Role of Quality Education and Professional Skills in Perceived Employability among Professionals: A Case of Potential Managers

Dr. Ashfaq Ahmad,[1] Humaira Yasmeen,[1]

Abstract

This study examines the role of quality education and professional skills in self- perceived employability among professionals. Higher education sector is an essential for creation of suitable human capital with desired skill-set according to dynamic changes and demand of the emerging markets at local, regional and global level. It aims to conduct comparative investigation among potential project managers by assessing the influence of academic performance and selected skills in the perceived employability among individuals who were enrolled in professional degree programs at two educational streams i.e. distance learning (off campus) as well as on-campus.

The data is collected from professionals who are pursuing MS in Project Management at both educational streams i.e. distance learning (off campus) and on-campus through a structured questionnaire in English. Selected statistical tools enable to analyze the data by application of Descriptive Statistics, Independent T-test, Pearson's Correlation and Regression analysis etc. through SPSS. Results indicate that both academic performance and Professional Skills have positive correlation with Perceived Employability. However, academic performance has comparatively stronger association to perceived employability in case of on campus stream. Moreover, it is also evident from findings that professionals who are pursuing on-campus degree program reported better academic performance and more Professional Skills have greater perceived employability scores as compared to professionals who were enrolled in distance learning programs (off-campus). This study could help to enhance the understanding of relevant stakeholders for the selected variables to address the prevailing issues indicated especially in case of distance learning programs for professionals.

Keywords: Quality education, professional skills, perceived employability, academic performance, potential managers.

[1] Assistant Professor, Noon Business School, University of Sargodha, Sargodha

Research Journal of PNQAHE
ISSN: 2707-9074 Volume 2 | Issue 2 July – Dec 2019

Introduction

Quality of education activities serves as the backbone of a nation HR employability. Therefore, in the international education forum, the idea of quality addressed regularly. The forum of World Education for all has discussed quality education in their EFA goals and framework and the Framework containing six key goals. Improve and monitor quality of education in every phase and achieve excellence so that recognize d and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills' (UNESCO, 2000, p. 17). There may be a different concept regarding quality of education in different stakeholder (Garira, 2020). According to the Williams (2001), quality of education is measured against the output. Despite student attainment in public examinations and tests may shows better quality of education to several, a complete understanding of quality of education should be measure against the processes, inputs, outputs and outcomes of knowledge which cover student overall knowledge (cultural heritage and academic), personal improvement (educational and personal interest and requirements) and also social preparation (requires and trends of societal) (Thijs & Van den Akker, 2009). According to the quality of education creates better opportunity for employment (Leu E, 2005). Therefore, the existing research study elaborate it impact on student perceived employability.

Literature Review

Professional Skills

Skills of professional, sometime called "generic" (De La Harpe et al., 2000) or "soft" (Shuman et al., 2005). Industry delegate recognize skills as the key aspect of practices of engineering educators (Connelly & Middleton, 1996). Research suggested employees are need to encourage to enhance their professional skills by using three kind of extrinsic motivation such as integration, identification and introjection (Ryan & Deci,2000).

Perceived employability

Employability is studied across a wide range of academic disciplines, such as business and management studies, human resource management, human resource development, cognitive and social psychology or educational science (Knight and Yorke, 2002; Heijde and Heijden, 2006). Drawing on different frameworks such as human capital theory (Kim et al., 2015), the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)

(Chou and Shen, 2012; Qenani et al., 2014), the competence-based approach (Heijde and Heijden, 2006) or the career construction theory (De Guzmán and Choi, 2013) researchers have analyzed the concept of employability and the variables which play an important role in determining it. Research highlighted that students follow their education, what they will evaluate is their perceived employability, defined by Rothwell et al., (2009) as the perception of the personal capacity to obtain appropriate employment in terms of the level of qualification that is expected to be acquired during their studies.

Regarding the perceived employability factors much of the research is theoretical (Finch et al., 2013) and diagnostic tools available in this area are very limited (Dacre et al., 2014). In the few validated scales that exist, validation is incomplete. Some authors only perform exploratory validation (Chou and Shen, 2012; Rothwell et al., 2009). In a very few cases some confirmatory validation is performed, but there is no full analysis of psychometric properties, convergent and discriminant validity is not always demonstrating (Dacre et al., 2014) or the sample size is very small (Yusof et al., 2012)

Research Objectives

- To examine influence of quality of education (academic performance) and professional skills on perceived employability of professionals who aspire to become potential managers
- To compare quality of education and professional skills on perceived employability of professionals who are availing online education and on-campus education

Research Methodology

The data is collected from professionals who are pursuing MS in Project Management at both educational streams i.e. distance learning (off campus) and on-campus through a structured questionnaire in English. Population of the study consist upon professional who pursuing MS Project Management degree and considered as potential managers in the two universities i.e. COMSATS University, Islamabad and Ripha International University, Islamabad. A sample of 700 professionals was selected from the both universities to get their response through convenience sampling. Research Instrument developed in the light of existing literature (Príncipe, 2005; Martha, 2009; Gargallo et al. 2009; Linda and Jackson, 2013). Five point likert scale was used ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree to quantify the responses. Selected

Research Journal of PNQAHE
ISSN: 2707-9074 Volume 2 | Issue 2 July – Dec 2019

statistical tools enable to analyze the data by application of Descriptive Statistics, Independent T-test, Pearson's Correlation and Regression analysis etc. through SPSS.

Result

Table 1

Correlation between Academic Performance, Professional skills and Perceived Employability

Construct/Variables	R	Sig.
Academic Performance and Perceived Employability	.755**	.0000
Professional Skills and Perceived Employability	.722**	.0000

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

The value of correlation between Professional Skills and Perceived Employability is .755 which shows that its correlation is positive and significant (shown by the p value .000). It shows that perception about employability is directly related with Professional Skills. As one gains and improves more and more Professional Skills, one's perception about employability improves. Similarly, a positive association is observed between professional skills and perceived employability i.e. 0.722 It means a person having good academic performance tends to have more skills or better learning of Professional Skills leads to improved academic performance. All these relations are measured through 2-tailed test at 0.01 level of significant. As the results shows that the value of Pearson correlation for academic performance is .755 and for professional skill is .722 that indicates a positive association among selected variables. The influence of selected variables is indicated by Table 2 that reveals coefficients of regression model.

Table 2

Summary of Professional Skills and Academic Performance on Perceived Employability

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.793[a]	.629	.626	.40389

a. Predictors: (Constant), Professional Skills, Academic performance

Table 2 shows that the Value of R2 is .629 for defined model. It demonstrates the effect of academic performance and Professional Skills on Perceived Employability. It means that 62.9% changes in Perceived Employability are explained by these two factors. While value of standard error shows that 40.389% changes are due to other factors. These selected variables don't explain 40.389% changes in the dependent variables.

Table 3

ANOVA for Professional Skills, Academic Performance and Perceived Employability

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	53.213	2	26.607	163.102	.000a
	Residual	31.321	192	.163		
	Total	84.534	194			

Table 3 indicates the Value of F statistic for selected model is 163.102 with p-value 0.000 which shows that the purposed model fits the regression line and linearity exist between dependent and independent variables. Moreover, coefficients of regression are placed in Table 4.

Research Journal of PNQAHE
ISSN: 2707-9074 Volume 2 | Issue 2 July – Dec 2019

Table 4

Coefficient of Regression: Professional Skills, Academic Performance & Perceived Employability

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.330	.198		1.663	.098
	Academic performance	.566	.075	.489	7.503	.000
	Professional Skills	.326	.059	.360	5.520	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Perceived Employability

Table 4 shows the coefficient of regression almost the same thing as explained by R2 but its individual value for each variables shows which one explains more changes in dependent variables. The beta value of academic performance is 0.566 with standard error 0.075 and for Professional Skills is 0.326 with standard error 0.059. It means that academic performance affects Perceived Employability more as compared to Professional Skills. Table 5 and 6 presents the output of Independent T-test.

Table 5

Group Statistics for Professional Skills of On-campus and Distance Learning

	Mode of study	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Professional Skills	Distance learning	124	3.5185	.68367	.06140
	On campus	71	3.8351	.76649	.09097

Table 5 shows that the sample data is grouped into two categories on campus and distance learning. This table shows that how many respondents were from on campus institute and from distance learning institutes (N), their mean and standard deviation. This is aim to explore what is difference between Professional Skills of distance learning and on campus institutes. The table 4.12 shows more respondent belong to distance learning institute (124) with mean 3.5185 with standard deviation .68367, and respondent belongs to on campus students are 71 with mean 3.8351 and standard deviation .76649. The

table shows that the mean value of Professional Skills of on-campus students is high then distance learning students.

Table 6

Independent t Test of Professional Skills of On-Campus and Distance Learning

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Professional Skills	Equal variances assumed	.702	.403	-2.976	193	.003	-.31663	.10638	-.52645	-.10681
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.885	132.636	.005	-.31663	.10975	-.53371	-.09955

Table 6 contains the result of Levene's test for Equality of Variances and t-test for Equality of Means. In the table the value of P for F statistic is .403 that is greater than alpha (0.05) this shows the variance is equally distributed. It reveals that T-value for academic performance is -2.976 and P=0.003 value of P is less then alpha (0.05) so there is significance difference of on campus students and distance learning students in case of Professional Skills.

Table 7

Group Statistics for Perceived Employability of On-campus and Distance Learning

	Mode of study	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Perceived Employability	Distance learning	124	3.6310	.63415	.05695
	On campus	71	3.8257	.69033	.08193

Research Journal of PNQAHE
ISSN: 2707-9074 Volume 2 | Issue 2 July – Dec 2019

Source: Generated

Table 7 and 8 reflects that the sample data is grouped into two categories on campus and distance learning. This table shows that how many respondents were from on campus institute and from distance learning institutes (N), their mean and standard deviation. This is aim to explore what is difference between Perceived Employability of distance learning and on campus institutes. The table 4.14 shows more respondent belong to distance learning institute (124) with mean 3.6310 with standard deviation .63415, and respondent belongs to on campus students are 71 with mean 3.8257 and standard deviation .69033 The value of mean shows that Perceived Employability of on-campus students is high than distance learning students.

Table 8

Independent T-test of Perceived Employability of On-campus and Distance Learning

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	ig.		f	ig. (2-tailed)	ean Dif.	td. Error Diff	95% Confidence Interval	
									ower	pper
Perceived Employability	Equal variances assumed	816	367	1.997	93	047	.194	0979	.386	.0023
	Equal variances not assumed			1.951	35.928	053	.194	09978	.391	0026

Table 8 contains the result of Levene's test for Equality of Variances and t-test for Equality of Means. In the table the value of P for F statistic is .367 that is greater than alpha (0.05) this shows the variance is equally distributed. It shows that the T value for academic performance is -1.997 and P=0.047, value of P is less then alpha (0.05) so there is significance difference of on campus students and distance learning students in case of Perceived Employability.

Conclusion

Results indicate that both academic performance and Professional Skills have positive correlation with Perceived Employability. However, academic performance has comparatively

stronger association to perceived employability in case of on campus stream. Moreover, it is also evident from findings that professionals who are pursuing on-campus degree program reported better academic performance and more Professional Skills have greater perceived employability scores as compared to professionals who were enrolled in distance learning programs (off-campus). It is may be due to their interaction with colleagues and teachers in actual environment where one can learn a lot from others' experiences. This study could help to enhance the understanding of relevant stakeholders for the selected variables to address the prevailing issues indicated especially in case of distance learning programs for professionals.

Reference

Chou, C. M., & Shen, C. H. (2012). Factors influencing employability self-efficacy of engineering students in Taiwan. *International Journal of Engineering Practical Research*, *1*(1), 10-14.

Dacre, P. L., Qualter, P. and Sewell, P.J. (2014), "Exploring the factor structure of the Career EDG Employability development profile", Education + Training, Vol. 56 No. 4, pp. 303-313.

De Guzman, A. B., & Choi, K. O. (2013). The relations of employability skills to career adaptability among technical school students. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *82*(3), 199-207.

De La Harpe, B., Radloff, A., & Wyber, J. (2000). Quality and generic (professional) skills. *Quality in Higher Education*, *6*(3), 231-243.

Finch, D. J., Hamilton, L. K., Baldwin, R., & Zehner, M. (2013). An exploratory study of factors affecting undergraduate employability. *Education+ Training*.

Gargallo, B., Suárez-Rodríguez, J. M., & Pérez-Pérez, C. (2009). The Ceveapeu questionnaire. An instrument to assess the learning strategies of university students. *Relieve-Revista Electronica de Investigation y Evaluation Educative*, *15*(2).

Heijde, C. M. V. D., & Van Der Heijden, B. I. (2006). A competence-based and multidimensional operationalization and measurement of employability. *Human Resource Management: Published in Cooperation with the School of Business Administration, The University of Michigan and in alliance with the Society of Human Resources Management*, *45*(3), 449-476.

Kim, S., Kim, H., & Lee, J. (2015). Employee self-concepts, voluntary learning behavior, and perceived employability. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*.

Knight, P. T., & Yorke, M. (2002). Employability through the curriculum. *Tertiary education and management*, *8*(4), 261-276.

Laurie, R., Nonoyama-Tarumi, Y., Mckeown, R., & Hopkins, C. (2016). Contributions of education for sustainable development (ESD) to quality education: A synthesis of research. *Journal of Education for Sustainable development*, *10*(2), 226-242.

Leu, E. (2005). The Role of Teachers, Schools, and Communities in Quality Education: A Review of the Literature. *Academy for Educational Development*.

Pool, L. D., Qualter, P., & Sewell, P. J. (2014). Exploring the factor structure of the CareerEDGE employability development profile. *Education+ Training*.

Qenani, E., MacDougall, N., & Sexton, C. (2014). An empirical study of self-perceived employability: Improving the prospects for student employment success in an uncertain environment. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, *15*(3), 199-213.

Rothwell, A., Jewell, S., & Hardie, M. (2009). Self-perceived employability: Investigating the responses of post-graduate students. *Journal of vocational behavior*, *75*(2), 152-161.

Rothwell, A., Jewell, S., & Hardie, M. (2009). Self-perceived employability: Investigating the responses of post-graduate students. *Journal of vocational behavior*, *75*(2), 152-161.

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and new directions. *Contemporary educational psychology*, *25*(1), 54-67.

Shuman, L. J., Besterfield-Sacre, M., & McGourty, J. (2005). The ABET "professional skills"—Can they be taught? Can they be assessed?. *Journal of engineering education*, *94*(1), 41-55.

Thijs, A., & van den Akker, J. (2009). Curriculum in development. Enschede, Netherlands: SLO–Netherlands Institute for Curriculum Development.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2000). The Dakar Framework for Action. Paris: UNESCO. Retrieved 16 December 2019, from http://unesdoc.unesco. org/images/0012/001211/121147e.pdf

Williams, J. H. (2001). On school quality and attainment. In J. Crisp, C. Talbot, & D. B. Cipollone (Eds.), *Learning for a future: Refuge education in developing countries* (pp. 88–108). United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Yusof, H. M., Mustapha, R., Mohamad, S. A. M. S., & Bunian, M. S. (2012). Measurement model of employability skills using confirmatory factor analysis. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *56*, 348-356.

The Issue of Quality at Affiliated Colleges in Pakistan: A Case Study

Muhammad Kamal Khan[1] and Ibrar Hussain[2]

Abstract

The present case study is the part of an on-going research project to explore the issue of quality at the affiliated colleges with Pakistani High Education Institutions (HEIs). Earlier, during 2014-15, as the part of Tertiary Education Support Programme (TESP) titled as Disbursement Link Indicators-4 (DLI-4) launched by Higher Education Commission (HEC) in collaboration with World Bank, a sample was taken from affiliated colleges all over the country through a specifically designed instrument and Minimum Quality Standards (MQS) set by the HEC team which showed that the quality at affiliated colleges in most cases was questionable all over the country.

Inspired by the above study, the researchers designed a proforma and collected data from 35 (out of a total of 45) privately owned affiliated colleges from two districts (Dir Upper and Chitral) and found that the case of quality was worse in rural and far flung areas. Based on the findings of the study, the paper highlights important recommendations and suggestions for the improvement of the overall quality of the affiliated colleges in the country. The study is highly significant for the next stage of TESP-HEC program and helps the policy makers realizing the strengths and weaknesses of such colleges, specifically now when the government has already launched four-year BS degree programs in KP and Punjab provinces.

Keywords: Affiliated colleges, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Quality Assurance (QA), Minimum Quality Standards (MQSs), SBBU Sheringal

1.Introduction

[1] Director, Quality Enhancement Cell at Shaheed BB University, Sheringal Dir Upper, KP-Pakistan
[2] Deputy Director Quality Enhancement Cell at Shaheed BB University, Sheringal Dir Upper, KP-Pakistan

Research Journal of PNQAHE
ISSN: 2707-9074 Volume 2 | Issue 2 July – Dec 2019

Quality is a new buzzword throughout the world as there has been a rapid move to mass higher education, not only associated with a greater diversity of institutions and programmes but also with a large increase in the number and size of universities. In Pakistan, we have grown from approximately 20 universities in 2001 to 188 universities today (2017). Along with the establishment of such a large number of universities, an increase in the number of affiliated colleges has expanded manifold as the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are further allowed to affiliate public and private sector colleges in the country. This phenomenon has given rise to a huge concern over quality of education offered in these public and private sector institutions (both universities and colleges). Although the HEC of Pakistan along with other associations has tried to bring in a variety of Quality Assurance (QA) techniques and mechanisms in the HEIs of the country but very little has been done for the maintenance and enhancement of quality in the affiliated colleges. Keeping in mind this state of affairs of the quality at affiliated colleges, the present study focuses on investigating the situation of colleges in the country.

1.1 Rationale of the study

According to the statistics of the Statistical Division of HEC, there are approximately 1900 public sector affiliated colleges registered with the HEIs in the country and as per a careful approximation, around 75 % of the students of higher education level in Pakistan study in these colleges. Apart of public sector colleges, there are hundreds of the private sector colleges which also offer various study programmes in the country. Even having such a great influence on the higher education of the country, very little has been done directly by the watchdogs of quality for the evaluation and investigation of quality in these colleges. This present study, therefore, strives to explore the question of quality at affiliated colleges. The study is particularly significant as the government is in the policy making process regarding the launch of BS degree programmes at affiliated colleges. The research objective of the study are given in the following lines.

1.2 Research objectives

As a result of the earlier studies carried out by the HEC of Pakistan, during the Tertiary Education Support Programme (TESP) on the situation of public sector affiliated colleges of the country, we decided to further investigate the situation of the private sector colleges in order

to learn more about quality problems and their causes and to identify remedial strategies. This is an ongoing project which involves both qualitative and quantitative elements.

To identify the situation of the private sector affiliated colleges on:

1. Their capacity as institutes of higher education, and,
2. Their practices regarding the enhancement and maintenance of quality.

In order to accomplish the above research objectives, a specific methodology was designed for the study.

1.3 Research design

Inspired the Minimum Quality Standards (MQSs) set by HEC for the evaluation of the affiliated colleges, a carefully designed proforma was prepared for the present study. Since most of the MQSs were not directly relevant for the private sector affiliated colleges, therefore, some of the MQSs were reduced and more relevant standards were added.

The study was based on qualitative methodology and a convenient sampling technique was used for data collection form two districts (Dir Upper and Chitral) of the country where total number of private colleges were 45. In order to bring maximum validity and reliability to the study, 35 out of these 45 (78%) colleges were visited and the information on the proformas were collected by the researchers themselves. The following eleven factors were considered for the research:

1. Physical infrastructure (including buildings and rooms)
2. Degree programmes offered
3. Student-teacher ratio
4. No of books and research resources
5. Information technology (IT) facilities (PCs and internet)
6. Scientific laboratories and equipment
7. Quality assurance support (such as the establishment of QECs)
8. Classroom facilities (multimedia and furniture)
9. Registration with HERA (Higher Education Regulatory Authority)
10. Affiliation status with the parent university
11. Financial status

Research Journal of PNQAHE
ISSN: 2707-9074 Volume 2 | Issue 2 July – Dec 2019

2. Survey of relevant literature

This section gives a brief survey on the relevant literature.

2.1 Quality in Higher Education (HE)

According to Lee Harvey and Peter Knight (as mentioned by Vanchai, 2000) 'quality' in HE means; something exceptional, perfection or consistency, value for money, fitness for purpose, and transformation. Similarly, Dorothy Lander has provided the concept of 'quality' as service (ibid). No matter what is the exact definition of quality, the present globalization era with speedy movements of changes along with intense competition has made 'quality' a must. Now, in every field, a system of quality has to be put in place to ensure it. In order to gain maximum confidence of the stakeholder (such as parents, their graduates, employers) and further build on it, our higher education institutions have to work on quality at a satisfactory level.

Having established the concept of quality in HE, now let us see the concept of latest issues related to HE. Harman (1996) points to certain concerns on the quality issues that presently dominate the debates in higher education circles:

a. Maintenance and improvement of levels of teaching, learning, research and scholarship
b. Improvement in the quality and adaptability of graduates
c. How to define and measure quality
d. Whether management approaches of universities and colleges improve outcomes
e. The use of benchmarking and performance indicators, and,
f. How to convince stakeholders that institutions and systems are doing a competent job in ensuring quality outputs.

Based on the issues related to quality, various approaches have been developed internationally and the phenomenon has been titled as Quality Assurance (QA). The term QA refers to various mechanisms and processes applied to lead to the maintenance and improvement of quality outcomes in educational institutions. QA has come to mean a guarantee or satisfaction level that particular standards in a specific field are being met. QA is, thus, largely about the systematically applied procedures and processes which are adopted to ensure achievements and certification of a given quality and continued improvement in quality processes. 'Quality assurance' in higher education can be defined as a systematic

management and assessment procedures adopted by HEIs and systems in order to monitor performance against objectives, and to ensure the achievement of quality outputs and quality improvements. Essentially, quality assurance systems aim to provide an appropriate evidence to substantiate claims made by HEIs about quality and so to enable key stakeholders to have confidence about the management of quality and the level of outcomes achieved. Stakeholders are graduates, individuals and groups (such as employers) who have a major interest in higher education institutions and systems, and their achievements made.

In Pakistan, the QA processes mare mainly managed by HEC through the adoption of various mechanisms and processes. HEC, within its 15 years has strived to focus on the issue of quality by establishing Quality Enhancement Cells (QECs) at almost all HEIs of the country and by establishing other internationally recognized procedures such as, qualification frameworks, review surveys and periodic reports of degree programmes and institutions and evaluation of HEIs though rankings. It has also contributed its part in the establishment of 188 universities in the far flung areas of the country (such as Chitral, Turnbat and Skardu).

Although universities throughout the country today are focusing special attention on designing and implementing new quality assurance mechanisms and systems set by HEC in order to ensure that students receive high quality and relevant education and that degrees and diplomas are widely recognized. But the case of affiliated colleges is very different. It has not been given the due attention by the relevant policy makers. Since the focus of the study is quality at affiliated colleges, the following section provides relevant information on it.

2.2 Quality at affiliated colleges in Pakistan

As per the data available with Statistical Information Unit of HEC, there are 1993 Colleges affiliated with 41 public sector Universities of Pakistan during early 2000s. After the establishment of HEC in 2002, the first serious effort for the enhancement of quality at affiliated colleges was made during the launch of Tertiary Education Support Programme (TESP) during 2011-15 when a special study was carried out throughout the country. This project directly benefited public sector colleges in all provinces as various training programmes were arranged for senior teachers and administrative staff (such as principals and vice principals). The following Minimum Quality Standards (MQSs) were set for the evaluation and improvement of quality at these colleges:

Standard 1: Vision, Mission, & Objectives

Research Journal of PNQAHE
ISSN: 2707-9074 Volume 2 | Issue 2 July – Dec 2019

Standard 2: Academic Programs
Standard 3: Students
Standard 4: Academic Staff/Faculty
Standard 5: Educational Resources
Standard 6: Programme Evaluation
Standard 7: Governance and Administration
Standard 8: Research
Standard 9: Capacity Building of Academic/Administrative staff of College

Along with these training projects in provincial headquarters, the colleges were also evaluated through the following standards (slightly different than the above ones). During the TESP project by HEC, Minimum Quality Standards (MQSs) (outlining major areas to be focused on for the evaluation of quality, effectiveness and future development of affiliated colleges) were set for the evaluation of affiliated colleges in the country. The finalized MQSs and their percentages are given below:

Table 1: Minimum Quality Standards for Affiliated Colleges

S. No:	**Name of the MQS** **Percentage allocated**
Standard 1	Vision, Mission and Goals (05%)
Standard 2	Academic Programs and Evaluation (10%)
Standard 3	Student Admission and Progression (10%)
Standard 4	Academic Faculty and Non-Academic Staff (10%)
Standard 5	Physical Infrastructure, Academic Facilities and Learning Resources (20%)
Standard 6	Organization, Governance and Financial Management (20%)
Standard 7	Research (03%)
Standard 8	Public Disclosure and Transparency (15%)
Standard 9	Community Link & Outreach (07%)

In addition to training programmes for teachers at public sector colleges, HEC also worked on the private sector and prepared 'affiliation rules' for the HEIs to affiliate private sector colleges.

2.3 Standard norms for the affiliation of an institution

While preparing the 'affiliation rules' for affiliated colleges, the HEC also prepared standard norms for the affiliation of an institute (college) with a university. The following nine norms were set by the committee established for the purpose:

1. Physical facilities: Including infrastructural facilitates such as available land, type of current building (owned/rented) and total covered area, total number and size of class rooms, capacity for students, labs, halls, faculty rooms, sports ground and hostel facilities).

2. Academic facilities: Academic programmes, curriculum development and revision.

3. Faculty/staff: Faculty strength, salary packages and their professional training facilities.

4. Library: Number of books, textbooks, journals (international and national), periodicals, newspapers, reference books in library.

5. Facilities regarding Information Technology: Computer labs and internet connectivity.

6. Students: Support for student affairs, their strength and assessment policy.

7. Admissions: General admission policy number of students to be enrolled.

8. Quality Assurance and student supervision: Administrative and technical support for QA.

9. Finances: Financial position of an institution and scholarship awards offered to its students.

Keeping in mind the above developments, the present study was carried out for the private sector colleges in the lines of the methodology discussed in Section 1.3. The results are given in the next section.

3. Results, discussion and conclusion

The study found out the following results:

3.1 Physical infrastructure (including buildings and rooms)

Weak infrastructural facilities were found in all 35 colleges. Most of them (30/35) were without playground and proper common rooms for boys and girls.

3.2 Degree programmes offered

The majority (84.7%), held BAs or BScs with some holding others, such as B Com., MA, Bed, MEd, DP Ed. The variety of the programmes was found insufficient at these colleges as no modern programmes (such as BS) were offered.

3.3 Student-teacher ratio

In most cases, the teachers were acquired on part time basis. The average of the student- teacher ratio was over 40-1. The qualification of teachers was maximum up-to MA/MSc.

3.4 No of books and research resources

Less than 500 books. Only three colleges had 500 plus books.

3.5 Information technology (IT) facilities (PCs and internet)

No proper IT services were given to the students. 15 % of the colleges had computer labs with internet services.

3.6 Scientific laboratories and equipment

80 percent of the colleges has weak labs.

3.7 Quality assurance support (such as the establishment of QECs)

No college had established a section for QA and, overall, they were unaware of the concept of QA in academic setting.

3.8 Classroom facilities (multimedia and furniture)

Only two colleges had multimedia facilities and the conditions of furniture found in these colleges were weak.

3.9 Registration with HERA (Higher Education Regulatory Authority)

50% of the registration were expired with HERA.

3.10 Affiliation status with the parent university

80 % of the colleges were given only provisional affiliation with the parent university.

3.11 Financial status

90 % of the colleges had arrears on their part to clear and no scholarships were offered to students.

Overall, the results showed that the QA conditions of the private sector colleges were very weak and serous shortcoming were found on the part of them to maintain and enhance the educational quality of their degree programmes.

The HEC of Pakistan, provincial Higher Education Departments (HEDs) and the HEIs of Pakistan need to develop a uniform mechanism for the evaluation of affiliated colleges throughout the country which may include:

The establishment of a council for private sector affiliated colleges or a body which shall be responsible for maintaining minimum standards of these colleges.

The periodic evaluation of affiliated colleges to maintain MQSs. Such a system would encourage their voluntary adoption of QA mechanism.

Similarly, a periodic ranking system may be devised for the ranking of these colleges at national and provincial levels. This system will increase the environment of positive competition among the colleges.

Proper planning may be carried out to organize training projects for the affiliated colleges of private sector. Special funding may be given for their capacity building and infrastructural development.

A system for strict liaising may also be established to make sure the accreditation of affiliated colleges.

It is to be acknowledged at the end that there were three major research limitations in the study:

Firstly, the sample was taken only from the private sector affiliated colleges which may not be extendable to public sector colleges as the latter type of colleges are always quite rich in terms of buildings,

human resource and labs. Secondly, the sample of 35 colleges was taken from two districts is relatively small and it represents a very small portion of the affiliated colleges of the country and the results may not be generalizable to all privately owned affiliated college. Finally, the two districts selected for the study were most far flung and backward areas and the country which might not be equally generalizable to other parts of the country. Future studies on the topic, it is hoped, may address these limitations accordingly.

References

Biglete Amelia A, Lilia S. Garcia, Alicia S. Bustos and Roderick C. Salazar, Jr. 'Strategies for Quality and Excellence' in the Reform and Development of Higher Education in the Philippines UNESCO Higher Education Policy Series No, 1. 2000, pp. 35-70,

Federation of Accrediting Agencies of the Philippines (FAAP), Towards Quality Education, a brochure, 19 p.

Harman Grant, 1996. Quality Assurance for Higher Education: Developing and Managing Quality Assurance for Higher Education Systems and Institutions in Asia and the Pacific, UNESCO, Bangkok, 10 p.

Minimum Quality Standards (MQS) set by the Academic Division of the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan – Islamabad.

Sirichana, Vanchai. 2000. Quality Assurance: International Benchmarking for Higher Education. Proceedings of the International Conference on Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Standards, Mechanisms and Mutual Recognition- Bangkok, Thailand.

Standard Norms for the Affiliation of an Institution – set by Higher Education Commission of Pakistan – Islamabad.

Statistical Division, Higher Education Commission of Pakistan – Islamabad.

Valisno, Mona D. (ed.) 1995. 'Philippine Education in the 21st Century Strategies for Excellence and Equity'. Task Force on Higher Education, Commission on Higher Education, p. 323.

Valisno, Mona D. (ed.) 2000. The Reform and Development of Higher Education in the UNESCO Higher Education Policy Series No. 1. pp.1-33.

Note: The present case study is the part of an on-going research project to explore the issue of quality at the private sector affiliated colleges of the country. A request may be sent to kamal@sbbu.edu.pk for the final publication of the study once it is completed.

Research Journal of PNQAHE
ISSN: 2707-9074 Volume 2 | Issue 2 July – Dec 2019

Appendix – Checklist

Institute [Name & Address] Principal [name, qualification & contact]
Building detail [rooms? or rented?]
Degree Programs [shift?]
Number of students & teachers (ratio)
Library status (No. of books in library)
Computer lab [internet?] (Weak Moderate Strong)
Scientific Labs detail (Weak Moderate Strong)
QEC coordination (Established or not)
Classrooms facilitation [multimedia & furniture?]
HERA Registration Status Yes - No/Expired
SBBU Affiliation status (Provisional – Final)
Fee status [Finance] (Clear – pending)
Remarks (Any important point) Closed- relocated to other place – notice issued)