



Brunel Business School

**Impact of publicly reported
quality assurance on inter-
organisational networks – Case
study of Bahrain education
reforms**

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy by:

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Abstract

Audit, inspection and quality assurance are aspects of a broader but rapidly evolving "performance measurement"; which is part of the performance management (PM) in public administration. The effectiveness of PM and its public reporting are not established in all contexts and applications. In some contexts, PM public reporting is used along with other measures such as inter-organisational networks to reform public service provision. In such contexts, how PM reporting help stakeholders in a network? There have been different conceptual frameworks and models explored in the literature that aim to explain how networked governance works. None of the available models, however, addresses the impact of an outside performance measurement tools. The review of literature, on the perspective of inter-organisational network, shows a need to explore more deeply what is going on within the network, and how the network interacts with its boundaries and outside context. Therefore, the overall objective for this research is to propose a conceptual model that can explain the impact of externally reported PM, an example of which is independent mandatory quality assurance (QA), on inter-organisational networks dynamics and outcomes.

The research starts by building an 'initial theoretical conceptual' model based on theoretically derived influences of PM on the dynamics and outcomes of a network. The research uses qualitative case study strategy, using data from four cases, all linked with national education and training reform initiatives in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Participants representing the four cases were interviewed using semi-structured interview protocol. Data collected were analysed through two-order thematic analyses, and the results were used to revise the initial model and develop a novel conceptual model for this purpose.

The results of the analyses contribute to existing theories by proposing four themes, covered by four propositions, in which QA public reporting impacts the network dynamics – namely on accountability, engagement and trust, power and control; and collaborations and cooperation. The impact on the network dynamics may lead to the achievement of some collaborative advantages, after going through the resistance of some collaborative inertias that may exist in the system and context in which network operates.

In summary, QA reporting, in the case of this research, is an external variable to the network setting which activates members and offers a medium of change around members, within a network as well as outside it. The researcher introduces the term 'network catalyst' to describe the role of QA reporting in this context.

Key words:

Performance management, quality assurance, New Public Management, networks, Networked Governance, inter-organisational collaboration, policy networks, education reforms, public services, network catalyst.

Declaration

I Maitham Al Oraibi declare that this research, its idea, analysis, findings and conclusions that are included in this PhD dissertation are entirely developed by me for the purpose of this program only and have not been submitted for another qualification.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to all of my lovely family, particularly to my mother and father, my wife Manal and my children Sahar, Husam and Sarah, for their love, prayers, endless support, and for their patience with me!

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List of abbreviations

- **QA:** Quality Assurance
- **QQA:** The National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education and Training
- **PM:** Performance Management
- **NPG:** New Public Governance
- **MoL:** Ministry of Labour in the Kingdom of Bahrain
- **MoE:** Ministry of Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain
- **HEC:** Higher Education Council in the Kingdom of Bahrain
- **HCVT:** Higher Council for Vocational Training of Bahrain
- **Tamkeen:** The Labour Fund (Tamkeen) of Bahrain
- **KPI:** Key Performance Indicator

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

In his book *The New Bureaucracy: Quality assurance and its critics*, Max Travers notes the expansion of the use of audit and inspections to reform public services by UK governments. However, in his critical review of the use of such tools, Travers notes:

"Managers and quality assurers see it as beneficial for society, whereas many professionals view it as either unnecessary or harmful. The critics also often describe quality assurance as a form of red tape: one that slows down organisations through creating burdensome and unnecessary work"
(Travers 2007, p.124)

Despite such criticisms of the use of performance measurement tools such as quality assurance (QA), governments around the world opt for this measure as a tool to improve quality of services and efficiency of the service providing organisations. In some contexts, other measures such as inter-organisational networks are set to reform public service provision, along with the use of independent QA reporting. How then can this combined arrangement be conceptually analysed and assessed?

Reverting to the literature will provide various theories and conceptual frameworks of how networks work in some contexts, but not all, certainly not the context where a network is coupled with the use of publicly reported QA. Theories around the inter-organisational network field are emerging and still need to be fully developed. The following excerpt highlights one of the gaps in this field of research:

"Some networks are designed to increase the capacity of member agencies, thus enabling these agencies to face and resolve more difficult problems. Still other networks exist to reach beyond immediate results. In addition, network outcomes feedback into a community and, subsequently, affect a new set of outcomes ... not enough is known empirically about this process. It appears from some research that there can also be too much action or process in a network, which can lead to collaborative inertia. We must learn how networks overcome such inertia and deliver results" (Mcguire & Agranoff 2011, p.281)

This thesis details research that investigates how external quality assurance (QA) reviews, which are publicly reported, can influence inter-organisational collaborative networks, comprised of multiple stakeholders, that aim at achieving goals that are common to the stakeholders, such as enhancing the quality of education and training provision. The research quest started with a general question: is QA public reporting beneficial? If so, for whom might it be beneficial? How can it help in improving the quality of services to which more than one organisation contributes (such as providers, regulators, funding organisations and even the general public)? For the purpose of this research, the research questions and aims are funnelled into a specific area, zooming in to the linkage between public reporting of QA and the dynamics and impacts of related inter-organisational networks.

1.2 Research problems and gaps

As part of the New Public Management (NPM) strategies to modernise government services, there was a strong move towards implementation of more robust strategic planning and performance management. Performance measurement, as part of performance management (PM), and the public reporting of its outcomes are tools that are used in the NPM mode of governance (Van Thiel & Leeuw 2002; Talbot 2005; Amirkhanyan 2009; Martin 2010; Osborne 2010). Audit is argued to be just one aspect of a broader but rapidly evolving "performance measurement society" to cover a number of inspection activities (Bowerman et al. 2000; Maijoor 2000). Michael Power in his book *The Audit Society* used the term "audit

society” to describe the rise of audit and other performance measurement activities and the expansion of the word “audit” beyond its conventional financial audit setting to many fields including: health, safety, medicine and education (Power 1997; 2000; 2003).

What does the literature say about the usefulness of performance measurement and its reporting? Despite its wide spread, the literature review paints a mixed picture of PM tools. On one hand, some researchers argue that such auditing and inspections are used to overcome accountability challenges (Power 1997; Talbot 2005), give the user a choice of service (Propper & Wilson 2003; Hibbard et al. 2005; Werner & Asch 2005; Meijer 2007), and are ultimately used to raise performance and efficiency of public service organisations (Propper & Wilson 2003). On the other hand PM tools and its reports are criticised mainly, for incomplete reporting of actual performance (Overtveit 2005; Carmichael et al. 2001), over-complexity of reporting (Lansky 2002), in-accurate attribution of performance (Lindenauer et al. 2007), manipulation and deception attitude of auditees/reviewees (Lim 2009); distorted behaviours and unintended consequences of public reporting (Cotton et al. 2000; Van Thiel & Leeuw 2002; Propper & Wilson 2003; Marshall et al. 2003; Werner & Asch 2005; Travers 2007; Justesen & Skærbæk 2010), and in-effective use of PM reports by stakeholders (Leong & Wong 2004; Meijer 2007).

The usefulness of PM reporting is not established in all contexts and applications. One of the main gaps identified by the literature review is a need for more solid underpinnings for assessing effectiveness of PM, in its various types, approaches and context of application (Bowerman et al. 2000; Walshe & Freeman 2002; Øvretveit & Gustafson 2002; Power 2005).

Part of the dilemma in evaluating the effectiveness of PM is its ability to reconcile varying needs and expectations of stakeholders in order to reach an answer to the question: good for whom? (Humphrey & Owen 2000; Cotton et al. 2000; Klessig et al. 2000; Bolton & Hyland 2003; Preston & Hammond 2003; Skinner et al. 2004).

So, what happens when stakeholders are put together in collaborative settings, such as networks? Will this practical approach help in reconciling the differences in their needs, expectations and priorities? In such a setting, how effective would PM tools be then? This question prompts the review into the network and inter-organisational collaboration area of literature.

The review of literature on the perspective of inter-organisational networks reveals a lack of a more comprehensive conceptual model that can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of collaborative networks in different structural and contextual settings (McQuaid 2010; Osborne 2010). The literature also indicate a need to explore more deeply what is going on within the network (Provan & Kenis 2007), and how the network interacts with its boundaries and outside context (Crosby et al. 2010).

There have been different conceptual frameworks and models explored in the literature that aim to explain how collaborative or networked governance works (Ring & Van de Ven 1994; Huxham & Vangen 2000; Huxham 2003; Cooper et al. 2006; Thomson & Perry 2006; Kapucu 2006; Bryson et al. 2006; Ansell & Gash 2008; Ospina & Saz-Carranza 2010; Emerson et al. 2011; Purdy 2012). These models serve different purposes and explain various dimensions of how networks are formed, governed and what outcomes or impacts are realised from such collaborative work. None of the available models, however, addresses the impact of an outside performance measurement tool, since the two systems, PM public reporting and inter-organisational networking, can be used simultaneously in certain contexts to improve the efficiency and quality of public services (the models of Ring & Van de Ven (1994) and Bryson et al. (2006) refer to internal assessment within the network rather than external assessment).

To conclude from this, it is obvious that the effectiveness of performance measurements tools, as part of the PM initiatives, is not yet proven, and its success cannot be taken for granted in each context. How should the effectiveness of PM be assessed when it is coupled with other public policy reform initiatives, such as horizontal inter-organisational networks? To

assess such a context fully, one needs to understand how the stakeholders in a horizontal network react to PM reporting, and how this affects the outcomes of the network. The existing frameworks in literature do not provide such an explanation of the association of the two concepts, public reporting of PM and inter-organisational networking.

1.3 Research objective

Combining the findings from the two perspectives, as discussed above, it is apparent that there is a need to further develop more conceptual models that could help in getting deeper understanding of the dynamics of the networks, and how these dynamics, including structural and behavioral variables, interact with external cross-boundaries or external variables that may be featured in the surrounding environment, such as PM reporting.

Merging the conclusions from the two research perspectives, two key gaps can be identified that are relevant to this research:

- When combining PM and networks, how could public reporting of PM, such as QA, impact dynamics of networks?
- What sort of advantages could this contextual impact of PM reporting add to such networks?

Identifying these two key gaps, a general objective for this research was set **“to propose a conceptual model that can explain the impact of externally reported PM on inter-organisational networks”**. This framework will contribute towards evaluating effectiveness of dual use of PM and networks, to improve the quality and efficiency of public service provision.

1.4 Research conceptual development

Driven by the overall objective of the research, developing a conceptual model, the literature review continues to dig deeper into the various

relevant theories on network governance, inter-organisational collaboration and partnerships, to predict how publicly reported QA could potentially, from a theoretical stance, impact such collaborative networks. Five dimensions were initially identified which were then used to construct a "preliminary theoretical model". Based on this background theoretical analysis, five initial theoretical propositions were developed, each suggesting a theme of how QA impacts the network in the given context. The model explains the expected impact of QA:

- outside the network governance; on determinants of network formation and suitability; proposing that QA can have an influence on network formation and stability
- inside the network governance; proposing that QA can have an impact on network dynamics, more specifically on the dimensions of accountability, trust, power and control, and autonomy and tensions.

Upon collection of data from the chosen empirical context, the relevance of the dimension of network formation and sustainability was not found to be that strongly supported. The dimension was excluded from the framework analyses and development. Furthermore, two themes emerged from the collected data: 'collaborative advantages' that can be achieved collaboratively in a network; and 'collaborative inertias' that may hinder realisation of the full advantage of collaboration in a network.

It is worth noting here that the prime focus of the research, and hence the proposed conceptual model, is not meant to offer a full account on how networks, in such contexts, are governed or how the dynamics work. The focus of the research is to diagnose how QA public reporting, as an external contextual phenomenon, leads to corresponding additional impacts on networked dynamics and outcomes.

1.5 Research methodology and empirical context

Having identified the research objectives and questions, the research methodology was selected. The research goal and questions are mainly of

an 'explanatory' type, looking at "how" publicly reported QA impacts networked governance and outcomes.

Case study strategy was used, using data from four cases, all linked with national education and training reform initiatives in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Part of these initiatives was the establishment of the National Authority of Qualifications and Quality Assurance for Education and Training (QQA), in mid-1997 as an independent 'inspectorate' to carry out mandatory external quality assurance reviews, or inspections, on all the private and governmental education and training providers, covering all stages of basic schooling, secondary and post-secondary (higher and vocational) education and training.

The four networks chosen as cases for this research are all operated in a general context of the Education Reform initiatives of the National Economic Strategy. The four networks are multi-organisational settings, aimed at achieving specific common objectives, pertaining to improving higher education, vocational education and training and basic schooling in the Kingdom.

Participants representing the four selected cases were interviewed using a semi-structured interview protocol. Beside the primary qualitative data; some secondary data were also collected from published and non-published reports, minutes of meetings and web based research. Data were coded and analysed through a two-order thematic analysis approach.

Two stages of analysis were performed leading to the 'revised conceptual model': within-case followed by cross-case analyses. The transcribed interviews were first analysed and coded using mixed codes. The initial codes were then aggregated into 'first order themes', which were then further condensed into 'second order themes'. The second order themes, were eventually collated into 'overarching themes' such as accountability, engagement & trust, power and control, autonomy, coordination and collaboration, collaborative advantages, and collaborative inertias.

Following the within-case analyses of the four cases, second stage analyses are performed across the four cases. The analyses are done as per each of the second order themes of the six over-arching themes or dimensions (accountability, engagement and trust, power and control, coordination and collaboration, collaborative advantages, and collaborative inertias), investigating how strongly each case supports the given theme. The outcomes of the analyses are used to revise the initial conceptual model, hence informing development of the 'revised conceptual model', the novel contribution of this research.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

The thesis is organised into eight chapters as follows:

Chapter 1 – Introduction: This chapter first gives an overview of the research theoretical problem, objectives and questions, building on the main gaps found in the literature. It also explains the overall structure of the thesis over eight chapters.

Chapter 2 – Literature review: This chapter presents the first part of the literature review. It draws conclusions from literature from two perspectives: a) Performance Management (PM) as part of the New Public Management regime; and b) New Public Governance (NPG) and inter-organisational policy networks. The findings from these two theoretical perspectives are then synthesised to identify some relevant research questions that this research aims to answer.

Chapter 3 – Background theory: This chapter extends the review of literature on networks, collaborations and partnerships in order to construct a 'background theory' for this research project. Outcomes are used to predict how publicly reported quality assurance (QA) could potentially, based on theoretical stances, impact networks that are set-up to improve a particular public service sector. The chapter concludes by suggesting a "preliminary theoretical model" that can be used later to design the research methodology, and further developed, upon collecting and analysing empirical data, into a final conceptual model.

Chapter 4 – Research methodology: This chapter discusses the various aspects of the research methodology. The first part of the chapter explains the research philosophy, approach and strategy perspectives. The second part then explains, in detail, the design components and choices made for collecting and analysing data for this study.

Chapter 5 – Research context and case review: In this chapter, the four cases selected for the study are described in detail. The first two sections describes the basic features of the general context of the education and training sectors in Bahrain, and the specific contexts, which are the Education Reform initiatives, in which the four networks operate. The third section then describes each case in some detail. This chapter is primarily descriptive, setting the scene for elaborate data analyses and results discussion in the subsequent chapters. This chapter also presents, in the fourth section, the outcomes of the pilot interviews, and how these outcomes are used to validate the initial theoretical propositions and update the interview protocol before embarking on the actual data collection and analysis.

Chapter 6 – Within-case analyses: This chapter presents the detailed thematic analyses performed within each case. The results of thematic analysis of the collected data are presented here, showing how the initial codes were aggregated into 'first order themes', and how these were then further condensed into 'second order themes'. The second order themes were eventually collated into 'overarching themes'. Data from interviews are analysed herein, and validated with the collected secondary data such as published reports, un-published reports, minutes of meetings and web site search results.

Chapter 7 – Cross-case analyses: Following the 'within-case' analyses, presented in the previous chapter, this chapter presents the results of the analyses across the four cases. The analyses are done as per each of the second order themes of the six over-arching themes or dimensions (accountability, engagement and trust, power and control, coordination and collaboration, collaborative advantages, and collaborative inertias), discussing how strongly each case supports the given theme. The results

are used then to develop a 'revised conceptual model', or *data theory*, presenting the novel contribution of this research.

Chapter 8 – Conclusions and recommendations: This chapter concludes the thesis by summarising the whole research, from the literature review to the findings and conclusions. The second part of the chapter explains the conclusions, and how the findings serve the overall research objective and gaps that were identified earlier. Building on these findings and conclusions, the third part introduces some practical implications and recommendations that can benefit policy makers and practitioners in related fields. The main limitations that were faced in this research and additional recommendations for further research are presented in the last section.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the first part of the literature review. It draws conclusions from literature from two perspectives: a) Performance Management (PM) as part of the New Public Management (NPM) regime; and b) New Public Governance (NPG) and inter-organisational policy networks.

The findings from these two theoretical perspectives are then synthesised to identify some relevant research questions that this research aims to answer.

In the next chapter, more review of literature on networks, collaborations and partnerships will be carried out in order to construct a 'background theory' for this research project.

The journey of this literature review is depicted in Figure 2-1 below. The previous chapter explained how this research was prompted. It all started with an overall question: Is a publicly reported PM initiative, such as inspection, useful? Useful for whom? And in which way this can be useful? The first search was in the theories of PM and its link with the NPM mode of governance. The search then was on the usefulness of PM tools. The results of this search gave a mixed picture since multiple stakeholders are involved in public service provision (including policy setting, planning, provision and regulating and controlling). This probing question made the researcher look at literature on network and inter-organisational collaboration domain, as a theoretical concept that can reconcile varying needs and expectations of stakeholders. At this juncture of the literature

review, the search was focused on how PM could impact collaborative networks.

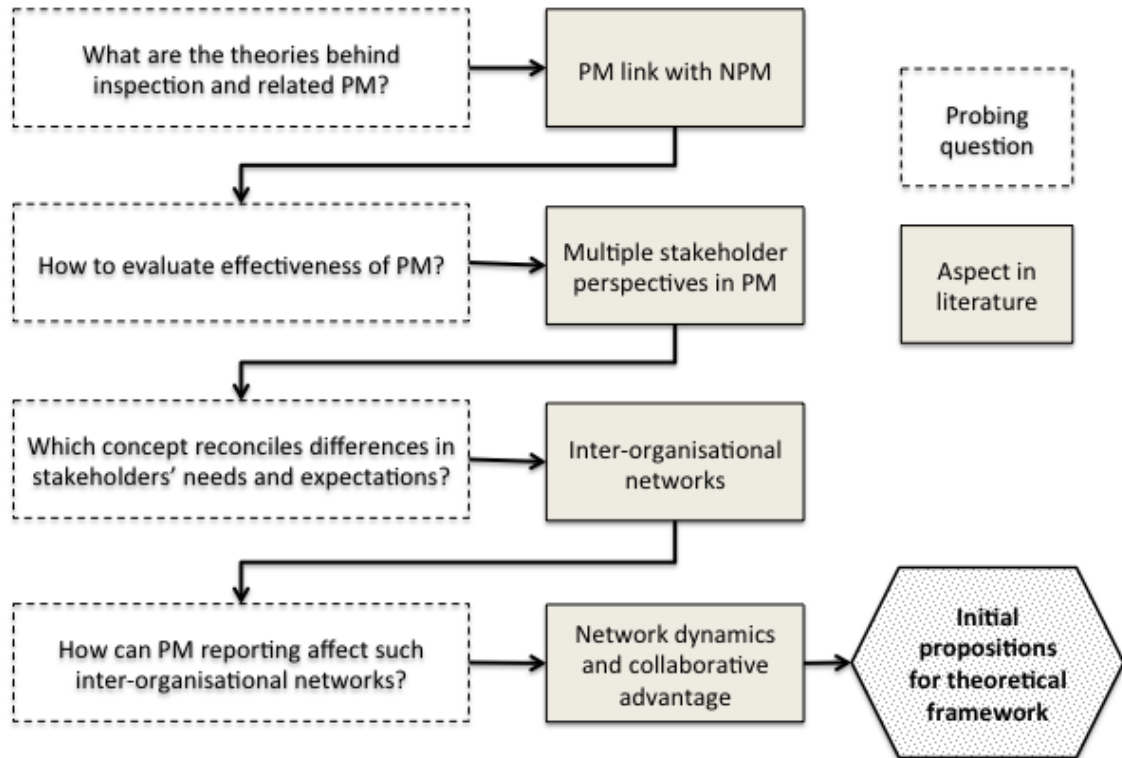


Figure 2 - 1: Road map of literature review (developed for this research)

2.2 Administration, management, governance: three regimes

For the purpose of this research, it is important to start the literature review with a **brief** review of the chronological development of the various regimes in administering, managing, and governing public policy, since the research looks at public service provision. The review here will focus on the theoretical perspectives and doctrines of each regime; and the relevant links with the subject of this research, wherever applicable.

Public policy implementation and public service delivery have gone, historically, through three regimes (Osborne 2010):

- Public Administration (PA): from the late 19th century to the late 1970s.
- New Public Management (NPM): from early 1980s to the start of the 21st century.
- New Public Governance (NPG): since the start of the 21st century, and still emerging.

PA started immediately after World War II (Martin 2010). This regime has bureaucratic and central traditions, dominated by the “rule-of law” (Hood 1991), and is associated with the theory of “welfare state”, in which the state is expected to provide the citizens will all sorts of public services (Osborne 2010). In the PA era, government was huge, local governments had much bigger roles, as they were the prime suppliers of public services. End users of public services had no choice of service providers, and had little influence over the service delivery, except through their political representatives (Martin 2010).

By the late 1970s the PA practices received criticism for an inability to cope up with complexity of public and social issues, which paved the road for the emergence of new regimes of the New Public Management (NPM), and later on the New Public Governance (NPG).

Although the three regimes vary in some key principals and practical perspectives, they have some elements in common (Osborne 2010), for example, the vertical bureaucracy, the core key concept of PA. Meier & Hill (2005) advocate the necessity of a bureaucratic form of administration. They argue that bureaucracy will continue to flourish in the 21st century, as it facilitates good governance that no other form of regime does, not least the accountability lines.

Table 2 - 1: Core elements of PA, NPM and NPG

Paradigm/key elements	Theoretical roots	Nature of state	focus	Emphasis	Resource allocation mechanism	Value base
Public Administration	Political science and public policy	Unitary	The political system	Policy creation and implementation	Hierarchy	Public sector ethos
New public management (NPM)	Rational public choice theory and management studies	Regulatory	The organization	Management of organisational resource and performance	The market and classical or neoclassical contracts	Efficacy of competition and the marketplace
New public governance (NPG)	Institutional and network theory	Plural and pluralist	The organization	Negotiation of values meaning and relationships	Network and relation contract	Dispersed and contested

Source: Osborne (2010)

2.3 New Public Management (NPM)

In this section, the development of the NPM regime is briefly reviewed for the purpose of explaining the link between the theories of this regime that underpin performance management (PM), of which quality inspection and reviews are a tool (the first probing question and literature aspect block of Figure 2-1 above). This brief review will then introduce the second aspect of Figure 2-1; which is the link between PM and the inter-organisational network mode.

The New Public Management (NPM) policies started in the 1980s (Larbi 1999; Osborne 2010) with Prime Minister Thatcher's government in the UK, and with managerialist reforms in New Zealand and Australia (Lynn 2005), as a wave of public policies sweeping a decade of "Public Administration (PA)" practices and paradigm of scholarly analyses, and paving the road to a new paradigm of "New Public Governance (NPG)", which will be explained in subsequent sections.

Driven by cost efficiency and neo-liberal perspectives on reforming public service provision, the main concepts of the NPM policies evolve around decentralising management, making better use of market and competition incentives in the provision of public services (Larbi 1999; Ferlie et al. 2005; Osborne 2010); gaining control over public spending (Martin 2010), using explicit standards and measures of performance and efficiency in using resources (Hood 1991). Part of the NPM strategies was also minimisation of the state through contracting and privatization (Martin 2010), as was the case for example with the privatisation of British Telecom (Durant et al. 1998).

Modernisation of government strategy of NPM focuses primarily on liberating administration, by giving public managers more freedom to plan and prioritize their actions. This in turn warrants identifying clear bottom-line performance indicators for these managers to meet, hence the focus on performance management and auditing (Meier & Hill 2005).

A part of the strategy to modernise government services, there was a strong move, by central governments, towards implementation of more robust strategic planning and performance management. This observed an emphasis on input and output control, and the start of utilising central audit commissions that specified performance indicators, audited public service organisations (PSO); and based on which, performance league tables for local governments were issued (Van Thiel & Leeuw 2002; Talbot 2005; Martin 2010; Osborne 2010).

Nevertheless, NPM did not last long, and received criticism for its “intra-organizational focus in an increasingly plural world” (Osborne 2010, p.4), and its inability to contribute to capturing the design, delivery and management of public policy implementation and public service delivery in a complex, inter-organisational context, hence was the trend towards a new regime, or paradigm, that has the promise to handle this inter-organisational focus and locus, as opposed to the intra-organisational types in the NPM (Osborne 2010).

The second critique for NPM, voiced by some researchers, is that performance management and auditing, which was part of the NPM reforms, did not necessarily raise performance (Martin 2010); or eliminate bureaucracy, it instead created new bureaucracy, red tape and extensive auditing and control procedures (Meier & Hill 2005) (see also the discussion on “audit explosion” theory by Power below).

2.4 Performance Management (PM)

2.4.1 The Audit Society Theory

As established above, PM is closely allied with NPM strategies. Performance measurement, as part of performance management (PM), and the public reporting of its outcomes are tools that are used in the NPM mode of governance. PM came to address the “limits of privatization” and inadequate monitoring of public agencies and programmes (Amirkhanyan 2009).

The causes of such an explosion are attributed to the rise of NPM as well as the rise of quality assurance models (Power 2000; 2003; Justesen & Skærbæk 2010). Audit is argued to be just one aspect of a broader but rapidly evolving "performance measurement society" to cover a number of inspection activities (Bowerman et al. 2000; Maijor 2000).

Michael Power in his book *The Audit Society* (1997) used the term "audit society" to describe the rise of audit and other performance measurement activities and the expansion of the word "audit" beyond its conventional financial audit setting in many fields including health, safety, medicine and education (Power 1997; 2000; 2003). This move is driven mainly by the need to establish a "measurable accountability" by having more and more areas of social life auditable (Hopmann 2008), or legitimacy to public service organisations (Meijer 2007).

2.4.2 Approaches, forms and foci of PM

Talbot (2005) identifies four waves of different types of PM, each using different tools, such as Management by Objectives (MBO), quality, Balanced Scorecard etc.:

- The first wave was in the US in the 1960s and 1970s, focusing mainly on the best way of planning and programming resources for public programmes.
- The second wave started in the 1980s focusing on efficiency in resource usage and delivery (outputs).
- The third wave started in the 1990s focusing on performance reporting by federal agencies (mainly in the US).
- The fourth one started in 2002, focusing on "outcome-based" budgeting and planning.

The various PM forms also vary in the focus of application (Talbot 2005). The focus can be 'Organisational' (covering the whole organisation); 'Activity/Programme/Policy' specific (focusing in details on a specific programme or activity; or 'Individual' focus (used by human resources functions).

Another term that is related closely with performance and PM is quality. The definitions of quality vary, from fitness for purpose and conformance to requirement to satisfying stated or implied needs. In public services, defining quality is more difficult, as it means more than just “producing happy customers”, it has other legal, regulatory and economic perspectives as well (Overtveit 2005). What matters most for the purpose of this research is the method of measurement of quality.

Measuring quality can be based on customer or end-user perceptions, such as the SERVQUAL tool that is used to measure the quality of services (Bryslund & Curry 2001), or the external evaluation or inspection, which is usually done by external government inspectorates or accreditation bodies, and is measurement based on professional judgement, that determines how effective the service is in meeting what consumers need.

2.4.3 Types of Performance Measurement Application

The performance measurement tools can be applied differently, and hence its impact also depends on the application type. In his assessment of the impact of the performance measurement, or what is termed as “management by numbers”, Hood (2012) hypothesises that the impact depends on the purpose of performance measurement application and on the culture in which it operates. Hood (2012) suggests three types of application of performance measurement: targets, ranking and intelligence. Table 2-2 explains the three types of application, and how each type can enhance (or obstruct) performance.

Table 2 - 2: Types of performance measurement application

Type of Application	What it involves	Example	How it aims to enhance performance	How it can obstruct performance
Targets	Using numbers to set and monitor minimum thresholds of performance	Carbon dioxide emissions reduction targets	Concentrate attention on improving performance in a limited number of priority areas	Can produce ratchet effects, threshold effects, output distortions
Rankings	Using numbers to compare performance of different units	Ranking schools and colleges by test scores or by compound numbers	Encourage "sweating and stretching" to raise overall performance, avoiding ratchet effects by focusing on relative performance among rivals	Can produce threshold effects (where ranking is categorical) and output distortions
Intelligence	Using numbers as back-ground information for choice by users or for policy change or management intervention	Anonymous near-miss reporting systems in medicine and aviation	Encourage informed choice or developing learning capacity and diagnostic power by adding knowledge about performance, avoiding ratchet effects, threshold effects, and output distortion from gaming behavior	Can produce ambiguity, complexity, and fragility and may be ignored by key players, especially service users

Source: Hood (2012)

In the education sectors (schools and higher education institutions) Hood (2012) refers to the rankings and intelligence as the two types of application that are found. Ranking is used mostly in the form of league tables, and are widely used by public sector policy makers and the media as well. Intelligence reports are also used in this sector for the purpose of informing choices of public and private users.

It is worth noting that what Hood (2012) presents is not a clearly defined typology, but rather a continuum of purposes for which performance measurement is applied. Hood states that "although the nomenclature varies, and the three applications are rarely, if ever, juxtaposed and carefully distinguished" (p. S86). He also notes that the purpose of application sometimes shifts from one type to another, for examples

targets and rankings can be used in intelligence reports, and the other way round, intelligence can turn into rankings and targets.

Beyond the typology of how performance measurement is applied, one needs to look into the way the reported numbers and reports interact with the outer social context and its stakeholders. This type of research has been dubbed by "second-generation" research (Hood, 2012). The significance of considering the interaction of the social context with the performance measurement, in the various forms of application, is highlighted by Power (2004) in his reflection on performance measurement, be it of "first-", "second-order" or "meta" measurement. Power (2004) explains that the impact of performance measurement on the outer social and political context overshadows the question of the technical quality of the performance numbers and reports. He stresses that "the contemporary performance measurement imperative does not depend on a view that measurement reveals things as they really are" (p. 770), and suggests further that we "should regard the spirit of performance measurement not as monolithic, but rather as fractured, incomplete and evolving, this spirit is also powerful. Specific measurement systems may be defective and fail, but they also constantly reproduce and reinvent an institutional demand for numbers" (p.769).

Hood (2012) indulges further into the social context of performance measurement systems and examines how each type of application of performance measurement can lead to deterring effects on performance. Hood refers to "ratchet", "threshold", "output distortion" as well as "ambiguity/complexity" effects (refer to Table 2-2 above). Analyses of the four types of obstructing effects reveal that performance is adversely affected by the way these measures interacts with the social stakeholders, either by incentivising (or disincentivising) them to focus (or ignore) on areas that do not lead to actual enhancement of performance; or not using the measures effectively, because of their complexity or ambiguity, or because of conflicting personal or organisational motives. These observations flag the need for careful examination how the performance measures are interacting with its outside context.

2.4.4 Arguments for PM

The aspect of PM that this research is looking at is how effective is the performance measurement tools are in raising performance. The effectiveness and impact of PM in public policy implementation and service delivery is still debatable. Literature review reveals a mixed picture of arguments; for, against as well as some balanced arguments. The arguments for PM will be reviewed first.

In reviewing the arguments here, the typology of Talbot (2005) is used mainly, but modified and augmented with findings from other research.

- **Performance as accountability:** the first argument is that publicly reported PM can improve public accountability in a democratic society Talbot (2005), and enhance transparency about what is spent on public services and the results of such expenditure. Examples of such PM reporting are the results of audits and inspections (e.g. OFSTED's); collectively forming what Power (1997) termed as an "audit society".
- **Performance as user choice and service:** the second argument is that PM information gives citizens the freedom of choice, helping them make "informed-choices" (Propper & Wilson 2003; Hibbard et al. 2005; Werner & Asch 2005), and hence getting better value for money (Meijer 2007). The PM reporting can also be used as a 'customer service', to mainly satisfy the "rights" and "expectations" of the consumers to know more about the quality and efficiency of service provision, even beyond the economic value of the service to the "public value" such as equality and building social capital.
- **Performance as efficiency and effectiveness:** The third argument is that PM, not necessary publicly reported, can be used for managerial purposes, to improve the performance of the organisation (Propper & Wilson 2003). For this to happen, it needs be linked with clear contractual targets, rewards and sanctions. The PM focus here needs to be more specifically on outputs not outcomes. It can also be used as a measure of effectiveness when the outcomes are reported.

2.4.5 Arguments against PM

On the other hand, there are some of the counter-arguments. Again, Talbot's (2005) summary is used here, unless indicated otherwise.

- **Incompleteness:** It is argued here that PM reports are often incomplete (Overtveit 2005), distorting, or give a crude picture, such as the league tables, or exacerbating poor results. In other cases, PM tends to take into account quantitative data and ignore qualitative, or intangible, aspects of a public service (Carmichael et al. 2001).
- **Over-complexity:** contrary to the first argument, PM reports sometimes are too complex for the target audience to make effective use of them (Lansky 2002).
- **Transaction cost:** The third argument is about the high cost of the performance measurement programme, and how the measurement tools, when used as public policy, stand in value-for-money or cost-benefit analyses (Overtveit 2005).
- **Attribution:** this challenge is encountered when PM reports try to attribute 'outcomes', or the intended results, to the output of a programme or organisation, i.e. is y-outcome a function of x-output? Or (x plus other)-outputs? The picture becomes more challenging to evaluate the usefulness of PM in contexts where it is coupled with other incentives or regulatory measures (Lindenauer et al. 2007).
- **Manipulation and deception:** when service providers, or auditees, try to manipulate data, or present them in a way to reflect a better picture, especially if the PM is linked with sanctions or reward mechanisms (Lim 2009).
- **Distorted behaviours and unintended consequences:** In cases where reporting of PM results in wrong behavioural patterns, or unintended consequences at the expense of performance (Cotton et al. 2000). The example given here is from the health sector of reported cases of prioritising of non-medically urgent or critical cases, to improve hospitals results in performance indicators, which is also known as a "cream skimming" exercise, in which providers tend to choose the best input to give the best output (Van Thiel & Leeuw 2002; Propper & Wilson 2003; Marshall et al. 2003; Werner & Asch 2005). It also generates tension and discomfort amongst

auditees (Propper & Wilson 2003 ; Power 2003; Justesen & Skærbæk 2010). One way to avoid “cream skimming” is the use of value-added indicators, by looking at the distance travelled from the quality level at the input to the level at the output (Propper & Wilson 2003).

- ***Incompatibility application and measurement rigour degradation:*** The argument here is for PM to be effective, its rigour of measurement needs to be sustained, and it needs to be applied consistently over longer periods than politicians or policy makers might focus on, before the policies are changed, or PM figures are distorted for political motives (Overtveit 2005).
- ***In-effective use by stakeholders:*** which refers to weak access to PM information (Meijer 2007), or how the stakeholders utilise the reports for their own purposes (Leong & Wong 2004).

2.4.6 Balanced arguments about PM

PM can have both a positive and a negative impact at the same time, or even positive impacts but under certain conditions. In a case study about one governmental department, Justesen & Skærbæk (2010) find that PM can help in the construction of new organisational identities, but at the same time, it generates tension and discomfort amongst auditees; a similar finding was confirmed by Power (2003).

Some research in public health suggests that public reporting of PM data has a positive potential, provided that the reported data are relevant to the concerns of expected users, so that they can be easily evaluated (Lansky 2002; Hibbard et al. 2005; Robinowitz & Dudley 2006).

Others have pointed out the extent of the PM impact. In their study of Skill-for-Life (SfL) and Adult and Community Learning (ACL) policies in the UK, Hodgson et al. (2007) found that external inspection is “both a weaker and a more benign policy lever” (p.221). However, they found that inspection is helpful mainly in pre-inspection preparation which helps in tightening things up, and the post-inspection action planning.

2.4.7 Stakeholders and PM

The other aspect in the PM domain that is relevant to this research is how various stakeholders perceive the effectiveness of PM, since as found in the above section the effectiveness is not clearly established. Measuring PM, or quality, in public services is always challenging. If the sole indicator is customers' needs, what customers want are not necessarily always good things in terms of quality (Overtveit 2005; Gulikers et al. 2009). In some cases, perceptions do not always correspond to satisfaction (Joseph & Joseph 1997). Besides, stakeholders' needs and interests are diverse. Their perceptions - and hence definition of what could be good quality provision - vary as well. Even amongst members of the same group of a stakeholder, differences might exist on what is required to constitute a good quality service (Bolton & Hyland 2003; Preston & Hammond 2003). The differences in perceptions can cause, under certain circumstances, dissatisfaction and disappointments amongst stakeholders (Skinner et al. 2004).

Part of the dilemma in evaluating the effectiveness of PM is its ability to reconcile varying needs and expectations of stakeholders (Humphrey & Owen 2000; Cotton et al. 2000; Bolton & Hyland 2003; Preston & Hammond 2003; Klessig et al. 2000; Skinner et al. 2004). Some scholars have noted this link in their search of new processes to avoid dysfunctional potentials of conventional PM processes. An example of this approach is the "social audit", wherein stakeholders through their representatives participate, in one way or the other, in the audit process itself (Humphrey & Owen 2000; Cotton et al. 2000; Lansky 2002).

To enhance its effectiveness, Power (2005) reviews some of the operational and design features that could enhance the impact. For example, the design of the report can be made more 'standardised and coded' to target the expert community, or it can be tailored to be more accessible to general audiences. Courville (2003) uses the terms 'monological' report for the former, and 'dialogical' for the latter. As examples, standardised reports are used in financial auditing, whereas the other type is used in school inspection reports. Bowerman et al. (2000)

refer to layering of information released to stakeholders to match their varying expectations.

Talbot (2005) made an observation that many of the arguments and counter-arguments are mostly theories of practitioners, and lack strong theoretical underpinning, and suggests that the theory still needs to be developed further. This observation is also suggested by an exercise done by the researcher at the early stages, to review how the relevant research on quality of education and training was conducted. The researcher found that most of the findings in these pieces of research are based on perspectives of practitioners in the field (teachers or educational institution managers). Little reference is made to the views of other stakeholders (see Appendix 1)

2.4.8 Contextual applicability

Any attempt to assess the effectiveness of quality evaluation schemes or quality initiatives in the public sector is difficult (Walshe & Freeman 2002; Øvretveit & Gustafson 2002), one reason for that being the difficulty in generalising the results across spatial geographical applications (Propper & Wilson 2003; Overtveit 2005). In revisiting his initial claims that were put forward in his book in 1997, Power recognises that “more research is needed particularly to explain that the audit explosion is not simply a UK phenomenon” (Power 2000, p.111).

In addition to the spatial applicability, more research is also needed to look deeply into the applicability of PM models in each area of service (e.g. health, education etc.) (Power 2003). PM application in these areas can have “considerable variation in the degree and application of audit” (Bowerman et al. 2000, p.72).

2.4.9 Summary of the main findings from literature on PM

Table 2-2 summarises the main findings from the main literature on various aspects of PM as discussed in the previous sections. This table is

used then to deduce the main gaps, either reported in the literature, or concluded by synthesising the findings.

2.4.10 Gaps in the literature

Some of the papers reviewed above have highlighted gaps in literature, or areas for further research, in the domain of PM. The following is a summary of these areas:

- There is a need for more solid underpinnings for assessing effectiveness of PM, in its various types, approaches and context of application, using a consistent assessment framework (Walshe & Freeman 2002; Øvretveit & Gustafson 2002; Talbot 2005).
- More research is needed to assess effectiveness of PM across different geographical regions, as well as different public sectors, which should also take into account the various NPM reforms initiatives in each country (Bowerman et al. 2000; Power 2003; Propper & Wilson 2003; Power 2005).
- One of the outstanding conceptual challenges is evaluating PM across horizontal partnerships and inter-organizational networks (Talbot 2005).
- There is still a need to evaluate the external audit process, assess how reflexive this process is to its public reporting; and the consequences of its public reporting (Power 2003; Justesen & Skærbæk 2010).

To conclude from this, it is obvious that the effectiveness of performance measurement tools, as part of the PM initiatives, is not proven yet, and its success cannot be taken for granted in each context. As reported, PM can be a potentially beneficial tool in reforming government services, but a more thorough and consistent analytical framework for its effectiveness is needed, especially if coupled with other public policy reform initiatives, or its effectiveness in horizontal inter-organisational collaborative networks. The development of such frameworks will help evaluating the usefulness of PM in various sectorial and institutional contexts.

In the next table, Table 2-2, a summary of the findings from the domain of PM and its measurement tools is presented, along with questions or

remarks that reveal either a link to this research, or a gap that can be found in the literature.

Table 2 - 3: Main findings from PM and public reporting

Key concept	Main aspects or findings	References	Questions/remarks
PM link with NPM	PM as a doctrine of the NPM.	Hood 1991; Meier & Hill 2005; Osborne 2010; Talbot 2005; Overtveit 2005; Ferlie et al. 2005; Amirkhanyan 2009; Justesen & Skærbæk 2010; Martin 2010.	--
	Quality inspection, audit, VFM audit are all forms of PM activities, termed as 'Audit society' phenomenon that is associated with NPM.	Power 1997; Humphrey & Owen 2000; Power 2003; Power 2005; Maijoor 2000; Bowerman et al. 2000.	--
Approaches, foci and types of PM	PM is adopted in different approaches and using various tools of measurement. It can have three foci of application: organizational, activity/programme & individual.	Talbot 2005.	Talbot (2005): identified a gap for assessment of effectiveness of various approaches of PM The individual focus of PM is outside the scope of this research.
	Performance measurement can be performed at input, process or output/outcomes levels	Skinner et al. 2004; Overtveit 2005; Brysland & Curry 2001.	This implies that defining effectiveness of measurement is challenging and needs better understanding at various levels.
Arguments for PM	PM enhance transparency and accountability in democratic settings.	Talbot 2005; Meijer 2007.	Will the PM work equally in less democratically developed settings?

	PM helps in giving user freedom of choice.	Propper & Wilson 2003; Werner & Asch 2005; Talbot 2005; Meijer 2007.	Propper & Wilson 2003: Depending on the type and depth of PM reports, but they suggest to do more research on the effectiveness of PM Argument is not valid in contexts where users have no or little choice.
	PM as customer service to satisfy customers' rights and expectations to know more about quality of service. It goes beyond economic or material values of service and adds 'public values'.	Talbot 2005; Hopmann 2008	Which theoretical or practical concept reconciles varying needs and expectations of stakeholders? This thread led to "network" theories in subsequent sections.
	PM as a tool to enhance organisational performance, or quality of public services.	Lansky 2002; Propper & Wilson 2003; Hibbard et al. 2005; Talbot 2005; Justesen & Skærbæk 2010.	Lansky (2002): PM can be useful in improving service quality provided that PM reports are relevant to concerned stakeholders. Propper & Wilson (2003): Depending on the type and depth of PM reports. Talbot (2005): This has to be linked with sanctions and rewards, PM doesn't have to be publicly reported, focus on outputs not outcomes. Hibbard et al. (2005): For PM to be effective, its reports need to be written in a language that is easily readable for target consumers. Justesen & Skærbæk (2010): Studied the impact of PM on organizational internal identity and accountability only.

Balanced argument about PM	External PM as “benign” policy lever; it has proven little impact, or it can lead to both positive and negative impact.	Martin 2002; Lansky 2002; Commons 2003; Robinowitz & Dudley 2006; Hodgson et al. 2007; Justesen & Skærbæk 2010.	<p>Martin (2002): External PM auditing does not necessarily improve performance.</p> <p>Commons (2003): External inspection is helpful in improving data analysis mainly.</p> <p>Robinowitz & Dudley (2006): The PM reported indicators must be carefully designed.</p> <p>Hodgson et al. (2007): main use of PM in pre-inspection preparation, and post-inspection action planning</p> <p>Robinowitz & Dudley (2006): Identify gap for more studies to assess impact of externally reported PM in health sector</p>
Counter-arguments against PM	PM gives incomplete picture of performance and exacerbates poor results, or does not take perspectives of all beneficiaries.	Carmichael et al. 2001; Talbot 2005; Overtveit 2005.	<p>Talbot (2005): This counter-argument is raised mainly by public service providers.</p> <p>Overtveit (2005): especially in big organisations or programmes</p>
	PM gives over-complex reports of performance, or is not a clear language for the target audience.	Lansky 2002; Talbot 2005.	In some cases this might hinder effective utilization of PM.

	PM cost is high when compared to its value.	Propper & Wilson 2003; Overtveit 2005; Talbot 2005.	Propper & Wilson (2003): suggest to do more research on cost-benefit of PM
	PM does not always attribute outcomes to the real inputs.	Talbot 2005; Lindenauer et al. 2007.	--
	PM focuses on quantitative and ignores intangible or qualitative values.	Talbot 2005.	--
	Manipulation of deception by service providers, trying to look better.	Talbot 2005; Lim 2009.	Talbot (2005): More evident when PM is linked with sanctions and rewards. Lim (2009): Finds a gap for more research into QA inspection in HE and VET sectors.
	PM results in unintended consequences in behaviors and practices, or can cause distrust, tension or discomfort among stakeholders.	van Thiel & Leeuw 2002; Marshall et al. 2003; Power 2003; Propper & Wilson 2003; Talbot 2005; Rachel M Werner & Asch 2005; Cotton et al. 2000; Justesen & Skærbæk 2010.	van Thiel & Leeuw (2002): Unintended consequences of PM can negatively affect performance.
	Incompatible application of PM and degradation of rigour of measurement.	Overtveit 2005; Talbot 2005.	
	Target beneficiaries of PM reports do not make effective use of them.	Marshall et al. 2003; Leong & Wong 2004.	

Stakeholders and PM	Customer perceptions and satisfaction is not always a good measure of service quality.	Belfield & Thomas 2000; Overtveit 2005; Gulikers et al. 2009.	
	Stakeholders have diverse perceptions and expectations as to what constitute good quality public services.	Joseph & Joseph 1997; Bolton & Hyland 2003; Preston & Hammond 2003; Skinner et al. 2004.	Joseph & Joseph (1997); Find that perceptions of stakeholders do not always correlate with satisfaction
	In social audit form, all stakeholders need to be involved in the audit process.	Humphrey & Owen 2000; Cotton et al. 2000; Lansky 2002.	
Contextual applicability	PM can be applied in different contexts but with some modification.	Grubb 2000.	Grubb (2000): Examined applying UK inspection framework in USA for internal organizational use

2.5 Networks

This section of the literature review looks at the third block of Figure 2-1 that depicts the pathway of the literature review for this research. Having established that one of the main challenges in assessing the effectiveness of public policy, such as performance measurement, is the variation in stakeholders needs, the network concept is a potential pragmatic concept that can be used to reconcile the differences amongst stakeholders when they come together.

This section will explore some historical perspectives behind the rise of networks, main definitions (and the observed inconsistent use of such definitions across the literature!), some theories that underpin the inter-organisational network concept, main advantages and strategies used in managing such horizontal settings and the main conceptual models that could explain how this setting works.

This elaborative search in the literature is deemed necessary by the researcher to get deeper understanding of this network, when it is applied into various contexts outside its historical origins, and thus helps in answering the research questions.

2.5.1 Rise of NPG

The interest in networks, and 'New Public Governance (NPG)', started in the 1970s, but accelerated during the last two decades. The accelerated use of networks started with the Labour Government that came to Power in the UK in 1997, with new governmental reforms (Klijn 2005; Martin 2010; Martin & Guarneros-Meza 2013; Bonollo 2013). The concept of networking came subsequent to the New Public Management (NPM) reform. While NPM translates ideas from the private sector and market mechanisms, the network approach focuses on policy making through inter-organisational co-ordination (Klijn & Koppenjan 2000).

Comparing between NPM and NPG, Osborne (2010) makes an overarching comparisons between the two. NPM disintegrates the functions of policy articulation and implementation, and focuses on 'intra-

organisational', whereby the role of state is chiefly regulatory, mostly through principal-agent contractual partnerships. NPG, on the other hand, draws from institutional and network theories, and focuses on the 'inter-organisational' context, in which the plural nature of the institutional environment encourages stakeholders to work collaboratively to articulate and implement public policies.

There is a debate in the literature over whether NPG can be considered as an exclusive alternative regime to NPM. Osborne (2010) argues that although NPG had developed from PA and NPM, as a new regime, the new model has not displaced the previous models. Similarly Martin (2010) argues that NPG is rather an extension of the previous NPM regime, and it came as a response to the criticalities of the previous NPM regime (Bonollo 2013). Zheng et al. (2009) argue that despite the development of the new regime, an element of the previous regimes, mainly formal authority, is still very much needed for multi-organisational collaborations in the new regime. The traditional bureaucracy is hindering the full involvement of networks as an alternative regime (Mcguire & Agranoff 2011).

There are two main reasons behind the wave of interest in network research; first is the increasing horizontal networking in the societies, owing to information technology and specialisation, and the second is due to the developing interest in public governance, mainly to deal with growing complexity in public policy and implementation spheres (Goldsmith & Eggers 2004; Klijn 2005).

Goldsmith and Eggers (2004) identify four trends that have influenced the increasing interest in networks:

- **Third-Party Governance:** The core concept in this is the transfer of the responsibility of public service delivery to the private and non-for-profit organizations. The main role of the government becomes then facilitating the delivery of the services (Stocker 1998; Heinrich 2010; Rethemeyer & Hatmaker 2008).
- **Joined-up-Government (JUG):** This concept is based on the joining-up of various governmental agencies, of various levels, to provide

more integrated services. This concept is sometimes referred to as 'networked community governance'; giving the community more input. This move was then manifested in three elements: the Local Strategic Partnerships, Sustainable Community Strategies produced by local authorities, and the Local Area Agreements (Martin 2010; Martin & Guarneros-Meza, 2013).

- Digital Revolution: which helps various governmental and non-governmental actors to collaborate in real time, and facilitates knowledge sharing.
- Consumer Choice: This comes from the trend towards giving citizens more choices, as well as a say in defining the quality and delivery of the public services, especially in the education and health sectors (Martin 2010).

The 'network' term here is associated with another term, which is 'public governance'. The term Public Governance is not exclusive, and has the following strands (Osborne 2010):

- Socio-political governance: concerning the over-arching institutional interactions within society.
- Public Policy Governance: concerning the way elites and networks, public and private, interact with each other to form and govern public policy. Another term sometimes used for this is 'meta-governance' (Kooiman & Jentoft 2009; Doberstein 2013).
- Administrative governance: This strand is re-positioning of public administration theories, pertaining to implementation of policies and delivery of services, in a modern networked society.
- Contract Governance: related mainly to contractual partnerships in delivery of public services.
- Network Governance: these are 'self-organising' networks with the purpose of policy implementation and service delivery.

Literature suggests that there is a strong move in governance from hierarchical or command-and-control mechanisms to more collaborative governance that includes networks of government, both for-profit and non-profit actors (Börzel 1998; Silvia 2011; Huxham 2003; Isett et al. 2011; Martin et al. 2009).

One of the prime interests in networks is its use to handle inter-governmental service reforms (Klijn & Koppenjan 2000; Klijn 2005). In the UK for example, the Labour Government introduced two main different but related approaches in governmental reform (Martin 2010, p.341):

- Modernisation: “included internal restructuring, the introduction of new information technology and new forms of external inspection”, and
- Marketisation: “involved the encouragement of competition between service providers”.

One of the main principal aspects in the ‘modernisation’ agenda was the unprecedented increase in the use of ‘top-down’ or external performance inspection. “The total cost of public service inspection rose steeply from £250 million in 1997/8 to £550 million in 2002/3. The cost of inspecting education more than doubled from £88 million to £201” (Martin 2010, p.342). This rapid increase is part of the ‘audit explosion’ phenomena as described by Power.

2.5.2 Theories of networks

The theories in networks, in its various forms, have been developed based on elements from various theories. Klijn (2005) gives a useful summary of the theoretical perspectives informing the research and analytical perspectives in networks field, as follows (Klijn 2005, p.265):

- **The Hollow State Theory:** which refers to a “state which does not itself perform the policy making and service delivery tied to the modern functions of government but in some way or another ensures that services and policy outputs are delivered by other organisations” (see also Ayres & Stafford (2014)).
- **Organisational Theories:** which stress “the possession of resources (and their relation to power), the use of strategies to exchange resources, and evolving the networks of interaction due to these resource exchanges”.

- **Public Administration Theories:** which stress that “the public policy is the result of the integration of different strategies by various actors who struggle with the problem definition, possible solutions and choice moments”.
- **Stakeholders theory:** In addition to the theories listed by Klijn (2005), Savage et al. (2011) refer to the Stakeholders Theory as basis for analysing the partnerships in inter-organisational collaborations, with the main theory here that in these settings organisations come together to solve “messy problems” that cannot typically be solved by one organisation acting alone.
- **Resource Dependency Theory:** This is regarded to be the core theoretical assumption behind network theories. According to Rethemeyer & Hatmaker (2008) and Klijn & Koppenjan (2000), many scholars view Resource Dependency Theory (RDT) as the theoretical perspective underpinning network formation. The basic assumption in this is that organisations work together to exchange resources with one another in order to sustain operations and achieve their goals. The resources could be Material-Institutional Resources (MIR), such as the financial, political, human, informational, and institutional conditions, or they could be Social Structural Resources (SSR). Provan & Huang (2012) found that networks are more stable when resources are less tangible and more knowledge based. The resources or needs could be real or perceived needs of stakeholders (Huxham et al. 2000). While researchers use different groupings for drivers, some of the identified variables, such as the role of leadership, which has been explained by Schneider et al. (2003), overlap with management roles that are required to manage a network.

How are networks formed? What are the driving forces or the incentives for people to work together in a networked or collaborative setting? Determinants or drivers of formation are what make stakeholders come together in a collaborative or networked setting. Related terms that also explain how stakeholders are motivated to come together are terms such

as initial conditions, antecedents or environmental variables (Robertson 2011). Krueathep et al. (2010) found that network formation is a function of five determinants: 1) institutional settings, 2) task difficulty, 3) management capacity, 4) local political climate, and 5) socio-economic context. Among these, Krueathep et al. (2010) found that the most important factors in determining network formation are the nature of the programmes and management capacity. Vangen & Huxham (2003a) identify that the key driver for network partnership is the perceived need to coordinate service provision either to:

- improve efficiency; or
- improve seamlessness.

Further, Vangen and Huxham identify more drivers, mainly reported from the private sector, including:

- Combining resources and expertise.
- Sharing of learning.
- Sharing cost.
- Reducing risk.

2.5.3 Definitions and types of networks

It is important before proceeding further that the definitions are clarified to avoid any confusion that may be caused by the array of terms and typology of networks. As will be revealed in this section, the literature refers to various definitions of networks and other related formations. The variations in the terms and definitions is partly preference, but partly the difference is due to the varying use and types of such settings. The definitions, and hence the typology, vary according to the purpose of network setting, its structure and membership, and it is how it managed and operated.

As noted by Pollitt & Hupe (2011) “the concept of a network is broad and normatively attractive; it implies some attainable consensus and can be used across domains” (p.652). The term ‘network’ is used along with

other terms such as partnership, alliance, collaboration, co-ordination, co-operation, joint working and multi-party or inter-organisational working, and it is also used in distributed leadership (Huxham 2003; Ospina & Saz-Carranza 2010a; Martin et al. 2009; Gazley 2010; Saz-Carranza & Ospina 2011).

Following are a number of definitions for 'network' and related terms that can be found in the literature.

- Agranoff & McGuire (2001): Network is a term that typically refers to "multi-organizational arrangements for solving problems that cannot be achieved, or cannot be achieved easily by single organization" (p.296).
- Goldsmith & Eggers (2004): Put forward a general definition for network, as "initiatives deliberately undertaken by the government to accomplish public goals, with measurable performance goals, assigned responsibilities to each partner, and structured information flow" (p.8).
- McQuaid (2010): Uses the definition of the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) for partnership as "systems of formalized co-operation, grounded in legally binding arrangements or informal understandings, cooperative working relationships, and mutually adopted plans among a number of institutions. They involve agreements on policy and programme objectives and the sharing of responsibility, resources, risks and benefits over a specified period of time" (p.128).
- Acar & Robertson (2004): Discuss 'Public-Private-Partnerships' and note that the term 'partnership' is used as an umbrella term to describe different types of collaborative undertakings between public, private, and/or non-profit organisations.
- Saz-Carranza & Ospina (2011) : Use the definition of 'inter-organizational network' as a "long-term cooperative relationship among organizations in which each entity retains control over its own resources but jointly decides on their use" (p.329). The term Inter-organisational network is also used by (Ayres & Stafford 2014).
- Lasker et al. (2001): In referring to the term 'collaboration' use the definition offered by Gray (1989) as a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can explore

constructively their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible”.

- Savage et al. (2011): Define partnerships as “collectivities of organizations that come together to solve “messy problems” that cannot typically be solved by an organization acting alone” (p.21).

As with the definitions, the typologies of network, and the similar settings, also vary considerably. Networks can have mandatory or voluntary participation, involving public or private actors (Meier & O’Toole 2001). Moreover, networks can be formal or informal; simple or complex (Smith 2009; Meier & Hill 2005; Ospina & Saz-Carranza 2010)

There are different ways of classifying types of networks. One of them is that of Isett et al. (2011) which identifies three types of networks: a) policy networks, b) collaborative, action or contracting networks (Rethemeyer & Hatmaker 2008; Johnston & Romzek 2008; Krueathep et al. 2010; Ospina & Saz-Carranza 2010) and c) governance networks (Klijn et al. 2010). Though these types do exist, sometimes it is difficult to classify a network under which type, because of its purpose and its collaborative structure (Voets et al. 2008).

In addition, there are other special types of networks such as goal-directed networks (Saz-Carranza & Ospina 2011) and knowledge sharing networks (Eglene et al. 2007). Saz-Carranza & Ospina (2011) refer to ‘Goal-directed networks’ and refer to the definition of Provan & Kenis for this as a network that encompasses “groups of three or more legally autonomous organizations that work together to achieve not only their own goals but also a collective goal”.

The typology also differs based on the main purpose of the network, or partnership. McQuaid (2010) refers to three general types of partnerships, depending on the main purpose:

- Facilitating partnerships: which manage strategic issues across agencies.
- Coordinating partnerships: concerned with management and implementation of policy.

- Implementing partnerships: concerned with managing specific projects mutually between actors.

The above types of partnerships correlate with the spectrum described by Martin & Guarneros-Meza (2013) and Keast et al (2007), in which they classify partnerships based on the level of integration as follows:

- Cooperation; members are independent but take into account each other's goals and activities
- Coordination; members align their resources, strategies and efforts to achieve common goals
- Collaboration; highest level of integration where boundaries between members can be blurred.

As another typology, Figure 2-2 below highlights the four generic models of governance, based on the level of public-private partnership, as well as on the extent to which the model requires networking capabilities (Goldsmith & Eggers 2004).

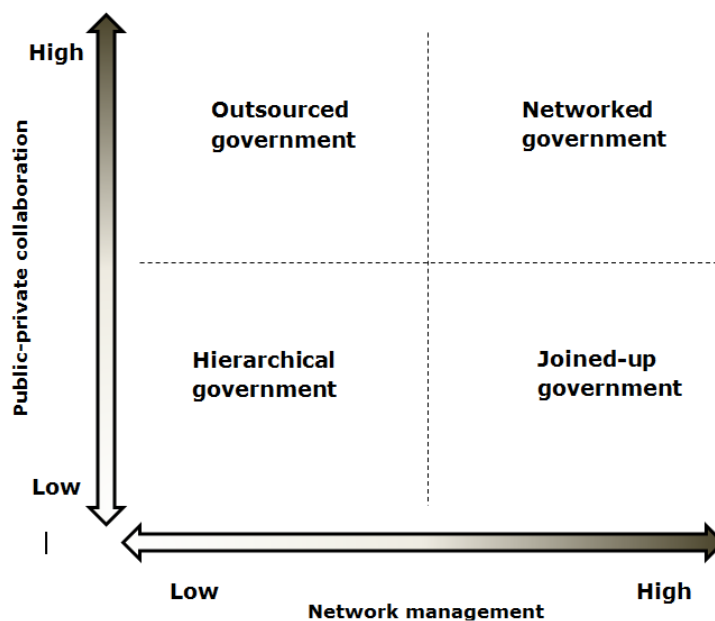


Figure 2 - 2: Governance Matrix (Source: Goldsmith & Eggers (2004))

Networks can also differ in the way they are formed and governed. They can be planned by higher authorities, or just based on mutual agreements

(Gains 1999), can be self-managed, by single or multiple units, or externally-brokered by central or higher authorities (Provan & Kenis 2007).

2.5.4 Advantages of networks

Do networks add value? Are they effective? These are key questions that are always raised in literature on networks and partnerships, and are related directly to the objective of this research. The problem with this question is how to define effectiveness? Or “effectiveness for whom”? (Provan & Kenis 2007).

It can be seen from the research on network management that researchers vary considerably on how to define success for a network or collaborative work, and what measures or indicators to use to judge the success of this mode of governance. The indicators that network scholars used can be either classified based on the level it is measured at, or its type; being measured or perceived indicators.

At level basis, success measures can be at four levels: community, network, organisation and individual level (Eglene et al. 2007). Silvia (2011) in her literature review study found that most of the available studies are at network level. At the network level, relevant success measures used relate to the structure, performance and inter-organisational relationships. Examples of these measures are the outcomes of Rogers & Weber (2010), as they classified the indicators into three broad categories: improving government agency problem-solving capacity, helping technology development and transfer, and going beyond compliance. Meier & O’Toole (2001) used organisational level, at which they related network management with the school’s overall performance. Smith (2009) measured the success at individual level. Smith in his work on the impact of institutional structure measured the impact on the breadth of collaboration between members in a network.

Measures of success of network management can be of measured accomplishments, or perceived indicators. Gazley (2010) suggests that collaboration of partnership accomplishments is a function of structural

and managerial characteristics (i.e. f (structural + managerial)). Gazley (2010) distinguishes between measured accomplishment and perceived effectiveness. Gazley (2010) used accomplishment measures, but some of the measures he used are also subject to perception such as service enhancement and service quality. As a compromise between measured and perceived indicators, Gazley (2010) used a mixture of accomplishment measures and perceived indicators. The same approach was used by Eglene et al. (2007) in their study about knowledge networks, where they used mixed indicators, both perceived and measured. Others used perceived indicators only, as was the case with Acar et al. (2008) and Klijn et al. (2010). In measuring success of network or collaboration, Acar et al. (2008) suggest that the perception of practitioners is robust enough for this type of research. Edelenbos & Klijn (2006a) in assessing the outcomes of a network used measures at organisation and members levels, using two criteria: actor contentment with the results of the process; as well as its enrichment which measures the content of the outcomes as compared with the initial ideas of the network.

In pursuit of measuring the effectiveness of a network, Provan & Kenis (2007) suggest the following definition for network effectiveness: the attainment of positive network-level outcomes that could not normally be achieved by individual organisational participants acting independently.

The issue with this definition is that it focuses on network-level outcomes only. People use different models to evaluate the effectiveness of networks. The models vary in the level of application as well as on the measures used.

While the Provan & Milward (2001) model evaluates networks at three levels of analysis: community, network and organisation/participant levels, the model of Dawes, as reported in Zheng et al. (2009), excludes the community level for service delivery and knowledge sharing network. Instead it focuses on three other levels: network, participating organisations and individuals.

Models of effectiveness use different criteria and measures of effectiveness; which can be of structural measures, performance measures, and process and relationship measures (Zheng et al. 2009) or can be classified into input, process and outputs measures (Lasker et al. 2001). A more recent model for such evaluation that combines multiple measures and levels is the model by Mandell & Keast (2008), who suggest a multi-level framework for evaluating effectiveness of networks, based on three levels: environmental, organisational and operational. They add an "operational" level and argue that the effectiveness of a network need not be based on outcomes, but on process as well. This is rather an inclusion of the efficiency aspect in assessing performance of a network.

Another example of frameworks that uses both effectiveness and efficiency aspects of performance is that of Voets et al. (2008) for policy networks. This framework is complex and it evaluates the performance of a policy network both at 'macro', national level, or 'micro', organisation or individual levels. They criticise traditional frameworks of NPM for focusing narrowly on the micro level, or abstractly on the macro level. In addition to the multi-level of assessment, Voest et al.'s framework assesses performance of policy network based on three dimensions: production performance, process performance and regime performance. The production performance dimension focuses on outcomes and results of a network: Policy networks need to deliver. The second dimension, process performance, focuses on the democratic values such as legitimacy and accountability. The third dimension however, regime performance, focuses on the capacity that a network builds for the regime and government.

Others argue that for a network to be effective, a multi-sector evaluation needs to be used, such that a network is deemed to be effective if the outcomes meets the expectations, or satisfy a number of actors (Klijn 2005). An example of this is the "Collaborative Advantage" model of Huxham and Vangen (discussed more in the next paragraphs).

The difficulty in evaluating the effectiveness of a network is attributed to the following reasons: Evaluating the outcome of network (Acar et al. 2008):

- The goals of the network might be vague, not clearly stated or changing over time (Klijn 2005; Acar et al. 2008; Ayres & Stafford 2014).
- Too many actors involved in a network, with varying goals, interests and perceptions (Klijn 2005; Acar et al. 2008; Ayres & Stafford 2014).
- Interactions in a network (and outside) are complex, and the knowledge about the network scope is spread over many actors, and sometimes the work is even delegated to actors outside the network (Klijn 2005; Acar et al. 2008).

Working through networks or collaboration can add some 'collaborative advantages' to the members, network, sector or community. The following is a list of some of the advantages network can bring: Advantages of Networks (Goldsmith & Eggers 2004):

- **Specialization:** By contracting out, or delegating, some services to other partners, organizations can focus more on their specialized and core responsibilities (Goldsmith & Eggers 2004).
- **Innovation:** This comes by involving a variety of actors, with wider perspectives and innovative ideas. Innovation is also enhanced when it is freed from the typical hierarchical constraints (Goldsmith & Eggers 2004; McQuaid 2010; Savage et al. 2011).
- **Speed and Flexibility:** by giving the governmental organisation more speed and flexibility, through partnership with private providers or partners, which have more flexibility to hire, fire, assign, and re-assign resources (Goldsmith & Eggers 2004; McQuaid 2010).
- **Increased Reach:** Which comes by using multiple actors, each has their own connections, partnerships and even geographical and institutional context. This can also help in sharing more resources from the actors in the network (Goldsmith & Eggers 2004).
- **Sharing knowledge, expertise and resources:** This is in line with the 'Resource Dependency Theory' (McQuaid 2010; Savage et al. 2011).
- **Developing a coherent and "aligned" service:** This is applicable to policy implementation and service providing networks (McQuaid 2010).

- **Improving efficiency:** by eliminating the duplication of efforts and improving communications (McQuaid 2010), achieving economy of scale or by complementing each other's capabilities (Savage et al. 2011).
- **Legitimisation:** Gaining legitimisation and buy-in of the community, through active participation of local representatives of the community in the partnership (McQuaid 2010).
- **Creating common norms:** amongst networks members, which help in strengthening the relationships between members (Savage et al. 2011).

When compared to vertical bureaucracy, working in networked or collaborative settings can bring forward some advantages over hierarchical governance. It can help in a) decision making to reach better performance measurement and monitoring of service provision (Lambright et al. 2010), b) creating organisational structures that contribute to system stability, c) buffering an organisation from environmental influences, and d) exploiting opportunities present in the environment (Herranz 2008; Meier & O'Toole 2001).

Despite the advantage of networks and the fact that public management often takes place in horizontal networks rather than solely in vertical bureaucracies (Milward & Provan 2000); networks cannot replace hierarchical bureaucracies for two reasons (Meier & Hill 2005):

- Most of the programmes are still delivered in hierarchical bureaucracies.
- Network and bureaucracies are not mutually exclusive, they co-exist in practice

Furthermore, Milward & Provan (2000) found that the most stable and successful networks are those which have succeed in establishing longer relationships, mimicking the stability of bureaucracy and taking some of its traits.

In addition to the above list of possible advantages of 'inter-organisational' networks, internal networking within the same organisation, or the 'inter-unit' network can bring some advantages to the

organisation, many of which are similar to the above list indeed (Hansen & Nohria 2004).

2.5.5 Challenges in networks

In this section, the challenges that hinder networks and collaborations from achieving the intended advantages or impact are briefly discussed. There are numerous challenges, some are specific to particular forms of networks such as Public-Private Partnership (PPP); others are common to all forms, although the extent might be different. Working collaboratively in networks faces some major constraints, the most challenging of which are: the capacity of public service managers at the new public management setting to manage networks of service provision (handled by network management strategies as discussed above); and, the subsequent ineffective monitoring and reporting of the effectiveness and quality of service delivery (Larbi 1999; Ferlie et al. 2005). In other words, the challenges can be either:

- at network level; pertaining to the structure of the network, or the behavioral relationships amongst its members; or
- at context or network environment level; pertaining to institutional or socio-economical environments.

Goldsmith & Eggers (2004) present an exhaustive list of possible challenges, although many of these are more evident in PPPs, or service delivery networks. The list is used as a basis here, and will be augmented with other challenges that have been reported in other references.

- **Goal congruence:** Alignment of goals in the public sector is not easy, and congruence in these cases must be done on outcomes, not processes. The issue here is when outcomes are not clear or difficult to measure or take a long time to realise. This might create additional tension in the network, when members try to maximise their own outcomes, at the expense of the network's (also in McQuaid (2010)).
- **Contorted oversight:** which happens either because of lack of effective monitoring of the network, or to the contrary, because of intensive control and micro managing of the network.

- **Communication meltdown:** In service delivery especially, formal and informal communications are needed. If this is not fostered in a network, the outcomes cannot be achieved efficiently and effectively.
- **Fragmented coordination:** Typically, networks require a high degree of coordination of strategies and efforts across public, private or not-for-profit organisations (also in Klijn (2005)).
- **Data deficit:** opting for a network model needs to be justified, with clear and reliable data of cost and benefits. Absence of such data might cause high or wrong expectations amongst stakeholders, or tensions between them.
- **Capacity shortage:** Contracting out service delivery can “hollow out” governments, to the point that it lacks sufficient expertise to manage the networks (This argument is valid mainly in PPP and service delivery type of networks.) The other challenge of capacity comes around the capacity amongst partner organisations to handle the extra task of the partnership (McQuaid 2010).
- **Relationship stability:** this challenge is faced when the partnership changes over time, or when it comes towards the end of the time span, for which the partnership is sought.
- **Resource costs:** in terms of staff time in meetings, and in delays in decision taking (McQuaid 2010).
- **Accountability and performance monitoring:** The networked governance blurs the lines of accountability (Martin 2010), where there is no direct hierarchical authority of control (Agyemang 2009). Accountability is a major challenge that needs to be negotiated at inter-organisational and inter-personal level (Osborne 2010). Related to this challenge is the difficulty in performance measurement of public services delivery or policy implementation (Lambright et al. 2010); or the measurement and management of the performance of the network itself (Meier & Hill 2005). The aspect of accountability will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.
- **Impact upon other services:** especially those with a stand-alone unit in charge of implementation (McQuaid 2010).
- **Power relations:** McDonald (2005) argues that power relations remain an area for greater theoretical development. Power

inequalities need to be managed to ensure success of a network (Osborne 2010). In the next chapter, this aspect will be discussed in more detail.

- **Community participation:** where representation of the community is absent or not effective. This applies to partnerships that need community participation such as governance networks.
- **Institutional or formal legitimacy:** One of the challenges facing the inter-organisational collaborations form of networks is the formal or institutional legitimacy, which can be handled by formal legislations and regulations, or by strong sponsorship from a well-recognised authority (Zheng et al. 2009).

2.5.6 Network management strategies

Public managers working in a network or collaborative setting require certain strategies, especially in managing the network itself. As an organisation, a network needs a manager. The network manager is a function or “set of activities which can also be performed by more than one actor” (Klijn 2005, p.267). Baker et al. (2011) find that such management practices at organisation and network levels have influence on the performance of a collaborative network.

In opposition to the traditional planning, organizing, staffing, directing, co-ordinating, reporting and budgeting (POSDCORB) (tasks that are needed in vertical or hierarchical management), (Agranoff & McGuire 2001) identified four generic groups of tasks that managers need in working and managing networks; they are **activation/de-activation, framing, mobilization, and synthesising**. In a comparable typology, Vangen & Huxham (2003a) suggest the following strategies needed to achieve ‘collaborative advantage’ out of a network: **Embracing** the ‘right’ kind of members, **empowering** members for active participation, **involving and supporting** all members, and **mobilising** them to perform the tasks. In a recent paper, Ayres & Stafford (2014) re-classify the various network management strategies into four main categories: **connecting** internally, **exploring content, arranging** external institutional connections, and **process agreements**. This categorisation however is confusing when it comes to identifying strategies that are

needed internally and externally, as suggested by the the early work of Klijn & Koppenjan (2000), which classifies these strategies into a) process management strategies, which focus on structure and composition of network, and b) network constitution strategies that deal with realising changes in a network.

Klijn (2005) offers another comparison between the management strategies between traditional organisations and networks. The comparison identifies three major strategies in traditional settings, which include: planning and setting the goals; organising the structure towards the plans and goals; and leading the organisation towards getting the job done. These three traditional strategies are then compared to the set of strategies that are needed in networks, which are summarised in the table below:

Table 2 - 4: Management strategies (source: Klijn 2005)

	Activation of actors and resource	Goal achieving strategies	Organisation arrangements	Interaction guiding
Management of interactions	Selective activation, resource, mobilising, stabilisation, deactivation of actors and resource, initiating new series of interaction, coalition building	Searching for a goal congruency, creating variation in solutions, influencing (and explicating) perceptions, managing perceptions information and research	Creating new ad hoc organisational arrangements (boards, project organisations, etc.)	Mediation, brokerage, appointing of process manager, removing obstacles to co-operation, creating incentives for co-operation

Management of network	Network activation, changing composition of networks, changing position of actors	Reframing of perceptions, changing information flow permanently	Creating permanent organisational constructions	Changing setting rules for conflict regulation, for information flow, changing pay-off rules or professional codes
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2.5.7 Conceptual models

There have been different conceptual frameworks and models explored in the literature that aim at explaining how collaborative or networked governance works. Table 2-4 summarises the key frameworks that have been developed in chronological order Ring & Van de Ven (1994); Huxham et al. (2000); Huxham (2003); Cooper et al. (2006); Thomson & Perry (2006); Kapucu (2006); Bryson et al. (2006); Ansell & Gash (2008); Ospina & Saz-Carranza (2010); Emerson et al. (2011); and Purdy (2012). A general theme can be observed evolving from these frameworks which can be traced back to the initial attempt to structure a framework of collaborative governance in the work of (Wood & Gray 1991). The general theme of these frameworks tends to treat the various variables and dimensions as:

- Drivers and conditions that are needed to begin or to sustain a network/collaboration.
- Internal systems or processes that explain what goes on between partners at network/collaboration level.
- Outcomes from a network and collaboration and the impacts those outcomes may have.

Table 2-4 gives a detailed comparison of the existing frameworks that are advanced in the literature on a network and how it works. The table describes how each framework treats the three dimensions: drivers or determinants, network levels, and system or institutional context levels. In addition, key features of each framework are highlighted here to help draw some relevant comparisons.

Besides the above general theme that the frameworks follow, these frameworks, however, differ in the degree, clarity and the extent to which they handle the various variables and the inter-relationships between them. The frameworks can be differentiated based on the aspects outlined in the following sub-sections.

- ***Drivers and initial conditions; formation or sustainability***

The reviewed framework lists a number of drivers, starting conditions, antecedents and motives that are needed to motivate stakeholders to begin collaboration or networking. The only framework that introduces the concept of sustainability, in addition to formations, is that of Bryson et al. (2006) in which they define these variables as competitive and institutional pressures that “affect their formation as well as their long-term sustainability” (p.45).

- ***Focus; comprehensive or specific***

While most frameworks follow the above general theme (that is, drivers and initial conditions, processes, outcomes and impacts), the focus of the framework and the extent to which the three dimensions are treated varies considerably. Most of the models converge internally to explore dimensions within a network or collaboration level. This is the case, for example, with the early model of Ring & Van de Ven (1994) of a process-based, inter-organisational co-operation, and the model of Huxham et al. (2000), whereby the focus is exploring the challenges that *structure and diversity dimensions* may cause partners. Similarly, the focus of Thomson and Perry's framework (Thomson & Perry 2006) is to describe what goes on in the “black-box of collaboration”. Crosby & Bryson (2005) offer a specific framework for leadership in cross-sector collaboration that can drive a policy-change cycle in which the focus is on leadership skills and attributes that managers need in a collaborative setting. Purdy (2012) framework is another example of a specific-purpose framework that looks at the power dimension in networks, in this case.

On the other hand, the model developed by Cooper et al. (2006) focuses mainly on the surrounding system context; their aim is to put a

conceptual model for better civic engagement in collaborative work within public management to maximize the effectiveness of such collaborations.

The framework developed by Emerson et al. (2011) is the most comprehensive as it depicts all the variables and dimensions on three levels: the internal dynamic, the collaborative governance level, and the outside system context level. Nevertheless, the propositions that this framework offers to test at the system context level need more detailed discussion and exploration. The other system that treats a network at all the levels is the conceptual model offered by Kapucu (2006). The model however, is specific to inter-agency communication in networks during emergencies.

- ***Assessment as a dimension***

Assessment as a variable appears only within two frameworks. The first is that of Ring & Van de Ven (1994) in which assessment is depicted as a central task within collaborative work. Bryson et al. (2006) advance this concept further and propose that “cross-sector collaborations are most likely to create value when they are resilient and engage in regular reassessment” (p.51). The assessment in these two frameworks refers to the internal assessment or re-assessment that is done at the collaboration level. It is not the same as the assessment in the performance management that is done by an independent organisation outside the network or collaboration.

Table 2 - 5: Comparison between key process and dimensional frameworks

Framework	Drivers, antecedents or determinants of formation	Collaboration or network dynamics	Outcomes at collaboration or network level (Collaborative Governance Regime)	Outcomes at institutional context level (system context)	Remarks
Ring & Van de Ven (1994)	Unexplored	Presents a model for a cyclic process of building continuous commitment among stakeholders through negotiation, commitment, implementation; and assessment of the three elements.	Unexplored	Unexplored	- Process based model at network and collaboration level only. - Presents assessment as a central task within the collaboration level.
Huxham et al. (2000)	Briefly refers to general drivers to collaborate: a) perceived need to collaborate; b) sharing of learning; and, c) sharing of financial resources.	Group challenges facing collaborative governance: a) structural complexity dimension (including working relationships, organisational memberships, governance and task structures, pluralism, ambiguity, and dynamics; b) diversity dimensions including resources and aims, language and culture; and power.	Only explains implications of challenges regarding collaboration.	The focus is on the impact of some system dimensions on collaborations, such as the pluralism of network dynamics of governmental policies. Does not treat all the potential reciprocal impacts.	Useful in conceptualising challenges (mainly from within) that may face collaborative work.
Huxham (2003)	Not explicit	The model is practice-oriented which highlights five themes within collaborative governance: common aims, power, trust, membership structures and leadership.	Refers indirectly to only the importance of achieving outcomes that help in completing a trust-building loop within a collaboration level.	Unexplored	The model is a rather practice-oriented model that aims to highlight to practitioners important themes they need to consider while collaborating or networking.
Cooper et al.	Unexplored	Unexplored	Unexplored	Suggests six variables to maximise civic	Very system-centred model. Does not treat network-level

(2006)				engagement in collaboration, and effectiveness of collaborative work.	dimensions.
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Framework	Drivers, antecedents or determinants of formation	Collaboration or network dynamics	Outcomes at collaboration or network level (Collaborative Governance Regime)	Outcomes at institutional context level (system context)	Remarks
Thomson & Perry (2006)	Partially and indirectly treated under mutuality dimensions: a driver for partners to collaborate is explained in which partners need to forge common interests.	Explains five iterative dimensions of what goes within a collaboration. These dimensions generally mix challenges with management strategies. The five dimensions are: governance, administration, organisational autonomy, mutuality; and norms of trust and reciprocity.	Unexplored	Not explored directly.	The focus of this model is to present interactive processes that present themselves within collaboration.
Kapucu (2006)	Focuses on drivers during emergencies, or extreme events that can lead to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased communication - Less centralised networks - Increased uncertainty 	Mainly sharing information and resources.	Direct outputs at network level are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased communication - Effective decision making 	Better services to public.	This framework is specific to inter-agency communication in networks during emergencies.
Bryson et al. (2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refers to general environment, sector failure, and direct antecedents. - Regards these as pressures that affect their formation and sustainability. 	Covers three dimensions: a) formal and informal process components b) formal and informal structure and governance; and, c) contingencies and constraints.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Three categories of outcomes: a) public value, b) direct and indirect effects; and c) resilience and reassessment. - Lists accountability along with the three categories of outcomes. 	Some dimensions are nested implicitly and indirectly in the initial conditions, institutional contingencies and constraints; and in accountability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significance of this model in terms of: a) conceptual conditions of sustainability, b) identifying constraints, c) introducing reassessment at outcome levels. - Overlap in some environmental variables and antecedents within

					<p>processes and within structural and governance dimensions.</p> <p>- Discusses some dimensions at 'boundary' level across organisations.</p>
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Framework	Drivers, antecedents or determinants of formation	Collaboration or network dynamics	Outcomes at collaboration or network level (Collaborative Governance Regime)	Outcomes at institutional context level (system context)	Remarks
Ansell & Gash (2008)	Conditions that influence collaborative processes: a) power/resource imbalances, b) incentives to participate, and c) prehistory antagonism, co-operation and trust.	Propose a cyclic process of trust building within a collaboration that has: a) commitment to process, b) shared understandings c) intermediate outcomes, d) face-to-face dialogue e) intermediate outcomes and f) trust building.	Only in terms of intermediate outcomes within a collaboration that brings small wins and helps in trust building.	Unexplored	<p>- Introducing sustainability and a continuity dimension of a collaboration in terms of trust building and continuous commitment within a collaboration level.</p> <p>- Regards facilitative leadership and institutional design as factors that influence collaborative processes, but not as part of the process itself.</p>
Ospina & Saz-Carranza (2010)	Unexplored	Mainly featuring inward strategies for addressing unity:diversity paradox; and outward strategies for addressing dialogue:confrontation paradox.	Unexplored	Unexplored	Specific to management strategies only,
Crosby et al. (2010)	Two types as Initial Conditions: - General environment (turbulence, competitive &	Unexplored	Unexplored	Unexplored	--

	institutional elements) - Sector Failure				
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Framework	Drivers, antecedents or determinants of formation	Collaboration or network dynamics	Outcomes at collaboration or network level (Collaborative Governance Regime)	Outcomes at institutional context level (system context)	Remarks
Emerson et al. (2011)	Lists four groups of drivers that begin collaboration; leadership, consequential incentives, interdependence and uncertainty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Puts collaborative dynamics and its actions and impacts within a "collaborative governance regime". - Collaboration dynamics has three interactive dimensions: principled engagement, shared motivation and capacity for joint action. 	Lists some possible actions as outcomes of collaboration dynamics. The model depicts the impacts and adaptation on governance regime and system context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduces "system context" as an overall context within which collaborative governance regime works. - Explains the impacts and adaptation that collaboration might have on system context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduces three levels through which drivers, dynamics, actions and impacts extend. - Explains the causal relationships between various dimensions across the three levels. - More general and comprehensive model. - Explains the dynamic nature within a collaboration.
Purdy (2012)	Not addressed	Suggests a framework for assessing power in network, based on source of power (authority, resources or legitimacy), and arena of power (participants, process or content).	Not addressed	Not addressed	Specific framework that looks at power dimension in a network.

2.5.8 Main findings from the NPG and networks Literature

To sum up the findings from the literature review on networks and NPG, Table 2-5 below lists the main findings on various aspects of networks, collaborations and related terms, as discussed in the previous sections. This table is then used to deduce the main gaps, either reported in the literature, or concluded by analysing and synthesising the findings.

2.5.9 Gaps in the literature

The review of the relevant papers on networks and NPG revealed the following **key** gaps and areas for further research, as reported by the various scholars:

- There is a general need for further research to identify which network strategies work better, and under which conditions, in each type of network formation, its internal structural complexity, as well as its environmental variables. It also needs to take into account its interactions with other networks and institutional context (Klijn 2005).
- There is a need to develop more comprehensive frameworks to evaluate the performance of networks in different structural and contextual settings (McQuaid 2010), and what is the best architecture for a network that can deliver better services to the public (Osborne 2010).
- In exploring the impact of a network, the frameworks need to do more than network-level outcome analyses, and look deeper inside what is going within the network (Provan & Kenis 2007, McGuire and Agranoff 2011; and Silvia 2011). To some degree, the new framework developed by Emerson et al. (2011) manages to explore the networks at multiple levels, but the framework is thus far a theoretical conceptual model. It has not been verified with empirical studies.
- In developing models, there is another area for research highlighted by Crosby et al. (2010) concerning the role of 'boundary' objects (such as proposals, agreements, maps and timelines that are used

by key stakeholders in a network) in developing shared understanding and on the outcomes of the collaboration.

It is clear that there is a common theme, being identified here, which is the need to further develop more conceptual models that could help in:

- Getting deeper understanding of the dynamics of the networks, and how these dynamics, including structural and behavioral variables, interact with external cross-boundary or external variables that may be features in the surrounding environment. The challenge in this is that networks are applied differently, and the institutional or system contexts around them vary considerably.
- PM is recognized as a key tool deployed usually in public management reforms, alongside NPG and collaborative networks. Martin (2010) briefly described in his book how PM initiatives (e.g. audits and inspections) responded to NPG initiatives in the UK governmental reforms. There is no research done yet on how collaborative policy network might be impacted by the PM initiatives such as inspections and audit reporting. Performance measurement and data availability/access on performance of public service provision is identified as one of the top challenges facing networks. It is therefore conceptually legitimate to ask the question here: how does a publicly reported PM initiative impact the dynamics of related collaborative policy networks? What aspects of the network structural, behavioral or institutional dimensions can get affected by this PM reporting?
- Following on the previous propositional concept, the subsequent question is how the potential impact of PM adds to the advantage of a network. The evaluation of this impact needs to be on multiple-level (network dynamics, outputs and outcomes), as suggested by Mandell & Keast (2008).

Figure 2-3 summarises the conclusion of this part of the literature review. The main gaps from the relevant literature on PM were first identified. The main gaps from the network and collaboration literature were similarly identified. Since the two modes, PM and networking, can be used simultaneously in some context to reform public policy and service provision, the findings from these two modes are then synthesised to

identify a research area that needs to be exploited to answer two main research questions in this case, as indicated in the figure below.

Based on these two **key** questions, the objective of this research was then chosen to develop a conceptual model that could explain the impact of publicly reported PM on inter-organisational policy networks, and what could be the advantages in this case of dual application of the two strategies.

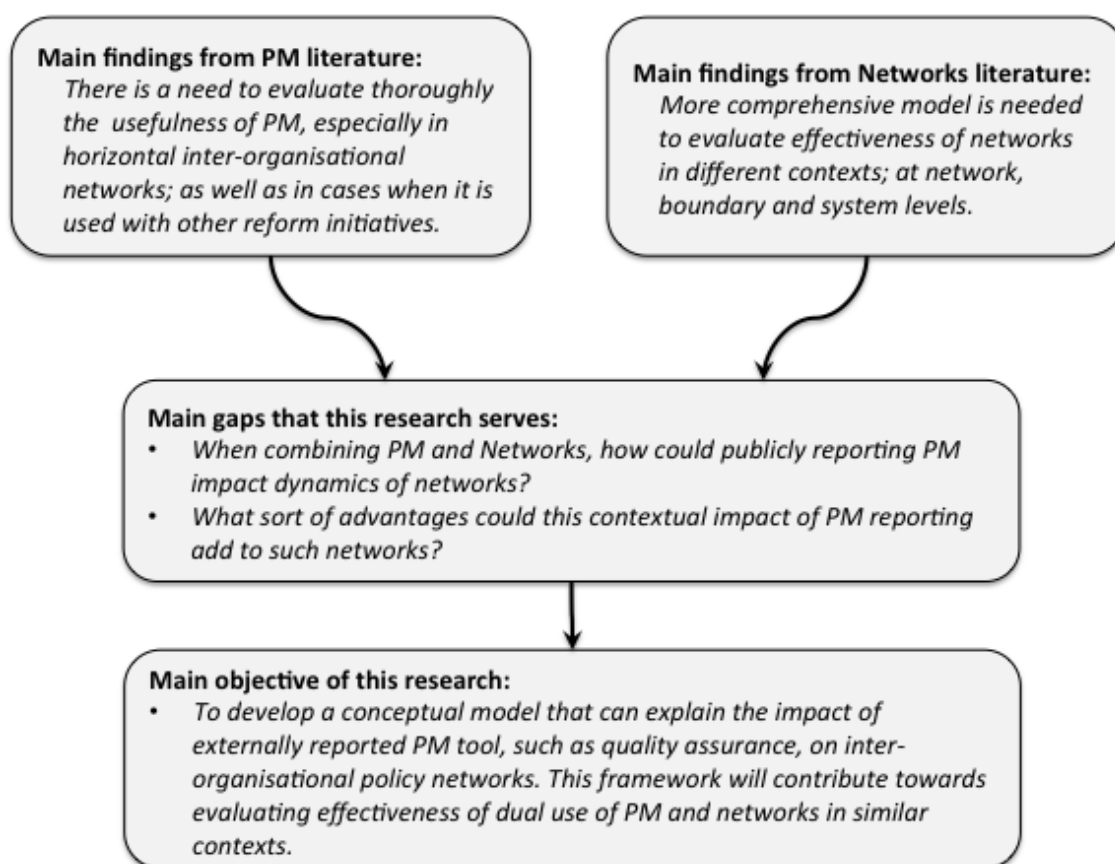


Figure 2 - 3: From literature to research gaps and objective

Table 2 - 6: Main findings from NPG and networks literature

Key concept	Main findings	References	Questions/remarks
Rise of networks	General perspectives on the rise of networks, NPG, and other related terms such as partnerships and collaborations.	Goldsmith & Eggers 2004; Klijn 2005; Martin 2010;; Osborne 2010; Martin & Guarneros-meza 2013.	--
	NPG is one school of governance, and within it has Policy Governance and Networked Governance. Extensive use of PM and inspections is part of NPG agenda.	Klijn & Koppenjan 2000; Power 2000; 2005; Klijn 2005; Martin 2010; Osborne 2010; Isett et al. 2011.	--
Theories behind networks	Theories in network are informed by previous theories such as: The Hollow State Theory; and ...	Klijn 2005; Ayres & Stafford 2014.	Applicable to PPP or service delivery networks.
	Organisational Theories	Klijn (2005)	--
	Public Administration Theories	Klijn (2005)	--
	Stakeholders Theories	Savage et al. (2011)	--
	Resource Dependency Theory (RDT)	Klijn 2005; Rethemeyer & Hatmaker 2008; Klijn & Koppenjan 2000; Huxham et al. 2000; Schneider et al. 2003.	--
	A number of drivers or determinants can encourage partners to work collaboratively in a network. Other related terms are also used such as collaboration, inter-organisational, partnerships and alliances.	Vangen & Huxham 2003a; Krueathep et al. 2010; Robertson 2011.	Can publicly reported PM, as an institutional factor, be one driver for formation? Which resource can this add to a network, as per RDT?

Definitions and forms of networks	Numerous definitions and typologies of networks exist; as well as for types of governance.	Many references as listed in Section 2.6.3	It is important to specify the type of network under study as 'network' can be an umbrella definition for a number of settings; each may differ in operational or contextual aspects.
Advantages of network	Effectiveness of network can be evaluated at individual, organizational, network, or system/context level. Measures of performance can be of input, process, output; or outcome type.	Meier & O'toole 2001; Provan & Milward 2001; Lasker et al. 2001; Smith 2009; Acar et al. 2008; Zheng et al. 2009; Eglene et al. 2007; Mandell & Keast 2008; Gazley 2010; Klijn et al. 2010b; Silvia 2011.	<p>Lasker et al. (2001): available frameworks do not identify what additional advantages are added by a network that members cannot accomplish working alone?</p> <p>Mandell & Keast (2008) model of evaluation is more comprehensive.</p> <p>Ayres & Stafford (2014): Evaluating effectiveness is still a challenge; the difficulty remains; 'effective for whom'?</p> <p>Silvia (2011): Most of the available models are at network level.</p> <p>Network in each context needs to be evaluated carefully; there is no common acceptable model of evaluation yet.</p>
	'Collaborative Advantage' is a multi-sector evaluation model.	Vangen & Huxham 2003a; Huxham & Beech 2003; Huxham & Vangen 2005; Huxham & Vangen 2004; Klijn 2005.	This model takes into account the perspectives of different stakeholders in a network, but the focus is mainly on the outcomes.

	A number of advantages reported in literature; such as specialisation, innovation, speed and flexibility, increased reach, sharing resources, aligned services, improved efficiency, legitimisation, common norms, improved decision making, improved network structure, buffering and exploiting environment.	A list of references from various types of networks, collaborations and partnerships; refer to section 2.6.4	There is not yet a theoretical or conceptual model to explain which advantage is expected in a particular form of network; or under which conditions. How do environmental variable, such as PM, add to this?
	Despite the potential advantages of networks, vertical bureaucracies still needed.	Milward & Provan (2000)	How do bureaucratic norms help or hinder networks in realising advantages?
Challenges in networks	Challenges in network could be at network level, pertaining to the complexity of the network; or at context level, pertaining to the surrounding environment.	Goldsmith & Eggers 2004; Ferlie et al. 2005; McDonald 2005; Zheng et al. 2009; McQuaid 2010; Lambright et al. 2010.	Institutional and system context around network can pose challenges.
	List of cited challenges include: Goal congruence, contorted oversight, communication, coordination, data deficit, capacity shortage, stability, cost, accountability and PM, power relationships, impact upon other services, community participation, legitimacy.	A list of references from various types of networks, collaborations and partnerships; refer to section 2.6.5	Meier & Hill 2005; Osborne 2010; Lambright et al. 2010: accountability and PM are on the top of challenges in networks Can publicly reported PM help in overcoming this challenge? How?

Network Management strategies	Managing network of multiple partners warrants special management strategies.	Klijin & Koppenjan 2000; Agranoff & McGuire 2001; Vangen & Huxham 2003b; Klijin 2005; Ayres & Stafford 2014.	<p>Agranoff & McGuire (2001): activation/de-activation, framing, mobilization, and synthesising.</p> <p>Vangen & Huxham (2003b): Embracing, empowering, involving, and mobilising.</p> <p>Klijin (2005): suggests more research to find out most effective strategies considering structural and environmental variables of a network.</p> <p>Ayres & Stafford (2014): connecting internally, exploring content, arranging external institutional connections, and process agreements.</p>
Conceptual Models	Table 2-4 depicts review and comparisons of this key dimension.	Ring & Van de Ven 1994; Huxham et al. 2000; Huxham 2003; Cooper et al. 2006; Thomson & Perry 2006; Kapucu 2006; Bryson et al. 2006; Ansell & Gash 2008; Ospina & Saz-Carranza 2010; Emerson et al. 2011.	Refer to Table 2-4 for detailed discussion.

2.6 Summary:

Figure 2-3, as shown above, summarises the conclusion of this chapter. The main gaps from the relevant literature on PM were first identified, revealing that there is a general need to evaluate thoroughly the usefulness of PM tools, especially in horizontal inter-organisational networks; as well as in cases when it is used with other reform initiatives. On the other hand, the main gaps from the network and collaboration literature were similarly identified, showing a need for a more comprehensive model in order to evaluate performance of networks in different contexts; at network, boundary and system levels. Since the two modes, PM and networking, can be used simultaneously in some contexts to reform public policy and service provision, the overall key questions that can be then synthesised by considering the gaps from the two modes of governance, are:

- When combining PM and Networks, how could publicly reporting PM impact dynamics of networks?
- What sort of advantages could this contextual impact of PM reporting add to such networks?

Based on these overall research questions, the objective of this research was then chosen to develop a conceptual model that could explain the impact of publicly reported PM on inter-organisational policy networks, and what could be the advantages in this case of dual application of the two strategies.

In the next chapter, additional literature will be reviewed to establish what are the possible, propositional, aspects within a network level that can be affected with this external institutional variable; PM. Aspects will include accountability, trust, power relations, and autonomy and inward/outward tension. The outcomes of the literature review, as explained in this chapter and the next, are then used to construct a 'background theory' for the research.

3 Background Theory

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, relevant literature was reviewed from the performance management, as well as network and inter-organisational collaboration fields. Since the two modes, PM and networking, can be used simultaneously in some contexts to reform public policy and service provision, overall key questions were identified by synthesising the gaps from the two modes of governance. Based on these overall research questions, the objective of the research was then chosen to develop a conceptual model that could explain the impact of publicly reported PM on such collaborative networks.

This chapter extends the outcomes of relevant literature review, from various theories on network governance, inter-organisational collaboration and partnerships, to predict how publicly reported quality assurance (QA) could potentially, based on theoretical stances, impact networks that are set up to improve a particular public service sector. The discussion here draws on available literature on various types of collaborative and inter-organisational networks, none of which address the dimension of public reporting of the quality of the corresponding public service that a network aims at improving. The objective of this chapter is to propose a **"preliminary theoretical model"** that can be used later to design the research methodology. The model will be further developed, upon collecting and analysing empirical data, into a revised conceptual model, which is the overall objective of this research.

It is worth noting here that the model, presented at the end of this chapter, is not meant to offer a full account on how networks, in such contexts, are governed. The focus of the model is to diagnose how QA public reporting, as an external contextual phenomenon, leads to corresponding **additional impacts** on networked governance. Existing theories and conceptual models give explanations of networked governance and its interactions with varying variables, internally within a network, or external to it.

The chapter is divided into sections each of which discusses a particular theoretical dimension, or a pattern, that is expected to be affected by QA public reporting. At the end of each section, a table is presented summarising the possible categories that could be anticipated, and how the outcomes of the literature review of each category are then reflected on the given dimension. The reflections of the particular categories under each dimension are then used collectively to develop an **"initial proposition"**. The propositions are theoretical only at this stage, which then need to be supported with empirical data to induce relevant testable hypotheses at the end of this research.

3.2 Determinants of network formation

How are networks formed? What are the driving forces or the incentives for people to work together in a networked or collaborative setting? Determinants or drivers of formation are what make stakeholders come together in a collaborative or networked setting. Related to this aspect are other terms that can be found in the literature, such as initial conditions, antecedents or environmental variables (Robertson 2011). The following sections briefly review the main findings from relevant literature, and attempt to extrapolate these findings to make some predictions on how public reporting of QA may lead to, or motivate members in a network to work and continue work together.

3.2.1 Local climate and context

Krueathep et al. (2010) found that network formation is a function of five determinants: 1) institutional setting, 2) task difficulty, 3) management capacity, 4) local political climate; and 5) socio-economic context.

One way in which public reporting can impact is the socio-political context around the stakeholders, who are related to a particular public service provision. The reporting cannot add to institutional settings (as long as the links with QA outcomes are not explicitly institutionalised), nor to the task difficulty. It may however impact on the management capacity (discussed later on), and more notably on the local political and socio-economic context, since the reports address the general public and other societal groups concerned with the quality of the public service provision.

3.2.2 Resource dependency

Many scholars view Resource Dependency Theory (RDT) as the theoretical perspective underpinning network formation (Rethemeyer & Hatmaker 2008; Klijn & Koppenjan 2000). The basic assumption here is that organisations work together to exchange resources with one another in order to sustain operations and achieve their goals. The resources could be Material-Institutional Resources (MIR), such as the financial, political, human, informational, and institutional conditions, or they could be Social Structural Resources (SSR). The resources or needs could be real or perceived needs of stakeholders (Huxham et al. 2000; Vangen & Huxham 2003a).

Besides exchanging resources, Wyatt (2002) lists other motives, in voluntary type networks, such as benefits for the clients of individual members within a network, desire for more influence; and desire for more funding.

It is not clear exactly what type of shareable resources are being discussed at this point of the research, but public reporting on quality of public services is expected to motivate the concerned stakeholders, to come together, share experience and knowledge, in other words at least

share information, in order to improve the overall effectiveness of that particular public service provision sector.

3.2.3 Network sustainability

This dimension of how networks can be sustained is not discussed in the literature, except in the work of Bryson et al. (2006). The literature highlights the determinants of a network formation; what is needed to start a network (refer to Table 2-5 of Chapter 2), but once a network is established, what other variables are needed to sustain it after formation? Bryson et al.'s (2006) model refers to a general environment, and direct antecedents for network formation, as well as other factors that lead to network sustainability.

As discussed above, public reporting adds another dimension into the context around a network, and since public reporting is an ongoing process, its potential impact on motivating stakeholders to work collaboratively will remain so long as the pressure exerted externally from public reporting exists. Therefore, it can be expected here that public reporting helps in sustaining a network.

The above three categories comprise how public reporting is expected to lead to network formation and sustainability. Table 3-1 below summarises the three expected categories from the literature review, and how theoretical aspects of each category are linked to this research objective and questions.

Table 3 - 1: Categories that are expected to explain the impact of QA reporting on network formation and sustainability

Expected category (Based on literature review)	Reference	How is it linked with this study?
Local climate and context	Krueathep et al. (2010)	By addressing the general public and societal groups, public reporting can impact the context around a network, creating a need for joint work to improve the quality of a public sector.
Resource dependency	Rethemeyer & Hatmaker (2008); Klijn & Koppenjan (2000), Huxham <i>et al.</i> (2000), Vangen & Huxham (2003a), Wyatt (2002)	Overall it is expected that public reporting on the quality of public services is to motivate the concerned stakeholders to come together, share experience and knowledge, at least share information, in order to improve the overall effectiveness of public service provision sector.
Sustainability of a network	Bryson <i>et al.</i> (2006)	Since public reporting is an on-going process, its potential impact on motivating stakeholders to work collaboratively will remain. Therefore, it helps in sustaining a network.

At this point in the journey of the research, it is not clear exactly how exactly the public reporting of QA may help in network formation and sustainability, or what would be the exact type of resources that members would be sharing by working jointly, but the three categories above give sufficient theoretical basis to make the following initial expectation or proposition:

Initial Proposition 1: Public reporting of QA can have an influence on network formation and sustainability.

3.3 Accountability in networks

Working in a network mode has some advantages, but also some obvious challenges. At the top of these challenges is **accountability**, which warrants special management strategies to manage (Agranoff & McGuire 2001; Klijn & Koppenjan 2000). The challenge of accountability in networks reported in the literature varies considerably according to the type of the inter-organisational network.

The definitions of accountability are closely linked to “answerability” for performance, “to whom” and “to what” elements (Dicke 2002; Romzek 2000). Answerability is usually to a higher authority in a bureaucracy or “inter-organisational chain of command (Dicke 2002). The three elements (answerability, to whom and to what) are part of the challenge of accountability in a network setting, compared to a vertical bureaucratic organisation.

The following section reviews the findings from published literature on accountability in network settings, with the aim of constructing an initial and generic proposition on how publicly reported QA can impact accountability in such collaborative policy making networks, based on a number of expected ways, from the literature in which such a proposed impact can be materialised.

3.3.1 Accountability environment

There are different ways or types in which accountability works depending on the structure and the degree of control or authority exercised by parties. The most common types of accountability are hierarchical, legal and political accountability (Aucoin & Heintzman 2000; Page 2004; Romzek 2000). In addition to these types, two more types of accountability are discussed in the literature that could explain how accountability might work in settings, such as network settings, where none of the hierarchical, legal or political mechanisms exist. O’Connell (2005) uses the term “**accountability environment**” to refer to collective accountability that is formed from “the interactions of multiple parties, [and which] appears to be characteristic of many government programs” (p.92). This definition encompasses other terms that are used to define similar accountability such as “professional accountability” (Romzek 2000; Page 2004), “accountable culture” (Dubnick & Frederickson 2010), and mutual or dialogue-based accountability (Roberts 2002; Whitaker et al. 2004).

According to this definition, one might expect that by public reporting of QA results, the environment surrounding the key players in charge of the

quality of services, e.g. service providers and network members, will be more motivating for other stakeholders to apply various mechanisms available at their discretion to hold these players accountable for improving the quality of services.

3.3.2 Managing expectations

Acar et al. (2008) list five functions of accountability in network settings, the first of which is mapping and manifesting expectations of stakeholders from the network or partnership. Page (2004) lists "*managing expectations*" as an example of an internal platform in which accountability functions in a network.

By public reporting of QA results, it is expected that public reports may help in shaping expectations of either internal members of a network or external stakeholders. This can be yet another possible mechanism in which publicly reported QA impacts accountability in a network setting.

3.3.3 Management for results

Accountability in network settings can serve different objectives. One of the key concepts in NPM is accountability for results (Bardach & Lesser 1996) or "*management for results*" (Page 2004). Aucoin & Heintzman (2000) identify threefold objectives of accountability in managing government funded programmes: control, assurance, and continuous improvement. The three objectives overlap in several ways, but they all aim at ensuring and maximising the efficiency of the use of public money.

Public reporting of QA is expected to motivate stakeholders to apply more controls in order to improve quality of public services. Public Reporting of QA is also expected to encourage decision makers, regulators, and funding agencies to adopt more of a "*management for results*" approach, either to hold the service providers more accountable, or to embetter their positions in front of parties to whom they are answerable in a network.

3.3.4 Access to information

"Access to information" on performance is listed at the top of the challenges that face networks (Romzek 2000; Acar & Robertson 2004; Page 2004; Dubnick 2005; Acar et al. 2008), whereas the main motive behind NPM policies is the demand for greater accountability and transparency (Justesen & Skærbæk 2010). The link between access to information and accountability was the research area of Meijer (2007), in which he studied the relation between publishing performance results into the internet, and the effectiveness and legitimacy of public service providers. He concluded that publishing data on performance on the internet induces new form of "public accountability".

At this point, one can raise the following question: Will public reporting by an independent QA help in overcoming the challenge of access to performance data, especially if the reports are made public to all stakeholders? From a theoretical stance, the answer will be quite possibly.

3.3.5 Measurability of performance

Related strongly to the challenge of access to information is another challenge of "*measurability of performance*". According to Acar & Robertson (2004), measurability is at the heart of constraints to access to information that faces accountability. Page (2004) suggests that in order to be accountable for results, networks should have the capacity to measure performance in the first place. Romzek (2000) stresses the importance of measurability especially for government reform type of projects.

QA serves directly to measure and report performance of providers, and hence collectively the sector. It is expected, therefore, that public reports of QA help in providing the required measurability of performance to strengthen the accountability in a network.

3.3.6 Balancing of power

One of the challenges within the structure of a network - due to the hierarchical authority arrangement - is the distribution of power inside a network (Huxham 2003; Agranoff 2006), where "one part has no hierarchical authority over its partners and no full control over the performance" (Acar et al. 2008, p.4). It is recognised that asymmetry of power, in terms of amount and type of power that members of a network hold, is one of the main challenges that may lead to major implications on accountability (Acar & Robertson 2004; Crosby & Bryson 2005; Currie et al. 2007; Ansell & Gash 2008). The imbalance in collaboration can be caused by real or perceived differences in power, occurring at organisational or individual levels (Huxham et al. 2000).

By public reporting of QA, and by putting all the stakeholders on a balanced ground of accountability, will QA reports help in "*balancing the power*" by diminishing the imbalance that usually exists within a network? That could be an expected theme here.

To summarise the above discussion on the expected categories in accountability, Table 3-2 below lists the theoretical categories, along with how each is linked to this research objective and questions, which collectively give the basis for the resultant initial proposition, a proposition that is based on a theoretical basis at this stage.

Table 3 - 2: Categories that are expected to explain the impact of QA reporting on accountability

Expected category (Based on literature review)	Reference	How is it linked with this study?
Accountability Environment	O'Connell (2005), Page (2004), Romzek (2000), Dubnick & Frederickson (2010), Whitaker et al. (2004), Roberts (2002)	Public reporting of QA results can make the environment surrounding the key players in charge of the quality of public services more motivating for other stakeholders to hold, in various ways, these players accountable for improving the quality of services.
Managing expectations	Acar et al. (2008), Page (2004)	By public reporting of QA, it is expected that public reports may help in shaping expectations of either internal members of a network or external stakeholders, which helps in holding members accountable for better outcomes.

Management for results	Bardach & Lesser (1996), Aucoin & Heintzman (2000)	Public reports are expected to motivate stakeholders to apply more controls in order to improve quality of public services; as well as encourage decision makers, regulators, and funding agencies to adopt a "management for results" approach.
Access to information	Acar et al. (2008), Acar & Robertson (2004), Dubnick (2005), Page (2004), Romzek (2000), Justesen & Skærbæk (2010) Justesen & Skaerbaek (2010).	Making QA results publicly accessible can overcome the challenge of access to information that is needed to exercise more accountability.
Measurability of performance	Acar & Robertson (2004), Page (2004), Romzek (2000)	QA serves directly to measure and report performance of providers and the sector, which then helps in strengthening accountability.
Balancing of power & control	Agranoff (2006), Huxham (2003), Acar et al. (2008), Acar & Robertson (2004), Crosby & Bryson (2005), Ansell & Gash (2008), Huxham et al. (2000), Currie et al. (2007)	By public reporting of QA, and by putting all the stakeholders on a balanced ground of accountability, QA reports will help in diminishing the imbalance in power that usually exists within a network as a challenge.

Based on the above mentioned categories that can be expected, extracted from available literature on various types of networks and collaborative settings; and, based on the possible links that each category has with the subject networks of this research, one would expect that, in theory, publicly reported QA would have an impact on accountability between members in a network, as well as between regulating and funding organisations and their respective service providers under their jurisdiction or fiscal control. Thus the following initial proposition is made:

Initial Proposition 2: By making its reports on performance of service providers public to all stakeholders, independent QA can impact the accountability in a network.

3.4 Trust in networks

Trust is another dimension in network or collaborative governance that can affect the outcomes (Zaheer et al. 1998; Edelenbos & Klijn 2007). Trust can impact the outcomes of public programmes implemented in

networks; a network structure can also affect the interpersonal trust amongst personnel involved in organisations across a network (Ostrom 1998). Klijn et al. found that trust has an impact on the perceived outcomes of a collaborative public programme and that network management strategies enhance the levels of trust (Klijn et al. 2010a; 2010b).

Trust not only affects the outcomes of a network, but as per Edelenbos and Klijn (2007), it is an effective coordination mechanism to manage horizontal inter-organizational cooperation. They add further that it is a precondition for inter-organizational cooperation.

In the following sub-sections, the key findings from literature are discussed here in the context of identifying possible ways in which publicly reported QA may affect trust in the subject networks.

3.4.1 Binding members through formal engagement

Silvia (2011) listed the establishment of trust as one of the best practices that is used in network leadership, and adds that trust "is the glue that holds the network" (p.70). At an interpersonal level, networking also has a positive impact on building interpersonal trust amongst members involved in networks (Lambright et al. 2010).

Building trust and interpersonal relationships across organisations is key to success in a network or collaborative setting (Williams 2002; Ansell & Gash 2008). The way in which trust is being built is cyclical in nature, in which stakeholders start with some trust and, through engagement, stronger trust is built which leads to further engagement (Huxham & Vangen 2005; Ansell & Gash 2008; Emerson et al. 2011;). This building of trust is a lengthy cyclical process that generates strong 'psychological contracts' between partners (Ring & Van de Ven 1994).

This process of fostering more engagement, whilst building trust, can be evidenced from the higher frequency of formal interactions between members, which will lead to higher and even more trust (Edelenbos & Klijn 2007).

One of the expected impacts, once the QA reports are out into the public domain, is that members within the network will be encouraged to get more engaged and will increase their interactions and meetings in order to achieve the overall common goals of the network. This increased engagement as per the above literature will lead to building more trust amongst them.

3.4.2 Binding members through informal engagement

Trust in a network can also be built through informal interpersonal relationships, through various interactions of members within a network, and through reciprocity amongst partners in a network (Thomson & Perry 2006).

Trust might also be expected to occur within a network as an outcome of public reporting of QA, especially for resolving ad hoc issues or increasing formal engagement, when formal engagement is not sufficient to resolve an issue. The impact of the public reporting on trust through informal engagement is anticipated to have the same pattern as that of the formal one.

3.4.3 Trust transferability

Trust is a property that is transferable between parties, not necessarily through direct dyadic interactions between two members or two parties (Ferrin et al. 2006). To start with, it is worth highlighting the definition of "perceived trustworthiness" as: "the extent to which an individual judges another to have integrity and dependability" (Ferrin et al. 2006, p.871). This perception of trustworthiness has a positive impact on the level of trust between members in a network (Edelenbos & Klijn 2007).

Although trust is a variable that can be controlled by various network management strategies within a network (Edelenbos & Klijn 2007), external third party elements also have an impact on the level of trust, as found by Ferrin et al. (2006), who conclude that "third party" could have an effect on interpersonal trust in three different ways: network closure, trust transferability and structural equivalence.

In an attempt to study the impact of third parties on interpersonal trust, but within one organisation, Ferrin et al. conclude that network closure (the extent of the dyadic interrelations) and structural equivalence (how similar or different are the formal or informal dyadic relationships members have with third parties) affects interpersonal trust indirectly, but the trust transferability has a direct positive relationship on the "interpersonal trust", which is defined as "an individual's belief about the integrity and dependability of another" (Ferrin et al. 2006, p.871).

Ferrin et al.'s research, however, was on the dyadic interpersonal trust within the same organisation that is embedded within what they refer to as "social network" within the same organisation. Based on their concept that third parties to a network can affect directly the interpersonal trust of members of networks within an organisation, one can intuitively predict the same role of third parties on inter-organisational networks. In this case, one predicts that external, or third party, public reports can be a medium for transferring trust between members, since the reports give information and can shape the perception people have about the capabilities and effectiveness of other members, or their organisations, especially if the reports are presented in an aggregate form that can support directly the conclusions or perceptions of other members' effectiveness, especially if they have a direct role in regulating or improving the quality of public services.

3.4.4 Managing expectations

Forming expectations of members or stakeholders within, or around, a network is recognised as one of the elements that contribute to trust definition.

Edelenbos & Klijn (2007) in their research on private public partnerships (PPP), determine three dominant characteristics in the definition of trust in networks or collaborative settings: vulnerability, risk and expectation.

The first dominant characteristic of trust is vulnerability, which is related to the willingness of one actor in a network to assume an open and vulnerable position, and expects that the other actor will refrain from

opportunistic behavior (Nooteboom 1999; Edelenbos & Klijn 2007). The second dominant characteristic is risk, especially in in ambiguous, unpredictable, and risky situations. These two dominant characteristics are more applicable to the context of the research of Edelenbos & Klijn, which was PPP.

The third dominant characteristic, as per Edelenbos & Klijn (2007), is “managing expectations” that entails the presumption of a stable expectation and prediction of the behaviour of other actors within a network. Amongst the three dominant characteristics, this characteristic of managing expectations is likely to prevail in an inter-organisational collaborative settings, such as the subject setting of this research, in which vulnerability and risk dominant characteristics are not applicable, but certainly members within the network are “expecting” some behaviour, attitude, or performance from the people and organisations related to public service provision or its quality. By public reporting, directly or indirectly, on the performance of individual service providers, QA may have the impact of adding, altering or negating some of the existing expectations that members have towards each other. By managing the expectations of members of a network, it is anticipated as per the hypotheses of Edelenbos & Klijn (2007) that QA reporting affects the level of trust within a network as a consequence.

3.4.5 Trust building by small winnings

Trust in networks is developed through a cyclic process, although the perspectives of how this is developed throughout vary in literature. Edelenbos & Klijn (2007) put forward some hypotheses on how trust can be developed: frequent interactions or engagement between members will result in a higher level of trust; and expected benefits of cooperation will also strengthen this level of trust. In their hypothesis, Edelenbos and Klijn focus on the levels of interaction and the expected benefits as determinants that help in building trust in a network, although they have not delineated a cyclical form, but the hypothesis implies that trust is continuously being developed as far as interactions and benefits of collaboration continue to exist. Oortmerssen et al. (2014) associate the

trust building cycle with changes in collaborative governance such as more openness, more responsiveness and more speed of outcome realisation.

Vangen & Huxham (2003b) advance a model for a “cyclic trust building loop” as explained in Figure 3-1 below. They further present a model suggesting different approaches to manage trust in two types of collaboration: modest collaboration where trust can be built by a “small wins” approach; and ambitious collaboration, where you cannot afford to wait for small wins. The management strategies regarding trust are implemented over two stages: initiating trust where trust is weak to start with, and sustaining current level of trust:

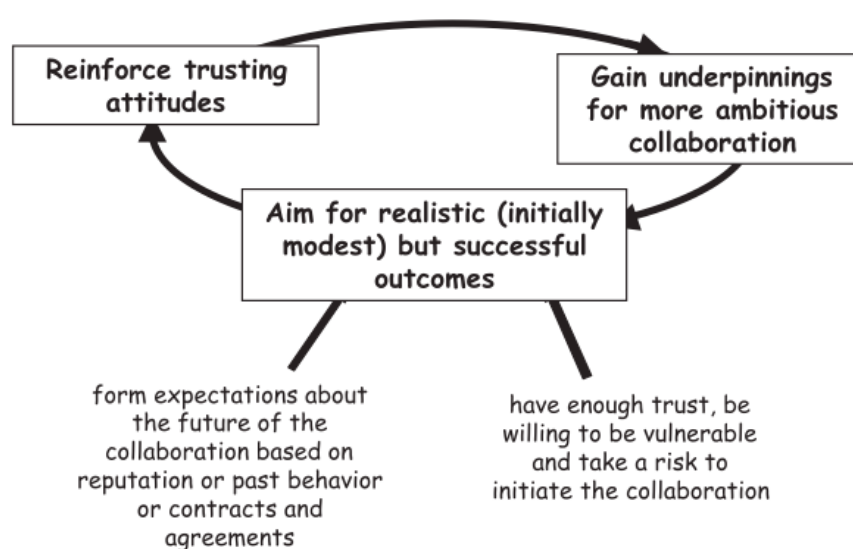


Figure 3 - 1: Cyclic Trust Building Loop (Vangen and Huxham 2003b)

As a reflection from these theoretical perspectives within this study, one would expect that trust, interpersonal or inter-organisational, is developed within the subject network in some form of this cyclical loop. Public reporting, as it involves naming and shaming within the public domain, is expected to have some impact, positive or negative, on the level of trust within the network. It cannot be anticipated, though, what level of the risk this public reporting has on the inter-relationships amongst the members, and what would be the expected network management strategies that will be deployed to manage such a risk. Nevertheless, it is well expected that public reporting of QA results will have some impact on the trust

especially at the beginning stages of the collaborative work; depending on the level of interactions and the “wins” or “benefits” members realise, trust will eventually go through this loop, as expected from the above theories.

3.4.6 Balancing of power and control

Another factor that could impact the trust building in a collaborative network is imbalance of power within a network; hence one of the main network management strategies is to manage this power imbalance so as to minimise inert-agency hostility and mistrust (Vangen & Huxham 2003b).

Another aspect related to power imbalance is the feeling of “losing control” by some disadvantaged members within a network (Vangen & Huxham 2003b). This aspect can have a negative impact on trust building. Vangen & Huxham (2003b) suggest that one of the key strategies, therefore, is to mitigate these negative feelings if they occur.

Depending on the profile of a network, it is expected that by making inspection reports transparent within the public domain, this not only gives a more authentic picture of individual service providers, but in addition gives an aggregate picture of the performance of each regulating and other relevant agencies in charge of the overall quality and performance of the service provision sector. The existence of a mandatory QA, that has the tool of publicly reporting the outcomes of inspection, can in theory create some negative feelings within some concerned members of “losing control” or ground, especially if the outcomes of the reports are damning or not to their convenience. Such public reporting will put all members within a network on equal grounds of accountability, and hence offset the power imbalance, whether it is an actual or perceived power.

Table 3-3 below summarises the expected categories, from the literature review, and how theoretical aspects of each category are linked to this research objective and questions, which collectively give the basis for the resultant *initial* proposition; based on this theoretical framework only.

Table 3 - 3: Expected categories that are expected to explain the impact of QA reporting on trust

Expected category (Based on literature review)	Reference	How is it linked with this study?
Binding members through formal engagement	Silvia (2011), Huxham & Vangen (2005), Emerson et al. (2011), Ansell & Gash (2008, Lambright et al. (2010), Ring & Van de Ven (1994), Edelenbos and Klijn (2007)	Reporting into public domain can motivate members to have more formal engagement to achieve common goals, and thus build more trust.
Fostering informal relationships	Thomson & Perry (2006)	Similar to formal engagement, public reporting can foster more informal engagement between members, thus build more trust.
Contributing by small wins	Edelenbos & Klijn (2007), Vangen & Huxham (2003b), Oortmerssen et al. (2014)	Depending on the extent of benefits, or wins, that publicly reported QA can lead to, members can engage gradually into trust building cycle.
Mediating trust transferability (can be either positive or negative)	Ferrin et al. (2006), Edelenbos & Klijn (2007)	Since they give more insight performance and effectiveness of individual providers, as well as concerned stakeholders, public reports can be a third-party media that transfer perceptions across members, hence trust.
Managing expectations	Edelenbos & Klijn (2007), Nooteboom (1999), Vangen & Huxham (2003)	Managing expectations is one of the determinants of trust formation; reporting publicly on quality of provision can alter or manage expectations of members regarding quality of a service, or how to enhance it.

Balancing of power & control	Vangen & Huxham (2003b)	Public reporting can put members on an equal ground of accountability, therefore offset power (actual or perceived) imbalance. This could also create "losing power" feeling amongst some members. Hence, this disturbance of power and control is expected to affect trust.
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Based on the above mentioned categories, which have been extracted from the available literature on various types of networks and collaborative setting; and, based on the possible links that each category has with the subject networks of this research, one would expect that in theory publicly reported QA would have an impact on inter-personal and inter-organisational trust amongst members and their counter organisations. Thus the following initial proposition is made:

Initial Proposition 3: Publicly reported QA affects trust amongst stakeholders in a network.

3.5 Power in networks

Power is another dimension that is recognised in the network literature. According to Huxham (2003), the points of power within a network or collaboration exist at the micro level of collaboration and not necessarily among the top-level representatives of individual member organisations. These points of power form "the power infrastructure" of a network (Huxham 2003).

Purdy (2012) introduces a framework for assessing power in collaborative governance networks. Purdy's framework assesses power in networks, based on the source of power (authority, resources or legitimacy), and the arena of power in which it is practiced (participants, process or content).

The following sections discuss the main findings from literature, but from various types of network and inter-organisational collaborations, and then

use the findings to predict potential ways in which public reporting of QA impacts power.

3.5.1 Formal and legal authority

Power distribution in inter-organisational collaborations and networks is different from that in a vertical command-and-control hierarchical organisation (Agranoff 2006). The points of power (referred to as power infrastructure by Huxham (2003)) are mainly distributed horizontally across the network.

In many types of networks, power and authority are of informal types. Collaborative work relies on various tools of authority. However, in research on information sharing types of networks, Zheng et al. (2009) concluded that some sort of formal and legal authority is still needed and could provide a foundation for the success of cross-boundary information sharing initiatives in the public sector.

For the same type of network, knowledge-sharing, Eglene et al. (2007) found that formal authority has a big influence on the performance of the network.

Zheng et al. and Eglene et al.'s research, and hence their conclusions regarding the role of formal authority, was on information sharing types of networks. One would expect that in strategy coordination and decision making networks - which are the subject of this research - formal and legal authority could have an impact on the outcomes of the network as well. Public reporting of the quality of provision might motivate members to work closely, and as they progress, this inter-organisational work could possibly develop into more legal and formal forms, especially if the outcomes of the QA are used formally to inform decision making or the setting of relevant strategies.

3.5.2 Informal power

Besides the formal and legal authority, O'Toole (1997) and Zheng et al. (2009) point to another form of authority: informal authority. This form

represents the use of personal power and expert power, rather than the formal authority and command power, inside the network to “influence” decisions or outcomes of the network.

As in the category of the formal power and authority, it is expected as well that the reports of QA might instigate some members, in response to the outcomes of the reports, to use their personal and expert authority in order to influence the collaborative work.

3.5.3 Collective power

In collaborative settings, another concept of power introduced by Mizrahi & Rosenthal (2001), is the “collective power” that “comes from the power of member organisations that the members delegate to it” (p.66). In their research, Mizrahi and Rosenthal use the concept of “collective power” as a measure of collaborative effectiveness.

One of the expectations in cases within this research is that public reporting of the quality of a public service provision would encourage all concerned stakeholders in a network to work collaboratively and to coordinate their efforts and strategies in order to “collectively” have more powerful measures for the improvement of the overall quality of service provision.

3.5.4 Balancing of power

One of the main challenges in a network is the imbalance of power among stakeholders (Crosby & Bryson 2005), whether that is in the *amount* or *type* of power members hold (Acar & Robertson 2004). The challenge of power imbalance in networks stems from two perspectives: power is unequal, or power hinges on relationships of dependence among organisations in a network (Agranoff & McGuire 2001; McGuire & Agranoff 2011) . The imbalance of power can be caused by real or perceived differences in power (McCann 1983) and occurs at organisational or individual levels (Huxham et al. 2000).

Power differential can be one of the main obstacles to collaboration or “collaborative inertia”, as per Savage et al. (2011). It can have a direct impact on the capacity of a partnership in building “synergy”; hence the effectiveness of it (Lasker et al. 2001).

It is important to keep the power imbalance among stakeholders as small as possible. Ansell & Gash (2008) conclude “if there are significant power/resource imbalances between stakeholders, such that important stakeholders cannot participate in a meaningful way, then effective collaborative governance requires a commitment to a positive strategy of empowerment and representation of weaker disadvantaged stakeholders” (p.552). In a similar vein, but in an urban planning partnership, Bailey (2003) describes this strategy of “taking power from the centre” as the most significant outcome of a partnership, in this case.

The direct implication of power imbalance in a network is a disturbance of the trust building processes amongst stakeholders (Huxham et al. 2000) and on the accountability within a network (Acar & Robertson 2004).

The importance of balancing power in a network as well as the impact it has on the outcomes of collaborative work is clear from the literature. Public reporting of the quality of service providers, and hence the effectiveness of the service provision as a whole, is expected to put all stakeholders in the eye of accountability and monitoring, which places all stakeholders on an equal ground of accountability. This action is expected to have the potential of minimising the power differences when all relevant stakeholders are brought together around one table to enhance the provision of public services.

To summarise the expected impact of public reporting of QA on power, Table 3-4 below gages the main expected categories, from the literature review, and shows how theoretical aspects of each category are linked to this research’s objective and questions.

Table 3 - 4: Expected categories that are expected to explain the impact of QA reporting on power

Expected category (Based on literature review)	Reference	How is it linked with this study?
Formal and legal authority	Zheng et al. (2009), Eglene et al. (2007)	In policymaking and coordination networks, public reporting could motivate stakeholders to work closer together, and this can develop into more formal and legal relations.
Informal Power	Zheng et al. (2009), O'Toole (1997)	Publicly reporting on quality can motivate members to exercise their "informal" power or influence to reach common goals.
Collective Power	Mizrahi & Rosenthal (2001)	Public reporting can instigate members to work together and develop joint measures, hence create collective power.
Balancing of power	Bailey (2003), Lasker et al. (2001), Savage et al. (2011), McGuire & Agranoff (2011), Crosby & Bryson (2005), Agranoff & McGuire (2001), Acar & Robertson (2004), Huxham et al. (2000)	Public reporting on quality of public services means members are put on an equal footing of scrutiny and accountability, which may help in reducing power imbalance among members.

Based on the expected categories, as explained in the table above, public reporting of QA can have an impact on the balance of power, as hypothetically engendered per the theoretical expected links - as explained above. These potential influences are used then to build the following initial proposition:

Initial Proposition 4: Public reporting of QA affects power and authority distribution within a network.

3.6 Autonomy and internal–external tensions

Besides accountability, another challenge that public managers face in networked or collaborative work settings is maintaining their autonomy and balancing the tension created by inward interactions (within member organisations participating in a network) and outward interactions.

According to Keast et al.'s (2007) framework, there are three forms in which networks might work together. The autonomy and power profile will vary accordingly from one to another: Cooperation, coordination and collaboration. Tschirhart et al. (2005) conclude that collaboration and autonomy can undermine each other when working collaboratively in a network.

The subject networks of this study are of cooperation types, where autonomy and independence of members is mostly maintained, but members have to take into account other members' strategies and objectives, or align their resources and strategies to achieve the common goals of the network. In these two forms, working in a network does not impact the autonomy in a major way. Nevertheless, with the introduction of external reporting of QA - an element that is common to all members - the following section explains the potential ways in which the autonomy, and the internal-external tension, might be affected.

3.6.1 Alignment with common objectives

As per Keast et al.'s (2007) framework, working in a coordination type of network requires alignment of resources, plans, and strategies of individual members in order to achieve the common goals and objectives of a network. In some networks, their initial purpose can get distorted by the agenda of the central government (Addicott et al. 2007). For a network to achieve better "collaborative advantage", Vangen & Huxham (2012) suggest a framework for balancing congruent and paradox goals.

In Bonollo's (2013) research about planning within public organisation, note that it is important for government organisations to align their formal

planning and control to the objectives of the network, if the network is to achieve better performance.

In loosely structured networks, can publicly reported QA be a further motive for the members to align better their strategies and plans to achieve some common goals of the network, such as improving the quality of a public service provision? The prediction, at this point, is that they can.

3.6.2 Conflict of interest and internal-external tensions

The dimension of autonomy adds to the dynamism as well as the frustration, or inertia, that partners within a network face in balancing the competing priorities of their individual, their organisation's and the network's dual identities (Tschirhart et al. 2005; Vangen & Winchester 2014). Reconciling the individual interests with the collective interests of a network is a rather a difficult task to achieve (Huxham & Vangen 2005). Conflict of interest is considered as one common cause of network failure (Klijn & Koppenjan 2000).

In their study of the impact of management behaviour on performance of networks, Hicklin et al. (2008) raised the question of the extent to which managers need to network even though networking has a positive impact on the outcomes? They found that networking has a non-linear impact; its impact diminishes at high levels of networking. At their best, managers can then balance internal-external competing factors to avoid this diminishing effect of networking on performance.

Provan and Kenis (2007) explain tensions in governing networks, and suggest that the tension varies, in type and amount, according to the mode of network governance, which range from extreme decentralised mode of governance (all members have a share in governance) to externally centralised or brokered ones (with few direct organisation-to-organisation interactions, except regarding operational issues). The first type of tension comes from the conflict between achieving outcomes (efficiency), or, just simply building wider collaboration (inclusiveness). Ospina and Saz-Carranza (2010) refer to this type of tension as "unity-

diversity” tension. The second type of tension is due to conflict in maintaining internal legitimacy (as individual members have their own legitimacy needs, as independent, autonomous organisations) versus that of external legitimacy needs of the network as a whole. The third tension is to do with the structure of the network; flexibility vs. stability of network structure.

To cope with the additional challenges that networks might pose, Ospina & Saz-Carranza (2010) in their empirical work found that managers in organisations that work in network settings have developed practices to balance inward and outward work, mainly by managing unity and diversity when dealing with internal challenges, and by managing confrontation and dialogue when dealing with external ones. In subsequent research, they found three mechanisms that are used by network managers to address the unity–diversity tensions they face (Saz-Carranza & Ospina 2011). Failing to manage the interactions of internal and external stakeholders in a network can weaken the outcomes expected (Edelenbos & Klijn 2006).

In addition to the reported conflict of interests that can occur by working in a network, issuing reports into the public domain, such as those of QA, is expected to add to this tension that members face because of this dilemma of inward and outward work and prioritisation, especially if the reports highlight, implicitly or explicitly, the need to resolve such a conflict for the sake of collectively enhancing the quality of services.

3.6.3 External steering mechanism

To what extent does central government steer or influence a network? Is this intervention or steering more helpful as opposed to a fully autonomous or self-steering network? Martin & Guarneros-Meza (2013) try to answer these questions in multi-sectorial public service partnerships, and conclude that, “soft-steering” externally exerted by government has been beneficial. However, they distinguish between ‘hard steering’, by which government imposes top down targets and performance regimes, and ‘soft steering’, by which government influences network effectiveness through provision of funding, information and

expertise. This conclusion is in line with that of Turrini et al. (2010) and Ferlie et al. (2011) in regard to the use of fiscal and control measures that push members to work together, or create the right conditions for members to collaborate (Klijn & Koppenjan 2000).

Mandatory and publicly reported QA, which reports about the quality of provision, is expected to have the capacity to be used by government to externally steer networks, such as those examined in this research, by potentially using the outcomes of the QA reviews to monitor the effectiveness of the network, or to impose some performance targets based on these outcomes.

To summarise the expected impact of public reporting of QA on autonomy and internal-external tension, Table 3-5 below outlines the expected categories, gleaned from the literature review, and how theoretical aspects of each category are linked to this research's objective and questions.

Table 3 - 5: Categories that are expected to explain the impact of QA reporting on autonomy and tensions

Expected category (Based on literature review)	Reference	How is it linked with this study?
Alignment with common objectives	Keast et al. (2007), Addicott et al. (2007), Vangen & Huxham (2012), Bonollo (2013).	In loosely structured networks, publicly reported QA can be a further motive for the members to align their strategies and plans to achieve common goals of the network.
Conflict of interest and internal-external tensions	Tschirhart et al. (2005), Huxham & Vangen (2005), Klijn & Koppenjan (2000), Hicklin et al. (2008), Provan & Kenis (2007), Ospina & Saz-Carranza (2010), Saz-Carranza & Ospina (2011), Edelenbos & Klijn (2006), Vangen & Winchester (2014).	Publicly reporting QA is expected to add to this tension that members face in a network, if the reports highlight, implicitly or explicitly, the need to resolve any conflict that impacts quality of provision.

External steering mechanism	Martin & Guarneros-meza (2013), Turrini et al. (2010), Ferlie et al. (2011), Klijn & Koppenjan (2000).	Public reporting can be used by government to externally steer networks by potentially using the outcomes to monitor the effectiveness of the network, or to impose some performance targets based on these outcomes.
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Based on the expected categories, as explained in the table above, public reporting of QA can have an additional effect on the internal-external tensions, according to the theoretical expected links as explained above. These potential impacts are used then to build the following initial proposition:

Initial Proposition 5: Public reporting of QA can affect the autonomy and inward-outward tension that is faced by members in a network.

3.7 Preliminary Theoretical Model

The previous sections explained how the literature review was used to reach to five initial propositions, based on theoretical prediction only at this stage. The theoretical predictions on how publicly reported QA could impact networked governance, based on the theoretical perspectives only, are depicted in the "***preliminary theoretical model***" (Figure 3-2).

The model explains the expected impact of QA:

- outside the network governance; on determinants of network formation and suitability,
- and, inside the network governance; on the dimensions of accountability, trust, power and control as well as on autonomy and tensions.

The bullet points under each theme of the theoretical model represent the expected categories that were discussed in the previous sections, and summarised in the summary tables above (Table 3-1 to Table 3-5).

This preliminary theoretical model is then used as a basis for designing the research methodology and data collection and analyses (as discussed in Chapter 4), before reforming it into a final conceptual model using the outcomes of empirical data collected for this research.

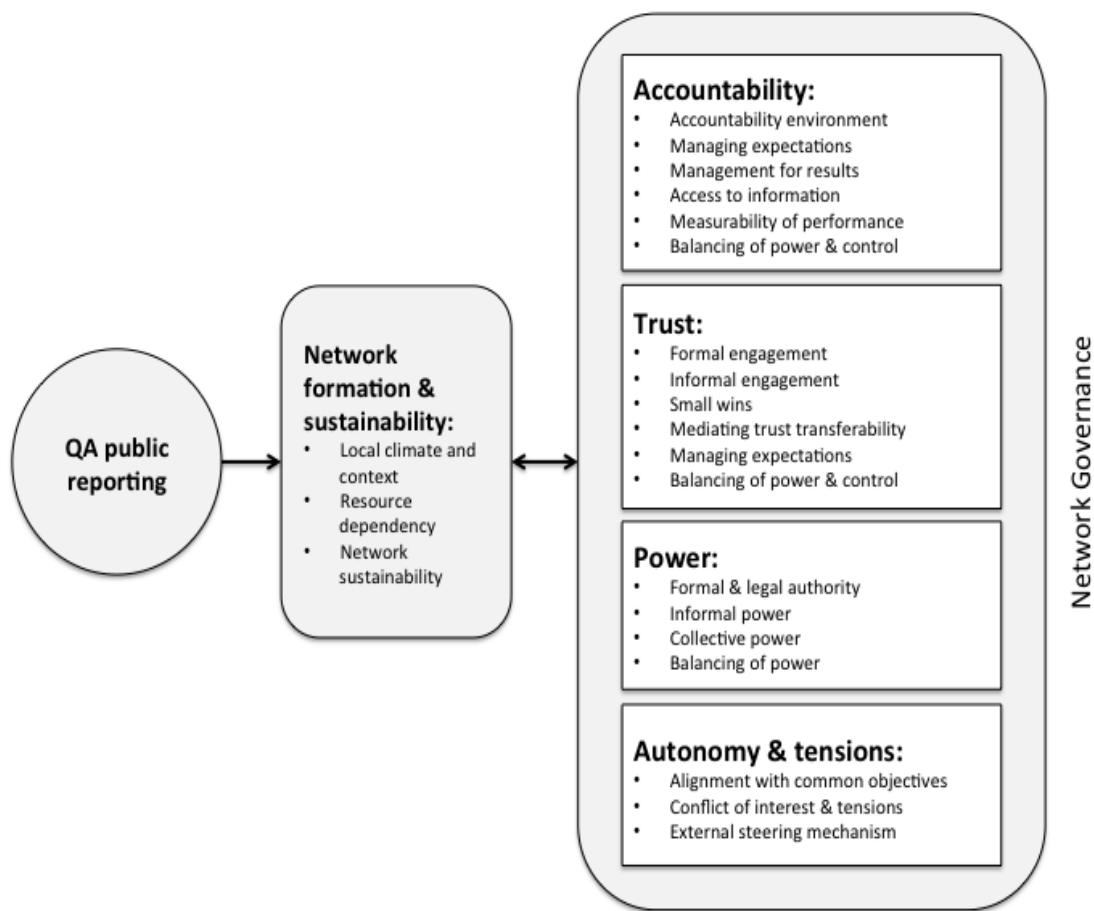


Figure 3 - 2: Preliminary Theoretical Model (developed for this research)

3.8 Summary

In this chapter, an initial theoretical model was proposed based on five expected themes through which QA public reporting may impact collaborative networks. The model, as depicted in Figure 3-2 above, proposes an expected impact in five ways, covered by five main propositions, each of which is constructed based on a number of theoretical expected categories as follows.

Initially, QA public reporting may have an impact outside the network governance; on determinants of network formation and suitability. This is covered by the following proposition:

Initial Proposition 1: Public reporting of QA can have an influence on network formation and sustainability.

On the network governance dimension, QA public reporting is expected to have impact through the internal governance themes of accountability, trust, power and control as well as on autonomy and tensions. The impacts of QA reporting on these four themes of network governance are covered by the following four initial propositions:

Initial Proposition 2: By making its reports on performance of service providers public to all stakeholders, independent QA can impact the accountability in a network.

Initial Proposition 3: Publicly reported QA affects trust amongst stakeholders in a network.

Initial Proposition 4: Public reporting of QA affects power and authority distribution within a network.

Initial Proposition 5: Public reporting of QA can affect the autonomy and inward-outward tension that is faced by members in a network.

The next chapter discusses how this initial theoretical model, and its five initial propositions, are used as the basis for the pilot stage of data collection and analyses.

4 Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

In the previous two chapters the main research gaps, questions and objective were identified. Initial propositions, based on theoretical findings from the literature review, were formulated to explain how public reporting QA, as an example of PM, could impact collaborative network governance and collaborative advantages. Having established this theoretical background, what remains then is to choose the right research methodology to fulfil the identified research objective and answer its questions.

This chapter discusses the various aspects of the research methodology. It starts by explaining the philosophical framework, approach and strategies that underpin the methodology. The author follows primarily the framework of Saunders et al. (2009) in this endeavour as depicted in Figure 4-1 below.

Having identified the underpinning research philosophy and methodological approach, the author relates these to the research objectives and questions. In the following sections, references on research methodology and design are reviewed in order to explain the rationale behind the approach selected and the design choices made for the purposes of this research. The second part of the chapter explains in detail the design components and choices made for this study in light of the review.

The chapter finally summarises the research methodology and design in one table (Table 4-4)

4.2 Research philosophy, approach and strategy

4.2.1 Research goals and questions

The research philosophy, approach, strategy, and design are all determined by the research objectives and questions they are intended to answer. Before going further into examining the philosophical stances of the research and relevant choices made here, it might be useful to start by reviewing **briefly** the objective and questions of this particular research, and then linking these to the subsequent discussion of these aspects.

The previous chapter established that the overall objective of the research is **"to construct a conceptual model that could explain how QA public reporting impacts networked governance"**, since at the moment there is no theoretical framework that can predict the impact of such public reporting on the quality of public services through the perspective of collaborative network settings.

Based on the identified research gaps (refer to Chapter 2), two main questions are formulated for this research:

- **How does public reporting of QA impact the networked dynamics?** Particularly on the dimensions of accountability, interpersonal and inter-organisational trust, power and control; and autonomy;
- **What are the main collaborative advantages that the QA reporting could have helped the network in achieving?** Either on the personal, organisational or outer context of the particular public service provision.

Please note here that the above are the finalised research questions. The initial questions were revised just after collecting data from the pilot interviews. Initially, the dimension of network formation and sustainability was part of the research questions, with the aim of explaining how publicly reported QA could have been one of the determinants of network formation or sustainability. From the pilot interviews, it was clearly evident that this dimension was not applicable to the chosen context but

the dimension of “collaborative advantage” emerged strongly. The two dimensions are related to each other, however.

4.2.2 Research philosophy

To complete the description of this research strategy, it might be of some value to explain the research philosophy (or paradigm) and the ontological and epistemological assumptions of this research. There are four different research philosophies according to the classification of Saunders et al. (2009); pragmatism, interpretivism, realism and positivism. Each one has different assumptions and characteristics when it comes to the ontology (what assumptions we make about how the way the world works, which comprises objectivist and subjectivist aspects); and epistemology (the researcher’s views about what constitutes acceptable knowledge); and axiology (the researcher’s views of the role of values in research).

Following Saunders et al.’s classification, this research falls under the “interpretivism” approach in which:

- the view of reality, in this case the impact of public reporting on networked governance, is a social construct, subjective and may change across the various stakeholders involved (*ontological assumption*)
- what could be acceptable knowledge here, is indeed subjective, knowledge that depends on the social interpretation of the phenomena. The focus will be on the details of the phenomena, processes of change imposed by QA public reporting on networked governance, and what these changes mean to the stakeholders involved (*epistemological assumption*)

Linking the research philosophy with the above mentioned research goal, it might be worth noting that generally there are three types of goals a research can serve, according to Maxwell (2013): personal goals (inspired by personal motives and might be influenced by personal concerns or practical experience); practical goals, or intellectual (or scholarly) goals. Maxwell (2013) lists some of the intellectual goals that can be addressed by qualitative research; one of them is “understanding the meaning of

events, situations, experiences or actions” (p.30). Maxwell further explains that this goal is usually the stance of interpretive researchers. Referring back to the objective and questions of the research, it is clear that the focus of the research is gaining deeper understanding of the meaning of the QA reporting, as an event, within a particular context of networked governance. This further clarifies the “intrepretivism” stance of this research.

4.2.3 Research approach

4.2.3.1 Determinants of research approach

The following section explains in some detail how the research is approached as determined by the research goals and the overall questions, as well as by the state of knowledge, or theory, that underpins the research. The research approach is chosen to suit the research overall aim and question(s). The research approach can be, generally, either deductive (testing a theory using data) or inductive (building a theory from data) (Saunders et al. 2009).

The first determinant in deciding the research approach is the research goal and questions (Maxwell 2013; Yin 2009). The research questions should not be formulated before the research goals have been clearly identified. The questions should be directly linked with the set goals, and subsequently should inform the research method and validity tests as well (Maxwell 2013).

To what extent the existing developed theory serves the research goal is yet another determinant. In Chapter 3, various theories were reviewed to “anticipate” the answers to the research questions, hence building a background theory. The discussions in Chapter 3 show that there is a fairly good amount of existing theory that can be used here as background, although there is as yet no complete and coherent conceptual framework that links the two dimensions, of PM and networked governance, together. This state of theory, and its proposed use, makes the approach neither completely deductive nor inductive; it has some elements of both. It builds on an existing theoretical background

(deductive part) to induce a new conceptual framework (inductive part). In the next section, the role of the existing theory in this type of mixed research approach and the designed strategy – case study – will be discussed in more detail.

4.2.3.2 Reflection on research goals, questions and theory

According to Blaikie (2010, p.17) there are three types of research questions: ‘what’, ‘why’ and ‘how’. “Generally, ‘what’ questions seek descriptions; ‘why’ questions seek explanation or understanding; and ‘how’ questions are concerned with interventions to bring about change”. Going back to this research, the overall purpose of the research is an explanatory objective, to explain the association or correlation between public reporting of QA and networked governance. The two overall questions, explained in the first section above, however vary in nature. The first question, and its sub-questions, are “how” type questions seeking explanation for the process in which the publicly reported QA can impact the internal network dynamics.

As explained in the previous chapters, there is sufficient theoretical basis for the researcher to build initial “theoretical” propositions that can be used to predict the trends that offer a proper explanation for the first research question. In other words, the objective here is to provide an explanation for a possible association between ‘*public reporting of a mandatory QA monitoring*’ and ‘*networked governance of relevant stakeholders involved in a public service provision*’. The research strategy approach for this has a deductive element to start with, and the objective of this deductive part is to “find an explanation for an association between two concepts by proposing a theory, the relevance of which can be tested” (Blaikie 2010, p.85).

The initial propositions, as discussed in Chapter 3 in building the background theory, are only “*theoretical*” propositions which Blaikie (2010) refers to as “*theoretical hypothesis*”. They are not meant to be fully operationalised and testable hypotheses at this stage. According to Blaikie (2010), there are two types of hypotheses; theoretical hypothesis and statistical hypothesis. In the theoretical hypothesis – or the initial

propositions in this case – the aim is to establish tentative relationships, but in the statistical hypothesis, the aim is to establish a statistical generalisability from a probability sample, to establish whether the relationship between two variables can be expected in the wider population from which the sample was taken.

The set of “theoretical” initial propositions was based on the available literature on networked governance. In the absence of any research that relates QA reporting to the networked governance and dynamics, the hypotheses do not, therefore, provide a full explanation of all the possible trends of association between the variables that are related to the two main aspects under research. Hence, the research strategy cannot be solely a deductive strategy. The researcher will also leave room for some new trends that can be revealed during data collection; hence, new propositions can be induced from the collected data.

The state of the theoretical perspectives for the second research question, mentioned above in the first section, is different however. Although there are some existing theories on collaborative advantage in a network setting, the linkage between the initial propositions, as suggested in Chapter 3, is relatively less explicit. Therefore, the aim of the second question is to explore the possible advantage that stakeholders can achieve, under the influence of public reporting of QA, on the outer remit of a network (networked governance and system context, as per Emerson et al. 2011). The existing literature does not offer a strong basis to build more explicit propositions regarding this. As such, the need here is to explore all the possible impacts, categorise the trends, and try to induce valid propositions from the data. Hence the strategy here will be more of an **inductive** approach.

In conclusion, the research approach, to fulfil the research goals and answer the two overall research questions, will need to be a mixture of **deductive-inductive approach**. This approach is quite common in case-study strategies (Yin 2009; Boardman 2012).

Advocating this mixed deductive-inductive approach, Miles et al. (2014) highlight the fact that most qualitative research lies between highly loose

inductive and tightly knit deductive approaches. As per Miles et al. (2014), most qualitative researchers start with some pre-established framework (deductive), and gradually move to (inductive) treatment. The usefulness of starting with a pre-established framework, according to Miles et al. (2014), is more prominent in multiple-case research, because it allows for better comparability across cases.

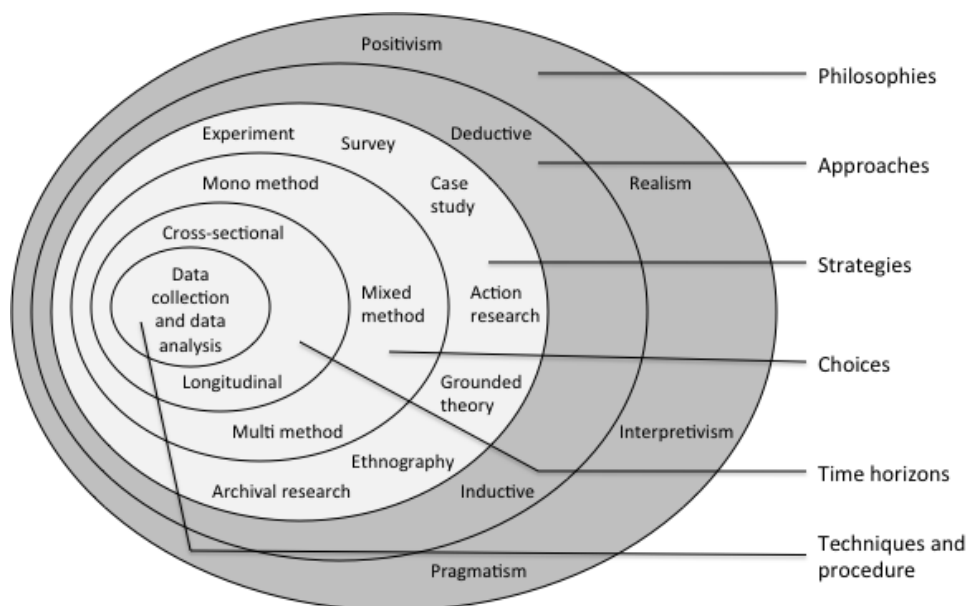


Figure 4 - 1: The Research Onion (Saunders et al. 2009)

4.2.4 Research strategy

4.2.4.1 Rationale behind choosing a case-study strategy

In the following two sections, the rationale behind choosing a case-study strategy and following a qualitative method of data collection and analyses is explained in detail, linking the choice again with the overall objective and questions of the research.

The strategy chosen for this research is a “case-study” one using a qualitative method of data collection and analysis. First of all, however, why choose the case study strategy? Case study strategy is used when

studying a phenomenon 'within its real life context', and where the research is done without any control on the context (Saunders et al. 2009; Yin 2009). The main characteristic here is the blurred boundaries between the case as a "phenomenon" and its bounded context (Miles et al. 2014).

Yin (2009) lists three bases on which the choice of case-study strategy is made:

- a) the type of the research question,
- b) the extent of control over the behaviour events,
- c) the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events.

Case study is used mostly for explanatory and exploratory research (Saunders et al. 2009), for answering "how" and "why" type research questions (Yin 2009). The case needs to be contemporary; that usually involves interviewing or observing people who are involved in the event; however, in conducting the research, the researcher has no control or limited control on the events of the case. Table 4-1 below compares the various methods of research, and the characteristics of each method which in turn determine the choice of the researcher.

Table 4 - 1: Relevant situation for different research methods (Yin 2009)

Method	Form of research question	Requires control of behavioural events?	Focuses on contemporary events?
Experiment	How, why?	Yes	Yes
Survey	Who, what, where, how many, how much?	No	Yes
Archival Analysis	Who, what, where, how many, how much?	No	Yes/No
History	How, why?	No	No
Case study	How, why?	No	Yes

Case study is used mostly for explanatory and exploratory research (Saunders et al. 2009), and it uses qualitative methods of data collection and analysis (Creswell 2009; and Blaikie 2010).

What distinguishes case study strategy is the use of a “comparatively small number of units in naturally occurring settings, and these units are investigated in considerable depth” (Blaikie 2010, p.189). This depth of investigation is needed in this research to explain fully the process in which public reporting impacts networked governance. The small number of the “sample” size defines the type of generalisability of the research outcomes. In case study, only “analytical generalisation” and not “statistical generalisation” can be used to support a theory or its rival theory (Yin 2009).

In summary, the case-study strategy was selected to:

- a) suit the explanatory objective of the research; explaining how publicly reported QA can impact networked governance,
- b) fit in the contemporary nature and extent of control; the selected empirical cases had been set up around six years ago; most of the interviewees are still participating in such networks, or have just recently discontinued their work within these settings. Moreover, the researcher has no control on the events around the selected cases (refer to Chapter 5 for detailed description of the cases),
- c) overcome the case/context boundary aspect; the four selected cases are directly related to the overall programme of Education Reforms that the Kingdom of Bahrain has been embarking on since 2006. The boundaries between the cases and the contexts in which the cases operate (basic schooling, secondary vocational education, post-secondary vocational education and training, and higher education) are not sharply defined, and the cases interact with the context in un-defined and complex ways. This condition, as discussed above, fits within a typical description of a case study,
- d) fulfil the objective of the research which focuses on getting deeper understanding of the processes through which the subject impact

of QA occurs, so that a more robust and elaborate conceptual framework can be developed.

4.2.4.2 Concerns over case study strategy

In selecting the case study strategy, the researcher needs to consider the concerns and shortcomings of this strategy, in order to mitigate the impact of these shortcomings on the robustness of the research and conclusions.

Traditionally, case study research is critiqued around three main aspects:

- a) Rigor of the strategy: The main concern is that the method does not follow robust systematic procedure, which makes it less rigorous and more prone to subjectivity and bias (Yin 2009; Maxwell, 2013). This can be mitigated by various tactics as explained under the validity and reliability sections below.
- b) Generalisation of outcomes: The case study usually employs a small sample; hence, the results cannot be “statistically” generalised over the wider population. However, case study scholars make a clear distinction between theoretical generalisation and statistical generalisation, as in survey strategy, for example. Maxwell (2013) rejects the term “sampling”, and instead prefers the term “case selection” when it comes to this process. Statistical generalisation is not intended in this research strategy. However, to make the conclusions more valid within the same theoretical context, multiple-case strategy is chosen (as discussed under the validity and reliability section below).
- c) Intensive resources: The third concern is more of a practical one, since the case study takes a much longer time, requires more resources and produces massive amounts of documents (Yin 2009). This is a valid concern and will be considered in the design of the research.

4.2.5 Qualitative vs. quantitative methods

For this research, a qualitative method of primary data collection and analysis is used. Semi-structured interviews are used to collect data to answer the research questions. Semi-structured interviews are prepared to serve the overall research questions but follow different and more specific and targeted questions according to a previously designed interview protocol (Creswell 2009; Yin 2009).

A qualitative method is better suited to match the chosen inductive-deductive case study approach (Miles et al. 2014). This choice of qualitative method helps in serving the research goals better. According to Maxwell (2013), qualitative research might serve one, or more, of these intellectual goals of research:

- a) Getting deeper understanding of the events and the context around the case.
- b) Gaining comprehensive and deep understanding of the process and events, rather than the outcomes of the events.
- c) Developing causal explanations; this is against the argument that only quantitative methods are used to establish causal relationships. The difference between the two is explained herein: "Quantitative and qualitative researchers tend to ask different kinds of causal questions. Quantitative researchers tend to be interested in whether and to what extent variance in x causes variance in y . Qualitative researchers, on the other hand, tend to ask how x plays a role in causing y , what the process is that connects x and y " (Maxwell 2013, p.31). In other words, quantitative methods focus on variance explanation, whereas qualitative focuses on process explanation (Maxwell 2013).

The above three aspects are identified as intellectual objectives of this research and explained in the Research Philosophy and Approach section above.

4.3 Research design

4.3.1 Design overview

In what follows, the design of the research is explained in more detail. The research method is of a multiple-case study, using primarily qualitative, semi-structured, interviews as the choice for data collection and analysis. The research design, as will be explained in the following sections, follows the approach and framework of Yin (2009).

The steps involved in the design and conduct of case study research according to Yin (2009) is illustrated in the following figure:

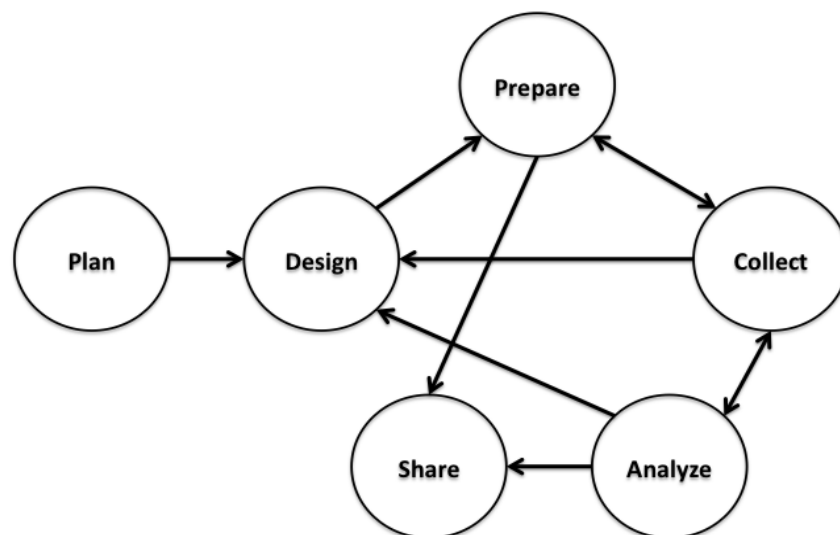


Figure 4 - 2: Doing case study research (Yin 2009)

The steps of the case study can be arranged into three distinct phases:

Phase I) Define and design

Phase II) Prepare, collect and analyse

Phase III) Analyse and conclude.

The following diagram (Figure 4-3) shows the sequence of the steps done in this research, aligned to the three phases mentioned above. The following sections explain the design features of this study in more detail.

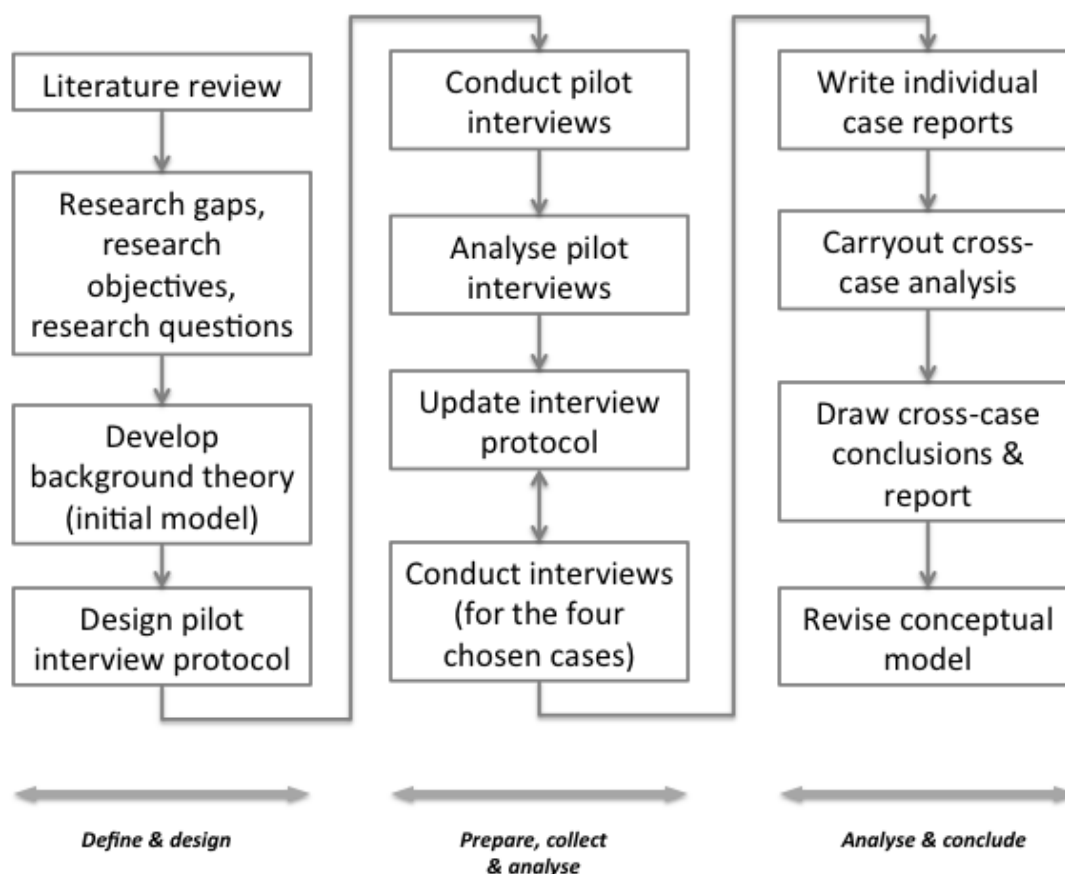


Figure 4 - 3: Moving from literature review to data analysis – Developed for this research, based broadly on Yin (2009).

4.3.2 Components of case study design

The design of a case study, as per Yin (2009), involves five main components. The following sections will explain how each component is handled in this research. The fourth and fifth components identified by Yin (2009), the logic of linking data to the proposition; and the criteria for interpreting the findings, are both covered under the fourth element below: analysis.

4.3.2.1 Study questions

The first component that the design of a case study should start with is the research, or study, question. As discussed above, case study method most likely suits the “how” and “why” explanatory types of questions.

Case study seeks “process” causation, or explanation, rather than the “variance” explanation sought by the quantitative method (Maxwell 2013).

Although the research question is developed based on the literature review, the final form of the research question in qualitative method is not finalised until some significant amount of data has been collected and analysed (Maxwell 2013). This was done in this research. The questions at the start of the study, prior to the pilot interviews, were slightly different. At the beginning, there was one question regarding the driver of formation of networks (trying to understand what motivates people to work together, and if the public reporting of QA has had any impact on these motives). The question was dropped after the pilot interviews, as it was revealed that participation for members was mostly mandatory; mostly they were instructed to participate. The trends of responses were pointing, rather, at another dimension, which was the “collaborative advantage”. Chapter 6 explains the outcomes of the analysis of pilot interviews in more detail, and how the outcomes of the pilot reviews are used to revise the interview protocol.

Maxwell (2013) set some useful guidance notes for formulating the research questions, as well as interview questions. The two sets are different, as the latter are cascaded down from the former, with the aim of collecting data that could answer the main questions of the research. The questions should neither be too generic – which makes data collection and analysis challenging, later on – nor should they be too focused, as this may create “tunnel vision” in the analysis. The questions also should not “smuggle” in unexamined assumptions of the hypothesis (Maxwell 2013).

These useful guidance notes were used to formulate and refine the research question of the study. For example, the issue of “smuggling” unsupported theory in questioning was carefully noted in formulating the interview questions. So, if we take the example of the accountability dimension, instead of asking how QQA reports impact accountability – assuming impact is there – the question was put in this way: Did the QQA have an impact on accountability, if yes how? (Refer to Appendix 2 and

Appendix 3 for the participant information sheet and the revised interview protocol).

4.3.2.2 Study propositions

The second component that needs to be factored in the research design is the existing theory and research proposition (if any). The consideration of research propositions helps in channelling the research attention into more specific aspects (Yin 2009). There are two aspects in managing the pre-existing theory, or propositions, in the design of a case study. The first is the role of the theoretical propositions in the study; and the second is to what extent these propositions are used to inform the study design.

The role of existing theory in qualitative methods is still debatable. It is instrumental in quantitative studies, but it is often contested in qualitative ones (Maxwell, 2013). In arguing this, Maxwell (2013) states:

"My view, in contrast, is that there is no inherent problem with formulating qualitative research hypotheses; the difficulty has been partly a matter of terminology and partly a matter of inappropriate application of quantitative standards to qualitative research hypotheses" (p.77)

For Yin (2009), a case study needs a "theory" to start with, as it gives a "hypothetical" background that gives useful guidance to researchers in determining what data to collect and how to analyse them.

The second issue related to the use of theory is the extent of this use in qualitative research, which can determine how structured the study and the research questions are. Although some scholars are against the use of the structured approach in qualitative studies, Maxwell (2013) and Miles et al. (2014) advocate such use, and argue that a structured approach helps researchers, especially inexperienced ones, in focusing their enquiry, and in reducing time and resources required for data collection and analysis. Miles et al. (2014) state that most qualitative research uses a mixed approach; deductive (more structured) and inductive (less structured). They add further that the use of a pre-established theoretical framework is helpful for cross-case analysis in multiple case research.

In this research, a similar approach was followed. First, a background theory was established predicting that publicly reported QA would impact networked governance in the following general trends:

- It forms an additional driver for network formation.
- It affects accountability in a network.
- It affects interpersonal and inter-organisational trust within a network.
- It affects power distribution in a network.
- It affects autonomy of members of network.

The initial propositions around these theoretical trends (refer to Chapter 3 for more details) were used to formulate open-ended questions for the semi-structured pilot interviews, which were then revised further upon analysis of pilot interviews; as a result of that analysis, the theme on drivers of network formation was dropped, and it was replaced with a related trend on 'collaborative advantage' that emerged from the analysis of the pilot interviews.

4.3.2.3 Unit of analysis

This component has to do with the selection of the unit of the case, unit of analysis, as well as sampling and data collection. Once more, the basis of the selection and design of the case, unit of analysis, and the data collection are all linked with the research goal and questions (Yin 2009). In terms of the design perspectives, this component is rather big. The following sub-sections describe specific elements of these components.

a) Selection of cases and participants

As per Miles et al. (2014), a case is defined abstractly as "phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bonded context" (p.28). From the perspective of the definition of network theories, and relating this definition with the research goals and questions, the cases are selected based on the following criteria (Chapter 5 explains in more detail the four selected empirical cases for this research):

- The case: multi-organisational network (or committee) of members from more than two organisations, having common tasks or objectives.
- The context: Education Reform initiatives of basic schooling, secondary vocational education, tertiary vocational education and training; and higher education in the Kingdom of Bahrain.
- The unit of analysis: dynamics of network governance and impact; i.e. focusing on the network level.

“Case and participant selection” in qualitative studies are equivalent to “sampling” in quantitative ones. Although some researchers in qualitative methods sometimes use the term “sampling”, it is strongly rejected by others like Maxwell (2013) and Yin (2009). Maxwell argues that the term “sampling” in qualitative research “connotes a purpose of representing the population sampled; the usual goal of sampling in quantitative research” (p.96). In quantitative methods, the sampling is usually “probability” type sampling (such as simple random, systematic, stratified random, cluster or multi-stage (Saunders et al. 2009)), whereas in qualitative ones, it is mostly of “purposeful” types (Maxwell 2013; Miles et al. 2014).

In non-probability sampling, the size of the sample does not matter, except for quota sampling, since the qualitative research is after theoretical generalisation, not statistical generalisation. Nevertheless, Saunders et al. (2009) reckon that a sample size of 25-30 interviews is generally sufficient for qualitative research. In addition to the size, such research also needs consideration for “data saturation” where no more insight is taken from the additional interviews.

Maxwell (2013) lists some goals for purposeful sampling here (in the case of this author it is chosen because of the second and fourth goals): achieving representativeness of the settings, capturing the heterogeneity in the population, deliberate selection of special individuals or cases that serve the theory, establishing cross case comparison and reasoning of variations especially in multi-case qualitative studies.

Furthermore, researchers in case studies sometimes need “to talk to people who are not central to the phenomenon but are neighbours to it, to

people who are not actively involved” (Miles et al. 2014, p.36). This is particularly important to grasp better understanding of the context around the case or the events.

For this research, having selected the four cases as discussed above, the next step was to select the participants. In order to get better understanding of the events inside each network and around it (that is in the surrounding context that can affect the internal dynamics of the network), the following criteria were delineated in selecting the candidate participants for the semi-structured interviews:

The participant needs to be either a permanent member of a selected network, ad hoc member, or directly informed by the progress, discussions and outcomes of the network (termed as neighbour by Miles et al. (2014)). The participant needs to be involved (directly or indirectly) for more than a year in such a network, so as to be in a position to give better informed opinions about the interview questions.

These criteria were necessary to ensure that the right interviewees were selected who could have relevant input into the research and interview questions. Most of the interviewees were involved directly in one or more of the selected four cases, but a few were involved in indirect ways (neighbours). The table below shows the number and type of involvement within each case study.

Table 4 - 2: Interview database

Participant No.	Case			
	ERB	VPIS	SVP	HESC
1		◆		
2	◆	◆		
3		◆		
4				○
5		◆		◆
6	○		◆	○
7	◆	◆		◆
8	◆			
9		◆		
10		○		
11		○		
12	○		◆	
13	◆			
14		◆		
15		◆		
16	◆			
17	◆			
18		○		
19		◆		
20	◆			
21	◆			
22	◆			
23				◆
24	◆			
25		○		
26			◆	
27		◆		◆
28		◆		
29	○	◆		

30				◆
31				◆
32	○	◆		
33				◆
34		◆		◆
35	○		◆	
36			◆	
37	◆			
38		◆		
Legend:				
ERB:	Education Reform Board			
VPIS	Vocational Provider Improvement Strategy Committee			
SVP:	Secondary Vocational Project Executive Committee			
HESC:	Higher Education Steering Committee			
◆	Direct membership			
○	Ad-hoc membership; or directly related to the work of the committee			

Some participants were involved in more than one case. In these instances, participants were asked at the beginning of the interview to talk about general aspects/answers to each interview question common for the subject cases, and then to identify any peculiarities or differentiations between the cases. This practical measure was necessary to avoid interviewing the same participant more than once for different cases.

b) Single vs. multiple case design

Case study strategy has been selected for this research based on the rationale mentioned above, primarily to get an opportunity for deeper understanding and clearer causation (Miles et al. 2014). The design question was then: Will it be a single or multiple-case design?

As per Yin (2009), generally there are two broad types of design of case study research, single-case design or multiple-case design, but in each type, there might be a single unit of analysis or multiple, or embedded

units of analysis that a researcher can choose to analyse. The four different arrangements are shown in the matrix below (Figure 4-4).

One thing to observe in the matrix above is the dotted lines between the case and the context, which represents the point that the boundaries separating the cases and their contexts are not so sharply defined (Yin 2009), meaning that a deeper analysis of events is warranted within the particular context of the case being studied.

Yin (2009) summarises the main differences between the single and multiple case design in the following:

For a single-case design:

- This design is selected when the case represents a critical case (defined by a well-defined theory), extreme or unique case, representative of a uniform typical case, revelatory case (where the researcher has access to study a previously inaccessible case); or for a longitudinal case.

For a multiple-case design:

- This is chosen if there is more than one case than can be studied, and these cases are not one of the above cases for single case design.
- The advantage of this design is that it gives more robustness to the research, as it collects evidence from more than one case, and hence allows “replication”.
- The disadvantage of this, however, is that it requires extensive resources and time.

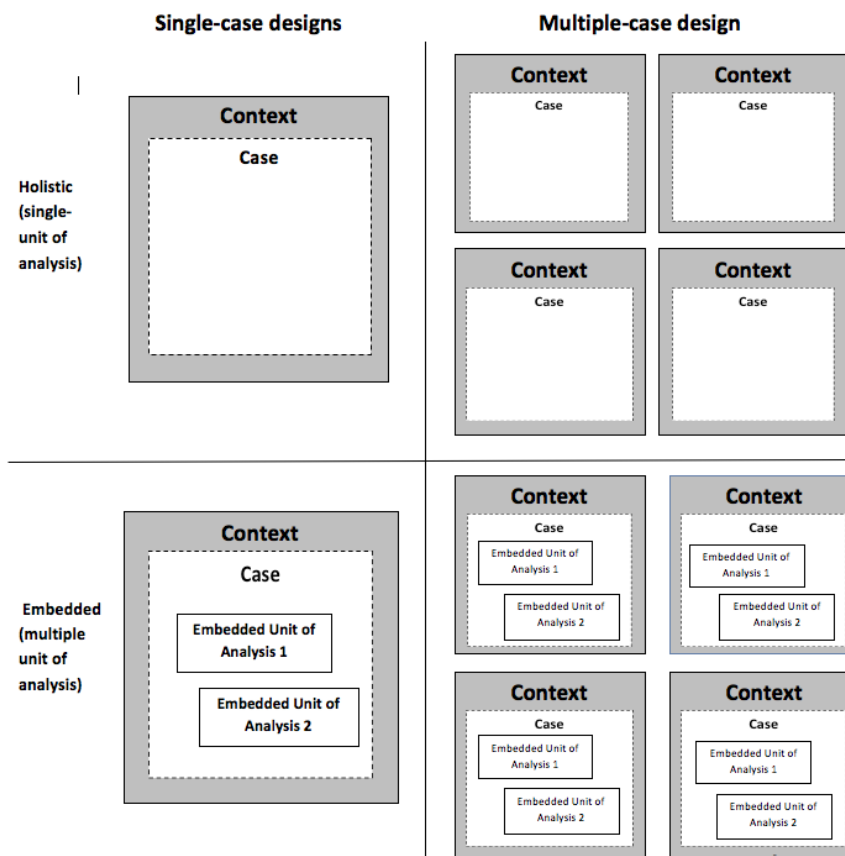


Figure 4 - 4: Case study design matrix (Yin 2009)

c) Replication in multiple-case studies

A fundamental concept in a multiple-case study is “replication”, which refers to examining one case in depth and then repeating the examination for other cases to see whether or how the pattern is matched across the cases (Yin 2009; Miles et al. 2014).

The replication strategy in a multiple case study needs to be considered at the design phase. Moreover, in the analysis stage, data collected from the various cases needs to be carefully examined, in order to build on it within the resultant framework, stating the conditions under which a particular phenomenon is likely to be found (literal replication) as well as the conditions when this phenomenon is not likely to be found (theoretical replication) (Yin 2009).

Though the four cases chosen for this research are all inked with the Education Reform initiatives in the Kingdom of Bahrain, they differ in terms of:

- The structure and seniority of members within their respective organisations.
- The scope of the network; policymaking and coordination, knowledge sharing or merely project steering.
- The context of each case; one focuses on secondary vocational education, another on tertiary vocational education and training, a third on higher education, and the fourth cuts across all of the sectors of education and training.

The communalities and particularities of the four cases are explained in more detail in Chapter 5, and will be considered in the replication framework, as well as the cross-case analysis (discussed in Chapter 7).

d) Designing the semi-structured interview protocol

As discussed previously, the chosen strategy, multiple-case study using semi-structured interview method of data collection and analysis, is chosen to suit the research goals and questions. The semi-structured approach, being informed by the background theory, is used here to help in focusing the data collection and analysis, reducing the time and resources required in collecting and analysing data, and supporting cross case analysis.

Data collection was done over two phases; firstly four interviews were conducted as pilot using an open ended semi-structured protocol. The protocol was then further revised after the pilot phase, and the revised protocol (Appendix 3) was then used for the remaining interviews.

The interview questions were formulated to answer the main research questions (Maxwell 2013), and the questions were open-ended types around the key themes developed as part of the background theory. For each open-ended question, a number of “key words” were identified, representing the expected themes as informed by the literature in this field. Some of these “key words”, but not necessarily all, were then used

as probing questions, following the main open-ended question during the interviews. Figure 3-2 (in Chapter 3) shows the main themes and the corresponding expected themes for each one. In addition to the probing questions, interviewees were encouraged, during the course of each interview, to always cite specific examples or events, wherever possible, as advised by Maxwell (2013).

Candidate interviewees were first approached by phone, or emails. Prior to each interview, interviewees were sent the "Participant Information Sheet", as approved by the Brunel Business School (BBS) academic panel. Two organisations requested the researcher to sign a "declaration" letter, stressing the anonymity of participants, confidentiality of unpublished information, and the fact that the participants are only representing their own views, not those of the organisation.

e) Use of pilot interviews

The main use of pilot interviews was to develop clearer understanding of the concepts and theories relevant to the research. The initial theoretical framework had to change in response to the outcomes of the pilot phase (Maxwell 2013).

For this research, four "experts" were interviewed (Saunders et al. 2009) using the open-ended semi-structured interview protocol developed for the pilot phase. The four participants were selected to represent the whole spectrum of the stakeholders in these networks as follows:

- Participant 1: sits on two committees related to VET.
- Participant 2: sits on two committees related to basic schooling, VET and HE.
- Participant 3: sits on a committee related to HE
- Participant 4: sits on a committee related to VET.

f) Validity and reliability

Validity threats are defined broadly by Maxwell (2013) as "a way a researcher might be wrong". Validity threats are often conceptualised as

alternative explanations or interpretations, or 'rival hypotheses' (Maxwell 2013).

There are mainly two sources of validity threats (Maxwell 2013):

- Researcher Bias: in selecting the data that most fit the researcher's own conceptions or theories.
- Reactivity: which comes from the interference of the researcher or his influence in collecting or analysing the data.

Another related aspect to validity is reliability, which is defined as demonstrating that the operations of a study, such as the data collection procedure, can be repeated with the same results (Yin 2009).

Various tactics can test the validity and reliability during the design, data collection, data analysis and conclusion composition, as per Yin (2009), who lists the main tests that can be used for various validity threats; construct validity (avoiding subjectivity and bias in collecting data), internal validity (establishing the right causal relationships); and external validity (defining the domain to which the study can be generalised).

Yin (2009) summarises the main tactics, or measures, that are used to control validity and reliability threats in case study research in the following table. The last column of the table shows the tactic adopted for this case study research:

Table 4 - 3: Tests and controls of validity and reliability (based on Yin (2009))

Test	Case Study Tactic (suggested in literature)	Tactics used for this study
Construct validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - use multiple source of evidence - establish chain of evidence - have key informants review draft case study report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - use multiple sources of evidence; primary and secondary data (Chapter 5) - have draft case study report, and reports of individual cases discussed with two informants
Internal validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - do pattern matching - do explanation building - address rival explanation - use logic models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - do pattern matching; refer to Chapter 7 - do explanation building; refer to Chapter 7 - address rival explanation; wherever evident as explained in Chapter 7

External validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - use theory in single-case studies - use replication logic in multiple-case studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - use replication logic in multiple-case studies; cross case analyses done for four cases, refer to Chapter 7
Reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - use case study protocol - develop case study database 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - use case study protocol; Appendix 3. - develop case study database; Refer to Table 4-2.

4.3.2.4 Data analysis

This section briefly highlights the design aspects of data analysis methods, and the rationale behind the choices of these methods. For full account of data analyses, please refer to Chapters 6 and 7. Even in qualitative methods, data analysis needs to be designed prior to the data collection, as part of the overall research design, and should start immediately after collecting some data (Maxwell 2013).

The data analyses were done over two main distinct phases; after the pilot interviews and then for the remaining interviews. The analyses were done for each case separately, as well as across cases (Chapter 6 details the within-case analyses; and Chapter 7 is for the cross-case analyses). Thematic analyses, using primarily process coding, was used (Miles et al 2014; Saldana 2013). First-order codes were firstly identified from the transcribed quotations of the participants. The first order codes were then used to establish second order themes. The results were presented, first per each case separately to produce individual case reports, then the same results were used for the cross-case analyses.

4.3 Summary

This chapter discussed in detail the aspects of the research methodology, and the rationale behind the various design methodological concepts. The table below summarises the methodology features of this research.

Table 4 - 4: Summary of methodology concepts (developed for this research)

Concept of methodology	Decision and choice for this research
Research goal and questions	Mainly explanatory; looking at "how" publicly reported QA impacts networked governance
Research philosophy	Intrepretivism approach
Research approach	Deductive-inductive approach
Research strategy	Case study; multiple case design; four cases
Data collection and analyses	Qualitative using semi-structured interviews as primary data, supplemented by document reviews as secondary.
Data analyses approach	Thematic analyses, two-order, using process coding mainly.
Validity and reliability tactics	Various tactics for construct, internal & external validity; as well as reliability (Table 4-3)

5 Research Context & Case Review

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the four cases selected for the study are described in detail. The cases are inter-organisational networks associated with the Education Reform initiatives in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The first part of the chapter, comprising of three sections, describes the chosen context and cases. The first two sections describe the basic features of the general context of education and training sectors in Bahrain within their specific contexts, namely the Education Reform initiatives in which the four networks operate. The third section then describes each case, separately and in more detail.

The rationale behind the choice of these cases has already been discussed in Chapter 4. This chapter is primarily descriptive, setting the scene for elaborate data analyses and results discussion in the subsequent chapters. There is no attempt to discuss or analyse related secondary data here, but such data will be used and discussed, wherever relevant, in the upcoming chapters.

Some of the data used in describing the contexts and the cases herein are presented mainly for the purpose of placing the cases within their contextual perspectives, and/or for the purpose of any potential comparison with similar research projects later on.

The second part of this chapter describes the outcomes of the pilot interviews, which were conducted using the initial protocol, which was based on the initial propositions described in Chapter 3. The outcomes of

the pilot were then used to revise the interview questions before its subsequent use in the real interviews.

5.2 About Kingdom of Bahrain

This section gives an overview of the Kingdom of Bahrain, with the objective of introducing the geo-political, social and economic contexts in which the four selected cases operate.

5.2.1 Location

The Kingdom of Bahrain is a middle-eastern archipelago made up of 33 islands located in the Arabian Gulf to the east of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and north-west of the State of Qatar. Administratively, the country is divided into four governorates with the city of Manama as capital (EDB 2015).



Figure 5 - 1: Map showing location of Bahrain (source: Google Maps)

5.2.2 Population

Although Bahrain is a small country, with population of just above 1.3 million people, of which expatriates form about 52%. The population however is increasing both amongst Bahraini and non-Bahraini citizens. Refer to Table 5-1 below for the details of Bahraini population (source: CIO (2015)).

Table 5 - 1: Population of Bahrain (2010 - 2104)

Year	Bahraini			Non-Bahraini			Total		
	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male
2010	570,687	282,235	288,452	657,856	181,951	475,905	1,228,543	464,186	764,357
2011	584,688	288,810	295,878	610,332	164,727	445,605	1,195,020	453,537	741,483
2012	599,629	294,275	305,354	609,335	154,240	455,095	1,208,964	448,515	760,449
2013	614,830	301,885	312,945	638,361	162,925	475,436	1,253,191	464,810	788,381
2014	630,744	309,905	320,839	683,818	198,170	485,648	1,314,562	508,075	806,487

Source: CIO (2015)

5.2.3 Economy

Bahrain is one of the Arabian Gulf oil-based economies. However, the economy of Bahrain is diversifying away from oil. The oil sector is decreasing at a growth rate of (-) 5.3% annually (2014 figures). The oil currently represents 24.1% of the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2014. The other non-oil sector is growing at a rate of 5.8% annually (2014 figures). This sector includes financial services, professional & industrial services, logistics, education and training; manufacturing (aluminum, food & beverage, chemicals & plastics); as well as information and communication technology (ICT) services (CIO(2015)).

Table 5 - 2: Key economic indicators of Bahrain

GDP at current market prices (2014)	BD 23,735 million
GDP at 2010 constant prices (2014)	BD 11,257 million
Real GDP growth (2014, YoY)	4.5%
Inflation CPI (2006 = 100), annual change (February 2015)	2.1%
Total Employment (December 2014)	687,147
- Bahraini	22.8%
- Non-Bahraini	77.2%
Unemployment rate (Bahraini, December 2014)	3.8%
<i>Notes:</i> YoY = Year-Over-Year CPI = Consumer Price Index	

Source: EDB (2015)

5.2.4 Political system

Bahrain is a constitutional monarchy, governed by the Al Khalifa family. The present Head of State is His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa. The Al Khalifas have ruled Bahrain since 1783 (Council Shura 2015).

Constitutionally, the legislative authority comprises of two chambers or councils; the Shura and the Parliament. The King appoints the members of the Shura Council, whilst Bahraini people directly elect the members of the Parliament. The two councils form the National Assembly. In addition to the legislative authority, municipal councils, whose members are freely elected as well, govern municipality affairs in their respective administrative governorates. Men and women are entitled to equal political rights to elections and candidacy (Council Shura 2015).

Bahrain first indulgence into parliamentary arrangement was in 1973 with the election of the country's first "National Council" with 30 freely elected members. The then National Council did not last longer, and was resolved in 1975. The democratic political arrangement was then re-instated, to take the current structure of the two-chamber National Assembly, in 2002 (Council Shura 2015).

The executive authority is performed by the Council of Ministers, which consists of the Prime Minister and a number of ministers. The King, as head of the state, appoints the Council of Ministers. Ministers are responsible to the Parliament for their relevant ministries. The Parliament

has the power of vote of no-confidence in the ministers (Refer to the Bahrain Constitution as populated in Council Shura (2015)).

5.3 Education & training profile in Bahrain

This section describes the landscape of the education and training sector in the Kingdom of Bahrain, starting with basic education, moving into secondary education and ending with post-secondary education in either post-secondary vocational training institutes or higher education institutions.

The sectors are distributed between public and private education providers; such distribution will be described here as well.

5.3.1 Basic education

The official web site of the Ministry of Education, being the regulating body for the whole spectrum of pre-school, basic schooling and secondary education domains, gives some details about the education system in Bahrain (Ministry of Education 2014b). The following data are cited chiefly from this reference, unless otherwise indicated.

Prior to school education, Bahrain offers children optional education in a) nurseries (from birth to three years old) and b) kindergarten (from three to six years old). Most of the nurseries and kindergartens are privately owned and run; however, some non-governmental and charitable organisations own a small number of them. The sector is regulated by the Ministry of Education.

The formal basic education starts with the **Primary Level** (6-11 years old), which is divided into two cycles:

- The first cycle combines the first three grades of primary education.
- The second cycle combines the upper three grades.

In the two cycles, pupils are taught the following compulsory core subjects: Islamic education, Arabic language, English language, mathematics, science and technology, social studies, family-life education,

physical education, fine arts including songs and music. Within the Class-Teacher system, one teacher teaches all subjects except English Language, Design and Technology, Music and Physical Education; this system is applied in all schools of the first cycle, whilst the second cycle applies subject-specific teachers, where each subject is taught by a specialised teacher.

Upon successful completion of the second cycle, pupils are admitted to the third cycle, which is the **Intermediate Level** of basic education (12-14 years old). This cycle lasts for three years. The syllabi for the third cycle of basic education include the following compulsory core subjects: Islamic education, Arabic language, English language, mathematics, science and technology, social studies, practical studies, and physical education. A subject-teacher system is applied within this level throughout.

5.3.2 Secondary education

The secondary education level comes after the intermediate level and lasts for three years. Students at this level have the choice of five main tracks; scientific, literary, commercial, technical (for boys only); and textile (for girls only). The public schools are gradually applying a unified track for the scientific, literary and commercial subjects. The main purpose of secondary education is to equip students with the necessary competencies for post-secondary education or the labour market.

The study plan of the secondary level (credit hour system) is based on the total credit hours required to complete secondary education, which comprise 156 credit hours for the scientific, literary, commercial, and textile tracks; and 210 credit hours for the technical track. The credits are divided into four groups of courses: core courses, specialised courses, elective specialised courses; and free elective courses. The percentage of credits in each group varies according to the curricular track of the student.

5.3.3 Private education

The private sector has a significant share in pre-schooling, basic and secondary education. As indicated above, nurseries and kindergartens are owned and run mainly by the private sector, except for a minority that are owned and run by non-governmental and charitable organisations.

According to the published statistics of the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education 2014a), there are 104 public schools for males, 102 for females, totaling 206 public schools (for the academic year 2012/2013). Listed during the same academic year are 72 private schools (excluding nurseries and kindergartens). The statistics show that in the academic year 2012/2013, there were 66,084 students registered in private schools (from primary to higher secondary), and 128,741 students in public schools. This gives a distribution of about 34% in private educational institutions and 66% of students in public institutions (Figure 5-1 below).

The private schooling sector is regulated by the Directorate of Private Education in the Ministry of Education. Subject to the approval of the Directorate, the private schools are free to choose the schooling curricula and system.

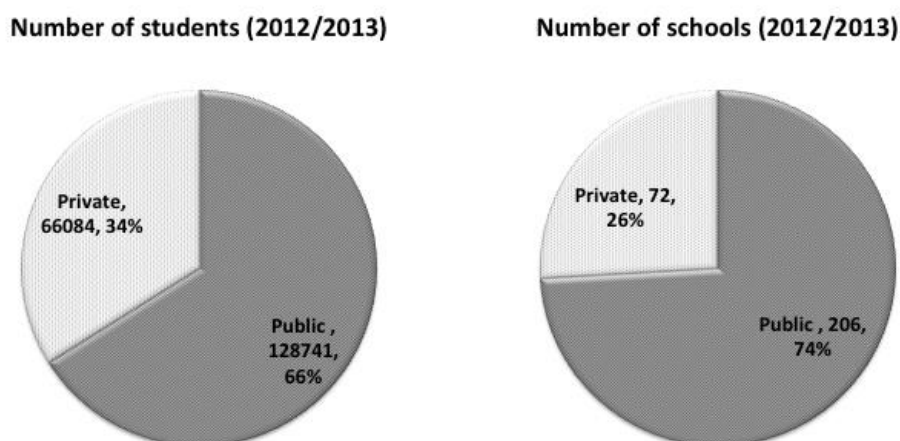


Figure 5 - 2: Distribution of schools and students (analyses of researcher, based on Ministry of Education (2014 a) – excluding nurseries and kindergartens)

5.3.4 Vocational education and training

The Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector in Bahrain caters to learners at post-secondary, or tertiary, educational levels.

According to the QQA annual report for the year 2013, there are 67 private training providers licensed and regulated by the Ministry of Labour (MoL), and two large public training institutes (Bahrain Training Institute and the Bahrain Institute of Banking and Finance). These two public institutes are self-regulated. The majority of providers are deemed to be small, according to the classification of QQA, with an average of 500 - 1000 learners enrolled during any given year (QQA 2014c).

The vast majority of learners in these VET providers are sponsored by their employers, or through some government funding schemes offered either by MoL or the Labour Fund (Tamkeen). In addition, private sector companies pay a percentage of the costs of having an expatriate workforce as training levy to a central funding organisation, the High Council for the Vocational Training (HCVT), which operates under the umbrella of MoL. The HCVT then oversees the direction of the collected levy towards training the Bahraini workforce of these companies by these VET providers (Ministry of Labour 2014).

The above mentioned 67 VET providers are regulated by the Directorate of the Training Institutes Affairs, which was established in 2005, as part of the Ministry of Labour re-structure (Ministry of Labour 2014). The main roles of the directorate, as a regulating body, are:

- Overall supervision of the training institutes, for the purpose of ensuring the quality of training services.
- Licensing and re-licensing of training institutes to permit them to operate.
- Approval of training programmes (not accreditations) and vocational trainers.
- Inspecting training institutes to ensure full compliance with requirements and, that they use license properly for its intended use.

- Promoting local, regional, and international investment in the training and human resource development sector in the Kingdom.

Although VET providers, as per the QQA Annual Report 2013 (QQA 2014c), show an increasing trend towards internationally accredited programmes, the majority of courses and programmes remain internally designed, leading to either certificate of attendance or certificate of achievement (for those which have internal assessment of learners' achievements and progress). The following charts depict the distribution of VET training, in terms of the number of programmes and courses licensed by MoL, or the number of learners enrolled in these programmes (analysed from unpublished statistical reports from MoL, Ministry of Labour (2012)). The data are categorised in the following VET subjects: management, information technology (IT) software, IT hardware, finance and accounting, technical, safety and health, legal, beauty, languages; and quality.

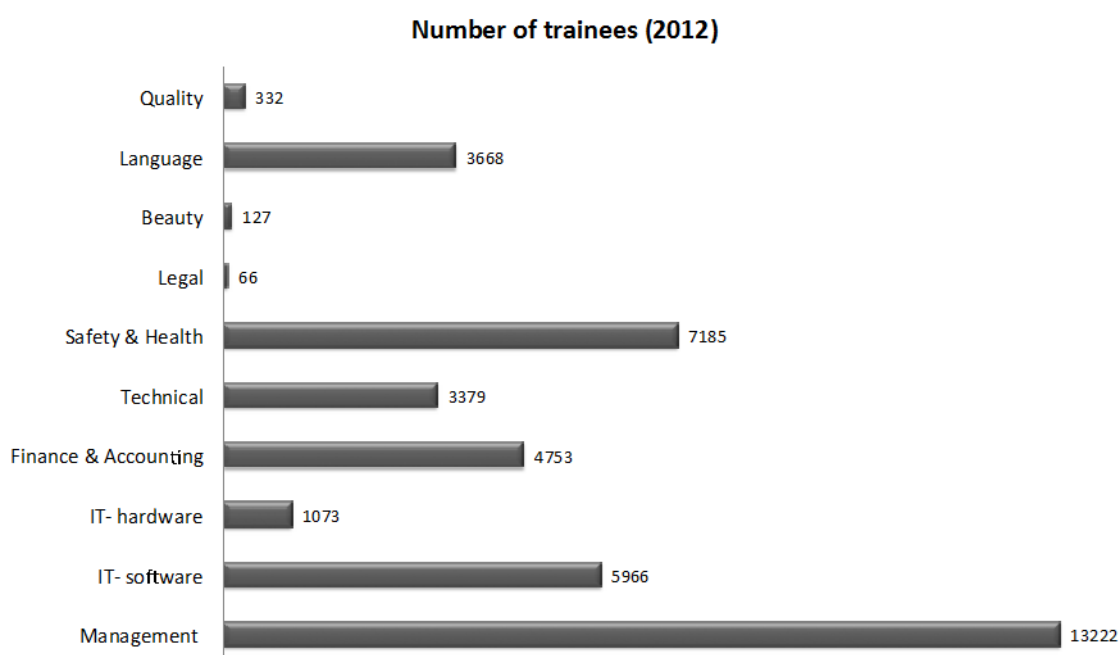


Figure 5 - 3: Total number of trainees enrolled in VET programmes in 2012
(Source: Ministry of Labour (2012))

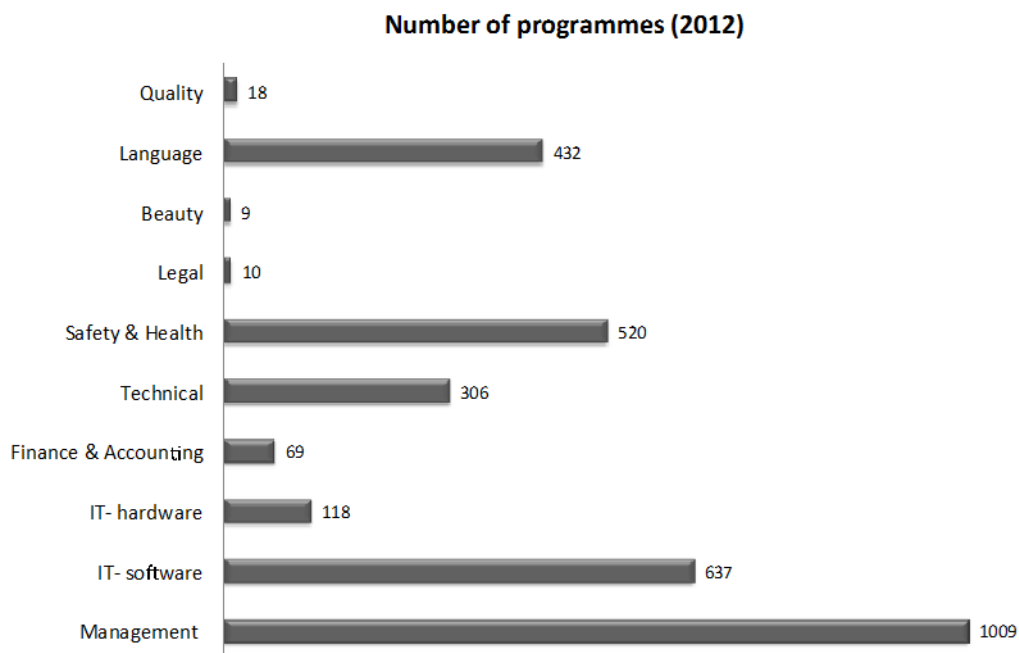


Figure 5 - 4: Total number of VET programmes licensed by MoL in 2012 (Source: Ministry of Labour (2012))

Further to the VET providers regulated by MoL and the two self-regulated institutes, there are another 31 providers licensed by MoE, offering mainly tutorial and revision classes delivered to school and higher education students; some examples are English language courses and performing arts courses in dance, music and art (QQA 2014c). Such classes are not offered within proper vocational programmes, and the researcher could not get access to much meaningful information about this segment of educational services.

5.3.5 Higher education

The higher education sector offers post-secondary degrees at different levels. According to the annual report of the Higher Education Council (HEC) (Mirza 2012), there are 14 universities and higher education institutions in Bahrain, 2 are public (University of Bahrain and Bahrain Polytechnic), one regional (Arabian Gulf University) and the remaining 11 are all privately owned. The following data and analyses are extracted

from the HEC Annual Report 2012 (Mirza 2012), HEC being the governmental regulator of the higher education sector.

The largest university is the University of Bahrain (UoB); which is a public institution. UoB offers a total of 82 programmes on different levels; diploma (24), bachelor's (34), postgraduate diploma (3), Master's (14), and PhD (7). The remaining institutions offer a range of programmes in 10 different disciplines as indicated in Figure 5.4 below, the majority of which are in business and finance.

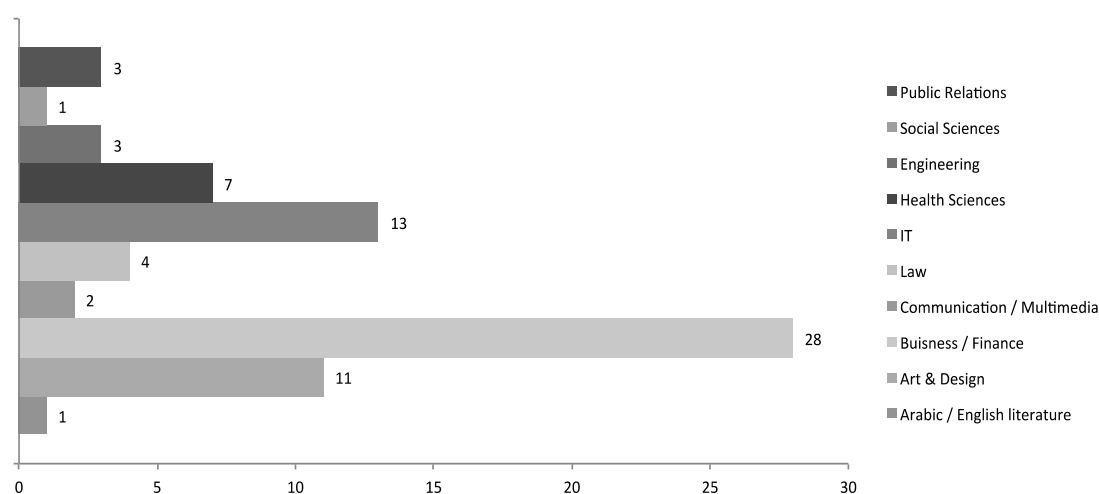


Figure 5 - 5: Distribution of programmes in private HE institutions in Bahrain (Source: Mirza (2012))

The total number of students in higher education for the academic year 2011/12 stands at 32,327, with the gender breakdown showing 60% for females and 40% for males (Figure 5-5). Of the total number of students, public and regional institutions host 55%, whereas the remaining 45% are hosted by the private institutions (Figure 5-5).

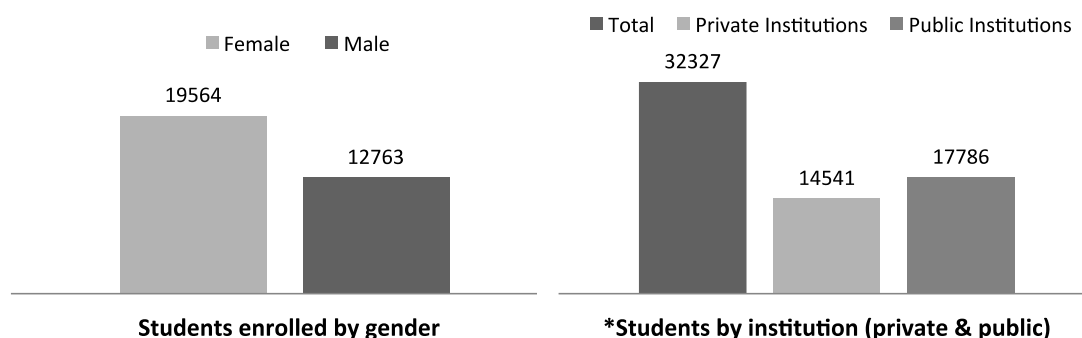


Figure 5 - 6: Distribution of students in Bahrain's HE institutions (Source: Mirza (2012))

More than 50% of students are studying in a business-related programme. Mirza's (2012) report recognises the gap between the labour market needs and the student intake, which currently focuses mostly in business-related disciplines. The report identifies the need for more graduates in other subject areas in order to meet Bahrain's future needs, such as health, engineering, energy, technology, law, arts and information technology (IT).

The higher education sector is regulated by the Higher Education Council (HEC), which was formed according to Law No. 3 of 2005 under the chairmanship of the Minister of Education. As per this law, the HEC's mandate is three-fold: improving the performance of all universities, monitoring and evaluating higher education provision, and regulating new study programmes in the higher education institutions (Higher Education Council 2014).

Students in higher education institutions are either self-funded, or sponsored by governmental or non-governmental organisations, including Tamkeen, or funded by their employers. No report on the breakdown of such data was available for the researcher.

To sum up the landscape of education and training in Bahrain, the two tables below (Table 5-1 and Table 5-2) show the ladder of basic schooling, secondary education, as well as post-secondary education in higher education or VET institutions. At the time of writing this thesis, the QQA is

piloting a 10-level national qualification framework that will encompass all forms of learning which includes higher education, vocational, school and work-based qualifications. This framework will facilitate more horizontal progression routes across the various types of learning (QQA, 2014).

Table 5 - 3: Education ladder in Bahrain for basic and secondary education

Grade	Age	Stage			
12	17	Secondary Education	General	Technical & Vocational (Specialised Track - Advanced Track)	Religious education (primary, intermediate, secondary)
11	16				
10	15				
9	14	Basic Education	3 rd Cycle (Intermediate)		
8	13		2 nd Cycle (Primary)		
7	12				
6	11		1 st Cycle (Primary)		
5	10				
4	9				
3	8				
2	7				
1	6				

Source: Ministry of Education 2014b and 2014c

Table 5 - 4: Post-secondary education and training in Bahrain

Regulator: Ministry of Labour or self-regulated*	Regulator: Ministry of Education/Higher Education Council
Vocational education and training (Public and private institutes)	Higher education (Polytechnic and universities, public and private)

Source: Researcher analysis. *MoE regulates some education institutes that offer some complimentary educational courses.

5.4 Education reform

5.4.1 Overview of reform initiatives

Having realised the challenges that face the education and training sectors and the impact that such challenges have on the development of the country, the Bahrain Economic Development Board (EDB) initiated Education Reform programmes, which have been in place since mid-2007. These initiatives are comprised of the following (Economic Development Board, n.d., p.49):

- **“Quality Assurance:** Establish Quality Assurance Authority to set standards and monitor quality using a combination of national school examinations and reviews and public reports on schools, vocational education, training institutes and universities.
- **Teachers College:** Improve the recruitment, education, evaluation and performance management of teachers, including establishment of a “Bahrain Teachers College” in September 2008.
- **Polytechnic:** Establish a new Bahrain Polytechnic in September 2008 to increase the range and quality of post-secondary options available to students in Bahrain.
- **Secondary vocational:** Introduce a new vocational programme in secondary schools”.

The first initiative, **Quality Assurance**, will be discussed further in the next section, as this is linked with a key concept of the research question, which is the public reporting of quality assurance reviews. The fourth initiative, **Secondary Vocational Programme**, will be the subject of one of the selected case studies, and will be explained later as well.

The Education reform initiatives were part of a wider economic and labour market reform, which were all articulated in three different official documents (Economic Development Board n.d.):

- The Economic Vision 2030, which defines Bahrain’s long term aspirations (2009-2030),
- The Strategy, which defines the country’s medium-term strategic priorities (2009-2014)
- The implementation plans, which describe in detail how each strategic priority will be implemented and monitored.

The National Economic Strategy (Economic Development Board n.d.) has defined three strategies: Government Strategy, Social Strategy and Economic Strategy. Under the Social Strategy, six main priority areas were identified:

- Enhance social assistance
- Improve health care quality and access
- **Build a first rate education system**

- Ensure public safety and security
- Promote and protect a sustainable natural environment
- Foster and promote Bahrain's cultural life and create an effective living environment

What matters for the purpose of this research is the third strategic priority area: **Build a first rate education system**. The following discussion will focus mainly on this priority and link it to the context of the selected case studies of this research.

Table 5-3, is an extract from the National Economic Strategy (Economic Development Board, n.d.). It is useful here since it places all the various initiatives within one clear structural framework. It sets out in a clear manner the context of the selected case studies. Table 5-3 will be referred to then in the subsequent explanation of the cases.

Table 5 - 5: Education-related strategic priority and initiatives in Bahrain's National Economic Strategy

Strategic Priority	Strategic initiative and sub-initiatives	Primary owner
Build a first rate education system	<p>1. Improve the quality and effectiveness of policy and regulation and funding arrangements to underpin Bahrain's education system</p> <p>1.1 Develop a comprehensive policy framework for education in Bahrain 1.2 Develop a single, comprehensive funding framework 1.3 Ensure that licensing and regulatory arrangements across the education sector meet Bahrain's contemporary policy and development needs</p>	<p>Ministry of Education Ministry of Education Ministry of Education/Higher Education Council/ Quality Assurance Authority</p>
	<p>2. Improve the quality of teaching, learning and student outcomes in Bahrain's school</p> <p>2.1 Implement a School Improvement programme 2.2 Improve participation in schooling 2.3 Improve teaching and learning outcomes for students in private schools</p>	<p>Ministry of Education Ministry of Education Quality Assurance Authority/ Ministry of Education</p>

	<p>3. Improve the quality of teaching, learning and student outcomes within the training sector in Bahrain’s vocational institutes</p> <p>3.1 Implement a vocational improvement programme</p> <p>3.2 improve the performance of the Bahrain Training Institutes</p>	<p>Quality Assurance Authority/Ministry of Labour/Tamkeen Bahrain Training Institute/Ministry of Labour</p>
	<p>4. Improve the quality of teaching, learning and student outcomes and research and development at Bahrain’s institutes of higher education</p> <p>4.1 Implement a university improvement programme</p> <p>4.2 Improve the performance of the university of Bahrain</p>	<p>Higher Education Council/Quality Assurance Authority University of Bahrain</p>

Source: (Economic Development Board, n.d., p. 114)

Right from the inception of the reform initiatives, the EDB have conceptualised inter-organisational collaboration as a form of achieving the set strategic objectives, and the required accountability: “it is therefore imperative that those responsible for implementation, whether in the public or private sectors, work together, and whose work will be monitored to track progress” (Economic Development Board, n.d., p.10).

The collaboration scope goes beyond governmental institutions; the document explicitly states that “in implementing the Social Strategy, the Government recognises the important role played by many organisations and individuals inside and outside the government, and non-governmental organisations in civil society” (Economic Development Board, n.d., p.41). As explained in the previous chapters, this collaborative setting, or **networked setting**, is very much the key theoretical concept of this research. One of the dimensions that will be discussed later is *accountability*, which has been introduced briefly in the above quotation.

Related to the concept of accountability in this kind of collaborative setting, the overarching long-term Economic Vision 2030 defines explicit potential measures of success for achieving the strategic priority of “*building a first class education system*” to include: “improvement of

educational institutions in independent quality reviews and national examinations; scores in international tests of school performance (for instance, TIMS, PISA and PIRLS)” (Economic Development Board n.d., p.22).

5.4.2 National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education and Training (QQA)

Establishing an independent authority was one of the main Education Reform initiatives that started in mid-2007. In realising this vision, the Quality Assurance Authority for Education and Training (QAAET) was established as an independent body by Royal Decree No. 32 of 2008. The authority was re-structured and renamed ‘The National Authority of Qualifications and Quality Assurance for Education and Training’ (QQA) by Decree No. 83 of 2012, with the addition of the National Qualification Framework to its mandate. The Authority is attached to the Cabinet and its board is chaired by a minister (QQA 2009a; 2014a).

The main interest of this research is the quality assurance reviews, which are currently being carried out by four directorates of QQA: Directorate of Government School Review, Directorate of Private Schools & Kindergartens Review, Directorate of Higher Education Reviews; and the Directorate of Vocational Reviews. In addition, QQA has two more directorates, one for national examinations and one for the national qualification framework. These two functions are outside the scope of this research. All the review reports are approved by the Office of the Prime Minister before they are published in the public domain. Copies of the reports also go to the respective regulating organisation. The Authority’s role ends at the point of reporting the outcomes of reviews; it does not have any regulating or decision-making power in response to these reports (QQA 2009a).

As noted by Power (1997), more than one term is used to denote conceptually similar processes (audit, inspection and review). For the sake of more clarity and possible comparability among the research results, the next sections aim at briefly clarifying the different review frameworks that

QQA use, and some of the salient features in each. All reviews start with the reviewed education or training institution conducting a self-evaluation report, and end up with the institution developing action plans to address the areas of improvement and recommendations raised in the review report. For more details, the QQA web site has additional information on these review frameworks, processes and outcomes (see QQA 2009a; 2009b; 2012a; 2012b; 2014a; 2014c; 2014b; 2014c).

5.4.2.1 Higher Education Institutional Reviews

The Directorate of Higher Education Reviews uses “**Institutional Reviews**” for all higher education institutions operating in Bahrain. The Institutional Review Handbook (QQA 2009a) was developed in conjunction with the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA). The institutional reviews are carried out by panels of international and local peer reviewers (QQA 2009a).

Institutional reviews are carried out against 25 pre-defined quality indicators, grouped into nine themes (QQA 2009a):

- Mission, planning, and governance (five indicators)
- Academic standards (six indicators)
- Quality assurance and enhancement (one indicator)
- Quality of teaching and learning (three indicators)
- Student support (one indicator)
- Human resources (three indicators)
- Infrastructure, physical and other resources (three indicators)
- Research (two indicators)
- Community engagement (one indicator).

As an outcome of the review process, the report will make a judgment about the overall performance of the institution against each indicator from the following perspectives (QQA 2009a):

- Commendations: denoting significant good practices.
- Recommendations: highlighting the most important matters for improvement.

- Affirmations: delineating important areas for improvement that have been recognised and are being addressed by the institution.

No summative judgement is given to the overall performance of the institution, however.

5.4.2.2 Higher Education Programme Reviews

Complementing institutional reviews, the Directorate of Higher Education Reviews carries out "**Programme Reviews**," as more specialised reviews focusing on the quality assurance arrangements within an academic programme in a particular discipline or subject area (QQA 2009b).

The quality of the programme is reviewed using four main indicators as follows (QQA 2009b):

- Curriculum.
- Efficiency of the programme.
- Academic standards of the graduates.
- Effectiveness of quality management and assurance.

Unlike the institutional review, the Programme Review ends up with an overall summative judgement, falling into one of the following categories (QQA 2009b):

- Confidence: If the programme satisfies all the four indicators.
- Limited confidence: Where up to two indicators are not satisfied.
- No confidence: Because more than two indicators are not satisfied.

5.4.2.3 School Reviews

The Directorates of Governmental Schools Review and the Private Schools & Kindergartens Review use one single framework for "**School Reviews**" (QQA 2012a). This framework is used for reviewing the overall performance of all schools, public and private, and kindergartens in Bahrain. The reviews are carried out mainly by teams of locally trained reviewers (QQA 2014a).

The performance of each school is judged against the following indicators, termed as main questions in the Framework (QQA 2012a):

- Students' academic achievement
- Students' personal development
- The effectiveness of teaching and learning
- The implementation and enrichment of the curriculum
- Support and guidance given to students
- Leadership, management and governance

In addition to the six main questions, each school is given overall judgements about its **overall effectiveness** and **capacity to improve**. Unlike higher education institutional reviews, summative judgements are made using a four-level grading system when it comes to schools:

- 1: Outstanding
- 2: Good
- 3: Satisfactory
- 4: Inadequate

5.4.2.4 Vocational Reviews

Through a procedure relatively similar to the framework of the School reviews, the Directorate Vocational Reviews use the "**Vocational Review**" framework (QQA 2012b) to review the quality of all VET providers in Bahrain. The reviews are carried out by teams comprised of locally trained reviewers, as well as some "consultant" reviewers drawn from a pool of subject-matter specialists in their specific vocational areas from Bahrain, or abroad if need be (QQA 2014a; 2012b).

The performance of each VET provider is judged against the following indicators, termed as main questions in the Framework (QQA 2012b):

- Learners' progress and achievements
- Effectiveness of teaching and/or training in promoting learning
- The quality of programmes
- Support and guidance given to learners
- Leadership and management

In addition to the six main questions, the VET provider is given overall judgement about its **overall effectiveness** (including its capacity to

improve). Summative judgments are made using a four-level grading system (QQA 2012b):

- 1: Outstanding
- 2: Good
- 3: Satisfactory
- 4: Inadequate

Table 5-4 makes comparisons of the four review frameworks currently in use by the QQA directorates for judging the overall performance of all education and training institutions in Bahrain.

Table 5 - 6: Comparison of QQA Review Frameworks

	Institutional Review	Programme Review	Schools Review	Vocational Reviews
Scope	All HE institutions	All HE institutions	All schools and kindergartens (private and public)	All VET institutions (private and public)
Responsible Directorate (within QQA)	Directorate of Higher Education Reviews	Directorate of Higher Education Reviews	Directorate of Governmental Schools Review, Directorate of Private Schools Review	Directorate of Vocational Reviews
Criteria	Nine themes (25 indicators)	Four indicators	Six indicators, overall effectiveness and capacity to improve	Five indicators, overall effectiveness (including capacity to improve)
Report Judgement on overall quality of institution	Not summative, for each indicators, commendations, affirmations and recommendations are identified	Summative; programme is judged to be of either confidence, limited confidence or no confidence	Summative, all judgements are of 4-scale grading: 1) outstanding, 2) good, 3) satisfactory or 4) inadequate	Summative, all judgments are of 4-scale grading: 1) outstanding, 2) good, 3) satisfactory or 4) inadequate

Source: Analysis of the researcher

Referring to the type of performance measurement application, Hood (2012) suggests three types of application of performance measurement:

- Targets
- Rankings, and
- Intelligence

As discussed in Chapter 2, this typology is not well defined, and it can be considered as a continuum of applications performance measurement. Using this typology the QQA reports are of 'intelligence that contains rankings' as well. This duality of purpose of application is quite common, as indicated by Hood (2012), where the purpose can shift from one application to another, as targets and ranking can run into intelligence if the numbers are presented in no order of priority; and intelligence on the other hand can run into rankings if it contains prioritisation or categorisation. The former is the case for the QQA reports; except for higher education institutional reviews; where the detailed descriptive review reports end up with categorisation on pre-defined scales as explained in Table 5-6 above.

Although some of the judgments are based on processing of numbers, such as students' pass rates, the QQA reports are of 'intelligence' type of reports as they are mostly descriptive and based on reviewers' judgments in comparing the quality of provision, as observed by the reviewers, with the published frameworks of best practices. The objectives of these reports are mainly to serve as a developmental tool for service providers and policy makers, as well as to give the users a choice. These two objectives are the very objectives of intelligence type of application as per Hood (2012).

The ranking element of application is clearly evident in the QQA in all its reports, except for the higher education institutional review reports. This categorisation, or ranking, in the QQA reports obviously aims at encouraging providers to outperform one another. This purpose of application fits better with the Hood 'ranking' type of application.

5.5 Research cases – education reform networks

The following section discusses in some detail the four selected cases for this research. The rationale behind the choice of these cases has already been discussed in Chapter 4. The description notes in this chapter, for the four cases, aim at paving the road for within-case and cross-case analyses in the subsequent chapters.

Please note that for the purpose of this research, all four committees will be termed as **networks**, since it is the term of choice for this research.

5.5.1 Case No.1 – Education Reform Board (ERB)

The first case for this research is the Education Reform Board (ERB), which is a high level inter-organisational network responsible for the overall steering of all the Education Reform initiatives. The network commenced its work in mid-2007 (as gathered from the interviews by the researcher) when the Education Reform initiatives began. The network setting is not part of the Cabinet hierarchy, but it is well positioned as a high level steering and coordinating authority. ERB is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, and includes the following as permanent members (DPMO 2014):

- Minister of Education
- Minister of Labour
- Minister of Transport / Chief Executive of EDB
- Chief Executive of Tamkeen
- Minister in Charge of QQA
- Two representatives of the private sector

In addition, the network has other members who regularly attend, as well as others who are deemed necessary by ERB, such as (the information was obtained by the researcher through interviews):

- The Chief Executive of QQA
- President of the University of Bahrain

- Secretary General of HEC
- Undersecretaries and Assistant Undersecretaries of MoL and MoE
- Two representatives of EDB
- Two representatives from the Deputy Prime Minister's Office (for support and follow-up)

The network does not have a published charter, by-laws or memorandum of understanding. Initially, members used to meet once every two weeks, but the frequency was reduced to a couple of meetings every year (as gathered by the researcher through interviews).

As per DPMO (2014), the committee's main objectives are to oversee the implementation of the Education Reform's various initiatives, to monitor the progress of such initiatives, and to coordinate the work between the various governmental organisations.

5.5.2 Case No.2 – Higher Education Steering Committee (HESC)

The second case is the Higher Education Steering Committee (HESC). Its formation was stipulated by the National Economic Strategy right from the latter's inception. The strategy calls for

"Implementing a university improvement programme: The Higher Education Council and the Quality Assurance Authority will develop and implement a comprehensive university improvement programme, linking licensing and accreditation decisions to the reports and recommendations from the University Quality Review unit at the Quality Assurance Authority. The Higher Education Council will also develop programmes to promote the funding research and development at Bahrain's institutes of higher education." (Economic Development Board n.d., p.52)

The network is chaired by the QQA Chief Executive and includes the membership of the following (the information was gathered by the researcher through interviews):

- Representatives of QQA – as Quality Review Agency.
- Representatives from HEC – as regulator.
- One representative from Tamkeen – as funding organisation for some VET and HE programmes.

- One representative from the EDB – as the main initiator of the Education Reform initiatives.

Like the third network, this network is also governed by a formal memorandum of understanding, which was signed on 25th March 2010 between the Minister of Education (in-charge of the HEC) and the minister in-charge of the QQA at that time (Bahrain News Agency, 2010). No further details of the articles of the memorandum are available.

From the interviews conducted with members of this network, it was indicated that initially the network met more frequently, but the meetings dropped to almost twice a year. The network has developed specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and targets initially, but the participants in the research interviews made little reference to these KPIs and targets.

5.5.3 Case No.3 – Vocational Provider Improvement Strategy Committee (VPIS)

The third case for this research is the Vocational Provider Improvement Strategy Committee (VPIS), an inter-organisational network related directly to the Education Reform context. Establishment of this network, as was the case with HESC, was set as part of the National Economic Strategy (Economic Development Board, n.d.). This document clearly identified the need to

"Implement a vocational improvement programme: The quality assurance authority, in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Tamkeen will develop and implement a comprehensive vocational improvement programme to raise the quality of training and student outcomes at Bahrain's Vocational Review Unit of the Quality Assurance Authority and licensing decisions by the Ministry of Labour and the funding decisions made both by the Ministry of Labour and Tamkeen." (Economic Development Board n.d., p.52).

The network is chaired by the QQA Chief Executive with the membership of the following (as gathered by the researcher through interviews):

- Four representatives of QQA (from various directorates) – as a quality review agency.
- One representative from MoL – as regulator.

- One representative from HCVT – as funding organisation for some VET programmes.
- Three representatives from MoE – as regulator.
- One representative from Tamkeen - as funding organisation for some VET programmes.
- One representative from the EDB – as the main initiator of Education Reform initiatives.

The Vocational Provider Strategy Improvement Committee (VPIS) is governed by a formal memorandum of understanding, detailing the jointly developed “Provider Improvement Strategy,” and the roles and responsibilities of each party in the implementation process. The memorandum was signed on 25th of March 2010 between the Ministers in charge of Education, Labour, Tamkeen and QQA. The MoE was not a party to this memorandum, but was invited to join the network later on. The memorandum stipulates reporting mechanisms to the EDB to monitor the progress of the work, creating incentives for better performing providers in the QQA reports, taking regulatory measures against those who fail to improve, and supporting VET providers with relevant capacity building programmes (Bahrain News Agency 2010).

From the interviews conducted with members of this network, it was indicated that initially the network met once every two months, but the meetings later took place three times a year on average. The network had developed specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and targets for each organisation to achieve by 2014.

5.5.4 Case No.4 – Secondary Vocational Education Project (SVEP)

As indicated above, introducing a new secondary vocational education programme in Bahrain schools was one of the main four Education Reform initiatives (Economic Development Board, n.d.). The new programme was first introduced, as a pilot, in two schools during the academic year 2007/2008. To help in designing and piloting the new programme, Bahrain sought to link with an international partner. The contract for this purpose was awarded to Victorian Department of Education of Australia,

and Holmesglen Institute of TAFE to undertake the project on the Victorian Department's behalf (Holmesglen Institute 2010).

For the execution of this project, a steering project committee was formed. This committee has been selected here to be the fourth case for this research. The main purpose of this network was the project management and overall supervision of its execution. It is therefore a specific objective-driven network. The network was chaired by the Director of Technical and Vocational Education in the MoE, and includes the following as members (the information was obtained by the researcher through interviews):

- Representatives from MoE – as service beneficiary of this project.
- Representatives from EDB - as project manager.
- Representatives from the Australian partner – as contractor.

According to the Holmesglen Institute (2010), the project scope has four components of the Secondary Vocational Education Project contract that included:

- "Development of new secondary vocational education tracks for upper secondary schools in Bahrain
- Establishment of an apprenticeship system for schools
- Development of strategies for engaging the private sector in secondary vocational education.
- Piloting of the new curriculum and teaching and learning pedagogy in targeted Bahraini secondary schools" (Holmesglen Institute 2010, p.1)

It is worth noting here that this network commenced its work much earlier than QQA's review reporting, which started being made public somewhere in the middle of the work duration of this network. The network members took note of the outcomes of the QQA review reports and reacted accordingly (as gathered by the researcher through interviews).

5.5.5 Overall comparison of the four cases

To sum up the comparisons between the chosen four cases, Table 5-5 below gives an overview of the four case study organisations using the

main aspects relevant to the objectives of this research (general context, specific context, main objectives of the network, its membership profile, any official binding documents that govern the network, and the start date of the network operations). Figures 5-6 illustrates how the four cases studied are connected within their specific and general contexts.

Table 5 - 7: Overview of the four research cases

Network or research case	Case No. 1 ERB	Case No.2 HESC	Case No.3 VPIS	Case No.4 SVEP
General context	National Economic Strategy and Education Reform in Bahrain			
Specific context	Education Reform	Higher education	Post-education VET	Secondary vocational education
Main objective of network	Overall steering of education reform initiatives	Developing and implementation of HE institution improvement strategy	Developing and implementation of VET provider improvement strategy.	Steering SVEP project execution
Organisational Membership	Multi-governmental organisations and private sector representatives	Multi-governmental organisations	Multi-governmental organisations	Multi-governmental organisations and service contractor
Official binding document(s)	No official document	Memorandum of understanding, KPIs and targets	Memorandum of understanding, KPIs and targets	Contract between government and contractor only
Starting date	Mid-2007 (prior to QQA reporting)		2010 (after QQA reporting)	Mid-2007 (prior to QQA reporting)

Source: Researcher analysis

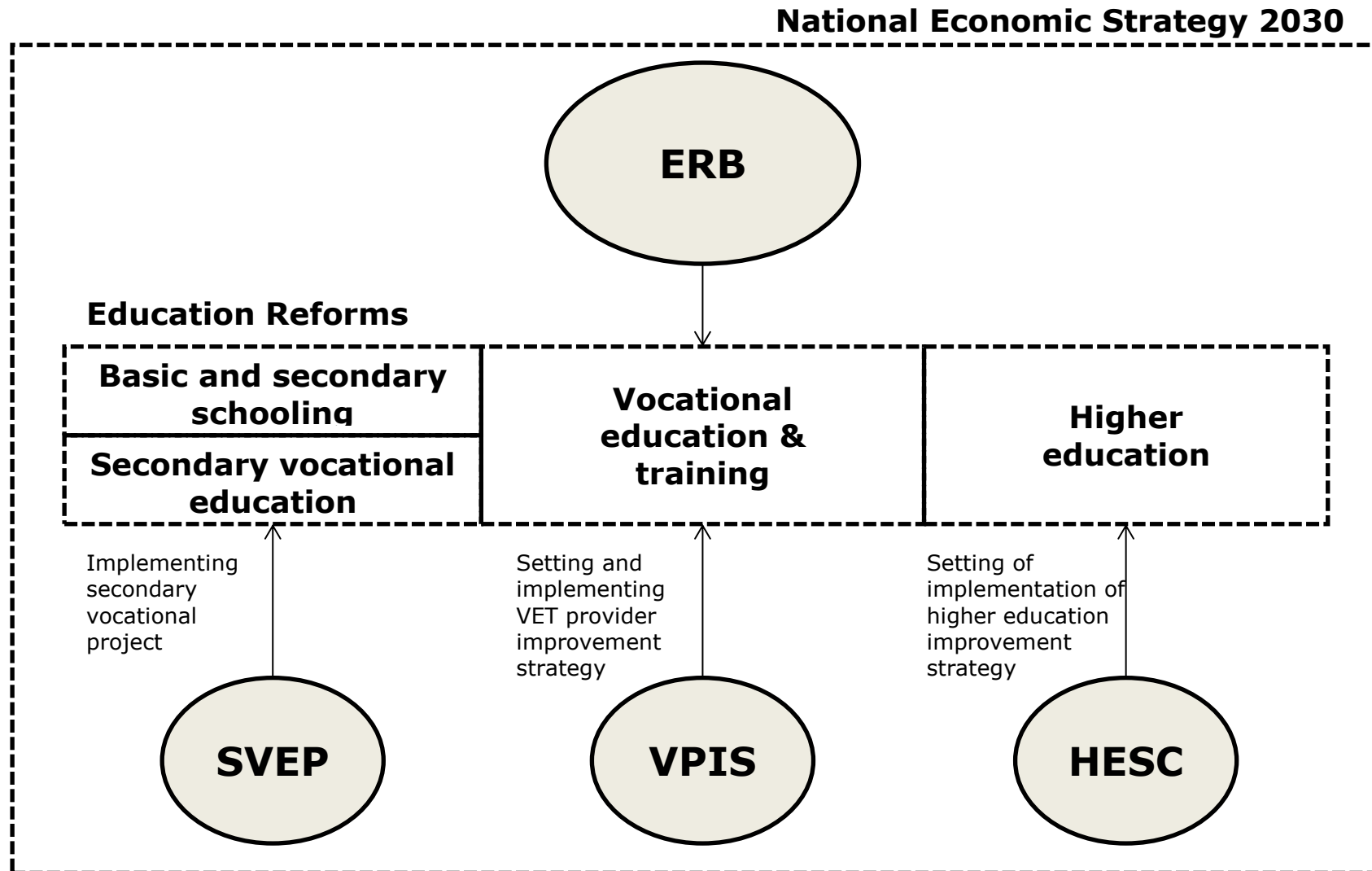


Figure 5 - 7: The research cases – four education reform-related networks (developed for this research)

5.6 Results of pilot interviews and updating interview protocol

The main use of pilot interviews was to develop clearer understanding of the concepts and theories relevant to the research. The initial theoretical framework had to change in response to the outcomes of the pilot phase (Maxwell 2013).

For this research, four “experts”, as termed by Saunders et al. (2009), were interviewed using the open-ended semi-structured interview protocol developed for the pilot phase. The four interviewees were selected to represent the whole spectrum of the stakeholders in these networks as follows:

- Pilot participant 1: sits on two committees related to VET.
- Pilot participant 2: sits on two committees related to basic schooling, VET and HE.
- Pilot participant 3: sits on a committee related to HE
- Pilot participant 4: sits on a committee related to VET.

The pilot interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed using a two-stage thematic analysis method. The resultant themes were then aggregated into over-arching themes (accountability, trust, power, autonomy and inward/outward tensions; and collaborative advantage).

The main purpose of these pilot interviews was to test the initial protocol, and to check the validity of the main initial proposition suggested in the initial conceptual framework, as explained in Chapter 3 (Figure 3.2).

The outcome of this pilot interviewing was useful. It confirmed the validity of all the initial propositions, with the exception of the one pertaining to “driver of network formation”. The responses of the participants prompted the researcher to look into a related aspect which was the “collaborative advantage”. It was evident that for participants, joining the network was not optional, hence the initial question about what drives a participant to work collaboratively in a network was found not to be applicable. Instead the responses made the researcher look into **what are the advantages**

that participants look forward to achieving jointly in the network.

Referring back to the literature, this aspect is covered by the theories of “collaborative advantages” of Huxham & Vangen (2005), Savage et al. (2011), Vangen & Huxham (2003a), Cao & Zhang (2010), Hansen & Nohria (2004) and Bailey (2003).

In the following sub-sections, the outcomes of the analyses of the pilot stage interviews are discussed briefly. The results are compared to the initial findings and conclusions of Chapter 3. Please note that the purpose of the pilot interviews was not to verify each theme, but rather to verify the validity of the overall question being asked. The actual interviews are then used to establish the themes under each over-arching aspect being investigated. Each of the following sub-sections ends up with a summary table, that indicates which of the themes that are identified in the literature are supported in the responses of the participants; which ones are only partially or weakly supported (if they are reported by one or two and the association explained is rather weak); as well as other themes that emerged in the responses, but the researcher could not find a relevant reference to them in the literature. The three sets of themes are listed in each table below.

5.6.1 Accountability

The responses suggest that the proposition about the association between QA public reporting and accountability within a network is indeed valid. This association takes place in six themes, as listed in Table 5-5 below. Out of these six themes, the theme about “balancing of power” and how this helps in affecting the accountability is not that strongly supported yet. The responses also suggest that QA public reporting helps in promoting self-accountability measures amongst members and providers, which helps then in improving accountability. This new emerging theme can be exemplified by the following excerpt:

“I think it is very innovative, of course I am biased about it, but we decided that we would create our self-review system ... so we developed our own system with our own criteria and we embedded these other criteria within it, so how this linked to your question which is about the public accountability” (Pilot participant No 3)

Table 5 - 8: Emerging themes from pilot interviews about accountability

Themes that are supported in literature as well as the pilot interviews	Getting access to information on performance
	Managing expectations
	Creating accountability environment
	Having more control and management for results
Themes that are supported in literature but partially supported in the pilot interviews	Balancing of power
Themes that emerged in the pilot interviews but have no reference in the cited literature	Promoting self-accountability

5.6.2 Trust

In this over-arching theme, Trust, the thematic analyses support the validity of the initial proposition that QA public reporting affects trust between members in a network. The analyses reveal ten themes from the responses of the pilot participants; five are supported, one is partially supported (that QA reporting fosters more formal engagement and hence builds more trust); and three additional new emerging themes.

The responses indicate that QA reporting can lead to giving members and providers confirmation about their initial perceptions about the quality of provision, promotes transparency in reporting actual performance of providers; and helps in developing a sense of ownership of joint work or results of the network. These three new themes affect level of trust amongst members of a network. As an example, Pilot participant 3 explains how this ownership is developed jointly in the network:

"it was as facilitated sessions, we brought things, we critique things, we developed the policies from the ground up, we have talked about what should be a policy, how should a policy be written and so on everything was up for debate and so, out of this we got huge level of ownership"

Table 5 - 9: Emerging themes from pilot interviews about trust

Themes that are supported in literature as well as the pilot interviews	Binding members together
	Contributing by small wins
	Fostering informal relationships
	Managing expectations
	Mediating trust transferability
Themes that are supported in literature but partially supported in the pilot interviews	Fostering more formal engagement
	Balancing of power and control
Themes that emerged in the pilot interviews but have no reference in the cited literature	Giving self-assurance and confirmation
	Offering neutral and transparent opinion
	Building ownership in joint products

5.6.3 Power

Table 5-8 below summarises the outcomes of the thematic analyses of the four pilot interviews. The outcomes support the initial proposition about the association between QA reporting and power and authority distribution in a network. Six themes can be identified here, all of them have some previous reference in the literature, except one about QA reporting helping members in their decision making, hence empowering them to achieve the common goals of the network, as explained in the following excerpt:

"[QA reports] support to the licensing bodies ... [licensing bodies] started with time to realize that quality assurance is there not to take power but it is to support decision making, and you see many cases in the newspapers for example about universities, actions taken against them based on the quality assurance reports ... so it is it became a support to the decision making" (Pilot participant No 4)

Table 5 - 10: Emerging themes from pilot interviews about power

Themes that are supported in literature as well as the pilot interviews	Formal and legal authority
	Informal Power
	Collective Power
	Balancing of power
Themes that emerged in the pilot interviews but have no reference in the cited literature	Supporting decision making

5.6.4 Autonomy and tension

The analyses of the responses of the pilot interviews under this overarching theme support the initial proposition about the association between QA reporting and autonomy of members, and the inward/outward tension they face in a network.

The themes identified here, six in this case, suggest that merging impact is not negative, but is rather positive in the way that QA reporting helps better coordination and understanding. This is not a final conclusion, as it is only a pilot stage at the moment. For example, the initial theme that is reported in the literature about creating additional tension because of the conflict of interest and priorities of the members was not found evident in the pilot interviews. This did not mean dropping it and not proposing it further in the actual interviews however.

Table 5 - 11: Emerging themes from pilot interviews about autonomy and tensions

Themes that are supported in literature as well as the pilot interviews	Alignment with common objectives
	Reports as external monitoring and steering mechanism
Themes that are supported in literature but partially supported in the pilot interviews	Conflict of interests and priorities
Themes that emerged in the pilot interviews but have no reference in the cited literature	Coordinating legislative tools

5.6.5 Collaborative advantage

As explained above, this overarching theme is rather a new one. It was not covered earlier in the initial proposed framework. The researcher however decided to explore it, in response to the open discussion during the pilot interviews.

No conclusion can be made at this stage, but the responses can be grouped into seven themes, that are reported in the literature as indicated in Table 5-10 below.

Table 5 - 12: Emerging themes from pilot interviews about collaborative advantages

Themes that are supported in literature as well as the pilot interviews	Access to information
	Improving quality of services
	Better coordination and seamlessness
	Learning and sharing expertise
	Creating common norms
	Improving decision making
Themes that are supported in literature but partially supported in the pilot interviews	Having better capacity for collective actions

As an outcome of this stage, the initial propositions that were suggested in Chapter 3 were re-visited, and accordingly the key questions for the interviews were updated, as explained in the next table. The pilot interviews supported the validity of the main association between the QA reporting and the identified aspects of network dynamics (accountability, trust, power and autonomy). The explanation of the “how” these impacts take place remains un-established at this stage. The themes identified here will serve as initial prompts, or seeds, for probing questions following the main question about each aspect. Moreover, the research enquiry is made open in each question, and not excluded by the identified themes.

At this stage, one question about the collaborative advantages was added. The following are the updated interview questions (Refer to Appendix 3 the revised protocol).

Table 5 - 13: Revised interview question based on pilot interviews

Over-arching theme	Main question
Accountability	<i>Q1: Did QQA reporting affect accountability of network members within a network, or providers in front of regulating bodies or funding agencies? If yes, how?</i>
Trust	<i>Q2: Did QQA reporting affect how members trust each other? Or trust other organisations in the network? How?</i>
Power	<i>Q3: Did QQA reporting affect the ways in which power within a network is distributed? How?</i>
Autonomy & tensions	<i>Q4: Did QQA reporting affect the autonomy status of organisations (in taking decisions, setting strategies/plans or making new policies)? Has this change created any tension? If yes, how?</i>
Collaborative advantages	<i>Q5: What are the main results of this network? Did it have any impact on the overall objectives for which the network was set up? Explain.</i>

5.7 Summary

The four networks chosen as cases for this research all operate in a general context of the Education Reform initiatives of the National Economic Strategy. The four networks are within a multi-organisational setting, aimed at achieving specific common objectives. The four networks are related to the quality assurance review work of the QQA but two of them, ERB and SVEP, commenced their work prior to QQA reporting, whilst the remaining two were formed only after the QQA started its public reporting. The starting time, in relation to QQA reporting, is important in establishing clearly the extent to which QQA reporting has informed the work of the given network, as will be discussed in the upcoming chapters. Table 5-5 above is constructed to give a brief comparison of the four chosen organisations for the case studies using the main aspects relevant to the objectives of this research, and the subsequent data analyses. For

the sake of graphical presentation, Figures 5-6 above was put together to illustrate how the four cases are connected within their specific and general contexts.

Following Hood (2012) typology of application, the QA reporting, as type of performance measurement, in this context serve purposes of 'intelligence' and 'rankings'. The review reports use pre-defined frameworks of quality as references to give users a choice, and to guide service providers and regulators on how to improve further. All reports, with the exception of higher education institutional reports, categorise the education and training providers on pre-defined scales of performance. The higher education programme review reports do as well.

The second part of this chapter explained how the outcomes of pilot interviews are used to support the validity of the initial key question about the association between QA reporting and the aspects of network dynamics (accountability, trust, power and autonomy and inward/outward tensions). The thematic analyses of the pilot participants have identified initial themes that could explain such associations. Moreover, one overarching aspect on "collaborative advantage" was identified at this stage, and the interview questions were then updated accordingly.

6 Within-Case Analyses

6.1 Introduction

In the previous two chapters the research methodology and the rationale behind the design choices were explained. The second part of Chapter 5 also presented the outcomes of the pilot interviews conducted using the initial propositions that were developed based on the theoretical results of literature review. The interview protocol was then modified, in light of the emerging findings of the pilot interviews. The updated protocol was then used to conduct interviews with participants in the four chosen case studies.

This chapter presents the detailed thematic analyses performed within each case. The interview transcripts were coded with mixed codes: marking the case, initial overarching theme, process code and the strength of association or presence of the process as expressed by the participant in the selected quote (being positive, partial, neutral or negative association if any). The negative associations were helpful in exploring some rival explanations for some of the expected associations. The resultant 'participant-ordered' matrices are attached in Appendices 4-7 for the four cases respectively.

A thematic analysis method (Miles et al. 2014) was chiefly followed for this part of the analyses; within-case analyses. The initial codes were aggregated into 'first order themes', which were then further condensed into 'second order themes'. The second order themes were eventually collated into 'overarching themes' such as accountability; engagement & trust; power & control; autonomy, coordination & collaboration; collaborative advantages; and collaborative inertias. The results of the thematic analysis for each case are discussed in detail in the following

sections. Following these 'within-case' analyses, the next chapter presents the 'cross-case' analyses.

The quotations of each participant were aggregated into the emerging 'second order themes', and this group of quotations were reviewed separately to judge whether the participant's responses strongly support the given association or theme, marked as (✓✓); agree with the association, marked as (✓), give neutral or mixed picture, marked as (○), or even negate the association or offer a rival explanation, marked as (X).

The strength of responses of participants across each theme was then analysed separately. Themes which have at least three participants supporting (or two participants for the cases with small number of participants; i.e. the second and fourth cases with nine and five participants respectively); or two participants and some solid secondary data and no plausible rival or negating opinion, were considered to be a plausible propositions. The second order themes, which explain these propositions in each case, are discussed in this chapter, generally in the order of their strength of presence in each case; i.e. starting with the themes that are strongly present or supported by the data.

Data from interviews are analysed herein, and validated with the collected secondary data such as published reports, un-published reports, minutes of meetings and web site search results.

6.2 Case 1 – Education Reform Board

This collaboration is the overarching network that has the overall responsibility of steering the education reform initiatives in Bahrain.

It is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, and comprises of members of MoE, MoL, EDB, Tamkeen and representatives of the private sectors (DPMO 2014)

6.2.1 Accountability

The first-order themes emerging from the responses in this network indicate that QQA public reporting is affecting accountability through the following second order themes, as discussed below, in the order of the strength of impact, as per the responses and the triangulation of these responses with the various sources of secondary data collected for the purpose of this project. Figure 6-1 below depicts the first order themes (as aggregated by the various codes), and how these are then condensed into second order themes.

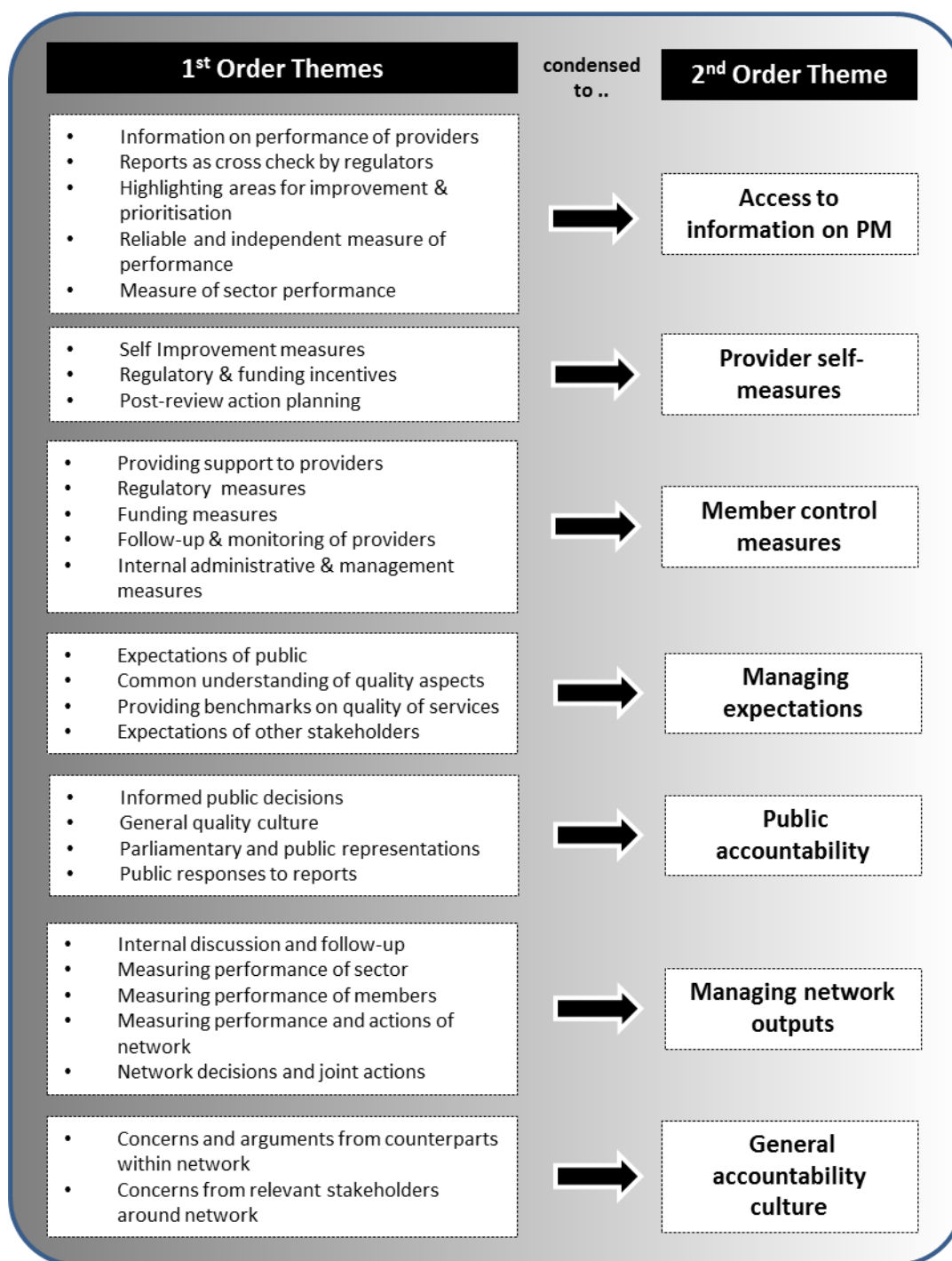


Figure 6 - 1: First and second order thematic analyses of impact on accountability in ERB

6.2.1.1 Access to information on PM

This represents the strongest impact here, 12 out of 14 participants indicated this association, out of which seven expressed it as a strong presence. Reporting of QQA outcomes helps this network by providing

reliable and independent measures of performance of providers, as well as the sector. This information, highlighting the main areas for improvement, can be used by members as an independent “cross-check” validating the information they already have. Bahrain did not have this information publicly accessible before the start of QQA. The importance of this information provision on accountability within the network is expressed by this excerpt:

"It was, it was kind of a mirror, or a second check to what is reported to the committee. So, for example, if a member of the committee who is responsible for a certain part of the educational system or an institution and he or she presented something about the performance of their institution within this committee, the QAA report was kind of a second measure that provided the committee members with information that might or might not be in the presentation that these people provided, so the impact of it was high on accountability... there is another source of information on their performance" (Participant No.8)

6.2.1.2 Member control measures

The second strongest impact of QQA reporting on accountability comes through the measures that member organisations of the network are encouraged to adopt. This theme was supported by the responses of 9 of 14, out of which 6 indicated strong correlation. This include regulatory measures (such as issuing notices and licensing/de-licensing decisions by MoE and MoL, regulatory funding by organisations such as Tamkeen and HCVT); follow-up and monitoring with failing providers, formal support schemes (such as that by MoE for public schools); or tightening internal administrative measures within these organisations. Participant No. 7 explains how these “internal control measures” have developed in response to QQA reporting:

"It definitely promotes [internal accountability]... I think these organisations are having those kinds of conversations because they are forced to look at the QAA, now it exists, it has disturbed the system, the system is responding definitely. So, within their own organisations, they are beginning to take note of the QAA independently of these committees even"

These responses are also supported by other secondary data collected from the MoE and MoL. In the schooling sector, the MoE have initiated the “School Improvement Programme” in response to the outcomes of the QQA review reports. The outlines of this programme were set initially at the overarching Bahrain National Economic Strategy (Initiative No.

2.3.2.1) (Economic Development Board, n.d., p.51). The programme started in 2008 and includes eight different initiatives (The Model Bahraini School, Partnership for Performance, Teaching for Learning, Leadership for Outcomes, Performance Management System, Intervention scheme for inadequate schools, Increase of schooling time, and Numeracy and Literacy Strategies). The programme was implemented in 10 schools in 2008, but increased to 107 schools in the 2012/2013 academic year (MoE 2011; 2013; 2014).

As far as the vocational training institutes are concerned, the MoL have initiated a team for following-up with failing institutes after they receive their review from the QQA. As secondary data, monthly reports from November 2013 to April 2014 were reviewed. The reports (unpublished) show that the Ministry carries out between 8 and 10 visits a month mainly for providers who got inadequate grade from the QQA. The notes also show the team get informed by the QQA reports, and closely follow the recommendations and the post-review action plans, in addition to other compliance criteria that MoL impose (MoL n.d.).

6.2.1.3 Managing expectations

According to 10 of 14 participants, QQA can impact accountability through managing the expectations of public and other stakeholders as to what good quality service should look like. It can manage the expectations, promote good understanding of quality constituents as well as providing "reliable and independent" benchmarks for people's expectations. This quotation exemplifies such an impact:

"It actually started something with [parents], some sort of exposure to something that didn't exist before ... parents would always believe in public schools regardless of whether they are performing well or not, because they didn't simply didn't have the tool that would showcase the level of performance within schools. So in terms of accountability with parents it did certainly improve it" (Participant No.13).

6.2.1.4 Public accountability

Linked with the theme of managing expectations is this theme of "public accountability". This theme was revealed in responses from nine participants (out of 14) but its correlation was not that strong. Moreover, three other participants gave neutral responses to this. Furthermore, in

reply to the question about challenges that hinder full utilisation of QQA reports in the network, public passivity was found to be one of the main challenges. Balancing these views, one can conclude that public accountability (through informing their decisions, improving general quality culture; or through the responses of the public or their representatives of the QQA reports) is starting to take effect, but has not reached its full potential. This will be further discussed and validated with some other secondary data collected by the researcher in the section about challenges later on. The following quotation clarifies this aspect:

"...the other thing is the transparency, we wanted to have some transparency, exposure to public means more pressure on members. It was part of this process, we wanted to have like a watchdog so we started seeing this impact of public pressure, even the parliament started questioning the ministers" (Participant No.20)

In contrast, Participant No.22 explains that there is a potential for the public to play a role in the schooling sector, but *"people don't care, see people have no option"*.

6.2.1.5 Managing network outputs

Having the necessary information on performance, the QQA reports can encourage more useful accountability function within the network by focusing the discussion and follow-up on the outputs of the networks, such as the relevant deliverables of the member organisations, or the related indicators of their performance, or progress of relevant programmes and hence take the necessary decisions or agreeing on joint actions. As an example of this, the minutes of meetings of the network show how QQA reports instigated discussion and follow-up on the "school improvement programme" in the MoE and the implementation of the "Higher Education Policy" of the HEC. This theme was reported by 8 of 14 participants. As an example, this quotation clarifies how QQA reports are used in the network:

"Well, accountability is the platform for our meetings, each member is reporting to the committee ... we started institutionalising the work of this committee, we needed a thermometer as a measuring tape, and this was the main reason behind the QAA existence ... we started depending more and more on the QAA reporting to know what's going on" (Participant No.20)

6.2.1.6 General accountability culture

Five of the interviewed participants in this network indicated a correlation, three of which are strong correlations, between QQA reporting and fostering a “general accountability culture” among the members in the network. This informal type of accountability happens through argument and discussion between members and their counterparts in the network, or with relevant stakeholders outside it. For example:

“one has to accept in many cases there is what we call a deterrent factor, deterrent factor by virtue of knowing that you are coming to be accountable to me, you will count it twice, you will check, you will make sure there is no mistake ... if nothing is found at that time there is nothing to prevent any member from reading it at home and going and picking up the phone and saying hey minister, I mean this is wrong ... it happened in many cases” (Participant No.16)

6.2.1.7 Provider self initiatives

One of the ways in which QQA reporting has impacted accountability in the ERB is through the self-initiatives that have been adopted by the service providers themselves, driven by various motives related to QQA reporting. This theme though is not strongly present, as it was reported by four participants from three different member organisations of the ERB. The theme represents the improvement measures initiated by providers themselves, or in responding to QQA post-review action planning (all providers are obliged to submit this to QQA); or improvement instigated by the available regulatory and funding incentives offered by the regulators and funding agencies, such as Tamkeen, MoL and HCVT; or to secure better competitive edge in the private sector. Participant No.22 explains such an impact:

“there was a competition, it was between training centres to take it to higher level, more stars and evaluation of the QAA ... [and this] was the whole idea of QAA is to improve the quality of training and education ... training centres were the same institutions that I dealt with, tried their best to please the QAA inspectors by actually improving whether in their curriculum in their environment, in their quality of teachers and instructors, and their links to external training and educational bodies”.

6.2.2 Engagement and trust

The title of the overarching theme for this section; “engagement and trust”, was slightly different than the title of the expected theme

originally: trust. As explained in the next sections, the responses of the participants and the other data collected go beyond mere “trust” and address the general engagement between members and the development of the inter-relationships, personal and organisational, between them.

The responses of the participants are analysed and aggregated into first-order themes, which were further aggregated into some second order-themes that explain how QQA reporting impacts engagement and trust between members in the ERB network, as summarised in Figure 6-2 below. Nevertheless, two themes were rejected; balancing of power (which was reported by one participant and was negated by another); and the “assurance and confirming with own perspectives” (which was supported by two but negated by a third participant, and a fourth had a mixed picture of it).

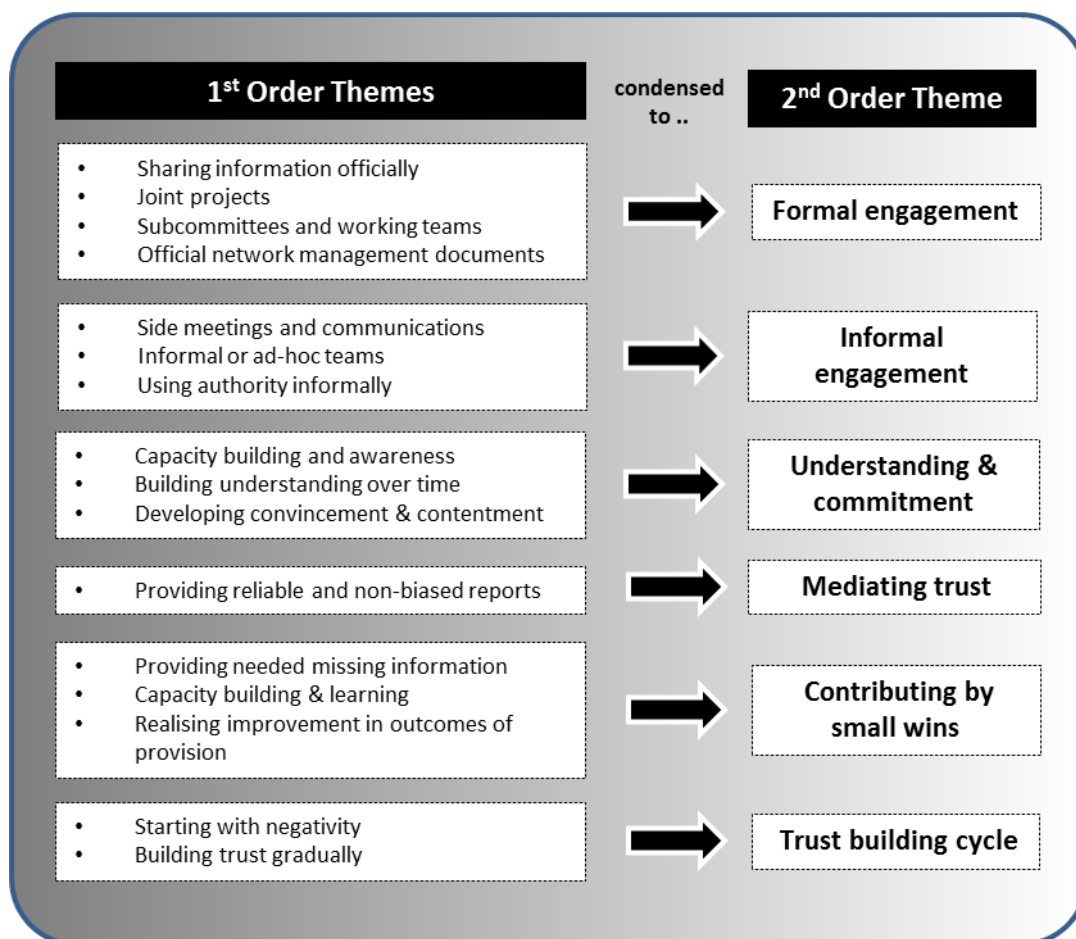


Figure 6 - 2: First and second order thematic analyses of impact on engagement and trust in ERB

6.2.2.1 Mediating trust

One of the strongest theme revealed here is the capacity of QQA to act as a medium to transfer trust between parties within and around the network's members. Eight of the 14 participants (with one strong correlation) confirmed a correlation between QQA reporting and engagement and trust levels, all of which converge to the ability of such reports to provide reliable and non-biased opinions about the performance of providers, the sector and indirectly the organisations in charge as well. One of the participants explains this as follows:

"The positive side, it creates trust in the system as a whole by the society because the society always looks at the system or a service that the government provides with a critical eye ... but if the government itself comes out and says well look we have got this area that we need to improve and they admit it and put it out there, that puts credibility, that improves trust" (Participant No.8).

6.2.2.2 Contributing by small wins

The second theme by which publicly reported PM helps in developing more trust here is through gradually letting members realise some benefits, or wins, either in the form of getting the needed information on PM, building more capacity and understanding between members and in the sector as a whole, or even starting to realise some improvement in the quality of education and training services. The gradual improvement in the quality of services is also evidenced in the secondary data collected for this research (discussed in the collaborative advantage section). Eight of the 14 participants (with one strong correlation) confirmed this correlation. The next excerpt exemplifies the impact of QQA reporting on trust and engagement building:

"let me give you an example, the school reviews, they saw that the initial reviews were not particularly favourable but after 12 months or 2 years they saw that results by large were getting better ... I think it helped the committee, it was important to them that the QAA data, the QAA reports to show that if you actually attended to these matters properly you could get improvement" (Participant No.17)

6.2.2.3 Trust building cycle

The responses of the participants describe a typical cycle of trust building (as explained in Chapter 3). The members showed some negativity at the beginning of their collaborative work, fuelled by QQA reporting,

uncertainty and some fears over losing power and control (due to emergence of QQA as a key player). The network then passed the stage of negativity and trust is being developed gradually with time and more interactions. In this theme, eight of the participants described this cycle. For example, Participant No. 16 put it in this way:

"we went through a phase of establishing the trust, at the beginning [the ministry] resisted, and not only resisted, they came time after time saying we have, we are going through change, we are reviewing we have the best syllabuses, we have the best that and that ... so it took us time but at the end they changed".

6.2.2.4 Understanding and commitment

Another theme which was reported by six participants (one indicated a strong correlation) is that of understanding and commitment that QQA reports help in developing as capacity building and awareness exercises, or through developing more understanding of quality issues over time, or through convincing members and developing more commitment to supporting the work of the network. Participant No.20 explains the efforts that were put in to the ERB to develop better understanding of QQA reporting and the common objectives of this network:

"trust was the main issue, you know the moment you say I will come and measure you, you always get this negativity, then we realise that we have to explain, we have to do a lot of side meetings going around explaining to the people"

6.2.2.5 Informal engagement

One of the ways that QQA reporting has influence is through developing more "informal" engagement between members. Five of the participants reported this association, either through side meetings and communications between members on subjects raised by QQA report findings, or working in ad-hoc teams to discuss some serious issues, or even using formal authority "informally" to encourage members to participate and respond actively to common objectives of the network. As an example, this quotation explains what happens in the ERB meetings:

"Yes, yes I have I have seen it, why? Because there were direction from the head, from the Deputy Prime Minister to come and say look gentleman these issues we need to correct them and we need to do something about them" (Participant No.13)

6.2.2.6 Formal engagement

To a lesser extent, 'developing more formal engagement' between parties in the ERB is evident, as was revealed by four participants in this case. Formal engagement in this case takes place in the form of sharing information officially between organisations (such as that between MoL, QQA and Tamkeen), joint projects (such as the higher education strategy project, and indirectly the occupational standards project of the MoL), sub-committees and working teams, and having some official documents, such as memoranda of understanding governing the collaborative work between members. On this aspect, one of the participants highlighted a counter-argument to the theme, which was regarding the sluggish engagement in the HE sector due to insufficient commitment between relevant members to the joint objectives. In other sectors however, this association is established, although only partially. Participant No.20 gives example of this formal engagement:

"what we did instead we made them sign the memorandum of understanding and we started cross boundary joint projects, for example; the numeracy and literacy project, this was a clear area for improvement from the QAA reporting, so jointly and based on this report we initiated the project on numeracy and literacy".

6.2.3 Power and control

The third overarching theme by which QQA public reporting is impacting the dynamics of ERB is through "power & control". It must be noted here that the overall impact on the profile of actual power is negligible; however the actual impact was mostly of "perceived power". The data collected here support four themes (as depicted in Figure 6-3 below), whilst not supporting one theme about creating "collective power" for the network.

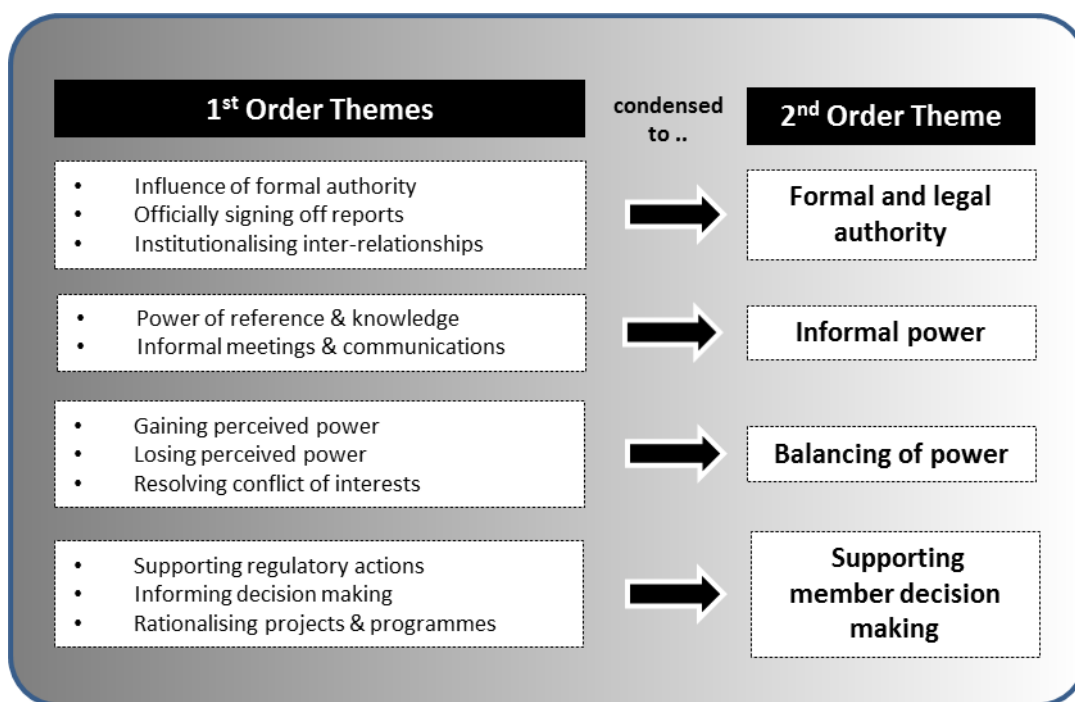


Figure 6 - 3: First and second order thematic analyses of impact on power and control in ERB

6.2.3.1 Supporting member decision making

The most supported theme here is about the use of QQA report outcomes by the ERB network to support their own regulatory, control and funding decisions; informing their own decisions; rationalising their own projects and programmes. Six participants, five of which offer strong association, clearly support the correlation between QQA reporting and supporting decision making by the ERB members. This is also further supported by the secondary data. For example, MoL, Tamkeen and HCVT use the outcomes of the reports to inform their funding allocation for training providers (mainly depriving inadequate providers from government sponsorships and f). This linkage was made explicit in the Memorandum signed between MoL, Tamkeen, HCVT and QQA (Bahrain News Agency 2010). The following quotation gives an example of a supporting argument for this theme:

"Some of my projects that were standing little chance to be accepted by the committee, have more chance now for approval, for example, I have presented recently our project about "skill testing centres" hoping that the government will appreciate its importance, especially that some of the QQA reports, directly or indirectly, support the need for such project" (Participant No.37)

6.2.3.2 Balancing of power

Six of the participants report various impacts of QQA reporting on the soft side of the “power and control” dimension, which is the perceived power (gaining or losing), in addition to its partial impact on resolving some of the conflict of interest in the sector by being an independent organisation in charge of measuring the performance, as opposed to the earlier situation where this was left to the regulators and providers themselves. Three more participants gave neutral opinions about this theme. This impact on the perceived power is evident, for example, in the following response of Participant No.22:

“If you look at it the other way, as an unautocratic way, dominating way then people lost power, or their power reduced because there’s an external body which says no this is what’s happening”

6.2.3.3 Formal and legal power

Five of the participants (out of 14) indicated some impacts of QQA reporting through various channels of formal and legal authority that the ERB has access to. This was clear for example in the formal authority of signing off all QQA reports by the Prime Minister’s Office. There were also some cases of use of formal authority, since the ERB is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, to influence and push some items on the agenda, such as the “school improvement project” and the strategy for improvement of the University of Bahrain. The network also observed some attempts to legally institutionalise the inter-relationships between the parties around the table.

“this is why we have to make all the reports signed by the [Prime Minister’s Office], this gives it more power, this gives the ownership of this report by the committee and this helped ease the possible negativity or the negative impact from the QAA reporting” (Participant No.20)

6.2.3.4 Informal power

In addition to the formal and legal forms of power, there was some evidence of softer or informal types of power, for example, the power of knowledge and reference status in meetings and communication that some parties have assumed such as the QQA. This theme is evident but not in a strong way as it was reported by three participants; here is as example of this power, referring to some discussion in the ERB meetings:

"and obviously also some people gained power, those who scored well. You know got trust, got praise, you know people were pointing at them, saying look at that person they did very well on the report, you know they got thanked and perceived power" (Participant No.13)

6.2.4 Autonomy, collaboration and coordination

As is the case with trust, the title of this overarching theme was changed in line with the data collected and the responses of the participants, which suggest that the impact of QQA reporting on the autonomous status of members was not that evident, however, what it did in this case, was to promote more collaboration and coordination between members. Participant No.21 summarises this point:

"today, the work is no longer in silos, people have to work collaboratively and in joint committees, and this is the philosophy in the [ERB]. Still you can see the organization have their own decisions, no change in this".

One theme about creating additional conflict of interests was not supported, and hence was not considered as a second order theme in this analysis. Figure 6-4 depicts the thematic analysis of this dimension.

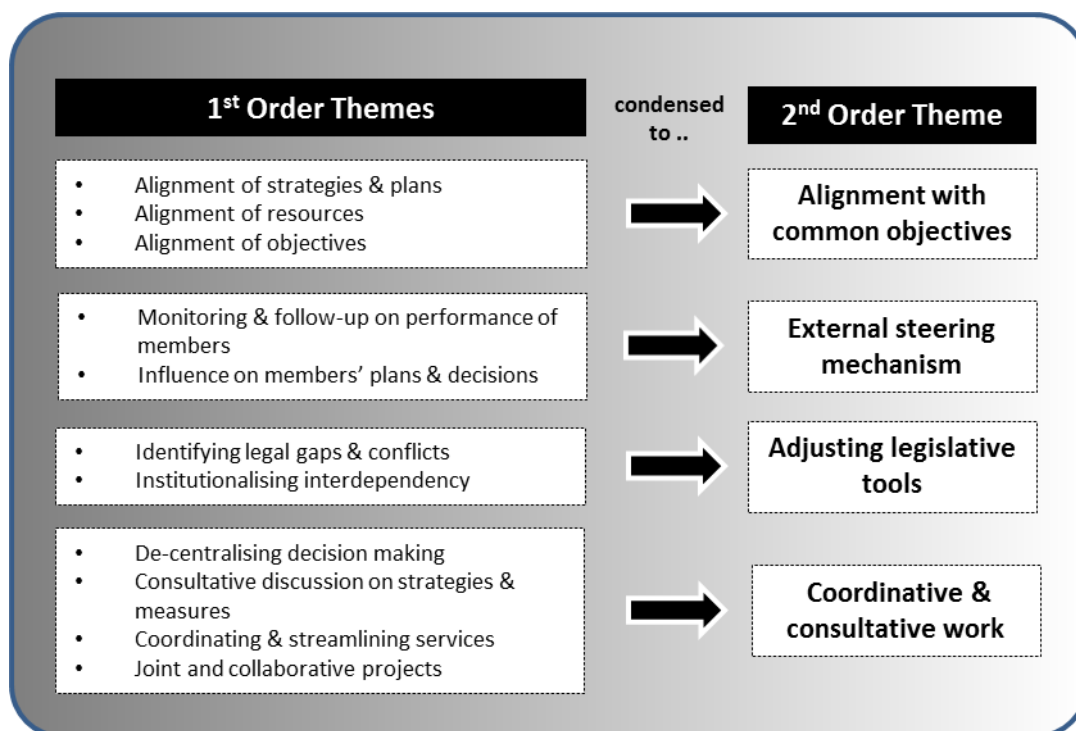


Figure 6 - 4: First and second order thematic analyses of impact on autonomy, collaboration and coordination in ERB

6.2.4.1 Coordinative and consultative work

QQA reporting has obviously encouraged the network to work more collaboratively, consult each other on key strategies and plans, take some key decisions in more collegial fashion (without affecting the actual autonomy of members to decide on their own measures) and to start embarking on some collaborative projects, such as the Higher Education Strategy. Six participants confirmed this association, two of which indicated strong association indeed. The following is a quotation that exemplifies this concept:

"[the QQA report] has empowered our decisions more through the coordination with all members. If you ask [the QQA], we support them in their projects, and they participate with us in our projects. It is no more that bureaucracy and the decisions of one organisation, we work together and this have helped all of us a lot" (Participant No. 37)

6.2.4.2 External steering mechanism

This theme is partially present. It was reported by four participants, and one gave a mixed picture of it. The QQA reporting encourages the usage of its outcomes in the ERB to monitor the progress and performance of the member organisations, as well as to influence their plans, hence presenting rather a soft "external steering" mechanism for the network. The minutes of the committee show number of such cases where plans and strategies are discussed following review of QQA outcomes, and the same plans then followed upon in the subsequent meetings. Participant No.7 clarifies this mechanism as follows:

"In the ERB, I would say the committee has definitely become, if they want to make a decision, they have definitely also because of this objective report become more powerful ... they can say well Ministry, we want you to respond to this report, why is it like this, why is this report showing this. So, now, they have something to go by. If there is no QAA, the ERB would have to rely completely on the ministry"

6.2.4.3 Alignment with common objectives

The third theme that emerges here, although not strong, is the theme about aligning strategies, plans, resources and objectives of the individual member organisations towards the common objectives of the network. This was reported by three participants, for example this one:

"the ERB is one of the most successful committees we have had, because it has helped us realising our common goal of aligning the outcomes of education and training to the labour market needs ... it is so important to bring all the ministers in charge along with the QQA under one roof to plan together for common objectives ... we, for example, discussed the plan for the new "occupational standards", the "national labour market observatory" and the "skill testing centres", all such programmes complement each other" (Participant No.37)

6.2.4.4 Adjusting legislative tools

Although this was not strongly evident in the responses, as only three participants reported this association, the secondary data support this theme further. For example, in the training sector, a committee was formed between MoL, QQA, MoE and others to reform the vocational training law (Law 25 Committee). The essence of the new changes is to accommodate the existence of QQA and to achieve better coordination between the parties involved. The data show that the committee has made good progress towards finalising the new law. The QQA reports have helped the committee in revealing some gaps in the existing legislative tools, which then pushed the members towards institutionalising the necessary coordination between the members in the revamped tools. Here is a quotation that clarifies such an impact:

"We are starting finding gaps and we're trying to bridge these gaps, we started to realise that there is some conflict between bylaws in the institutional tools. QQA also in some cases highlighted some of these deficiencies and we are trying to help in overcoming this conflict of interest and to issue new bylaws and institutional tools" (Participant No.20).

6.2.5 Collaborative advantage

This overarching theme aggregates all the evident advantages, or impacts, that the ERB managed to achieve collaboratively, with the input of QQA review reports. The impacts are condensed into five themes, as illustrated in Figure 6-5 below. One theme, reported by one participant only, about collective capacity and action has not been considered here. Although there are some examples of joint or collaborative actions, participants view the direct advantage in having better coordination and seamless work, rather than collective capacity. The challenges cited in the next section also support this proposition, that the ERB has so far been successful in improving the coordination between parties, but not the extent that it can be considered as an explicit collective action.

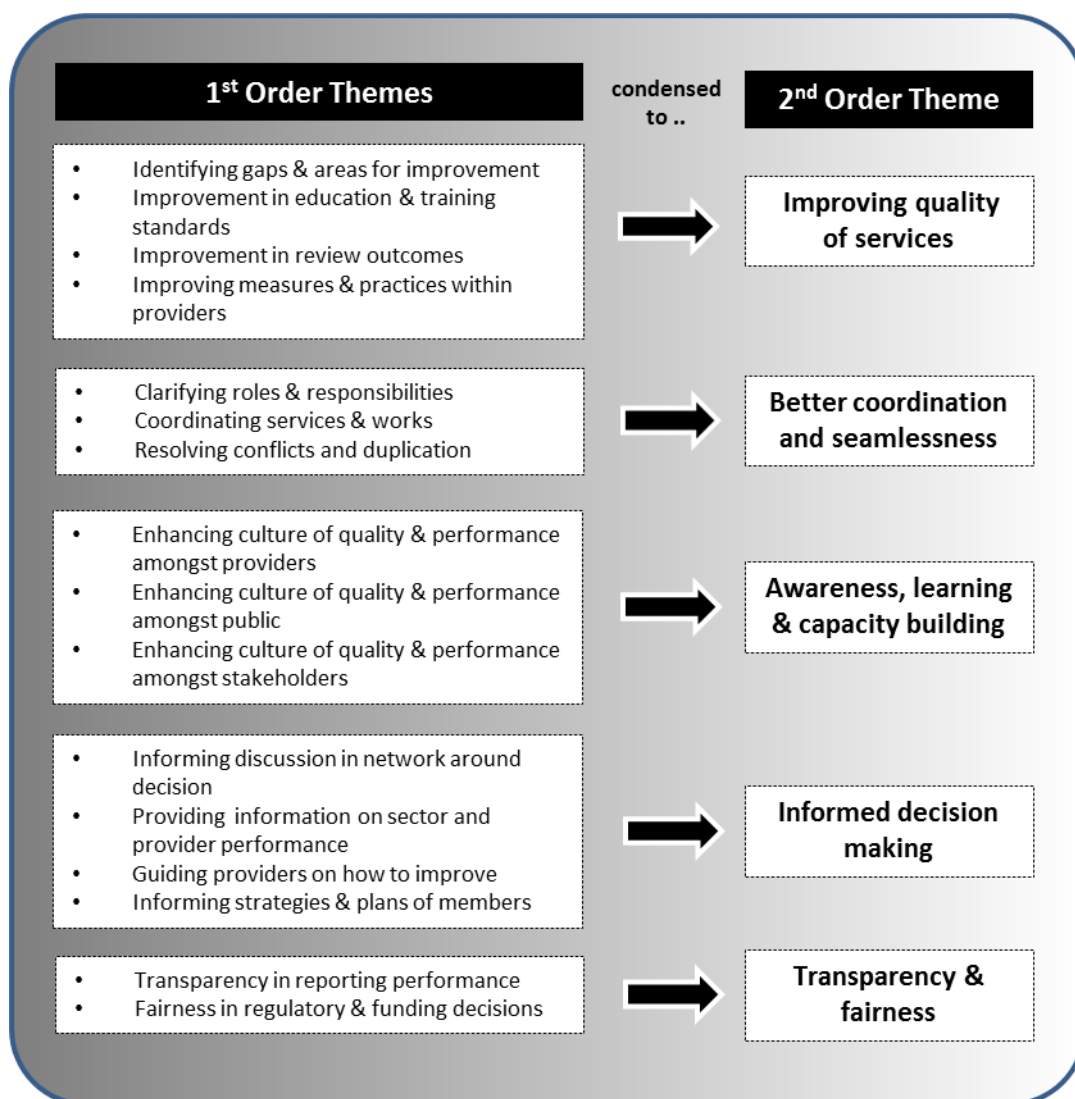


Figure 6 - 5: First and second order thematic analyses of impact on collaborative advantage in ERB

6.2.5.1 Informed Decisions

This theme is the strongest advantage coming out from the data. Nine of the participants suggest this association, five of which perceive it as a strong association. This theme summarises the role of QQA reports in providing the necessary information for decision making by the member organisations, the network or the providers themselves, as to be used to inform the decisions and plans for further improvement. This strong association also tallies with the themes of “supporting member decision making”, under power dimension, and the themes about “provider” and “member self-measures”, under the dimension of accountability. The four

themes complete the picture that QQA reporting has a strong impact by providing the necessary information that helps providers and members to take informed decisions, individually within their organisations, or collectively in the network. The following participant expresses this advantage of QQA reporting in the ERB:

"Recently there was a very important paper put in front of the committee on the employability agenda ... I think the conversation came from QQA reports to say look QQA reports are showing that there is room for improvement ... all of this debate and conversation was triggered by the QQA reports and it's been proposed by the committee and big decisions were taken. So, yes obviously, I think the QQA has been very influential in that sense" (Participant No.8)

6.2.5.2 Awareness, learning and capacity building

With nine participants confirming the association, three of them strongly, the second strongest advantage emerging in the ERB case is the enhancing of awareness, learning and capacity building of providers, members and stakeholders on quality assurance related issues. This theme indeed goes in line with the other related themes, such as the "managing expectations" of the accountability dimension; and the "understanding & commitment" of the trust and engagement dimension. The collected data on formal capacity building by QQA, Tamkeen and MoE support this theme as well. For example, Tamkeen has embarked on an official programme called Training and Education Providers Support (TEPS). This programme aims at building capacities amongst all training and education providers, in all sectors, across the Kingdom. So far 49 various workshops have benefited a total of 814 individuals from various training and education providers (Tamkeen 2014).

The following excerpt summarises the overall impact of QQA reporting in this regard:

"[QQA reporting] created an environment where people start to focus on pretty high outcomes" (Participant No.6)

6.2.5.3 Better coordination and seamlessness

The third theme of advantages that is realised in the ERB with the help of QQA reporting is the achieving of better coordination of services, helping in clarifying roles and responsibilities, and revealing any conflicts, overlapping or duplication of such roles and activities. The theme has

been supported by eight participants, but nevertheless, two other participants indicated a neutral stance on this. This indicates that the ERB is improving in this regard, but is still not up to the full expectations of the members. The secondary data gives the same conclusion as well. There have been serious starts with regards to the coordination between MoL, Tamkeen and QQA. Another attempt, although less serious, has been in the higher education sector. To clarify his impact, the next participant is quoted:

"Streamlining the services! ... so you don't have two doing the same thing ... we had after this we had better streamlined services, and therefore, in theory, should be better product and of course it should be less corrupt and more efficient" (Participant No.16)

6.2.5.4 Transparency and fairness

The fourth theme that comes up here is the impact of QQA reporting on fostering transparency, in reporting performance, and fairness in regulatory and funding decisions. Six of the participants highlighted this as an advantage of the collaboration, as exemplified in the next extract:

"Yeah, well I mean that's part of the whole process, the transparency, is to make the public aware of the schools, because if I want to put my son or my girl in a school I have to make sure that the school is good" (Participant No.24)

6.2.5.5 Improving quality of services

The ultimate overarching advantage that ERB is set to achieve is improving the education and training services in Bahrain. It might be early to realise some clear and solid trend of improvement in the services, but the responses of participants have suggested that there is some improvement taking place. Eight of them have noted this improvement, whilst one suggested that:

"Six years old, still young, still a very young organisation and I don't think we have seen the full impact and potential of the QAA. Educational system, reformed educational system, takes usually 20 years before you can see real results because you need a generation to go through" (Participant No.8).

Participant No.17 observes a clear improvement in the standards of school (although not all participants observe the same extent of improvement):

"let me give you an example, the school reviews, they saw that the initial reviews were not particularly favourable but after 12 months or 2 years they saw that results by large were getting better, and if you unpacked a lot of school reports for example lessons being taught were much better".

Analysing the available secondary data collected for this research gives a picture of slight improvement overall. The data analysed here are mainly extracted from the QQA recent annual report for the academic year 2013/2014 (QQA 2014).

Basic schooling:

In the government schools sector, the picture shows no significant improvement overall in the grades awarded by QQA school reviews, comparing the first cycle of reviews (2008-2011) with the second cycle nearing completion now (2011-2013). Figure 6-6 below shows such comparison of grade profiles of all the schools. There is an obvious improvement trend in the schools which have been judged 'outstanding', and a slight decrease in 'inadequate' schools (drop of 3%). The bulk of schools, falling in 'good' and 'satisfactory', show no significant change, if not slight decrease in performance.

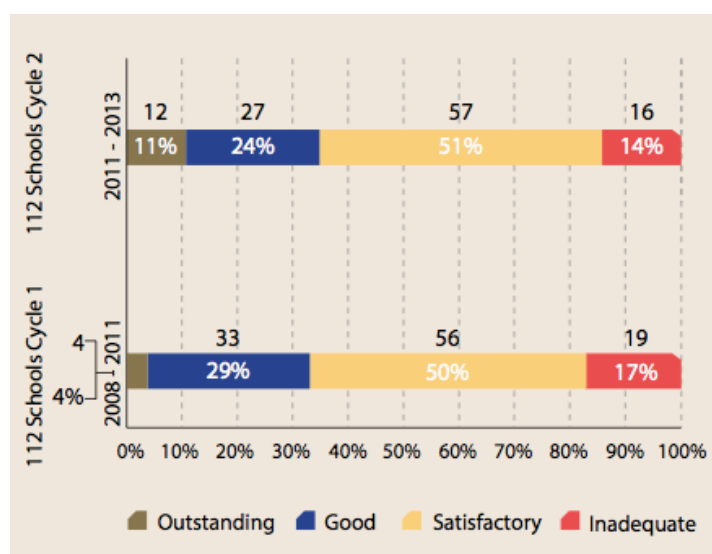


Figure 6 - 6: Overall effectiveness of government schools reviewed in Cycles 1 and 2 – Source: (QQA 2014b)

As far as private schools are concerned, the QQA started reviewing them only recently. So far, there have been 35 review reports published on private schools. No comparison can be made, but results thus far show a

high percentage of 'inadequate' schools (37%), which is a major concern indeed (Figure 6-7)

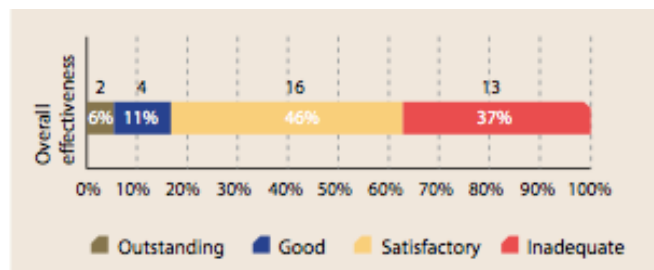


Figure 6 - 7: Overall effectiveness of 35 private schools reviewed so far – Source: (QQA 2014b)

The other measure that can be used here is the performance of schools in the central 'National Examinations' that are conducted by the QQA for the subjects and grades detailed in Table 6-1 below. Apart from English Grade 9, the mean performance scores show that the performance¹ of students decreased in all grades in all subjects. The QQA report notes this decreasing trend and raises this question "Are students' and teachers' initial enthusiasm and excitement with the national examinations waning, particularly since the national examinations do not count towards students' Grades and promotion to the next year?" (QQA, 2014b, p.47)

¹ "Performance of students is measured and reported by a performance score on a scale from 0.0 to 8.0. The performance score is an absolute measure that is based on an absolute ability scale derived from a Rasch model within item response theory. It is a measure of students' ability against the skills and topics in the test specifications. The national average performance score was defined as 4.0 in the first year of assessment (2009 for Grades 3 and 6 and 2010 for Grade 9) as the baseline against which to measure future years' performance. Test equating enables the comparison of the performance of the subsequent years against the baseline years' performance" (QQA, 2014b, p.46)

Table 6 - 1: Mean performance scores in national examinations – Source: (QQA 2014b)

Grade	Subject	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
3	Arabic	4.0	4.05	3.70	2.69	1.99
	Mathematics	4.0	4.35	3.40	2.05	1.52
6	Arabic	4.0	3.90	2.50	1.74	0.96
	Mathematics	4.0	4.05	2.50	1.83	0.70
	English	4.0	4.05	3.30	2.47	1.29
	Science	4.0	4.05	2.85	1.94	1.47
9	Arabic	-	4.0	2.75	1.51	1.07
	Mathematics	-	4.0	3.85	1.77	1.69
	English	-	4.0	4.05	3.31	3.59
	Science	-	4.0	2.80	1.27	0.67

When international measures of performance, such as the results of the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) are applied, the results show little but irregular improvement as shown in the next graphs, taken from the TIMSS web site. The available data from Bahrain are only for Grade 8 students. Bahrain has participated in Grade 4 tests as well, but the results are excluded from the analyses, since it is the only year available for these graders.

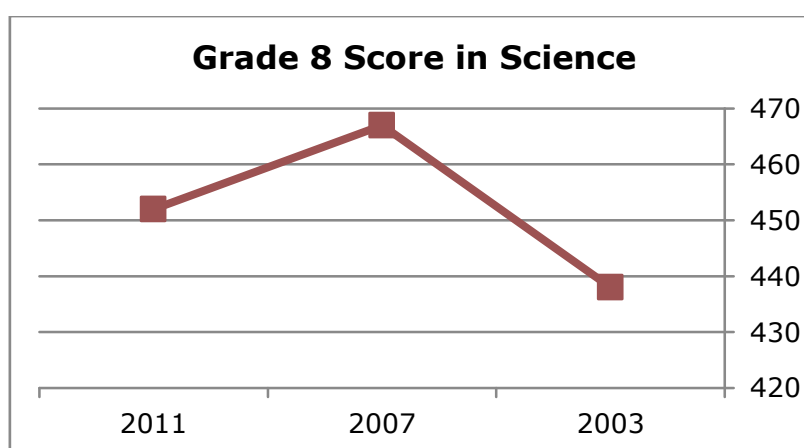


Figure 6 - 8: Bahrain average TIMSS score in Science (Source: TIMSS 2014)

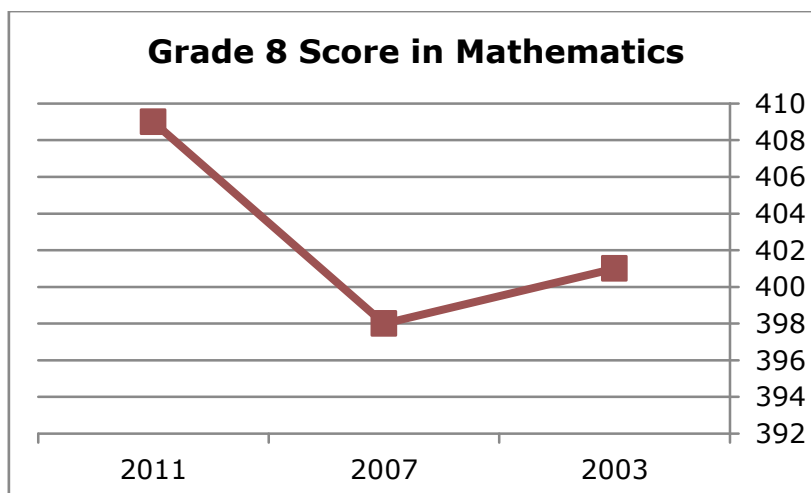


Figure 6 - 9: Bahrain average TIMSS score in Mathematics (Source: TIMSS 2014)

Tertiary vocational training:

The picture in this sector is brighter. The results of QQA review grades for the vocational training institutes in Bahrain show good improvement overall. Figure 6-10 below compares the grades available so far from Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 of QQA reviews. The grade profile reveals that 42% of the institutes have improved by at least one grade.

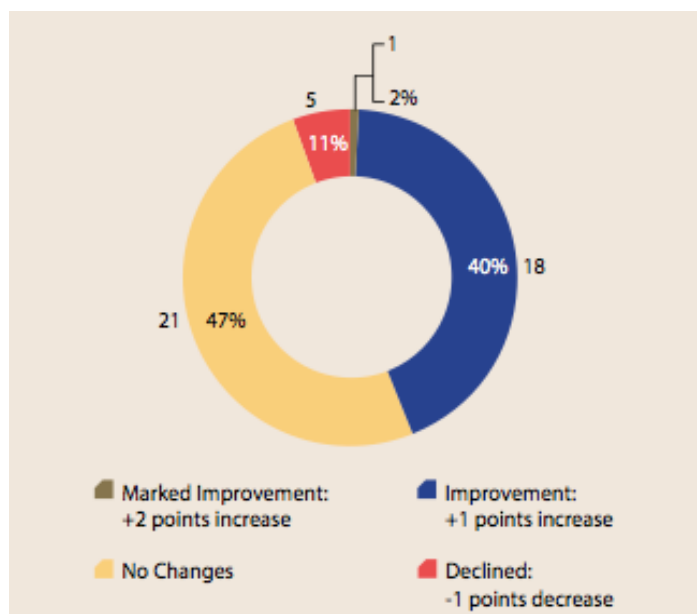


Figure 6 - 10: Changes in review grades of vocational training providers – Source: (QQA 2014b)

Higher education:

The picture in the higher education sector has been mixed, summed up precisely in the concluding remark of the QQA report:

"While most institutions have made some progress in managing the quality of their education provision, the extent of improvement has been varied. As institutions did not start from the same baseline, for some the climb to become a quality provider of higher education is very steep. For some of those institutions this can only be achieved through incremental improvements that will take a considerable time to get to a minimum threshold of quality. Although institutions may have made adequate progress in addressing the recommendations, it has to be recognised that coming from a very low baseline may mean that they still do not come close to offering a quality learning experience for their students. Evidence of this can be seen in the continuous receiving of 'no confidence' or 'limited confidence' judgements in reviews of their programmes. These poor performing institutions are likely to have a negative impact on the lives and careers of young Bahrainis" (QQA 2014b, p.82).

QQA conducts three types of reviews for HE institutes: programme-within-college reviews, institutional reviews; and institutional follow-up reviews. The only comparison that can be made here, to show the progress thus far, is in the results of the institutional follow-up reviews (conducted a year after publishing the first institutional review report). Figure 6-11 below depicts the results so far, which show that half of the institutions managed to make at least adequate progress.

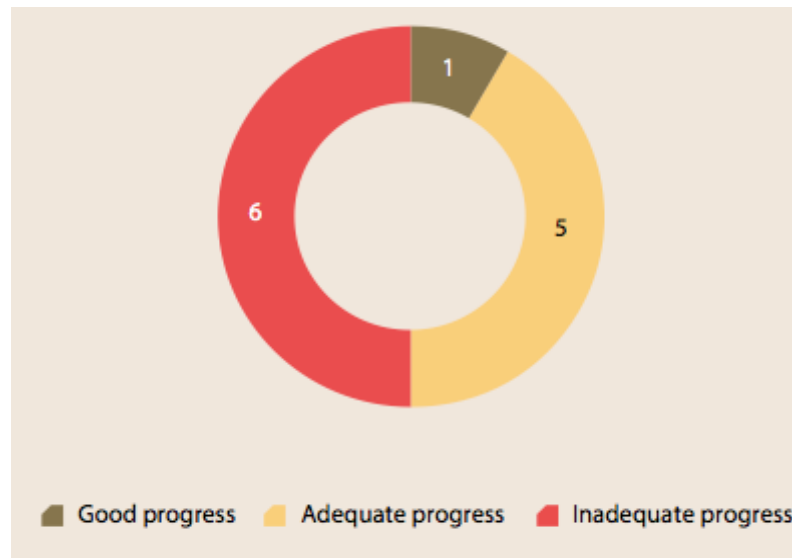


Figure 6 - 11: Results of institutional follow-up reviews in HE – Source: (QQA 2014b)

6.2.6 Collaborative inertia

In this theme, the main challenges that face the ERB network, or the collaborative inertia, are grouped into six key themes. These will be discussed one-by-one in the next sections. As can be noted, although the participants have listed a number of challenges, their presence does not stop the collaboration from achieving advantages, they rather hinder the utilisation of QQA reporting and the collaborative capacity to its full potential. The next figure depicts the main collaborative inertias in the ERB:

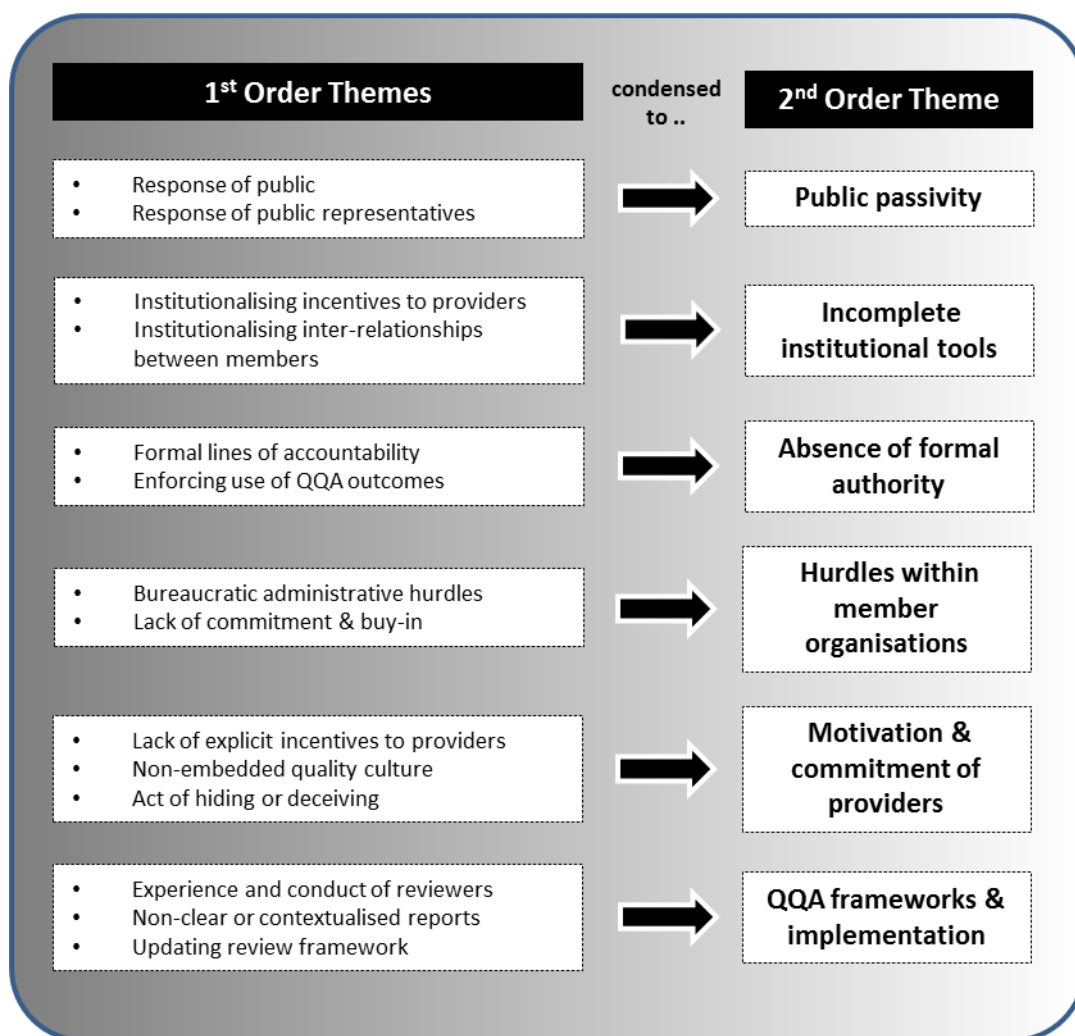


Figure 6 - 12: First and second order thematic analyses of impact on collaborative inertia in ERB

6.2.6.1 Public passivity

At the top of these collaborative inertia comes the “public passivity”. Whilst the main concept of QQA is public reporting, the passive response of the public, or their representatives, to the QQA reporting has been recognised as one of the main inertia that hinders the full utilisation of QQA reporting. Five participants see this as a challenge, whilst one takes a neutral position. The following response exemplifies this challenge:

"To my knowledge the public is very passive, and as far as I'm concerned it is one of those issues that I personally has insisted because in every country in every sort of developed nation in the west, the parents are really the driving force after any educational system, they are the force who force changes in the system ... I don't think it is happening today but

it is therefore to happen one day Inshallah in the future” (Participant No.16).

For the purpose of this research, data were collected regarding the response of the public in three different media: 1) the first one is the number of visits made by public to the QQA web site (hosting all education and training providers’ review reports); 2) number of written articles published versus official press cuttings in one of the widely distributed local newspaper; and 3) number of parliamentary proposals and questions raised by the two chambers of Bahrain’s Parliament (the publicly elected Council of Representatives, and the appointed Shura Council). The data from the three sources indeed support the proposition of public passivity.

The number of visits to the QQA web site shows no increase in the overall trend as depicted by Table 6-2 below.

Table 6 - 2: Number of visits to QQA web pages

Year	Page Views
2009	5,494
2010	44,629
2011	29,736
2012	49,148
2013	104,741 ²
2014 (till July 2014)	20,241

The data collected from the second source also support this trend. Despite the marked increase in official press releases on various education and training quality review outcomes, the written interaction has not been significant, as depicted in Figure 6-13 below.

A search in the Representative and Shura council archives also produced an insignificant number of proposed legislations, or preliminary questions

² The sudden jump in number of hits in 2013 is due mainly to technical testing of a new web site, according to a QQA official.

concerning the quality of education and training, in response to QQA reporting.

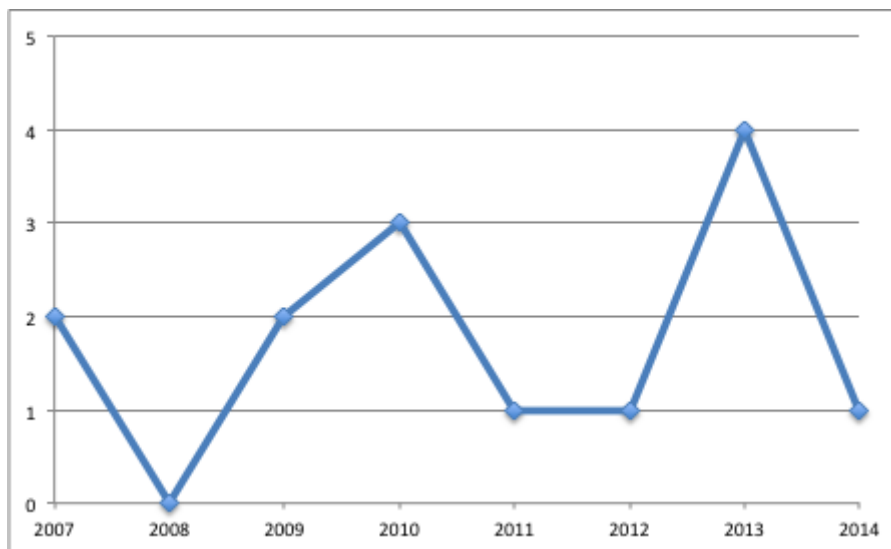


Figure 6 - 13: Number of columns that contain all the words "quality education training" in Al Wasat Newspaper archive (from 2007 - Oct 2014) – Source: Compiled by Researcher from Al-Wasat Newspaper search engine

The data collected from the archives of the Council of Representatives and Shura Council also support the same conclusion. The annual reports of the Council of Representatives in the last two Convening Periods (the second Period from 2006-2010, and the third Period from 2010-2014), members raised four questions to ministers in the Cabinet informed, but indirectly, by issues raised by QA reports. For the same periods, there was one law proposal and two questions raised by members of Shura Council. The questions and the proposal were all weakly linked with QQA reports' findings. This shows once again ineffective utilisation of QA public reporting by the representatives of public in this case.

6.2.6.2 Motivation and commitment of providers

The second inertia to collaboration is the lack of sufficient motivation and commitment amongst service providers, which might come as a result of non-explicit incentives or punishment schemes, or when quality assurance procedures are not embedded enough in the provider organisations. This might result in some negative attitudes towards quality review, when providers try to present a picture that does not mirror the truth inside their organisations. The last phenomenon is expressed by this participant:

"but of course one of the problems that QAA faces is that because of the powerless state, because of the poor state of our schooling system, particularly on technical school system, virtually, every report is bad for [them] ... there is still a culture where we try hide things" (Participant No.6)

6.2.6.3 Hurdles within member organisations

The third challenge that ERB faces stems from the bureaucratic and administrative hurdles within the member organisations in implementing the strategies or reform initiatives, or from the lack of strong commitment or buy-in amongst some members in the network. This challenge is not that strong however; it has been noted by four participants, one of them explains how one project was struggling to make progress in the committee:

"I think the [member organization] just decided to take no notice of [the QQA reports]" (Participant No.17).

6.2.6.4 QQA framework and implementation

The fourth challenge lies in the QQA review frameworks or the ways these are conducted. This theme includes issues pertaining to the review framework, or the review reports not written in clear or contextualised language, or in the experience or conduct of review teams (as perceived by members). Again, this is not a strong challenge; it was noted by only four participants in this committee. The following note exemplifies this concern that some members have about QQA conduct:

"There is not enough contextualisation of the judgments, for example if you consider the learning environment criteria, you cannot simply apply in a school that has 200 students the same way you apply it in a big school of 1900 students. These issues need to be considered" (Participant NO.35)

6.2.6.5 Absence of formal authority

Although formal authority has some influence in this committee, some challenge remains in having clear and explicit lines of accountability within the network, as well as in enforcing the use of QQA report outcomes, as perceived by three participants. Participant No.7 explains the extent of this challenge in the ERB:

"If you want to talk about strictly accountability, that is a very big problem actually in all of these committees that there is no accountability structure in place, officially".

6.2.6.6 Incomplete institutional tools

Despite the recent attempts to institutionalise the inter-relationships between members in the vocational and higher education sectors, the network still needs more in this regard, especially in institutionalising incentives to providers, and fully institutionalising the engagement and inter-relationships between members and stakeholders. Nevertheless, this inertia remains a weak one, as it was reported by only three participants. The next quotation is an example of this theme:

"Yes, it is important to develop the legislative instruments, and to recognize formally the policy of punishments and rewards for the providers" (Participant No.32)

6.3 Case 2 – Higher Education Steering Committee (HESC)

The second network is the Higher Education Steering Committee (HESC). It comprises of members from the QQA, HEC, Tamkeen and the EDB. The network is chaired by the Chief Executive of the QQA.

The following sections discuss the results of analyses of data from the interviews as well as those collected as secondary data for this research.

6.3.1 Accountability

The data show that the QQA reporting impacts accountability, to various degrees, in HESC through six main themes, as depicted in Figure 6-14 below. Following are brief discussions of these six "second order themes. Three of the expected themes; "managing network outputs", "general accountability culture" and "balancing power and control" were not supported with sufficient data, and hence were not considered.

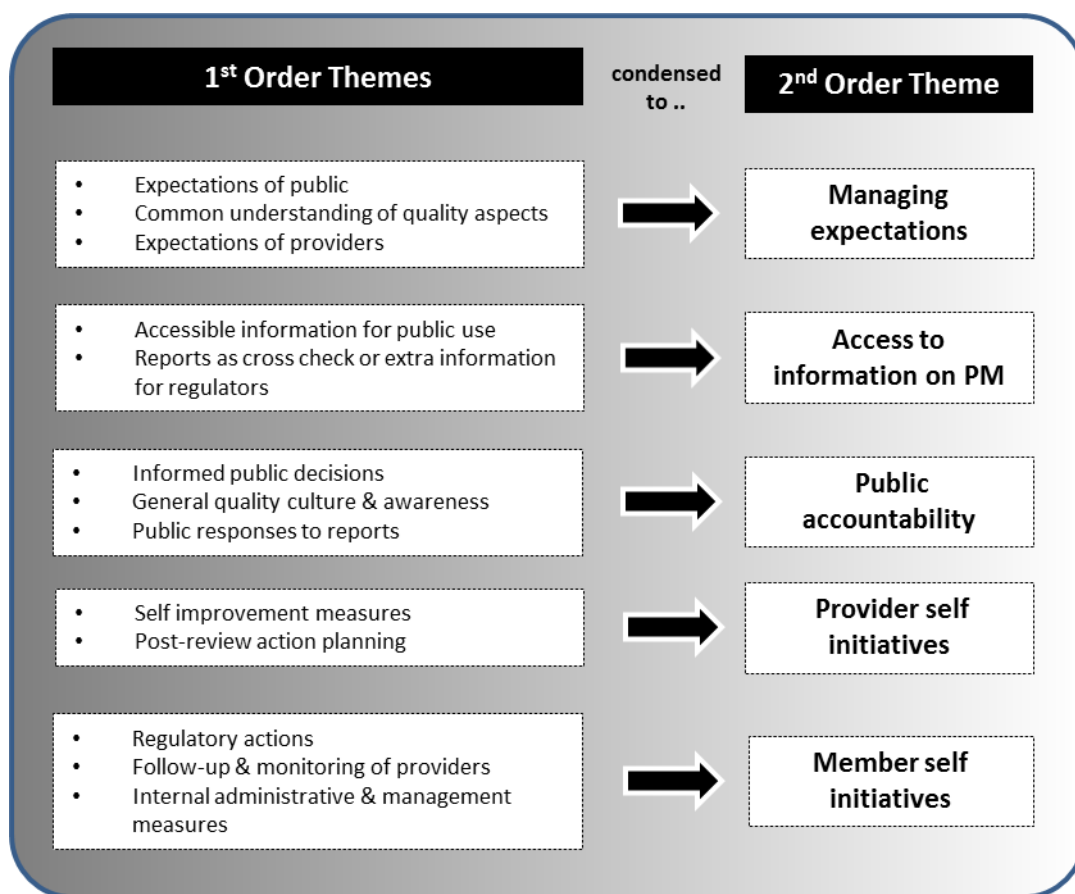


Figure 6 - 14: First and second order thematic analyses of impact on accountability in HESC

6.3.1.1 Access to information on PM

The strongest way in which QQA reporting impacts accountability in HESC is through providing the necessary access to information on performance of providers, or the sector, for the public as well as for other stakeholders, to be used for their own decisions and control. As for all the cases, information on PM of providers and sectors was made accessible for the first time since the start of the QQA in Bahrain. Prior to this, such information data was not made readily accessible. All nine participants agree on this theme; two of them perceive it as a strong association. Participant No.34, for example, describes this impact as follows:

"[QQA reports] provided information, providing information I think strengthens one's accountability more than it basically affects it."

6.3.1.2 Provider self initiative

The second theme that affects accountability in HESC is through the self-initiatives that HE providers take, either on their own for the sake of improving their institutions, or through the formal action planning after QQA reviews. Six participants see this as an existing association, five of them strongly. This theme is expected, since the majority, 12 out of 14, HE institutions are private, and have no option but to take serious measures and improve to sustain competitiveness. This excerpt exemplifies this theme:

"Of course like if I am a university president and if I've been receiving a recommendation from the quality assurance, I can take it to my board and my board of course will give me the facility will give me all all"
(Participant No.33)

6.3.1.3 Member self initiatives

Another strong association is related to the measures that members take, on their own, to regulate the sector better, follow-up and monitor the HE providers, or to adopt certain internal measures to tighten control and accountability within their own organisations. This theme also includes the steps taken by the regulators to link regulatory measures, such as admission into programmes and colleges, with the outcomes of the HE institution in the QQA reviews. Eight of the nine participants confirm this association; out of them six indicate strong association. This quotation explains the impact of such regulatory measures, informed by QQA reports, on the sector:

"I think now you know that there has been public, in the newspaper, they have closed universities, they have stopped programmes, I think that the sector as a whole can see that" (Participant No.3)

6.3.1.4 Public accountability

In the HE sector, the public plays a role in relations to the accountability, as confirmed by five participants. This is expected as almost half the students in HE institutions are self-sponsored, and hence one would expect that they, and their parents, will be bothered by the quality of services they pay for. This, however, was not translated into clear solid actions, in the parliament for example, as per the data collected by the researcher.

"Pressure from the public! People know that there are so many institutions going around for example providing not acceptable education and this is not what we want, this is not what the Kingdom wants and not any family wants. So basically it does provide pressure and I think that having such a pressure is wise and healthy" (Participant No.27)

6.3.1.5 Managing expectations

Related to the previous theme, QQA reporting also helps in shaping the expectations, and common understanding, of the general public and providers of quality education and its constituents. This was not strongly supported by the views of the participants, with three confirming and two giving mixed opinions. The next extract exemplifies such an impact:

"Yes people are aware of our standards, they are aware of the quality assurance mechanism and how quality assurance will impact ... it is a step to improve your current process and above all it is developing a mechanism to ensure that there is effectiveness within our processes" (Participant No.33)

6.3.2 Engagement and trust

The second overarching theme, of the impacts of QQA in this network, is about the engagement between the members and the inter-personal and inter-organisational trust amongst them. It is evident here that QQA reporting can influence this through four main themes, as illustrated in Figure 6-15 below.

In this network, the impact on engagement and trust is not that profound. Four of the initially expected themes, as in the conceptual model, were not evident; "informal engagement", "contribution by small wins", "balancing of power", and "assurance and confirming own perspectives". These were either not supported enough, or some disconfirming notes were made, as in the case of "assurance and confirmation of own perspectives", as expressed by Participant No.30:

"Question marks, yeah sometimes ... they might question that how come this institution for example got this kind of judgement whereas from like they feel based on their own data that they have probably that this is not so accurate ... It's not up to their expectation".

This rival explanation of the last theme might explain partially the weakening, along with other factors, of the engagement and trust building in this network.

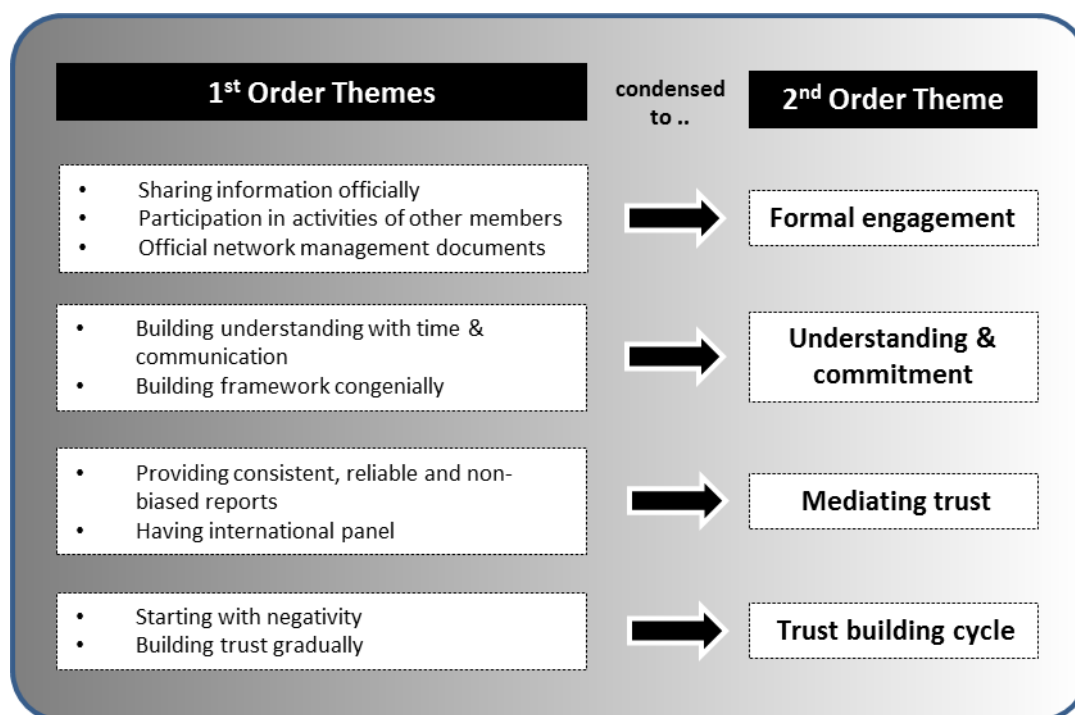


Figure 6 - 15: First and second order thematic analyses of impact on engagement and trust in HESC

6.3.2.1 Understanding and commitment

This is the first theme by which QQA has an effect in this network. The understanding of each other comes from the congenial work in developing the QQA review framework in the first place, and is strengthened by continuing communication over time. The responses do support developing understanding, but not necessarily building buy-in or commitment. The next extract from a response of Participant No.5 is in reply to the question about the impact of QQA reporting on trust:

"I think this committee was formed for a purpose within the EDB's National Economic Strategy (NES), but it created its importance more and more and all of the members see the importance of this committee for the communication and clarity purposes"

6.3.2.2 Mediating trust

QQA reports also play the role of trust transfer within the network, as it provides "consistent, reliable, and independent reports on performance". The fact that international panellists participate in the QQA reviews helps in having this capacity for trust building, as confirmed by four participants. This association is explained in the next excerpt:

"I think learners now know, let's talk about stakeholders together not just learners can feel confident that if a person has graduated with a particular type of qualification, has meaning. That, I think, is huge and I think that then the learner can look and make a decision about which course they want to go it is now a lot transparent publish more information they can make informed choices" (Participant No.3)

6.3.2.3 Trust building cycle

Four of the participants note the trend of evolutionary development of the engagement and trust between members, and two gave some neutral perspectives. The agreement was mostly on the start of the cycle with negativity, which in this network appears to last longer, as explained by the next quotation:

"Well, the idea of quality assurance is a totally new thing and everybody fears a new thing in that sense, but as the effect, a positive effect, was seen in terms of improving quality of education and training in the Kingdom, I believe that created the trust ... so it's convincing, hopefully this will go over everybody in that sense" (Participant No.27)

6.3.2.4 Formal engagement

The network observed some developing in the engagement between parties, mostly formal, but it was not that high, as one of the participants expressed this:

"No there were suggestions at some point but nothing, for example it was supposed to be like how about we form a subcommittee to look at applications or licensing, but no nothing really happened and this did not really reach anywhere" (Participant No.30)

Nevertheless, there are other responses that suggest that such formal engagement is being slowly developed, but not as fast as it can be, for example:

"We had a couple of I mean activities together, they have been involved in our conference, we invite them to become speakers and they invite us to all their workshops ... so it is a very good relationship that we have" (Participant No.33)

The reviewed data also suggest that the frequency of meetings of HESC has been not been regular recently, as it used to be in the beginning.

6.3.3 Power and control

This overarching theme is one of the weakest themes in this network. It appears that the QQA network did not have an impact on power and control distribution except through some formal and legal channels. Triangulating this finding with other evidence from the data collected suggests that in this network there is an issue of power and authority definition among stakeholders, at least the way it has been perceived by some members. As one informed participant describes it:

"With the universities I think the [authorities] decided to take no notice of this and I think there are two reasons here; one is that there is real confusion in Bahrain about the roles ... and there are a lot of differences for all sorts of reasons." (Participant No.17)

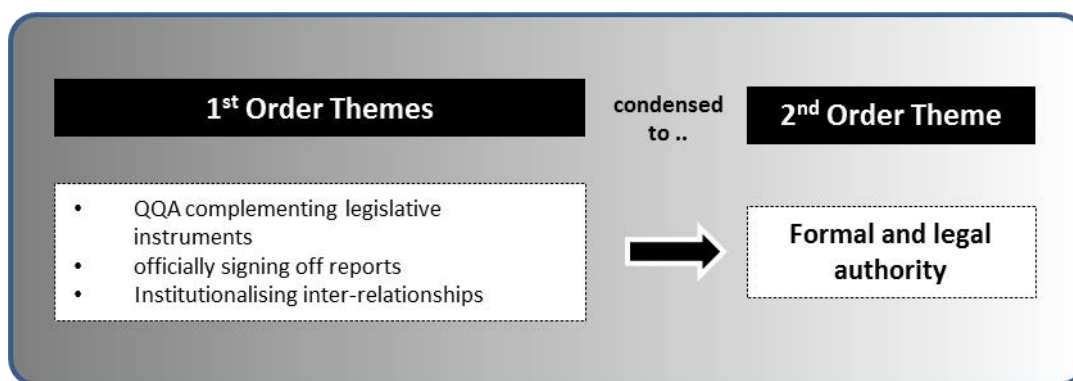


Figure 6 - 16: First and second order thematic analyses of impact on power and control in HESC

6.3.3.1 Formal and legal authorities

Because QQA came part of the National Reform agenda, it assumed a role, independent quality reviewing, which was missing in the institutional instruments. The status of the reports, being signed by the Prime Minister's office, gave them a formal authority. This was then supported with an emerging move towards revising and updating the existing legislation and by-laws relevant to the HE sector, although nothing has materialised yet. These three themes are observed by three participants in their responses, one of them for example as follows:

"we had added a layer of quality assurance, we did not take any power from anybody else, the regulator is there, the institution is here. We just made sure that there was a layer of quality assurance that need to be

embedded within the function and process of every institution whether education or training so this layer has been added” (Participant No.33)

6.3.4 Autonomy, collaboration and coordination

QQA reporting does not impact autonomy, inside or outside HESC, but rather it affects partially the degree of collaboration and coordination between the parties in this network. Figure 6-17 below depicts this impact.

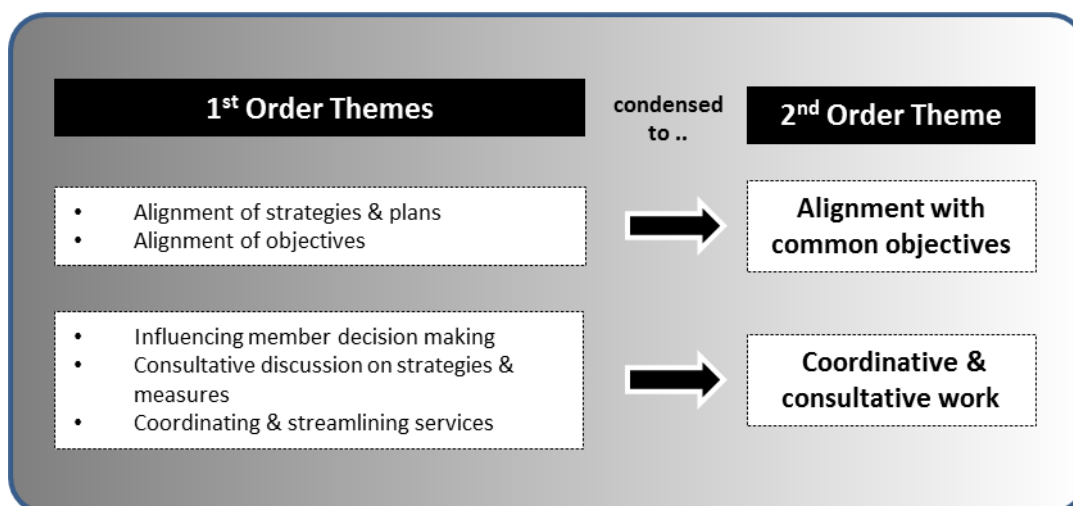


Figure 6 - 17: First and second order thematic analyses of impact on autonomy, coordination and collaboration in HESC

6.3.4.1 Coordination and consultative work

The main impact of QQA reporting is that it encourages the members in the network to discuss their strategies and key decisions, though not consistently, either by streamlining the various activities delivered by the parties involved in the network; or by informing their decisions which help in having better coordination among the member organisations. The extent of this coordination, however, did not affect the autonomous status of the members in setting their own strategies and making decisions. Five participants note this association in their replies. The following quotation is an example:

"...they have regulations like for example the number of teaching hours that used to be very high and the HEC tried to lower it, but with [the QQA] reviews it's been lowered now. Even the number of students in a class used to be very high, with [these] reviews it's become now less ... HEC do their part, they do monitoring visits, they do surprise visits and [the QQA]

*do quality assurance visits so both mechanisms help reducing this gap”
(Participant No.33)*

6.3.4.2 Alignment with common objectives

Although the decisions remain with the parties and affect no change in their actual autonomy, the QQA reporting, through this network, has motivated the member organisations to work, mostly individually, to achieve common goals, strategies and plans that were initially discussed in the committee, as confirmed by four participants in this case. The next extract exemplifies this impact:

*“The same thing was for the HE. HEC before was the only regulator ... they have to, I mean, it is even more in their case because certainly, you know, all their decisions they have to justify and align with the QQA”
(Participant No.7)*

Nevertheless, one participant, No.31, sees no progress in this regard *“there was a committee that didn’t have sort of joint outcomes”*, which suggests that there is still some more work to do in this regard.

6.3.5 Collaborative advantage

The main advantages the members could achieve in this network, with the aid of the QQA outcomes, can be grouped into four main themes, as discussed next and depicted in Figure 6-18 below. One theme which was reported weakly by three participants, on developing collective capacity and action, was dropped as it was not supported strongly. Moreover, the example cited, the development of the “higher education strategy”, was rather the outcome of the close follow-up of the ERB. Its participation in this strategy was beyond HESC.

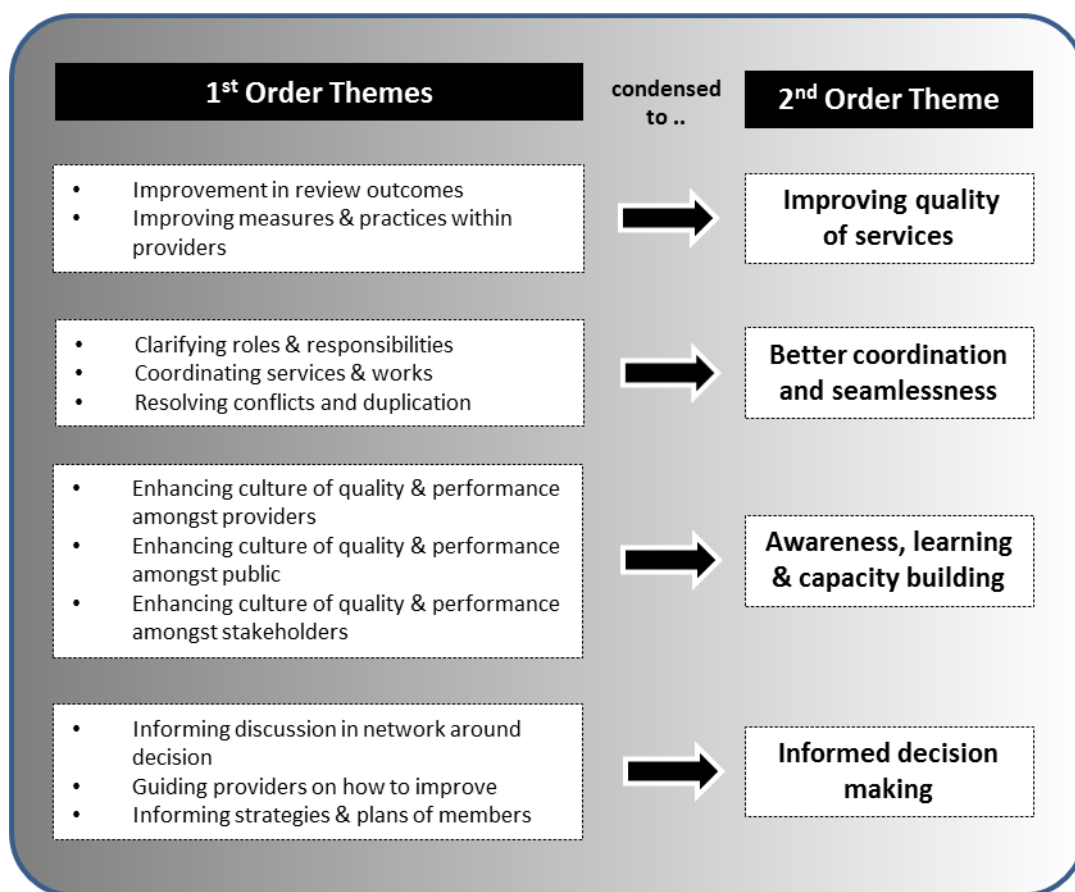


Figure 6 - 18: First and second order thematic analyses of impact on collaborative advantage in HESC

6.3.5.1 Awareness, learning and capacity building

This might be the strongest advantage here. QQA has directly helped sharing of information and developing capacity and awareness of HE providers, stakeholders and the general public as well. Eight of the nine participants confirm, two strongly, this impact. The various formal capacity building offered by QQA, Tamkeen and HEC also have helped in this. The following excerpt from one of the participants provides an example:

"Yes, I see a huge impact. I think there are lots of benefits first of all in interagency forming committees, because otherwise the information is difficult to travel from one organization to the other. So this is a sort of slightly official, but informal way of sharing information with relevant stakeholders or even the regulators and the funders" (Participant No.7)

6.3.5.2 Informed decisions

The shared information on PM helped either providers or stakeholders to take better informed decisions, mostly acting in their own capacities, but in a better coordinated and aligned way. Seven participants cited this aspect as an advantage of this collaboration, one of them in these words:

"We in the government complement each other; QQA is doing a great job in reviewing the universities and raising recommendations. The [HEC] take note of these reports and discuss them in their meetings to take necessary actions" (Participant No.23).

6.3.5.3 Better coordination and seamlessness

Although this theme is supported by six participants, but negated by another one, the data and replies show that the network is moving to achieve better coordination and seamlessness but still there is more work to do in this regards. Participant No.31 expresses this as follows:

"[Streamlining collectively? coordination?] ...slightly better coordination" and then further explains "until they sort out this issue about exactly how we're going to work together ... nothing happens"

6.3.5.4 Improving quality of services

Despite the challenges, five participants observed an improving trend in the HE institutions, as reflected by the QQA review outcomes, or by the serious improvement efforts that the institutions have implemented. Participant No.34 comments on the quality of HE as measured by QQA reports *"the profile, if you see, there is a progress, overall there is progress"*.

The profile, as reviewed in Figure 6-8 above, shows however that the improvement in this sector is little so far.

6.3.6 Collaborative inertia

The analyses of the responses of the participants show that for this network, the challenges or the inertias to the collaborations are diverse and can be collated into four main themes, as illustrated in Figure 6-19 below.

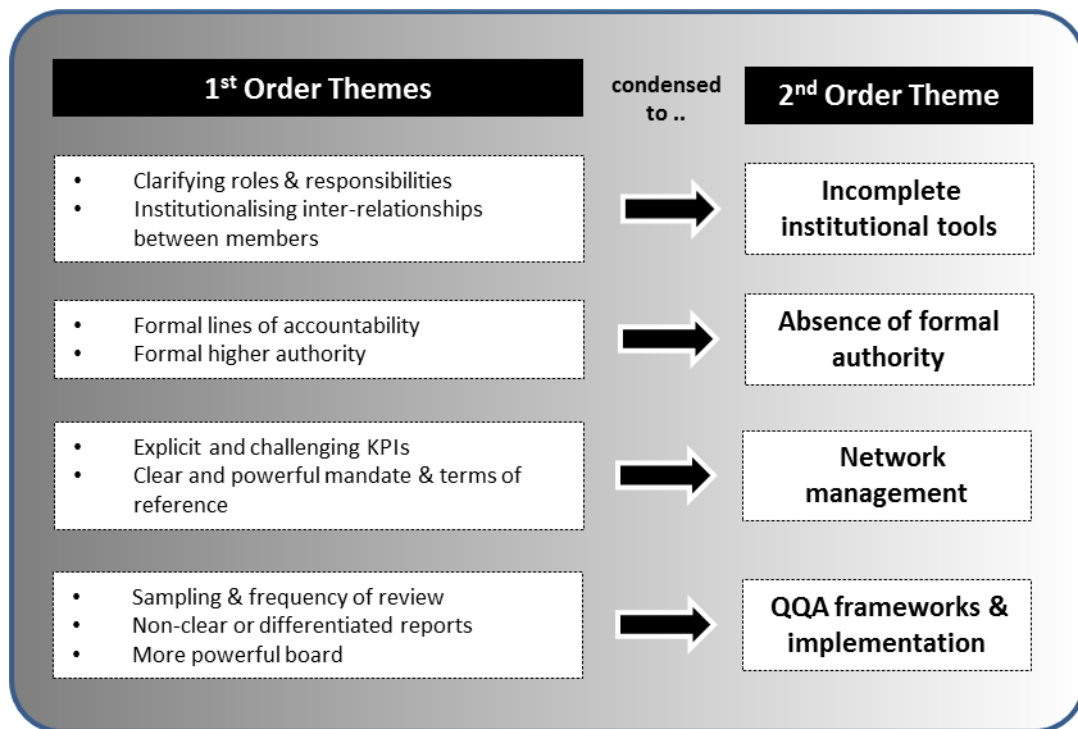


Figure 6 - 19: First and second order thematic analyses of impact on collaborative inertia in HESC

In general, there is a tendency in the responses of the participants to focus on the key challenges, and ignore other challenges, or the related subsequent challenges. For example, there were more participants focusing on completing the institutional tools, having formal authority and fixing the network mandate than those who have highlighted the issue of conflict of interests and authorities, because once the former three challenges were overcome, then the later challenge can be resolved more easily. In this case it was a matter of prioritising the inertias, rather than inclusive description of them. The other example is “public passivity”. This was mentioned by one participant only, who stresses that:

“the [QQA] biggest thing should be how many people know about [them]. That is the way their strength is. If everybody knows the QAA and understands what they do and takes their work seriously, you know, just by using their reports and that is the way their strength is, and I do not think that is happening in society” (Participant No.5)

6.3.6.1 Network management

One of the strongest challenges that hinders full utilisation of QQA reports and achieving more advantages in this network is to do with having a clear mandate for the network, and working towards explicit and

challenging targets and KPIs. Four of the participants highlight this, and as an example the following excerpt is from one of them listing the challenges:

"to have clarified responsibilities because of the mandates ... they need to be revised, to avoid overlap any possible overlap in responsibilities"
(Participant No.30)

6.3.6.2 Incomplete institutional tools

As discussed above, there have been recent attempts to overcome this challenge and to institutionalise the inter-relationships between the parties, but despite this, this was identified strongly by three participants as one of the challenges. To exemplify this, the reply from one participant is quoted:

"it is the clarification of our roles, that is a problem, that apparently is everything ... they do have legally accreditation that they haven't done anything and the [QQA] reports was supposed to be input for accreditation and they say no they will do it themselves, there's duplication and this is why we it keeps going [back and forth] ... but somehow rather we can't get there" (Participant No.31).

6.3.6.3 Absence of formal authority

This theme is related to the one above on network management. HESC at the time being lacks clear lines of accountability and higher authority above all the members that can resolve any conflict of interests. This aspect was reported by two participants only, but the impact of it is evident in the sluggish progress of the network. One of the participants comments on this challenge:

"No, it is something that goes to each ministry separately and whether it happens or not is a long story. I wish it was a committee whereby we sit together, create stories, create proposals and take them to one unified body to get it done. That would be a much more effective, you know committee" (Participant No.5).

6.3.6.4 QQA framework and implementations

This theme stems from the review framework of the QQA, the way it is conducted and reported; or how powerful its board is in influencing its wider use. One particular issue pertaining to the HE review reports is their language. The reports do not have clear conclusive or summative judgements. The following quotation clarifies this aspect further:

"if these reports were improved to address the different stakeholders it will enhance their impact. At the moment it's like probably a little bit academic ... the way it's written you don't expect a parent to look at this and understand. I believe you need a differentiated reporting to make it for each stakeholder for employers, for government and for students and for parents" (Participant No.30).

6.4 Case 3 – Vocational Provider Improvement Strategy (VPIS) Committee

This is the third network which was chosen as a case study for this research. The VPIS committee comprises of members from the QQA, MoL, MoE, Tamkeen, HCVT and the EDB. The network, until very recently, is chaired by the Chief Executive of the QQA.

The following sections discuss the results of analyses of data from the interviews as well as those collected as secondary data for this research. Overall, the impact in this committee was strongly evident in many aspects as will be discussed next.

6.4.1 Accountability

The most evident impact of QQA public reporting in VPIS is through the "accountability" dimension. Accountability here has been affected by seven key themes, as revealed from the collected data, and depicted in Figure 6-20 below.

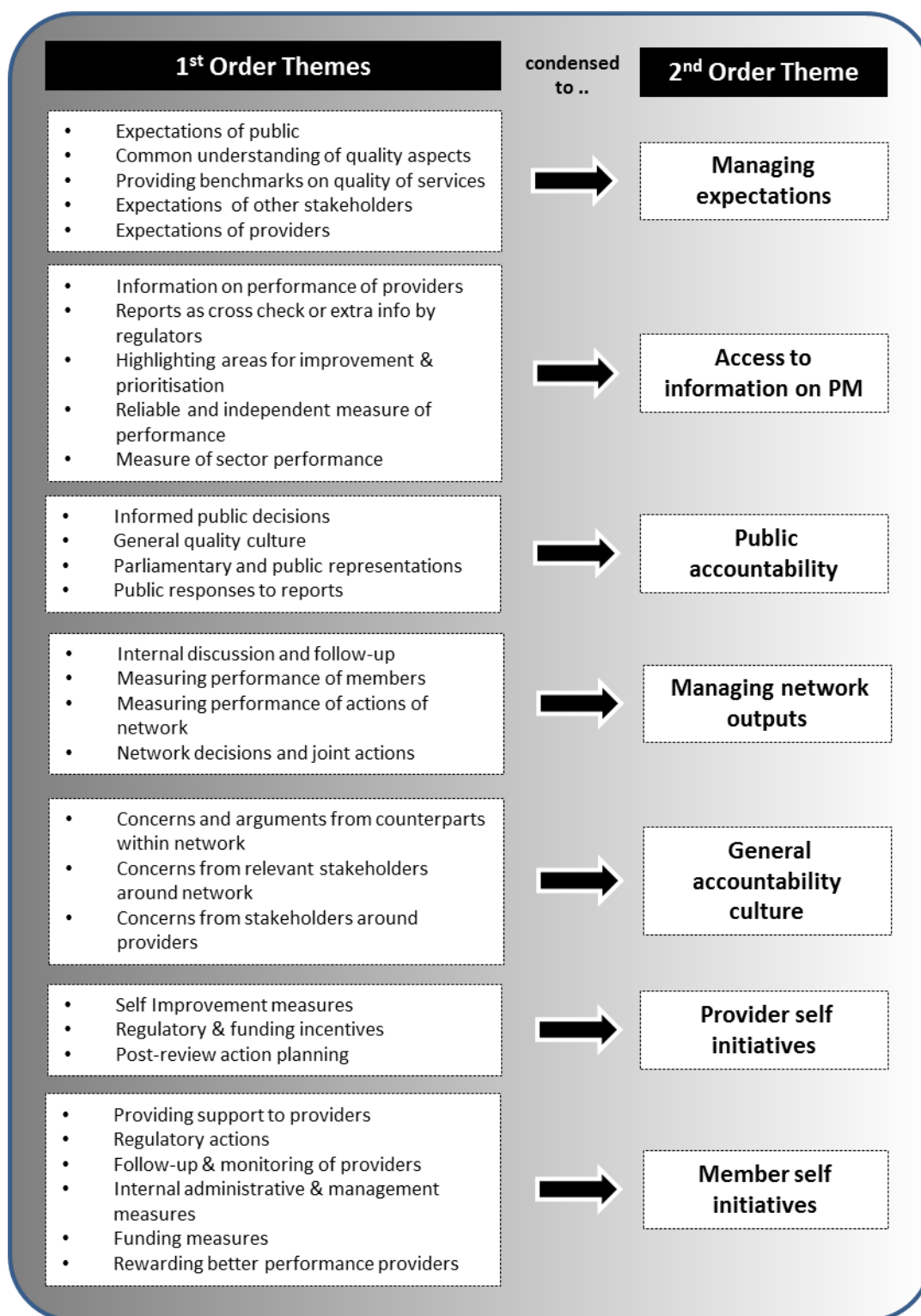


Figure 6 - 20: First and second order thematic analyses of impact on accountability in VPIS

6.4.1.1 Access to information on PM

The information released by QQA reports plays an important role in informing members and regulators as well as providers on the performance of each provider individually, and on the training sector overall. The information can be used as reliable measures or as extra information to cross-check or support the information that stakeholders have in hand. Seventeen out of 19 participants highlight this association, 12 of which indicate strong association. One of the participants explains the impact of QQA reporting on accountability:

"providing information, I think it strengthens one's accountability ... basically these committees are places where you assume your responsibilities toward what you're responsible for ... and the information provided here will support you and your decision making" (Participant No.34).

6.4.1.2 Member self measures

The second theme, which appears strongly in this case, is the improvements induced by the self-measures adopted by the committee members in their own organisations. These measures include linking funding and regulatory measures directly with the QQA review outcomes, applying stringent monitoring and follow-up regimes, providing official support to providers or tightening internal administrative processes in response to QQA findings. This impact is strongly evident in the responses of 18 out of the 19 participants; one of them expresses this impact in the following quotation:

"after the information of the VPIS committee the common question I was waiting for it every time, what you will do with inadequate providers as Ministry of Labour, so two things were the outcome of this question or this committee. One of them is we formed an internal sort of committee; follow up team with the inadequate providers. Their mission is to check the report of [these] providers ... and they visit the institutions, they ask them what your problems are? What is your action plan? And they have a look at the action plans ... It is working actually" (Participant No.9)

The secondary data collected here also confirm the points raised in the interviews. As discussed above, the monthly reports of MoL (from November 2013 to April 2014) show that the Ministry does between 8 and 10 follow-up visits mainly for providers who got inadequate grades from QQA. (MoL n.d.)

In addition, Tamkeen, HCVT and MoL abide by the memorandum of understanding with QQA in regards to linking their funding to the grades of QQA reviews (Bahrain News Agency 2010)

6.4.1.3 General accountability culture

The other theme of impacts, which comes across strongly in 14 responses out of 19, is the theme of “general accountability culture” created by concerns and discussions on PM within the network; between members and providers and the related stakeholders around them. These concerns and discussions are also linked with the (re)formed expectations they hold about the quality of services, as discussed in more detail in the next section. As an example of the quotations that illustrate the impact the general accountability environment created within the network, the following is taken from Participant No.1:

“this has put pressure on both ministries, Ministry of Education and Labour to build their own strategies and how to ensure that [the training institutes] can improve further by communicating more frequently with them and visiting them in a more frequent manner”

The data on the follow-up and monitoring visits, as discussed in the previous section, indeed support this conclusion.

6.4.1.4 Managing expectations

The public reports of QQA help in managing the expectations of the public, providers and stakeholders, creating common understanding on quality aspects, as well as providing benchmarks for people to compare quality of providers. These findings were confirmed by 14 participants; one of them explains it as follows:

“as they started reading reports they started learning, their expectation of what comprised good quality training institute or good quality training provision started also shaping, and they started talking the same language, they have some common expectation, everybody on the same page ... so that was definitely a positive thing” (Participant No.38).

6.4.1.5 Public accountability

Similar to the impact of the general accountability environment, public accountability goes to the larger circle of the general public, or their representatives. The impact here is in the form of setting their expectations, increasing their awareness and understanding of quality

aspects, and hence informing their decisions in selecting the service providers. Although this impact is emerging, being confirmed by nine participants, it is also considered as one of the inertias to the collaboration. The impact of public accountability is taking some effect here, but not to its full potential. (Refer to the discussion on Public Passivity in sub-section 6.2.6.1 above.) As an example of this developing impact, the following quotation is presented:

"If you're talking about VPIS not much pressure on me [from the public] as a person ... now people changed to be honest. People would love to know more, not only would love to know they're insistent to know about education system, they're insistent on the ranking, knowing the level ... asking for more details. Well if we are the concerned people it would put pressure on us" (Participant No.19).

6.4.1.6 Provider self initiatives

Accountability is also being improved by providers taking self-initiatives to improve the services they provide. This theme is collated from the responses of eight participants. It refers to the improvement initiatives, especially in the privately-owned providers, which represent the vast majority, driven by competition, linked to regulatory and funding schemes with QQA outcomes, as well as the compulsory post-review action planning that these institutes are obliged to formulate by the QQA. Recently, these action planning documents are also followed-up by MoL in their subsequent inspection visits (MoL n.d.). To exemplify this, the following participant states:

"Self-measures? Yes, there have been. From our monitoring, we have noticed this. Some of the owners of these institutes had to recruit managers from abroad to enhance their quality. Before they did not have this motive, but with QQA reports, they had to do it" (Participant No.10)

6.4.1.7 Managing network outputs

The last theme of the impacts of QQA reporting is the use of the outcomes to manage the network, VPIS, and its progress, as well as to follow up on the agreed actions and plans of each member organisation. Nine participants support this association. The review of the VPIS document shows that the main KPI for the committee is improving the overall grade profile of all institutes (the target is reaching 80% 'satisfactory' or above in all vocational training institutes by the end of 2014). The next quotation from Participant No.1 clarifies this:

"To start with, when we started with VPIS, we put KPI's for the committee and one of the KPIs for the committee is how the grading, the outcome of the reviews are happening over time"

6.4.2 Engagement and Trust

The second overarching theme in this network, "engagement and trust", comes from seven key themes, as illustrated in Figure 6-21 below. As was the case with the previous two networks, the impact here was more on the level of engagement between parties, rather than the trust between them; hence the title of the theme was changed to include 'engagement' as well as trust. One of the expected themes, "mediating trust", is not considered here, as it was only reported by three participants, and counter argued by two. The reason for this might be that this committee involves operational executives, who have better knowledge of the system, as well as of their counterparts in other organisations.

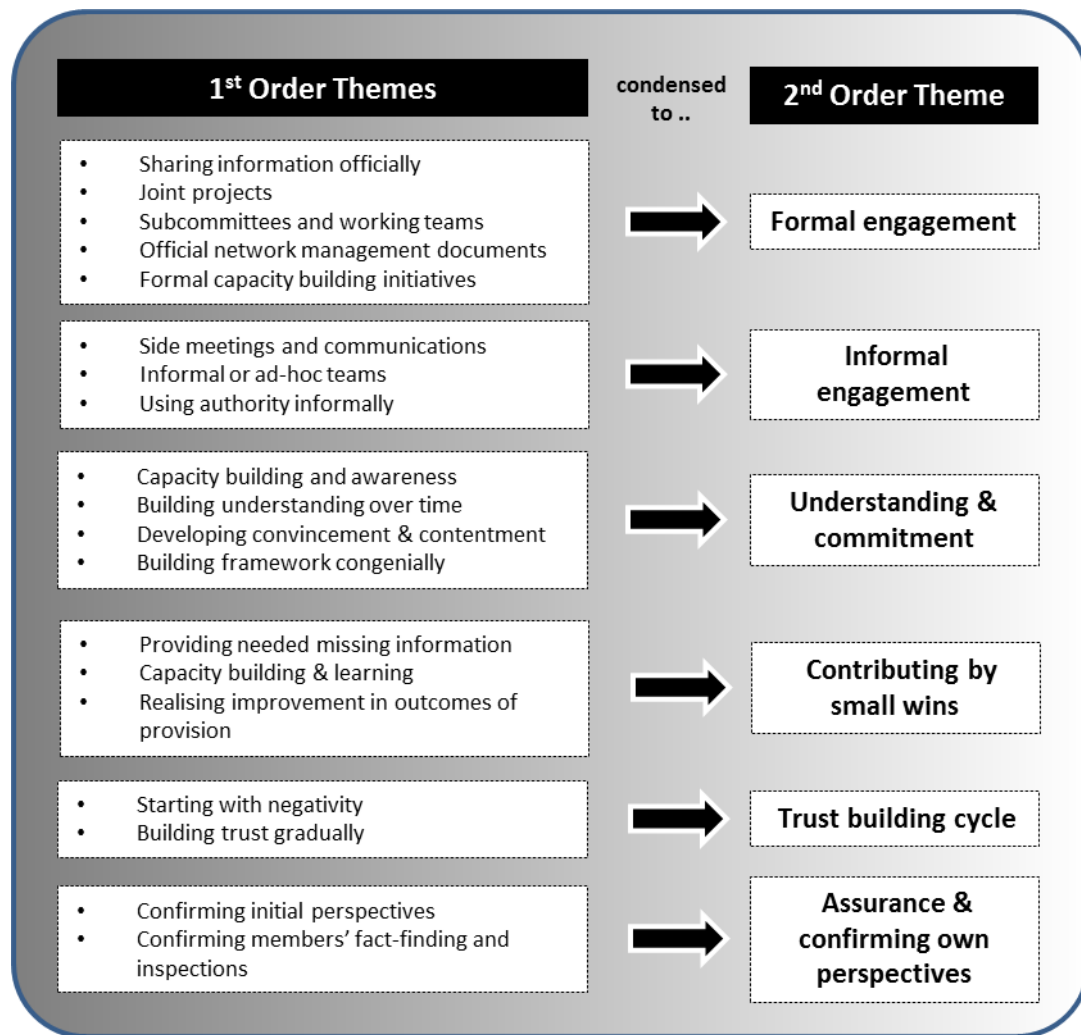


Figure 6 - 21: First and second order thematic analyses of impact on engagement and trust in VPIS

6.4.2.1 Formal engagement

Fifteen out of the 19 participants cited different examples of the impacts of QQA on trust under this theme: formal engagement, which includes formal activities of sharing information; capacity building workshops; and joint teams and sub-committees and projects. This next quotation exemplifies this impact:

"There is another benefit of knowing more about your partners, strategic partners, that helped to be honest ... we said why don't we create other committees that would help us to sort out you know a big issue that has not been sorted out yet. This is one of the benefits that we achieved ... we started with informal but we will end up with formal committee at national level" (Participant No.19)

More notably in this network is the joint committee between the QQA and MoL which are working jointly now to develop a new law for vocational education and training (Law 25 committee). Another joint project is the information sharing between QQA and Tamkeen, which helps Tamkeen in proposing topics for their Training and Education Providers Support (TEPS) programmes. So far 49 various workshops have benefited 814 individuals from various training and educations providers (Tamkeen 2014). The selection of the topics of these workshops is informed, partially, by the information provided officially by QQA to Tamkeen for this purpose.

6.4.2.2 Informal engagement

The engagement between members in VPIS started formally, but developed into informal engagement (such as side meetings and informal communications) as well, as noted by nine participants. To explain how this has developed in this case, the following quotation is presented:

"Yeah, [it did create] side committees, discussion, people getting better understanding ... even if there were significant discussions that's a positive thing, because you know you can't get all the dirty laundry out on the table, don't you?" (Participant No.15).

6.4.2.3 Understanding and commitment

One way in which QQA reporting helps in building trust and engagement, as reported by nine participants, is by helping members to develop more understanding, conviction and contentment in the idea of joint work; building understanding with time or through formal capacity building events; or through working congenially to develop or update the review framework of QQA. One example of the quotations that support this conclusion is the following:

"Because of the professional trust, agreeing on the main objective and these objectives serve all of the committee members. You want to improve the quality of education and training in the Kingdom of Bahrain, each member got an important role in this reform and improvement project. So it is integration and corporation committee rather than a conflict or a fight committee" (Participant No.29).

6.4.2.4 Trust building cycle

As 13 responses confirm, trust and engagement building evolves within the network, starting with negativity but quickly disappearing by engaging

in more inter-relations and clearing some misconceptions or fears of losing power. In what follows, a quotation from one of the participants, representing a regulatory organisation, describes this cycle:

"Before, what I had in mind as a person, I am talking about myself, is not a clear vision of QQA, what they were doing and what is the sort of coordination between us and QQA, I know before that we should do this work, and I didn't know if QQA will do the same quality of work or its different, they do inspection and we do inspection as well, so I was confused in the role of QQA and [our] role, but it was very clear after publishing of the reports. We used them as our reference for a lot of things" (Participant No.9)

6.4.2.5 Contribution by small wins

One of the aspects that helps build more trust is members realising some benefits, or small wins, as they work together; either on a personal scale, such as building capacity and understanding, or on an organisational scale, by getting the necessary information on PM, or by realising some gradual improvement in the quality of services (this will be discussed in more detail in the following section on collaborative advantages). The following quotation exemplifies this aspect:

"Yeah, I think [members] start trusting the system, when they start to find it helpful and find it actually leads improvement. I don't think it is necessarily a quick process ... but something in place to generate improvement and then see that it works, then they trust the system" (Participant No.15).

6.4.2.6 Assurance and confirming own perspectives

How far the QQA reports, especially the initial batches, form the initial perspectives of the people on the performance of the provider and the sector is indeed a variable that has an impact on trust building. The responses however are mixed here; five participants thought that the reports are confirming their own initial perspectives, whilst four others gave disconfirming or mixed opinions. Those who gave supportive responses, that QQA reports confirmed initial perspectives, are those who are closely aware of the service providers; whereas the other four came from outside the sector. One of the supporting excerpts explains this:

"Generally speaking, when we compare the performance of the institutes, especially the low performing ones, we were expecting them to fail according to the information and the insight we have about them; we expected that these will never pass. The reports indeed came as expected, and this enforced the trust we have in the system" (Participant No. 32)

However, the other four participants don't see this association. One of them expresses his views in this way:

"It was a surprise for everybody actually, the QAA report it was a surprise for everybody especially that it was published and also for the first batch there was an interview which took in the press and it was like a shock for everybody" (Participant No.28).

6.4.3 Power and control

Four key emerging themes of the impact of QQA reporting collectively comprise this overarching theme: power and control. The theme about balancing actual power and authority was not considered as it was not sufficiently supported. The four themes are depicted in Figure 6-22 below.

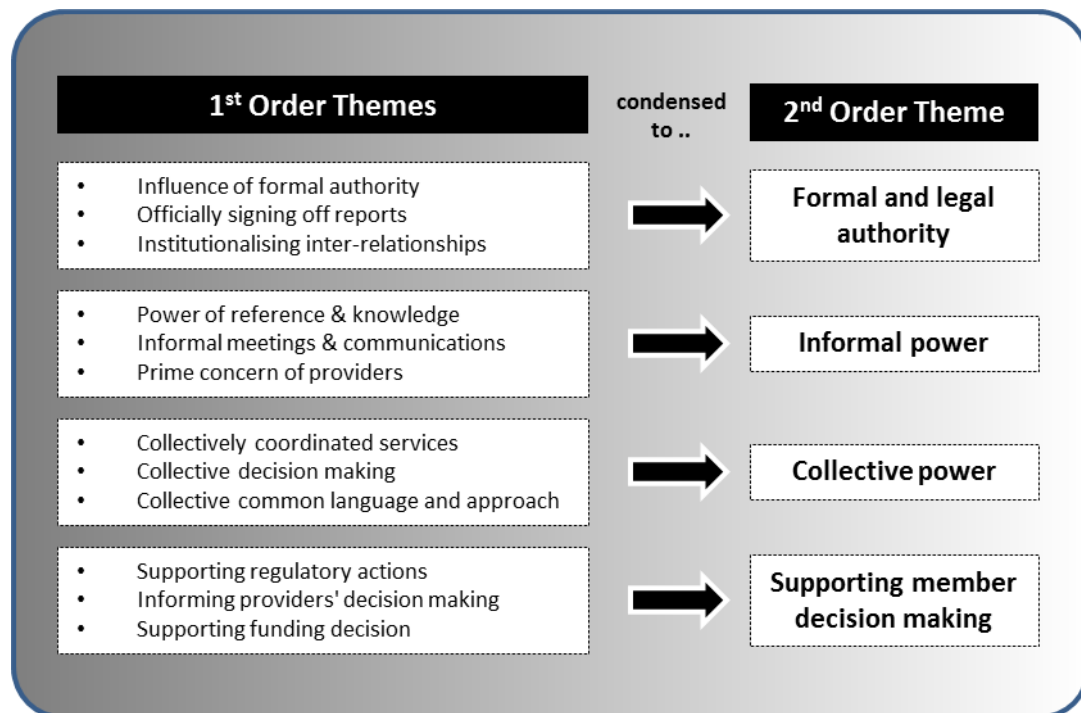


Figure 6 - 22: First and second order thematic analyses of impact on power and control in VPIS

6.4.3.1 Supporting members' decision making

This theme is the most evident theme of impacts, with 14 participants' views supporting it; the vast majority of them indicate strong support of this association. The theme centres on mainly the use of QQA reports to inform the decision making of the members in their organisations. The

following participant explains how Tamkeen and MoL are using the outcomes of QQA to support their decisions:

"[QQA reporting] is a tool that will give you an indication of what's happening both for the regulatory bodies and even for Tamkeen which will provide different schemes for providers, so without the QAA reports there is no benchmark ...yes, yeah, both Tamkeen and MOL are relying on [these reports], they are making certain decisions on this yeah" (Participant No.28)

Part of this linkage between QQA reporting and the funding decisions is mandated by the memorandum of understanding that was signed initially by the VPIS members (Bahrain News Agency, 2010).

6.4.3.2 Informal power

In the VPIS committee, the QQA is also found to assume certain "informal" authority or power, power of reference and knowledge on the performance of providers that members refer to in the meetings of VPIS, or outside the committee in an informal way. On this, the next quotation describes:

"Knowledge and influence gives power and I think what we saw, the QAA was in the middle of all of the relevant organisations, so it touched policy and strategy, it touched compliance, it touched support, so the power came from the fact that it was in this central role ... it actually became a hub and the fact that it then didn't report to any of the [members] that were comprising the committee then those two things gave it its natural power" (Participant No.14)

6.4.3.3 Formal and legal authority

The QQA also enjoyed some forms of "formal and legal" authority, supported mainly by the high authority signing off its reports (the Prime Minister's Office), and the recent efforts to institutionalise the inter-dependencies which were started with signing an official memorandum of understanding between the parties. This theme of impacts was compiled from the responses of five participants. Participant No.27 stresses the importance of this formal element:

"but the reports given that they are approved by the Prime Minister's Court, at the end does create a pressure and it's a positive pressure"

6.4.3.4 Collective power

The coordinated services, the common language and understanding, and the collegial decision making (in some key aspects) give the system, mainly regulating the training sector, some form of “collective power”. This was confirmed by nine participants. As an example of this impact, the following excerpt is selected:

“The system as well, I would say that it gave the system a powerful, a collective power, in terms of coordinating the services, so we have now better coordination between services, somebody is licensing either institutes or programmes, somebody else is reporting independently on the quality of these programmes and institutes and going back to the regulators, or somebody else to take decisions about the funding or the regulatory decisions, so that gave the system as a system more power, collective power” (Participant No.38)

The power however, was not a real power. It is more of a coordination of authorities and power between the parties, as Participant No.5 puts it:

“I actually don’t think this is a decision making committee at all even though I would like it to be. I would like it to be but I don’t think it is”.

6.4.4 Autonomy, coordination and collaboration

Four key emerging themes describe how QQA affects autonomy, coordination and collaboration in VPIS. The impacts here do not affect the real autonomy of members in making decisions and setting strategies and plans, but rather the impact is evident on the coordination and collaboration between them. Figure 6-23 depicts the four themes that comprise this overarching theme.

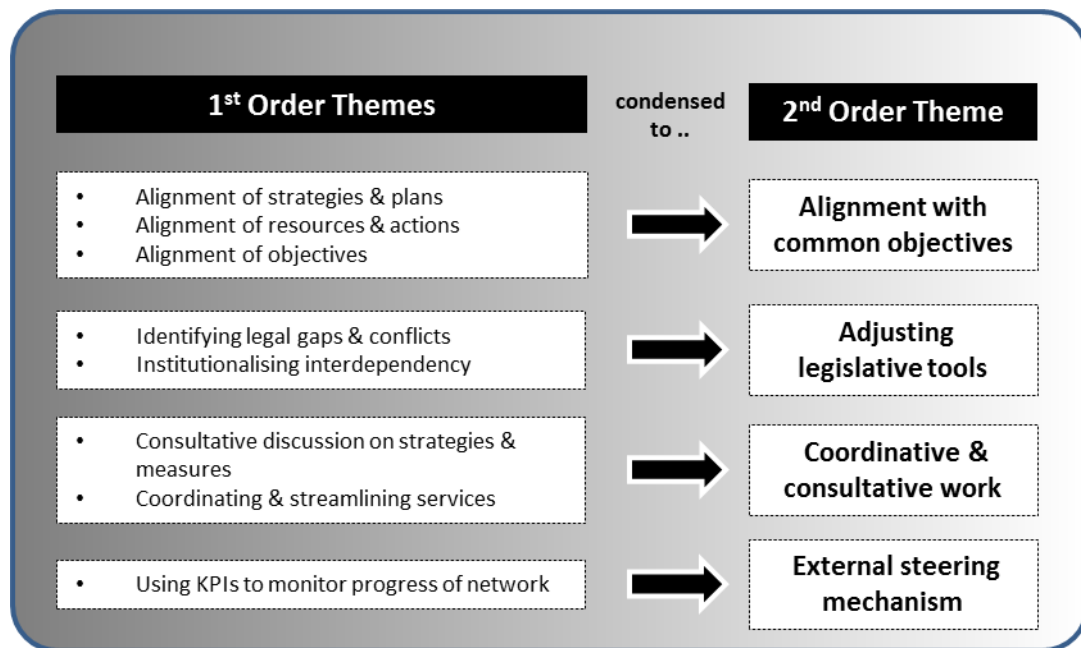


Figure 6 - 23: First and second order thematic analyses of impact on autonomy, coordination and collaboration in VPIS

6.4.4.1 Alignment with common objectives

Eleven of the 19 participants noted how QQA reporting motivated member organisations in the VPIS committee to align their objectives, resources, actions and strategies towards the common goals of the network. This alignment though did not reduce the autonomous status of members, as explained by the next quotation:

"basically we are coordinating our roles together in order not to repeat the work, to complement our work and that's the whole thing, I mean we are working for one objective" (Participant No.27)

6.4.4.2 Coordinative and consultative work

With 11 confirming respondents, this theme suggests that QQA public reporting has an overall impact in encouraging members to work together in the VPIS committee to coordinate their services, and discuss their own strategies and key plans with the rest of the committee before implementation. To exemplify this impact, the following excerpt is presented:

"It did encourage [more collaborative work], because now before taking any decision they need to take into consideration [QQA reports] and how to collaborate together, even with the NQF we have things that we need to

agree together ... for example our understanding of credit hours is different ... so we need to agree on these things and not to convey conflicting messages to providers" (Participant No.28)

6.4.4.3 Adjusting legislative tools

Six participants indicated that QQA reports and their findings have helped in revealing some gaps in the legislative instruments, and encouraged the members to work together in adjusting some of these instruments. The clearest example of such efforts is the formation of the joint committee to develop the new law for vocational education and training in the joint committee (Law 25 Committee). Participant No.32, representing a regulatory organisation, explains some of these efforts:

"We worked in the [VPIS] committee, and we accordingly went back and changed our by-laws concerning programme licensing and inspection, in a way to reflect what we have agreed in the committee. We have not yet completed this task, but the new changes will give the QQA report outcomes a big role in deciding the incentives and regulatory measures" (Participant No.32).

The efforts in adjusting the legal framework are not yet completed, this is why the same dimension has been considered as one of the challenges that face the VPIS committee, as will be discussed later.

6.4.4.4 External steering mechanism

Although only three participants mentioned this in their responses, the secondary data, about selection of KPIs based on QQA review outcomes, support this as well. The VPIS committee has formulated some KPIs that are used to monitor the progress of the network. A big part of these KPIs uses measures that directly link with the outcomes of the QQA review outcomes. The following participant explains how the KPIs are used to monitor the progress of the network as an "external steering mechanism":

"The [QQA reports] affected the committee through the KPIs, these are set so that we work towards them, in every meeting the members are asked to report on how far they reached in achieving their relevant KPIs" (Participant No.32).

6.4.5 Collaborative advantage

The main advantages the members could achieve in this network, with the aid of the QQA outcomes, can be grouped into four main themes, as discussed next and depicted in Figure 6-24 below. The theme on

“fostering innovation” was not supported strongly, and hence was dropped as a proposition that explains the advantages in this network.

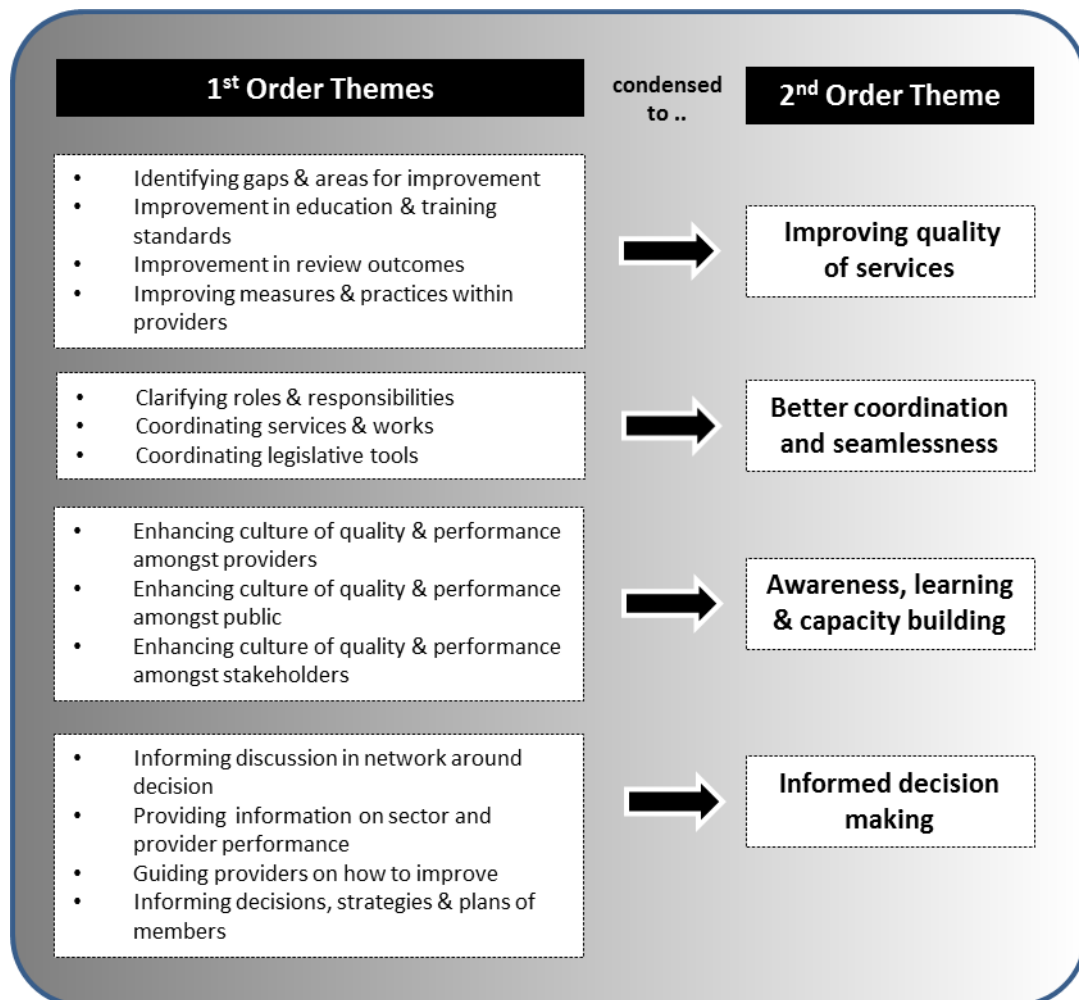


Figure 6 - 24: First and second order thematic analyses of impact on collaborative advantages in VPIS

6.4.5.1 Awareness, learning and capacity building

This theme turns out to be the most evident theme of advantages that could be achieved in the VPIS committee with the help of QQA reporting; 17 out of 19 participants note this, most of them with strong association. The theme summarises the enhancement of awareness and culture of quality amongst members, providers and the general public. The capacity building and awareness events that QQA, Tamkeen and MoL offer to the providers and general public (as discussed above on Tamkeen TEPS

initiatives) have also helped in this. One of the participants, representing a regulating organisation, explains how the QQA reports have helped him:

"It gives [awareness] about some of the aspects that were missing before, for example how to evaluate a training programme properly, it gave us knowledge about new terminologies ... This was new things to us"
(Participant No.10)

6.4.5.2 Informed decisions

Sixteen participants, representing different organisations, have confirmed that QQA reports helped them in making better informed decisions, thanks to the new information the reports add on the performance of the providers and the sector. The reports also help the providers by guiding them on what needs to improve. The new information, overall, is found helpful in informing the strategies, plans, actions and decisions of members and providers. Participant No.28 explains how a funding agency, Tamkeen, use the outcomes of QQA reports, which are shared in the committee, to design their capacity building programmes:

"for example Tamkeen look at areas for improvement and they do the TEPS workshops based on these"

6.4.5.3 Better coordination and seamlessness

One of the main evident advantages in the VPIS case is the better coordination and seamlessness in related service provision. This comes from clarifying the roles and responsibilities first of all, then by the members' efforts in coordinating their tasks and services, as well as in coordinating the relevant legislative instruments; 14 of the 19 participants confirm this association; many of them indicate strong association. The secondary data also support these findings. The formation of the Law 25 joint committee, and the adjusting of MoL inspection criteria to match those of QQA, linking Tamkeen and HCVT funding with QQA rating, all are efforts that helps in achieving this advantage. Participant No.9 explains the efforts of MoL in adjusting the inspection criteria to complement those of the QQA:

"Three of the [revised criteria] are related to QAA reports ... these were not there before the VPIS. It was created after the VPIS, we had inspection visits but we did not have KPIs based on these inspection visits so we created a sheet of inspections and linked it to the QAA reports".

6.4.5.4 Improving quality of services

The ultimate advantage of improving the training and education services has been observed by 13 participants in their responses. The improvement is evident in the QQA review grades; and in some of the newly introduced measures amongst service providers. The review outcomes for the vocational providers support this as well. One of the participants, observing this improvement, makes the following comment:

"There is a big emphasis on monitoring the outcomes by the providers, and this had a big impact on the performance of the vocational training institutes, if you compare the outcomes from 2009 and now in 2014"
(Participant No.18)

The same point that was raised before about the truth of this improvement is valid here as well. The big improvement in reports outcomes indicates that there is some real improvement, but not necessarily the rate of improvement indicated by the QQA grades. Part of this improvement is also attributed to the fact that providers now are aware of the "rules of the game" and can therefore present their cases to seem better than they actually are. This last aspect is highlighted as part of the challenges that will be discussed in the next section.

6.4.6 Collaborative inertia

The challenges, or the inertias, cited here vary in nature and strength, but overall the impact of these inertias did not prevent the network, VPIS committee, from achieving some good collaborative advantages. The challenges here however hinder achieving more advantages. These can be considered as "areas for further improvement" for this case. The challenges are grouped into six main themes as depicted by Figure 6-25 below. The theme about the "hurdles within member organisation" was not strongly supported, and hence was dropped since it is not of prime importance in this case.

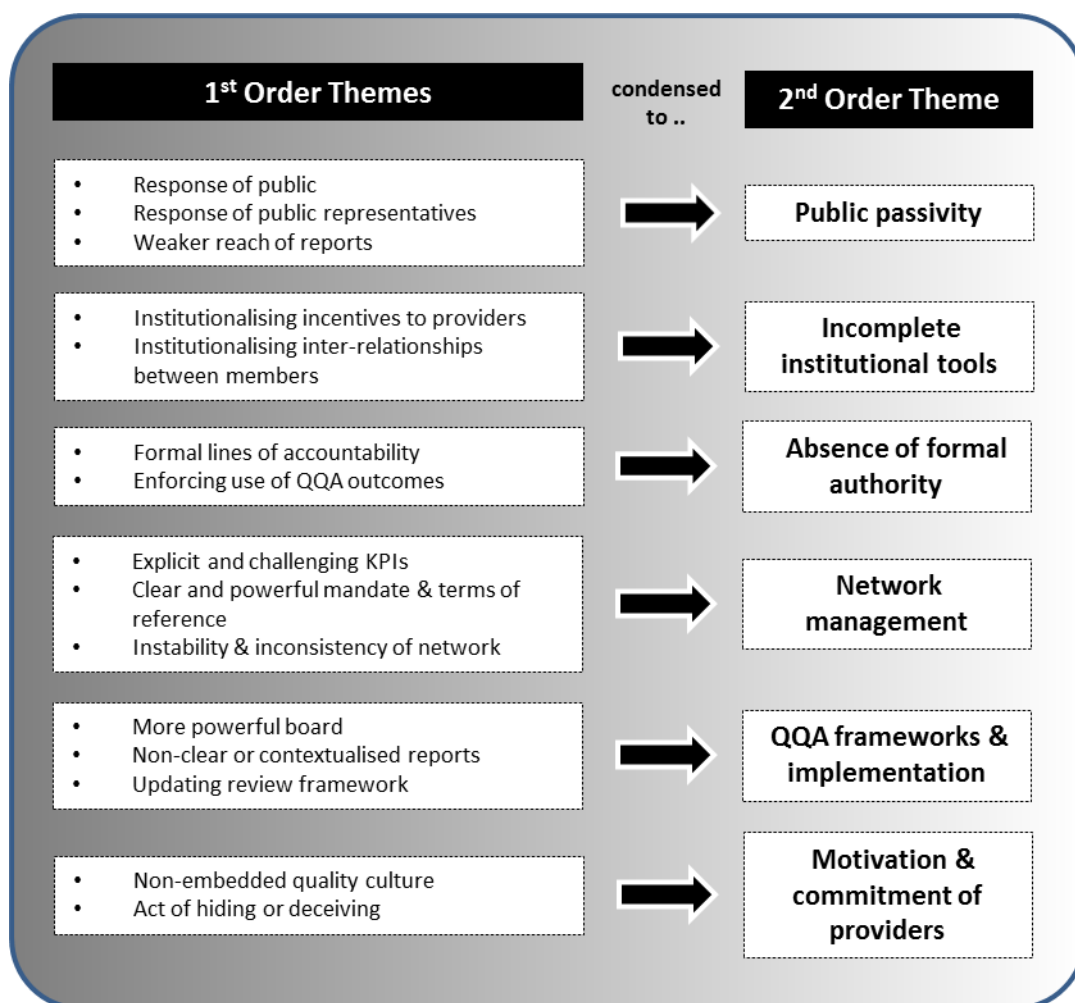


Figure 6 - 25: First and second order thematic analyses of impact on collaborative inertias in VPIS

6.4.6.1 Network management

Nine participants refer to various challenges that can be collated under this theme. These include having clearer mandate and terms of reference for the network, more challenging KPIs, and instability and inconsistency in the network membership. For example, the following quotation refers to the KPIs as a challenge:

"what is required is then to raise the bar, to make the KPIs challenging and to make everybody abide by achieving these KPIs" (Participant No.38)

6.4.6.2 QQA framework and implementation

This theme came across strongly in this case, reflecting the fact that the network is achieving some results, but these cited challenges are the

prioritised area for improvement as perceived by the members. Eleven of the participants indicated challenges related to the QQA review framework, the clarity of its reports; or the influence of its board of directors. The next participant explains the issue of QQA reports thus:

"the language that is used is not very simple for the general public to understand ... it would be difficult for me, for some, to pick a report, if I'm from the general public and go and read the whole report and understand what's going on, so if there is a summary for the main points, [the public] will benefit from it more" (Participant No.28)

6.4.6.3 Public passivity

Public passivity emerges as a theme of a group of challenges, mainly due the weak reach of QQA reports to the general public, or the ineffective response from the public or their representatives. Seven participants highlight this inertia in their responses, such as the following:

"In fact, general public still don't see the value of the QQA. In fact, what I see is that the general public are not aware of the value that the QQA is adding" (Participant No.25)

6.4.6.4 Incomplete institutional tools

Despite the efforts that the members in the VPIS are making towards adjusting the legal and institutional framework and instruments, this aspect remains an area for further development, as per responses from five of the participants. The next excerpt explains one of these challenges:

"I think the legislation is one of the obstacles because lots of these legislations were developed before the existence of the QQA and revising legislation seems takes a long time where you want that to be more dynamic, and you want that to be up breast, and meeting the needs" (Participant No.34)

6.4.6.5 Absence of formal authority

Despite the level of engagement and the results it achieved, VPIS still lacks formal authority to enforce the use of QQA outcomes and clear and explicit lines of accountability. These challenges have been noted by five participants; the following is an example:

"one of the challenges here is that we don't have a clear mechanism of reporting, the KPIs are initially informed by the 2030 vision but we don't have after that a reporting mechanism, there's no authority higher up monitoring the whole progress of the VPIS ... that will be a good idea really if it was there" (Participant No.38)

6.4.6.6 Motivation and commitment of providers

The VPIS has been to some degree successful in adopting some incentives for providers to perform better, by linking the funding with their grades. This created, to some extent, another challenge, as reported by four participants, caused by a non-embedded quality assurance culture amongst providers, or some sort of acts of hiding, deceiving, or “playing the game rules”, to get better outcomes in the QQA reports. About this challenge, Participant No.25 makes the following comment:

“this is another question now .. you want me to tell you the truth here ... how much it is true to the reality this report when somebody say this training provider is outstanding, how much it is reflected? To some extent! I have a feeling, what we see the training providers started knowing the game rule ... you will see that a number of training providers become in the good or outstanding, and I think that is not because they have changed drastically, they just understand the requirements”

6.5 Case 4 – Secondary Vocational Project (SVP) Steering Committee

This is the fourth network which was chosen as a case study for this research. This committee existed before the QQA inception, and was formed between the EDB, MoE and the International Partner for the purpose of overall project management of the then newly introduced secondary vocational education project.

The following sections discuss the results of analyses of data from the interviews as well as those collected as secondary data for this research. The impact of QQA in this case was not that strong, because a) the committee existed before the QQA and b) the scope of the committee was well defined through the project contractual document with the international partner. Nevertheless, there were some impacts, though not strong, through the following overarching themes.

6.5.1 Accountability

When the QQA started reporting on the outcomes of quality reviews of the technical schools, the SVP committee reacted to the reports. The

accountability dimension got affected, partially, through the following key themes, as illustrated in Figure 6-26 below.

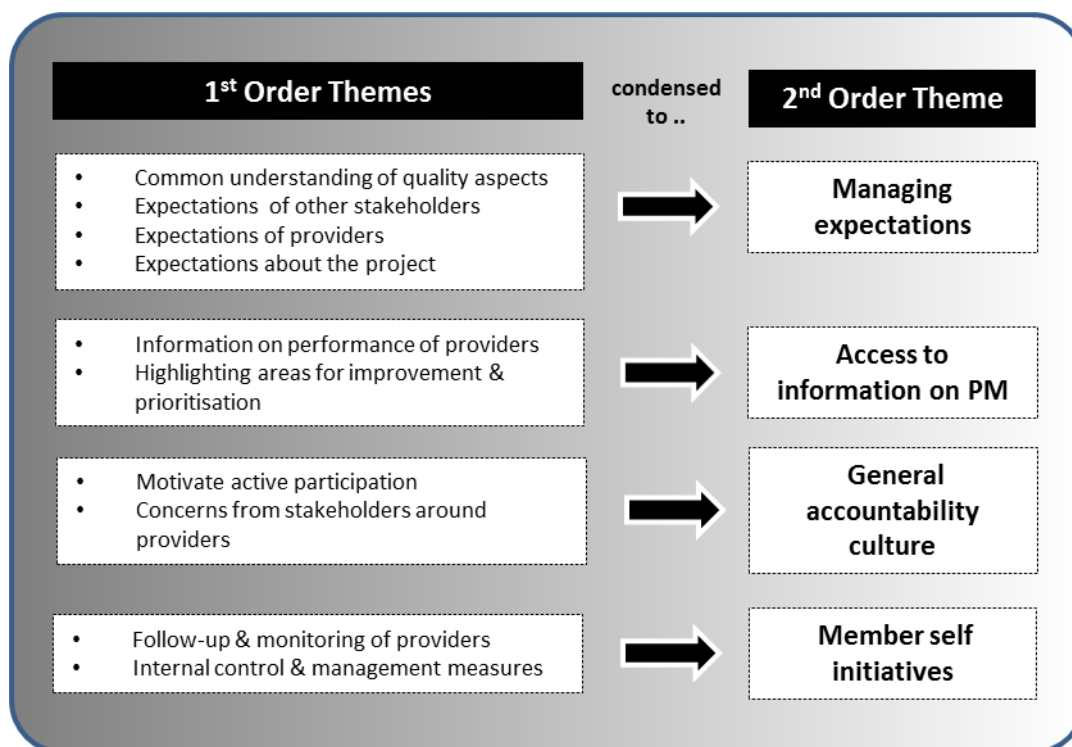


Figure 6 - 26: First and second order thematic analyses of impact on accountability in SVP

6.5.1.1 Managing expectations

The most evident impact of QQA outcomes was through its influence on managing the expectations of the stakeholders, providers (the technical schools) and fostering common understanding of quality aspects. Three out of five participants observed such impacts. The next quotation explains the impact on the common culture:

"it created an environment where people start to focus on pretty high outcomes" (Participant No.6)

6.5.1.2 Access to information on PM

Although the members of this network are closely attached with the schools, the QQA reports served as reliable information on the performance of the schools, and more specifically it highlighted clear and explicit areas for improvement that the committee found useful for the

project, as indicated by three participants in their responses. The next Participant explains the use of the QQA reports:

"in relation to the reports done on the four technical colleges, it was important for our project, we had commenced in June of 2007 and in many respects we hadn't much statistical information available from the Ministry of Education in regards to the work undertaken by the technical colleges ... the quality assurance report was actually really important for us to have some sort of baseline so we could benchmark our improvement" (Participant No.26)

6.5.1.3 Member self initiatives

The response of the MoE to this was mainly in taking some initiatives to use the outcomes in following up the schools after reports, as well as taking some improvement initiatives (such as English testing for students prior to entering technical schools). The next quotation explains such use of QQA reports to hold schools accountable for their performance:

"Yes, [the QQA reports] gave us an additional channel by which we follow up with schools on their performance" (Participant No.35)

6.5.1.4 General accountability culture

The QQA reports created some pressure around the stakeholders in this network, and it was used to motivate stakeholders and providers to actively participate in the project. This impact however was partial; it was reported by two participants in this case, one of them explains the effect in the following:

"it did affect, it did act at the beginning as an accelerator for participation from the Ministry's side" (Participant No.12)

6.5.2 Engagements and trust:

The QQA reporting had some impacts in this case on the engagement and trust between the parties, as depicted in Figure 6-27 below. In this case, the reports did not impact the engagement, as this was mostly set before the QQA, but rather it impacted the trust; mainly towards the QQA review process, not the inter-organisational trust between the parties.

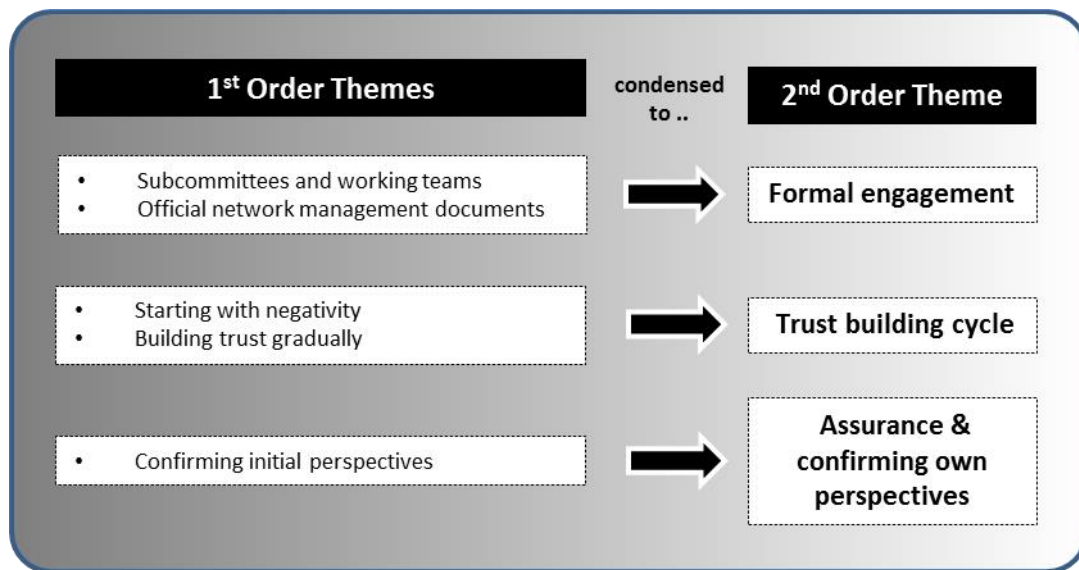


Figure 6 - 27: First and second order thematic analyses of impact on engagement and trust in SVP

6.5.2.1 Trust building cycle

When the QQA review report were first released, the reactions towards these reports started negatively at the beginning, but slowly the trust started developing. This explains the evolutionary trust building towards the QQA system. The five participants in this case observed this, though some did think that the negativity persisted throughout the project. The overall evolutionary process of trust building is explained in the following quotation:

"The ministry viewed it at the time as losing control initially when the whole turn of tide happened, but this didn't last for a very long time because the personnel that were involved in this committee knew that they needed to do some sorts of reform to what's already a failing system at least in their eyes as well" (Participant No.12).

6.5.2.2 Assurance and confirming own perspectives

The other factor that helped in developing more trust in the QQA review reports was that the outcomes were in line with the perceptions that the members had about the performance of these technical schools. Three participants cited such impact, one of them expresses it in this way:

"[The QQA reports] also highlighted a number of issues in relation to assessment practices at the technical colleges that we knew that we needed to concentrate on" (Participant No.26).

6.5.3 Power and control

The responses of the participants in this case do not support any significant impact of QQA reporting on the distribution of power, authorities and control.

6.5.4 Autonomy, coordination and collaboration

The QQA reporting did not affect the autonomy in the SVP case, but it did affect the coordination and collaboration between the parties in one way: alignment of objectives and commitment towards the common goals of the project, as illustrated in Figure 6-28 below.

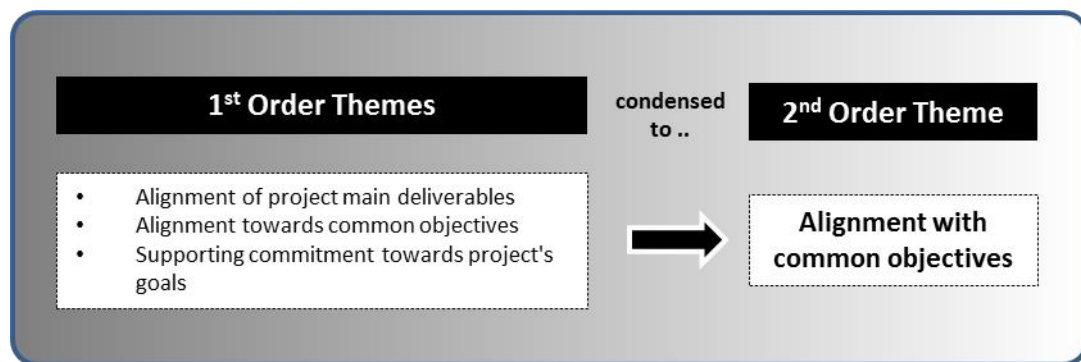


Figure 6 - 28: First and second order thematic analyses of impact on autonomy, coordination and collaboration in SVP

6.5.4.1 Alignment with common objectives

This theme represents the main impacts of QQA on the coordination and collaboration between the parties in the SVP network, mainly through revising the project deliverables in accordance with the QQA results, or supporting the commitment and buy-in of members towards achieving the common goals of the project. The following quotation exemplifies this impact:

"because of the way that the QAA reports focused on outcomes, that was very significant because we were trying to argue that this new curriculum we were developing had to be outcomes-led, had to be standard-based and that of course never existed before. So, in a way the quality assurance reports that were focusing on outcomes, were just providing fuel to that fire, support for the argument we were developing ... QAA was in additional piece of evidence that we would use" (Participant No.6)

6.5.5 Collaborative advantage

QQA reporting had some impacts, though not strong, on the advantages that could be achieved by the SVP steering committee, as depicted in Figure 6-29 below. The impacts however, have not yet been reflected in the quality of services, or school performance, as the SVP steering committee ended soon after the start of QQA reporting.

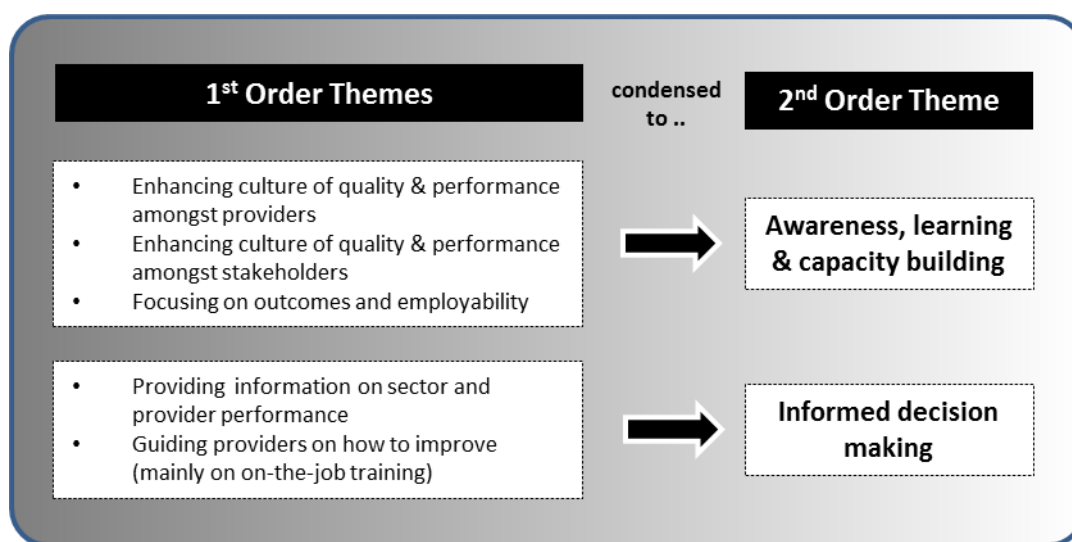


Figure 6 - 29: First and second order thematic analyses of impact on collaborative advantages in SVP

6.5.5.1 Informed decisions

Four participants have indicated that QQA reports have helped the members, mainly MoE, in making some decisions with regards to the design and delivery of the new secondary vocational education project. The reports highlighted the performance of the four technical schools, as well as highlighting the importance of skills acquisition through on-the-job training. The next quotation explains this impact:

"[the QQA reporting] helps because these reports clarified exactly where are the gaps that give [the Ministry], in detail, the gaps, it shows where exactly they're lacking. This was positive feedback" (Participant No.36)

6.5.5.2 Awareness, learning and capacity building

The second theme of advantages was building capacity and learning amongst the schools and the stakeholders around quality issues,

especially on learning outcomes and employability issues related to suitability of programmes, as explained by two of the participants; one of them expresses this as follows:

"the main addition of [the QQA report] is the promulgation of a general culture about some of the quality issues" (Participant No.35)

6.5.6 Collaborative inertias

The participants in this case have highlighted some important inertias to the collaboration, which can be grouped into three main themes as indicated in Figure 6-30 below.

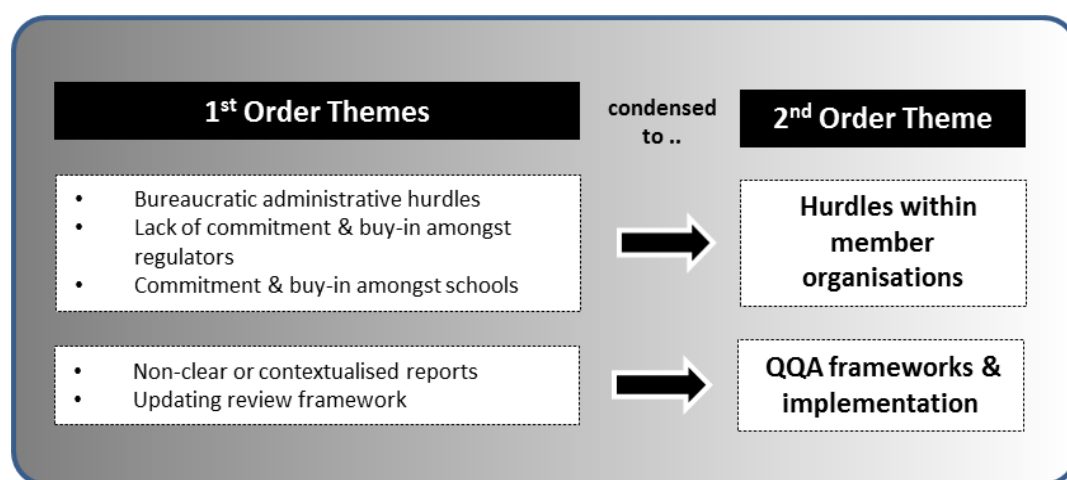


Figure 6 - 30: First and second order thematic analyses of impact on collaborative inertias in SVP

6.5.6.1 Hurdles within member organisations

The main challenges here are the lack of strong commitment and buy-in of all stakeholders (including the technical schools which are part of MoE structure); and some administrative and bureaucratic hurdles that hinders implementation of the necessary reforms. One of the three participants citing these challenges makes the following comment:

"[QQA reporting] was a public naming and shaming and I don't necessarily think that they used it to the advantage that they should have used it. I think what stopped them was the point I made earlier, I just don't think a lot of people were on board with the reform process" (Participant No.26)

6.5.6.2 QQA framework and implementation

The second challenge theme, as highlighted by two participants, is to do with the suitability of the review framework being used by QQA; and the clarity and contextualisation of their reports. About this challenge, the next participant elaborates:

"There should be fairness for schools, you cannot compare a school that has 200 students with teaching faculty of 30, with another school that accommodates more than 1900 students, the learning environment is different, in the technical schools for examples, we have learning in workshops, these present another learning environment altogether, there should be enough contextualisation" (Participant No.35).

7

Cross-Case Analyses

7.1 Introduction

Following the 'within-case' analysis presented in the previous chapter this chapter presents the results of the analyses across the four cases. The analyses are done as per each of the second order themes of the six overarching themes or dimensions (accountability; engagement and trust; power and control; coordination and collaboration; collaborative advantages; and collaborative inertias), discussing how strongly each case supports the given theme. If the theme is supported sufficiently across the four cases, a sub-proposition is made depicting the impact of QA reporting on the specific variable of the given theme. Case-ordered matrices, following the method of (Miles et al. 2014), are used to present the results of the cross-case analyses of each dimension separately (Tables 7-1 to 7-6).

Each dimension is then discussed in more detail. The themes emerging from these analyses are compared to the original themes anticipated by the initial conceptual model, presented in Chapter 3, and the additional themes developed based on the thematic analysis in Chapter 6. New themes have emerged, others were dropped, and some were merged or extended further than originally thought possible based on the results of these cross-case analyses.

The chapter concludes by presenting a summary table (Table 7-7) of all the themes; operational definition of the themes; and the related propositions. The results are presented as well in the form of a final 'conceptual model', or data theory, presenting the novel contribution of this research.

7.2 Accountability




The first dimension on the 'Network Governance' level is accountability. The following table shows the case-ordered matrix on the accountability dimension across the four cases. The results of the case-ordered analysis of this dimension are presented in Table 7-1 below.

Comparing the results of this analysis with the initial conceptual model presented in Chapter 3 (as well as the emerging findings from the pilot interviews presented in Chapter 5), the initially anticipated theme on 'balancing power and control' was rejected as it was not supported. In addition, two new themes emerged and were added after this analysis; 'provider self-initiatives' and 'member self-initiatives'.

The initial theme on 'measurability of performance' was merged with the 'access to information on PM', as the two refer at the end to providing reliable and accessible information on PM to stakeholders and the general public.

Table 7 - 1: Case-ordered effect matrix showing second order themes under the accountability dimension

Over-arching Theme	2 nd Order Theme	Propo-sition	Case 1 ERB	Case 2 HESC	Case 3 VPIS	Case 4 SVP
Accountability	Managing expectations	<i>P1.a</i>	+	+	+	+
	Access to information on PM	<i>P1.b</i>	+	+	+	+
	Public accountability	<i>P1.c</i>	+	+	+	○
	Managing network outputs	<i>P1.d</i>	+	○	+	
	General accountability culture	<i>P1.e</i>	+	○	+	+
	Provider self-initiatives	<i>P1.f</i>	+	+	+	
	Member self-initiatives	<i>P1.g</i>	+	+	+	+
	Balancing power & control	-				

<i>Legend:</i>		<i>Association between QQA reporting and 2nd Order theme is supported, or strongly supported.</i>
		<i>Association between QQA reporting and 2nd Order theme is partially supported.</i>
		<i>Association between QQA reporting and 2nd Order theme is weakly supported or insignificant.</i>
	Blank	<i>No comment on the association between QQA reporting and 2nd Order theme.</i>

7.2.1 Managing expectations

The first theme through which QQA reporting affects accountability is 'managing expectations'. Managing expectations here refers to shaping the expectations of the stakeholders, providers and the general public with regard to the quality of service provision. Managing expectations emerges from promulgating common understanding of quality measures and aspects and providing those measures with benchmarks that could be used for managing expectations (Refer to Table 7-7 for the operational definition of 'managing expectations').

This theme is supported across the four cases, but more strongly in the ERB and VPIS cases. It is only partially supported in the SVP, as the scope of the project covers a smaller number of providers, and fewer stakeholders. Moreover, the quality assurance authority (QQA) reporting only started after the SVP initiative had been in place for a longer period of time. In the HESC, QA reporting affected the expectations of the public, as in the response of the participants, but was not evident in other stakeholders, who were directly involved in the HE sector; their understanding of quality measures, or expectations of what constitutes good quality, were not altered significantly by the QQA reporting.

This theme is consistent with the findings of Page (2004) and Acar et al. (2008), who list 'mapping and manifesting expectations' of stakeholders in a network as one function of accountability. In this case, the QA public reporting has been found to impact accountability within such networks by managing the expectations of the relevant stakeholders and the general public (since they also play a part in accountability through 'public accountability' media as will be discussed later on).

This theme supports the following sub-proposition:

P1.a: Public reporting of QA impacts accountability by managing expectations of stakeholders, providers and the general public with regard to quality of service provision.

7.2.2 Access to information on PM

The second theme that emerges across the four cases is the provision of 'access to information on PM'. The theme is supported strongly in all cases except in the SVP, wherein members are directly involved in the technical schools, and hence did not perceive the information added by the QQA as a 'big addition' to their repository.

QQA reporting helps in strengthening accountability through this theme as it helps to overcome one of the major challenges facing accountability in networks, namely access to information on PM (Romzek 2000; Acar & Robertson 2004; Page 2004; Dubnick 2005; Meijer 2007; Acar et al. 2008; Justesen & Skærbæk 2010).

This theme refers to provision of reliable information, fully or partly, on the performance of providers and sectors, their areas of further development and suggestions, by QQA, on how to improve (Table 7-7). Such information can be used differently by providers, regulators and members of the network, especially when strengthening the accountability for the performance of the providers and sectors (since some members are responsible for improving the performance of the sector overall). Therefore, the theme is used to construct the following sub-propositions:

P1.b: Public reporting of QA impacts accountability in a network by providing access to reliable information on performance of providers and the sector overall.

7.2.3 Public accountability

The third theme that is supported here, at least in three cases, is 'public accountability' which refers to the action of informing the general public, or their representatives and, promulgating a general culture of quality

amongst them, which gets reflected in their informed decisions and responses to the QA reports (refer to Table 7-7).

This theme is part of the previously expected theme of 'accountability environment', which was discussed in developing the conceptual model. This theme is, rather, an extension of the same concept that underpins the 'accountability environment' that was suggested by (O'Connell 2005), the 'public accountability' suggested by Meijer (2007), and the 'accountable culture' described by (Dubnick & Frederickson 2010). The researcher decided to split it as public responses appear to have different mechanisms and a different impact on the other stakeholders, such as the counterpart members in the network. This theme did not appear in the case of SVP, probably because of the limited scope and enclosed interactions of the project (which involved three parties mainly) and the relatively shorter duration in which QQA reporting overlapped with SVP implementation.

In the three cases where public accountability materialised (the ERB, HESC and VPIS) the impact of public accountability was not that strong. This extent of support complements the theme that emerges under collaborative inertias; and public passivity. On balance, it can be concluded that the public response has an effect, putting forth a public form of accountability, but the impact is not as strong as it could be. This conclusion supports the next sub-proposition:

P1.c: Public reporting of QA impacts accountability in a network by instigating the general public, or their representatives, to exercise a general form of public accountability on members of a network and providers to improve quality of services.

7.2.4 Managing network outputs

According to the literature, accountability in network settings can serve different objectives. One of the key concepts in NPM is the 'accountability for results' (Bardach & Lesser 1996) or 'management for results' (Page 2004). Based on this concept, the theme of 'management for results' was identified, in the background theory as explained in Chapter 3, as one of

the themes in which QA reporting can help; hence supporting accountability delivering as one of its key functions.

The name of the theme however was changed to 'managing network outputs' to specifically focus on the use of QA reports that emerged in the responses of participants mainly from the ERB and VPIS cases. The picture in the HESC was mixed. The committee has identified some KPIs to track the progress of the network, but the members rarely refer to these in their meetings. The use of these measures was not evident in the case of HESC. Similar KPIs were set for VPIS, but in the VPIS network, the KPIs were regularly reported and monitored, though some members highlighted the need to revise some of these KPIs, as they were found to be relaxed and need to be stretched to be more challenging. In the case of SVP, the use of QA reporting in managing the network was not established, as the project was governed by a contractual project management document, which was set much ahead of QQA reporting, and hence practically no room for changing the network outputs thereafter.

This theme refers to (as summarised in Table 7-7 below) the use of QA reporting outputs in monitoring and management of performance; or means plans of members in a network, or the agreed objectives and actions of the network, or the performance of the sector in general. Such use can take an informal shape, in informing the internal discussion inside the network meetings; or, it could take the more formal shape of agreed KPIs and targets set for members individually, or for the network, collectively.

The data show that the QA reporting is used in managing network outputs; however, the use in the cases of this research could have been more aggressive. The following sub-proposition is made accordingly:

P1.d: Public reporting of QA impacts accountability in a network by helping in managing the outputs of a network, or the outputs of the members within the network.

7.2.5 General accountability culture

This theme is the second part of the 'public accountability' theme, discussed above; both parts are based on the concepts of 'accountability

environment' of (O'Connell 2005), 'professional accountability' of Page (2004) and Romzek (2000), and the 'mutual or dialogue-based' accountability of Roberts (2002) and Whitaker et al. (2004).

The researcher had to disengage this theme from the general public accountability, to shed more light on these 'informal' mechanisms of accountability between members in a network, or those exerted informally by relevant stakeholders on the members. This can be in a form of dialogue, discussion or arising questions and concerns related to performance and the quality of services; whether inside the network, or outside it when members go back to their daily interactions with their relevant stakeholders.

The impact of this mechanism is found to be more evident than that of the general public, which is still considered not to have been exploited fully in the four cases. Nevertheless, accountability culture in the case of HESC was found to be insignificant, perhaps due to the low level of synergy between members. This issue is reflected in other themes as well, as will be discussed in the following sections. The impact of this culture of accountability among the members is more evident in the case of VPIS, as the commitment to common goals, as well as coordination is more established. Based on this finding, the following proposition is established:

P1.e: Public reporting of QA impacts accountability in a network by fostering an accountability culture around the members, inside and outside the network, created informally from the interactions with relevant stakeholders.

7.2.6 Provider self-initiatives

This theme and the next theme are new emerging themes that were not predicted in the conceptual model. The main function of accountability is linked to 'answerability' for performance (Dicke 2002; Romzek 2000). In these study cases, it was evident that providers, mainly HE and post-secondary vocational institutes, were driven mainly by public reporting (naming and shaming) and funding incentives (in the case of VPIS) to take self-measures to improve their performance. It was more evident in the HE sector, where the vast majority of HE institutes are private; and in

the vocational ones where Tamkeen, MoL and HCVT funding are linked to QQA report grading.

These improvement actions are also encouraged by the post-review action planning step that QQA requires all providers to engage in after receiving their review report. The recommendations in the QQA reports are not explicit, and it leaves it to the provider to come up with their own action plans to address the areas of improvement identified in the review reports. The same initiatives were not found in the SVP case, where the project covers governmental schools that are centrally governed by MoE. However, the Ministry has developed some programmes in response to the QQA findings (as discussed in the next section). Based on this, one can make the following sub-proposition

P1.f: Public reporting of QA impacts accountability in a network by encouraging providers to take initiatives to improve their performance.

7.2.7 Member self-initiatives

The second new emerging theme, that was not part of the conceptual model, is the theme of 'member self-initiatives', which summarises the actions taken by the network members in tightening up regulation, monitoring, and control measures within their organisation, or providing funding and other incentives in rewarding better performing providers, as well as 'punishing' failing ones (refer to the operational definition in Table 7-7).

This theme is also an extension of the concept of supporting the answerability function of accountability (Dicke 2002; Romzek 2000) in improving the performance of providers and the sector overall. Encouraging members to take such self-initiatives certainly adds to achieving the overall goal of accountability, which in this case is improving the quality of services. This theme was found to be supported by data from all cases, especially within MoE, HEC, MoL, Tamkeen and HCVT. Their data shows that these organisations have taken positive measures in response to QQA reporting, mostly on their own, but such measures were encouraged and their impacts were followed up in the respective

committees; most notable are the School Improvement Initiatives within MoE and inspections and a follow-up revamp within HEC and MoL. Accordingly, the following sub-proposition can be made here:

P1.g: Public reporting of QA impacts accountability in a network by encouraging members to take initiatives to improve their performance.

7.3 Engagement and trust

The second dimension on the 'network dynamic' level is that of engagement and trust dimension. Table 7-2 below shows the case-ordered matrix on the engagement and trust dimension across the four cases.

Comparing the results of this analysis with the initial conceptual model presented in Chapter 3, the initially anticipated theme on 'balancing power and control' was rejected since it was not supported.

The new theme entitled 'understanding and commitment' is an extension of the original theme about 'managing expectations', since the data goes beyond mere expectations into real understanding, hence developing commitment by stakeholders.

The theme on 'assurance and confirming one's own perspective' which was developed as a result of the thematic analysis in Chapter 6, is eventually merged here with the relevant theme of 'mediating trust', as the real impact of the assurance of confirmation of one's own perspective is on the perceived trustworthiness (will be discussed more in the next section). The theme here entitled 'mediating trust' is directly linked with the previously identified theme on 'trust transferability'.

Table 7 - 2: Case-ordered effect matrix showing second order themes under the engagement and trust dimension

Over-arching Theme	2 nd Order Theme	Proposition	Case 1 ERB	Case 2 HESC	Case 3 VPIS	Case 4 SVP
Engagement & Trust	Formal engagement	<i>P2.a</i>	⊕	⊕	⊕	
	Informal engagement	<i>P2.b</i>	⊕	○	⊕	○
	Understanding & commitment	<i>P2.c</i>	⊕	⊕	⊕	○
	Mediating trust	<i>P3.d</i>	⊕	⊕	⊕	⊕
	Contributing by small wins	<i>P2.e</i>	⊕	○	⊕	
	Trust building cycle	<i>P2.f</i>	⊕	⊕	⊕	⊕
	Balancing of power & control	--	○	○	○	○
Legend:	⊕	Association between QQA reporting and 2 nd Order theme is supported, or strongly supported.				
	⊕	Association between QQA reporting and 2 nd Order theme is partially supported.				
	○	Association between QQA reporting and 2 nd Order theme is weakly supported or insignificant.				
	Blank	No comment on the association between QQA reporting and 2 nd Order theme.				

7.3.1 Formal engagement

The first theme in which QQA reporting helps in building more engagement and trust between members is through fostering 'formal engagement', in the form of joint projects, team work, joint documentation and the sharing of official information between the parties. This formal engagement occurs in response to QQA reporting and findings.

As is the case in ERB, HESC and VPIS, the data supports the following: that the members were engaged in some 'formal' initiatives which helped in building more engagement between them. There was no data from the SVP, since the engagement was mostly set ahead, and the inter-relationship among the parties had already matured by the time the QQA started reporting on the performance of schools.

The finding here is consistent with the conclusion of (Edelenbos & Klijn 2007), which indicates that higher frequency of formal interactions between members in a network will lead to even more trust. The next sub-proposition sums up this conclusion:

P2.a: Public reporting of QA impacts engagement and trust levels in networks by driving members to engage in more formal joint initiatives and work.

7.3.2 Informal engagement

As concluded by Thomson & Perry (2006), trust in a network can also be built through informal interpersonal relationships, through various interactions and reciprocity amongst members within a network. This theme was evident mainly in the cases of ERB and VPIS, but more strongly in the latter case. The HESC did not support this, perhaps because the engagement did not develop beyond the formal initiatives between the members. In the SVP case, the engagement was confined to a specific project, and the QQA reporting had no scope to evolve the engagement beyond the contractual deliverables of the project.

This theme refers to inter-personal and inter-organisational informal collaboration between members within a network, which might be in the form of informal meetings, side discussions and communication, or even using the formal authority in informal ways to foster more collaboration between the members to achieve common goals that QQA reporting may drive. The data collected supports the next sub-proposition:

P2.b: Public reporting of QA impacts the engagement and trust level in a network by encouraging members to engage in informal, inter-personal or inter-organisational communications and collaborations.

7.3.3 Understanding and commitment

The third theme here was not predicted initially in the conceptual model. The work of Edelenbos & Klijn (2007) identifies three dominants of trust in networks: vulnerability, risk and expectations. In indirect ways, expectations of members regarding the behaviours and performance of

other members in a network, are influenced by gaining a clearer 'understanding' of the roles and responsibilities of others as well as an understanding of the common objectives the network is trying to achieve. The second part of the theme, supported by the collected data, involves developing more commitment, as a result of clearer understanding, towards working together and engaging in further collaborative initiatives.

The data from the VPIS and ERB supports a general theme about the impact of QQA reporting on helping members develop better understanding and conviction over time, with the help of capacity building actions or formal work related to developing the QQA framework; or through informal communications and engagement instigated by QQA findings. In the case of HESC this theme was not so evident. The case in SVP was different however, since the members have a certain level of understanding and commitment to the project scope and objectives; in addition, the QQA had hardly changed any expectation, understanding or commitment in this regard. This discussion brings us to the following sub-proposition:

P2.c: Public reporting of QA impacts engagement and the trust level in a network by helping members develop better understanding about the work and objectives of the network, and, hence, commitment towards achieving those objectives.

7.3.4 Mediating trust

This theme is about the impact of QQA public reports on mediating perceived 'trustworthiness' and 'trust transferability' amongst members in a network. The first aspect of this theme is about the perception of trustworthiness, which is defined by Ferrin et al. (2006) as "the extent to which an individual judges another to have integrity and dependability" (p.871). This perception of trustworthiness has a positive impact on the level of trust among members in a network (Edelenbos & Klijn 2007).

In this research, it was found that participants, especially from the VPIS and SVP cases, who had more insight about the performance and quality of service providers, found that QQA reports confirmed their perceptions

and expectations about the level of quality of the service providers. This confirmation in itself gave them a further assurance and trust in the review system. The case was not the same for the ERB and HESC, as the participants felt differently about the reports. Some found the reports conformed to their expectations as their counterparts in VPIS and SVP did, but others found them 'shocking' and representing a 'complete surprise' to them. Upon reviewing the profiles of the participants, it could be concluded that those participants who were not directly familiar with the providers found the QQA reports, especially the first batches, really surprising and representing 'bad news' to them. This in turn shed some doubts and a degree of 'mis-trust' towards the capacity of some regulators to reform the education and training sectors. One of the participants from the ERB, who comes from outside the sector, expresses his reaction to this:

"I think in my opinion it was overwhelming, I think personally I was overwhelmed when I started looking at numbers and the reports, I felt that our educational system was in shambles, that's the feeling I have personally, and I felt that we reached to the bottom of the educational system when we were spending on the façade but we were not spending on the educational system itself... I wondered what is going to happen to the economy of Bahrain, what is going to happen to Bahrain as a whole"
(Participant No.13)

The second aspect of this theme is the role which the QQA reports play in 'mediating trust transferability,' as a 'third party', among members, as suggested by Ferrin et al. (2006). This effect is evident in at least two cases, the ERB and the HESC, but mostly in the ERB. The reason is that perhaps in the ERB, unlike the other three cases, members come from various organisations and sectors, some of whose members had not met before. In the rest of the cases, members had opportunities to work, in one capacity or another, with other members, as individuals or organisations. The mediating effect of trust comes mainly from providing 'reliable and independent' reports on the performance of providers and the sectors, reports that influence the perceptions of members on the level of 'dependability' and trustworthiness of the providers, sectors, and regulators to deliver the promised performance. Other elements also helped in building this trust, such as having international review panellists in QQA HE review teams and the initial awareness and capacity building in the school administrations prior to the start of actual reviews. The two

sided impact of QQA reporting can be used then to support the following sub-proposition:

P2.d: Public reporting of QA impacts the trust level between members by helping in mediating the creation and transferability of the perception of trustworthiness towards service providers and sectors as well as related regulators.

7.3.5 Contributing by small wins

This theme emerges consistent with the theories of (Edelenbos & Klijn 2007) and Oortmerssen et al. (2014) that stipulate that expected benefits of cooperation strengthen the level of trust within a network; and the model of Vangen & Huxham (2003b) of a 'cyclic trust building loop' by 'small wins' in modest type collaborations.

In the ERB and VPIS, it is evident that QQA reporting has a positive impact in helping the members realise some, though small, benefits or wins over the time of their joint collaboration, with the help of the outcomes of QQA reports. Examples of such benefits include benefits at the sector level such as realising gradual improvement in the quality of services (especially in the post-secondary vocational training), or at the organisational and individual levels, such as providing useful information on performance or helping in building organisational and individual capacities. Such benefits were not evident in the cases of HESC and SVP, as discussed in the previous chapter, and, hence, this theme was not significantly reported in the latter cases. The impact is occurring slowly and gradually; nevertheless one can make the following sub-proposition on the likely impact of QQA reporting:

P2.e: Public reporting of QA impacts enhances the engagement and trust level among members by helping them realise gradual and small wins, due to this QA reporting, at the sector, organisational or individual levels.

7.3.6 Trust building cycle

Vangen & Huxham's (2003b) 'trust building loop' explores building trust starting with modest aims or outcomes that can be achieved. What can be

observed in the four cases of this research is a common trend of building trust, which may start with negative attitudes and poor engagement, due to lack of understanding, unfamiliarity with other members, or even 'perceived' conflict of power and control in some cases. This negativity lasted for a while in the initial stages; however, it soon vanished and trust and engagement started to be developed throughout an 'evolutionary' and gradual path. The four cases differed in how long this 'negativity' persisted. In the case of HESC, it seems that this persisted for longer, while in the VPIS, the network management strategies, in addition to other factors, have helped quicker recovery and a more fruitful trust and engagement building cycle.

The fact the QQA outcomes are publicly reported had an impact on aggravating this negativity at the beginning. The reporting then seems to have a positive impact on developing better understanding, binding members in formal and informal engagement, and aligning them towards the common goals of the network. The evolutionary development of trust and engagement started thereafter. This common trend supports the following sub-proposition:

P2.f: Public reporting of QA impacts engagement and the trust level among members by fostering a trust building cycle, starting with a negative attitude, but then gradually engaging members in a positive evolutionary cycle of building more trust and engagement.

7.4 Power and control

The third dimension on the 'Network Governance' level is about power and control. Table 7-3 below shows the case-ordered matrix relevant to this dimension across the four cases. The data collected here refers to power and authority within the network, as well as the sector.

Two themes that were stipulated in the initial conceptual model are dropped in this analysis. These are the themes of 'collective power' and 'balancing of power', which together suggest that there is no actual impact on the distribution of power or authority within the network. Moreover the network was not set to have real 'collective power'; its collective impact is

mainly in the coordination and collaboration among members. The following excerpt from the response of Participant 27 explains this:

"In terms of power, as a committee, it was not meant [to assume] power. It was meant to provide powerful information to all parties to make them operate better. The committee is not an authority, it's not an entity in itself, it's a coordinating body".




The findings under the theme of 'collective power' are reflected within the next dimension of 'coordination and collaboration' as well as in achieving 'better coordination and seamlessness' as part of the Collaborative Advantages dimension.

Moreover, the analysis revealed one new theme; 'empowering member decision making' that will be discussed shortly in more detail.

The other note that needs to be made here, before discussing the themes, is that QQA reporting was found to have no significant impact on power and control in the case of SVP, perhaps because the scope of the initiative was limited and the roles, responsibilities and authority parties are defined as part of the project charter.

Table 7 - 3: Case-ordered effect matrix showing second order themes under the power and control dimension

Over-arching Theme	2 nd Order Theme	Propo-sition	Case 1 ERB	Case 2 HESC	Case 3 VPIS	Case 4 SVP
Power & Control	Formal and legal authority	<i>P3.a</i>	⊕	⊕	⊕	
	Informal power	<i>P3.b</i>	⊕	○	⊕	○
	Collective power	-	○	○	⊕	
	Balancing of power	-	⊕	○	○	
	Supporting member decision making	<i>P3.c</i>	⊕	⊕	⊕	

<i>Legend:</i>		<i>Association between QQA reporting and 2nd Order theme is supported, or strongly supported.</i>
		<i>Association between QQA reporting and 2nd Order theme is partially supported.</i>
		<i>Association between QQA reporting and 2nd Order theme is weakly supported or insignificant.</i>
	Blank	<i>No comment on the association between QQA reporting and 2nd Order theme.</i>

7.4.1 Formal and legal Authority

Although most types of power and control mechanisms in networks exist informally in a horizontal hierarchy of networks, in some cases, formal authorities are also used, or even needed, as suggested by Eglene et al. (2007) and Zheng et al. (2009) in their work on cross-boundary information sharing initiatives in the public sector.

In the case of this research, QQA reporting is found to have an impact on power and control profiles through exercising some 'formal and legal' authority, especially at the ERB case, where the committee has a clear hierarchical structure and is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister. The reports of QQA are all signed off by the Prime Minister's Office, giving them high official status. In the ERB, there are some examples of using the formal power to drive some projects, informed by QQA, such as the School Improvement Programme. The theme is less evident in the HESC or VPIS, as the structures of these two committees do not allow for such formal influence, except for the official signing of the reports of QQA. As a matter of fact, this very issue of lacking formal authority is identified by participants as one of the collaborative inertias that hinder better outcomes of the networks. In the SVP, the initiative is run through a contractual project management document, so the relationships differ from the rest of the committees.

The observed theme here can be used as a basis for the development of the following sub-proposition:

P3.a: Public reporting of QA impacts power and control profile in a network through the use of a formal and legal authority that the network might possess.

7.4.2 Informal power

Besides the formal and legal authority, O'Toole (1997) and Zheng et al. (2009) point out another form of authority: informal authority. This form represents the use of personal power and expert power, rather than the formal authority and command power, inside the network to "influence" decisions or outcomes of the network.

This theme was evident in the three cases; ERB, HESC and VPIS; but more strongly in VPIS. The theme represents some members enjoying a more 'informal' type of power, mainly the QQA as being a reference in discussions and decision making. The QQA was not represented in the SVP, so this theme was not evident there. In the SVP, some signs of similar 'informal' status were partially played by the representatives of the EDB, packed with the outcomes of the QQA reviews, but this was emerging and not that significant. The following sub-proposition is made accordingly:

P3.b: Public reporting of QA impacts the power and control profile in a network through fostering the use of some informal types of power within a network.

7.4.3 Empowering members' decision making

This theme is a new emerging theme that was not anticipated by the initial conceptual model. The QQA reporting has a direct impact on the power and control profile in improving the performance of the sector, through its use by member organisations, as well as providers, to empower their own decisions in bringing forth improvement measures to regulatory and funding schemes for example. The network, most notably in the cases of VPIS and HESC, has a great influence on coordinating this use to empower internal decisions to service the common objectives of the network. In VPIS and HESC, this use is stipulated in the memorandum of understandings between the parties (in the VPIS case, MoL, Tamkeen and HCVT use the QQA outcomes more explicitly). Some providers, mainly HE and vocational institutes, are also observed using the outcomes and recommendations of the reports to justify their internal decisions and expenditures in quality improvement initiatives.

This evident emerging theme supports the following sub-proposition about the impact of QQA reporting on power and control:

P3.c: Public reporting of QA impacts the power and control profile in a network through empowering members, as well as providers, in making their own internal decisions.

7.5 Coordination and collaboration

This dimension on Coordination and Collaboration is the fourth dimension on 'Network Governance'. Table 7-4 below shows the case-ordered matrix of this dimension across the four cases.

Thorough analysis of the data, the codes and the constructed themes under this dimension reveals that the actual impact was not on the autonomy status of members; members are still autonomous in their decision making; the actual impact was on strengthening the degree of coordination and collaboration among them. This was not perceived as affecting the autonomy, and hence the word 'autonomy' was dropped from the title of this dimension.

One theme is emerging as a new theme that was not part of the initial conceptual model, which is about 'coordinative and consultative work'.

One theme, the theme on 'adjusting legislative tools' that was stipulated in the initial conceptual model is not sufficiently supported to stand alone. Careful analysis of this theme shows that the codes refer to the same trend of coordinating work, and hence this theme was merged with the theme titled 'coordinative & consultative work'.

Table 7 - 4: Case-ordered effect matrix showing second order themes under the coordination and collaboration dimension

Over-arching Theme	2 nd Order Theme	Propo-sition	Case 1 ERB	Case 2 HESC	Case 3 VPIS	Case 4 SVP
Coordination & Collaboration	Alignment with common objectives	<i>P4.a</i>	+	⊕	+	+
	Conflict of interests & priorities	-	○	○	○	○
	External steering mechanism	<i>P4.b</i>	+	○	+	
	Adjusting legislative tools	-	○	○	⊕	
	Coordinative & consultative work	<i>P4.c</i>	+	⊕	+	
Legend:	+	<i>Association between QQA reporting and 2nd Order theme is supported, or strongly supported.</i>				
	⊕	<i>Association between QQA reporting and 2nd Order theme is partially supported.</i>				
	○	<i>Association between QQA reporting and 2nd Order theme is weakly supported or insignificant.</i>				
	Blank	<i>No comment on the association between QQA reporting and 2nd Order theme.</i>				

7.5.1 Alignment with common objectives

The first theme in which QQA reporting impacts the this dimension is through the alignment of strategies, plans and resources of member organisations towards the common objectives of the network. This observation is in line with the findings of Addicott et al. (2007), Mandell and Keast (2008) and Bonollo (2013) about the importance of such alignment, especially in 'coordination' type networks.

It is worth noting here, as is the case in the next two themes as well, that the actual impact is on the degree of coordination and collaboration, not on the real autonomy status of members; hence the word 'autonomy' was dropped from the title of this dimension.

The theme is evident more clearly in the case of VPIS and SVP. In the case of HESC, the network could not make much progress towards the common goals in a collective manner (it was more individual organisational efforts, with some degree of coordination). In the ERB, however, it was expected that this theme would appear more prominently, but this was not the case as was evident from the responses of the participants. However, the secondary data in this case supports this theme. The MoE has embarked on extensive initiatives to improve the school improvement; the HEC is working hard to develop a national strategy for higher education; MoL, Tamkeen and HCVT are found responsive to the initiatives of the Education Reform Board, and all of these strategies and programmes are informed in one way or the other by the results of QQA work. Hence, the next sub-proposition is developed regarding the impact of QQA reporting:

P4.a: Public reporting of QA impacts the coordination and collaboration in a network by driving members to align their resources, strategies and action plans towards the common goals of the network.

7.5.2 External steering mechanism

As part of the conceptual model development, the findings of the previous literature review were discussed which suggest that in networks, government authorities sometimes opt for 'soft steering' mechanisms to control the output of inter-organisational networks (Klijn & Koppenjan 2000; Turrini et al. 2010; Ferlie et al. 2011; Martin & Guarneros-meza 2013). In line with this conclusion, the data in these case studies support a general theme of using the outcomes of QQA reports as a steering mechanism for the networks to achieve their intended outcomes, such as using the results explicitly as KPIs for the network (in VPIS for example) or using the outcomes as bases for monitoring and discussion of individual member performance, or the performance of the sector overall. In the SVP case, this was not evident, as the initiative is well controlled and managed by the project management document developed ahead of the QQA work.

The theme supports the next sub-proposition about the impact of QQA reporting:

P4.b: Public reporting of QA impacts the coordination and collaboration within a network if it used as an external steering mechanism to drive the members and network towards achieving the objectives.

7.5.3 Coordinative and consultative work

The third theme under this dimension is a new emerging theme that was not part of the conceptual model. This theme refers to the collaborative efforts in consulting other members to review and discuss the individual strategies and action plans of the members or to participate in common and joint projects, or, even, to take some decisions jointly away from the centre in a consultative manner. This level of coordination and consultation does not eventually take the decision away from the respective organisation members, or affect their actual autonomy; rather, it strengthens the coordination and collaboration work among them.

Another relevant emerging theme was merged with the Coordinative and Consultative Work, regarding 'adjusting legislative tools', as this action was also deemed to be part of coordinating the work of members in the committee, including coordinating their legislative instruments. An example of these efforts is the joint work between MoL, QQA, Tamkeen and other stakeholders in drafting a new law for vocational education and training. Similar examples can be found in the three cases, ERB, HESC and VPIS, but due its pre-defined contractual scope of work, this theme is not evident in the case of SVP. This theme can be used as a basis then to conclude the following sub-proposition:

P4.c: Public reporting of QA impacts the coordination and collaboration in a network by encouraging coordinative and consultative work between members.

7.6 Collaborative advantages

Moving from the Network Governance level to the 'impact' or the 'outcomes' level, this dimension stands along with the next one on Collaborative Inertias. The results of the case-ordered analyses for this dimension are tabulated in the table below.

This dimension as a whole was not part of the initial conceptual model. It was part of the interim analysis done upon collecting and analysis of some data from the field. The dimension was developed out of the originally identified dimension of 'driver of network formation'. The data did not support the former, but the responses point rather to the 'advantages' that could have been achieved by working collaboratively in these networks, with the influence of QQA reporting.

In the thematic analyses of Chapter 6, two additional themes were identified under the collaborative advantages dimension; these are the themes of 'fostering innovation' and 'transparency and fairness'. The two themes were not supported enough by the data. The titles of the rest of the themes were further developed at this stage of analysis to reflect the new findings and insights.

Table 7 - 5: Case-ordered effect matrix showing second order themes under the collaborative advantages dimension

Over-arching Theme	2 nd Order Theme	Propo-sition	Case 1 ERB	Case 2 HESC	Case 3 VPIS	Case 4 SVP
Collaborative Advantages	Improving quality of services	<i>P5.a</i>	⊕	⊕	⊕	
	Better coordination and seamlessness	<i>P5.b</i>	⊕	⊕	⊕	○
	Awareness, learning & capacity building	<i>P5.c</i>	⊕	⊕	⊕	⊕
	Informed decisions	<i>P5.d</i>	⊕	⊕	⊕	⊕
	Collective capacity & action	-	○	○	○	

	Fostering innovation	-	○
	Transparency & Fairness	-	⊕ ○
Legend:	⊕	<i>Association between QQA reporting and 2nd Order theme is supported, or strongly supported.</i>	
	⊕	<i>Association between QQA reporting and 2nd Order theme is partially supported.</i>	
	○	<i>Association between QQA reporting and 2nd Order theme is weakly supported or insignificant.</i>	
	Blank	<i>No comment on the association between QQA reporting and 2nd Order theme.</i>	

7.6.1 Improving quality of services

The ultimate objective of all committees in the context of this research is improving the quality of education and training services in Bahrain. Improving the quality or efficiency is very much the aim of many collaborative network initiatives (McQuaid 2010; Savage et al. 2011); achieving this improved efficiency, however, differs in mechanisms and the way in which it is evaluated.

In three cases of the four, ERB, VPIS and HESC, there has been some improvement observed in the services as a result of the collaborative work within the committee, and the public reporting of QQA reviews. The degree of improvement, however, varies from one sector to another, as discussed in the previous chapter. Improving services was most evident in the post-secondary vocational education and training sector. In the schooling and HE sectors, the improvement is either not established, or just emerging. In the SVP, the project duration did not allow for sufficient time to observe such improvement. The improvement is generally observed in the trend of grades given in QQA review reports or in general improvement in the standards, measures and practices within providers (For example, in vocational institutes there was an increasing trend towards internationally accredited training programmes.)

Comparing this theme with other advantages that are discussed in this dimension, it can be noted that 'improving quality of services' sits at the top of the other advantages; i.e. the overall objective which supersedes

all other advantages is in fact to achieve 'improvement in the quality of services'. Using the typology of Emerson et al.'s model (2011), it can be said that 'improving quality of services' is at 'system context level,' or the sector level in this case, whereas the remaining advantages are in fact at 'network governance level'. Adopting this concept, 'improving quality of services' is pictured at a subsequent level to the rest of advantages in Figure 7-1 below. Based on this, the following sub-proposition is made:

P5.a: Public reporting of QA helps members working collaboratively in a network improve quality of service provision.

7.6.2 Better coordination and seamlessness

Developing a coherent and "aligned" service is listed as one of the advantages, particularly in service providing networks (McQuaid 2010). Consistent with this, this theme of 'better coordination and seamlessness' emerges more evidently in three cases: ERB, HESC and VPIS.

In this theme, the QQA reporting helps in clarifying roles and responsibilities; or any areas that need more coordinated efforts, which then encourages members to work collaboratively in coordinating their work, to adjust the relevant institutional and legislative instruments, and to resolve any conflict and duplication of efforts among members. In the given cases however, the need was also highlighted for more efforts in developing the institutional tools that govern the inter-relations between parties, as part of the inertias in the next section. This theme is used here as the basis for the next sub-proposition:

P5.b: Public reporting of QA helps achieve better coordination and seamlessness of services between members in a network.

7.6.3 Awareness, learning and capacity building

Sharing knowledge, expertise and creating common norms that help in strengthening relationships among members in a network are listed as the main advantages of collaborative work (McQuaid 2010; Savage et al.

2011). The same theme of advantages has been observed to emerge strongly in the four cases of this research.

The data shows that the QQA reporting, supported by subsequent capacity building programmes, has led to the improved culture of quality and performance amongst providers, stakeholders and the general public (although the use of this awareness varies across different groups of people). This general observation supports the following sub-proposition:

P5.c: Public reporting of QA helps network in promulgating enhanced culture of quality and performance across providers, stakeholders and the general public.

7.6.4 Informed decisions

As direct results of the themes on providing access to information on performance, and the use of such information by providers and member organisations in supporting their regulatory and funding decisions, this theme summarises this subsequent advantage of reporting QQA results.

The theme is evident in the four cases of the research, but more evidently in the case of ERB and VPIS. There have been a number of examples here of members, such as MoL, Tamkeen, MoE and HCVT, referring to the QQA results, be it in regard to information on performance of providers or the collective performance of the sector, or on QAA results informing their decisions, strategies and action plans. Such use is encouraged by the respective networks, especially the VPIS and ERB.

It can be concluded here that QQA reporting can lead to the following collaborative advantage:




P5.d: Public reporting of QA helps network members in making better informed decisions.

7.7 Collaborative inertias

The last dimension is about the collaborative inertias. Table 7-6 below presents the case-ordered matrix analyses for this dimension across the four cases.

The development of this dimension was exploratory. None of the themes was predicted at the beginning, and it was only explored after some interviews had been conducted, revealing an urge to explore the possible challenges and hurdles that hinder exploiting QQA reporting fully in such networks, and hence achieving more outcomes or advantages.

Table 7 - 6: Case-ordered effect matrix showing second order themes under the collaborative inertias dimension

Over-arching Theme	2 nd Order Theme	Propo-sition	Case 1 ERB	Case 2 HESC	Case 3 VPIS	Case 4 SVP
Collaborative Inertias	Public passivity	<i>P6.a</i>	⊕	○	⊕	
	Incomplete institutional tools	<i>P6.b</i>	⊕	⊕	⊕	
	Absence of formal authority	<i>P6.c</i>	○	⊕	⊕	
	Network management	<i>P6.d</i>	⊕	⊕	⊕	○
	Hurdles within member organisations	<i>P6.e</i>	⊕	○	○	⊕
	Motivation & commitment of providers	<i>P6.f</i>	⊕		⊕	⊕
	QQA frameworks & implementation	<i>P6.g</i>	⊕	⊕	⊕	⊕
Legend:		<i>Association between QQA reporting and 2nd Order theme is supported, or strongly supported.</i>				
		<i>Association between QQA reporting and 2nd Order theme is partially supported.</i>				
		<i>Association between QQA reporting and 2nd Order theme is weakly supported or insignificant.</i>				
	Blank	<i>No comment on the association between QQA reporting and 2nd Order theme.</i>				

7.7.1 Public passivity

Although the research identifies 'public accountability' as one of the themes that affect the general accountability in such networks, the data indeed shows that the response of the public, or their representatives, has

not been as effective as it could have been in the four cases in exerting enough pressure on the members or providers to aggressively improve the overall services. This challenge can also be the result of the weak reach of QQA reports to the general audience.

Related to this theme, Goldsmith and Eggers (2004) have identified a similar challenge, which they refer to as 'community participation'. Similarly, Meijer (2007) pointed at the weak access to PM information, and Leong & Wong (2004) to the ineffective stakeholder utilisation of the PM reports for their own purposes.

The following sub-proposition can be made based on this observed inertia to collaboration:

P6.a: Public passivity can pose a challenge to achieving wider collaborative advantage in a network.

7.7.2 Incomplete institutional tools

The second theme of collaborative inertia, that can be observed in the responses of many participants, mainly across ERB, HESC and VPIS, is a general theme related to the absence of a comprehensive and updated institutional and legal framework which can institutionalise properly the inter-relationships between members within a network. This comprehensive and institutional legal framework can also underpin formal incentives and regulatory measures for providers (based on their performance).

There have been some initiatives recently in working collaboratively within ERB, HESC, and VPIS to review and revise the existing legislative tools, particularly in the vocational and HE sectors; however, these initiatives have not yet been completed. The members still need to work on this front, and hence this theme was identified as one of inertia. The next sub-proposition is developed based on this observation:

P6.b: An incomplete institutional framework is a challenge to achieving wider collaborative advantage in a network.

7.7.3 Absence of formal authority

One of the challenges that face inter-organisational forms of network collaborations is the formal or institutional legitimacy, which can be handled by formal legislations and regulations, or by strong sponsorship from a well-recognised authority (Zheng et al. 2009). This challenge was referred to by participants in the HESC and VPIS cases. In the case of ERB, the committee has some sort of vertical hierarchy, as it was chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, while the members are at the rank of ministers or below. In the SVP, the network was managed well as a project (through project management).

The theme of inertias here refers to some hurdles related to formal lines of accountability, which can oversee the progress of the network, or sponsorship of higher authority that can enforce or influence some projects or tasks of the network. The case of HESC clearly exemplifies a committee that needs a higher authority to secure stronger commitment and participation of all parties; and to steer the network harder to achieve its common objectives.

Accordingly, the following sub-proposition about the challenge is made:

P6.c: Absence of formal authority and lines of accountability is a challenge to achieving a wider collaborative advantage in a network.

7.7.4 Network management

Goldsmith & Eggers (2004) and Klijn (2005) list some of the questions and issues that all converge into challenges in managing networks. Examples of these challenges are 'communication meltdown', 'fragmented coordination'; and 'relationship stability' in a network.

In the subject cases of this research, relevant challenges have been highlighted by participants, pointing towards a general theme of 'network management'. The theme comprises challenging objectives, targets and KPIs for the network to achieve; underpinning this theme are demands for a clearer and more explicit mandate and terms of reference for the members to allow collaboration within the network; and, a need to

address the presence of inconsistency in membership (as was highlighted in the case of VPIS). All of these challenges form a theme that can support the next sub-proposition:

P6.d: Ineffective network management practices are challenges to achieving wider collaborative advantage in a network.

7.7.5 Hurdles within member organisations

Another theme that emerges from the responses of participants stems from the member organisations themselves; either because of the bureaucratic hurdles that have hindered the progress of the agreed reform initiatives; or due to the lack of sufficiently strong commitment from the organisations to work collaboratively and implement the required projects and actions.

This theme is not that evident, except in two cases; the ERB and the SVP and its impact is not necessarily significant. Nevertheless, it can be one of the challenges that can hinder full exploitation of QA reporting, or the harmony of collaborative work; hence, the following sub-proposition is suggested:

P6.e: Bureaucracy and lack of strong commitment within member organisations are challenges to achieving wider collaborative advantage in a network.

7.7.6 Motivation and commitment of providers

One of the key arguments that is used against audit and inspection is related to the attitude of providers, being the auditees, in manipulating data, deceiving reviewers or presenting their cases in ways that reflect a better picture than is the case, especially if the PM is linked with sanctions or reward mechanisms (Lim 2009). These deterrent behaviours have been also reported by Hood (2012) for mainly the 'rankings' types of application of performance measurement. QA reports, as explained in previously, serve the purpose of rankings as well.

There are some signs of such behaviours reported in some of the cases in this study. In addition, there are some other challenges, related to providers, of having weak commitment, or a quality culture that is not so embedded within the system of providers, which makes the improvement of performance not that sustainable in the long-run, since providers make quick fixes before receiving their reviews, but quickly return to previous practices prior to the review preparations.

P6.f: Low motivation and commitment of providers towards quality improvement is a challenge to achieving wider collaborative advantage in a network.

7.7.7 Review framework and implementation

Some of the arguments used against PM initiatives, coming from various research papers, boil down to the review framework that is used to measure performance of providers; or the way it is implemented in practice. Examples of these counter-arguments are incompleteness of review reports (Overtveit 2005; Carmichael et al. 2001); over-complexity of the reported PM measures (Lansky 2002); attribution of outcomes to the right inputs (Lindenauer et al. 2007); or incompatibility in application of PM measurement (Overtveit 2005). The over complexity and ambiguity issue is an obstructing aspect associated with the 'intelligence' types of performance measurement, as per Hood (2012). QA reports can be fall under this type of application.

In line with this general theme, there were some challenges reported here, in fact in all four cases of the study, suggesting that one theme of the challenges comes from the QQA review framework not being at the cutting edge of research with respect to educational and training advancement, inexperienced reviewers, or insufficiently contextualised review reports. This theme gives rise to the next sub-proposition:

P6.g: A QA review framework, or its implementation, can be a challenge to achieving wider collaborative advantage in a network.

7.7 Overall analyses

The results of the case-ordered analyses of all six dimensions are summarised in Table 7-7 below. In this table, the second order themes are tabulated along with their '**operational definitions**' (operational definitions that are used for the purpose of this research) and the related sub-proposition and its number.

The final results of these cross-case analyses are used to construct the **Revised Conceptual Model, or the data theory**, in Figure 7-1 below.

Table 7 - 7: Operational definitions of supported themes

Overarching Theme	2 nd Order Theme	Operational definition of the theme	<i>Related Sub-proposition</i>	
Accountability	Managing expectations	Altering the expectations of the stakeholders, providers and the general public in regard to what constitutes quality of service provision.	<i>P1.a</i>	Public reporting of QA impacts accountability by managing expectations of stakeholders, providers and the general public with regard to quality of service provision.
	Access to information on PM	Providing reliable information, fully or partly, on the performance of providers and sectors; their areas of further development and suggestions on how to improve.	<i>P1.b</i>	<i>Public reporting of QA impacts accountability in a network by providing access to reliable information on performance of providers and the sector overall.</i>
	Public accountability	The response of the public, or their representatives, in response to PM reports, either in the form of their informed decisions or other accountability means.	<i>P1.c</i>	Public reporting of QA impacts accountability in a network by instigating the general public, or their representatives, to exercise a general form of public accountability on members of a network and providers to improve quality of services.
	Managing network outputs	Use of QA reporting outputs in monitoring and management of performance and plans of members in a network, or the agreed objectives and actions of the network, or the performance of the sector in general.	<i>P1.d</i>	Public reporting of QA impacts accountability in a network by helping in managing the outputs of a network, or the outputs of the members within the network.

	General accountability culture	Informal accountability exercised around the members, by relevant stakeholders, in their communication with members inside the network as well as outside it.	<i>P1.e</i>	Public reporting of QA impacts accountability in a network by fostering an accountability culture around the members, inside and outside the network, created informally from the interactions with relevant stakeholders.
	Provider self-initiatives	Measures taken by providers, as self-initiatives, to improve their performance, encouraged directly or indirectly by QA public reporting	<i>P1.f</i>	Public reporting of QA impacts accountability in a network by encouraging providers to take initiatives to improve their performance.
	Member self-initiatives	Measures taken by member organisations, as self-initiatives, to improve regulatory, monitoring, control, or funding measures, encouraged by QA reporting	<i>P1.g</i>	Public reporting of QA impacts accountability in a network by encouraging members to take initiatives to improve their performance.
Engagement & Trust	Formal engagement	Participation of members through formal projects, initiatives and joint collaborations encouraged, directly or indirectly, by outcomes of QA public reports.	<i>P2.a</i>	Public reporting of QA impacts engagement and trust levels in a network by driving members to engage in more formal joint initiatives and work.
	Informal engagement	Participation of members in joint communications and collaborations, in informal ways, in response to common causes supported by QA reports.	<i>P2.b</i>	Public reporting of QA impacts engagement and trust levels in a network by encouraging members to engage in informal, inter-personal or inter-organisational, communications and collaborations.

	Understanding & commitment	Developing clearer understanding, and hence commitment, amongst members towards the common objectives of the network, influenced by findings of QA reports.	<i>P2.c</i>	Public reporting of QA impacts engagement and the trust level in a network by helping members develop better understanding about the work and objectives of the network, and, hence, commitment towards achieving those objectives.
	Mediating trust	Impact of public reporting on creating or transferability of perceptions of trustworthiness and dependability of providers and regulating organisations to deliver required performance.	<i>P2.d</i>	Public reporting of QA impacts the trust level between members by helping in mediating the creation and transferability of the perception of trustworthiness towards service providers, sectors and related regulators.
	Contributing by small wins	Benefits that are induced by QA reporting in networks on individual, organisational or sectoral levels, which help in gradually strengthening trust amongst members.	<i>P2.e</i>	Public reporting of QA impacts enhances the engagement and trust level among members by helping them realise gradual and small wins, due to this QA reporting, at the sector, organisational or individual levels.

	Trust building cycle	A general trend of actions, influenced by QA reporting, starting with negative attitudes and engagement, due to poor understanding and commitment, which then gradually turns into a positive trend of building more trust and engagement.	<i>P2.f</i>	Public reporting of QA impacts engagement and the trust level among members by fostering a trust building cycle, starting with a negative attitude, but then gradually engaging members in a positive evolutionary cycle of building more trust and engagement.
Power & Control	Formal and legal authority	The actions of using formal or legal authority to institutionalise or influence the utilisation of QA reports by members within a network.	<i>P3.a</i>	Public reporting of QA impacts power and control profile in a network through the use of a formal and legal authority that the network might possess.
	Informal power	The use of QA reports in fostering some informal types of power and influence by members in a network, such as the power of knowledge and reference.	<i>P3.b</i>	Public reporting of QA impacts the power and control profile in a network through fostering the use of some informal types of power within a network.

	Empowering member decision making	The use of QA reports by members and providers to support and justify their internal decision making, including regulatory and funding as well as the justification of expenditure on performance improvement initiatives.	<i>P3.c</i>	Public reporting of QA impacts the power and control profile in a network through empowering members, as well as providers, in making their own internal decisions.
Coordination & Collaboration	Alignment with common objectives	Alignment of the resources, strategies, and action plans of organisation members in a network, to match the common objectives of the network.	<i>P4.a</i>	Public reporting of QA impacts the coordination and collaboration in a network by driving members to align their resources, strategies and action plans towards the common goals of the network.
	External steering mechanism	The use of QA reports as an external steering mechanism, explicitly in the form of KPIs, or to inform monitoring and discussion of members' performance, or the network or sector performance.	<i>P4.b</i>	<i>P4.b</i> : Public reporting of QA impacts the coordination and collaboration within a network if it is used as an external steering mechanism to drive the members and network towards achieving the objectives.

	Coordinative & consultative work	The efforts of members in consulting each other in the network to discuss members' individual strategies and action plans; or the participation in joint coordinative projects including updating and adjusting legislative instruments collaboratively.	<i>P4.c</i>	Public reporting of QA impacts the coordination and collaboration in a network by encouraging coordinative and consultative work between members.
Collaborative Advantages	Improving quality of services	Improvement in the quality of services, either as a measure by QA reporting results, or through other observed measures and practices, as a result of working collaboratively in a network and as a result of the influence of QA reporting.	<i>P5.a</i>	Public reporting of QA helps members working collaboratively in a network to improve quality of service provision.
	Better coordination and seamlessness	Clarifying roles and responsibilities, identifying conflicts and duplication of tasks; and working collaboratively to coordinate the services offered by members in a network.	<i>P5.b</i>	Public reporting of QA helps achieve better coordination and seamlessness of services between members in a network.
	Awareness, learning & capacity building	The status of reaching common understanding, general awareness, and the culture of quality and performance amongst providers, stakeholders, and the general public in large.	<i>P5.c</i>	Public reporting of QA helps a network in promulgating enhanced culture of quality and performance across providers, stakeholders and the general public.

	Informed decisions	The use of QA report outcomes in informing the decisions, strategies and action plans of providers and member organisations within a network.	<i>P5.d</i>	Public reporting of QA helps network members in making better informed decisions.
Collaborative Inertias	Public passivity	Weaker reach of QA reports to the wider public, or the ineffective response of the public or their representatives in exercising their influence to push for improving quality and performance.	<i>P6.a</i>	Public passivity can pose a challenge to achieving wider collaborative advantage in a network.
	Incomplete institutional tools	Absence of proper institutional instruments that clarify roles and responsibilities of members, establish their inter-relationships, and underpin incentives and regulations to providers based on their performance.	<i>P6.b</i>	Incomplete institutional framework is a challenge to achieving wider collaborative advantage in a network.
	Absence of formal authority	Absence of clear and explicit lines of accountability in the network; or the absence of a higher authority that can drive the network further towards achieving more outcomes.	<i>P6.c</i>	Absence of formal authority and lines of accountability is a challenge to achieving a wider collaborative advantage in a network.
	Network management	Improper practices in managing a network, such as the absence of challenging objectives, targets or KPIs, an un-clear scope and terms of reference or the instability of network membership.	<i>P6.d</i>	Ineffective network management practices are challenges to achieving wider collaborative advantage in a network.

Hurdles within member organisations	Challenges that stem from within organisation members, such as bureaucratic or administrative hurdles; or the lack of strong commitment and participation by members within the collaborative projects.	<i>P6.e</i>	Bureaucracy and lack of strong commitment within member organisations are challenges to achieving wider collaborative advantage in a network.
Motivation & commitment of providers	Lack of sustainable or embedded quality culture within providers, or the lack of motivation and commitment, due to inappropriate incentives or improper attitudes towards review activities, such as hiding or manipulating presented data.	<i>P6.f</i>	Low motivation and commitment of providers towards quality improvement is a challenge to achieving wider collaborative advantage in a network.
QQA frameworks & implementation	Challenges that stem from the suitability of the QA review framework, or the way it is implemented, or the clarity or viability of its reports.	<i>P6.g</i>	QA review framework, or its implementation, can be a challenge to achieving wider collaborative advantage in a network.

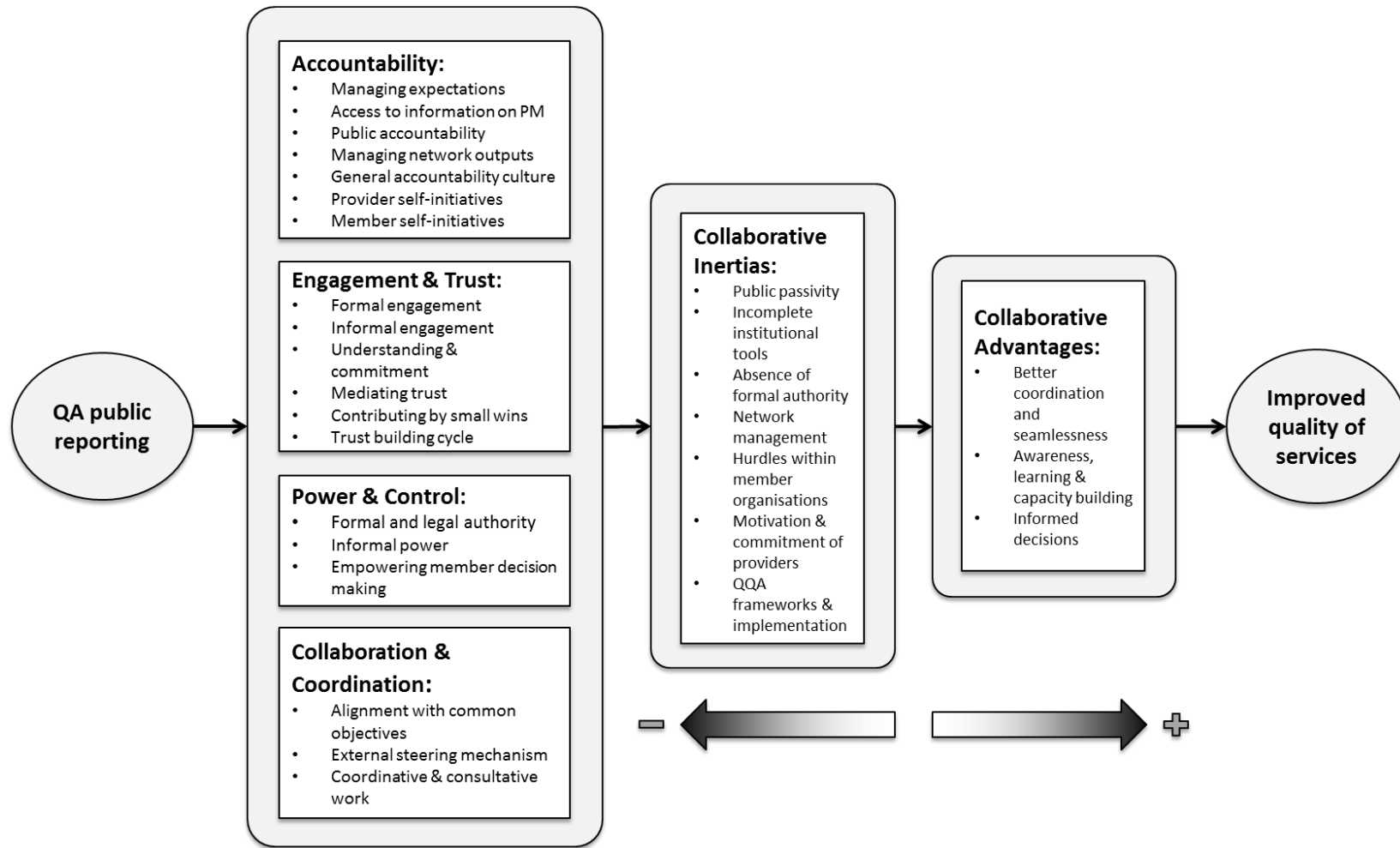


Figure 7 - 1: Revised conceptual model - Data theory (developed by researcher)

To explain the journey of this research and sum up the findings, Table 7-8 below compares the outcomes of the initial theoretical conceptual model, which was developed and presented in Chapter 3, and the revised proposed conceptual model presented in Figure 7-1 above. The table also shows the major changes which occurred post the pilot interviews, and the first stage of analysis, in developing the final propositions and sub-propositions. Some of the initial theoretical propositions were not found to be well supported by the collected data, and hence were not considered in the final conceptual model. Additionally, the analyses of the collected data revealed some new themes that were not originally identified in the initial theoretical model. The new themes are equally presented in the table below.

Table 7 - 8: Development of propositions from initial to revised proposed conceptual model

Overarching Theme	2 nd Order Theme	Corresponding initial theoretical concept	<i>Changes after pilot interviews and initial data analyses</i>	
Accountability	<i>P1.a</i>	Managing expectations	Managing expectations	--
	<i>P1.b</i>	Access to information on PM	Access to information and measurability of performance	The two concepts are closely related, and hence the codes were clustered into one 2 nd order theme.
	<i>P1.c</i>	Public accountability	Accountability Environment	The codes pertaining to the general public were clustered into this 2 nd order theme.
	<i>P1.d</i>	Managing network outputs	Management for results	The name of the theme was made more specific, reflecting the focus of responses of participants.

	P1.e	General accountability culture	Accountability environment	The codes pertaining to accountability of stakeholders were separated from general public and clustered under this 2 nd order theme.
	P1.f	Provider self-initiatives	Was not identified	Emerging theme; was not identified as part of the initial theoretical model.
	P1.g	Member self-initiatives	Was not identified	Emerging theme; was not identified as part of the initial theoretical model.
	--	Not supported	Balancing of power	This theme was part of the initial theoretical model, but was not supported by collected data.
Engagement & Trust	P2.a	Formal engagement	Binding members through formal engagement and binding members together	--
	P2.b	Informal engagement	Fostering informal engagement and binding members together	--
	P2.c	Understanding & commitment	Was not identified (but partially linked with managing expectations)	Emerging theme; was not identified as part of the initial theoretical model.

	<i>P2.d</i>	Mediating trust	Mediating trust transferability	--
	<i>P2.e</i>	Contributing by small wins	Contributing by small wins	--
	<i>P2.f</i>	Trust building cycle	Contributing by small wins	Partly explained in the trust-building cycle aspect. The link used here is the trend of trust and engagement developing; starting from low/negative level normally.
Power & Control	<i>P3.a</i>	Formal and legal authority	Formal and legal authority	--
	<i>P3.b</i>	Informal power	Informal power	--
	<i>P3.c</i>	Empowering member decision making	Was not identified	Emerging theme; was not identified as part of the initial theoretical model.
		Not supported	Collective power	This theme was part of the initial theoretical model, but was not supported by collected data.
		Not supported	Balancing of power	This theme was part of the initial theoretical model, but was not supported by collected data.
Coordination & Collaboration	<i>P4.a</i>	Alignment with common objectives	Alignment with common objectives	--
	<i>P4.b</i>	External steering mechanism	External steering mechanism	--

	P4.c	Coordinative & consultative work	Was not identified	Emerging theme; was not identified as part of the initial theoretical model.
	--	Not supported	Conflict of interest and internal-external tensions	This theme was part of the initial theoretical model, but was not supported by collected data.
Collaborative Advantages	P5.a	Improving quality of services	Was not identified	Note: The two overarching themes of 'Collaborative Advantages' and 'Collaborative Inertias' were not identified as part of the initial theoretical model presented in Chapter 3. These two themes started emerging in the early stages of data analysis, after the pilot interviews, and initial stage of analyses (for the inertias part).
	P5.b	Better coordination and seamlessness	Was not identified	
	P5.c	Awareness, learning & capacity building	Was not identified	
	P5.d	Informed decisions	Was not identified	
Collaborative Inertias	P6.a	Public passivity	Was not identified	
	P6.b	Incomplete institutional tools	Was not identified	
	P6.c	Absence of formal authority	Was not identified	
	P6.d	Network management	Was not identified	
	P6.e	Hurdles within member organisations	Was not identified	
	P6.f	Motivation & commitment of providers	Was not identified	

	P6.g	QQA frameworks & implementation	Was identified	not	
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Legend:

	<i>New theme; was not identified as part of the initial theoretical model that was developed in Chapter 3.</i>
	<i>Theme that was identified as part of the initial model that was developed in Chapter 3, but was not supported by collected data.</i>

7.8 Summary

This chapter presented the results of the case-ordered analyses of all six dimensions, and how these results are used to construct the **Revised Conceptual Model, or the data theory**, as in Figure 7-1 above.

The revised conceptual model proposes that QA reporting has an impact on the 'network governance' dimension through four overarching themes: accountability, engagement & trust, power & control; and coordination and collaboration. This collective impact faces some 'collaborative inertia' that the network must overcome before it realises some 'collaborative advantages'. Each theme of this is supported with a number of sub-propositions as discussed in respective sections, and summarised in Table 7-7 above.

At the end of the chapter, a table is constructed depicting the development of each proposition, from the initial concept in the 'background theory', or the initial conceptual model, to the 'data theory', as presented in the revised conceptual model. Table 7-8 above presents the development history of all the propositions.

8 Conclusions & Recommendations

8.1 Overall summary

This research looks at the impact of external mandatory quality assurance (QA), which is publicly reported, on the governance and outcomes of inter-organisational networks, aiming at improving the overall quality of services.

Starting with a general enquiry about how public reporting of external QA can improve quality of service provision, Chapter 2 reviews the outcomes of published literature across two main domains of research: a) Performance Management (PM) as part of the New Public Management regime; and b) New Public Governance (NPG) and inter-organisational networks.

The effectiveness of PM is not yet established, and a number of researchers have voiced their arguments against its effectiveness (mainly for its incomplete reporting (Overtveit 2005; Carmichael et al. 2001); over-complexity (Lansky 2002); transaction cost (Overtveit 2005), incorrect attribution (Lindenauer et al. 2007); manipulation and deception behaviour of auditees (Lim 2009); and distorted behaviours and unintended consequences of reporting (Cotton et al. 2000; Van Thiel & Leeuw 2002; Propper & Wilson 2003; Marshall et al. 2003; Werner & Asch 2005; Power 2003; Justesen & Skærbæk 2010); incompatibility application and measurement rigor degradation (Overtveit 2005); as well as in-effective use of reports by stakeholders (Meijer 2007; Leong & Wong 2004). Despite these arguments, performance measurement and public reporting are still in use, and continue propagating through different geographical areas and public administrative applications. Literature from the PM perspectives indicates that there is a need for thorough evaluation of the usefulness of PM (of which QA is one tool) in various applications and contexts (Walshe & Freeman 2002; Øvretveit & Gustafson 2002;

Talbot 2005), especially in horizontal inter-organisational networks; as well as in cases when it used with other reform initiatives (Bowerman et al. 2000; Power 2003; Propper & Wilson 2003; Power 2005); and to get deeper understanding of the consequences of its usage and public reporting (Power 2003; Justesen & Skærbæk 2010).

The review of literature on the perspective of inter-organisational networks shows a lack of a comprehensive conceptual model that can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of collaborative networks in different structural and contextual settings (McQuaid 2010; Osborne 2010). The literature also indicates a need to explore more deeply what is going on within the network (Provan & Kenis 2007), and how the network interacts with its boundaries and outside context (Crosby et al. 2010).

Merging the conclusions from the main perspectives, two key gaps can be identified:

- When combining PM and networks, how could publicly reporting PM impact dynamics of networks?
- What sort of advantages could this contextual impact of PM reporting add to such networks?

Identifying these two key gaps, a general objective for this research was set *“to develop a conceptual model that can explain the impact of externally reported QA on inter-organisational policy networks”*. This framework will contribute towards evaluating effectiveness of dual use of PM and networks in similar contexts.

Driven by the overall objective of the research, proposing a conceptual model, Chapter 3 then digs deeper into the various relevant theories on network governance, inter-organisational collaboration and partnerships, to predict how publicly reported QA could potentially, from a theoretical stance, impact such collaborative networks. Five dimensions were discussed in this chapter, which were then used to construct a *“preliminary theoretical model”*. Based on this background theoretical analysis, five ‘initial’ theoretical propositions were developed; each suggesting a theme on how QA impacts the network in the given context. The model explains the expected impact of QA:

- outside the network governance; on determinants of network formation and suitability
- inside the network governance; on the dimensions of accountability, trust, power and control; and autonomy and tensions.

As highlighted in Chapter 3, the conceptual models developed in this research are not meant to offer a full account on how networks, in such contexts, are governed or how the dynamics work. The focus of these models is to diagnose how QA public reporting, as an external contextual phenomenon, leads to corresponding additional impacts on networked dynamics and outcomes.

Chapter 4 explains in detail the research methodology aspects, the rationale of choices and design features. The selection of the research methodology aspects is informed by the research objective and questions. The research goal and question are mainly 'explanatory', looking at "how" publicly reported QA impacts networked governance. Case study strategy was used, using data from four cases, all linked with national education and training reform initiatives in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Participants representing the four cases were interviewed using a semi-structured interview protocol. Beside the primary qualitative data; some secondary data were also collected from published and unpublished reports, minutes of meetings and web based research. Data were coded and analysed through two-order thematic analysis. Various validity and reliability testing tactics were used (as summarised in Table 4-3).

Chapter 5 explains the four selected research cases, setting the scene and context for further within- and cross-case analyses in the subsequent chapters. The four chosen networks, as cases for this research, are all operated in a general context of the Education Reform initiatives of the National Economic Strategy in Bahrain. The four networks are multi-organisational settings, aimed at achieving specific common objectives. The chapter reviews each case separately, its context, membership, stated objectives, official documents, and how each network is related to the quality assurance review work of the QQA. This chapter also explains the outcomes of the pilot interviews, and how the results are used to

verify and update the interview protocol, which was used later on for data collection.

Two stages of analysis were performed leading to the 'revised conceptual model': within-case followed by cross-case analyses. Chapter 6 presents the detailed thematic analyses performed within each case individually. The transcribed interviews were first analysed and coded. The interview transcripts were coded with mixed codes, marking the related case, initial overarching theme, process code, and the strength of association or presence of the process as expressed by the participant in the given excerpt. The initial codes were then aggregated into 'first order themes', which were then further condensed into 'second order themes'. The second order themes were eventually collated into 'overarching themes' such as accountability, engagement and trust, power and control, autonomy, coordination and collaboration, collaborative advantages and collaborative inertias. The results of these thematic analyses are presented in the form of 'participant-ordered' matrices (Appendix 4-7).

Following the within-case analyses of the four cases, the second stage of analysis is performed across the four cases, and the results are presented and discussed in Chapter 7. The analyses are done as per each of the second order themes of the six over-arching themes or dimensions (accountability, engagement and trust, power and control, coordination and collaboration, collaborative advantages, and collaborative inertias), investigating how strongly each case supports the given theme. If the theme is supported sufficiently across the cases, a sub-proposition is made depicting the impact of the QA reporting on the specific variable of the given theme. Case-ordered matrices are used to summarise the results of such analyses. The outcomes of the analyses are used to revise the initial conceptual model, hence constructing the '**revised conceptual model**', or *the data theory*, the novel contribution of this research.

In the next section, the conclusions, contributions, implications, recommendations, limitations and opportunities for further research will be highlighted.

8.2 Conclusions and contributions

In the following sections, the main findings will be discussed along with key conclusions as well as how the outcomes of this research project contribute to the body of knowledge in related fields. The following discussions are centred on the original research objective and questions.

8.2.1 Novel conceptual model

The main objective of the research is to propose a conceptual model that can explain the impact of externally reported PM on inter-organisational networks. The data theory, based on the collected data about the chosen case studies, suggest that QA public reporting overall has a soft, benign and evolving positive impact on the relevant inter-organisational networks and their outcomes. The impacts of QA public reporting – although affecting a number of dimensions – are still not that direct to the level that the network cannot work without them. Nevertheless, its impact is comprehensive, affecting network members, stakeholders and providers as well as the general public (although the impact and response of each group varies). The impacts, as expressed in the main propositions and sub-propositions by phrases such as ‘encouraging’, ‘fostering’, ‘motivating’, ‘supporting’, ‘helping’, ‘mediating’ etc. support the notion of ‘**catalytic**’ impact that the researcher would use to describe.

On the balance of the observed effects, QA reporting in this model act as a ‘**network catalyst**’; a term that the researcher borrows from chemical sciences to better explains the impact in this context. A ‘catalyst’ in chemistry and chemical engineering fields refers to a substance that is neither a reactant nor product, which helps in changing the rate of reaction (Levenspiel 1999; Richardson & Peacock 1994). Using this metaphor, one can summarise the overall impact of QA public reporting on an inter-organisational network as being a ‘*catalyst*’ of change for the network. Public reporting as an external variable has the potential to change the collaborative dynamics, and hence the collaborative advantages, without being an essential constituent of change in the service provision.

This overall conclusion by no mean disregards the possibility of having negative or unintended consequences of QA reporting on practitioners, service providers or individual organisations, as the scope of the research focuses on the additional impact of such policy mechanism on the dynamics and outcomes of inter-organisational networks. This is discussed further in the limitations and opportunities for further research in the last section of this chapter.

Based on the review of the literature, an initial conceptual model was first developed (Figure 3-2) depicting five dimensions in which QA could have an impact. The conceptual model follows a general structure that can be observed from relevant previous models – Ring & Van de Ven (1994); Huxham et al. (2000); Huxham (2003); Cooper et al. (2006); Thomson & Perry (2006); Kapucu (2006); Bryson et al. (2006); Ansell & Gash (2008); Ospina & Saz-Carranza (2010); and recently Emerson et al. (2011). These models show a general theme that treats the various variables and dimensions of collaborative networks over three levels:

- Drivers and conditions that are needed to begin (or sustain) a network/collaboration.
- Internal systems or processes that explain what goes on between partners at network/collaboration level.
- Outcomes from a network and collaboration and the impacts those outcomes may have.

The mentioned frameworks vary in the extent of coverage of the above three levels. None of the models consider the impact of external performance measurement or assessment reporting at sector or context level (referring to the three levels described by Emerson et al. (2011)). Two of these models feature the variable of assessment: Ring and Van de Ven (1994) and Bryson et al. (2006). Assessment in these two frameworks refers to the internal assessment or re-assessment that is done at the collaboration level. It is not the same as the assessment in the performance management that is done by an independent organisation outside the network or collaboration.

It became evident after the pilot interviews that the aspect of 'drivers of formation of network' could not be explored further, as participation in almost all of these networks was mandatory. Instead, the researcher started exploring a relevant aspect, which is "collaborative advantages", or the outcomes that they could manage to achieve, collaboratively, in the network, with the aid of QA reporting. Hence, the new emerging theme of 'collaborative advantages' was included in the subsequent data collection and analysis.

Going through two stages of analysis, within- and cross-case analyses, the initial conceptual model was then updated with the outcomes of the analyses of the data, and hence evolved to become the 'revised conceptual model (Figure 7-1). The general arrangement of the model follows the multiple-leveilling of Emerson et al. (2011) for collaborative governance: the 'collaborative dynamics' level, the 'collaborative governance regime' level, and the 'system context' level. In this model, four themes are featured at the 'collaborative dynamics' level, the innermost level that describes the dynamics of the inter-relationships between members within the network. These themes are 'accountability', 'engagement and trust', 'power and control', and 'collaboration and coordination'. The four themes are the same as those presented in the initial model, but the titles have been slightly adjusted to reflect the importance of the sub-themes comprising each overarching theme. For example, the 'autonomy' title was replaced with 'collaboration and coordination' since the data suggest that QA reporting does not have evident impact on autonomy, but it rather drives the members to work together in a more collaborative and coordinative way; without jeopardising the autonomous status of each member in making decisions and plans.

In the middle of the data collection and analysis, an additional theme started to emerge. Nearly all participants agree that the QA reporting, overall, has been beneficial for the network, but not to the full extent that it might be. Upon probing this aspect further, a common theme of 'collaborative inertia' was collated, representing the hurdles that hinder full effective utilisation of such reporting in the subject inter-organisational networks. The inclusion of collaborative inertia – a term cited from the

works of Huxham and Vangen – along with the other themes of collaborative dynamics and collaborative governance regime, makes this novel proposed conceptual model more comprehensive and inclusive.

8.2.2 Impact on collaborative dynamics

The literature review, discussed in Chapter 2, identifies two main gaps that this research is trying to address. The first is to investigate how publicly reported external quality assurance impacts the collaborative dynamics within inter-organisational networks. As Provan & Kenis (2007) pointed out, there is a general need for the frameworks that explain networks to go beyond the outcome analysis, and look deeper inside what is going on within the network. The development of this conceptual model helps in getting clearer understanding of how an inter-organisational network works in such contexts.

The investigation here looks at the additional impacts that can be attributed, directly or indirectly, to the QA reporting variable. It is not designed to address all the network dynamics dimensions; some of which can be manifested in any network setting regardless of the presence of QA public reporting.

The results of the analysis contribute to the existing theories of performance management and networks by proposing four themes in which QA reporting impacts the network dynamics. These themes are expressed in four main propositions each of which is supported by a number of sub-themes that collectively contribute in the overarching theme.

- **Accountability – P1: Public reporting of QA strengthens accountability among members within networks and among members and providers in the sector.** This proposition is supported by seven sub-propositions that explain how accountability is impacted by QA reporting (through managing expectations, providing access to information on PM, promoting public accountability, helping in managing network outputs, promoting general accountability culture, encouraging provider self-initiatives as well as member self-initiatives).

Public reporting is rather a new tool used in the chosen context of the study; education reforms in Bahrain. In general, the reports have helped informing stakeholders and the general public about the quality of provision of education services, and hence shaping their expectations. For the first time, the country experiences publicly reporting of performance that have 'naming and shaming' effects on those who are involved in either providing or regulating such services. In this case, and due to the newness of public reporting mechanism, the networks seemingly reap the benefits of the immediate reaction to public reports in deploying direct and indirect measures that help in tightening accountability within the network.

- ***Engagement and Trust – P2: Public reporting of QA promotes more engagement and trust building among members within a network.*** Six sub-propositions collectively give rise to this main proposition (through fostering formal engagement, informal engagement, creating more understanding and commitment, mediating trust, contributing to building trust by small wins and supporting a trust building cycle).

The findings here obviously resemble the trust building cycle that of Huxham and Vangen described in their works. In this context, there has been an evident vacuum for wider engagement amongst stakeholders, and hence more capacity for realising 'small' wins which were instigated by such public reporting and made possible by bringing key players more closely together, either via formal or informal ways of engagement. The positive impact was more evident in at least two cases where network managers succeeded in overcoming the negative phase of building understanding and trust; and thereafter creating more synergy amongst members. Reporting of QA in this case has been an additional external motive for members to continue collaborate, and hence build more engagement and trust. There was no evidence of QA reporting negatively impacting the trust, or mediating mistrust, between the members as might be suggested otherwise by some literature (as unintended consequence of PM reporting). This positive impact

suggests that the networks, in this context, are mostly in the positive trend of the development curve for implementation of such policy in public management.

- ***Power and Control – P3: Public reporting of QA affects distribution of power and control among members within a network.*** The impact here is mostly on perceived and informal types of power, rather than on the actual power and authorities. This proposition is a result of three sub-propositions (formal and legal authority, informal power and empowering member decision making).

The impact here is rather soft and it did not go further into shaping the landscape of the institutional power and authorities amongst members of the network. The most evident impact was on empowering members, within their jurisdictions, to take more serious decision to reform public services and regulations. The public reports, as a new tool in this context, also helped in giving some members, especially those who have more insight into such reports, some sort of perceived and informal power of reference and knowledge. The impact on the real power, in this case, was hampered by the negating effect of inertias that exist, such as incomplete institutional tools, and the absence of formal authorities that could have enforced members to achieve more outcomes. This is further discussed in section 8.2.3.

- ***Collaboration and Coordination – P4: Public reporting of QA promotes more collaboration and coordination among members within a network.*** Three sub-propositions contribute in building this proposition (alignment with common objectives, use of QA reports as an external steering mechanism and promoting coordinative and consultative work). It is worth noting here that originally it was anticipated that QA reporting may impact 'autonomy', but as highlighted in the previous section, the real impact observed here is rather on making members work in a more collaborative and coordinative way.

Once again, realising the impact on promoting more collaboration and coordination, in this case, was due to the newness of public reporting on quality of education services; as well as on the capacity for more collaboration between the key members and their organisations. For the first time, the stakeholders come together formally in such comprehensive and purposeful collaborative formations. The QA reports helped in making explicit to the members the need for more collaborative and coordinative work between them to reform the quality of services.

8.2.3 Collaborative advantages and inertias

The second main gap that was identified from the literature is to do with exploring the impact of PM reporting tools, an example of which is QA, on the collaborative governance regime, particularly on the additional collaborative advantages that this reporting of PM can help in achieving through its mediating impacts on the collaborative dynamics. Evaluating the 'usefulness' of performance measurement tools, such as QA, across horizontal partnerships and inter-organisational networks is indeed one of the outstanding conceptual challenges in evaluating PM (Talbot 2005). These external performance measurement tools still need to be evaluated, and the consequences of its reporting need to be further explored (Power 2003; Justesen & Skærbæk 2010).

The propositions on this dimension explain the impact over three phases. In the first phase, the outcomes of the collaborative dynamics first go through some resistive power of 'collaborative inertias' that hinders the realisation of their full beneficial outcomes. Depending on the extent of changes in collaborative dynamics, and the strength of collaborative inertias, the 'collaborative advantages' are realised at collaboration governance regime level (referring to the levels outlined by Emerson et al. (2011)) in the second phase. In the last phase, the overall collaborative advantage (in this case improving quality of education and training services) can be realised. The last phase exists at the system context level, and can be considered as the *outcome of the outputs*, or advantages, from the collaborative governance regime level.

The research findings indicate that some of the advantages can be arranged into three main themes: better coordination and seamlessness; awareness, learning and capacity building; and informed decisions. These three themes of advantages overall support the next proposition:

- ***Collaborative Advantages – P5: Public reporting of QA helps members achieve some collaborative advantages.***

The advantages here refer to the outcomes that are realised at the collaborative governance regime, after going through the effects of collaborative inertias.

As discussed in the previous section, as a new theme emerging from the responses of the participants, the researcher explored the possible 'collaborative inertias' that exist and hinder achievement of full benefit from the additional impact of QA reporting. The data identifies seven themes, presented by seven sub-propositions, of such collaborative inertias: public passivity; incomplete institutional instruments; absence of formal authority; network management practices; hurdles within member organisations; motivation and commitment of providers; and QA review frameworks and implementation. The totality of these seven sub-themes forms the following main proposition:

- ***Collaborative Inertias – P6: Collaborative inertias that exist at system context and collaborative level hinder achievement of wider collaborative advantage in a network.***

The resistive impacts of the above collaborative inertias do not prevent the network from achieving 'some' collaborative advantages, but rather they limit the extent of such advantages. The picture varies, of course, amongst the four cases studied.

Going through the opposing effects of collaborative inertias from one side and collaborative advantages from the other, the impact of QA reporting can lead to the overall collaborative advantage, at system context level: improved quality of services. The picture is mixed here; in one network, namely the VPIS, the impact on improving the quality of related

vocational training is evident, while in others, the impact is either little, not consistent, or just developing.

8.3 Practical implications and recommendations

The following are the key practical implications and recommendations that can be considered by policy makers and practitioners who are involved in a performance management or collaborative network mode of work in reforming public service provision. These points are based on the findings and propositions that were constructed in this research. For each recommendation or practical implication explained in the next sections, the relevant proposition number is used as the basis for the implication/recommendation cited as reference for further elaboration on the theoretical and empirical basis of the point raised.

8.3.1 Importance of public reporting

One of the key challenging decisions policy makers may face is whether to make performance measurement, such as quality assurance or inspection, accessible to the general public or not.

In this case, it was found that public reporting was useful in managing the expectations of stakeholders, providers and the general public as to what constitutes good quality service. This helps in mobilising informal accountability lines, coming from the general public and the stakeholders around providers and regulators. Making reports available in the public domain also provides easy access for stakeholders, and any potential user, to independent measures of the performance of providers and the sector, that can be used to inform decision making.

Public reporting, in this case, was useful in promoting learning and general awareness about quality and performance. Public reporting in itself can also be an incentive for providers, especially private ones, who compete to achieve a better reputation and bigger customer base.

Policy makers, in making PM results public, also need to be mindful for the downside of public reporting, as highlighted by some of the previous

literature, such as Michael Power in his works on 'audit society' and 'audit explosion' theories, Max Travers in his book on quality assurance (Travers, 2007);, and the counter argument to PM presented in Chapter 2, mainly the manipulation and deception behaviour (Lim, 2009) and the distorted behaviours and unintended consequences of public reporting (Cotton et al. 2000; van Thiel & Leeuw 2002; Propper & Wilson 2003; Marshall et al. 2003; Werner & Asch 2005; Justesen & Skærbæk 2010).

For more details, please refer to the discussion on propositions *P1.a*, *P1.b*, *P1.c* and *P1.e* in Chapter 7.

8.3.2 Use of explicit incentives for providers

It was evident from the data that QA reporting helps in motivating providers to take some serious measures, on their own initiative, to improve their provision. This in effect makes the function of accountability in improving the quality and performance easier.

In the cases in this research, this was evident where clear explicit incentives are linked with outcomes of QA report outcomes, as the case in forbidding inadequate providers from receiving government funding or sponsorship. However, such incentives are not accessible to all providers, like the governmental schools and institutions.

One of the collaborative inertias identified here is about motivation and commitment of providers, as well as institutionalising the use of PM reports, including making explicit the incentives and punishment or regulatory measures for all providers, in all sectors. This implies that regulators, funding organisations and policy makers will link the PM results with clear incentives (sticks and carrots), to punish providers who fail to improve over time, and to reward and recognise those who successfully achieve better performance.

Refer to discussion on propositions *P1.f* and *P6.5* in Chapter 7 for more details.

8.3.3 Widen the reach and interpretation of PM reports

The core concept of public reporting is that reports reach a wider audience: the general public read the reports, interpret them appropriately and make their decisions accordingly, or respond in a way to influence providers and legislators to drive them to improve the quality of services, to match the (reformed) expectations of the public.

In order for public accountability to work better, and stakeholders – including the general public (learners, parents and employers) – to take informed decisions in selecting the service providers, the reports that are released on the performance of providers, by QQA for example, need to be made clear and easily interpreted by all stakeholders. One of the challenges identified from the data of this research is to do with the way in which the QQA reports are written, especially those concerning HE institutions. This conclusion is consistent with the findings from literature, mainly from public reporting of performance in the public health sector, in which some researchers in public health suggest that public reporting of PM data has a positive potential, provided that the reported data are relevant to the concerns of expected users, so they can be easily evaluated (Lansky 2002; Hibbard et al. 2005; Robinowitz & Dudley 2006).

It might be challenging to write one report that satisfies the needs of all stakeholders, as providers and legislators are interested in more technical details and elaborated reports, whereas the general public is interested in aggregated and summative reports. One possible route is to make differentiated reports that target different stakeholders. At the time of collecting data, this aspect was already under serious consideration by the officials from the QQA.

The other limitation that was highlighted is the reach of the reports to a wider audience. This is another challenge that those in charge of PM reporting need to manage, in order to make sure that as many people as possible are made aware of the findings of their reports, and how to access and interpret these documents appropriately.

Please refer to discussion on propositions *P1.c*, *P3.c*, *P6.a* and *P6.g* in Chapter 7.

8.3.4 Introduction of effective network management practices

Part of what comes out of the collected data is the importance of the use of network management practices that drive the network, and its members, to achieve better collaborative outcomes.

PM reporting can be used to inform the targets and KPIs for the members, or the network, so that resources and strategies are aligned in a direction to meet those objectives and targets. In this way, the information provided by PM can be used as an 'external steering' tool, that policy makers and network managers use to monitor the progress of actions and measures of members and the network.

One aspect highlighted by participants is the need to periodically review and revise the set objectives, KPIs and targets, in order to update them with any contextual, sectoral or technical advancement, or to step them up to make them more challenging if they turn out to be lenient.

The other practical aspect that needs to be highlighted here is the importance of agreeing collectively within the network on clear measures of collaborative outcomes, or advantages, i.e. what the network is collectively trying to achieve, and how the progress towards this will be measured and monitored. Measuring performance of public service provision can be challenging in some sectors, boiling down to the fact that stakeholders' needs and expectations are diverse (good quality for whom?).

For more detail on this, refer to discussion on propositions *P1.d*, *P4.a*, *P4.b*, *P4.c*, *P6.d* and *P6.e* in Chapter 7.

8.3.5 Influence of formal authority and accountability

Although in a network informal types of accountability work, from counterparts and the general environment around members, still some form of 'formal' lines of accountability and authority is needed to influence the progress of the network, resolve any conflict of power or interests amongst members, or to provide "overarching" steering power that keeps

the network moving in the intended direction towards the intended outcomes. Reporting to high enough authority, or sponsor, helps in ensuring that the network makes sufficient progress and achievements in a timely manner.

The other benefits of using the influence of formal authorities and sponsors is to encourage effective coordination between involved parties in reforming service provision, making the related services more seamless and institutionalising the use of PM outcomes and inert-relationships between members in a network (discussed more in the following section).

Absence of formal authority and accountability in a network is recognised as one of the collaborative inertias, in line with the conclusion of Zheng et al. (2009), Milward & Provan (2000); and Meier and Hill (2005).

The section in Chapter 7 about propositions *P2.a*, *P3.a* and *P6.c* provides further details on this aspect.

8.3.6 Upgrading institutional and legal instruments

Despite some efforts made by members, especially in the vocational education and training sector, to adjust and upgrade the legislative and legal instruments, participants highlighted the need to pursue this mission to further institutionalise the inert-relationships between member organisations, stakeholders, funding agencies and other relevant parties.

This includes making explicit use of and reference to PM outcomes by members, formalising incentives and regulatory actions against providers and formally linking funding decisions with provider performance.

On a precautionary note, upgrading legislative and institutional instruments needs careful consideration of the unintended consequences of PM public reporting, and the distorted behavioural impacts that public reporting of PM can lead to, especially if it is linked with funding and regulatory measures (refer to first point of this section on practical implications and recommendations).

Please refer to Chapter 7 for more details around this in the discussion of propositions *P3.a*, *P4.c*, *P5.b* and *P6.b*.

8.3.7 Investing in awareness and capacity building

The research findings show clearly that awareness and knowledge of stakeholders and providers play an important role in improving the functionality of accountability, building more trust and engagement and introducing effective measures and plans to improve quality of services and efficiency of providers. Many of these activities take place outside the remit of the networks, either through members' or providers' own initiatives, or informally through reading the reports published by QQA.

The importance of investing more time and effort is also evident in avoiding misconceptions or misunderstanding, or any form of negative attitude and behaviour, most likely to happen at the initial stage of working together in the network. This helps in speedy recovery from, the initial 'negative' participation and commitment that features in the common trust and engagement cycle. Initiatives that might help here include preparing members before joining the programmes of a network, as was done in government schools, as well as making the scope, responsibilities and terms of reference clear to all those who are involved in collaborative work.

It is important at this point to stress the importance of this aspect, and recommend that policy makers continue investing in capacity building and awareness initiatives that target providers, stakeholders, and even the general public.

Refer to discussion on propositions *P1.a, P1.e, P2.b, P2.c, P3.b and P5.c* in Chapter 7 for more details.

8.3.8 Celebrating small winnings

The last practical recommendation that can be made here is regarding a management practice that helps in building more trust and management between members in a network, and even amongst relevant stakeholders outside it. Small achievements, or winnings, that are materialised collectively in a network need to be celebrated, so as to foster the trust amongst stakeholders that the system works better. This, as per the

findings of the research, motivates members to engage, formally and informally, in more joint work, and hence achieve even more results.

Please refer to discussion on proposition *P2.f and P2.e* in Chapter 7, which explains the impact of this aspect on building more trust and engagement.

8.4 Limitations and opportunities for further research

In this section, the limitations that were faced in this research will be highlighted. Besides the limitations, relevant opportunities will be highlighted for further research work. Some of the aspects listed below are more opportunities rather than real limitations.

8.4.1 Extension of research into providers and public perspectives

The research is qualitative in nature, looking at the impact of QA reporting on inter-organisational networks, chiefly from the perspectives of members of the selected networks. The memberships of these networks cover a wide spectrum of stakeholders (regulators, funding organisations, private sector, and other governmental organisations). Providers and general public however were not represented directly in these networks.

Another relevant limitation that faced the research in collecting data is getting access to wider representatives from the Ministry of Education and the government schools.

The QQA has just started reviewing the private schools, and hence this segment of providers was not explored in this research.

As an area for further research, the propositions of the novel conceptual model can be verified, possibly quantitatively, by surveying providers and the general public to explain their perspectives, responses and views about the impact of QA public reporting and the outcomes of the respective inter-organisational network. The research into this should cover the response of the general public, or their representatives in

representative institutional organisations, such as the parliament, or even students and parents' councils in schools and universities.

8.4.2 Exploring the impact of self-improving initiatives

One of the emerging themes under the dimension of accountability and collaborative advantages is the improvement measures that providers and stakeholders initiate on their own.

The types of these measures, the impact of them, and the driving forces behind such measures (in addition to the public reporting and competition reasons) need to be explored more comprehensively in future research.

8.4.3 Exploring interactive impacts within networks

The research focused on the impact of QA reporting on certain dimensions within network dynamics, which leads to collaborative advantages passing through some collaborative inertias.

The research however did not look into the interactive impacts between the dimensions, internally within the network. For example, it appears that there are relationships between 'power and control distribution' and 'trust and engagement' and 'accountability', suggesting that less imbalance of power and authority between members in a network, may lead to more trust building and effective accountability. These inter-linked associations need to be investigated, as well as the impact of QA reporting on those associations in such collaborative settings. By the same token, the other dyadic inter-relations between the dimensions within the network could also be explored.

8.4.4 Consistency in measuring quality of public services

As mentioned in the literature review, Chapter 2, one of the challenges is defining and measuring the quality of 'public services' (how to measure it?), especially when it comes to exploring collaborative advantages for networks that aim at improving the quality of such services.

In this research, an interpretivist approach was followed, based on the ontological assumption that the view of reality, in this case the impact of

public reporting on networked dynamics and advantages, is a social construct, subjective and may change across the various stakeholders involved; and on an epistemological assumption that what could be acceptable knowledge here, is indeed subjective and depends on the social interpretation of the phenomena. The method followed here is to interview multiple stakeholders represented in a network, who can define what could be considered as quality of service.

Nevertheless, the research conclusions could have benefited from more 'standardised' or widely 'acceptable' norms of quality or performance in such types of public services. More research needs to be done on this.

8.4.5 Establishing the extent of impact of QA reporting

The focus of this research, as explained above in the first section, is establish to whether there is an impact of QA public reporting, and if yes, how this public reporting changes network dynamics and collaborative advantages. The data reveal some themes within network internal dynamics and advantages in which QA reporting is observed to have 'an additional' impact.

More research can be done to establish exactly the extent of such impact, as some dimensions, for example trust and engagement building, are affected obviously by QA reporting, but at the same time are influenced by virtue of members working together over time.

Appendices

Appendix 1: List of references addressing performance and effectiveness of various quality of education and training; and quality assurance

No.	Reference	Research topic and context	Research based on feedback of:			Research addresses external/ national quality inspection
			Providers	Employers	Learners	
1	Almeida (2007)	Employability concept and the role companies can play through training in Portugal.	--	--	--	--
2	Appleton (2005)	The impact of IT skills' training on the academic performance of student midwives.	Yes	--	Yes	--
3	Ashford & Pratten (1999)	Analysis of models / practices in business and enterprises skills for 15-19 in the UK.	--	--	--	--
4	Belfield & Thomas (2000)	Relationship between per student expenditure and college grade by OFSTED inspection in the UK.	--	--	--	Yes
5	Bolton & Hyland (2003)	Lecturers' perceptions of key skills in GNVQ Advanced Business Studies in the UK.	Yes	--	--	--
6	Burden-Leahy (2005)	Reviewing steps taken by VET providers to establish internal programme quality assurance system in	Yes	--	--	Internal quality assurance

		UAE.				
7	Canning (2000)	Evaluation of work-based vocational training practices in Scotland.	--	--	Yes	Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ) Level 4, 5
8	Carmichael et al. (2001)	Examining approaches to quality assurance in schools, HE and VET in Australia.	Yes	--	--	Internal quality assurance only
9	Carr (1999)	Effectiveness of online multimedia management training courses for SME's in the UK.	Yes	Yes	Yes	UK government's University for Industry (Ufi) initiative
10	Commons (2003)	Effectiveness of various initiatives on quality of FE in the UK.	Yes	--	--	Yes
11	Davidson & Elliot (2007)	Utilization of online or e-learning resources for learning core skills in secondary schools and FE in Scotland.	Yes	--	Partly	--
12	Day & Koorland (1997)	Survey of the more cited competencies in literature.	--	--	--	--
13	Dimitropoulos (2008)	Contribution of Life Long Learning (LLL) into economic growth in USA, UK and some EU countries.	--	--	--	--
14	Dowrick (2004)	Involvement of stakeholders in setting learning objectives for students with intellectual difficulties in Australia.	Yes	Yes + Parents	Yes	--

15	Felstead & Unwin (2001)	Comparing different funding principles and the impact on skills delivery.	--	--	--	--
16	Fisher (2003)	Development of BEC/BTEC, NVQ and Edexcel programmes.	--	--	--	BTEC college moderation only
17	Grubb (2000)	Possibility of adopting UK school and FE inspection in USA. Reflection of author's self experience in inspection. Focus on internal lesson observation.	--	--	--	Yes
18	Hall & Thomas (2004)	Relationship between HE, FE and 6 th form schools and colleges in the UK.	--	--	--	Reference to QAA and OFSTED inspection
19	Hills et al. (2003)	Gaps between employers' requirements (employability skills) and HE environmental-related curricula in the UK.	--	--	--	Quality assurance for HE
20	Hyland & Merrill (2001)	Governmental policy to widen community participation and social inclusion in FE sector in the UK.		Yes	Yes	--
21	Johnson (2000)	Perception of providers about potential impact of Learning and Skills Act 2000 legislation.	Yes	--	--	--
22	Knight (2006)	Enhancing teaching quality and professional development in HE in the UK.	--	--	--	Internal quality assurance
23	Knox (2005)	Preparation for transition from FE to HE in Scotland. Quantitative analyses of a target group of students.	--	--	--	--

24	Leong & Wong (2004)	Governmental steps in setting qualification frameworks and quality assurance of frameworks for VET sector in Hong Kong.	--	--	--	Accreditation and qualification frameworks
25	Melia (1995)	Description of earlier college inspection by the FEFC in the UK.	--	--	--	Yes
26	Moussouris (1998)	Response of higher education and community colleges to a governmental mandate to meet skills required by knowledge based industries in USA.	Policy makers	--	--	Governmental policy to link VET to market needs
27	Muijs et al. (2006)	Relationship between leadership development and leadership behavior, as perceived by managers of FE sector in the UK.	Yes	--	--	--
28	Navaratnam (1994)	Internal quality audits in FE sector in Australia.	--	--	--	--
29	Ness (2005)	Feasibility of "FE pass book" to document formal and informal education and skills in Germany.	--	--	--	--
30	Normand et al. (2008)	Flexible programme delivery in HE in the UK.	Yes	--	--	Governmental funded initiative with specific purpose
31	Ogunleye (2006)	Examining "creativity" in subject syllabuses in FE in the UK.	--	--	--	--
32	O'Keefe & Tait (2004)	Accreditation and training of "senior practitioners" in early childhood care in the UK.	--	--	--	--

33	Ori & Hulshoff (1994)	A case study; implementing ISO-9004 in a polytechnic in Netherlands. No results of implementation are given.	--	--	--	ISO-9004
34	Owen (2001)	Key skills required by employers from geography graduates in the UK.	--	Yes	--	--
35	Payne (2000)	Changes to definition of core or key skills in a political context in the UK.	--	--	--	--
36	Pilikos (2006)	Report on VET practices in Cyprus.	--	--	--	--
37	Preston & Hammond (2003)	"Wider benefits" or non-economic benefits of FE as perceived by FE practitioners in the UK.	Yes	--	--	--
38	Rolle (2008)	Learning styles of students and managers in a hotel training college in Bahamas, as measured by Marshal and Merritt instrument.	--	--	--	--
39	Saunders (2000)	Indicators that can be used to measure supply/demand for VET in Australia.	--	--	--	--
40	Skiningsrud (1995)	Comparison of FE and training policies, with reference to PICKUP initiative in the UK and RESULT initiative in Norway.	--	--	--	--
41	Torpolov (2006)	Professional education and training in the Republic of Komi/Russian Federation.	--	--	--	--
42	Woolhouse & Blaire (2003)	Relationship between students' learning styles and their retention and achievement rates in FE in UK.	--	--	--	--

Appendix 2: Participant Information Sheet



Brunel Business School

Research Ethics

Participant Information Sheet

1. Title of Research: Impact of Mandatory Quality Inspection and Reporting on Networked Governance.

2. Researcher: Maitham Al-Oraibi on PhD programme at Brunel Business School, Brunel University

3. Contact Email: maitham.aloraibi@brunel.ac.uk

4. Purpose of the research: The overall objective of the research is to investigate the impact of quality inspection and reporting (the NAQQAET reports in this case) on networked governance of education reform initiatives (how the Education Reform initiatives are governed collaboratively through committees/networks of various organisations and stakeholders in our case) in terms of:

- Impacting the internal networked governance dynamics: how do such reports impacts the interactions of members in such education reform related networks.
- Fostering collaborative advantage: Helping in achieving the intended outcomes for which these network settings were established.
- Impacting the outer context of the network: is there any evident impact of the changes due to the subject governance on either individual members; their organisations; or the outer context (in this case the education and training sector).

5. What is involved: individualised semi-structured interviews with members of networks involved in education reform initiatives. The interview will be tape-recorded for transcription and data analysis.

6. Voluntary nature of participation and confidentiality. Participation is completely voluntary and you may stop any time. Data collected will be kept securely and confidentially. The data will only be used in an aggregated form in the project report with no reference to you as an individual.

Appendix 3: Interview Protocol and Guide

Part 1: Personal information

<i>Interview reference no.</i>	
<i>Date and venue</i>	
<i>Committee/sub-committee involved</i>	
<i>Role within parent organization</i>	
<i>Role within committee</i>	
<i>For how long?</i>	
<i>Other possible committees</i>	
<i>Nominated interviewees</i>	
<i>Gender</i>	

Part 2: Interview questions

<i>Main question</i>	<i>Aspect to be expected or used as a probing question</i>
<i>Q1: Did QQA reporting affect accountability of network members within a network, or providers in front of regulating bodies or funding agencies? If yes, how?</i>	
	Getting access to information
	Measurability of performance
	Balancing power with in a network
	Accountability to the public
	Managing expectations of stakeholders
	Creating a general accountability environment
	Helping in having more control
	Promoting self-accountability
<i>Q2: Did QQA reporting affect how members trust each other? Or trust other organizations in the network? How?</i>	
	Binding members together
	Trust building in small wins
	Fostering more formal engagement
	Fostering informal engagement
	<i>Managing expectations of members</i>

	<i>or public</i>
	<i>Mediating trust transferability</i>
	<i>Taking credit of joint achievements</i>
	<i>Perception of losing control</i>
	<i>Balancing of power in network</i>
	<i>Giving self assurance</i>
	<i>Capacity building</i>
	<i>Neutral and transparent opinion</i>
	<i>Ownership in joint products</i>
Q3: Did QQA reporting affect the ways in which power within a network is distributed? How?	
	Formal and legal authority
	Informal power
	Collective power
	Balancing of power
	Promoting self-measures
	Supporting decision making
Q4: Did QQA reporting affect the autonomy status of organizations (in taking decisions, setting strategies/ plans or making new policies)? Has this change created any tension? If yes, how?	
	Creating common identity
	Creating common understanding/expectations
	Reports as external monitoring and steering mechanism
	Coordinating legislative tools
	Institutionalizing inter-relationships.
	Conflict of interest
	Conflict of priorities
Q5: What are the main results of this network? Did it have any impact on the overall objectives for which the network was set-up? Explain	
	Improving quality of services
	Better coordination and seamlessness
	Learning and sharing expertise
	Creating common norms
	Improving decision making
	Better capacity for collective action

<i>Q6: Overall, how do you rate the impact in which QQA had, through impacting network governance, on the overall quality of education and training services? Positive, negative or in between?</i>	
<i>Q7: what could be the main challenges that hinders a full utilization of reports?</i>	
<i>Q7: Any other remarks?</i>	

Thank you so much!

Appendix 4: Participant-Ordered Matrix – Case1

ERB Case - Analsyses of 2nd Order Themes														
Participant	2	6	7	8	13	16	17	20	21	22	24	32	35	37
Managing expectations	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓✓
Access to information on PM	✓✓		✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓
Public accountability	✓			✓	✓	○	○	✓	✓	○	✓	✓	✓	✓
Managing network outputs	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓				
General accountability culture			✓✓		✓✓	✓✓	✓				✓			
Provider self initiatives		✓					✓✓			✓✓				✓✓
Member self initiatives		✓	✓✓				✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓		✓✓	✓	
Balancing power & control			○											
Linking regulatory & funding decisions														✓✓
Overall impact on accountability	✓✓		✓		✓		✓							
Formal engagement			✓✓	✓		✓	✗	✓✓						
Informal engagement					✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓	○				
Understanding & commitment	✓					✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
Mediating trust	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓✓			✓	✓	✓		
Contributing by small wins	✓		✓✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Balancing of power & control			○				✗			✓				
Trust building cycle			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	
Assurance & confirming own perspectives					✗		✓		○	✓				
Overall impact on trust						○				○				
Formal and legal authority				○	✓			✓✓	✓✓	✓				✓
Informal power				✓✓	✓			✓						
Collective power	✓✓									✓✓				
Balancing of power	✓			✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	○	○	○
Supporting member decision making	✓✓			✓✓		✓				✓✓		✓✓		✓✓
Overall impact on power						○								
Strengthening network management														
Alignment with common objectives			✓	✓										✓✓
Conflict of interests & priorities											✗			
External steering mechanism			✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓								○
Adjusting legeslative tools								✓	✓	✓				
Coordinative & consultative work	✓		✓			✓		✓✓	✓✓					✓
Overall impact on autonomy				○		○				○		○		○
Improving quality of services	✓			○		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Better coordination and seamlessness	✓		✓	○	○	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓✓
Awareness, learning & Capacity building		✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Informed decisions				✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓		✓		✓	✓
Collective capacity & actions	✓✓													
Fostering innovations														
Transperency & Fairness					✓		✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Public passivity		✓	✓✓			✓✓	✓✓			○				✓
Incomplete institutional tools									✓	✓		✓		
Absence of formal authority			✓✓		✓		✓							
Network management				✓										
Hurdles within member organisations			✓				✓			✓				✓
Motivation & commitment of providers		✓								✓✓		✓		✓
QQA frameworks & implementation	✓		✓			✓							✓	
Conflict of interests/authorities							✓							
Capacity to improve														

Appendix 5: Participant-Ordered Matrix – Case2

HESC Case - Analyses of 2nd Order Themes										
Participant	3	23	27	30	31	33	34	7	6	5
Managing expectations			✓	○	○	✓		✓		
Access to information on PM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Public accountability	✓	✓	✓	✓						✓
Managing network outputs			✓		○		○	✓		○
General accountability culture				○		○	✓	✓		
Provider self initiatives	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Member self initiatives		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Balancing power & control										○
Linking regulatory & funding decisions	✓	✓	✓							
Overall impact on accountability								✓		
Formal engagement			✓	○		✓		✓		✓
Informal engagement	✓	✓		○	✗					
Understanding & commitment	✓	✓	✓		○		✓			✓
Mediating trust	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓		
Contributing by small wins				✓				✓		
Balancing of power & control								✓		
Trust building cycle			✓	✓		○	✓	○		✓
Assurance & confirming own perspectives	✓	✓		✗	✗	○	✓			○
Overall impact on trust										
Formal and legal authority			✓			✓	✓			
Informal power					✓		✓			
Collective power	✓		○	○			✓			○
Balancing of power		○	○	○	✗	○				
Supporting member decision making	✓	✓	✓							
Overall impact on power							○			
Strengthening network management										
Alignment with common objectives	✓	✓	✓		○			✓		✓
Conflict of interests & priorities		○					○			
External steering mechanism					○					
Adjusting legislative tools								○		
Coordinative & consultative work		✓	✓		○	✓		✓		✓
Overall impact on autonomy			○	○	○	○	○			○
Improving quality of services	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			
Better coordination and seamlessness	✓	✓	✓	✗	○	✓	✓	✓		
Awareness, learning & Capacity building	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Informed decisions		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Collective capacity & actions	✓	✓		✓						
Fostering innovations										✓
Transparency & Fairness										
Public passivity								✓		
Incomplete institutional tools					✓		✓		✓	✓
Absence of formal authority								✓		✓
Network management				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Hurdles within member organisations			✓					✓		
Motivation & commitment of providers										
QQA frameworks & implementation		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Conflict of interests/authorities							✓	✓		
Capacity to improve									✓	✓

Appendix 6: Participant-Ordered Matrix – Case3

VPIS Case - Analyses of 2nd Order Themes																			
Participant	1	38	4	5	7	34	9	32	14	15	29	28	27	19	18	11	10	2	25
Managing expectations	✓	✓✓		✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓		✓✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	
Access to information on PM		✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓		✓✓	✓✓	✓
Public accountability				✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	○	✓		✓	○
Managing network outputs	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	○	✓	✓								
General accountability culture	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓		✓	✓✓		✓		✓
Provider self initiatives						✓✓			✓	✓	✓				✓✓		✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Member self initiatives					✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓		✓	✓	✓✓		✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓		
Balancing power & control				○															
Linking regulatory & funding decisions	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓			✓✓			✓✓		✓✓	✓✓	✓✓		✓✓		✓✓	✓✓
Overall impact on accountability					✓														
Formal engagement	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓		✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓		✓✓			✓
Informal engagement	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓		✓✓		✓✓	✓✓		✓✓	✓✓			✓✓					
Understanding & commitment	✓✓		✓✓	✓✓		✓✓	✓✓		✓	✓	✓✓		✓						
Mediating trust			✓✓		✓		○		×										✓
Contributing by small wins		✓✓	✓✓		✓✓		✓✓	✓✓		✓				✓	✓				✓
Balancing of power & control				○								✓							
Trust building cycle	✓✓	✓		✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Assurance & confirming own perspectives				○		✓		✓✓	✓	×		×		○				✓	✓✓
Overall impact on trust																			
Formal and legal authority		✓✓				✓							✓✓				✓		✓
Informal power		✓✓				✓✓	✓		✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓				✓✓	✓✓		
Collective power		✓✓		○		✓✓	✓✓	✓		✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	○	○					✓
Balancing of power		✓					✓		✓		○	○	○						
Supporting member decision making			✓✓		✓✓		✓✓	✓✓			✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓
Overall impact on power					○										○	○			○
Strengthening network management																			
Alignment with common objectives	✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓		✓✓		✓				✓✓			✓	✓		✓
Conflict of interests & priorities						○				○	×								
External steering mechanism		✓						✓✓				✓							
Adjusting legislative tools		✓			✓		✓	✓				✓							✓
Coordinative & consultative work		✓		✓	✓		✓✓	✓✓				✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓			✓
Overall impact on autonomy		○		○		○		○		○			○		○				
Improving quality of services				✓		✓✓	✓✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓✓	○	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓
Better coordination and seamlessness	✓✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓		✓	✓		✓✓	✓
Awareness, learning & Capacity building	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓		✓✓		✓
Informed decisions		✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Collective capacity & actions															○				
Fostering innovations			✓	✓															
Transparency & Fairness		✓																	
Public passivity		✓✓			✓✓						✓	✓			✓	✓			✓✓
Incomplete institutional tools		✓✓			✓			✓	✓			✓							
Absence of formal authority		✓		✓✓	✓✓				✓										✓
Network management		✓✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓✓					
Hurdles within member organisations					○						✓	✓	✓						
Motivation & commitment of providers								✓								✓	✓✓		✓✓
QQA frameworks & implementation		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	
Conflict of interests/authorities					✓														
Capacity to improve																			

Appendix 7: Participant-Ordered Matrix – Case4

SVP Case - Anllyses of 2nd Order Themes					
Participant	6	36	12	26	35
Managing expectations	✓✓		✓	✓	
Access to information on PM	✓	✓		✓	
Public accountability		✓			
Managing network outputs	✓		✓		
General accountability culture	✓		✓		
Provider self initiatives					
Member self initiatives	✓	✓			✓
Balancing power & control	○				
Linking regulatory & funding decisions					
Overall impact on accountability					
Formal engagement	✓	○		✓	✓
Informal engagement	✓	○	✓		
Understanding & commitment	✓	X	✓✓		
Mediating trust			✓		
Contributing by small wins					
Balancing of power & control					
Trust building cycle	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Assurance & confirming own perspectives		○	✓	✓	
Overall impact on trust					
Formal and legal authority					
Informal power			✓		
Collective power					
Balancing of power					○
Supporting member decision making	✓		✓		
Overall impact on power					
Strengthening network management					
Alignment with common objectives			✓	✓	
Conflict of interests & priorities		✓			
External steering mechanism					
Adjusting legeslative tools					
Coordinative & consultative work					
Overall impact on autonomy			○		
Improving quality of services		✓			✓
Better coordination and seamlessness			✓		
Awareness, learning & Capacity building	✓				✓
Informed decisions	✓	✓		✓	✓
Collective capacity & actions					
Fostering innovations					
Transperency & Fairness					
Public passivity					
Incomplete institutional tools					
Absence of formal authority					
Network management		✓			
Hurdles within member organisations		✓✓		✓	
Motivation & commitment of providers		✓		✓	
QQA frameworks & implementation		✓			✓
Conflict of interests/authorities					
Capacity to improve		✓✓			

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