Quality enhancement, teaching quality, and students perceived satisfaction: challenges and perspectives in higher education

Muhammad Ayub Buzdar[1], Hina Jalal[2]

Abstract

The globalization and commercialization of higher education has become more apparent and greater than before. In present, quality education is becoming essential to survive in global competition. In Pakistan, quality assurance (QA) is prime challenge in higher education. the current study adds body of knowledge on identify challenges of QECs to execute policies of internal quality assurance (IQA), students and teachers perceived satisfaction about teacher education program quality with provision of QECs contribution.

Key Words: Quality Assurance, Teaching Quality, student perceived satisfaction and Higher Education

Introduction

Quality assurance is necessary rather than to provide quality level. There is no single definition that explain quality in higher education. Although, quality can be defined as 'fitness of quality' (Harvey & Green, 1993). Some define quality as a procedure of action through which the quality will achieve minimum predefined standards (Woodhouse, 1998). Quality assurance (QA) become an important issue overall the world for higher education system. Quality assurance is the trust among the stakeholders that their respected institution and program meets minimum standards set by the QA agency. The system of QA is designed to promote collaboration, sustain quality, assure standards, and globalization of higher education. It enhances their productivity and efficiency through internal and external quality assurance framework.

In Pakistan, HEC (higher education commission) established quality assurance to the quality in higher education. QA implemented its

policies through accreditation (external quality assurance) and quality enhancement cells (internal quality assurance). Both internal and external process established to assure that higher education institutions and programs reach to given standard (McCowan, 2016; Mirza, 2015; Shahid, Wahab, & Ahmed, 2016). Quality assurance is also the system of for higher education institutions to improve the mechanism. In present, it is mandatory for all the universities to establish their QECs inside the institute. One-hundred and eighty-nine QECs are functioning in various public and private universities. Universities are responsible to serve a nation and its individuals. It is also a source to serving humanity and interreacting with other educational institutes of both public and private sectors over the world.The words "enhancement and Improvement" as both are often interchangeable. The term improvement is used for bringing an activity upto standard while enhancement is used for the raising higher degree, intensifying and magnifying it (Burrows, Harvey, & Green, 1992; Hill, Walkington, & France, 2016). Numerous definitions related to quality enhancement often focus on student's learning of quality. The UK QAA defined the quality enhancement as an aspect of quality management which is designed to secure, reliable demonstratable improvement in quality of individual institutions and learning opportunities (Quality Assurance Agency, 2016).

Although, most of the previous studies agreed that quality of the education can be measured by different and multiple dimensions which help the higher education institutes to provide appropriate values, in which the factors influence the learner's perception about these 'dimensions. Several authors concentrate on student's evaluation in class or evaluation of teachers by students to measure the quality of education (Ginns Prosser, & Barrie, 2007). Some other authors focus on student's perception related to learning environment, study and leaning outcomes (Lizzio, Wilson, & Simons, 2002).Quality enhancement is the augmentation of students' quality in higher education through standardized disciplines. As well as, QECs focus to improve and sustain the quality of higher education institutions and programs.

QECs have the several major functions as; design and monitor phased programs through ultimate objective of autonomy in QA, capacity

building at higher education to meet global challenges, competitivness of graduates through trained programs, and foreign trained cadre of master for QA. In Pakistan, the environment of higher education institutions is not as much as fully established as required. There are several issues and challenges regarding quality assurance in higher education. Previous studies explore the QA in terms of their context as accreditation, quality assurance indicators, program quality indicators, and QECs implementations in higher education (Awan, 2016; Batool & Qureshi, 2009; Parvez, Anjum, & others, 2016; Shahid et al., 2016). The current study investigated the issues and challenges of QECs directors. in relation to the teachers and students' satisfaction with teacher education program quality. The present study developed the following research questions:

Objectives
The main objectives of present study were to identify determinants of teaching and teacher education program quality in terms of students and teachers' satisfaction, and the challenges of directors/deputy directors in augmentation of quality education.

Research Methodology
        Mixed methods design of explanatory approach adopted in this study. The researchers used questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to gather the data from participants. The quantitative analysed through statistical tests and techniques of mean, standard deviation, t-tests, and thematic analysis for qualitative data.

Participants
        The researchers applied random sampling techniques to gather the data for this study. Five public universities located in Punjab province were randomly included in this study. Hundred university teachers, and five hundred students associated to teacher education program were participated in this study. The directors of QECs in selected universities were also included in this study.

Research Instrument

Questionnaire was used to gather the data from the teachers and students. Questionnaire was developed by researchers was adopted to investigate the teachers and students' satisfaction about education quality. This questionnaire was consisted of the indicators of Course Content, Services, Faculty, Social activities, University community interaction, and Evaluation. Validity and reliability of questionnaire was ensured through experts and Cronbach alpha > .7 respectively. The experts of relevant field were university assistant professors to assure the face and content validity of questionnaires. They also assure the format, language, content, and construction of questionnaires and interview protocol as per this study objectives. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect the qualitative data from the directors of QECs universities. The interview schedule was comprised of 6 main themes to explore challenges and issues of QECs in higher education. The themes were; achievements in Quality enhancement, quality enhancement influence, weaknesses of quality enhancement framework, issues that constraint quality enhancement in higher education, challenges of quality enhancement, recommendations.

Findings

The perception of students demonstrated greatly that they are less satisfied with teaching quality, curriculum transmission, generic attributes development (communication, problem solving, lifelong learning, and ethics etc.), teaching practices, and services. While, the teachers rated teaching quality, curriculum transmission, generic attributes development, teaching practices, research and development, administrative services, services, evaluation process with greater satisfaction. Furthermore, teachers are less satisfied with the process and role of QECs.

Table 1

Comparison of teachers and student' perception regarding program quality

Indicators		Mean	SD	MD	*t*	*p*
	Teachers	3.02	.888	.7	-.283	.21

Factor	Group	Mean	SD	MD	t	p
Curriculum transmission	Students	2.32	.845			
Services	Teachers	3.54	1.062	1.5	-1.261	.00
	Students	2.04	.662			
Teaching quality	Teachers	3.33	.993	.6	.106	.01
	Students	2.73	.893			
Teaching practices	Teachers	3.16	.723	-0.01	.571	.00
	Students	3.17	.219			
Generic attributes	Teachers	3.77	.839	1.71	.150	.00
	Students	2.06	.720			
University community interaction	Teachers	2.86	.792	-0.25	.073	.03
	Students	3.11	.336			
Evaluation	Teachers	3.66	.368	0.78	.080	.02
	Students	2.88	.234			

$p < .05$*

Table 1 demonstrated the comparison of mean scores of teachers and students about their satisfaction with program quality of teacher education. There is insignificant mean difference between the perception of teachers and students about curriculum transmission. On the factor of curriculum transmission, mean score of teachers is higher (M = 3.02, SD = .888) than the students' mean scores (M = 2.32, SD = .845) with t value of -.283, and MD = .7. On the factor of services, mean score of teachers is higher

(M = 3.54, SD = 1.062) than the students' mean scores (M = 2.04, SD = .662) and MD = 1.5 with *t* value of -1.261. On the factor of teaching quality, mean score of teachers is higher (M = 3.33, SD = .993) than the students' mean scores (M = 2.73, SD = .893) and MD = .6 with *t* value of .106**.** On the factor of teaching practices, mean score of teachers is almost equal to (M = 3.16, SD = .723) to the students' mean scores (M = 3.17, SD = .219) and MD = -0.01 with *t* value of .571. On the factor of generic attributes**, m**ean score of teachers is higher (M = 3.77, SD = .839) than the students' mean scores (M = 2.06, SD = .720) and MD = 1.71 with *t* value of .150. On the factor of university community interaction, mean score of teachers is lower (M = 2.86, SD = .792) than the students' mean scores (M = 3.11, SD = .336) and MD = -0.25 with *t* value of .073**.** On the factor of evaluation, mean score of teachers is higher (M = 3.66, SD = .368) than the students' mean scores (M = 2.88, SD = .234) and MD = 0.78 with *t* value of .080. The teachers are more satisfied with curriculum transmission**,** services**,** teaching quality**,** generic attributes**,** and evaluation with higher mean scores than that of students. The students are more satisfied with university community interaction in comparison to teachers. While, both participants are satisfied with teaching practices.

Table 2

Perception of teachers regarding quality enhancement

Sr #	Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	QECs Contribution	3.92	1.014
2	Role of QECs in quality enhancement	2.70	1.020
3	QECs effectiveness	2.71	.851
4	Procedure of QEC	2.01	.522

Table 2 demonstrated that the teachers' perception about quality enhancement cells' role to enhance quality in higher education, its

effectiveness, and process of QEC is lower than the average mean score value of 3, except about contribution of QECs. It can be said that teachers are less satisfied with role, effectiveness, and process of QECs in higher education.

Word cloud explained the qualitative findings from the point of view of directors of QECs (fig. 1). The figure 1 displayed that improper infrastructure, departmental cooperation, QECs staff require international exposure and training, more professionals for quality enhancement, issue of additional Charge of directors in QECs, to achieve university ranking, maintain program quality, internal influences on teaching quality, develop quality culture and awareness in higher education, quality assurance awareness in higher education, quality culture in higher, research and development, workload on teachers, students awareness about feedback, proper departmental feedback, administrative approval for QECs decisions, and QECs need full fledge to implement QA policies are the major issues and challenges. The words that are large depict more attention of interviewees than that of small size words.

Figure 1. Word cloud regarding QECs issues and challenges

Discussion

The current study aimed to investigate the challenges and issues that QECs face in higher education. As well as, the perception of teachers about quality enhancement cells, and students and teachers' satisfaction with their program quality. The quantitative findings of this study are associated to the studies of Coffey and Gibbs (2001), Jalal, Buzdar, and Mohsin (2017), Prisacariu and Shah (2016), Tsevi (2016), and Verma (2016). As these studies explored that the stakeholders are not much satisfied with the program quality. The results of present study explored that the teachers are more satisfied with curriculum transmission, services, teaching quality, generic attributes, and evaluation with higher mean scores than that of students. The students are more satisfied with university community interaction in comparison to teachers. While, both participants are satisfied with teaching practices. Moreover, teachers are

less satisfied with the role of quality enhancement cells, effectiveness and process of quality enhancement in higher education (Jalal et al., 2017). However, teachers are satisfied with the contribution of QECs to higher education.

The qualitative analysis of this study indicated that QECs have several challenges ahead. In present, globalization and international competition of higher education, extensive production of program qualities, lack of funding have made challenges for quality enhancement cells (Jalal et al., 2017; Williams, 2016). The QECs constantly review its developmental procedure for conventional system to sustain the quality. Yet, there is need of more professional, trained, and permanent staff with international exposures (Cheng, 2016). Large number of institutions offer range of educational programs and it becomes another challenge to utilize infrastructure and teaching faculty (Jalal et al., 2017; Singh, 2017). This study found that the major issues and challenge of QECs are as Improper infrastructure, departmental cooperation, QECs staff require international exposure and training, more professionals for quality enhancement, issue of additional Charge of directors in QECs, to achieve university ranking, maintain program quality, internal influences on teaching quality, develop quality culture and awareness in higher education, quality assurance awareness in higher education, quality culture in higher, research and development, workload on teachers, students awareness about feedback, proper departmental feedback, administrative approval for QECs decisions, and QECs need full fledge to implement QA policies are the major issues and challenges. The words that are large depict more attention of interviewees than that of small size words.

Conclusion

Teachers and students are fundamental pillars in educational process. Satisfaction of these stakeholders regarding quality of education is of paramount of nature. Though, teachers are the major stakeholder to transmit quality of education into students. Teachers play pivotal role to enhance and assure the quality of programs and institutions as well. Yet, clear majority of the teachers are not satisfied with the role, effectiveness, and process of quality enhancement cells. They are much satisfied with the contribution of QECs. The findings of present study demonstrated that

teachers are clearly satisfied with the program quality. In contrast students are only satisfied with university community interaction and less satisfied with overall quality of their teacher education program. QECs theoretically have the potential to transform quality discourse yet settled with many challenges such as proper infrastructure, research and development, teaching quality, departmental and administrative cooperation, dissemination of quality culture, limited trained and professional team, and teachers and students' awareness

Limitation and future recommendation

The research study has several limitations as the study adopted newly developed questionnaire that covers limited indicators of program quality satisfaction. Its aim was to give a first worthy insight into how students perceive the quality of their teacher education program. Furthermore, the data was gathered from limited numbers of participants, universities, and only teacher education program for masters degree included.

Future researcher can use more indicators to investigate the satisfaction level of program quality. Moreover, private university can also be used as comparative analysis. As this study has limitations mentioned above, the results of present study cannot be generalized to the whole population. No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Reference:

Awan, A. K. (2016). Trading-off quality for quantity: Mushrooming of Medical Institutions and Quality of Medical Education in Pakistan. *International Journal of Pathology*, *14*(1). Retrieved from http://jpathology.com/wp-

Batool, Z., & Qureshi, R. H. (2009). Quality assurance manual for higher education in Pakistan. *Higher Education Commission, Pakistan*. Retrieved from http://www.iiu.edu.pk/wp-content/uploads/downloads/qec/HEC_Quality_Assurance_Manual_for_Higher_Education_in_Pakistan.pdf

Burrows, A., Harvey, L., & Green, D. (1992). Concepts of Quality in Higher Education: A review of the literature. *Perry Barr Birmingham B42 2SU*. Retrieved from http://www.qualityresearchinternational.com/Harvey%20papers/Burrows%20Harvey%20and%20Green%20Concepts%20of%20Quality%20in%20Higher%20Education%20A%20review%20of%20the%20literature%20.pdf

Cheng, M. (2016). *Quality in higher education: developing a virtue of professional practice*. Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=1358103

Coffey, M., & Gibbs, G. (2001). The Evaluation of the Student Evaluation of Educational Quality Questionnaire (SEEQ) in UK Higher Education. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, *26*(1), 89–93. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602930020022318

Ginns, P., Prosser, M., & Barrie, S. (2007). Students' perceptions of teaching quality in higher education: The perspective of currently enrolled students. Studies in Higher Education, 32(5), 603–615.

Harvey, L., & Green, D. (1993). Defining Quality. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, *18*(1), 9–34. https://doi.org/10.1080/0260293930180102

Hill, J., Walkington, H., & France, D. (2016). Graduate attributes: implications for higher education practice and policy: Introduction. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, *40*(2), 155–163. https://doi.org/10.1080/03098265.2016.1154932

Jalal, H., Buzdar, M. A., & Mohsin, M. N. (2017). Accreditation and Quality Enhancement Dynamics in Higher Education. *Journal of Educational Research Dept. of Education, IUB, Pakistan*, *20*(2), 127–145.

Lizzio, A., Wilson, K., & Simons, R. (2002). University students' perceptions of the learning environment and academic outcomes: Implications for theory and practice. Studies in Higher Education, 27(1), 27–52.

McCowan, T. (2016). Three dimensions of equity of access to higher education. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, *46*(4), 645–665. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2015.1043237

Mirza, M. S. (2015). Institutionalizing ESD Standards in Teacher Education Programs: Case of National Accreditation Council for Teacher Education, Pakistan. *Applied Environmental Education & Communication*, *14*(2), 97–104. https://doi.org/10.1080/1533015X.2014.973543

Parvez, A., Anjum, M. A., & others. (2016). Quality Assurance: The Standards for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Institutions of Pakistan. *Journal of Applied and Emerging Sciences*, *5*(2), pp105–118.

Prisacariu, A., & Shah, M. (2016). Defining the quality of higher education around ethics and moral values. *Quality in Higher Education*, *22*(2), 152–166. https://doi.org/10.1080/13538322.2016.1201931

Quality Assurance Agency, (QAA). (2016). *The UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Overview and Expectations*. Retrieved from

http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2968#.V-FqXyF97IV

Shahid, H., Wahab, Z., & Ahmed, S. A. (2016). Factor Analysis to Explore the Indicators of Quality Assurance Mechanism on Higher Educational Institutions in Pakistan. *Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences*, *12*, 146–154.

Singh, V. (2017). *Role and Requirement of Students and Teachers in Quality Enhancement of Higher Education Institutions*. 4.

Tsevi, L. (2016). *QUALITY ASSURANCE IN PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION: THE CASE OF GHANA*. University at Albany, State University of New York, USA.

Verma, A. (2016). A REVIEW OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS. *International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Literature*, *4*(5, May 2016), 55–66.

Williams, J. (2016). Quality assurance and quality enhancement: is there a relationship? *Quality in Higher Education*, *22*(2), 97–102. https://doi.org/10.1080/13538322.2016.1227207

Woodhouse, D. (1998). Quality assurance in higher education: The next 25 years. Quality in