Perceived Tasks of Quality Assurance and Its Impact on the Teaching-Learning Process among Deans and Faculty

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Abstract
Quality assurance systems of schools are put in place to ensure that optimum education are provided by institutions responsible for such endeavors. The study looked into the perceptions of deans and faculty on the task of the quality assurance system and its impact on the teaching-learning process of a University in Northern Philippines. The researchers made used of the descriptive design with the use of an adopted questionnaire modified for the purpose of the study. There were 62 faculty and 7 deans who participated in the study. Pearson R and independent sample t-test showed that the tasks of the quality assurance system is significantly related to the perceived impact on the teaching and learning process. There is no significant difference in the perception of the deans and faculty on the tasks of the quality assurance system of the University and its impact on the teaching and learning process. Quality of teaching-learning process is greatly influenced by the strategies/tasks performed by the quality assurance system of the school. It is thus recommended that strengthening and empowering the teachers and deans to perform quality assurance activities to ensure provision of quality education – manifested in globally competitive graduates.

Keywords: Quality Assurance, Teaching-Learning Process, Quality Education

Introduction

Education is necessary for survival in the modern world, and it is not only education but also high-quality education that ensures the citizens of the world's maximum survival (Sharma, 2015). Quality education is not only the acquisition of knowledge, but also the training in how to apply that knowledge in any given situation, so that an individual can perform their best and harness their potential for their own benefit and the benefit of the society to which they belong (Eze, 2009; Slade, 2017; Tawil, Akkari & Macedo, 2012; UNESCO, 2003). To achieve high-quality education, a system of measuring the teaching-learning process must be holistic and affordable (Almadani, Reid, & Rodrigues, 2011). (Barrett, Chawla-Duggan, Lowe, Nikel & Ukpo, 2006). As the educational process's focal point, the teaching-learning process must be examined to develop quality assurance strategies that effectively enhance/improve the quality of education provided (European Commission, 2018).

The concept of quality education promoted by developed countries cannot be applied to developing and underdeveloped countries due to their socioeconomic status (Barret, Chawla, Lowe, NIkel & Ukpo, 2006). UNESCO recognized the importance of achieving a common standard of quality education among third world countries by establishing quality assurance systems to monitor all educational institutions worldwide (Slade, 2017; European Commission, 2018). Quality assurance is critical for enhancing and maintaining effective teaching and learning environments, particularly in higher education (Biggs, 2002; Council on Higher Education, 2012). Typically, quality assurance is measured in terms of the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process and, more concretely, the quality of graduates produced by the school (Basheka, Nkataand & Barifaijo, 2013; Blasko & Raschman, 2015). Teaching and learning processes are frequently the primary focus of most quality assurance systems, as indicated by higher education institutions' mission-vision statements.

Higher education institutions' quality assurance systems utilized internal and external mechanisms to promote the quality of teaching-learning processes that work in tandem to ensure sustained development and competitiveness. External quality assurance mechanisms include evaluations by international, national, or regional agencies to determine whether higher education institutions adhere to quality education standards/frameworks. Internal quality assurance mechanisms include self-assessments and staff/faculty appraisals (Elken & Stensaker, 2018; UNSW, 2017). These mechanisms are being implemented to deliver the best education possible – which is contingent on the quality of teaching and learning processes – which entails examining the relationships between administration and the people who operate within a set of established practices to accomplish the intended goal (Hwang & Colyvas, 2011; Lawrence, Suddaby & Leca, 2009).

In achieving quality, the teaching-learning process must be constantly reviewed to ensure that the techniques and strategies used are consistent with the institution's mission and vision (Netshifhefhe, Nobongoza & Maphosa, 2016). Teachers must be given the opportunity to self-assess, peer-assess, and evaluate administrators' strategies during the review and evaluation of the teaching-learning process to create a feedback loop that will enhance and improve the institution's instructional areas (Barrett, Chawla-Duggan, Lowe, Nikel & Ukpo, 2006; Chong & Ho, 2006; Saeed, 2018).

In the Philippines, the Higher Education Act of 1994 (Republic Act No. 7722) demonstrates the country's desire to improve the country's educational quality by establishing the Commission on Higher Education to oversee and set up minimum standards for degree
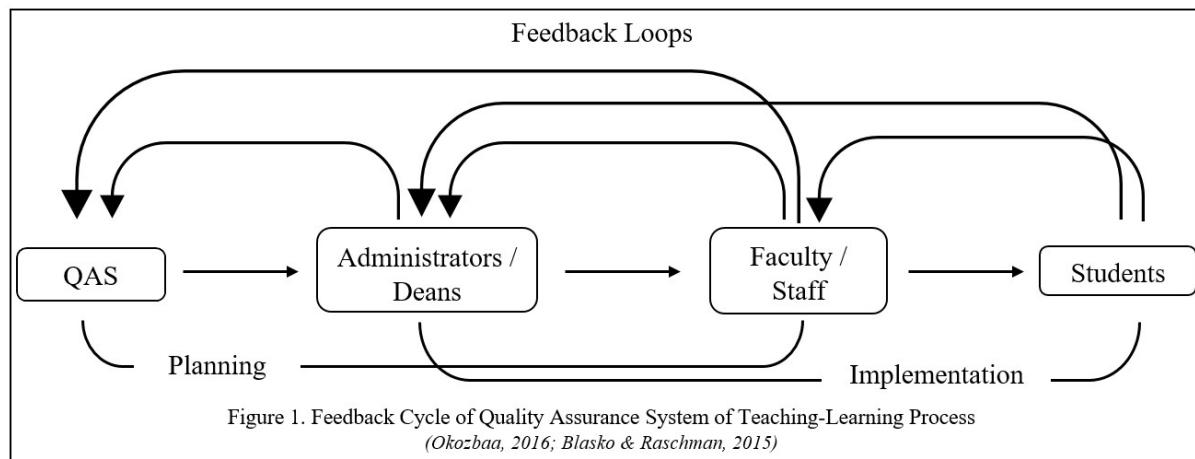
programs and educational institutions (CHED, 2012). The commission is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the quality assurance systems in place at all higher educational institutions in the Philippines (CHED Memo no. 15, 2005). The Commission of Higher Education's role in promoting and maintaining quality education through quality assurance, particularly in the teaching and learning process, is very evident (Ruiz & Junio-Sabio, 2012), as evidenced by more stringent regulations for university autonomy, particularly in four (4) key areas: governance and management, quality teaching and research, and student support and communication (CHED Annual Report, 2009). According to Segismundo (2017), an essential tool for achieving quality education, particularly in the teaching-learning area, is accreditation.

The University of La Salette, Inc.'s quality assurance system is housed in the Office of the Quality Enhancement Cell, which reports to the Vice-President for Academics. It is a newly established office as mandated by University typology. It is not older than five (5) years. Its duties and responsibilities are geared toward promoting, maintaining, and enhancing the institution's quality assurance mechanisms. The roles and functions of the University's quality assurance system are not well understood by the average faculty member. This situation may be caused by policies governing the quality assurance system that are communicated to the university's middle supervisors – deans and office heads. In this regard, the study seeks to ascertain how deans and faculty perceive the quality assurance system at the University of La Salette, Inc. and its effect on the teaching-learning process.

Conceptual Framework

According to the Danielson Model of quality teaching, the teaching-learning system involves four dimensions: 1.) Planning and preparation (method of instruction); 2.) Classroom environment (environment in which learning occurs); 3.) Instruction (student participation and engagement); and 4.) Professional responsibilities (intention to improve or enhance capabilities) (Almadani, Reid & Rodrigues, 2011). Along these dimensions, the quality assurance manager, deans/administrators, and teachers must collaborate and gain insight into how each can contribute to achieving quality and identifying areas of the teaching-learning process that require attention (Danielson, 2007; Higueras, 2009).

The primary responsibility of an educational institution's quality assurance system is to ensure that the academic services provided by the school adhere to established standards, such as the ASEAN educational standards in Asia. Additionally, it is necessary to consider the difficulties and the impact of quality assurance strategies on the goals and objectives for them to be realistic and effective (Leiber, Stensaker & Harvey, 2015; Seyfried & Pohlenz, 2018). The quality assurance manager's role should be more consultative with teachers, deans, and administrators (Almadani, Reid & Rodrigues, 2011; Seyfried & Pohlenz, 2018).

Figure 1. Feedback Cycle of Quality Assurance System of Teaching-Learning Process
(Okozbaa, 2016; Blasko & Raschman, 2015)

A quality assurance system is a collaborative mechanism comprised of a quality assurance manager, administrators/deans, and teachers/staff. They all collaborate to develop strategies for meeting quality education standards (Almadani, Reid, & Rodrigues, 2011). The same team, led by the quality assurance manager, assesses and evaluates the strategies' implementation concerning the desired outcome (Basheka, Nkataand & Barifaijo, 2010). Regular and random assessment and evaluation must ensure objective results and a high-quality feedback cycle (Harvey & Williams, 2010; Williams, 2016). This process requires mutual trust in monitoring activities to maintain a high level of engagement and sufficient flexibility to achieve the desired results. Feedback loops from students, teachers, deans, and administrators must be considered when developing future strategies and actions to address identified areas of concern (Okogbaa, 2015; Blasko & Raschman, 2016). Students' evaluations of the teaching-learning process are also an integral part of the loop regarding content and instructional strategies. Moreover, the quality assurance manager's primary responsibility is to collate and reconcile all of these feedbacks to formulate solutions and strategies that adhere to the standards (Neshifthefhe, Nobongoza & Maphosa, 2016).

Research Questions

The study aims to specifically answer the following:
1.   What are the perceived tasks of the Quality Assurance System of the University among the faculty and deans?
2.   What are the perceived impacts of the tasks of the Quality Assurance System on the teaching-learning process of the University among the faculty and deans?
3.   Is there a relationship between the perceived tasks of the Quality Assurance System and the perceived impacts of the functions on the teaching-learning process
4.   Is there a difference in the perceived tasks of the Quality Assurance System and the perceived impacts of the functions on the teaching-learning process when grouped according to the profile of the deans and faculty?

The study is significant for the following reasons. First, no study has been conducted to evaluate the functions and responsibilities of the quality assurance system of the university. Moreover, academic employees perceive overlap in the roles and responsibilities of the quality assurance manager and the Vice-President for Academics. Thirdly, the quality assurance system was created as a requirement for accreditation and typology status of the institution. The study's findings will provide perspectives into faculty and dean perceptions of the quality

assurance system that was established to assist them in performing their teaching and facilitating learning.

Methodology

Research Design. The study used the descriptive correlational method to determine the respondents' perceptions on the tasks of the university's quality assurance system and the perceived effects of these tasks on their teaching-learning process. It aims to describe the perceived functions of the quality assurance system and the impact of these tacks in the teaching-learning

Participants. The faculty and deans were the study respondents because they are the ones responsible for the teaching-learning process. There were 77 faculty members and seven deans. Purposive sampling was done. Meanwhile, 15 faculty members were not able to participate due to various reasons that they could not attend the webinar.

Table 1. Profile of the Participants

		f	%
Gender	Male	28	40.6
	Female	39	56.5
Age	59-68 years old	7	10.4
	49-58 years old	21	31.3
	39-48 years old	14	20.9
	29-38 years old	10	14.9
	19-28 years old	22	32.8
Department	College of Teacher Education, Arts & sciences	19	28.4
	College of Business Education	10	14.9
	College of Engineering & Architecture	5	7.5
	College of Information Technology	5	7.5
	College of Medicine & Allied Medical Programs	13	19.4
	College of Accountancy	3	4.5
	College of Criminology	2	3.0
	College of Nursing, Public Health & Midwifery	6	9.0
	Department of Student Services	1	1.5
	Graduate School	1	1.5
	Library	2	3.0
Educational Attainment	Bachelor's Degree	26	37.7
	Master's Degree	31	44.9
	Doctoral	8	11.6
Position	Deans	7	10.1
	Faculty	62	89.9

Data Collection and Procedure. The survey questionnaire used by the researchers was a modification from the study of Saeed (2018). The instrument comprises ten (10) items, 4 for tasks and 6 for the impacts. The task variables were: provisions of trainings, support services, the conduct of academic audits, and encouragement of research. Furthermore, the impact variables were professional development and academic performance, evaluation and assessments, motivation of participation of institutional activities, curriculum implementation, and academic workload.

After securing approval from the School Administration, the questionnaire was administered during the webinar on research capabilities to ensure one hundred percent participation and retrieval. All faculty and deans were requested to participate in the study.

Data Analysis. The responses of the participants were analyzed using a four-point scale, with numerical and qualitative description:

Table 2 Four-Point Scale.

Scale	Numerical Range	Qualitative Description
4	3.25 – 4.00	Strongly agree
3	2.50 – 3.24	Agree
2	1.75 – 2.49	Disagree
1	1.00 – 1.74	Strongly

The answers were subjected to computations of mean and standard deviation. The Pearson's r was used for correlation and independent t-test and ANOVA was used to find the differences in the responses of the participants' perceptions.

Results and Discussions

In view of the research questions, the following are the salient findings of the study:

Table 3. Frequency, Percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses of the Participants on the Perceived Tasks of the Quality Assurance System

Items	4	3	2	1	M	SD
1. The training provided has aided me in making my course syllabus and learning plans	25 (38.5)	29 (30.8)	8 (12.3)	3 (4.6)	3.22	0.84
2. QA/QES has supported the learning process through various support systems	19 (29.2)	31 (47.7)	10 (15.4)	3 (4.6)	3.05	0.81
3. QA/QES conducts regular academic audits to give recommendations and solutions to challenges I face in teaching	21 (32.3)	27 (41.5)	14 (21.2)	3 (4.6)	3.02	0.86
4. QA/QES has encouraged research and scientific productions	21 (32.3)	28 (43.1)	12 (18.5)	4 (6.2)	3.02	0.88
Overall Mean		3.08			Agree	

Note: percentages do not add up to 100% due to missing responses

The respondents agreed that the provisions of training to aid in the making of the course syllabus, provides a support system for the learning process, conducts regular academic audits and solutions and encourage research and scientific productions are tasks of the Quality Assurance System of the University. These tasks were part of the internal mechanisms of a higher education institution to determine the relationships between the administration and the people are mandated to function within a set of established practices to reach the intended goal (Hwang & Colyvas, 2011 Lawrence et al., 2009). These tasks of quality assurance system are required as part of the school's compliance to international, national, and regional standards/framework of quality education in congruence to the school's typology (Elken & Stensaker, 2018; UNSW, 2017)

Table 4. Frequency, Percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses of the Participants on the Perceived Impacts on the Teaching-Learning Process of the tasks of the Quality Assurance System

Items	4	3	2	1	M	SD
1. QA/QES helps me develop my professional and academic performance	29 (44.6)	24 (36.9)	10 (15.4)	1 (1.5)	3.27	0.78
2. QA/QES enables me to continuously develop my teaching skills through evaluation and periodic assessments	29 (44.6)	24 (36.9)	10 (15.4)	2 (3.1)	3.23	0.83
3. QA/QES has motivated me to actively participate in the University activities especially those that could improve my teaching abilities	28 (43.1)	23 (35.4)	11 (16.9)	2 (3.1)	3.20	0.84
4. QA/QES has been very helpful in my execution and implementation of the curriculum of my program/subjects	31 (47.7)	20 (30.8)	10 (15.4)	3 (4.6)	3.23	0.89
5. QA/QES has motivated me to make improvements of my learning assessment methods	32 (49.2)	23 (35.4)	7 (10.8)	3 (4.6)	3.29	0.84
6. QA/QES increases my academic workload	23 (35.4)	29 (44.6)	11 (16.9)	1 (1.5)	3.16	0.76
Overall Mean		3.23			Agree	

Note: percentages do not add up to 100% due to missing responses

The respondents agree that the Quality Assurance System's tasks affect professional and academic performance, the development of teaching skills through evaluation and periodic assessments, motivation to participate in activities aimed at improving teaching abilities, and assessing student learning and the execution and implementation of the program's curriculum.

The significance of quality assurance tasks can be quantified only when the effectiveness and efficiency of the teaching-learning process are tangibly demonstrated through the quality of graduates produced by the school (Basheka, Nkataand & Barifaijo, 2013; Blasko & Rashchman, 2015). Internal quality assurance frameworks are based on the premise that an institution's teaching-learning process is only as good as its teachers (Biggs. 2002; Schindler, Puls-Elvidge, Welzant & Crawford, 2015). How teachers and administrators perceive their roles and the quality assurance system's functions in achieving quality education can indicate the degree to which strategies and techniques align with the institution's mission and vision (Netshifthefhe, Nobongoza & Maphosa, 2016; Williams, 2016).

Table 5. Relationship between Perceived Tasks of Quality Assurance Systems and Perceived Impact on the Teaching-Learning Process

Variables	Perceived Impacts	
	r	p-value
Perceived Tasks	0.89	p<0.001

As shown in table 5, there is a strong to perfect positive relationship between the perceived tasks of the Quality Assurance System and the perceived impact of these tasks on the teaching-learning process.

Quality assurance is a strategy of all higher education institutions to gain recognition in the international arena, especially among the developing and poor countries (Ryan, 2015). It is focused on improving the teaching-learning process to provide quality education (Javier, 2015; Jung, Wong, & Belawati, 2013). The way the people whose responsibility is focused on providing quality education understand the importance of quality assuring teaching and learning will there be a quality culture and be able to meet expectations and standards (Netshifthefhe, Nobongoza & Maphosa, 2016). The quality assurance framework is always intertwined with the organization's goals and quality of teaching and learning (Chong & Ho, 2009).

Table 6. Difference of Responses of the Participants in terms of Age, Gender, Educational Attainment and Position

Variables	Age	Gender	Educational Attainment	Position
Perceived Tasks	$F(4)=1.74$ $p=0.153$	$t(65)=0.77$ $p=0.447$	$F(2)=2.33$ $p=0.106$	$t(67)=0.39$ $p=0.697$
Perceived Impacts	$F(4)=1.59$ $p=0.188$	$t(65)=0.12$ $p=0.905$	$F(2)=2.12$ $p=0.129$	$t(67)=0.26$ $p=0.793$

The table above shows no significant difference in the perceived tasks of the Quality Assurance System and its impact on the teaching-learning process of the respondents in terms of age, gender, educational attainment, and position.

The demographic characteristics of participants did not influence the perceived tasks of the quality assurance and the perceived impact of the tasks on the teaching-learning process. According to Newton (2000) and Williams (2016), the teaching-learning process is based on mutual trust in performing quality assurance activities to achieve the desired results and not the physical characteristics of people concerned in achieving and maintaining quality. Establishing quality culture that involves everyone in the institution creates an environment that embraces and assumes that implemented strategies are effective, significant, and equitable to the institution's goals (Technological Higher Education Association, 2017).

Table 7. Difference of the Responses of the Participants on the Perceived Tasks of the Quality Assurance in terms of the Department they belong

Department	M	SD	N	df	F	p-value
CAS	3.11	0.65	19	7	8.38	<0.001
CBE	1.98	0.65	10			
CMAMP	3.42	0.51	13			
CON	3.64	0.40	6			
CEA	3.87	0.30	5			
CIT	2.95	0.62	5			
COA	3.13	0.52	4			
OFFICES	3.4	0.55	5			

Results showed that there is statistical difference in the responses of the participants on the perceived tasks of the Quality Assurance System. Among the Departments, CBE (College of Business Education perceived that the given items are not the tasks of the Quality Assurance System because the ten (10) respondents, 1 dean and 9 faculty disagree that the given tasks are not the job of the Quality Assurance System.

Table 8. Difference of the Responses of the Participants on the Perceived Impact of the Tasks of the Quality Assurance System on the Teaching-Learning Process in terms of the Department they belong

Department	M	SD	N	df	F	p-value
CAS	3.30	0.55	19	7	10.12	
CBE	2.15	0.58	10	<0.001		
CMAMP	3.62	0.39	13			
CON	3.64	0.50	6			
CEA	3.80	0.18	5			
CIT	3.43	0.47	5			
COA	3.25	0.29	4			
OFFICES	3.37	0.51	5			

Base on the result of One-way ANOVA, there is a significant difference in participants' responses according to their Department. CBE (College of Business Education) believed that the Quality Assurance System's tasks did not affect the teaching-learning process because respondents disagreed with the Quality Assurance System's assigned tasks.

When participants are grouped according to their Department, the difference in their responses regarding their perception of quality assurance tasks and the impact of these tasks on the teaching-learning process can be explained by Quality Assurance Principle 5. Such a principle states that for quality assurance policies/strategies to be significant, they must be proportionate to the needs a. (Technological Higher Education Association, 2017). Different teachers and departments have various effective initiatives, necessitating a variety of operational quality assessments and commitments (Matei & Iwinska, 2016).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The perceived tasks of the quality assurance system are perceived to have a strong impact on the teaching-learning process. Indirectly, the respondents understand the roles and functions of the quality assurance system of the University in improving the quality of education offered by the institution. This means that the people who have been given the responsibility to implement quality assurance in teaching and learning embrace the requirements and standards set by accrediting bodies for the best outcome – globally competitive graduates.

The study was based mainly on the perceptions of quality education and the roles and responsibilities of a newly created quality assurance system. No pre-survey information was given to the respondents. The study was limited by its objective of just finding out what they think would be the tasks of the quality assurance system and how it has influenced the teaching-learning process to which the faculty and deans are the main players. In this regard, the following recommendations were given:
1.   Institutions must provide information on the possible creation of programs and departments that are recommended by accrediting bodies to enhance the delivery of quality education;
2.   A culture of quality must be practiced through policies and regulations to give insights that quality is everybody's concern and responsibility;
3.   All teaching and learning activities emanate from the curriculum so that people entrusted to implement them must embrace their roles through accountability; the institution, therefore, must emphasize responsibility among its academic employees even at the beginning of their term;

4.   Lastly, the quality assurance system is not an independent part of the school and the institution must ensure that the quality assurance system is the school, the individuals that make up the school and the students that rely on the institution to be part of the hired classes of graduates through the feedback system, making all feedback, big and small, relevant and trivial be given a chance to be considered in the pursuit of excellence and quality.

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