

Do the Image of Quality Certificates in Non-Profit Organisations in Saudi Arabia have More Influence than Performance

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Abstract

A paired-samples t-test was used to determine a statistically significant mean difference between the importance and popularity of quality certificates ran when 13 grant makers from Sulaiman Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Rajhi Charitable Foundation (Al-Rajhi Foundation) were given 26-Item questionnaire. The questionnaire was segmented by category of importance and popularity and divided further into the four subcategories of quality accreditations or awards consisting of ISO 9001, The King Abdulaziz Quality Award, The Excellence Award for Charitable Organisations, and The King Khalid Award. The results weremixed for ISO 9001 whereby it was more significant in importance ($M = 2.62$, $SD = 1.33$) than popularity ($M = 1.85$, $SD = 0.80$) however not statistically significant $.77$, 95% CI $[-.34, 1.88]$, $t(12) = 1.51$, $p < 0.16$, $d = .42$. The Excellence Award for Charitable Organisations difference in means (M) results were $-.92$, 95% CI $[-1.72, .13]$ compared to the popularity of quality certificates and is statistically significant, $t(12) = -2.52$, $p < .03$, $d = -.70$. Key findings showed the difference in means (M) must account for the organisational type and its structure by which it operates alongside outside stakeholders.

Introduction

What do quality certificates represent to organisations? Do they ensure a high-level of performance leading to organisational effectiveness, productivity or the perception of it? Prior literature focus on the process of implementation of quality programs to address the role of quality certificates contributing to organisational effectiveness and productivity (Upadhyaya & Bhat, 2016; Smith, 2011;Boiral & Roy, 2007;van der Wiele, van Iwaarden, Williams, & Dale, 2005). As for publicly traded organisations the cost-benefit analysis is done at the onset before the decision to pursue a quality certificate. The cost-benefit analysis is an important factor before the pursuit of quality certification. Therefore, the question of what quality certificates represent to publicly traded organisations is viewed strategically by either profitability, market share, competitive advantage or simply profit growth (Hill & Jones, 2009). The fiduciary duty of shareholders in publicly traded organizations makes the purpose less complicated to define for managers and employees tasked with implementing a quality process (Donaldson et al., 2002).

Unlike publicly traded organisations, with non-profit organisations the

fiduciary duties of stakeholders are towards profitability, competitive advantage, market share, and profit growth are no longer justifiable reasons for quality certificates. With non-profit organisations the duties shift towards grant makers and the decisions they make on where or how granted funds are used (Bush, 2014; Gerli, 2012). For the grant makers quality certificates must contribute to evaluations of products or services and programs—given that evaluations are the most ignored part of planning in non-profit organizations (Bush, 2014; Gerli, 2012). The lack of attentiveness by grant makers towards evaluations of programs brings into question motivations for quality certificates—with two practical outcomes. The first outcome justifies the importance pursuit of quality certificates to non-profit organisations in its achievement of overall organizational effectiveness and implementation (Boiral & Roy, 2007; van der Wiele et al., 2005). The second outcome justifies the pursuit of quality certificates for popularity or to portray a perception of performance, or evaluation assurance to donors (Osborne, 2003). This popularity justification reflects pressure on management to enter the quality certification processes to create, whether intentional or not, the perception of quality assurance achievement to donors (Bhuiyan & Alam, 2005; van der Wiele et al., 2005).

This study examines whether a difference exist between importance and popularity of quality certificates in nonprofit organisations in Saudi Arabia. This study makes the reference of quality certificates to the achievement of quality through TQM, ISO 9000, PQASSO or other quality accreditations and awards. Prior studies view quality certificates as the direct result of quality achievement with emphasis based on motivations behind the actions necessary to gain quality certificates (Boiral & Roy, 2007; Llopis & José Tarí, 2003; Smith, 2011). These motivations are proxies for examining importance and popularity as causes for quality certificates achievement in nonprofit organisations.

The review of literature in this study first shows the proxies for the importance of quality certificates as organisational effectiveness in implementing quality that leads to certificate achievement. The popularity proxies are pressure and overall growth of membership which is signaled by prior studies results that showed no impact or link between achieving quality certificates and profitability, sales, or overall increase organisational performance. Third, the focus shifts to grant making foundations and their role in Saudi Arabia with special emphasis on the Al Rajhi Foundation and whether quality certificates achieved more of an importance or for popularity purposes to their grant makers. This study ends

with the results of a paired-sample t-test based on a survey given to grant makers in the Al Rajhi Foundation, to determine whether a difference exist between importance and popularity of quality certificates.

Review of Literature

The importance of quality certificates

Prior literature focused mainly on organisational effectiveness and implementation as reasons for the importance of quality certificates (Boiral & Roy, 2007; Heras et al., 2002; Smith, 2011; van der Wiele et al., 2005). Organisational effectiveness stems from two perspectives that reflect the current state of organizations towards quality. The first perspective looks at organisational effectiveness from the perspective that scores quality based on the ability to improve one's existing quality program to address the new market forces affecting product or service delivery and differentiation. In Van der Wiele et al., (2005), 775 organizations ISO 9000 certified in the Netherlands surveyed on the difference in appreciation and value. General and quality managers comprise the sample. The goal of Van der Wiele et al., (2005) was to find if a difference existed between appreciation and value based on the changes in quality standards of ISO 9000 between the 2000 version and the 1994 version. The major findings showed that both general and quality managers had an overall positive view of the ISO 9000 (2000) quality program compared with the 1994 version. Based on the responses to the question that addressed the dissatisfaction with ISO 9000 (2000) standards, a positive view of organizational effectiveness could be inferred.

If organisational effectiveness is measured in terms of profitability or business performance, then the findings in Van der Wiele et al., (2005) aligns with Alič, (2012); Heras et al., (2002); Singels et al., (2001); and Wilson et al., (2003). Alič, (2012) and Herras et al., (2002). Their studies found no difference in profitability or business performance as two of the various effects of quality certificates. Both studies focused on various effects of organisations with quality certificates. For example Alič, (2012) focused on the effects of cancelling ISO certificates and business performance decline with no significant difference. Herras et al., (2002) used return on assets (ROA) to measure 800 organisations in Northern Spain with 400 ISO certified and the remaining 400 not ISO certified. There were no significant results that showed ISO 9000 organisations had higher profitability than non-certified organisation in the study. Wilson et al., (2003) focused on a direct relationship between ISO 9000 certified organisations and financial economic benefit. This was achieved by exploring the link between Malcolm

Baldrige recipient organisations and their stock performance.

Boiral & Roy, (2007) discussed both perspectives of organisational effectiveness and implementation on the importance of quality certificates. Their study was performed on 872 Canadian companies—all ISO 9000 certified. Boiral & Roy, (2007) viewed the organisational effectiveness through the lens of motivation. Their study focused on the impact of motivation on organisational performance and the integration of ISO 9000. Their findings identified the nature and intensity of motivations was the basis for success in implementing the ISO 9000 and it exposed organisational issues otherwise unknown had not arose because of the certification process. These organisational issues reflect the process of organisational change that is necessary for a successful quality program implementation.

Smith (2011) looked at the sequence that preceded a successful quality program to determine what comes first—quality or change? This study implied that quality and change are dependent on each other. The case study used in Smith (2011) identifies issues related to quality implementation and organisational change that intersect, and managed simultaneously. Similar to Smith (2011), Upadhyaya & Bhat, (2016) looked at the sequence on implementing a successful quality program however absent the organisational change process. Upadhyaya and Bhat, (2016) focused on the impact of quality initiatives and common influences on quality awards. Their study surveyed 238 Indian quality-award winning companies, with an 17.6% response rate, quality initiatives with a significant impact before, and after winning.

The popularity of quality certificates

As mentioned earlier in Van der Wiele et al., (2005) the findings showed that both general and quality managers had an overall positive view of the ISO 9000 (2000) version quality program compared with the (1994) version. However, the first claim of Van der Wiele et al., (2005) points to pressure as the key to improve organisation performance. Since both groups had an overall positive view of the ISO 9000 (2000) version implementation, there was no significant effect of pressure. Unlike the first claim of Van der Wiele et al., (2005), Psomas et al., (2017) did show the influence of TQM on the operational and quality performance of 125 Greek local authorities and citizens.

In Psomas et al., (2017) a questionnaire was given to CEOs to address the level to which TQM factors achieved, adopted and influenced by local authorities. The response revealed divide between the importance of TQM and the influence it had on other stakeholders. As for the

importance of quality certificates, the questionnaire revealed that local authorities did not acknowledge any significant benefits of TQM. However contrary to the local authorities' general view of TQM, the citizens had a high positive influence on the adoption of TQM processes in their municipalities. Furthermore, the satisfaction part of the questionnaire revealed that both the citizens and employees of the municipalities were satisfied with the TQM results.

Psomas et al., (2017), Van der Wiele et al., (2005) and Llopis & José Tari, (2003) are significant to this study because they showed variations of quality certificates effect from various stakeholders. Psomas et al., (2017) explained that influence and the importance of quality certificates are not from inside the organisation solely, but from other stakeholders as well. The significance of Van der Wiele et al., (2005) is similar to Psomas et al., (2017) whereby the source of the data retrieved came from two different groups—general and quality managers. This is the same theme of Llopis & José Tari, (2003) with the difference in the groups not categorized under management functions but by internal and external motivations. Unlike Psomas et al., (2017), Van der Wiele et al., (2005) and Llopis & José Tari, (2003), this study looks at the effects of quality certificates in Al-Rajhi Foundation based on the grant makers.

Contrary to the importance of quality certificates, pressure exists in government, private, and non-profit organisations to acquire quality certificates as an assurance of quality (Bhuiyan & Alam, 2005; van der Wiele et al., 2005). However, to mitigate this pressure, involvement of outside stakeholders during the implementation process has allowed for measured expectations of results (Fredriksson, 2004; Osborne, 2003). In the Fredriksson, (2004) case study, the community of Aseda, Sweden actively engaged in implementing TQM within their municipalities as a way of changing the negative trend portrayed of community development. The community of Aseda leveraged collaboration with local public and private companies to create a positive community. This joint effort among local authorities, public and private companies, and the Aseda residents created high motivation to improve their society with practical TQM results—due in part to the role played by stakeholders.

Prior studies had several commonalities when it came to reporting the findings on the impact of quality certificates. When it came to impact inside the organisation, importance linked to the organisational effectiveness as defined by success of the quality program implementation (Alić, 2012; Boiral & Roy, 2007; Heras et al., 2002; Smith, 2011; Upadhyaya & Bhat, 2016; van der Wiele et al., 2005). As

for the influence from outside stakeholders, the popularity by direct involvement defined success (Boiral & Roy, 2007; Fredriksson, 2004; Heras et al., 2002; Osborne, 2003; Psomas et al., 2017; van der Wiele et al., 2005). Another commonality that continuously resonated in prior literature used in this study was the findings that showed no effect of quality certificates in terms of impact on organisational effectiveness, profitability, view by employees of different job functions, annual sales, or different managers within organisations' cost structures (Alič, 2012; Llopis & José Tarí, 2003; Singels et al., 2001; Upadhyaya & Bhat, 2016; Wilson et al., 2003). Osborne, (2003) makes this point although in a general context when he states, "Performance management is treated as an objective managerial exercise rather than the subjective, value-driven and political exercise that it often is" (p.333).

Research Questions

Given the underpinnings of prior research used in this study, one can see the success of quality certificates based on implementing a quality process successful. Success is subjective based on implementation or perception of quality assurance based on outside participation. However, if the success of quality certificates are dependent on any traditional quantifiable measures like change in annual sales, profitability, or business performance the impact of quality certificates have no effect. It is with this observation of the prior literature the first research question, in this study is as follows:

1. Is there a difference between importance and popularity of quality certificates sought by non-profit organisations in Saudi Arabia?

Sulaiman Al-Rajhi Charitable Foundation

Al-Rajhi Foundation is one of the most important charitable foundations in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. According to its website, "It focuses its efforts in supporting registered, non-profit organisations designed to help the educational, health, social, and religious sectors" (Al-Rajhi, n.d.). Al-Rajhi has 13 branches covering the 13 administrative regions with an estimate of 1200 grants each year awarded. Al-Rajhi has a 3-Step Initial Assessment for awarding grants which consist of the following:

1. Verification of the criteria of the organisations, the project and the grant requested in the presented applications.
2. Assessment of the organisations according to specific standards based on the track.
3. Assessment of the project based on specific standards.

The 3-Step Initial Assessment is used by the chairmen of

the grants department, the 13 branch managers, and 13 committees of external stakeholders from the local communities.

The dataset in this research consist of 13 decision makers (the 13 branch managers) in the Al-Rajhi Charitable Foundation. The three reasons for using the Al-Rajhi Charitable Foundation in this study is as follows:

1. Sulaiman Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Rajhi Charitable Foundation has 89% and 98% ratings respectively for the most well-known and beneficial grant-making foundation in Saudi Arabia. This survey that produced these ratings was conducted from 437 charities and association in Saudi Arabia (Abo Romman, 2015).

2. Sulaiman Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Rajhi Charitable Foundation is only charitable foundation that has 13 branches covering all the regions in Saudi Arabia.

3. Sulaiman Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Rajhi Charitable Foundation provides easy accessibility to information for researchers.

Quality influence on grantmaking decisions

The connection between quality and grant making decisions in charitable foundations is training (Bush, 2014; Sattler et al., 2015). Similarly, to Bush, (2014), decision makers within the Al Rajhi Foundation rely on training in rating proposals, scale knowledge, and grant qualifications. This training improves reliability and accuracy in analysing grant proposal scoring and funding recommendations (Sattler et al., 2015). In fact Bush, (2014) goes further in explaining what trained decision makers are looking for from grant proposals when he stated, "When requesting a grant, funders want to know how you will determine (a) the success of the program or project, (b) were any program component unsuccessful, (c) who will review evaluation material, and (d) what will the organization do with the information?" (p. 43).

The existence of quality in charitable foundations exist within grant making decisions of when, how and why grants are awarded (Gerli, 2012). Gerli, (2012) looks at evaluating grant proposals in terms of product and process evaluation. Product evaluation focus on the results earned from the award and whether it aligns with the stated objectives. Gerli, (2012) product evaluation description coincides with Al Rajhi's third step in its 3-Step Initial Assessment guidelines previously mentioned. The specific standards mentioned in Al Rajhi's 3-Step Initial Assessment aligns results with the standards mentioned at the onset of the award.

The process evaluation of awards, "...addresses how the

project was conducted, in consistency with the stated plan of action and the effectiveness of the various activities within the plan” (Gerli, 2012, p.13). Quality is embedded in the process evaluation more so than the product evaluation. The goal of process evaluation leads to a review of programs and projects among both the grantor and grantee of the award. Periodic reporting by the grantee to the grantor addressing the status reflects a monitoring and control process that makes planning or evaluation design compulsory.

Two reasons given by Gerli, (2012) of why evaluation design should be critical to grantors and be the start of any project whereby grants are awarded. The first reason amounts to clear justification or need supported by data collection throughout the life of the project. The second reason is an extension of the first, as advisement of an action that should be performed if an evaluation design is not prepared—a critical review of the entire program.

Gerli (2012) is not alone in this view of the importance of a plan for a project's quality process. Heagney, (2012) and PMI, (2018) makes clear in the explanation of the planning process—there is no monitoring and control process without a plan. Besides the existence of an initial plan, it must be accepted or signed off on by the sponsors (Heagney, 2012, p.40). A grantor with an evaluation design or a quality plan accepted by its sponsor reduces the nature of investigation of the grantor, grantee or both, into a critical review of a process. It is under this premise that Gerli, (2012), Heagney, (2012) and PMI, (2018) infer that grantors view quality certificates as more of an importance to have than popularity surrounding the certificates. Therefore, the second research question in this study is:

2. Do grant makers view the importance of quality certificates more significant than popularity regardless of the types of quality certificates?

The first research question is aimed at whether a difference between the importance and popularity of quality certificates exist among non-profit organisations in Saudi Arabia. The second research question focus on the importance of processes, training and planning by grant makers as possible justification that importance of quality certificates is more significant than the popularity of them. Furthermore, the importance by grant makers exist regardless of the type or characteristics of quality certificate aimed for.

Methods and Analysis

Participants and Design

To answer the two research questions in this study, a 26-Item Questionnaire was given to the 13 grant makers for the

Al-Rajhi Foundation. The questionnaire was segmented into two parts. The first part focused on the importance of quality certificates while the second part on the popularity of quality certificates. The questionnaire had a Likert scale of 1 to 4 with 1 representing very important, 2 important, 3 important to some degree, and 4 representing not important. The 26-Item questionnaire was given to each grant maker four times. Each grant maker had to complete four questionnaires representing each of the four quality accreditations or awards of ISO 9001, The King Abdulaziz Quality Award, The Excellence Award for Charitable Organisations, and The King Khalid Award.

Paired-samples t-test determined whether means for both categories had differences between paired observations significantly different from zero. The grant makers' responses measured the significance of the importance and popularity of the four quality accreditations or awards previously mentioned. The sample size is 13 representing the number of participants.

Procedures

As a rule of thumb when conducting a t-test, the sample size should not be greater than 50. The sample size in this study is 13 as previously mentioned. The assumption of normality was violated but paired-samples t-tests are robust to violations of normality with respect to Type I error (Fradette et al., 2003; Lund & Lund, 2015; Rasch & Guiard, 2004; Wolfgang & Alexander, 2013). Furthermore, based on prior literature previously mentioned in this study, the following hypothesized statements are deduced.

1. The difference in means (M) between both the importance and popularity of quality certificates, across all four quality accreditations or awards is 0.

This null hypothesis is based in the findings from Alič, (2012), Llopis & José Tari, (2003), Singels et al., (2001), Upadhyaya & Bhat, (2016) and Wilson et al., (2003). However, after a more critical assessment of grant makers and the importance of planning and process evaluation as reflected in Al Rajhi's third step in its 3-Step Initial Assessment guidelines, the second null hypothesis statement makes the assumption that importance of quality certificates has higher significance to grant makers than the popularity (Gerli, 2012; Heagney, 2012; PMI, 2018).

2. The mean (M) that represents the importance of quality certificates is greater than and the popularity of quality certificates among the 13 grant makers of Al-Rajhi Foundation, across all four subcategories of quality accreditations or awards.

This study further highlights this assumption with a one paired sample t-test calculation of the difference score (D)

as:

$D = \text{Importance} - \text{Popularity}$

Any missing values in the either category of importance or popularity were not included in the paired sample calculation. The sample set had no outliers.

Analysis

Table 1 shows King Abdulaziz Quality Award as the only

subcategory that makes the null hypothesis statement 1 true among the grant makers. They perceived no difference between the importance ($M = 2.62$, $SD = 1.04$) and popularity ($M = 2.62$, $SD = 1.26$) in regards to the King Abdulaziz Quality Award. The alternative hypothesis is accepted with the three remaining subcategories.

Table 1. Paired Statistics of Importance and Popularity Among the Quality Accreditation Certifications

Quality Accreditations & Certificates	Importance		Popularity	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
ISO9001	2.62	1.33	1.85	0.80
King Abdulaziz Quality Award	2.62	1.04	2.62	1.26
Excellence Award for Charitable Organisations	2.08	1.26	3.00	0.91
King Khalid Award	2.46	1.27	2.54	1.27

The null hypothesis statement 2 is false among all subcategories with ISO 9001 being the exception. The grant makers did consider ISO 9001 more significant in terms of importance ($M = 2.62$, $SD = 1.33$) than popularity ($M = 1.85$, $SD = 0.80$).

Table 2 shows the importance of ISO 9001 elicits a mean (M) increase of .77, 95% CI [-0.34, 1.88] compared to the popularity of ISO 9001, but this mean (M) increase is not statistically significant, $t(12) = 1.51$, $p < 0.16$. The importance of ISO 9001 among the 13 grants makers support null hypothesis statement 2. However, the importance of ISO 9001 could have been by chance because of the lack of statistical significance—therefore

must be rejected.

Table 2 also shows the importance of the Excellence Award for Charitable Organisations elicits a mean (M) decrease of .92, 95% CI [-1.72, .13] compared to the popularity of it and is statistically significant, $t(12) = -2.52$, $p < .03$. However, the null hypothesis statement 2 is rejected. Therefore, the popularity of the Excellence Award for Charitable Organisations among the 13 grant makers is more significant than its importance.

Table2 Quality certificates Differences in Perception between Importance and Popularity Across Four Quality Accreditation Certifications

Quality Accreditations Certificates	& <i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	95% <i>CI</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
ISO9001	0.77	1.83	12	[-.34, 1.88]	1.51	0.16
King Abdulaziz Quality Award	0.00	1.47	12	[-.89, .89]	0.00	1.00
Excellence Award for Charitable Organisations	-0.92	1.32	12	[-1.72, .13]	-2.52	0.03
King Khalid Award	-0.08	1.04	12	[-.70, .55]	-0.27	0.79

Conclusion

This study aimed to answer two questions. First, is there a difference between the importance and popularity of quality certificates? Second, do grant makers view the importance of quality certificates more significant than popularity regardless of the types of quality certificates? A paired samples t-test analyzed the difference in means of both categories whereby for subcategories representing the four quality accreditations or awards of ISO 9001, The King Abdulaziz Quality Award, The Excellence Award for Charitable Organisations, and The King Khalid Award. The results showed that popularity of The Excellence Award for Charitable Organisations, and The King Khalid Award was more significant with ISO 9001 and The King Abdulaziz Quality Award being the exceptions although not statistically significant to rule out the possibility of chance.

Given the importance of quality certificates as assurances of organisational effectiveness, planned process evaluation and design mentioned in prior literature, it did not resonate in the results in this study. Therefore, the subjectivity of which category of importance or popularity of quality certificates is a significant point to the stakeholders involved in the process. Prior literature signalled that no effect was identified when the sample size consisted of general and quality managers (Boiral & Roy, 2007; Fredriksson, 2004; Heras et al., 2002; Osborne, 2003; Psomas et al., 2017; van der Wiele et al., 2005). Importance and popularity became relevant when outside stakeholders were injected into the process (Bhuiyan & Alam, 2005; van der Wiele et al., 2005).

As for the importance of quality certificates, prior literature focused on organisations that viewed ISO 9001 in relation to traditional profitability and growth ratios to support significance (van der Wiele et al., 2005). Popularity was

not a factor until prior literature introduced included outside stakeholders or joint projects between local municipalities as part of the sample observations (Llopis & José Tarí, 2003; Psomas et al., 2017). This explains the mixed results of ISO 9001 whereby it was more significant in terms of importance ($M = 2.62$, $SD = 1.33$) than popularity ($M = 1.85$, $SD = 0.80$) however not statistically significant $.77$, 95% $CI [-.34, 1.88]$, $t(12) = 1.51$, $p < 0.16$, $d = .42$ (Lund & Lund, 2015)¹.

The Excellence Award for Charitable Organisations difference in means (M) show a decrease in the importance of quality certificates with $-.92$, 95% $CI [-1.72, .13]$ compared to the popularity of quality certificates and is statistically significant, $t(12) = -2.52$, $p < .03$, $d = -.70$. The negative sign in the effect size (Cohen's d) shows that the 13 grant makers are of a strong view that popularity of this particular quality certificate has more significance over its importance. However, this could be misleading because of the ceremonial process that follows the announcement of award winners overshadowing the rigour during judgement phase. Fareed, (2018) highlights an evaluation that entails 9 major criteria and 35 sub-criteria which include 236 practices of excellence that promote standards of philanthropic work in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The demographics of the sample size in this study differ from that of the prior literature used in this study. Grant makers are the decision makers of how resources are allocated with outside stakeholders having significant input—similar to the prior literature although with one important condition. The grant makers in this study had fiduciary duties with regards to the accountability assessment of the criteria, planning and evaluation of organisations seeking charitable funds as with Sulaiman Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Rajhi Charitable Foundation (Al-Rajhi Foundation). Therefore, the difference in means (M) between the importance and popularity of quality

certificates must consider the organisations and its structure by which it operates alongside outside stakeholders. Furthermore, one must be careful not to discount the importance of quality certificates due the low and statistically insignificant difference in mean (M) scores in comparison to popularity. In these cases, an analysis of the characteristics and ceremonial processes of the quality accreditations or awards needs to ensure they do not overshadow the selection criteria—which is where the importance lies.

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Endnotes:

1. The Cohen's d represents the effect size of the (M) in terms of importance. The .42 shows that the effect size of the (M) in relation to importance of quality certificates is medium.