



Faculty Resistance to Changes Arising from the Implementation of Educational Quality Management Processes: Causes and Strategies for Overcoming

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Abstract

Educational quality management processes often necessitate significant changes within higher education systems, yet such initiatives are frequently met with resistance from faculty members. This resistance, rooted in diverse psychological, professional, and organizational factors, can create barriers to achieving the intended goals of quality management. The present study, applied in purpose and descriptive-analytical in nature, employed a documentary and library-based method using credible academic sources to explore both the causes of faculty resistance and the strategies to address it. The findings reveal that preference for maintaining the status quo, identity-related perceptions and professional self-definition, negative attitudes and distrust toward quality management systems, the perceived weakening of academic authority and expertise in decision-making, and tensions between academic autonomy and managerial requirements of quality assurance represent the most influential drivers of resistance. The analysis further identifies practical strategies to mitigate these challenges, including active participation of faculty members, effective communication and training, constructive reward management, capable and wise leadership, facilitation and emotional support through empowerment and recognition, negotiation and consensus-building, nurturing a supportive organizational culture, applying force-field analysis, and employing adaptive and contingency-based approaches. The study concludes that addressing resistance through these strategies can enable higher education institutions to manage quality processes more effectively, thereby ensuring the successful implementation and long-term institutionalization of educational quality management. These insights contribute to strengthening academic quality systems and advancing sustainable improvement in higher education.

Keywords: Management, Educational Quality, Educational Change, Faculty Resistance, Coping Strategies.

Introduction

The implementation of quality management in higher education has become an essential component of institutional reform aimed at improving educational outcomes and competitiveness in a rapidly changing society. The success of these initiatives depends heavily on the support and engagement of faculty members, who play a central role in

teaching, research, and academic governance. However, numerous studies have documented that faculty members often resist changes associated with educational quality management, perceiving such measures as externally imposed, bureaucratic, and detached from the realities of academic work (Ewell, 2018; Overberg, 2019). This resistance is not merely a technical obstacle but a significant cultural and organizational challenge that can undermine the effectiveness of reform efforts (Clemons & Jance, 2024).

Educational change, as defined by Flamholtz and Randle (2008), involves transforming the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of stakeholders in ways that enable competitive performance in dynamic contexts. Fullan (2008) emphasized that innovation and change in education are closely tied to improving performance and enhancing quality. At the heart of such transformations lies the ambiguous yet critical concept of "quality." Scholars highlight that quality in education has multiple interpretations: from technical efficiency and accountability to broader understandings of excellence, fitness for purpose, and professional virtue (Schindler et al., 2015; Cheng, 2014). While quality management frameworks seek to standardize and assure excellence, they also risk reducing complex educational processes to numerical indicators, often generating dissatisfaction among faculty (Rashidi et al., 2022).

The phenomenon of resistance to change, first theorized by Kurt Lewin in the 1940s, has since been recognized as a multidimensional construct shaped by individual, organizational, and cultural factors (Mohammadi, 2019; Rostamzadeh et al., 2024). Faculty resistance may manifest in refusal, avoidance, or conditional compliance (Anderson, 2008), and is driven by causes such as entrenched attitudes, professional identity, institutional culture, bureaucratic complexity, and lack of communication or support (Oreg, 2006; Tagg, 2012). In higher education, resistance often emerges as a response to perceived threats to academic autonomy, increased administrative workload, or insufficient resources to support change (Abdul Kadir et al., 2016; Harrison et al., 2001).

Previous research at the international level highlights a range of strategies to mitigate resistance. These include education and communication, faculty participation, negotiation, incentives, and strong leadership (Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979; Wagner, 1998). For example, Rashidi et al. (2022) identified staff engagement as critical for adapting to quality assurance requirements, while Rahmadani et al. (2025) emphasized participatory approaches to overcome teacher resistance. Other studies point to structural and managerial barriers, such as poor communication, inadequate training, and ineffective leadership, which exacerbate resistance (Pour Rajab et al., 2019; Al Basami, 2022). Importantly, Gorospe and Edaniol (2022) demonstrated that faculty resistance is not monolithic but varies across emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions, requiring context-sensitive strategies.

Despite the significance of this issue, a review of the literature indicates that few studies have simultaneously addressed both the causes of faculty resistance to changes arising from educational quality management and the strategies for managing it within a multidimensional theoretical framework. Most existing works focus on primary or secondary education or examine isolated aspects such as accreditation or curriculum reform. Furthermore, frameworks such as Kotter and Schlesinger's six strategies, Lewin's force field analysis, and contingency approaches have rarely been integrated in a single study to provide a comprehensive understanding.

Against this background, the present study seeks to fill this research gap by focusing on faculty as central stakeholders in higher education. Specifically, it investigates the underlying causes of their resistance to changes resulting from educational quality management and explores strategies to effectively address such resistance. By synthesizing theoretical and empirical evidence, this research contributes both to academic discourse and to practical decision-making in higher education institutions. The central research question guiding this work is: What are the main causes of faculty resistance to changes arising from the implementation of educational quality management, and what strategies can be employed to address it? The findings are expected to offer valuable insights for policymakers, university managers, and quality assurance professionals seeking to implement reforms that are not only technically sound but also organizationally sustainable.

Material and Method

This applied study employed a descriptive-analytical review design and was conducted through a documentary-library method. Data were collected from reputable academic sources, including specialized books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and academic theses, which were systematically searched, reviewed, and analyzed in line with the research objectives. A qualitative content analysis approach was used, whereby relevant information was identified, extracted, and categorized into key themes and conceptual clusters. The study also draws on Kotter and Schlesinger's (1979) framework, extending its theoretical application in the educational context, while providing practical insights for educational managers to enhance adaptability and effective implementation of change initiatives. As the research relied exclusively on published secondary data without direct involvement of human or animal subjects, ethical approval was not required.

Causes of Faculty Resistance to Changes Arising from the Educational Quality Management Process

Individual Factors

Preference for the status quo and the desire to maintain it. According to Samuelson and Zeckhauser (1998), the tendency to preserve and sustain the status quo is often an attempt to resolve cognitive dissonance, particularly regarding an individual's value as a decision-maker. Asking a faculty member to change their teaching style may be perceived as an attack on the methods they have always employed. Past choices are rationalized even in the face of new evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of modern approaches. This inclination to retain existing conditions fosters resistance to changes that are perceived as threats to prior rewards or recognition. Evidence suggests that this tendency among university professors is just as strong as in other demographic groups (Dane et al., 2021; Tagg, 2012; Savina, 2019).

Identity perception and professional self-definition of faculty. Faculty members' understanding of what it means to be a professor within their discipline plays a decisive role in shaping their teaching behavior. Do they define themselves as transmitters of

organized knowledge or as facilitators of learning? Altering such professional self-definitions is difficult (Ekroth, 1990).

Negative attitudes and lack of trust in quality management systems. One critical success factor for quality management is faculty support. However, previous studies indicate that faculty may resist quality management. Ewell (2018) noted that professors often believe quality management is devised by individuals who lack any understanding of research or teaching in universities. These individuals are hired to enforce quality management but, in reality, do not know what it entails (Overberg, 2019). A lack of trust between staff and senior management also contributes significantly to resistance, as staff may not perceive the changes as beneficial either for themselves or the institution (Hadavi-Nejad & Safikhani, 2016).

Anxiety and fear of the unknown and of incompetence. Fear of the unfamiliar and of failure fosters resistance. When professors are asked to deviate from familiar and predictable paths, they may experience discomfort and anxiety. Confronted with new methods, a professor may feel unstable, asking questions such as: Can I handle this? How will students react? What will colleagues think? As a result, they may prefer to adhere to traditional practices (Rahmadani et al., 2025; Al Basami, 2022; Savina, 2019; Ekroth, 1990).

Sensitivity to professional dignity and status. Because faculty are in high demand, they assign a higher status to themselves compared to others. Thus, to establish boundaries and protect their perceived dignity, they may resist changes they interpret as conflicting with their professional status (Hadavi-Nejad & Safikhani, 2016).

Enjoyment of being the center of attention and fear of losing this position due to change. Lecturing, as the most traditional teaching method, plays a central role in consolidating the professor's position as an expert and knowledgeable figure. This approach not only allows faculty to display their knowledge and expertise but also enables them to discuss topics of personal interest in front of an audience. In such situations, professors may even become enamored with their own speeches. From this perspective, the pleasure derived from being at the center of attention can hinder the acceptance of change (Ekroth, 1990).

Perception of disrespect for expertise and threat to professional identity. Snyder (2018) observed that resistance in teaching often comes from experienced instructors accustomed to familiar methods, who resist changes perceived as threats to their professional identity or established routines (Rahmadani et al., 2025). Sparks (1997) further argued that resistance reflects a lack of recognition and respect for professors' expertise (Lomba et al., 2022).

Perceiving change as a heavy burden rather than a valuable opportunity. Anderson (2008) highlighted that for many faculty members and other stakeholders, the pace and impact of change processes are more burdensome than beneficial. Consequently, quality assurance as both a concept and a process becomes controversial and is met with resistance, at least in the early stages of implementation (Seyfried & Pohlenz, 2018).

Organizational Factors

Institutional and structural stability. One of the main reasons for the lack of change in teaching approaches among faculty is the professional stability of their work environment. For example, physical teaching environments such as lecture halls, course schedules, curriculum decision-making processes, and educational reward systems all preserve traditions and act as barriers to change. A key factor in faculty stability is the academic disciplines in which professors were socialized. Most faculty members, before entering academia, had observational student experiences, which involved replicating and modeling the prevailing teaching methods in their field (Ekroth, 1990).

Lack of incentives and reward systems. Changes in teaching methods are often accompanied by professional risk and anxiety, yet there are few professional incentives or rewards for doing so. For instance, while presenting papers at scientific conferences is highly valued, presentations at higher education-related conferences often receive less institutional recognition. Moreover, some institutions provide neither rewards nor resources for participation in teaching development programs (Ekroth, 1990).

Weakening of professional roles and academic authority in decision-making. Faculty resistance to change is often driven by fears of losing academic independence and autonomy. Research indicates that the roots of resistance to quality assurance in higher education lie in the “academic tribe” values built upon scholarly freedom and autonomy, which form enduring structures resistant to change. Reports suggest that quality assurance processes strengthen managerial authority while undermining faculty autonomy. De Fiss (2003) describes this situation as: “The center of power has shifted from professionals to auditors, policymakers, and statisticians, who are not necessarily knowledgeable about the profession itself” (Chandler, 2010; Rahmadani et al., 2025; Rashidi et al., 2022). In many cases, resistance stems from feelings of exclusion from the decision-making process, leading faculty to believe that change is merely an administrative agenda rather than a shared initiative (Al Basami, 2022).

Pressure from high accreditation standards and their maintenance. Quality and monitoring requirements in accreditation processes may be perceived by faculty and administrators as adding to their workload. Such pressures, particularly when imposed without genuine stakeholder participation, reinforce resistance. Higher standards expected during accreditation preparation and maintenance can increase resistance among both faculty and administrators (Abdul Kadir et al., 2016).

Resource allocation. According to Diamond (2006), one factor contributing to resistance to change in higher education is resource allocation. Faculty are strongly attached to their disciplinary or departmental cultures, and any reallocation of resources away from their areas is perceived as a loss, often resulting in strong resistance. Given that universities and higher education institutions typically operate under financial constraints, resource distribution becomes a significant source of resistance (Chandler, 2010).

Conflict between faculty identity and autonomy and managerialist quality assurance requirements. The conflict between managerialist demands of quality assurance and faculty professional identity is a key factor driving resistance. Quality management is often perceived as opposing the traditional independence of professors. Literature suggests that academic identity itself legitimizes resistance to quality assurance, serving as a discursive resource to oppose managerialism. University ranks (professor, associate professor, assistant professor, etc.) are often viewed as sacred positions within academic culture. Consequently, quality assurance processes may threaten the existential security of faculty, creating a stereotypical power struggle between managerialism and academic professionalism (Rahmadani et al., 2025; Rashidi et al., 2022; Overberg, 2019).

Weak organizational leadership. Many university leaders lack the necessary preparedness to guide change effectively. As a result, faculty may experience mistrust toward management, lack of vision, ambiguous goals, and feelings of isolation or exclusion. Academic leaders are often promoted from scholarly rather than managerial or business backgrounds and may not possess the skills or knowledge of change models. This deficiency can lead to strong resistance. Ineffective change leadership results in weak acceptance of change, as leaders often fail to inspire genuine commitment among faculty (Al Basami, 2022; Chandler, 2010).

Workload and time pressure. Faculty members are often under significant time pressure, making them resistant to any change that demands additional time investment (Chandler, 2010). According to Slastenin and Podimova (1997), increasing workload is a major factor behind faculty resistance. Evans (1996) similarly observes that resistance frequently stems from concerns about excessive workload (Rahmadani et al., 2025; Savina, 2019).

Weak communication systems and lack of awareness of change. Communication systems in universities are often weak, which has been widely recognized as one of the main causes of conflict and resistance to change—not only in higher education but in organizations in general. This weakness applies not only to communication between departments or between faculty and administrators, but also between institutional staff and political leaders (Chandler, 2010). A key reason for failed reforms in educational institutions is poor communication with stakeholders. When faculty lack adequate awareness of changes, or face ambiguity, inability, or disinterest in understanding them, the likelihood of resistance increases (Alanoğlu & Karabatak, 2023). Insufficient information creates ambiguity, which itself acts as a trigger for resistance (Hadavi-Nejad & Safikhani, 2016). Misunderstanding or lack of clarity regarding the necessity of change is another common reason behind resistance (Al Basami, 2022; Savina, 2019).

Strategies for Overcoming Faculty Resistance

Active Faculty Participation

Decentralization in quality assurance represents a rational approach to aligning the characteristics of quality assurance in higher education through the effective involvement of faculty. The features of quality assurance can be strengthened by faculty participation,

which may counter what Rowlands (2012) described: “Faculty may see quality assurance as something done to them, or at best done by them, but not as something done for them.” Under participatory conditions, quality assurance becomes something done by and for faculty, thereby reducing resistance (Rashidi et al., 2022). One of the key lessons of accreditation projects has been the success achieved through engaging all stakeholders in accreditation initiatives, preparing them for acceptance and participation in change. This was facilitated by selecting the right “change agents” who truly believed in the project and devoted their energy to its realization (Aben Ahmed, 2025). Chen et al. (2016) argued that when staff are kept informed of new programs and decisions, and are prepared for changes prior to implementation, they feel included in institutional decision-making, thereby lowering their resistance to change and increasing their willingness to participate effectively (Mohtaram et al., 2022). Active involvement of faculty in designing change fosters ownership and acceptance, which in turn reduces resistance. Establishing participatory structures and channels of development beyond departmental frameworks decreases resistance and enhances the likelihood of successful change adoption (Tagg, 2012). Moreover, faculty participation strengthens their commitment to change, while also enabling them to implicitly safeguard their individual interests, security, and professional identity (Hadavi-Nejad & Safikhani, 2016).

Training and Communication

Cognitive adaptability training is essential to reduce resistance stemming from faculty rigidity (Gorospe & Edaniol, 2022). Members of educational institutions must be educated about the nature and necessity of change prior to its implementation, with the rationale for change clearly explained (Yılmaz & Kılıçoğlu, 2013). Research confirms that communication and coordination between departments and committees—supported by intelligent managerial strategies and open communication skills—play a key role in overcoming resistance and removing major obstacles to progress in accreditation projects (Aben Ahmed, 2025). If higher education leaders wish to guide institutions toward successful change, they must raise awareness among staff by communicating both the positive and negative consequences of change, while considering the quality of existing social capital within the university (Mohtaram et al., 2022). Senior university management should first clarify the rationale and processes of change to reduce uncertainty among staff, supported by a stronger information system (Hadavi-Nejad & Safikhani, 2016). Keeping faculty informed of upcoming changes and providing training on different components of change are essential organizational measures to facilitate adaptation (Ibrahim et al., 2013).

Training and communication entail providing staff with information and explanations about the reasons for proposed changes, thus enhancing understanding of the need for change, its objectives, and potential benefits. By communicating reasons for change effectively and addressing concerns or misconceptions, organizations can ensure faculty feel more informed and engaged in the process. Clear communication channels enable

open dialogue, encourage questions, and create opportunities for feedback, thus fostering a supportive environment for successful change implementation (Kamola & Rakhmonova, 2024). Armenakis and Harris (2009) identified effective communication as one of the core strategies for managing resistance, emphasizing that transparent and consistent communication reduces uncertainty and builds trust (Taspenova, 2024). Field observations by Diab et al. (2018) in several higher education institutions revealed that breaking old habits and adopting technological innovations makes adaptation to change lengthy and complex. Findings by Rismansyah et al. (2024) further suggest that an organization's ability to adapt to environmental changes triggered by crises depends on its capacity to manage stakeholder relations.

Effective Reward Management

Research on compensation and rewards demonstrates that an integrated reward system supports every stage of organizational change implementation. Employees tend to resist change when they perceive no personal benefit or reward associated with it. Without the notion of "what's in it for me?" there is little long-term motivation to support change. This often requires adapting organizational reward systems to reinforce the desired changes. Rewards do not always need to be large or costly; rather, an effective compensation and reward system considers the dynamic and evolving nature of organizational change initiatives, enabling the institution to steer its ultimate trajectory. Thus, effective rewards must be flexible, adaptive, and continually aligned with the ongoing change process (Obina & Adenike, 2022).

Wise and Capable Leadership in Facing Resistance

Fullan (2001) emphasizes the role of leaders in reducing resistance through communication, collaboration, and support (Rahmadani et al., 2025). University leadership must confront employee resistance to change and adopt strategic approaches to ensure that such transformations are achieved positively, without negative consequences for the institution's future (Abdul Kadir et al., 2016). According to Trolas Djesu (1977), leaders and managers in educational institutions act as agents of change, playing a decisive role. This implies that a manager not only has the power to initiate change but also functions as a facilitator. Accordingly, the manager must strengthen effective communication and ensure that potential sources of resistance are either neutralized or transformed into supporters of change. Thus, it is essential that managers are not only familiar with strategic approaches but also possess the capability to implement them effectively. This requires leadership qualities such as situational analysis, decision-making, communication skills, human resource management, and persuasive ability. All these should be conducted in a less hierarchical and more horizontal manner to guarantee the sustainability of change (Lomba et al., 2022). University senior management must strive to build trust with employees (Hadavi-Nejad & Safikhani, 2016). It should be ensured that organizational leaders actively support change, demonstrate a positive attitude toward it, and provide the necessary guidance and support to employees throughout the process (Rismansyah et al., 2024)

Facilitation and Support: “Valuing, Empowering, Compassion, Understanding, Attention to Emotions, and Psychological Safety”

Facilitating change involves providing support, resources, and assistance to individuals and teams to help them adapt to proposed changes. This approach recognizes that transitioning to new methods of work or thinking can be challenging and may require additional guidance. By offering training programs, workshops, coaching, and other support mechanisms, organizations can help employees develop the skills and confidence needed to embrace change. Facilitation also includes addressing barriers or challenges that may emerge during implementation (Kamola & Rakhmonova, 2024).

Feeling valued plays a crucial role in faculty acceptance or resistance to educational change. Individuals who perceive themselves as valued within their institution are more likely to accept innovative approaches (Dana et al., 2021). Faculty empowerment and individual dynamism are strategies to reduce resistance and enhance meaningful participation in change processes. Change agents should pay sufficient attention to the capacity and dynamism of academic staff to institutionalize change (Borna Khwaja et al., 2022). Emotional needs must also be addressed to ensure that autonomy and psychological security are not threatened, thereby reducing fear and anxiety associated with change and encouraging greater participation (Rezaei & Haqqani, 2016). Emotional support can be operationalized when school leaders actively listen to concerns, challenges, and complaints from those struggling with change and incorporate their valuable input. Supportive managers create a more welcoming environment for change processes (Yılmaz & Kılıçoğlu, 2013). Dessler (2001) argues that top management can reduce resistance by providing a supportive environment, such as offering training and skill development essential for implementing change, especially in sensitive areas. Research shows that successful change implementation requires effective management of employees' psychological well-being, as neglecting perceptions and emotions often leads to failure. Ultimately, successful change management depends on deep understanding of people and their emotions (Al Basami, 2022). Emotional support and psychological counseling are effective measures for managing stress caused by change and reducing faculty resistance (Gorospe & Edaniol, 2022). The first step in overcoming resistance is understanding individuals' attitudes toward transformation. This strategy allows identification of the nature of resistance and possible ways to overcome it but requires compassion and significant support (Bararpour, 2015). In the context of educational reform, it is essential to recognize teachers' knowledge, skills, and need for change (Alanoğlu & Karabatak, 2023).

Negotiation and Agreement

Empirical studies highlight the importance of negotiation in the change process, showing that negotiated agreements can provide a straightforward way to prevent resistance, though sometimes costly (Obina & Adenike, 2022). Through negotiation, specific benefits can be exchanged with resistant individuals to facilitate change (Yılmaz & Kılıçoğlu, 2013). When resistant individuals are considered valuable, negotiation becomes essential to

overcome opposition (A'rabi & Arman, 2017). In cases of strong resistance, negotiations and agreements often involve specific incentives or trade-offs in return for support (Alvani et al., 2018). Strategies such as offering valuable gifts or meeting essential needs have been proposed as ways to reduce opposition (Parsaian & A'rabi, 2015). Negotiation also serves as a mechanism to address stakeholder concerns, reconcile conflicting interests, and build collaboration and trust through dialogue (Kamola & Rakhmonova, 2024).

Cultivating a Constructive, Change-Supportive Organizational Culture

Research indicates that, historically, the greatest conflicts during change in higher education occur between administrators and faculty. This stems largely from the cultural traditions of academia, where faculty are often seen as guardians of institutional values and traditions. Thus, when deeply rooted cultural beliefs are challenged, resistance is natural. If cultural dimensions are overlooked, faculty opposition to change efforts becomes severe (Chandler, 2010). Universities, as open social systems influenced by constant and rapid change, can only survive if they accept change and adapt to their environment; otherwise, they face decline. Organizational culture thus plays a decisive role in the change process (Hosseinpour et al., 2018).

Fostering a culture that embraces change is critical for long-term success and competitive advantage in today's dynamic environment. Achieving this requires key elements such as leadership, communication, and continuous learning, which collectively create an environment that fosters innovation and progress. Developing a change-supportive culture is inherently multifaceted, requiring effective leadership, open communication that inspires and reassures, and a learning-based culture that equips members with the skills and knowledge necessary for innovation (Xue et al., 2024). A constructive culture emphasizes individual and organizational growth, continuous self-learning, interdependence, empathy among teachers, and a supportive human-centered environment. Such a culture encourages teacher participation in institutional programs, ultimately reducing their resistance to change (Hosseini & colleagues, 2025).

Subtle Methods: Co-optation, Co-optive Inclusion, and Manipulation

Subtle strategies for influencing and winning over potential resisters involve the selective use of information and implicit incentives to secure acceptance by promising specific rewards or benefits in exchange for cooperation with change (Alvani et al., 2018). Sometimes managers discreetly encourage individuals to abandon resistance by assigning them roles as close collaborators. By giving responsibilities to those who stand in the way of change, they can be partially co-opted. For example, by assigning desirable roles to key individuals and involving them in planning and managing the change process, managers can steer them toward supporting the intended transformation (Broomand, 2011; 2017). Manipulation refers to influencing or persuading individuals or groups to accept change through tactics such as selective sharing of information, encouragement, or pressure (Kamola & Rakhmonova, 2024). By shaping perceptions, providing essential information,

and structuring events strategically, the implementation of change becomes more feasible (Yılmaz & Kılıçoğlu, 2013).

Force-Field Analysis

This strategy, developed by Kurt Lewin, assists in identifying and analyzing driving and restraining forces in the change process. It involves examining the current situation and determining factors that either support or resist the proposed change. During this analysis, both supportive and opposing forces are identified and weighted. Stakeholders are thereby enabled to balance these forces, strengthen driving factors, or weaken resisting ones to address resistance (Kamola & Rakhmonova, 2024). Force-field analysis provides a framework for a deeper understanding of facilitating and restraining forces, allowing change agents to organize information and develop strategies based on the importance of these forces. The process typically includes five steps: defining the change, identifying driving and restraining forces, and designing strategies to strengthen the former while weakening the latter (Hosseinbeigi et al., 2020). Lewin (1951, 1958) argued that resistance arises when restraining forces—stemming from social and organizational structures such as roles, norms, and reward systems—become activated. Change can occur only by reinforcing driving forces or reducing restraining ones (Hadavi-Nejad & Ebadi, 2014).

Contingency Approaches

It is widely recognized that the sources and intensity of faculty resistance to change vary depending on their working environment, including the faculties or departments to which they belong. Consequently, one effective intervention strategy involves designing targeted measures that are tailored to these differences (Gorospe & Edaniol, 2022). Another general approach to reducing resistance is the contingency perspective. Organizational change experts have criticized the assumption that participatory methods can universally resolve resistance. Instead, they favor a contingency approach, acknowledging that resistance can take multiple forms and therefore requires context-specific responses (Rezaeian, 2015; Citing Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979).

Coercion: Overt and Covert Pressure

In certain cases, management compels resisters to accept change indirectly, for example by transferring them to other units or withdrawing privileges (Broomand, 2011). Managers may also use explicit or implicit force to push individuals into compliance, through measures such as job reassignment, transfer, stalled promotions, or similar actions (Broomand, 2017). In this approach, resistant individuals may face direct threats of dismissal, demotion, or exposure of their weaknesses in recommendations, thereby pressuring them to abandon resistance (Parsaian & A'rabi, 2015). School administrators, exercising their authority, may warn resistant staff that failure to cooperate will result in negative consequences. This method is typically used in crisis situations but may generate adverse outcomes such as despair, fear, retaliation, and alienation (Yılmaz & Kılıçoğlu, 2013). In some cases, resistant individuals are reassigned by leaders or even forced to leave

the organization (A'rabi & Arman, 2017). Here, change is imposed on employees. Research shows that without sufficient effort to explain the necessity of change or encourage acceptance, this approach is rarely effective, except in genuine crises where most organizational members perceive the urgency (Obina & Adenike, 2022).

Conclusion

The findings of this study reveal that faculty resistance to changes arising from the implementation of educational quality management stems from a combination of individual and organizational factors, yet can be effectively managed through diverse strategies. Key sources of resistance – such as preference for the status quo, identity-related concerns, negative perceptions of quality systems, fear of uncertainty, and sensitivity to professional status – can be addressed through active participation, training, communication, negotiation, and supportive organizational culture. Institutional and structural barriers, including workload pressure, inadequate resources, and weak organizational leadership, can be mitigated through contingency approaches, force field analysis, effective reward management, and facilitative leadership. Overall, the study underscores that resistance should not merely be viewed as an obstacle but as an opportunity to refine change management strategies within higher education institutions. By applying context-specific interventions and fostering a constructive, supportive organizational culture, administrators can reduce resistance and ensure the sustainable implementation of quality management processes. These results contribute to the literature on change management in Afghan higher education and provide practical guidance for policymakers and leaders committed to strengthening the effectiveness and stability of educational quality assurance systems.

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Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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