

Quality Assurance Approaches and Practices: A Gateway Towards Globalization

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Abstract –Higher Education (HE) has an important role both for the student, as an individual, and for the society in which he lives. HE represents and aids for the growth and the development of the students and of the society and a key for a better life. As drivers or economic engines of this knowledge-led economy it is imperative that Quality Assurance (QA) practices and approaches in higher education must be rigorously implemented and evaluated. QA has contributed significant development to both the government and the industry and advocated that a well-educated workforce is essential in increasing productivity and maintaining competitive edge in the global knowledge economy. This study was undertaken to determine the implementation of QA approaches and practices of public and private HEIs in Negros Occidental, Philippines. Descriptive method utilizing purposive sampling and the UNESCO standardized QA questionnaire was used in the gathering of data to ninety (90) respondents. Findings revealed that the extent of implementation of the HEIs to QA approaches and practices is good as a whole, as to public or private and as to QA criteria. Study also showed no significant difference on the extent of implementation of HEIs grouped as to public and private. Likewise, an absence of mean difference on the extent of implementation of HEIs to QA criteria revealed. Further, no significant relationship exists between management, organizational culture and leadership to; vision, mission and planning; to the learners; to human resource development; to program design and development; to course design and development; to learner support and progression; and to learner assessment and evaluation. From these findings, it can be inferred that educational leaders and managers provide equal if not equitable importance and support to the aforementioned variables or QA areas. Primarily, it is supportive to the mandates of HEIs on educating and capacitating the labor force in order to have quality life. While highly significant between management, organizational culture and leadership to learning infrastructure and resources and significant between management, organizational culture and leadership to research, consultancy and extension services. The results viewed a context that while educational leaders put emphasis on capacitating the learners and human resource it should not forget that it can only be attained if appropriate learning environment is provided and that academic learnings are translated and applied into research and extension activities. Hence, tri-focalization of instruction, research and extension in the curriculum must be achieved to ensure quality outcomes. Based on the study, the following conclusions were drawn; while HEIs in Negros Occidental implement varied QA systems and approaches it is not at a level of excellence that can be modeled by other HEIs in the regional or national; the implementation of QA programs, projects and activities (PAPs) in HEIs is merely in the level of embracing the culture of quality as mandated by the regulatory bodies not as the means towards quality, excellent and comparable education; and the relationships that exist between management, organizational culture and leadership; and learning infrastructure and resources; and research, consultancy and extension services is an indication that while HEIs implement a stringent promotion and selection criteria in hiring and promoting teaching and non-teaching personnel, less it should forget that the HEIs teaching and learning environment and other physical resources should be commensurate to the qualifications, skills and abilities the personnel have.

Keywords –Internal and external quality assurance, quality assurance approaches and practices, quality assurance criteria, quality, quality assurance structures and mechanisms.

INTRODUCTION

Quality Assurance (QA) practices and approaches in education have become increasingly common and are continuously gaining importance to all public and private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). That while HEIs are committed or mandated to provide equitable access to education less it forget that access to education must be equated with the quality of education the HEIs provide. Hence, this brought a call for greater accountability on the part of educational providers in measuring outputs and outcomes through quality assurance practices. Executive Order No. 705-A [1], amending Section 1 of Executive Order No. 705, dated January 2, 2008 provides direction on institutionalization of quality assurance in higher education institutions. Indeed, the State itself mandates the establishment of Internal and External Quality Assurance among higher education institutions in furtherance of quality academic and non-academic services. Quality assurance aims at ensuring consistency in the qualitative and quantitative outcome of learning in the university. It is a continuous process of built-in mechanism for monitoring the quality of higher education for the sustainability of high standards in the academic environment and programs. The mechanisms for its application are both proactive and reactive. In scope, quality assurance incorporates internal and external monitors and evaluators for continuous relevance of university programs to students. (Okpanachi & Okpara, 2014) [2]. In the Philippines, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Strategic Plan for 2011-2016 [3] highlights a program for quality and standards whose projects include setting and enforcement of Policies, Standards and Guidelines (PSGs), Institutional Quality Assurance Monitoring and Evaluation (IQuAME), and accreditation. Likewise, CMO No. 46, series of 2012 [4] was issued and implemented to private and public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the country to enhance the quality assurance system of Philippine higher education through learning competency-based standards and an outcomes-based system of quality assurance that differentiated by type of HEI. It should be noted, however, that any internal QA system begins with the HEI's identity and commitment to enter a quality cycle of planning, implementing, reviewing, and enhancing programs, projects, and activities. The plan-do-check-act cycle or the Deming Cycle is applied to the HEI's capacity to; 1) translate vision, mission, and goals (VMG) into desired learning outcomes, 2) establish the proper learning environment

(implementation of teaching-learning systems as well as support processes and procedures), 3) review against performance indicators and standards defined in the assessment system, and 4) enhance programs and systems. Presently, both public and private HEIs in the Philippines is continuously pursuing its quest for quality education as manifested by its program, projects and activities for International/National Certification and Accreditation among others in the programs and/or institutional level. Perhaps, the Philippine Educational System sees these activities as gateways towards Globalization. Globalization contextualize higher education as cited by Gnamam [5] as the flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values, ideas, skills, and talents across borders. Globalization affects each country in a different way due to a nation's individual history, traditions, culture and priorities. To cope with Globalization, the higher education system has to re-orient or re-direct its structure and function besides enlarging its scope of provisions to meet the challenges of globalization. Hence, this study was undertaken to determine the extent of implementation of quality assurance approaches and practices of public and private HEIs in Negros Occidental. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework of the study.

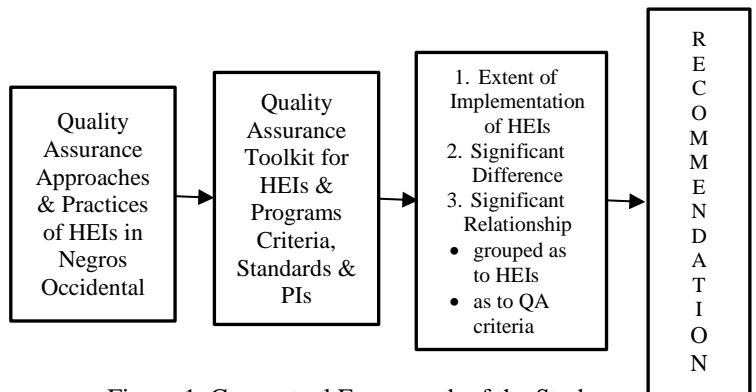


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to determine the quality assurance approaches and practices of public and private HEIs of Negros Occidental. Specifically, the following were pursued by the study; what is the extent of implementation of HEIs to quality assurance approaches and practices when taken as a whole and when grouped according to private and public HEIs and when categorized as to Criteria; is there a significant difference on the extent of implementation when grouped according to private and public HEIs and when

categorized as to Criteria; is there a significant relationship on the extent of implementation between management, organizational culture and leadership to, vision, mission and planning; the learners; human resource development; program design and development; course design and development; learner support and progression; learner assessment and evaluation; learning infrastructure and resources, and research, consultancy and extension services; and based on the findings of the study, what intervention is recommended.

METHODS

Descriptive method was used since the study primarily aims to determine the quality assurance approaches and practices of public and private HEIs of Negros Occidental using the UNESCO Commonwealth of Learning standardized quality assurance questionnaire. Desk research was also used to hunt out information published by entities that are relevant to the study. The data available in published form were accessed from the Internet, Public Library, Foreign and Local Journals, Researches and other compiled sources. Similarly, field research was used in the study because it involves fieldwork in collecting primary data among HEIs in Negros Occidental.

Evaluation and Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study are the Vice Presidents, Directors, Deans/Chairpersons, Institutional and Program/Academic Coordinators, Quality Assurance Committee, Curriculum and Instructional Materials Development Committee, Research and Extension Coordinators and Unit Heads/Support to Operations (or its equivalent) of the Four (4) State Universities and Colleges, Three (3) Local Universities and Colleges and Eleven (11) Private Higher Education Institutions in Negros Occidental. These 138 respondents were selected since they have the good grasp of the operations of the college in relation to quality assurance approaches and practices or mechanisms in the performance of their functions, duties and responsibilities to the school.

The researcher used purposive sampling as sampling technique of the study. To achieve the objectives set forth in this study, the researcher adopted the UNESCO Commonwealth of Learning standardized quality assurance questionnaire. The questionnaire has ten (10) criteria such as; criterion1-Vision, Mission and Planning, criterion2-Management, Organizational Culture and Leadership, criterion3-The

Learners, criterion4-Human Resource Development, criterion5-Program Design and Development, criterion6-Course Design and Development, criterion7-Learner Support and Progression, criterion8-Learner Assessment and Evaluation, criterion9-Learning Infrastructure and Resources, and criterion10-Research, Consultancy and Extension Services. Performance indicators and evidences in all criteria are also provided. Each item is rated in a scale of 0, 1, 2, 3, and 4 where 0-means fails to meet criterion, 1- unsatisfactory, 2- marginal, 3- good, and 4- excellent. An endorsement letter was asked from the office of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Negros Island Region to allow the researcher to conduct the study. With the approval from the CHED NIR the researcher himself together with his research staff administered the questionnaire to the public and private higher education institutions (HEIs) in Negros Occidental covering the schools from the Northern tip of San Carlos City to the Southern tip of Kabankalan City. The questionnaire was personally distributed and administered by the researcher and a research staff to the respondents. The respondents were given adequate time to answer the questionnaire. Instructions were stated in the questionnaire for the respondents to completely answer each item. Since the respondents are all professionals, it is deemed that all items were answered. After a month or two, the researcher personally retrieved the accomplished questionnaires and have it ready for tabulation and analysis. An interview with the administrators of the four-fold functions of the college and observation of the schools' QA system were also done to assess the schools' operations and implementation. The actual observation also validated the responses of the respondents on the items stipulated in the questionnaire. After the data were collected, the researcher processed it into an order and form that allows statistical tabulation and facilitates analysis and interpretation. The hypotheses postulated for the problems formulated in the study were tested in the following manner.

Data Processing and Statistical Treatment

To determine the extent of compliance of HEIs to quality assurance approaches and practices, the mean was used. On the other hand, to determine the significant difference on the extent of compliance when grouped according to type of HEIs and when categorized as to criteria, the test of significant difference using independent sample means was used.

Likewise, the Pearson-R Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the significant relationship on the extent of implementation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of quality assurance approaches and practices in higher education institutions is always geared towards provision of quality education ensuring attainment of graduate attributes as reflected in the HEIs VMGO. Quality as defined as fitness of purpose and consistency, however, is measured as to whether HEIs are continuously improving and developing to ensure graduates employment, in particular, and economic growth and development of the nation, in general. Likewise, the extent as to whether the QA approaches and practices is effective or not is highly dependent on the extent of implementing these approaches and practices rooting from the management to various colleges, departments, offices and units. Indeed, this will proved if implementation of QA mechanisms is cascaded to the beneficiaries as demonstrated by the outcomes. Table 3 shows the mean and verbal interpretation on the extent of implementation of HEIs to quality assurance approaches and practices when taken as a whole and when grouped according to public and private HEIs and when grouped according to the ten Quality Assurance Approaches and Practices criteria.

The study showed that the extent of implementation of HEIs to quality assurance approaches and practices is good at a mean of 3.21. On the other hand, when HEIs are grouped as to private and public, the extent of implementation is 3.18 and 3.23, respectively both interpreted as good. Further, when the extent of implementation is grouped as to QA approaches and practices criteria the results showed a mean that ranges from 3.09-3.36 for criterion 1 to criterion 10 all

interpreted as good. This showed that HEIs are true to its mission of providing quality tertiary education and have institutionalize QA in its operation or provision of services. However, this explains also, that while HEIs are implementing QA approaches and practices at a good level this still cannot be modeled by other local HEIs nor comparable to other HEIs abroad. Hence, Quality Assurance must become an essential part of institutional management and planning making it as a way of life and Quality as a culture. Lemaitre (2009) [6], Tertiary education is changing thus quality assurance approaches and processes must change with it, or become irrelevant. A process takes time and must be done within or by the HEIs themselves, learning to trust them and help them improve. Likewise, Pavlenko, Bojan and Trif (2008) [7] cited that, a quality assurance system in the case of HEIs is said to increase student confidence and the HEIs credibility as provider of quality services to improve processes and efficiency and to enable HEIs to better compete with others.

The implementation of QA structures and mechanisms is in accordance with the government’s commitment to improve the landscape of the Philippine Education System through provision of quality education services in higher education institutions, more so, in the public HEI’s. The issuance of Executive Order No. 605 in 2007 [8], amending the Administrative Order No. 161, s. 2006, institutionalized the Government Quality Management Program that calls public HEIs the implementation of quality assurance structures, mechanisms and standards. Complementing this Executive Order is the issuance of CHED Memorandum Order No. 46, series of 2012 articulating the “Policy and Standards to enhance Quality Assurance in the Philippine Higher Education through an Outcome-Based and Typology-Based QA”.

Table 1. Mean on the Extent of Implementation of HEIs to Quality Assurance Approaches and Practices when taken as a whole and grouped according to Private and Public HEIs and when grouped according to QA Criteria

Type of HEIs	Quality Assurance Approaches and Practices										M	VI
	VMP	Lead	Lear	HRD	PDD	CDD	LSP	LAE	LIR	RCES		
Pri	3.13	3.34	3.23	3.31	3.27	3.25	3.04	3.21	3.04	3.02	3.18	Good
Pub	3.26	3.37	3.24	3.27	3.20	3.18	3.14	3.28	3.24	3.15	3.23	Good
Mean	3.19	3.36	3.23	3.29	3.24	3.21	3.09	3.24	3.14	3.09	3.21	Good
VI	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good

The ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework for Higher Education (AQAFHE) also reiterated the institutionalization of both Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) and External Quality Assurance (EQA) Systems in higher education institutions consistent with the framework to ensure alignment and harmonization of all member regions. Henceforth, the implementation of quality assurance structures, processes, and mechanisms in all Higher Education Institutions, public and private is mandatory. Table 4 shows the mean and significant difference on the implementation of HEIs to quality assurance approaches and practices grouped according to HEI types.

Table 2. Significant Difference on the Implementation of HEIs to Quality Assurance Approaches and Practices when grouped according to Private and Public HEIs

Score	Mean Dif.	Std. Error Dif.	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval of Difference	
				Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.05500	.04274	.024	-.03478	.14478
Equal variances not assumed	.05500	.04274		-.03662	.14662

school	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
private	10	3.1830	.11814	.03736

Results showed no significant difference on the extent of implementation of HEIs to quality assurance approaches and practices when grouped according to public and private. This proves that both public and private higher education institutions embrace QA in the delivery of education services. Table 5 illustrates the significant difference on the extent of implementation of HEIs to QA approaches and practices according to criteria.

Study showed an absence of mean difference in the implementation of higher education institutions to quality assurance approaches and practices when categorized as to the ten criteria. This explains that HEIs provide balance in the implementation of QA mechanisms across all structures and processes to ensure attainment of outcomes. Campbell and Rozsnyai (2002) as cited by Ruiz and Sabio [9] states that quality assurance is an all-embracing activity covering all the policies, processes and actions through

which the quality of higher education is maintained and developed.

Table 3. Mean Significant Difference on the Extent of Implementation of HEIs to Quality Assurance Approaches and Practices when grouped according to Criteria

QA Criteria	Mean Dif.	Std. Error Dif.	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval of Difference	
				Lower	Upper
VMP	-.13278	.04169	.428	-.21544	-.05011
Leadership	-.03342	.02367	.584	-.08018	.01334
Learners	-.01316	.09076	.608	-.19723	.17091
HRD	.04455	.04700	.706	-.05030	.13939
PDD	.06576	.02730	.667	.01122	.12029
CDD	.07000	.04557	.619	-.02089	.16089
LSP	-.09612	.05341	.499	-.20213	.00989
LAE	-.07816	.03481	.594	-.14752	-.00880
LIR	-.20629	.03657	.532	-.27926	-.13331
RCES	-.12850	.06477	.605	-.25962	.00262

Perhaps, in higher education, quality assurance is the HEIs explicit commitment and practices to developing a culture of continuous quality improvement and enhancement of educational services. Results can also be attributed that higher education institutions are voluntarily subjecting themselves for accreditation and certification both national and international to show a higher level of confidence to its clients and the industry. More so to public HEIs where accreditation and certification counts for budget or funding, giving of incentives and benefits, grants of university status, Center of Development and Center of Excellence, among others.

Quality Assurance implementation is a shared responsibility of the HEIs' stakeholders. More importantly, the internal stakeholders specifically the staff and management are held accountable to the outcomes of higher education. Hence, the management and leadership should provide clear direction, supervision and resources and communicate clearly to all stakeholders involved any quality assurance activities and undertakings. Challenging and changing the mindsets of all stakeholders is essential, as it will change the paradigm and the culture of stakeholders towards the culture of quality. QA will only work when everyone is fully aware of and understands what is involved, and that it takes effort and commitment to make "quality" happen. In addition "quality" will only happen when all stakeholders from students and frontline staff to HEIs leadership and governance and management, has inputs.

Table 4. Correlation between Criterion 1: Management, Organizational Culture and Leadership to Criterion 2: Vision, Mission and Planning

		management, organizational culture and leadership	vision, mission and planning
management, organizational culture and leadership	Pearson Correlation	1	.174
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.208
	N	79	54
vision, mission and planning	Pearson Correlation	.174	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.208	
	N	54	54

Results showed no significant relationship between management, organizational culture and leadership to vision, mission and planning. The absence of relationship can be explained that the institutionalization of the QA mechanisms on management, governance and leadership do not guarantee attainment of the vision and mission of the HEIs and its planned targets. This is merely because there is no concrete and clear link that the management and governance is directed or aligned to the VMGO of the HEIs as well as its planned targets. A group of school officials supports this during interviews and focus group discussions that HEIs have difficulty of ascertaining and translating its vision and mission in concrete terms and evidence that will radiate as graduate attributes. Likewise, “the absence of the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle in the plan is also a manifestation of weakness of the QA mechanisms”. Further, focus group discussions revealed that “other HEIs’ management and governance mechanisms are not in consonance with the vision, mission and planning QA mechanisms” that often results to weak quality control.

Table 5. Correlation between Criterion 1: Management, Organizational Culture and Leadership to Criterion 3: the Learners

		management, organizational culture and leadership	learners
management, organizational culture and leadership	Pearson Correlation	1	.146
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.383
	N	158	38
learners	Pearson Correlation	.146	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.383	
	N	38	38

Table 5 showed no significant relationship between management, organizational culture and leadership to the learners. This can be explained that while effective leadership and management is essential in the operation of HEIs it may or may not contribute significantly in attaining outcomes with respect to graduate attributes. Primarily because, the one major factor that ensures attainment of graduate or employment outcomes is the kind of learners or graduates the HEI has and the comprehensive and strict implementation of quality admission and retention processes. Interview with respondents revealed, that while there are varied intervention strategies such as competency appraisal, remedial classes and in-house reviews; these do not guarantee positive results at a maximum level in attaining program and institutional outcomes.

Table 6. Correlation between Criterion 1: Management, Organizational Culture and Leadership to Criterion 4: HRD

		management, organizational culture and leadership	human resource development
management, organizational culture and leadership	Pearson Correlation	1	.142
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.357
	N	158	44
human resource development	Pearson Correlation	.142	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.357	
	N	44	44

Table 6 showed no significant relationship between management, organizational culture and leadership to human resource development. This shows clear manifestation that while leadership and management plays a pivotal role in the growth and development of the work force this does not necessarily contribute success of QA. Essentially, more than the system, mechanism or process the kind of people the HEIs is hiring or placing in a task is more important. It should be in the context of putting the right people at the right job, as supported by the school officials during interviews.

Study showed no significant relationship between management, organizational culture and leadership to program design and development. Result showed, indeed, since HEIs are implementing a program or curriculum based on its respective Policies, Standards and Guidelines (PSGs) set forth by the Commission on Higher Education.

Table 7. Correlation between Criterion 1: Management, Organizational Culture and Leadership to Criterion 5: Program Design and Development

		management, organizational culture and leadership	program design and development
management, organizational culture and leadership	Pearson Correlation	1	.124
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.320
	N	158	66
program design and development	Pearson Correlation	.124	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.320	
	N	66	66

That while HEIs are given the autonomy to design and develop its program it should be, however, in consonance with the PSG. Hence, HEIs leadership and management is bound to follow and comply minimum requirements set by CHED to ensure program recognition and grant of COPC.

Table 8. Correlation between Criterion 1: Management, Organizational Culture and Leadership to Criterion 6: Course Design and Development

		management, organizational culture and leadership	course design and development
management, organizational culture and leadership	Pearson Correlation	1	.228
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.054
	N	158	72
course design and development	Pearson Correlation	.228	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.054	
	N	72	72

Table 8 showed no significant relationship between management, organizational culture and leadership to course design and development. The result revealed that in the parlance of quality assurance the design and development of courses should be directly in consonance with the mandates, vision-mission and direction of the HEIs. That measure of course outcomes is directly aligned to attainment of organizational outcomes as transpired in the direction and leadership set by the management.

Study revealed no significant relationship between management, organizational culture and leadership to learner support and progression. The result is an indication that the respondent HEIs are providing the appropriate instructional support such as remedial and other academic intervention activities to promote quality growth and development of learners.

Table 9. Correlation between Criterion 1: Management, Organizational Culture and Leadership to Criterion 7: Learner Support and Progression

		management, organizational culture and leadership	learner support and progression
management, organizational culture and leadership	Pearson Correlation	1	-.025
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.806
	N	158	98
learner support and progression	Pearson Correlation	-.025	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.806	
	N	98	98

Interviews with some of the respondents revealed that spiritual, psychological and other curricular and non-curricular activities are essential in promoting total growth and development of learners in academic.

Table 10. Correlation between Criterion 1: Management, Organizational Culture and Leadership to Criterion 8: Learner Assessment and Evaluation

		management, organizational culture and leadership	learner assessment and evaluation
management, organizational culture and leadership	Pearson Correlation	1	.182
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.115
	N	158	76
learner assessment and evaluation	Pearson Correlation	.182	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.115	
	N	76	76

Table 10 showed no significant relationship between management, organizational culture and leadership to learner assessment and evaluation. Result revealed that assessment and evaluation measures institutionalized by the HEIs has no direct relationship. However, HEI academic administrators believe that the degree and strict implementation of quality assessment and evaluation contributes to attainment of quality outcomes that learners should have in particular and the organizational outcomes the college attain, in general.

Results showed a highly significant relationship between management, organizational culture and leadership to learning infrastructure and resources. The result revealed a very strong indication that primarily the quality assurance mechanisms HEIs must have is the presence of a very functional and effective learning

infrastructure facilities and resource system appropriate to the different needs of students and teachers and to which the management must prioritize.

Table 11. Correlation between Criterion 1: Management, Organizational Culture and Leadership to Criterion 9: Learning Infrastructure and Resources

		management, organizational culture and leadership	learning infrastructure and resources
management, organizational culture and leadership	Pearson Correlation	1	.319**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.007
	N	158	70
learning infrastructure and resources	Pearson Correlation	.319**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	
	N	70	70

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Study of Carron and Chau (1996) as cited by Colby, J. and Witt M. [10] in schools of India revealed that the quality of the learning environment was strongly correlated with the pupils' achievement in Hindi and mathematics. Indeed, the focus group discussions revealed that their respective HEIs have prioritized fund allocation for procurement of ICT-enabled learning facilities and systems to address the needs of the 21st century learners and teachers.

Table 12. Correlation between Criterion 1: Management, Organizational Culture and Leadership to Criterion 10: Research, Consultancy and Extension

		management, organizational culture and leadership	research, consultancy and extension services
management, organizational culture and leadership	Pearson Correlation	1	.358*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.023
	N	158	40
research, consultancy and extension services	Pearson Correlation	.358*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.023	
	N	40	40

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 12 showed a significant relationship between management, organizational culture and leadership to research, consultancy and extension services. The relationship clearly radiates the mandates and the VMG of respondents HEIs; that while HEIs grow and

develop, as an academic institution of higher learning less it should forget that such growth and development must also be visible and felt by its immediate community. Indeed, in its truest sense the attainment of organizational outcomes and success of the HEIs is reflective of the growth and development of the community where it served, in particular and to the province, region or country, in general. Interviews and focus group discussions of respondents revealed that some HEIs are weak if not poor in research and extension related activities. Further, the convergence of research and extension is not extensively evident. That while several researches were completed these researches were neither commercialized nor transferred to the community to serve its purpose. Finally, the fund allocated for research and extension programs and activities were minimal at the average.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the aforementioned findings derived from the study, the following conclusions were drawn: While public and private HEIs in Negros Occidental implement varied quality assurance systems, approaches, structures, mechanisms, procedures/practices, programs, projects and activities it is not at a level of excellence that can be modeled by other higher education institutions in the local, regional or national. The implementation of quality assurance programs, projects and activities in public and private HEIs in Negros Occidental or among higher education institutions, when appropriate, is merely in the level of embracing the culture of quality as mandated by the regulatory or applicable statutory bodies not as the means towards quality, excellent and comparable education and service delivery. These mean that the HEIs quality assurance activities is not yet fitting into Globalization characterized through expansion of both institutional base diversified delivery systems like distance education, online learning, privatization for additional resources and getting into virtual mode and the like. The program offerings should also be diversified to meet the specific needs of the global market. The significant relationships that exist between management, organizational culture and leadership; and learning infrastructure and resources; and research, consultancy and extension services is an indication that while higher education institutions implement a stringent promotion and selection criteria in hiring and promoting its teaching and non-teaching personnel, less it should forget that the HEIs teaching and learning environment and other physical resources should be

commensurate to the qualifications, skills and abilities the personnel have. Likewise, research and extension programs, projects and activities of HEIs must be enlivened to contribute to community and countrywide development and progress. While the present mode of quality assurance includes institutional and programmatic accreditation it should inevitably have to work in concurrence to global forms of educational quality. To serve the global market, it is important that the overall quality and standards of education available in a country must conform to certain threshold levels to become globally acceptable. Apparently, it should appear that this uniformity might provide a basis for a strong system of comparable quality assurance leading to the recognition of the studies and qualifications. Unless due emphasis is focused on the essential quality assurance elements required to internationalize the higher education units, the outcomes of the national quality assurance mechanisms may not be indicative of the international quality.

Based on the findings and conclusions derived from this investigation, the following recommendations were set; public and private HEIs may consider identification, evaluation and implementation of quality assurance structure and mechanisms relating to Internationalization to ensure Graduates comparability in the global market trends. Institutionalization of an independent and well-represented QA structure inclusive of sustained sufficient budget maybe considered to ensure a well-planned and strict implementation of quality assurance programs, projects and activities. Likewise, public and private HEIs may design and implement institutionalized continuous quality improvement trainings and capacity building among stakeholders to complement the implementation of quality assurance programs, projects and activities and making this as an integral part of quality assurance. Public and private HEIs may consider programs and projects on teaching and learning resources, facilities or environment and research and extension programs, projects and activities as top most priorities. Hence, sufficient budget may be allocated from internal or external funding sources. Likewise, the HEIs may consider inclusion of research and extension as criteria in the hiring, selection and promotion of faculty and staff ensuring the hiring of research and extension-driven personnel. Evaluation and implementation of other international quality assurance frameworks, structures and mechanisms maybe done as benchmark of ensuring alignment and attainment of graduates and

organizational outcomes towards globalization. HEIs may consider the introduction of the quality assurance dimensions such as: the continuous nature, the susceptibility to improvement, and the all-embracing character of QA among all stakeholders. Hence, stakeholders are made to understand that it is more than a process or mechanism and thus, it QA should be viewed as the individuals' attitude, which influence all aspects of the HEIs activities. Sustained and energetic advocacy for quality assurance programs, projects and activities such as benchmarking, in-house or in-service quality assurance trainings, QA visits simulations, and the like maybe provided. Likewise, strict monitoring and evaluation on the effectiveness and efficiency of these QA programs, projects and activities maybe conducted to ensure attainment of quality outcomes. Hence, a mind set to accept that anything can be made better is assured. Synergy and complementarities of quality assurance activities between the HEIs and other relevant and professional quality assurance bodies may be considered so that HEIs do not disintegrate energy in accommodating different groups with identical objectives.

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