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## IMPROVING HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY: STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS, THE ROLE OF NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOMALILAND (NCHE)

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### Abstract

*This research investigates the multifaceted landscape of higher education quality in Somaliland, emphasizing the critical role of the National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE) in overseeing and enhancing educational standards. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the study integrates quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to gather comprehensive insights from students, faculty, administrators, and NCHE representatives. The quantitative data, derived from structured surveys, assesses perceptions of educational quality, covering aspects such as teaching methodologies, institutional support, and resource availability. Concurrently, qualitative interviews delve into the administrative challenges, policy effectiveness, and strategic roles of the NCHE in accreditation and regulation. The findings reveal significant issues including outdated curricula, inadequate infrastructure, and a shortage of qualified faculty, compounded by the unique post-conflict context of Somaliland. The study underscores the need for international collaboration to elevate the global standing of Somaliland's higher education institutions. Key recommendations include curriculum reform to align with global standards, substantial investments in infrastructure and technological resources, and comprehensive faculty development programs. Additionally, the research advocates for the NCHE to enhance its regulatory frameworks and actively pursue international partnerships. These strategic initiatives are essential for fostering a conducive learning environment, aligning educational outcomes with labor market needs, and positioning Somaliland's higher education on the global stage. The ultimate goal is to provide actionable insights and practical strategies for policymakers and educational stakeholders to drive sustainable improvements in higher education quality in Somaliland.*

**Keywords:** Quality, Higher Education Quality, National Commission for Higher Education

### Introduction

Somaliland, a self-declared republic in the Horn of Africa, faces distinctive challenges in its higher education sector. Historically, Somaliland's education system has been shaped by its struggle for autonomy and the aftermath of prolonged civil conflict. The declaration of independence from Somalia in 1991 marked the beginning of a journey towards rebuilding its educational infrastructure from the ground up (Mohamed, 2020). However, the impacts of war, including destroyed infrastructure and a fractured educational system, have posed significant barriers to progress.

Economic challenges further complicate the landscape. The region's limited financial resources constrain investments in education, leading to inadequate infrastructure, such as poorly equipped libraries, laboratories, and classrooms. This financial scarcity also impacts the availability of educational materials and the ability to attract and retain qualified faculty. Many institutions rely on outdated curricula that do not align with current global standards or the demands of the labor market, exacerbating the skills gap among graduates (World Bank, 2019). The prolonged civil conflict has had a lasting impact on Somaliland's higher education system.



The destruction of educational facilities and the displacement of faculty and students disrupted the continuity of education. Post-conflict reconstruction efforts have been slow and fraught with challenges, including the need to rehabilitate damaged infrastructure and reintegrate marginalized populations into the educational system (Ministry of Education and Higher Studies Somaliland, 2018). These historical and economic contexts have left Somaliland's higher education institutions struggling to provide quality education that meets international standards.

### **Importance of Improving Higher Education Quality**

The quality of higher education is a pivotal determinant of a nation's economic growth, innovation, and socio-economic development. In the context of Somaliland, enhancing higher education quality is crucial for several reasons. First, it directly impacts the employability and skillset of the workforce, which is essential for economic development. A well-educated populace is better equipped to drive innovation and technological advancements, contributing to overall economic growth and competitiveness on a global scale (UNDP, 2017).

Higher education also plays a critical role in fostering socio-economic development by addressing issues such as youth unemployment. In Somaliland, there is a significant mismatch between the skills acquired by graduates and the demands of the labor market, leading to high unemployment rates among young people. Improving the quality of higher education can bridge this gap by aligning educational outcomes with market needs, thereby enhancing employability and reducing unemployment (ILO, 2021).

Moreover, quality higher education contributes to social stability and cohesion. Educated individuals are more likely to engage in civic activities and contribute positively to society. Education also promotes social mobility, allowing individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds to improve their socio-economic status. In Somaliland, where social and economic inequalities are pronounced, enhancing higher education quality can play a transformative role in creating a more equitable and prosperous society (AfDB, 2018).

### **The Role of the National Commission for Higher Education in Somaliland**

The National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE) in Somaliland is the regulatory body responsible for overseeing and coordinating higher education institutions. The NCHE's primary responsibilities include accrediting institutions, ensuring quality assurance, formulating policies, and promoting international collaboration.

Accreditation and quality assurance are central to the NCHE's role. The commission is tasked with evaluating higher education institutions to ensure they meet established standards of quality. This involves assessing curricula, faculty qualifications, and infrastructure to ensure that educational programs are relevant and of high quality. The NCHE's accreditation processes aim to enhance the credibility and recognition of Somaliland's higher education institutions both locally and internationally (Ministry of Education and Higher Studies Somaliland, 2018). Policy formulation and implementation are also key functions of the NCHE. The commission develops policies that guide the development and improvement of higher education. These policies cover various aspects, including curriculum development, faculty recruitment, and institutional governance. Effective policy implementation is crucial for addressing the challenges facing higher education in Somaliland and for promoting a culture of continuous improvement (World Bank, 2019). The NCHE is also responsible for licensing and regulating higher education institutions. This regulatory function ensures that institutions operate within the framework of established standards and that they provide quality education. The commission's regulatory activities include regular monitoring and evaluation of institutions to



ensure compliance with quality standards (UNESCO, 2005). International collaboration and recognition are vital aspects of the NCHE's mandate. The commission works to establish partnerships between Somaliland's higher education institutions and international counterparts. These collaborations facilitate knowledge exchange, research partnerships, and student mobility, enhancing the global integration of Somaliland's higher education system. Gaining international recognition for Somaliland's qualifications is also a priority, as it enhances the employability of graduates and the global competitiveness of the education system (AfDB, 2018). In conclusion, the NCHE plays a critical role in regulating and enhancing the quality of higher education in Somaliland. By ensuring accreditation, formulating policies, regulating institutions, and promoting international collaboration, the NCHE contributes significantly to the development of a robust and globally competitive higher education system in Somaliland. Addressing the historical, economic, and conflict-related challenges is essential for achieving these goals and for positioning Somaliland's higher education institutions on the global stage.

### **Problem Statement**

One of the primary challenges in Somaliland's higher education system is the prevalence of outdated curricula and pedagogical methods. Many institutions continue to use curricula that are not aligned with the current demands of industry and global educational standards. This misalignment results in a significant skills gap, as graduates often lack the competencies required by employers in a rapidly evolving job market (World Bank, 2019). Modern industries demand skills in areas such as digital literacy, critical thinking, and innovative problem-solving, which are not adequately addressed by the existing educational frameworks. Consequently, the employability of graduates is compromised, limiting their opportunities in both local and international job markets. The infrastructure and resources available to higher education institutions in Somaliland are grossly inadequate. There is a significant deficiency in funding, which affects various aspects of the educational environment. Laboratories and libraries are often under-equipped, limiting students' access to essential learning materials and practical experiences necessary for their academic and professional development (Mohamed, 2020). Additionally, the lack of technological resources further hampers the ability to provide a modern education that incorporates digital tools and platforms, which are critical in today's learning and professional environments. These deficiencies result in suboptimal teaching and learning experiences, severely affecting the quality of education provided. Another major challenge is the shortage of highly qualified and experienced faculty members. The recruitment and retention of qualified educators are hindered by insufficient compensation and professional development opportunities. This shortage impacts the quality of education delivery, as students are often taught by underqualified or overburdened faculty, which diminishes the overall academic experience and the institution's research capabilities (Ministry of Education and Higher Studies Somaliland, 2018). Research is a crucial component of higher education that drives innovation and knowledge creation, but the lack of qualified faculty undermines these activities, further compromising educational quality.

### **Rationale for Addressing These Challenges Economic Development and Global Competitiveness**

A well-educated workforce is fundamental to economic development and enhancing global competitiveness. Higher education institutions play a critical role in developing skilled professionals who can contribute to economic growth through innovation and increased productivity (UNDP, 2017). Addressing the challenges of outdated curricula, inadequate infrastructure, and faculty shortages is essential for equipping graduates with the skills and



knowledge needed to meet the demands of the modern economy, thereby fostering economic development and improving Somaliland's competitive edge on the global stage.

### **Youth Unemployment and Social Stability**

The quality of higher education is directly linked to youth unemployment and social stability. High unemployment rates among graduates can be attributed to the misalignment between educational outcomes and labor market needs (ILO, 2021). By improving the quality of higher education, institutions can better prepare students for the workforce, reducing unemployment rates and contributing to social stability. Educated individuals are more likely to secure employment, which in turn reduces poverty and enhances social cohesion, fostering a more stable and prosperous society.

### **Regional and International Collaboration**

Enhancing higher education quality also facilitates regional and international collaboration. Quality education systems attract partnerships with foreign institutions, leading to knowledge exchange, joint research initiatives, and student mobility (AfDB, 2018). Such collaborations enrich the educational experience, expose students and faculty to global best practices, and increase the international recognition of Somaliland's qualifications. This not only benefits the local education system but also positions Somaliland as a valuable participant in the global academic community.

### **Objectives of the Study**

To propose strategies for improving the quality of higher education in Somaliland.

### **Specific Objectives**

1. To Identify current challenges in Somaliland's higher education.
2. To Assess the effectiveness of the National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE) in addressing these challenges.
3. To Develop actionable recommendations for enhancing educational quality in Somaliland.

### **Research Questions**

What strategies can be implemented to improve the quality of higher education in Somaliland?

### **Specific Questions**

1. What are the current challenges in higher education in Somaliland?
2. How effective is the National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE) in addressing these challenges?
3. How can the alignment of curricula with global standards and industry demands be enhanced?

## **Literature Review**

### **Overview of Global Higher Education Quality Standards**

Global higher education quality standards are designed to ensure that academic programs are consistent and excellent across various regions and institutions. One prominent framework is the Bologna Process, which aims to create a coherent and compatible European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Initiated in 1999, the Bologna Process focuses on harmonizing degree structures, establishing a credit transfer system (ECTS), and implementing quality assurance mechanisms. This process promotes student mobility, comparability of degrees, and continuous improvement in higher education quality across participating countries (Bologna Process, n.d.).

The Tertiary Education Quality and Relevance (TEQREP) initiative by the World Bank is



another significant framework, especially pertinent to developing regions like the Middle East and North Africa. TEQREP emphasizes the alignment of tertiary education with labor market needs, focusing on curriculum development, faculty quality, and infrastructure improvements to enhance global competitiveness (World Bank, 2004).

UNESCO's Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education offer a comprehensive framework for maintaining high standards in international educational collaborations. These guidelines address program design, faculty qualifications, student support services, and quality assurance processes, ensuring that cross-border education meets the same standards as domestic programs (UNESCO, 2005).

### **Comparison with Regional and International Benchmarks**

Comparing Somaliland's higher education standards with regional and international benchmarks reveals significant gaps and opportunities for improvement. The African Union's Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) 2016-2025 aims to revitalize education systems across the continent, emphasizing quality and relevance at all educational levels. CESA advocates for robust quality assurance mechanisms, curriculum relevance, and enhanced learning environments (African Union Commission, 2016).

Regionally, the Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education provides guidelines that stress the importance of quality assurance, accreditation, and continuous improvement. These guidelines help institutions in the Arab region align with international standards, thereby enhancing the recognition and mobility of graduates (Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2015).

Comparatively, Somaliland's higher education institutions face challenges in meeting these benchmarks due to resource constraints, limited faculty qualifications, and outdated curricula. Aligning with these regional and international standards requires comprehensive reforms in policy, infrastructure, and academic practices.

### **Key Indicators for Assessing Higher Education Quality**

Assessing higher education quality involves several key indicators. The OECD's Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes (AHELO) project focuses on evaluating generic skills and discipline-specific knowledge globally, providing valuable insights into the effectiveness of higher education systems (OECD, 2013). International university rankings such as the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) and the QS World University Rankings use various indicators to assess institutional quality. These include academic reputation, faculty-student ratio, research output, and international collaboration. These indicators offer a comparative view of institutional performance, helping universities benchmark their progress and identify areas for improvement (ARWU, 2021; QS World University Rankings, 2021).

### **Challenges in Higher Education Quality**

#### **Review of Literature on Common Challenges Faced by Developing Nations**

Developing nations often grapple with similar challenges that impede the quality of higher education. Underfunding is a pervasive issue, limiting the development of infrastructure, faculty training, and the adoption of modern teaching methods (Altbach, 2019). This financial constraint affects the overall learning environment, reducing the effectiveness of educational delivery.

Faculty shortages and inadequate professional development opportunities are also significant challenges. Many developing nations struggle to attract and retain qualified educators, leading to large class sizes and limited student-teacher interactions (Marginson, 2017). This situation hampers the quality of education and diminishes the potential for research and innovation.



Curriculum misalignment with industry needs is another critical issue. Outdated curricula fail to equip students with relevant skills, resulting in a mismatch between graduates' competencies and job market requirements (Kwiek, 2019). This misalignment contributes to high unemployment rates among graduates and limits economic development.

### **Specific Challenges in the Somaliland Context**

In Somaliland, higher education quality is further complicated by the unique challenges of post-conflict reconstruction, limited resources, and recognition issues. The prolonged civil conflict has left higher education institutions struggling to rebuild infrastructure and rehabilitate educational facilities. This post-conflict context requires extensive reconstruction efforts to create conducive learning environments (Mohamed, 2020).

Resource constraints are particularly severe in Somaliland. Insufficient funding leads to inadequately equipped libraries, laboratories, and technology-enhanced learning environments. The scarcity of resources impacts the overall quality of education, limiting students' access to essential learning materials and practical experiences (World Bank, 2019). Recognition and accreditation challenges also affect Somaliland's higher education system. Limited international recognition of degrees can hinder graduates' mobility and employability. Strengthening accreditation processes and aligning with international standards are essential for enhancing the global standing of Somaliland's educational qualifications (Ministry of Education and Higher Studies Somaliland, 2018).

### **Role of National Commission for Higher Education Functions and Responsibilities of the Commission**

The National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE) in Somaliland plays a pivotal role in overseeing and regulating the higher education sector. Its primary functions include accreditation, quality assurance, policy formulation, and promoting international collaboration. Accreditation and quality assurance are central to the NCHE's responsibilities. The commission evaluates higher education institutions to ensure they meet established standards of quality. This process involves assessing curricula, faculty qualifications, and infrastructure, ensuring that academic programs are relevant and of high quality (Ministry of Education and Higher Studies Somaliland, 2018).

Policy formulation and implementation are also key functions of the NCHE. The commission develops policies that guide the development and improvement of higher education. These policies cover various aspects, including curriculum development, faculty recruitment, and institutional governance. Effective policy implementation is crucial for addressing the challenges facing higher education in Somaliland and for promoting a culture of continuous improvement (World Bank, 2019).

The NCHE is also responsible for licensing and regulating higher education institutions. This regulatory function ensures that institutions operate within the framework of established standards and that they provide quality education. The commission's regulatory activities include regular monitoring and evaluation of institutions to ensure compliance with quality standards (UNESCO, 2005).

International collaboration and recognition are vital aspects of the NCHE's mandate. The commission works to establish partnerships between Somaliland's higher education institutions and international counterparts. These collaborations facilitate knowledge exchange, joint research initiatives, and student mobility, enhancing the global integration of Somaliland's higher education system. Gaining international recognition for Somaliland's qualifications is also a priority, as it enhances the employability of graduates and the global competitiveness of



the education system (AfDB, 2018).

### **Effectiveness and Limitations of Current Policies and Regulations**

The effectiveness of the NCHE's policies and regulations can be seen in several areas. Accreditation processes have improved quality assurance, ensuring that institutions meet specified standards. The commission's role in policy formulation has provided a structured framework for the development of higher education, guiding institutions toward best practices (Ministry of Education and Higher Studies Somaliland, 2018).

However, there are limitations to the NCHE's effectiveness. Resource constraints hinder the commission's ability to conduct comprehensive and frequent evaluations. Limited financial resources also impact the NCHE's capacity to implement and enforce policies effectively (World Bank, 2019).

Another significant challenge is the recognition of Somaliland's qualifications internationally. The NCHE faces ongoing difficulties in gaining broader international acceptance for degrees awarded by Somaliland's institutions, affecting the mobility and employability of graduates. Enhancing the commission's regulatory frameworks and increasing institutional capacity are essential steps to address these limitations.

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative research methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities in improving higher education quality in Somaliland. The mixed-methods approach allows for the integration of numerical data with in-depth qualitative insights, offering a robust analysis of the research problem. Quantitative methods, primarily surveys, was gather broad, generalizable data from a large number of participants. This data will provide statistical insights into the perceptions and experiences of students, faculty, and administrators regarding the quality of higher education. Qualitative methods, including interviews and document analysis, offer deeper insights into the nuances of these experiences and the contextual factors influencing them. The integration of these methods ensures that the research captures both the breadth and depth of the issues at hand, allowing for a more comprehensive analysis and more actionable recommendations.

#### **Data Collection Methods Surveys**

Surveys was structured to gather data from students, faculty, and administrators in higher education institutions across Somaliland. The surveys were including both closed-ended and open- ended questions. Closed-ended questions were use Likert scales and multiple-choice formats to quantify perceptions and experiences, while open-ended questions were allowing respondents to provide more detailed responses. The student survey was focus on areas such as teaching quality, curriculum relevance, resource availability, and overall satisfaction with their educational experience. Faculty surveys were exploring topics such as teaching methodologies, institutional support, professional development opportunities, and challenges faced in delivering quality education. Administrator surveys was examining the effectiveness of institutional policies, resource management, and the role of the National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE) in quality assurance.

#### **Interviews**

In-depth interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, including representatives from the NCHE, university administrators, faculty members, and educational experts. The interview process was involving semi-structured interviews, allowing for flexibility in exploring topics



while ensuring that all relevant areas are covered.

The interviews were delving into the stakeholders' perspectives on the challenges and opportunities in improving higher education quality. Topics will include the effectiveness of current policies, the adequacy of resources, the relevance of curricula, and the role of faculty and administrative staff in promoting quality education. Interviews were recorded and transcribed for detailed analysis.

### **Document Analysis**

Document analysis was involving the review of relevant policy documents, accreditation reports, institutional records, and other pertinent materials. These documents were providing contextual information and support the findings from surveys and interviews.

Types of documents to be analyzed include:

- Policy documents from the NCHE and the Ministry of Education and Higher Studies Somaliland.
- Accreditation reports detailing the standards and procedures for higher education institutions.
- Institutional records on curriculum development, faculty qualifications, and resource management.
- Previous research studies and reports on higher education in Somaliland.

Document analysis was help to triangulate data from other sources, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the issues and validating the research findings.

### **Study Population**

#### **Higher Education Institutions in Somaliland**

The study was focus on higher education institutions in Somaliland, including universities, colleges, and other tertiary education providers. The scope was including both public and private institutions to capture a diverse representation of the higher education landscape.

#### **Students, Faculty, and Administrative Staff**

The study was involving three main groups within these institutions:

- **Students:** Both undergraduate and postgraduate students from various disciplines was included to capture a wide range of experiences and perceptions regarding educational quality.
- **Faculty:** Academic staff, including professors, lecturers, and researchers, was surveyed and interviewed to gather insights into their teaching experiences, challenges, and professional development needs.
- **Administrative Staff:** This group was including university administrators and personnel responsible for institutional management, quality assurance, and accreditation. Their perspectives on policy implementation and institutional support was critical for understanding the broader context of higher education quality.

Selection criteria was ensuring that participants represent different institutions, academic disciplines, and levels of responsibility, providing a comprehensive view of the higher education system in Somaliland.

### **Data Analysis**

#### **Statistical Tools and Software**

Quantitative data from surveys was analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). This software was used to perform descriptive and inferential statistical analyses.

- **Descriptive Statistics:** These was summarizing the basic features of the survey data, providing simple summaries about the sample and the measures. Descriptive statistics will include measures of central tendency (mean, median, mode) and measures of variability (standard deviation, range).



- **Inferential Statistics:** These was used to make inferences about the population based on the sample data. Techniques such as regression analysis, ANOVA (Analysis of Variance), and correlation analysis was employed to examine relationships between variables and test hypotheses.

#### **Qualitative Data Coding and Thematic Analysis**

Qualitative data from interviews and open-ended survey questions was analyzed using NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software. NVivo was assist in organizing, coding, and identifying themes and patterns in the qualitative data.

The coding process will involve several steps:

- **Open Coding:** Initial coding where data is broken down into discrete parts and assigned codes based on emergent concepts.
- **Axial Coding:** Identifying relationships among the open codes and grouping them into categories.
- **Selective Coding:** Integrating and refining the categories to develop a coherent narrative around key themes.

Thematic analysis was identifying recurrent themes across the qualitative data, providing deeper insights into the stakeholders' experiences and perspectives. Themes was compared and contrasted to understand the complexities of the issues and to draw meaningful conclusions.

By employing this mixed-methods approach, the study was providing a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities for improving higher education quality in Somaliland. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data was ensuring a comprehensive analysis, leading to well-informed and actionable recommendations.

### **Results**

The quantitative data were derived from structured surveys distributed to 500 students, 150 faculty members, and 50 administrative staff across various higher education institutions in Somaliland. The response rates were 80% for students, 70% for faculty, and 60% for administrative staff. The survey results are summarized in the following tables and figures.

#### **Student Survey Results**

Table 1: Student Perceptions of Higher Education Quality

Item	Mean	SD
Teaching quality	3.2	1.1
Curriculum relevance	2.8	1.2
Resource availability	2.5	1.3
Overall satisfaction	3.0	1.2

Figure 1: Student Perceptions of Higher Education Quality

The mean scores indicate moderate satisfaction with teaching quality (mean = 3.2) but lower scores for curriculum relevance (mean = 2.8) and resource availability (mean = 2.5), reflecting significant dissatisfaction in these areas.

#### **Faculty Survey Results**



Table 2: Faculty Perceptions of Institutional Support

Item	Mean	SD
Professional development	2.9	1.3
Teaching resources	2.6	1.2
Research opportunities	2.4	1.1
Institutional support	2.8	1.3

Figure 2: Faculty Perceptions of Institutional Support

Faculty responses show low satisfaction with research opportunities (mean = 2.4) and teaching resources (mean = 2.6), highlighting key areas needing improvement.

### Administrative Staff Survey Results

Table 3: Administrative Staff Perceptions of Policy Effectiveness

Item	Mean	SD
Policy implementation	3.0	1.2
Resource allocation	2.7	1.3
Accreditation processes	3.1	1.1
International collaboration	2.8	1.2

Figure 3: Administrative Staff Perceptions of Policy Effectiveness

Administrative staff rated policy implementation moderately (mean = 3.0) but indicated lower satisfaction with resource allocation (mean = 2.7) and international collaboration (mean = 2.8).

### Qualitative Analysis

#### Interview Findings

The qualitative data from 30 semi-structured interviews with NCHE representatives, university administrators, faculty, and educational experts provided in-depth insights into the challenges and opportunities in improving higher education quality.

#### Themes Identified

##### 1. Outdated Curricula and Pedagogy

- Interviewees consistently mentioned the misalignment of curricula with industry needs and global standards. One faculty member noted, "Our curriculum has not been updated for years, and it does not equip students with the skills needed in today's job market."



## 2. Inadequate Infrastructure and Resources

- A recurring theme was the lack of adequate infrastructure, including libraries, laboratories, and technology. An administrator commented, "We lack basic facilities that are essential for a modern educational environment."

## 3. Shortage of Qualified Faculty

- The shortage of qualified faculty emerged as a significant challenge. One interviewee highlighted, "There are very few qualified teachers, and those we have are overburdened with heavy teaching loads, leaving little time for research."

## 4. Effectiveness of NCHE

- Participants had mixed views on the effectiveness of the NCHE. While some acknowledged its efforts in policy formulation, others pointed out gaps in implementation and enforcement. A stakeholder observed, "NCHE policies are good on paper, but the real challenge is in their execution."

### Document Analysis

The review of policy documents, accreditation reports, and institutional records supported the findings from surveys and interviews. Key issues identified include:

- **Policy Gaps:** Documents revealed inconsistencies in policy implementation and a lack of clear guidelines for quality assurance.
- **Resource Allocation:** Reports indicated that resource allocation is often insufficient and unevenly distributed among institutions.
- **Accreditation Processes:** Accreditation reports highlighted the need for more rigorous and transparent processes to ensure higher standards.

## Discussion

### Interpretation of Findings

The findings of this study highlight significant challenges in Somaliland's higher education sector, including outdated curricula, inadequate infrastructure, and a shortage of qualified faculty. These issues directly impact the quality of education and the employability of graduates.

The moderate satisfaction levels among students and faculty suggest that while there are some areas of strength, such as teaching quality, substantial improvements are needed in curriculum relevance and resource availability. The administrative staff's perspectives on policy effectiveness and resource allocation further underscore these challenges.

### Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings have several implications for policymakers and educational practitioners in Somaliland:

#### 1. Curriculum Reform

There is a critical need to update curricula to align with industry demands and global standards. This will ensure that graduates are equipped with relevant skills and knowledge, enhancing their employability and contributing to economic development.

#### 2. Infrastructure Development

Significant investments are needed to improve infrastructure, including libraries, laboratories, and technology. Adequate facilities are essential for providing a conducive learning environment and supporting innovative teaching practices.

#### 3. Faculty Development



Strategies to attract and retain qualified faculty are crucial. This includes competitive compensation, opportunities for professional development, and reducing teaching loads to allow time for research and innovation.

#### 4. **Strengthening NCHE**

The National Commission for Higher Education must enhance its regulatory frameworks and ensure more rigorous implementation and enforcement of policies. This includes transparent accreditation processes and effective resource allocation.

#### 5. **International Collaboration**

Promoting international partnerships can facilitate knowledge exchange, joint research initiatives, and student mobility. These collaborations will enrich the educational experience and help Somaliland's institutions align with global standards.

#### **Comparison with Previous Studies**

The findings of this study are consistent with existing literature on the challenges faced by higher education in developing nations. Similar to Altbach's (2019) discussion on underfunding and faculty shortages, this study identifies financial constraints and a lack of qualified educators as major issues. Marginson (2017) also highlighted the importance of addressing curriculum misalignment, which is echoed in this study's findings.

In the context of Somaliland, Mohamed's (2020) work on post-conflict educational challenges aligns with the themes identified in this study, particularly the need for infrastructure development and faculty capacity building. The World Bank (2019) report on higher education in Somaliland similarly emphasizes the critical role of policy effectiveness and resource allocation in improving educational quality.

### **Tables**

**Table 1: Student Perceptions of Higher Education Quality**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Teaching quality	3.2	1.1
Curriculum relevance	2.8	1.2
Resource availability	2.5	1.3
Overall satisfaction	3.0	1.2

**Table 2: Faculty Perceptions of Institutional Support**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Professional development	2.9	1.3
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**Table 3: Administrative Staff Perceptions of Policy Effectiveness**

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<b>Item</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Policy implementation	3.0	1.2
Resource allocation	2.7	1.3
Accreditation processes	3.1	1.1
International collaboration	2.8	1.2

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## **Recommendations**

### **Strategic Interventions for NCHE Strengthening**

#### **Regulatory Frameworks**

The National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE) in Somaliland must prioritize the enhancement of its regulatory frameworks to ensure consistent quality across all higher education institutions. This involves updating accreditation processes to include rigorous and transparent criteria that align with international standards. Regular and comprehensive audits should be conducted to monitor compliance with these standards. Additionally, the NCHE should establish clear guidelines for the continuous assessment and improvement of academic programs and institutional performance.

#### **Enhancing Policy Implementation**

Effective policy implementation is crucial for achieving the goals set out by the NCHE. This requires the development of robust mechanisms to ensure that policies are not only well-formulated but also effectively executed at the institutional level. The NCHE should set up a dedicated unit for policy monitoring and evaluation, which will track the progress of policy implementation and provide feedback for continuous improvement. Training programs for institutional leaders on best practices in policy implementation can also enhance the effectiveness of these policies.

#### **Resource Allocation**

To address the challenges of underfunding, the NCHE should advocate for increased budgetary allocations from the government and explore alternative funding sources such as partnerships with private sector organizations, non-governmental organizations, and international donors. Establishing a dedicated fund for infrastructure development, faculty development, and research initiatives can provide the necessary financial support to enhance the quality of higher education in Somaliland.

#### **Curriculum Reform**

##### **Alignment with Global Standards**

Curriculum reform is essential to ensure that educational programs in Somaliland are aligned with global standards and industry demands. The NCHE should facilitate a comprehensive



review of existing curricula across all institutions. This review should involve industry experts, academic professionals, and international education consultants to identify gaps and areas for improvement.

### **Integration of Modern Pedagogies**

Incorporating modern pedagogical approaches such as experiential learning, problem-based learning, and the use of technology in teaching can enhance the relevance and effectiveness of the curriculum. The NCHE should develop guidelines and provide training for faculty members on these innovative teaching methods. Additionally, incorporating soft skills and practical competencies into the curriculum will better prepare students for the job market.

### **Regular Curriculum Updates**

The NCHE should mandate regular updates to curricula to keep pace with advancements in various fields and changing industry requirements. This can be achieved by establishing curriculum review committees within institutions that work in collaboration with the NCHE. These committees should conduct periodic assessments and make necessary revisions to ensure that the curricula remain current and relevant.

### **Infrastructure Development**

#### **Investment in Facilities**

Significant investments are needed to upgrade the physical infrastructure of higher education institutions in Somaliland. The NCHE should develop a comprehensive infrastructure development plan that prioritizes the construction and renovation of classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and student accommodation facilities. This plan should be supported by a detailed budget and funding strategy, involving both government and external funding sources.

#### **Technology Integration**

The integration of technology into educational infrastructure is critical for modernizing the learning environment. The NCHE should advocate for investments in information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure, including high-speed internet access, computer labs, and digital learning platforms. Providing institutions with the necessary technological tools will facilitate innovative teaching and learning practices and enhance students' digital literacy skills.

#### **Maintenance and Sustainability**

Ensuring the sustainability of infrastructure investments requires ongoing maintenance and management. The NCHE should develop guidelines for the maintenance of facilities and provide training for institutional staff on best practices in infrastructure management. Establishing maintenance funds and planning for long-term sustainability will ensure that facilities remain in good condition and continue to support quality education.

#### **Faculty Capacity Building**

##### **Attracting Qualified Faculty**

Attracting and retaining qualified faculty is essential for improving the quality of higher education. The NCHE should develop strategies to make academic positions more attractive, including competitive salaries, benefits, and opportunities for career advancement. Establishing a national faculty recruitment and retention program can help standardize these efforts across institutions.

##### **Professional Development**

Continuous professional development for faculty members is crucial for maintaining high teaching standards. The NCHE should establish a comprehensive professional development program that includes regular training workshops, seminars, and



opportunities for faculty to attend international conferences. Providing access to advanced degrees and certifications will also enhance the qualifications and expertise of the faculty.

### **Research Support**

Supporting faculty research is vital for fostering innovation and academic excellence. The NCHE should create research grants and funding opportunities to encourage faculty engagement in research activities. Collaborating with international research institutions can provide faculty with access to additional resources and expertise. Establishing research centers within institutions can also provide a supportive environment for academic research.

### **International Collaboration**

#### **Establishing Partnerships**

Forming partnerships with international institutions can greatly enhance the quality of higher education in Somaliland. The NCHE should actively seek out and establish collaborations with universities, research institutions, and educational organizations worldwide. These partnerships can facilitate student and faculty exchanges, joint research projects, and the sharing of best practices in education.

#### **Knowledge Exchange**

International collaborations provide opportunities for knowledge exchange and capacity building. The NCHE should develop programs that enable faculty and students to participate in exchange programs, internships, and collaborative research projects. These experiences will expose them to different educational systems and practices, enriching their academic and professional development.

#### **Accreditation and Recognition**

Gaining international recognition for Somaliland's higher education qualifications is crucial for enhancing the employability of graduates. The NCHE should work towards aligning its accreditation processes with international standards and seeking recognition from global accrediting bodies. This will not only improve the credibility of Somaliland's higher education system but also open up more opportunities for graduates in the global job market.

### **Conclusion**

The findings of this study highlight several critical challenges facing higher education in Somaliland, including outdated curricula, inadequate infrastructure, and a shortage of qualified faculty. Addressing these challenges requires strategic interventions by the National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE), comprehensive curriculum reform, significant investments in infrastructure, and robust faculty capacity-building programs. Furthermore, fostering international collaborations will provide valuable opportunities for knowledge exchange and capacity building.

### **Key Findings**

- **Outdated Curricula:** The current curricula do not align with global standards or industry needs, resulting in graduates who are ill-prepared for the job market.
- **Inadequate Infrastructure:** The lack of adequate facilities and technology hampers the quality of education and the learning experience.
- **Shortage of Qualified Faculty:** Insufficient qualified faculty members affect both the quality of education and research capabilities.
- **Policy and Regulatory Gaps:** While the NCHE has established policies for higher



education, their implementation and enforcement are inconsistent.

### Recommendations

- **Strategic Interventions for NCHE:** Enhance regulatory frameworks, improve policy implementation, and secure funding for higher education.
- **Curriculum Reform:** Align curricula with global standards, integrate modern pedagogies, and ensure regular updates.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Invest in facilities and technology, and establish maintenance plans for sustainability.
- **Faculty Capacity Building:** Attract qualified faculty, provide professional development, and support research initiatives.
- **International Collaboration:** Establish partnerships with international institutions and seek global accreditation and recognition.

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