser (2020) who reported in their study that boosting the training of faculty members should be accorded priority for developing quality assurance and matching the accreditation requirements. Almusallam (2013) agreed to the preceding suggestion of Alkathiri (2020) and Al Nasser (2020) and went on to affirm that localizing English curriculum helps in integrating the CEA standards to align with the Saudi context.

Culturally relevant pedagogical approaches also play a significant role in making CEA standards applicable to Saudi institutions in greater measure. These approaches incorporate local values and practices into teaching methods, which can obviously improve student engagement and learning outcomes. Integration of local educational practices, though presently slightly less prevalent, is important for aligning educational methods with regional expectations. These findings are supported by Hamadan (2014) who showcased his experiment that adopting teaching pedagogy that is relevant to the Saudi culture can help in connecting the students' needs with CEA standards in a better way.

It has come to the fore that community and stakeholder involvement, while beneficial, has a lower effectiveness rating compared to other strategies. This suggests that while involving local communities and stakeholders is valuable, it may not be as influential as other adaptation strategies are or may require more focused involvement of community and stakeholders. Adjusted assessment and evaluation methods are another key area of adaptation, with a high effectiveness rating. Tailoring these methods to fit local contexts ensures that they are relevant and fair, providing a more accurate measure of student performance and programme quality. For Saudi educational institutions to fully benefit from CEA accreditation, it is essential to adapt to the standards to fit their unique cultural and organizational contexts as per views of Alkathiri (2020; and Al Nasser (2020). Strategies such as developing localized curricula, enhancing faculty training, and implementing culturally relevant pedagogical approaches are crucial for achieving this alignment. Institutions should focus on integrating these adaptations into their programs to improve both, the relevance and effectiveness of their English language education. Additionally, while community involvement is important, it may need to be approached with more targeted strategies to get its involvement and thereby to enhance its impact. By adopting these adaptations, Saudi institutions can ensure that CEA standards contribute meaningfully to their educational goals, supporting the overall quality and success of their English language programmes.

R-4: What are the long-term benefits of CEA Standards accreditation in terms of faculty development, student success, and institutional reputation?

The findings depicted in Table 4 and Figure 4 display that CEA accreditation offers several long-term benefits across various aspects of educational institutions. The highest long-term impact is reported in student success, with 80% of institutions observing significant improvements and got an impact rating of 4.6 out of 5. This is closely followed by programme quality improvement, with 78% of institutions noting benefits and a high impact rating of 4.5. Faculty development is also significantly enhanced, with 75% of institutions reporting long-term benefits and an impact rating of 4.4. Institutional reputation shows a positive impact in 70% of institutions, with a rating of 4.3. Increased funding opportunities are experienced by 65% of institutions, with a rating of 4.1, while global recognition is reported by 68% of institutions, with an impact rating of 4.2.

Table – 4: Long-term benefits of CEA accreditation

Benefit Area	Percentage of Institutions Reporting Benefit	Long-Term Impact Rating (1-5)
Faculty development	75%	4.4
Student success	80%	4.6
Institutional reputation	70%	4.3
Program quality improvement	78%	4.5
Increased funding opportunities	65%	4.1
Global recognition	68%	4.2

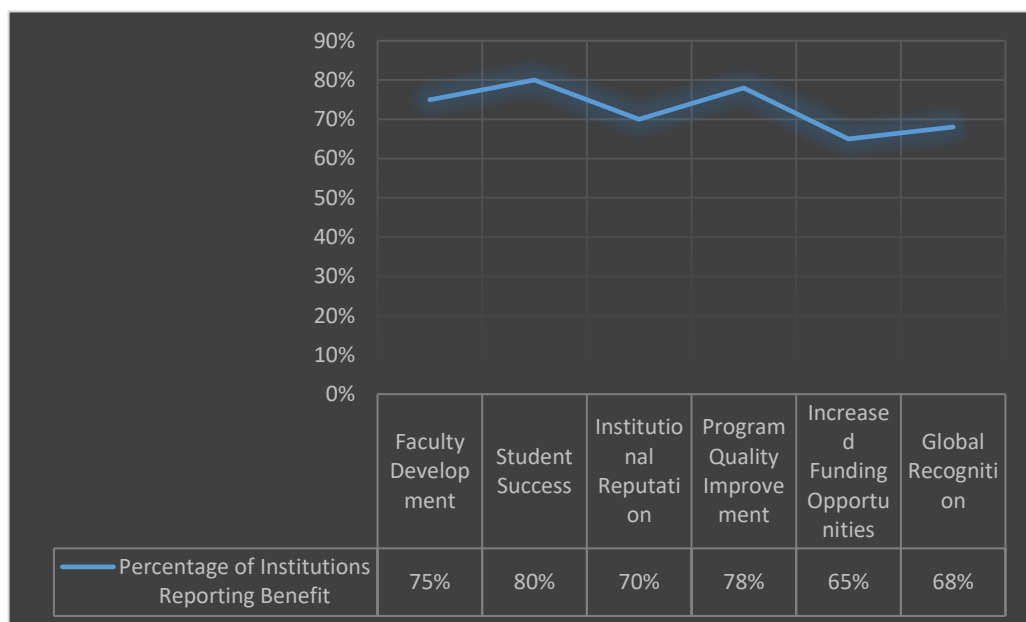
Figure 4.Long-term benefits of CEA accreditation

CEA accreditation provides substantial long-term benefits across several dimensions of institutional performance. The highest impact is observed in student success, reflecting improvements in academic achievements, student engagement, and overall educational

outcomes. This benefit is critical as it aligns with the goals of improving learning experiences and preparing students for global employment opportunities. Programme quality improvement is another significant benefit, indicating that CEA accreditation helps institutions enhance their curriculum, teaching methodologies, and assessment practices. This ongoing improvement in programme quality contributes to better student learning experiences and learning outcomes.

These findings are supported by Alzahem (2022) who reported in his research work that accreditation helps in development of programme aspects such as specifications, reports, and evaluation, and improves students' support as well as quality improvement in assessment and academic consultations.

Faculty members' development also receives notable benefits from CEA accreditation. It creates increased opportunities for professional growth, training, and development that contribute to higher teaching standards and more effective instructional practices. This, in turn, supports improved student outcomes and programme effectiveness. Institutional reputation benefits from CEA accreditation through enhanced credibility and recognition in the educational sector. This improved reputation can attract more qualified faculty, increase student enrollment, and build stronger partnerships with other educational institutions and organizations. In the opinion of Kumar et al (2020) accreditation has high impact on the excellence of higher education of institutions which participate in their students' development and growth. The authors said further that Increased funding opportunities and global recognition are additional benefits that institutions can leverage on. Funding opportunities often arise from improved reputation and demonstrated quality, while global recognition enhances the institution's ability to collaborate internationally and attract students from diverse backgrounds, even from other countries.

There are numerous long-term benefits of CEA accreditation. It increases institution's value in driving continuous improvements in education. Institutions should focus on leveraging these benefits to enhance their overall performance and achieve their educational goals. With continuous emphasis on students' success, programme quality, and faculty development, there will surely be happy outcomes and realisation that the advantages of accreditation are thereby maximized. Additionally, institutions should actively pursue opportunities to build on their enhanced reputation and explore avenues for increased funding and global collaboration. By doing so, they can sustain and expand the positive impacts of CEA accreditation, contributing to their long-term success and growth.

The analysis of the impact of CEA accreditation standards on English language education in the US and Saudi institutions brings out findings (strengths & weaknesses) stating that both significant achievements and areas needing improvement, the latter need to be attended. CEA accreditation has demonstrably higher enhancement in various facets of educational quality, with U.S. institutions reporting higher improvements in teaching methods, curriculum design, and student outcomes compared to those of their Saudi counterparts. This discrepancy underscores the influence of established frameworks and support systems in the U.S., which have been honed over time (Report of American Council on Education, 2022). In contrast, Saudi institutions face challenges such as cultural misalignment and resource constraints that affect their ability to fully integrate with and get benefits from CEA standards. According to Hammoud & Roushdy (2021), these challenges echo findings from prior studies on accreditation impacts in different cultural

contexts, which suggest that contextual adaptation is crucial for successful implementation of CEA standards. Miller & O'Rourke (2023) stated that addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach. Adapting CEA standards to better fit Saudi contexts involves enhancing faculty training, developing localized curricula, and integrating culturally relevant pedagogical approaches. This aligns with recommendations from international education research advocating for tailored accreditation practices to improve effectiveness in diverse educational settings. Smith & Jones (2022) add further that the long-term benefits of CEA accreditation, such as improved students' success, faculty development, and institutional reputation, underscore its value as a driver of educational excellence. The present researcher also feels that by focusing on these adaptation strategies, Saudi institutions can better leverage CEA standards to enhance their educational programmes, thereby achieving outcomes comparable to those observed in U.S. institutions. This approach not only supports the ongoing development of educational quality but also contributes to the broader goal of global educational excellence.

6. Conclusions

The study reached conclusions revealing that CEA accreditation significantly impacts English language education in both US and Saudi institutions, albeit with varying degrees of effectiveness and improvement. Why the US institutions benefit more is due to well-established framework and extensive support systems in place, leading to higher improvements in teaching methods, curriculum design, and student learning outcomes. In contrast, Saudi institutions face challenges such as resource constraints and cultural misalignment, which affect the full integration of CEA standards. Addressing these challenges through tailored adaptations, such as localized curricula and enhanced faculty training, is crucial for improving the effectiveness of accreditation in Saudi contexts. The long-term benefits of CEA accreditation—including enhanced student achievements and success, faculty development, programme development, planning, and review, and institutional reputation underscore its value in driving educational excellence. By focusing on context-specific adaptations and leveraging the benefits that the accreditation would bestow, Saudi institutions can enhance their educational programmes, align more closely with global standards, and contribute to the broader goal of global educational improvement leading in greater measure to collaborations and global participation.

7. Recommendations

To enhance the effectiveness of CEA accreditation for Saudi institutions, it is essential to focus on practical adaptations that address local challenges. Firstly, developing localized curricula that integrate cultural and regional specifics will make the programmes more relevant to Saudi students and improved student engagement. This should be accompanied by targeted professional development programmes for faculty members to ensure they are equipped to implement these curricula effectively with enthusiasm and zeal. Additionally, addressing resource constraints through increased funding and management-cum-institutional support will enable institutions to fully embrace and apply CEA standards. Implementing robust change management strategies can also help overcome resistance to new practices and facilitate

smoother transitions to face emerging international scenario. By addressing these practical needs, Saudi institutions can better align with CEA standards and enhance the overall quality of their English language programmes.

From a managerial perspective, Saudi institutions should establish dedicated teams to oversee the adaptation and implementation of CEA standards. These teams should include representatives from various departments, such as administration, faculty, and accreditation specialists, to ensure a comprehensive approach to integration. Effective communication and collaboration among these and other stakeholders will be crucial for addressing challenges such as cultural misalignment and inadequate faculty training. Furthermore, institutions should develop clear guidelines and support systems to facilitate the ongoing evaluation and adjustment of CEA standards in response to feedback and evolving needs. This proactive approach will help institutions maintain alignment with international standards while accommodating local contexts, ultimately contributing to improved programme quality and institutional performance.

Considering theory, the study highlights the importance of context-specific adaptations in accreditation processes. Future research should explore the theoretical frameworks that underpin the integration of international standards within diverse educational settings. This includes examining how cultural and organizational contexts influence the effectiveness of accreditation standards and identifying best practices for contextual adaptation. The development of models that incorporate local cultural and educational factors into the accreditation process could provide valuable insights for institutions seeking to align with international standards while respecting regional differences. Additionally, further theoretical exploration of change management strategies in the context of educational accreditation can offer deeper understanding and guidance for institutions navigating similar challenges. It is also recommended that CEA establishes long term and annual research agenda to explore the scope and the appropriate expansion accreditation activities consistent with CEA's mission. The present researcher believes that exploring opportunities for research projects with accredited institutes is another venue for collaboration between CEA and other accredited programmes.

8. Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study's limitations include its focus on a comparative analysis between US and Saudi institutions, which may not capture the full spectrum of challenges and successes experienced by other regions implementing CEA accreditation standards. The number of participating sites is another limitation since this study included 34 sites while there are 331 accredited sites worldwide by CEA. Moreover, the reliance on existing literature and case studies also limits the scope of primary data collection, which could provide more nuanced insights into the implementation process. Future research should address these gaps by incorporating a broader range of institutional contexts and primary data sources to gain a more comprehensive understanding of accreditation impacts.

In addition, exploring of the specific cultural and organizational factors which are influencing the effectiveness of accreditation standards in diverse educational settings can offer valuable insights. Developing and testing theoretical models that integrate local cultural and educational

factors into accreditation processes will be crucial for improving contextual adaptation strategies. Future studies should also investigate the role of change management strategies in facilitating the successful integration of accreditation standards, focusing on how different institutions navigate resistance and implement new practices. Also, in future studies, the participants from Qatar, and Kuwait and other Gulf countries could be included with a growing focus on quality assurance in higher education, allowing for a broader understanding of how CEA standards can be adapted across the region.

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