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Transformative Quality in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs): Conceptualisation, scale development and validation

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ABSTRACT

With the increasing post-massification of higher education institutions (HEIs), access-providing business schools (vs elite educational institutions) continue to rank at the bottom in terms of quality. This study defines and develops a measure of quality in the context of access-providing business schools in a developing country. Access-providing private business schools face competing challenges of balancing inclusiveness and access with excellence and quality. Pursuing inclusiveness and access alongside excellence and quality seems a utopian ideal. However, this study propounds transformative quality as key for addressing these conflicting issues, which have long impacted post-massification and continue to have a grave effect post-pandemic. We propose a five-factor, 27-item scale of transformative quality (TRFQ). We validated the proposed scale through three studies exploring the perspectives of front-line faculty members representing 25 business schools from 10 major cities in India. The study results indicate that TRFQ comprises five dimensions such as critical confidence, problem-solving skills for approach-avoidance, overall awareness, overcoming prejudices and skillfulness. The role of TRFQ in future research has implications and recommendations for institutional management in business schools and for policymakers.

1. Introduction

In recent years, tertiary education and its policies have undergone tumultuous changes globally (Pitman, 2014). Especially in the West, higher education institutions (HEIs) have struggled to address efficacy and federal funding-related challenges (Waddock & Lozano, 2013). However, country-specific challenges often remain hidden in the crevices of research, which is particularly lacking in North American and European scholarly forums (Nkomo, 2015). With the advent of the privatisation in education in several emerging and developed economies giving way to massification, these challenges are increasingly being recognised globally. Private HEIs, in most cases, have provided technical and vocational education in various disciplines, including engineering, technology, business, management and architecture (Atchoarena & Esquieu, 2002). Privatisation became a favourable alternative to conceptions of education as a public good (Daviet, 2016), and it has paved the way for 'massification' in global higher education (HE) systems. Massification implies greater access to college and university education and an increased number of graduates in the labour market, thus rendering education a common good in society (Mok & Jiang, 2017). Massification–a *massive quantitative phenomenon* which fuelled *massive privatisation of higher education*, thus became a global policy to meet the increasing need to expand access to higher education (Sanyal & Johnstone, 2011).

The three major private HE systems are China, India and the USA. Among these, India has been recognised as the '*big one*', holding a share of 21.9% of global private HE (Levy, 2018, p. 707) and an enrolment of almost 64.3% (AISHE, 2019). Privatisation in HE, which began as a promising alternative to public institutions in India in the 1990s (Daviet, 2016), eventually led to excessive privatisation over the years. Consequently, demand-absorbing private (non-elite) business schools, among other kinds of HEIs in India (Mok & Jiang, 2017), mushroomed. This mushrooming resulted in a spate of debates regarding two divides in business schools, namely, the access-quality divide and the inclusiveness-excellence divide (Tilak & Mathew, 2016). The type of massification India has exhibited is not a natural result of the economic

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development of the nation but instead an outcome of the government's *'leap forward'* approach, which depends primarily on private tertiary education providers (Sarkar, 2020).

Under this dichotomous HE system, demand-absorbing, non-elite business schools may not fulfil traditional quality indicators, such as research funding, use of latest technology and teaching methodologies, global institutional rankings, industry linkages and quality professors. However, they do provide access and inclusiveness (Berbegal-Mirabent, Sánchez García, & Ribeiro-Soriano, 2015; Brusoni et al., 2014; Snelson-Powell, Grosvold, & Millington, 2020). The HE system has thus become exceedingly dichotomous, with most public, elite, excellence- and quality-providing business schools on the one hand, and most private, non-elite, demand-absorbing, access- and inclusiveness-providing business schools on the other (Miotto, Del-Castillo-Feito, & Blanco-González, 2020). The latter, which form the access providers and suffer from lower instructional quality, comprise affiliated colleges that are primarily non-elite and mostly private business schools (Mok & Jiang, 2017). These non-elite institutions are regulated by the government but remain mostly privately owned and managed through funds, trusts or societies. These institutions, moreover, shoulder the responsibility of educating the burgeoning demographic of students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and they are facing serious quality issues as a result of the passive, catching up mode of massification in India. They are enmeshed in problems such as consistently low institutional rankings, unemployable graduates and low-quality teaching faculty. Thus, these institutions' students typically earn degrees that, unfortunately, are bereft of value in the labour market (Altbach, 2014).

Stuck in a quagmire of the self-fulfilling ranking system, the majority of these institutions continue to rank low in terms of quality. Despite the phenomenologically dichotomous HE system comprising starkly contrasting elite and non-elite business schools, quality measures for both types of business schools remain the same. Based on the preceding discussion, which highlights the futility of a self-fulfilling ranking system in post-massification dichotomous HE, we express the objective of the present study in the following two principle research questions (**RQs**): **RQ1**. Can there be a separate measure of quality for demand-absorbing (non-elite) private business schools in a dichotomous HE system? **RQ2.** Which stakeholder perspectives to develop this measure, should be taken into account? The study responds to these research questions by proposing and testing a 27-item measure of educational quality to provide an improved means for assessing quality at non-elite, private business schools from the perspectives of front-line faculty. This paper discusses the process of establishing the proposed 27-item instrument, the transformative quality (TRFQ) scale, used for measuring transformative quality in private business schools. The process included three different studies (N = 106, 349 and 299) to validate the instrument. We propose and develop a scale from front-line faculty perspectives because (a) of their close interaction with and influence on students positions them to contribute significantly towards redefining quality in private business schools (Watty, 2006) and (b) the traits of the redefined measure of quality are teachable, which makes front-line faculty perspectives particularly relevant.

The four novel contributions of the current study can be summarised as follows. First, our study is among the first to establish an empirical measure for the much endorsed but elusive concept of transformative quality. This study enables the identification of dimensions of TRFQ and contributes towards theoretical advancement in the business education and quality literature. Second, this study addresses the dearth of literature on front-line faculty members' perspectives and clearly delineates these stakeholders from broader and interchangeably used terms such as 'faculty,' 'academics' or 'lecturers'. Third, the findings from this study have theoretical and practical implications for academics and practitioners. The findings can have a profound impact both on intervention strategies employed in classrooms and on classroom pedagogies. Finally, by examining and developing a new scale in a dichotomous HE system, this study provides novel insights that balance the conflicting ideas of access and inclusiveness with quality and excellence. This research presents transformative quality in HE as a redefined measure of quality to address the access-quality and inclusiveness-excellence divide in the dichotomous HE system. We argue further that this redefined measure should be investigated through front-line faculty perspectives. To the best of our knowledge, only Teeroovengadum, Kamalanabhan, and Seebaluck (2016) have empirically studied the much-acclaimed but elusive TRFQ in HE through eight complex, higher-order and non-cognitive constructs, which collectively contribute towards the enhancement and empowerment of students. Unfortunately, they presented these exceedingly complex psychological and theoretical constructs, such as 'emotional stability', 'self-confidence', 'critical thinking', 'self-awareness' and 'transcending prejudices', in brief one-line sentences, thus negating the multidimensional nature of quality itself. Thus, the literature requires a more sophisticated and nuanced measure of the various dimensions that form TRFQ in HE. Our proposed TRFQ scale attempts to address the aforementioned issues, especially for demand-absorbing, mostly non-elite, private business schools, which are grappling with even greater challenges following the COVID-19 pandemic.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. First, we review the literature to revisit quality concepts in HE and redefine quality in the context of a dichotomous HE system. Then we introduce the three studies we conducted. Study one, the pilot study, focuses on the generation of items. Study two examines the underlying factor structure of the scale. Study three endeavours to establish a psychometrically valid TRFQ measure. Finally, in the concluding sections of the paper, we discuss the challenges and limitations of our work and propose fruitful avenues for future research.

2. Background literature

Quality in education has been a perennial topic of interest, especially given the economic, social, cultural and institutional lenses used to evaluate the economic and non-economic value of education. Nearly 30 years after Ball's article titled, 'What the hell is quality?' (Ball, 1985), researchers continue to struggle to define quality in an educational context (Schindler, Puls-Elvidge, Welzant, & Crawford, 2015). The reasons for this lack of consensus include (a) the multidimensionality of quality, which renders brief, one-sentence definitions less meaningful (Voss, Gruber, & Szmigin, 2016); (b) the multiple interpretations of quality that arise from varying stakeholder perspectives (Rauschnabel, Krey, Babin, & Ivens, 2016), including providers (Voss et al., 2016), users of products (Cullen, Joyce, Hassall, & Broadbent, 2003), users of outputs and employees of the concerned sector (Harvey & Green, 1993) and (c) the dynamicity of quality, which makes the concept susceptible to change in the context of a larger educational, economic, political and social landscape (Schindler et al., 2015). For instance, quality was initially synonymous with achieving prestige; however, due to declining public trust in private HE, business schools shifted their focus towards student learning (Amaral & Rosa, 2010; Ellson, 2009). More recently, HEIs have begun to emphasise pedagogical innovation, virtual teaching and digitalisation in light of the COVID-19 pandemic (Crawford, Butler-Henderson, Rudolph, & Glowatz, 2020; Donthu, 2020; Krishnamurthy, 2020), which has left the primarily private, non-elite, low-quality business schools most vulnerable and worst-hit.

2.1. Institutional background of business schools in India

Though this study develops a global measure to address quality issues in dichotomous HE systems, we examine and apply the proposed measure in India. Before revisiting quality concepts, therefore, we must also provide an overview of the business schools in the Indian HE system. This system comprises universities, colleges and standalone institutions, which can be further divided into different types of tertiary institutions. The focus of this study remains the affiliated, access-providing, private business schools that are primarily non-elite and

suffer from low institutional quality (Mok & Jiang, 2017).

2.2. Dichotomous higher education (HE) systems

The seminal work of Harvey and Green (1993) conceptualised quality in HE as *perfection*, *exceptional*, *value for money*, *fitness of purpose* and *transformative*. However, previous research has demonstrated that this traditional definition of quality struggled to define quality in the context of access-providing HEIs (Harvey, 1999; Gill & Singh, 2018; Harvey & Green, 1993). The lack of a quality measure capable of transcending the access-quality and inclusiveness-excellence divide in a dichotomous HE system underscores the importance of the fifth traditional notion of quality—*transformative*. Though bereft of traditional indicators of excellence, private business schools can transform and add to the diversity of HE by pursuing their unique missions, targeting specific students and offering distinct and specified academic disciplines. Such an approach meets a healthy combination of both elite and mass business schools (Hazelkorn, 2012).

The proposed measure of transformative quality is rooted in the notion of *transforming* students by enhancing their knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities, empowering them to take charge of their learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2005) and, at the same time, preparing them to be reflective and critical thinkers (Harvey, 2000). Such democratisation of the education process—and not just its outcomes—is transformative quality (Gill & Singh, 2019; Kis, 2005). Since the focus is on transformative life-long learning, employability becomes a subset of this dimension rather than the primary goal (Harvey, 2000). TRFQ includes concepts of cognitive transcendence, student empowerment, the emancipation of education, developmental transitions, mindfulness and change at an individual and social level (Cheng, 2014). It is a continual process of inculcating confidence, building new understandings and enhancing students (Mezirow, 1991) by redefining methods of teaching to emphasise collaborative learning, experiential pedagogies, contemplative practices, service-learning and creative and artistic experiences (Duerr, Zajonc, & Dana, 2003).

Since the private sector increasingly caters to students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and rural and regional communities, access-providing business schools have more chances to explore their potential and enact real change in the economic productivity of a country's HE system (Pitman, 2014). Small-scale research conducted with a sample of senior managers revealed that TRFQ best describes massification in HE (Lomas, 2002). Another study that investigated the teaching experiences of Teaching Excellence Awards winners at a university in England revealed that most of the faculty award winners associated the concept of institutional quality with transformative learning (Cheng, 2011). In a study regarding the conception of quality conducted in Oman, the three key stakeholders—students, faculty and employers—identified transformative learning as the most preferred definition of quality in HE (Zachariah, 2007). Student preferences for transformative quality were likewise unanimous in a study conducted across eight European countries (Jungblut, Vukasovic, & Stensaker, 2015). In fact, transformation has been considered the most appropriate definition for quality enhancement in massification (Lomas & Ursin, 2009). Understanding quality as transformation enables HEIs to address the concerns of all stakeholder groups (Srikanthan & Dalrymple, 2003).

Despite the consistent recognition of transformation as the most appropriate definition of quality in HE, both quality and transformation remain elusive (Cheng, 2014). This is because both constructs are subject to diverse interpretations, which hinders efforts to quantify and interpret them. These measurement challenges are prevalent for theoretically complex constructs, especially TRFQ, since it consists of myriad related and unrelated dimensions (Cording, Christmann, & Weigelt, 2010). Despite the challenges in operationalising quality as transformation, transformation has nevertheless become a key objective in quality enhancement educational processes around the world (Cheng, 2014). Research indicates that some of the transformative traits are teachable and can contribute to greater levels of innovation and economic growth (Staub, 2017).

2.3. Front-line faculty perspectives

The previous section presented a critical literature review and our argumentative reasoning. However, understanding the relativity of quality (as mentioned previously) and thus recognising the need to ask, '*Of whose quality?*' are likewise necessary.

Prior literature highlights a significant gap between institutional management perspectives and faculty perspectives on quality (Barandiaran-Galdós, Barrenetxea Ayesta, Cardona-Rodríguez, José Mijangos del Campo, & Olaskoaga-Larrauri, 2012; Karakhanyan & Stensaker, 2020; Stensaker, Langfeldt, Harvey, Huisman, & Westerheijden, 2011). Cartwright (2007) reported that management tends to view quality management processes more positively than do an institution's faculty members. Previous empirical studies have shown that some faculty members *go along with* quality activities (Hall, 2015), while others *actively resist* them and find them a *burden* (Anderson, 2006). More specifically, some faculty members find quality-related activities *problematic* (Ezer & Horin, 2013) and *meaningless because they are mandatory rather than voluntary* (Brennan & Shah, 2000). Moreover, some faculty members believe that quality management activities derive from a particular political affiliation and thus consider them *politicised* (Harvey, 2005). The resulting superficial involvement of faculty in quality management activities impedes the process of achieving transformative quality.

Since front-line faculty have the greatest impact on student learning outcomes and student transformation, engaging front-line faculty in quality management activities is key for attaining quality in HE (Coates & Seifert, 2011; Voss et al., 2016). Prior research has further endorsed this strong influence and urged faculty in HE to don the role of a broker, that is, to possess boundary-crossing competence, stimulate a learning attitude among students and enable transformation among them (Oonk et al., 2020). Earlier studies have also consistently urged faculty to develop the ability to switch, connect, change, adapt and integrate multiple courses and practices relevant to HE (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Lansu, Boon, Sloep, & van Dam-Mieras, 2013). These practices form the core of teacher efficacy and enable transformation, thus inching business schools closer to TRFQ (Guzmán-Valenzuela, 2015; Whitmer et al., 2010).

Front-line faculty perspectives, particularly for TRFQ, are even more relevant for the present study because faculty have, in several previous studies, espoused a definition of HE quality as *transformative*. For instance, in a qualitative study of faculty perspectives on quality, Harvey and Green (1993) conceptualisation of quality as *transformative* garnered more support than other definitions of quality (Watty, 2006). Similarly, in another study based in Portugal, faculty prioritised student outcomes over customer satisfaction (Rosa, Tavares, & Amaral, 2006). Lomas (2002) described transformative quality as the most appropriate definition in the massification of HE systems. Likewise, Gill and Singh (2018) described transformative quality as an antidote to the ills plaguing the post-massification HE system. However, the extant literature exhibits a glaring lack of empirical work on transformative quality in HE.

It is also important to note that faculty perspectives may vary depending upon institutional types and other factors (Massy, 2003). In this light, few empirical studies have addressed faculty perspectives across different institutional types in HE. The current research thus aims to bridge the following gaps: (a) the lack of empirical work on transformative quality and (b) sparse studies investigating front-line faculty perspectives from private business schools, which are in dire need of quality improvement (Altbach, 2014).

3. Development of transformative quality (TRFQ) scale

Following Churchill (1979) process of scale development, this study utilised a questionnaire to create a multiple-item TRFQ measure. Fig. 1 depicts the scale development process, which included three phases. Study one identified and defined dimensions of transformative quality from the literature. These efforts generated an initial pool of 38 items, which we subsequently grouped and refined to reduced redundancies (Koronios, Vrontis, & Thrassou, 2021). In Study two, we assembled data through exploratory factor analysis to present a five-factor, 27-item scale. Study three involved confirmatory factor analysis to further refine and validate the final five-factor, 27-item scale.

3.1. Study one: Scale construction

3.1.1. Identification of dimensions

Identifying dimensions involved a thorough review of the prior literature on business education and quality. We relied on the seven dimensions of TRFQ proposed by Teeroovengadum et al. (2016) as our starting point. Each of these dimensions signifies a complex psychological construct. We conducted a comprehensive literature review to elaborate on the specific dimensions of TRFQ.

3.1.2. Defining dimensions

After identifying the different dimensions of TRFQ, we defined each of these dimensions (refer to Table 1) and identified statements that could effectively capture the perspectives of front-line faculty on TRFQ. The identified dimensions are rooted in pedagogical relevance and can further contribute to greater levels of innovation and economic growth (D'Astous & Boujbel, 2007; Staub, 2017).

3.1.3. Item generation and content validity

Since transformative quality is a relatively new concept, this domain includes little empirical work. To the best of our knowledge, Teeroovengadum et al. (2016) were the first to empirically define TRFQ in HE, although TRFQ was well-defined in Harvey and Green (1993) seminal work on quality. Thus, we designed the items for the proposed TRFQ scale based on a comprehensive review of the literature and argumentative reasoning.

We began working individually to generate items for the TRFQ scale. Three brainstorming sessions followed. During these sessions, we exchanged our lists of items and generated more items while referring to various peer-reviewed journal articles, published conference proceedings, dissertations and working papers. Databases for the search included *Google Scholar*, the *Education Resources Information Centre*, the *EBSCO* database and journals specific to 'higher education' and/or 'business education' and 'business schools'. We employed permutations and combinations of specific keywords, such as 'massification', 'quality', 'access', 'inclusiveness', 'excellence', 'privatisation' and 'transformative quality', to search relevant articles. We drew most of the studies from academic journals, such as *Higher Education*, *Journal of Business Research, Higher Education Quarterly*, *Quality in Higher Education*, *International Journal of Educational Management*, *Studies in Higher Education*, *Economic and Political Weekly*, *Asia Pacific Education Review* and *Academy of Management Learning & Education.* The selected timeline was between 1990 and 2019. Though we located only a limited number of articles from the 1990s, we nevertheless recognised that decade as a crucial period marking the advent of the privatisation of HE in India. The mid-2000s witnessed an upward surge in the articles published on quality in private business schools. We also studied contemporary themes examined at prestigious conferences, such as the Academy of Management, Association for Institutional Research and The European Higher Education Society (EAIR), as well as those that appeared in the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) reports and newspapers.

This iterative process of developing concepts from the literature was followed by two focus group interviews with 20 front-line faculty. Most of the participants of the focus group (male: n = 7, 35% and female: n = 13, 65%) were between 30 and 50 years old (n = 14, 70%), while 20% were younger than 30 years of age and even fewer participants (n = 2, 10%) were older than 50 years of age. We supplied the participants of the focus group with information about the dimensions of interest and asked them to (a) discuss and describe 'transformative quality' in the context of a dichotomous HE system, (b) summarise the different dimensions of transformative quality and (c) discuss the role of front-line faculty in the transformative quality of a business school.

Thus, these two processes—the literature review and focus group interviews—enabled us to design a well-structured questionnaire to assess TRFQ from the front-line faculty's perspective (Dhir, Chen, & Chen, 2017). This process generated an initial pool of 45 items.

A cross-disciplinary team of nine experts in management, HE and quality collaborated to assess the content validity of the proposed scale. The nine-member expert panel included five academicians, two members of institutional management and two industry experts. After presenting these experts with the initial pool of 45 items, we asked them to respond regarding (a) the dimension to which they believed an item belonged, (b) the relevance of each item with its dimension and (c) the clarity of the items. Based on this procedure, we removed confusing, ambiguous, repetitive items, as well as double-barreled and contextually irrelevant statements. We agreed that a five-point Likert response would

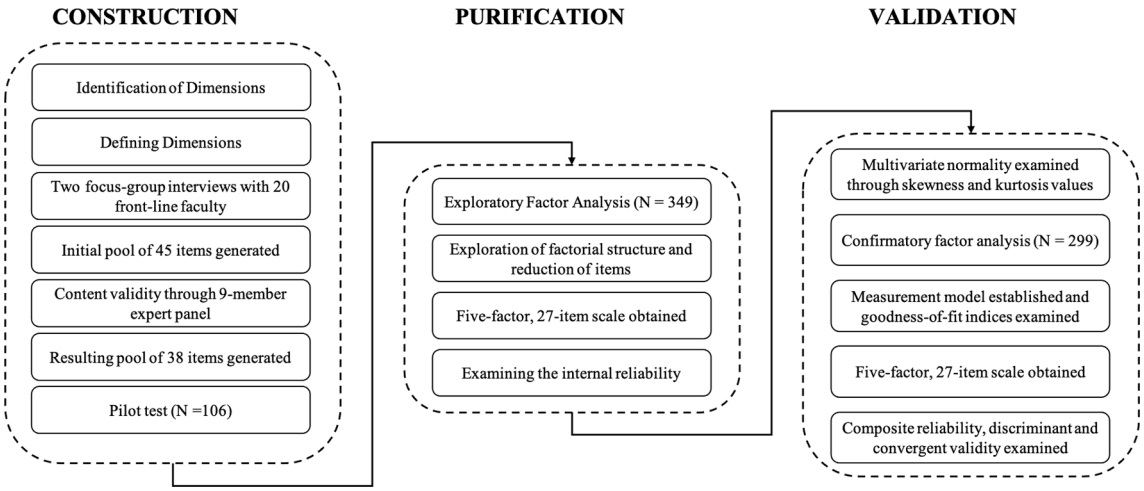

Fig. 1. The Process of Scale Development.

Table 1
Defining dimensions of transformative quality.

Specific dimensions	Definition
Emotional stability	**Emotional stability** refers to an individual's ability to remain calm, relaxed, not anxious or easily upset (Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann, 2003). The concept probes participants regarding how easily stressed they get, how easily their moods can be swayed, how easily they become offended and how easily they are prone to sadness. Students who can better regulate their emotions also tend to have higher academic achievement (Sanchez-Ruiz et al., 2013).
Confidence	**Confidence** refers to an individual's belief in his or her own ability to behave and to be successful academically (Sander & Sanders, 2003). Stankov, Kleitman, and Jackson (2015) define confidence as the 'strength of one's belief, trust or expectation, related to task accomplishment'. Confidence also enables students to pursue critical and life-long inquiries in the world and with one another (Lin & Cranton, 2005).
Critical thinking	**Critical thinking** has been defined as deep, more thoughtful and profound reflection, which allows students to critique assumptions and presuppositions without reaching hasty conclusions (Kember et al., 2000). The idea is not to accumulate knowledge or to focus on 'what to think'; rather, it is to develop capabilities to innovate, adapt and improvise while focusing on 'how to think' (Thomas, 2009).
Self-awareness	**Self-awareness**, which can be further understood as public and private self-awareness, refers to situational self-focus (Govern & Marsch, 2001). It considers students' surroundings as well as public and private aspects of self-awareness (Buss, 1980; Govern & Marsch, 2001). The crux of all learning, awareness asks 'how one knows what one knows' rather than just 'what one knows' (Duerr et al., 2003).
Problem-solving skills	**Problem-solving skills** are an important skill set, which are of paramount importance not only to students but to professionals as well (Heppner & Petersen, 1982) (Krumboltz, 1965). Scholars have studied the problem-solving processes of college students by taking into consideration their confidence in their own problem-solving abilities, their approach-avoidance style and their control (Heppner & Petersen, 1982).
Transcending prejudices	HE must address **prejudices, stereotypes and beliefs**, and it can do so particularly by engaging students. This further leads to benefits such as improved racial understanding among students, greater participation in community programs and lower levels of prejudice among students Chang, 2002; Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Milem, 1994).
Acquisition and enhancement of skills, knowledge and abilities	**Acquisition and enhancement of employability skills, knowledge, and abilities** is an important component of HE's primary role in transforming students (Harvey, 2000).

provide us with fine-grained distinctions and debated how detailed each item should be. We employed a simpler vocabulary to ensure a wider understanding. After exchanging drafts and gathering feedback, we finalised the preliminary instrument with an initial pool of 38 items, wherein eight items constituted the *emotional stability* dimension (items related to the front-line faculty's take on whether the coursework, teaching and learning processes at their university (college) make students often feel blue/take offence easily/get caught up in problems/get emotionally overwhelmed/feel worried/threatened/upset); four items constituted the *confidence* dimension (consisting of items related to the front-line faculty's perspective about the students' ability to produce coursework of the required standard/pass assessments/adequately motivated/ engage in profitable debates with their peers); seven items accounted for the *critical thinking* dimension (consisting of items related to the front-line faculty's perspective about whether the courses at the university require students to understand concepts/whether the courses question the students/whether the courses have led the students to change the way they look at themselves/whether the courses help a student reflect/whether the courses enable students to re-apprise their experiences); four items represented *self-awareness* (with items related to the front-line faculty's take on whether their students are self-conscious about their looks/what is going on around them/reflective about their life/concerned about what others think of them); 10 items embodied the *problems-solving skills* (comprising items related to front-line faculty's perspective about whether the students examine why their solutions didn't work/how they strategize when confronted with complex problems/whether they are confident when faced with novel situations/ whether or not students analyse after problem-solving/whether or not students are happy with their decisions/whether students try to predict results after carrying out a particular course of action/ whether students believe they can solve most problems); three items represented *transcending prejudices* (consisting of items related to front-line faculty's perspective about whether the university has enabled the students to transcend prejudices against having preferences for young over old/ having preferences for light skin over dark skin/linking family with females and career with males); and, two items represented *skills* (with items related to front-line faculty's perspective about whether the university has helped students to acquire as well as increase students' knowledge, abilities and skills for future jobs).

3.1.4. Pilot testing, validity and reliability

Due to Internet-related connectivity problems, we relied on a pen-and-pencil survey for the pilot testing. The main goal of the survey was to evaluate the psychometric characteristics of the paper-based TRFQ scale. A total of 120 front-line faculty members from five private business schools in North-Western India participated in Spring 2019. Explaining the background of the research project took approximately 15 min, during which participants were assured of their complete anonymity. Faculty members took nearly 20 min to complete the instrument, assessing each item on a five-point Likert-type scale (*1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree*). To lessen the pressure on faculty members, we seated ourselves at a distance and provided them with privacy while they completed the questionnaire. Although the pen-and-paper-based survey administration subjected us to the tedious process of typing data into Excel sheets, this task did offer us first-hand insight into the issues of a dichotomous HE system, where private business schools battle resource constraints at the most fundamental level (Amara, Halilem, & Traoré, 2016). We deemed a total of 14 responses unusable and discarded them. This left 106 responses from the paper-based TRFQ for further analysis. The purpose of this pilot test was to assess whether the items were relevant to the context of the study, and whether the language used was clear and bereft of ambiguity and confusion. Open suggestions were elicited from the participants. The feedback obtained from the pilot study was incorporated and minor language related changes were incorporated in the 38 item pool.

3.2. Study two: Scale purification

Study two has two objectives: (a) to explore and examine the factorial structure of the TRFQ and further reduce the number (38) of scale items and (b) to provide a parsimonious conceptual understanding of the underlying latent constructs (Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum, & Strahan, 1999). We administered the pen-and-pencil survey instrument to 370 faculty members at 25 private business schools in North-Western

India. Following the survey's administration, we removed 21 incomplete and unengaged responses and used the remaining 349 responses to investigate the factorial validity of the TRFQ scale. Respondents rated the items on a five-point, Likert-type scale (*1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree*). Table 2 details the demographic profile of the study participants (Study two).

Next, we undertook exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using Maximum likelihood (ML) Factor Analysis along with the varimax rotation method for extracting factors (Dhir, 2017) (Kaur, Dhir, Chen, & Rajala, 2016). Here, we considered items with factor loadings >0.40 and selected factors with eigenvalues >1 (Gorsuch, 1983). Additionally, we determined the maximum number of factors to consider by referencing the point beyond which the scree plot between eigenvalues and corresponding factors levelled off (Cattell, 1978). We conducted factor rotation to arrive at the best 'simple structure', wherein each factor consisted of a cluster of items having larger loadings than other items (Thurstone, 1947). The study utilised varimax rotation, an orthogonal method of rotation, which minimises the number of variables that have high loadings on a factor, thus enhancing the interpretability of factors. This was followed by the nomenclature of emergent factors (Malhotra, 2007). Further, we employed the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy to indicate the factorability of the data (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). The study obtained a KMO value of 0.88, which indicated the adequacy of our sample for the factor analysis (Kaiser, 1974). The Bartlett test of sphericity was also significant ($X^2 = 4979.12$, $df = 351$, $p < 0.001$).

The investigations uncovered a five-factor structure and decreased the scale to 27 items (see Table 3). The five-factor solution—*critical confidence*, *approach-avoidance problem-solving skills*, *overall awareness*, *overcoming prejudices* and *skills*—explained 61.96% of the variance. The scree plot (Cattell, 1978) re-confirmed the five-factor solution. The examination of internal reliability using Cronbach alpha suggested that all the five factors possess sufficient internal reliability (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994).

3.3. Study three: Scale validation

After extracting the factors from the EFA, we utilised Study three to confirm the underlying factor structure of TRFQ. This was essential to provide a psychometrically sound measure of TRFQ. The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed using covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM) and it enabled us to test the relationships between the observed variables and their underlying latent constructs (Dhir, Chen, & Nieminen, 2017) (Suhr, 2006). The objective of the CFA was to examine the discriminant and convergent validity as well as the reliability of the different dimensions of TRFQ and to determine whether the measurement model possessed satisfactory goodness-of-fit indices.

We created a revised questionnaire with two sections. The first section consisted of 27 items of the five-factor solution attained from the EFA. The second section consisted of items requesting respondents' demographic information. We administered the revised instrument—once again as a pen-and-pencil survey—to 310 participants from the same sampling frame of the 25 private business schools that had previously participated in Study two. We deemed a total of 299 questionnaires eligible for data analysis because 11 use cases were incomplete. Respondents again rated items for TRFQ on a five-point, Likert-type scale (*1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree*). Table 2 presents the demographic profile of the participants (Study three).

We examined the presence of common method bias in the collected data by using the Harman single-factor test as suggested by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, and Podsakoff (2003). The Harman single-factor test indicated that the single factor explained 36.43% variance, below the recommended threshold limit of 50%.

We performed the CFA to determine the goodness-of-fit index between the already factorially structured model (Koronios et al., 2021). Goodness-of-fit indices provide information on the overall fit of the measurement model. This research assessed the model fit based on the comparative fit index (CFI) > 0.92, goodness-of-fit index (GFI) > 0.92, chi-square (X^2) ratio degrees of freedom (df) < 3.0, the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) > 0.92, and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) < 0.08 (Hair et al., 2006; Byrne, 2001; Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998; Tho & Trang, 2015). However, before establishing the measurement model, we considered whether our data satisfied assumptions of multivariate normality (i.e. skewness > 2 and kurtosis > 7; Tho & Trang, 2015; West, Finch, & Curran, 1995). The study results indicated that our data set satisfied these assumptions.

Only after ensuring the normality of the data CFA was run in AMOS 27 software. The measurement model returned a good fit with $X^2/df = 2.18$, $CFI = 0.93$, $TLI = 0.92$, $RMSEA = 0.06$ (Jackson, Gillaspy Jr, & Purc-Stephenson, 2009). All the fitness indices required to achieve a good model fit exceeded the threshold value, thereby indicating the overall acceptability of the measurement model.

After establishing the overall acceptability of the measurement model (which indicated a good model fit), we examined the reliability and validity of the measurement model. First, we determined the unidimensionality by examining whether all the items had acceptable

Table 2
Demographic profile of the study participants.

Demographics	Categories	Study two		Study three	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	179	51.30	133	44.5
	Female	170	48.70	166	55.5
Age	Less than 30 years	149	42.70	122	40.8
	Between 30–50 years	182	52.10	165	55.2
	Above 50 years	18	5.20	12	4.00
Educational level	Bachelor's degree	55	15.80	22	7.4
	Master's degree	254	72.80	235	78.6
	Doctoral degree	40	11.40	42	14.0
Work experience	Less than five years	156	44.70	126	42.1
	5–10 years	98	28.10	93	31.1
	10–15 years	57	16.30	48	16.1
	15–20 years	19	5.40	18	6.0
	More than 20 years	19	5.40	14	4.7
Designation	Lecturer	96	27.5	39	13.0
	Assistant professor	176	50.40	197	65.9
	Associate professor	28	8.00	25	8.40
	Full professor	20	5.70	21	7.0
	Others	29	8.30	17	5.7
Computer trained	Yes	301	86.20	270	90.30
	No	48	13.80	29	9.7

Table 3
Results of exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis.

Dimensions	Measurement items	Standardised factor loadings	
		EFA	CFA
Critical confidence (CC)	CC1. I am confident that my students will be able to produce coursework at the required standard.	0.53	0.75
	CC2. I am confident that my students will be able to pass assessments at the first step.	0.68	0.70
	CC3. I am confident that my students will be able to remain adequately motivated throughout.	0.67	0.72
	CC4. This course at the university (college) requires students to understand concepts taught by us (lecturers).	0.82	0.83
	CC5. My students sometimes question the way others do something and try to think of a better way.	0.67	0.78
	CC6. As a result of this course at the university (college), the students have changed the way they look at themselves.	0.67	0.81
	CC7. To pass this course at the university (college), the students need to understand the content.	0.73	0.85
	CC8. My students often reflect on their actions to see whether they could have improved on what they did.	0.72	0.83
	CC9. As a result of this course at this university (college), my students have changed their normal way of doing things.	0.74	0.85
	CC10. My students often re-appraise their experience so that they can learn from it and improve for their next performance.	0.70	0.85
	CC11. After my students have solved a problem, they analyse what went right or what went wrong.	0.65	0.76
	CC12. My students make decisions and are happy with them later.	0.68	0.81
	CC13. When my students make plans to solve a problem, they are almost certain that they can make them work.	0.70	0.80
	CC14. My students try to predict the overall result of carrying out a particular course of action.	0.79	0.83
	CC15. Given enough time and effort, my students believe that they can solve most problems that confront them.	0.78	0.80
Overall awareness (OA)	OA1. Presently, my students are self-conscious about what is going on around them.	0.65	0.73
	OA2. Presently, my students are reflective about their life.	0.78	0.75
	OA3. Presently, my students are concerned about what other people think of them.	0.82	0.68
Approach-avoidance problem-solving skills (AA)	AA1. When a solution to a problem isn't unsuccessful, my students examine why it didn't work.	0.66	0.74
	AA2. When my students are confronted with a complex problem, they try to develop a strategy to collect information so that they can define exactly what the problem is.	0.56	0.74
	AA3. When faced with a novel situation, my students have confidence that they can handle problems that may arise.	0.56	0.66
	AA4. When the first efforts of my students fail, they don't become uneasy about their ability to handle the situation.	0.67	0.75
Overcoming prejudices (OP)	OP1. The university (college) has enabled my students to transcend their prejudices against age. (having preferences for young over old).	0.50	0.58
	OP2. The university (college) has enabled my students to transcend their prejudices against skin tone (having preferences for light skin over dark skin).	0.93	0.92
	OP3. The university (college) has enabled my students to transcend their prejudices against gender-career (linking family with females and career with males).	0.71	0.79
Skillfulness (SK)	SK1. The university (college) has helped my students to acquire adequate knowledge and skills for future jobs.	0.68	0.73
	SK2. The university (college) has helped my students to increase their knowledge, skills and abilities.	0.87	0.96

Note. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted using Study two, and confirmatory factor analysis was conducted using Study three.

factor loadings for their respective latent constructs (Awang, 2015). Tables 3 and 4 presents the standardised factor loadings, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE). All the item loadings were above 0.50, which indicates that the items used are good measures of each construct (Carmines & Zeller, 1979). The AVE values were between 0.51 and 0.73, higher than the recommended cut-off of 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Similarly, the CR values ranged between 0.76 and 0.96, higher than the recommended threshold of 0.70. These results indicated that the model possessed good convergent validity.

We assessed the discriminant validity, which implies 'the extent to which a construct is truly distinct from other constructs by empirical standards' (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2013, p. 121). This criterion compares the square root of the AVE values with the latent variable correlations. Specifically, 'the square root of each construct's AVE should be greater than its highest correlation with any other construct' (Hair et al., 2013, p. 122). Table 4 presents the inter-construct correlations as off-diagonal elements with the square roots of AVE in the diagonal position. Since the square root of each construct's AVE was greater than the correlation coefficient with the other constructs, as shown in the diagonal (and italics) in Table 4, the model met the criteria needed to assess discriminant validity. In addition to this, we also conducted heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) analysis suggested by Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2015) to confirm the presence of sufficient discriminant validity. Table 5 indicates that all the values are much lower than the recommended threshold value of 0.85.

4. Discussion

The current study primarily calls for attention towards realistic understanding and improvement of quality in the burgeoning access-provider HE sector. In a self-fulfilling ranking system, demand-absorbing, non-elite HEIs continue to rank at the bottom. This study addresses quality measures, particularly in a dichotomous HE system, and presents an approach that can transcend the access-quality divide. For this purpose, it takes into account the perspectives of the front-line faculty, which have often been under-researched or ignored. More specifically, most of the extant literature fails to distinguish between the

Table 4
Validity and reliability analysis.

Latent variables	Mean (SD)	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV	OP	CC	OA	PS	SK
Overcoming prejudices (OP)	3.03 (0.99)	0.81	0.60	0.08	0.04	**0.77**				
Critical confidence (CC)	2.30 (0.87)	0.96	0.64	0.06	0.03	−0.24	**0.80**			
Overall awareness (OA)	4.24 (0.73)	0.76	0.51	0.02	0.01	0.04	0.01	**0.72**		
Approach-avoidance problem-solving skills (PS)	3.80 (0.95)	0.82	0.53	0.02	0.01	0.14	−0.12	0.05	**0.73**	
Skillfulness (SK)	3.86 (0.96)	0.84	0.73	0.08	0.04	0.28	−0.23	0.14	0.14	**0.86**

Note: SD = Standard deviation, CR = composite reliability, AVE = Average variance extracted, MSV = Maximum shared variance, ASV = Average shared variance.

Table 5
Results of the HTMT analysis.

	CC	OA	PS	OP	SK
Critical confidence (CC)					
Overall awareness (OA)	0.02				
Approach-avoidance problem-solving skills (PS)	0.13	0.05			
Overcoming prejudices (OP)	0.24	0.02	0.14		
Skillfulness (SK)	0.21	0.17	0.22	0.24	

views of front-line faculty, on the one hand, and administrators and faculty members whose work includes significant management responsibilities, on the other. The existing studies simply refer to participants as 'faculty,' 'academics', or 'lecturers', thus leaving the scholar bereft of information regarding the participants' important characteristics and responsibilities. This lack of specific information on the characteristics of faculty member participants, such as rank, discipline and degree of involvement in quality management activities, impedes the transferability of the existing empirical studies (Hall, 2015).

In the present study, **RQ1** inquired whether we could develop a separate measure of quality for demand-absorbing, private (non-elite) business schools in a dichotomous HE system afflicted by a self-fulfilling ranking system. To address this question, the study proposes a transformative quality (TRFQ) measure based on the seminal concepts of Harvey and Green (1993). The core idea of transformative quality is to *transform* students by enhancing their knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes while also empowering them to become reflective thinkers (Harvey, 2000). Due to its seemingly broad nature, which comprises concepts of cognitive transcendence, student empowerment, the emancipation of education, developmental transitions, mindfulness and change at individual and social levels, transformative quality has long been considered elusive (Cheng, 2014). Moreover, much like quality itself, transformative quality has also been subject to diverse interpretations. Thus far, only Teeroovengadum et al. (2016) have empirically studied transformative quality. The authors offered eight complex, higher-order, and non-cognitive constructs. However, they presented these exceedingly complex psychological and theoretical constructs—'emotional stability', 'self-confidence', 'critical thinking', 'self-awareness' and 'transcending prejudices'—in brief one-line sentences, thus negating the multidimensional nature of quality itself. This study attempts to address this gap by developing a more sophisticated and nuanced measure of the various dimensions that comprise transformative quality in HE.

RQ2 asked which stakeholder perspective should be taken into account in developing a measure of transformative quality. To address this question, the study recognises the significant gap between institutional management perspectives and faculty perspectives on quality, which has the potential to adversely impact student transformation (Barandiaran-Galdós et al., 2012; Stensaker et al., 2011). With limited studies on front-line perspectives and an even greater dearth of empirical work, the present study addresses this lacuna by developing an instrument for measuring HEIs' transformative quality, or the ability of HEIs to enhance and empower students. It then validates the proposed measure using front-line faculty perspectives. Since the dimensions of TRFQ are teachable traits, the role of front-line faculty in the quality management activities of business schools becomes even more crucial.

The process of developing the aforementioned instrument, which collects data about several cognitive and higher-order constructs, involved three studies. First, we engaged in an extensive literature review and focus group interviews to design a well-structured questionnaire, assessing TRFQ from the front-line faculty's perspective. Study 1 thus facilitated the scale's construction by generating items, defining their specific dimensions, and enabling pilot testing. Study two refined the scale by conducting an EFA in order to examine the scale's underlying factor structure. The important dimensions of TRFQ in the context of private business schools that emerged from EFA and literature review are *critical confidence*, *approach-avoidance problem-solving skills*, *overall awareness*, *overcoming prejudices* and *skills*. These specific dimensions constituted approximately 61.96% of the variability in HEIs' overall transformative quality. In other words, the aforementioned factors significantly explain transformative quality. Study three enabled us to validate the proposed scale by conducting a CFA, examining goodness-of-fit indices and assessing discriminant and convergent validity and instrument reliability. The CFA results confirmed the five factor structure of transformative quality which includes *critical confidence*, *approach-avoidance problem-solving skills*, *overall awareness*, *overcoming prejudices* and *skillfulness*. The *emotional stability* measure was dropped after the EFA which indicates deeper issues at the level of teachers' training, as discussed in the forthcoming section.

5. Conclusions

The present study defines and develops a measure of quality in the context of access-providing higher education institutions (HEIs) in a developing country. It proposes a 27-item scale of transformative quality (TRFQ), as shown in Table 3, and validates it using three studies of front-line faculty representing 25 business schools from 10 major cities across India. The results of the study indicate that TRFQ comprises dimensions of *critical confidence, problem-solving skills for approach-avoidance, overall awareness, overcoming prejudices and skillfulness*. The role of TRFQ in

future research has implications and recommendations for institutional management in HEIs and for policymakers. This section discusses the practical and theoretical implications of the study.

5.1. Theoretical implications

First, although well-endorsed, the literature on transformative quality includes few empirical contributions. Scholars have recognised transformative quality as an appropriate measure in a dichotomous HE system; however, they have yet to operationalise the concept (Gill & Singh, 2019). This study constitutes the first in-depth attempt to re-conceptualise and operationalise transformative quality to present a more nuanced and sophisticated measure. The proposed scale integrates the previous literature on quality and is informed by insights from stakeholders in HE. Given the lack of empirical work on transformative quality, this study, in the context of business schools, makes specific contributions to the business education and quality literature through empirically supported theory.

Second, from a methodological viewpoint, the development of a parsimonious, context-specific (dichotomous HE system, non-elite, demand-absorbing HEIs) TRFQ scale benefits quality in education research. It offers a reliable and valid measure that can transcend issues of a dichotomous HE system and address the futility of the current self-fulfilling ranking system. Three empirical studies, focus group interviews and content validity assessments from the expert panel confirm the reliability, validity and psychometric properties of the proposed scale and open doors for its rigorous application in future research.

Third, this study addresses the dearth of literature on front-line faculty members perspectives by clearly delineating the views of front-line faculty, as opposed to 'faculty,' 'academics' or 'lecturers'. The specific information our scale gathers regarding participants' rank, discipline and degree of involvement in quality management activities allows for the transferability of these empirical studies (Hall, 2015). Furthermore, it extends studies of stakeholder perspectives on quality by providing a comprehensive investigation of the concept.

Fourth, our results removing emotionality from TRFQ have vital theoretical implications. Since teacher training itself fails to incorporate social and emotional learning (SEL), SEL, likewise does not translate into classroom teaching. Prior research has endorsed SEL because these skills are teachable, and they can benefit students from all backgrounds (Cohen, 2006). This study paves a path for research related to classroom pedagogy, wherein SEL can play a major role. Our findings further support prior empirical research regarding the crucial role of SEL in student transformation.

Finally, this study contributes towards consolidating the global dialogue, which calls for bridging the divides between access and inclusiveness, and quality and excellence. Stakeholders across the world are increasingly recognising the responsibility of universities to engage with societal needs and promote social, cultural and economic development. Many organisations, such as The Program for Research on Higher Education (PROPHE), EAIR, the Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE), the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) Forum and the Association for Institutional Research (AIR), echo these sentiments. These organisations have brought inclusion-excellence and access-quality issues in HE to the forefront of dialogue and collaborative research. This very undertaking is testimony to the increasing amount of dedication and attention being paid to access-quality and inclusion-excellence issues in HE.

5.2. Practical implications

The study offers four key practical implications. First, this research is relevant for any global HE system grappling with post-massification consequences of the access-quality and inclusiveness-excellence divides. In terms of economic implications, private HEIs comprise 69.2% of the global top 10 shares, with China, India and the USA in the top three positions (Levy, 2015). Therefore, the robustness of this sector is exceedingly important because its collapse would entail significant and irreversible fiscal implications. Given the volatility of this sector, this study addresses the elephant in the room (the inadequacy of the current ranking system) and underscores the need for a separate quality measure in a post-massification, dichotomous HE system. Policymakers, institutional managers and educators can use this framework comprised of specific dimensions—emotional stability, critical thinking, confidence, problem-solving abilities, self-awareness, overcoming prejudices and acquisition and enhancement of skills, knowledge and abilities—to empower and transform students and thus promote transformative quality in HE.

Second, our study has suggested that *emotionality* is not a significant component of TRFQ despite the fact that others scholars have supported in prior literature (Hay & Ashman, 2003; Sanchez-Ruiz, Mavroveli, & Poullis, 2013). These findings have important practical implications as well. One reason, from the faculty's perspective, for removing emotionality could be the glaring exclusion of aspects of SEL in the continuous professional development of teachers (Herald, 2019). Thus, the results suggest the need for policymakers to prioritise SEL training for teachers. This has implications in terms of classroom pedagogy as well. Indeed, by embedding effective intervention strategies in their teaching, faculty can play a vital role in enhancing students' emotional stability (Kennedy, 2020).

Third, this study assumes even greater relevance because the post-pandemic environment requires redefining the role of the educator (Luthra & Mackenzie, 2020), which is precisely what this paper proposes. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for faculty to recalibrate their teaching methods (Donthu, 2020). When students can learn skills from digital courses, the role of the educator, more specifically the front-line faculty, must involve facilitating students' TRFQ dimensions. The overall implications of this pandemic will be extensive for HE but more so for business schools, especially if students must explore other educational avenues post-business school (Krishnamurthy, 2020). In addition to the aforementioned issues that non-elite business schools face as demand-absorbers, they may also grapple with issues of mental health among their employees and students (Education, 2020). In this scenario, the TRFQ template—with its specific dimensions, especially *emotional stability*—becomes crucial. Furthermore, since these institutions are resource-constrained, the COVID-19 pandemic serves as an opportunity to reduce operational overhead, such as resources devoted towards hostels, building infrastructural facilities, parking areas and cafeterias, and instead allocate resources towards TRFQ (Krishnamurthy, 2020).

Fourth, this study's findings can benefit not only existing business schools but also those intending to enter the private HE sector. Simply put, access-providing institutions cannot be pushed into poverty at the cost of providing inclusiveness and access. Increasing resources in a generic manner might not be the answer (Snelson-Powell et al., 2020). Therefore, we suggest the following: (a) To liberate themselves from the self-fulfilling ranking system, private business schools must work to enhance and empower their key stakeholders, i.e., the students (Nguyen, Yu, Melewar, & Hemsley-Brown, 2016) and (b) Since front-line faculty members have direct access to and closely interact with students, their perspectives on quality must become vital. Therefore, policymakers must consider the previously ignored stakeholders of the HE sector—-front-line faculty and students—and collaborate with them to promote TRFQ. Since the dimensions of TRFQ consist of teachable traits, the front-line faculty play a crucial role in developing them among students. Such an approach can help transcend the access-quality and inclusiveness-excellence divides currently afflicting the private HE sector.

5.3. Limitations and future research direction

The present research offers interesting insights and attempts to

address aspects of quality in HE while drawing support from sound literature and methodological foundations. However, a measurable scope remains for further research. The following limitations of this study may present an opportunity for future researchers. First, although the TRFQ measure addresses dimensions that are central to the *transformation* of students, the possibility remains to investigate other mediating and moderating factors, such as institutional leadership, regulatory frameworks, teachers' sense of self-efficacy, reputation, recruitment performance and organisational culture (Plewa, Ho, Conduit, & Karpen, 2016; Rutter, Roper, & Lettice, 2016). Thus, future research on these factors may offer unique and valuable insights. Second, a comparison of private business schools and public business schools would offer a more nuanced picture of transformative quality and enable better visualisation of the access-quality and inclusiveness-excellence gap. In the future, we recommend scholars incorporate comparative research as a fruitful approach for attaining predictive results (Lažetić, 2020). Third, future research can validate this study from the perspectives of other stakeholders in HE, including policymakers, top management, students and parents. Such an endeavour can contribute towards integrating diverse stakeholder perspectives. Furthermore, future research can build upon our findings by conducting studies related to TRFQ at the K12, training and vocational education levels as well.

The scope and value of transformative quality in business education are tremendous. It aims to enhance and empower its participants by producing well-rounded, self-aware, unprejudiced and skilled students who are critical and confident thinkers and problem-solvers. To accomplish these aims, front-line faculty engagement is paramount. The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the central role of the faculty and the need for them to continuously recalibrate their courses and teaching methods (Donthu, 2020; Krishnamurthy, 2020). Hence, the effort to define transformative quality may not be a futile or a utopian endeavor. Instead, it could well be an opportunity for the vulnerable private business education sector to reinvent itself and address the issues long afflicting it.

Declaration of Competing Interest

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

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