

UNDERSTANDING QUALITY IN PHILIPPINE PRIVATE NON-SECTARIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

An inverse relationship exists between the growing number of Private Non-Sectarian Higher Education Institutions (PNSHEI) and diminishing student performance in terms of graduate employment and passing rates in the national board examinations. The purpose of this multiple case study was to describe how three Philippine PNSHEIs that operate as both education providers and business ventures understand Quality. A multiple case study methodology and two level sampling were conducted. Three PNSHEIs that represent the vertical typology of *Autonomous*, *Deregulated*, and *Regulated* private colleges or universities in the Philippines were selected and within each site, an administrator, a faculty member, a student, and a parent of an enrolled student were interviewed. Documents, observations and extant literature were used for data triangulation. A within- case, and cross-case analysis were performed. Findings of the study suggest that leadership and governance were essential to drive all other institutional efforts to promote quality higher education and within each institution Quality was predicated on accreditation but understood by the individual participants as stakeholder satisfaction. Results suggest that mandatory accreditation and demographic specific strategies to promote stakeholder satisfaction are essential for Quality in Philippine PNSHEIs.

INTRODUCTION

Each year, hundreds of thousands of Filipino students graduate to unemployment at the same time that thousands of job opportunities remain unfilled. This contrarian situation where there are many more employment opportunities than there are qualified college graduates is a direct indictment of Philippine higher education quality.

The Commission of Higher Education (CHED) reported that in AY2017-2018, 349,959 out of a total 708,445 or 49% of all graduates came from private higher education institutions (CHED, 2018). The last five years has seen an increase in the number of proprietary higher education institutions in the Philippines from 1,307 in 2012 to 1,323 in 2017. At the same time, the average passing rates for national licensure examinations across all types of higher education institutions fell from 42.61% reported as of AY 2012 -2013 to 36.82 % as reported in AY 2017-2018. Specifically, passing rates for the licensure examination for teacher education who continue to comprise the largest number of licensed professionals in the country (JobsFit, 2022, p.15) fell from 41.87 % in AY 2012-2013 to 31.38% in AY 2017-2018 (CHED, 2018). Paqueo et al., (2012) noted that low passing rates in national licensure examinations of an institution's graduates are evidence of low quality education (in Conchada & Tiongco, 2015, p.2).

The CHED Strategic Plan of 2011-2016 described the Philippine higher education system as “chaotic” where there is “a lack of overall vision, framework and plan, a deteriorating quality of higher education, and limited access to quality higher education”. The consequence of which has led to “job mismatch and over qualification with existing demand in the labor market (p. 12-13).

Tan (2012) argued that increased demand for higher education was driven by the education for - all policy adopted by many previous administrations without accounting for the necessary funding for its proper implementation and a “lack of understanding that misconstrued higher education as a basic human right as is basic education when it is clearly not”. She states “the labor market does not demand all workers to be college – educated”, opened the doors for the private sector to enter the higher education industry resulting in the disproportionately large number and proliferation of the PNSHEIs (p.149).

On top of this very predictable opportunity, RA 8424 -the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, allows private educational institutions some form of “equitable relief” in return for its contribution to national development:

According to Sec 27 (B):

A 'Proprietary educational institution' is any private school maintained and administered by private individuals or groups with an issued permit to operate from the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS), or the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), or the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), as the case may be, in accordance with existing laws and

regulations (1997). RA 8424 (1997) as amended by RA 9337 (2005) grants a preferential tax rate of 10% to any “Proprietary educational institution” that was issued a permit to operate from the DEC, CHED, or TESDA. Proprietary educational institutions are also exempt from VAT (Sec. 109 (H) of RA9337).

The private non-sectarian higher education institution is both an education provider and a business venture, yet it is tasked with providing the greatest of social goods. Cao & Li (2014) argue that “education is hinged upon life-long, value-laden processes and outcomes that impact not only the direct stakeholders such as students and parents; but also have a great impact on industry and society as a whole (p.70). The business venture is at natural odds with its mandate to provide quality education and yet the PNSHEIs continue to graduate ill-prepared students and is best described by Li (2012) and Zhou (2009) who state “the motivation of profit making and economic sustenance in private HEIs often overrides the goals of providing students with an intellectual experience and helping them achieve educational objectives (in Cao & Li, 2014, p.71).

Levy (2010) concludes that majority of PNSHEIs in the Philippines maybe then described as “questionable in academic quality and as having profit-making intentions” which are ‘usually family-owned and have limited capital and resources. Therefore, most of them offer fields of study that require minimal upfront investments but yield great profits in return (in ADB, 2012, p.12).

The growing population, the education for all mentality, the inability of government to fund higher education, the legal protection and tax incentives make a very compelling case for the private sector entry into the higher education industry. Not surprisingly, in Colombia where private higher education has also been found to be wanting in quality, a researcher found that “there is widespread belief that lower the quality of the school, the higher are its profits” (Patrinos, 1990, p.165). On top of this, Padua (2003) explains that “the typical Filipino family values the college diploma so dearly regardless of where this diploma is obtained such that cheap, substandard schools are deriving handsome economic returns by taking advantage of the situation” (p.9).

The documented inverse relationship between the steadily increasing number of private higher education and education quality notwithstanding, several private higher educational institutions in the region have been able to establish a reputation for quality education. In China, Cao (2008) found “some colleges have connected theory and practice in their teaching by establishing niche programs and excellent curriculum through inputs from both academia and the practitioners Some of their services and outreaches to local community and business have delivered extraordinary achievements” (in Cao & Li, 2014, p.71). In Malaysia, Chapman (2018) reported that a private Malaysian university had recently joined the ranks of the top 2% of universities in the world with two others following in the QS World Rankings closely (p.1-2).

Investigating how three PNSHEIs understand quality is compelling. To provide institutional leaders, government regulators and the general public with concrete examples of how others, who in the same situation have been able to deliver quality education within these private non-sectarian higher education institutions.

Quality in Higher Education

The literature on education quality is both numerous and confusing resulting in no single definition of Quality that can be applied in the study of higher education quality, just as there was no single definition of quality in the manufacturing and services sector as theorized by Deming (1982;1986B), Juran (1992), and Crosby (1984). Ruben (1995 as cited in Cao and Li, 2014) differentiates quality in education from other Quality found in other products and services:

According to Redmond, et al., (2008 as cited in Cao & Li, 2014):

First, the product of education is not a physically tangible object; instead, it is hinged upon life-long, value-laden processes and outcomes. Second, students, the primary customers, are not the only stakeholders; parents, prospective employers and even the society as whole are also involved in the service (p.70).

Ruben (1995 as cited in Cao & Li, 2014) suggests that education quality is defined across three dimensions:

1. Administrative quality that pertains to governance, leadership, management and planning;
2. Academic quality that pertains to instruction, service, and outreach;
3. Relationship quality that pertains to the relationship of and among the faculty and students, staff and students, and the HEI and the public (p.71).

Harvey and Green (1993) define education quality as having five dimensions. These five dimensions are:

1. Traditional concept of quality

2. Conformance with specifications or standards
3. Quality as fitness for purpose
4. Quality as effectiveness in achieving institutional goals
5. Quality as meeting customers stated or implied needs.

Harvey and Green (1993) conclude that different stakeholders have their own criteria and are in the best position to judge quality:

Looking at the criteria different interest groups use in judging quality rather than starting with a single definition of quality might offer a practical solution to a complex philosophical question. Not because it is atheoretical, but because it recognizes and acknowledges the rights of different interest groups to have different perspectives. On the other hand, if we want to find a core of criteria for assessing quality in higher education it is essential that we understand the different conceptions of quality that inform the preferences of different stakeholders (p.29).

Harvey and Green's (1993) five dimensions of Quality have been adopted by scholars, experts, government, and multi-lateral agencies as the basis for their own definition of quality in higher education. The literature shows that quality in higher education can be defined along the lines of its application or standards, and by the stakeholders involved in the pursuit of Quality.

Schindler, et al., (2015) propose a Conceptual Model of Quality Depicting Broad and Specific Strategies for Defining Quality in Higher Education. This conceptual model depicted below as Figure 1 is drawn in a concentric circle with three portions working from the innermost circle to the outermost ring. The central focus of the model calls for stakeholders to define quality. The second circle has four quadrants each with "classifications of quality" that are already well established in the literature and depicted in the middle portion of the model as; accountable, purposeful, transformative, and exceptional (p.7):

- (a) Quality as accountable is defined as "accountability to stakeholders for the optimal use of resources and the delivery of accurate educational products and services with zero defects" (p.7).
- (b) Quality as purposeful is defined as "conformance to a stated mission/vision or a set of standards, including those defined by accrediting and/or regulatory bodies" (p.7).
- (c) Quality as transformative is defined as "positive change in student learning (affective, cognitive, and psychomotor domains) and personal and professional potential (p.7).
- (d) Quality as exceptional is defined as "achievement of distinction or exclusivity through the fulfillment of high standards" (p.7).

The outermost portion of the model identifies several possible indicators of quality "that may be used to assess and measure each of four concepts of quality". Schindler et al., (2015) argue that the quality indicators in the outermost ring may be used for each of the concepts of quality (p.7)

The model put forward by Schindler, et al., (2015) can then be assessed against structures and procedures practiced within the institution and found in "Administrative Functions, Student Support Services, Instructional (education content & instructor competency), which represent "desired inputs, and Student Performance Indicators or desired outputs" for each of the participant institutions (p.6).

Structures and procedures are all activities that are put in place by leadership in the different functions of the institution that allows for implementation of both day to day operations, and to achieve strategic goals. Identifying structures and procedures that promote Quality within the three institutions was essential as this describes "how" Quality is promoted.

- (a) Administrative indicators are defined as:

A set of quality indicators that pertain to the administrative functions of an institution, including developing a relevant mission and vision, establishing institutional legitimacy, achieving internal/external standards and goals, and procuring resources for optimal institutional functioning (Cheng & Tam, 1997; Commonwealth of Learning, 2009; Hill, et al.,2003; Iacovidou, et al.,2009; Mishra, 2007; Online Learning Consortium, 2014; Owlia &Aspinwall, 1996; Zineldin, et al., 2011, in Schindler, et al., 2015, p.6).

- (b) Student support indicators are defined as:

A set of quality indicators that pertain to the availability and responsiveness of student support services, e.g., the degree to which student complaints are adequately addressed (Garvin, 1987; Hill, et al., 2003; Iacovidou, et al.,2009; International Organization for Standardization, (n.d.); Lagrosen et al., 2004; Mishra, 2007; National Institute of Standards and Technology, 2015; Oldfield & Baron, 2000;

Online Learning Consortium, 2014; Owlia & Aspinwall, 1996; Quality Matters, 2014; Wong, 2012; Zineldin et al., 2011, in Schindler, et al., 2015, p.6).

(c) Instructional indicators are defined as:

A set of quality indicators that pertain to the relevancy of educational content and the competence of instructors, e.g., programs and courses that prepare students for employment (Biggs, 2001; Commonwealth of Learning, 2009; Harvey & Green, 1993; Hill, et al., 2003; Iacovidou, et al., 2009; Online Learning Consortium, 2014; Quality Matters, 2014; Tam, 2014; Wong, 2012 in Schindler, et al., 2015, p.6.)

(d) Student performance indicators are defined as:

A set of quality indicators that pertain to student engagement with curriculum, faculty, and staff, and increases knowledge, skills, and abilities that lead to gainful employment, e.g. increased critical thinking skills (Bogue, 1998; Cheng & Tam, 1997; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Knight, 1996; Haworth & Conrad, 1997; Iacovidou, et al., 2009; Scott, 2008 in Schindler, et al., 2015, p.6).

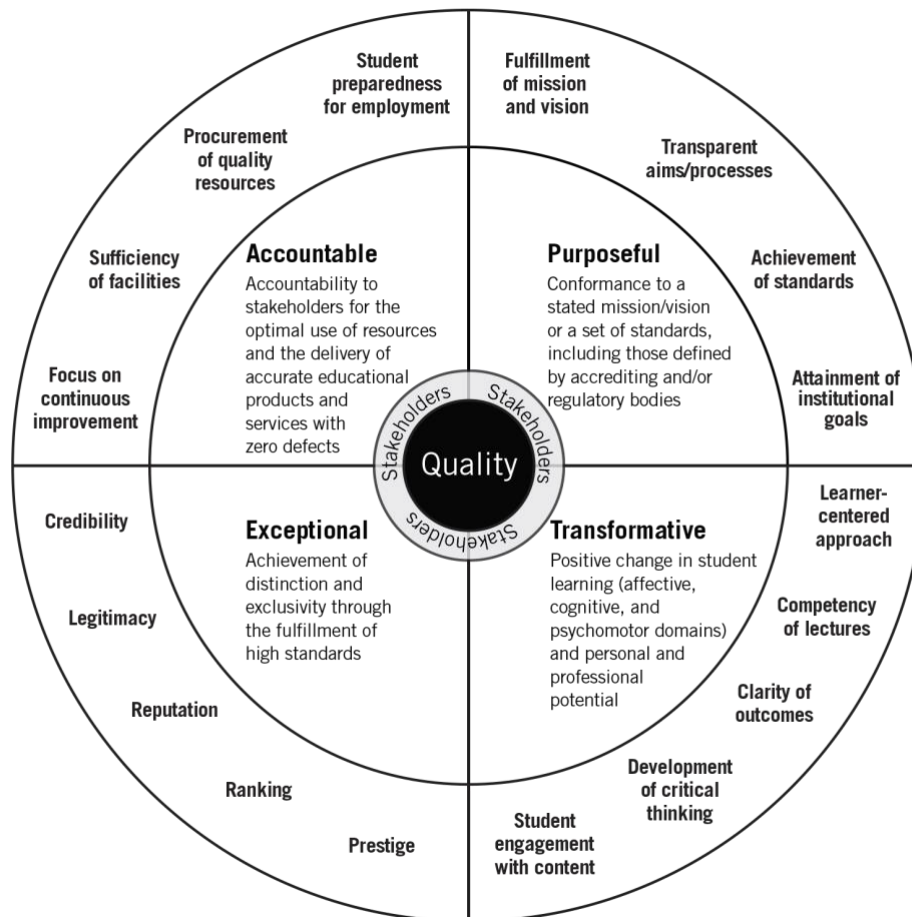


Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Quality Depicting Broad and Specific Strategies for Defining Quality in Higher Education (Schindler, et al., 2015).

Quality is not Quality Assurance

While a common definition of Quality is not to be found in the literature, it may be construed on personal terms by stakeholders (Harvey, 1996; UNICEF, 2000; Adams, 1993; Harvey & Green, 1993; Iacovidou et al., 2009), and by inference may then be classified as internal to the user, while Quality Assurance has been defined by many regulators in the literature and thus can be assumed to be external to the user (Elassy, 2015).

In another study, Quality Assurance was defined as “making judgement against defined criteria”, while Quality is “less bound to allow for complex discourse and more interpretative space” (Filippakou and Tapper, 2008, p.

91, as cited in Elassy, 2015, p.257). Harvey (2007) argues that Quality “is about the nature of learning” while Quality Assurance is concerned with “convincing others about the adequacy of the learning process” (p.5).

The difference between Quality and Quality assurance is more concrete in the literature and reactions to both Quality and Quality assurance by different stakeholders have been noted by Elassy (2015):

It was thought that Quality Assurance approaches were concerned with reporting, self-assessment and performance indicators, and ignored research into learning innovations, but Education Quality is concerned with the improvement of learning and teaching experiences. Additionally, quality in the form of “assurance” is often met with resistance being perceived as the concern of administrators rather than academics (p.257).

Harvey (1996) argues that Quality Assurance is detrimental to Quality:

I would not wish to deny that such accountability can lead to reform of teaching, learning and the curriculum. However, it is not a direct influence on the quality of learning nor is it likely to have a sustained impact. Indeed, EQM ought to carry a health warning. Accountability may damage learning by diverting academic staff's attention away from the improvement of learning, to compliance with the bureaucratic imperative and to attempts to improve performance on indicators that are, at the very best, poor operationalization of learning quality (p.10).

Private Higher Education in Asia

In 2012, The Asian Development Bank (ADB) published a report entitled *Private Higher Education Across Asia: Expanding Access, Search for Quality* and describes the impact of the rapid growth of private higher education in Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. The private higher education options within the Asian marketplace ranges from several highly reputable institutions that have attained world-wide acclaim in the academics, to the majority of the type of institution that is representative of the private HEI sector equated with being of poor quality (p.8).

According to the ADB (2012), private HEIs in the region are known for their “dubious quality”:

The majority of them are still small, family-owned, non-selective in the admissions criteria. Most private HEIs are self-funded, relying heavily on tuition and fees. Therefore, they often need to deal with trade-offs between providing good instructional quality and ensuring return on investment to their owners and shareholders. This consequence has triggered governments' concern about the quality and efficiency of private HEIs in many developing countries (ADB, 2012, p.1).

Private higher education has been growing around the world where total enrolment in private higher education systems is now at 31%, in Asia, 35% of the total population represents the number of student enrolment in private HEIs (ADB, 2012, p.6). While growth in any other sector of the economy would be welcomed with open arms, the rate at which private HEIs are sprouting up in the world is of great concern due to the issues associated with the private ownership of a well-documented social good such as education (p.1). Governments in Asia, Indonesia and the Philippines in particular are especially concerned with the “quality of the private HEIs while ensuring access to higher education” in the two countries that are experiencing immense growth in private higher education (ADB, 2012, p.8).

Private Higher Education in China

A collaborative study done by the UK Department of International Development and the World Bank entitled *Non-government / Private Education in China* (2004) as cited in Han (2004) described how the Chinese government anticipated the increase in private education and designed its private education promotion laws to ensure both quantity (access) and quality of private education by preserving the public welfare nature of education.

The promotion Law clearly states that “Non-government/private schools are public welfare undertakings” (Han, 2004, p.8), such that the private schools are not typical business entities where public interest comes before maximizing profit.

Article 25 of the Chinese Education law (as cited in Han, 2004) states “schools shall not take profit as its aim” (p.9). Yet to create the balance between the public nature of education and the return required by private investors, the law promoting non-government / private schools states:

After the cost of a private school is deducted, the funds for its development are withheld and the sum of money for other necessary expenses is retained in accordance with the relevant regulations of the

state, the investor may obtain a reasonable amount of requital from the cash surplus of the school (Han, 2004, p.8).

A study entitled *Quality and Quality Assurance in Chinese Private Higher Education* by Cao and Li (2014) observed that initially, the private HEIs in China had several of the negative issues associated with the rapid growth of private ownership of schools in other countries such that “the enrolling public considered private HEIs to be of low quality” (p.66). Also, Ozturgut (2011 as cited in Cao and Li, 2014) found that “private HEIs focus on raising enrollment numbers at the expense of school infrastructure” (p.71.). While Yan (2008 as cited in Cao and Li (2014) states that “private HEIs invest in infrastructure at the expense of student learning” (p.71).

Hayhoe et al., (2011 as cited in Cao and Li, 2014) observed that “family – style management” was common to the private Chinese HEI (p.71). Li (2012 as cited in Cao and Li, 2014) and Zhou (2009 as cited in Cao and Li, 2014) state “the motivation for profit making in the private HEI often overrides the goals of providing students with an intellectual experience and helping them achieve educational objectives” (p.71). Yet, because of government intervention the education quality in private Chinese HEIs has improved (Cao et al., 2011, as cited in Cao & Li, 2014, p.74).

Cao (2008 as cited in Cao and Li, 2014) found that several private HEIs in China have produced excellent results by “establishing niche programs and developing excellent curriculum by working with both academe and industry”. The positive effects of these tactics adopted by the private Chinese HEI has been “well received by business and society”, thus building a good reputation for their “well-designed academic programs, effective management, and state of the art facilities” (p.69). The result of which Li (2012 as cited in Cao and Li, 2014) suggests, that graduates of these private Chinese HEIs may now look forward to very good career opportunities.

The model of private higher education in China shows that education quality can be driven by strong government intervention for Quality, and eventually “when the sector stabilizes, market forces should take over to sustain the quality imperative of the HEIs” (Cao & Li, 2014, p.78).

Today, wealthy families in China prefer to send their children to private schools over traditional schools, to avoid the “pressure-cooker effect of traditional schools associated with examinations that don’t teach creativity” and mainly because they want to send their children to America for college education (Mangin, 2015, p.2).

Private Higher Education in Malaysia

Anis et al., (2014) conducted a study to define quality in private higher learning institutions in Malaysia. They found that stakeholders had varying views of quality education. Respondents who were quality directors equated education quality with “fulfilling satisfaction and meeting stakeholders needs” (p.383). Most of the respondents including prospective employers and parents agreed that the “quality of graduates are the main priority”. “Teaching and learning, accreditation, and quality of lecturers” were other definitions that resulted from the study (pp.382-383), while some students who participated in the study equated quality education with “quality of the lecturer” as students “perceived the lecturer as responsible for teaching, maturing, and nurturing them through the learning process” (p.383).

In 2013, the Malaysian government issued the *Malaysian Education Blueprint (2013-2025)* that stated plainly its national aspirations for quality education at all levels such that “Malaysian children will have excellent education that is uniquely Malaysian and comparable to the best international systems” (p. E-9). In 2018, one private Malaysian universities has made it to the world’s top 2% of the QS World University Rankings, while two other private universities follow suit (Chapman, 2018).

Private Higher Education in the Philippines

In 1994 The Higher Education Act, also known as RA 7722, paved the way for the creation of the Commission of Higher Education (CHED). Section 2 states “the State shall protect, foster and promote the right of all citizens to affordable quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to ensure that education shall be accessible to all”. The CHED charter also allows the commission “to provide incentives to institutions of higher learning, public and private, whose programs are accredited or whose needs are for accreditation purposes “(Sec. 14).

The CHED is mandated to “promulgate such rules and regulations and exercise such other powers and functions as may be necessary to carry out effectively the purpose and objectives of this Act” (Sec. 8, N), and “perform such other functions as may be necessary for its effective operations and for the continued enhancement, growth

or development of higher education” (Sec. 8, O). Section 6 article II of CHED CMO 46 (2012) defines quality as “the alignment and consistency of the learning environment with the institution’s vision, mission, and goals demonstrated by exceptional learning and service outcomes and the development of a culture of quality” (p.3).

CHED’s three perspectives of quality are based on the research of Harvey & Green (1993):

- (a) Quality as “fitness for purpose” is generally used by international bodies for assessment and accreditation. This perspective requires the translation of the institutions vision, mission, and goals into learning outcomes, programs and systems;
- (b) Quality is “exceptional” means either being distinctive; exceeding very high standards, or conforms to standards based on a system of comparability using criteria and ratings, the third characteristic underlies CHED’s definition of “exceptional”;
- (c) Quality as “developing a culture of quality”, is the transformational dimension of the CHED notion of quality (CHED CMO 46, 2012, p.3).

In 2012, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) issued CMO no. 46 “which lays the groundwork of Quality and Quality assurance of HEIs in the Philippines”. Essentially Article 2 section 6 of the CMO defined quality as “fitness for purpose, quality as exceptional, and developing a culture of quality” (CHED, 2012). There is a horizontal and vertical typology in the CHED approach to quality.

The horizontal typology describes the type of institution, such as professional institutions, colleges and universities, while the vertical typology is “based on the institutional assessment and commitment to excellence”. HEIs are then classified as autonomous, deregulated and regulated depending on its “institutional quality” (CHED CMO 46, 2012, p.9). Furthermore, professional Institutions are those that “develop technical knowledge which lead to professional practice “. Colleges are communities – oriented, while universities are expected to develop innovation as resources for Philippine national development (CHED CMO 46, 2012, p.7-8).

To better manage the higher education sector that is dominated primarily by privately –owned non-sectarian HEIs, the CHED developed a “comprehensive and concrete set of rules and regulations for the proper, effective and reasonable implementation of laws” (MORPHE) through the promulgation of CMO 40 s 2008 which describes the government’s guidelines and technicalities that private HEIs must fulfill in order to attain recognition and a license to operate or to continue to operate from the CHED.

While ideal in conception, the MORPHE is defeatist in its mission as its main powers are limited by its functions to “set the minimum standards for programs of HEIs” (Article IV, Sec 16 no 4, p.14). Furthermore, MORPHE states:

Article 1, Sec. 4:

The provisions of this manual shall be applied to attain the purposes of higher education, to give meaning to academic freedom, to institute reasonable supervision, and regulation, and to accelerate the development of higher education institution. All doubts in the implementation of the provision of this manual shall be resolved in favor of the higher education institution (P.1).

MORPHE Article XIV, Sec. 69 states as a matter of policy that:

The Commission encourages the use of voluntary accreditation. The goal of that policy is to (1.) maintain a policy environment which enhances the private and voluntary nature of accreditation and protects in integrity, and; (2.) establish a scheme for progressive deregulation of qualified higher education institutions, or specific programs of such institutions (p.52).

The CHED through the MORPHE has passed on the responsibility for quality in private higher education to the external accreditation agencies which according to Florida & Quinto (2015) have been “using different criteria from that what is used by international agencies and cites this as the main reason for the low rankings of Philippine HEIs in the world rankings” (p.61).

The conceptual framework that will guide this study is depicted as Figure 2.

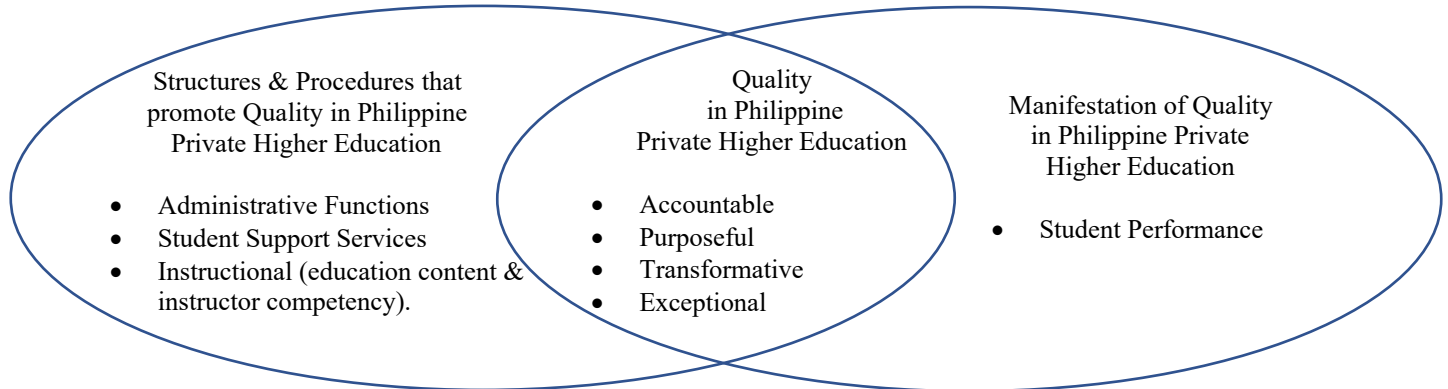


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework for Understanding Quality in Philippine Private Non-Sectarian Higher Education based on Schindler, et al., (2015) Conceptual Model of Quality Depicting Broad and Specific Strategies for Defining Quality in Higher Education.

Research Questions

This study aimed to understand quality in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education. Specifically, the study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What is Quality in terms of: (a) accountability; (b) purposefulness; (c) transformation; and, (d) exceptionality in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education?
2. What structures and procedures promote Quality in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education in terms of Administrative Functions, Student Support Services, and Instructional (education content & instructor competency)?
3. How does Quality manifest in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education in terms of Student Performance

THE STUDY

A multiple case study research design was adopted to investigate how three Philippine private non-sectarian higher education institutions that operate as both education providers and business ventures understand Quality. The CHED vertical typology classifies Philippine higher education institutions according to “program and institutional quality outcomes” (CMO 46, s.2012, p.9.). The three types of HEIs in the Philippines are Autonomous, Deregulated, or Regulated (CMO 46, s.2012). Case A will represent the deregulated, Case B will represent the autonomous, and Case C will represent the regulated private higher education institutions.

There were two levels of sampling (Merriam, 2015, p.99) that occurred in this multiple case study. Purposeful and criterion sampling were employed at the first level to identify the participant institution as the institution is the unit of analysis of this study (Creswell, 2007, p.127). Criterion and opportunistic sampling (Creswell, 2007, p.127) were then employed at the second level to identify participants within each bounded case (Merriam, 2015, p.99).

The criteria for selection of the three institutions is defined under the vertical typology of Philippine HEIs as described in CMO 46 s. 2012 where:

- (a) Autonomous HEIs (by Evaluation) demonstrate exceptional institutional quality and enhancement through internal QA systems, and demonstrate excellent program outcomes through a high proportion of accredited programs, the presence of Centers of Excellence and/or Development, and/or international certification. In particular, they show evidence of outstanding performance consistent with their horizontal type, e.g., research and publications for universities, creative work and relevant extension programs for colleges; and employability or linkages for professional institutes.
- (b) Deregulated HEIs (by Evaluation) demonstrate very good institutional quality and enhancement through internal QA systems, and demonstrate very good program outcomes through a good proportion of accredited programs, the presence of Centers of Excellence and/or Development, and/or international certification. In particular, they show evidence of very good performance with their horizontal type.

(c) Regulated HEIs, are those institutions, which still need to demonstrate good institutional quality and outcomes (p.9).

The selection of the autonomous, deregulated and regulated private higher education institutions for inclusion in this study was based on publicly available documents from the official website of CHED to provide the most updated information on the status of these private higher education institutions. CHED CMO 58 s. 2017 or The Grant of Autonomous and Deregulated Status by Evaluation to Private Higher Education Institutions is the official list of Philippine higher education institutions that have been granted autonomous or deregulated status. CMO 58 s. 2017 was the basis for selection of both the autonomous and deregulated institutions. Any other institution that is not on this list is then considered a regulated institution.

The criteria for selection of the institutions for inclusion in this multiple case study is as follows:

1. The private non-sectarian higher education institutions is owned by a family or group of private individuals without any religious affiliation.
2. The autonomous and deregulated private non-sectarian higher education institutions must be listed on CHED CMO 58 s.2017, while the regulated private non-sectarian HEI must have current CHED recognition.
3. The private non-sectarian higher education institution exhibited evidence of quality

For triangulation and “to further corroborate evidence and shed light” on quality in Philippine private higher education (Creswell, 2007 p.208) an administrator, a faculty member, a student and a parent of enrolled student within each higher education institution were selected.

The criteria for selecting the administrator is as follows: must have a title of Vice -President or Director or Head of any of the functional areas of the institution such as Finance Administration, Admissions, Scholarship, Student Affairs, and others; and must have been with the institution for at least five years; and possesses a graduate degree. The faculty member must possess a graduate degree and have at least 5 years teaching experience in the participant- institution; The student- participant must be in the 3rd or 4th year of any degree program in the participant-institution. The Parent-participant may or may not be the parent of the same student-participant first identified above but must be a parent of a student within the same institution; whose child is enrolled in the 3rd or 4th year of their degree program or is a recent graduate of the institution.

In total, this multiple case study involved interviews with twelve participants at three private non-sectarian higher education institutions each of whom have acknowledge that their participation was voluntary, without remuneration, and have granted their informed consent to participate in this study.

In this multiple-case study, interviews, observations, and documents were the forms of data collected to “build an in-depth picture of the case” (Creswell, 2007, p.76). These various forms of data presented a better understanding of how quality is perceived in private higher education while in -depth interviews with administrators, faculty, students, and parents provided the triangulation necessary for trustworthiness in this study (Creswell, 2013 p.251).

The interview questions for the individual participants were based on the extant literature in quality higher education and guided by the conceptual framework of this study. The semi-structured interview sessions with each participant captured both verbatim and observational data. Semi- structured interviews allowed the freedom for participants to “define the world in unique ways” (Merriam, 2015, p.110). Interview sessions did not take longer than 45 -60 minutes, were digitally recorded for reliability and professionally transcribed for proper documentation and data management. Interview and observational protocols were employed in the conduct of this study. Yin (2003) explains that a case study protocol” increases the reliability of case study research and is intended to guide the researcher in data collection” (p.67).

The data analysis process began by reading through the transcripts of the interviews and identifying significant statements for each case. The significant statements were subjected to in-vivo coding to remain true to the data and then organized under categories and finally nestled into codes.

A detailed narrative was written to describe the context and chronology of the experience with each case, at the end of which the themes and their supporting categories and codes were also chronicled. The emergent themes were then “compared and contrasted” with the extant literature and researcher observations captured during the data gather gathering process to further enhance the internal validity of this study (Creswell, 2013, p.251).

The collected data for this multiple case study such as interview transcripts,

observational notes, documents and artifacts was analyzed by using Creswell’s (2013) data analysis and representation approach for multiple case studies.

The analysis presented below is the synthesis of the within case analysis after which the themes across the three institutions were compared and presented in the cross – case analysis to “develop the generalizations about the case in terms of the emergent categories and themes and how they compare and contrast” with the conceptual framework drawn up for this study (Creswell, 2013 p.190).

FINDINGS

There were seven common themes that emerged from the cross –case analysis of the three cases namely: (1). “Success of Graduates”; (2). “Surpassing Standards”; (3.) “Instructional Leadership”; (4.) “Leadership and Governance”; (5.) “Performance in National Board Exams”; (6.)” Positive School Culture”; (7.) “Stakeholder Satisfaction”. Table 1 Summarizes the Themes Across the 3 Cases.

Table 1: Summary of Themes across cases.

| Case 1 | Case 2 | Case 3 |
|---|---|---|
| RQ1 | RQ1 | RQ1 |
| (1) Success of Graduates • Employability | (1) Success of Graduates • Employability • Community Service | |
| (2) Surpassing Standards • Accreditation | (2) Surpassing Standards • Accreditation | (2) Surpassing Standards • Accreditation |
| RQ2 | RQ2 | RQ2 |
| (3) Instructional Leadership • English proficiency • Curriculum intervention • Student activities | (4) Instructional Leadership • English proficiency • Student activities • Tutor duty program | (4) Instructional Leadership • English proficiency • Curriculum intervention • Mentoring |
| (4) Leadership and Governance • Human Resources Management • Faculty Development • Community Involvement | (4) Leadership and Governance • Full Time faculty • Faculty Development | (4) Leadership and Governance • Teacher-training • Proactive Management |
| RQ3 | RQ3 | RQ3 |
| (5) Performance in National Board Exams • Topnotchers | (5) Performance in National Board Exams • Topnotchers | (5) Performance in National Board Exams • Topnotchers |
| (6) Positive School Culture • Transformation • Trust in administration | (6) Positive School Culture • Nurturing environment | (6) Positive School Culture • Nurturing environment • Transformation |
| (7) Stakeholder Satisfaction • Faculty • Student • Parent | (7) Stakeholder Satisfaction • Faculty • Student • Parent | (7) Stakeholder Satisfaction • Faculty • Student • Parent |

Research Question 1: What is Quality in terms of: (a) accountability; (b) purposefulness; (c) transformation; and, (d) exceptionality in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education?

Theme 1: Success of Graduates

Quality in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education is perceived by stakeholders in Case 1 and 2 as securing the success of their graduates. The employability of graduates was common to Case 1 and Case 2 which is consistent with Maharosa & Hay (2001) who argue that “post-graduation employment rate is an important indicator of Quality” (in Harvey & Williams, 2010, Part Two, p.96). The employability of its graduates was not raised as a response to research question 1 by any of the participants in Case 3.

Case 3 parent suggested that most students came from well-off families:

Well most of the students that I see in the college they come from well-off, the families have businesses perhaps or you know. So, the going to look for a job immediately perhaps will not be as immediate as some.

In Case 2 community service was essential to the success of its graduates and is similar to what Knefelkamp et al., (N.D.) suggested “that higher education has a responsibility to a larger community: Recognizing and acting on one’s responsibility to the educational community and the wider society, locally, nationally and globally” (cited in Reason, 2013, p.3). The willingness to perform community service stems from the transformation of the student which Cheng (2014) states is “the most appropriate definition of quality in higher education” (p.273).

Theme 2: Surpassing Standards

Quality in private non-sectarian higher education was perceived by stakeholders of Case 1, 2, and 3, to be a direct result of surpassing established standards which is associated with “weaker notion of exceptional quality, as passing a set of required standards” (Harvey & Green, 1993, p.11). In the Philippine private higher education, it is CHED that sets the minimum requirements and local institutions believe, Tabora (2012) states “Something is of high quality if it exceeds the norm set by a governing institution” (in Conchada & Tiongco, 2015, p.18).

Surpassing established standards by undergoing accreditation was a common theme across the three cases, and in each case accreditation was found to be necessary for the attainment of higher education quality which is validated by Ching (2012) who states that “Accreditation is used as an indirect indicator of quality which may be used for differentiating programs and institutions in terms of quality” (p.64).

Undergoing the accreditation process was considered integral in the quest for quality higher education across the three institutions but at the same time Case 1 administrator described how the activities associated with accreditation have generated “resistance to change across all levels due to the work it entails”.

Research Question 2: What structures and procedures promote Quality in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education in terms of Administrative Functions, Student Support Services, and Instructional (education content & instructor competency)?

Theme 1: Instructional leadership

Structures and procedures in instructional leadership promote quality in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education. Instructional leadership was a common theme across all cases. Among structures and procedures that promoted quality higher education and held true among stakeholders in all three institutions was English proficiency. The English proficiency of faculty, staff and students was mentioned across institutional documents across all cases.

Observations made also noted the primary use of English during the interviews with participants in the three institutions. It is common and accepted knowledge that English is the dominant language in the globalization of business. Also, Gupta (1997) argues that English is the main language in use over the internet, while Kumaravadivelu (2008) suggests that English is associated with “being of higher status and offers better recognition” (in Chureson, 2013. p.23).

Curriculum intervention was common to Case 1 and 3 and is consistent with Akareem (2016) who argues that institutions need to enhance the curriculum for better student outcomes such that students “find synergy between institutional learning and application of that learning in a career” (p.63).

Enhanced student activities were common to Case 1 and 2 and is consistent with Banta et al., (1996) who argue that student activities are “at least as influential” as in-classroom activities (in Harvey & Williams, 2010, Part Two, P.101). Similar but slightly different, Mentoring and Tutoring were common to Case 2 and 3. The Tutor Duty program in Case 2 highlighted the two dimensions of tutoring in higher education that are similar to those identified by Boronat, et al., (2007); The personal dimension – where tutors “provide special help in cases of particular difficulties and offers guidance to students on their personal development”, and the practical dimension “which in certain courses (teaching, medicine, nursing, etc.) has a long tradition in which university teachers and tutors are involved” (Simao, et al., 2008, p.74). Mentoring in Case 3 is closer to Carrad’s (2002) definition:

One-to-one, non-judgmental relationship in which an individual mentor voluntarily gives time to support and encourage another. The relationship is typically developed at a time of transition in the

mentee's life, and lasts for a significant and sustained period of time (in McMillan & Parker, 2005, p.2).

The learning environment was specific to Case 2 but is also aligned with research that suggests that students' perception of their learning environment can impact on personal and social responsibility among college students (Reason, 2013, p.6).

Theme 2: Leadership and Governance

Structures and procedures relative to leadership and governance promote quality in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education. The theme Leadership and governance was common across the three cases. The similarities shared across the three cases borrow from the function of human resources management and within each institution is a unique approach to leadership and governance that promotes quality private higher education.

Leadership and governance was evident in the role taken by Case 1 relative to its chosen advocacies that engaged the larger community such as environmental protection and disaster preparedness. Knefelkamp et al., (N.D.) suggested that higher education has a responsibility to a larger community: "recognizing and acting on one's responsibility to the educational community and the wider society, locally, nationally and globally" (in Reason, 2013, p.3).

Case 3 employed proactive management towards innovating internal processes through quality frameworks such as quality circles, TQM, and Kaizen to deliver quality education consistent with Gordon (2002) who found that over the years that strategies that have been effective in higher education required "the alignment of leadership with ownership and internal cultures with quality cultures" (in Harvey & Williams, 2010, p.12-13).

In terms of governance, the three institutions employed policies and procedures to manage human resources but only Case 1 formalized a spectrum of tools associated with the function of human resources management such as individual work planning and succession planning through an enhanced role of the human resources department which was found to foment academic freedom in Case 1. Case 2 was keen on the on-campus availability of its faculty to support students especially in courses that required passing a national board exam.

Faculty development in terms of funding for scholarships to complete their graduate degrees, trainings, seminars, within and outside their home institution, and the provision of material and other fringe benefits were common to Case 1 and Case 2 which is consistent with Gansemer-Topf, et al., (2004) who found "institutions where student engagement is found to be high and educational gains are high, one finds a higher than average investment of resources in quality enhancement processes such as faculty development and teaching and learning centers" (in Gibbs, 2010, p.37).

Training and development opportunities for faculty and staff were also provided by Case 3, but unique to this institution was their leaders' competence in organizational development which allowed them to focus on internal teacher-training programs. The functions of human resource management such as recruitment and evaluation within universities according to Lorange (2006) is "virtually important for the quality of education" as universities" Deem (2001) suggests there is a "move in the HRM within universities from the collegial to the management model" (in Van den Brink, 2013, p.180).

Research Question 3. How does Quality manifest in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education in terms of Student Performance?

Theme 1: Performance in National Board Examinations

Performance in national board examinations is evidence of quality in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education. Not surprisingly, performance in the national board examinations was common theme across the three cases as Tan & Decena (2015) states "The national passing average of the HEI's in licensure examinations represents the visible output measure of the quality of the HEI's. In many studies, the institution's passing rates in various licensure examinations were, in fact, used as a surrogate measure of quality" (p.163).

Theme 2: Positive School Culture

A positive school culture is evidence of quality higher education within each institution. The transcripts of interviews with stakeholders, and the analysis of observations and documents, made a positive school culture palpable through the lens of the participants. A positive school culture was similar in description and in its

positives outcomes across the three cases but each institution enabled a positive school culture in each own unique way. Student and faculty transformation were reported in Case 1 and Case 3.

In addition, stakeholder trust in administration was also documented in Case 1. The learning environment appeared twice in Case 2. First as structure to promote academic achievement, and second as evidence that quality is manifest in the institution.

Theme 3: Stakeholder Satisfaction.

Stakeholder satisfaction is evidence of quality in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education and was a common theme across the three cases. Satisfaction among stakeholders “is one of the most commonly used measures of educational quality in contemporary higher education” (Coates, 2010, p.12).

Faculty satisfaction in Case 1 and Case 2 manifested in the tenure of faculty and longevity with the institution, while empowerment and a fully supportive management was reported in Case 3. Faculty satisfaction therefore is a key element to quality higher education. Oshagbemi, (1997a) “found employee satisfaction is as important as customer (student) satisfaction” which has led to the inclusion of “academic satisfaction in research on higher education quality” (Comm and Mathaisel, 2003, in Chen et al., 2006, p.485).

Case 1 student’s intention to run for president of the university student council exhibited a student’s deepening involvement with his institution which is considered an indicator of his satisfaction with the university is and is consistent with Astin (1993) who found “that satisfaction was enhanced by frequent interaction with faculty and other students” (in Korobova &Starobin, 2015, p. 75).

The direct quotations of Case 2 and Case 3 students best express their satisfaction with their institution. Case 2 student stated” Sir, for me as a Civil Engineering student, sir I am proud that I am studying here because as I mentioned earlier the university is a topnotch school, sir”. Case 3 student shared “Actually, I owe half of the person I am now because of the college”.

Many experts in the higher education community agree that “parental involvement contributes to the college student experience” (Coburn, 2006; Kennedy, 2009; Lipka, 2007; Wartman & Savage, 2008) and “the concept of parent involvement suggests greater satisfaction with college” (Shifting the paradigm, 2015, p.46).

Direct quotations best illustrate the individual parents’ satisfaction with their institution. Case 3 parent was candid as she stated “Who would have thought? So, yeah, at the end it's like it's a blessing that they're here”. Case 2 parent stated it was the family atmosphere that parents liked most about the university, “I think they saw the family atmosphere of the University, and not only are they good in the academic part, but also in the extra-curricular activities. So, it's more of the exposure of the students”.

Case 1 parent wanted her daughter to benefit from the university the same way she did “from my own experience, Sir, the University has really given us the quality education that we need. That is the reason why I also want my children to study here because of my experience”.

RELATIONSHIP OF FINDINGS TO CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

RQ 1. What is Quality in terms of: (a) accountability; (b) purposefulness; (c) transformation; and, (d) exceptionality in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education?

Schindler et al., (2015) identified four classifications of quality in their *conceptual model of Quality – accountable, purposeful, transformative, and exceptional*. The findings of the study reveal that quality in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education is understood as securing the success of graduates in terms of employability and surpassing established standards, both of which are aligned with the conceptual framework where “student preparedness for employment” is an indicator of *accountability* to stakeholders, and “achievement of standards” is an indicator of *purposefulness*.

In addition, findings of the study also suggest that quality in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education may be associated with the ability to perform community service as was found in Case 2 where student engagement with content is an indicator of quality as *transformative* which is also aligned with the conceptual framework.

RQ 2. What structures and procedures promote Quality in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education in terms of Administrative Functions, Student Support Services, and Instructional (education content & instructor competency)?

Schindler et al., (2015) identified quality indicators to assess and measure the four classifications of quality. Indicators for *accountable* are the following; focus on continuous improvement; sufficiency of facilities; procurement of quality resources; student preparedness for employment. Indicators for *purposeful* are the following; fulfillment of vision/mission; transparent aims / processes; achievement of standards; attainment of institutional goals.

Indicators for *transformative* are; learner-centered approach; competency of lecturers; clarity of outcomes; development of critical thinking; student engagement with content. Indicators for *exceptional* are; prestige; ranking; reputation; legitimacy; credibility (p.7).

Findings of the study reveal that several structures and procedures that promote quality in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education are associated with the theme Instructional Leadership such that *English Proficiency, Student Activities and Curriculum Intervention* are associated with *Instructional* (education content & instructor competency) and *Mentoring* is subsumed under *Student Support Services* and are both aligned with the conceptual framework of this study.

The data shows that the use of English and its proficiency among faculty, staff, and students emerged as the primary vehicle that promoted quality in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education. Policies to enhance English proficiency among students and selection criteria for staff and faculty were identified across the three cases clearly indicate the recognition that English proficiency was associated with better student outcomes related to employability and performance in national board exams, which eventually benefits the institution.

Student activities were also found to promote quality in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education. Case 2 student reported that student activities such as seminars, intra- school and inter- school competitions “would directly impact their future” (personal communication, June 27, 2018), while Case 2 parent argued that “developing or enhancing social skills is more important and is a source of pride for both student and parents” (personal communication, June 27, 2018).

Mentoring was found to promote quality in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education. The findings of the study revealed that mentoring was considered essential for an institution’s national board exam performance. In two institutions, mentoring was available for both board and non-board required courses. Mentoring was either formally organized by the institution or was a function of a tradition within a college department whose courses required passing a national board examination, in both instances the purpose and availability of mentoring was for achieving positive student outcomes. One institution that participated in this study reported that mentors are assigned to students in the first year of their program and students are highly encouraged to meet with other mentors.

Curriculum intervention was common practice among the three institutions that participated in this study. “Critical thinking, respect for dissenting views and linking curricular activities to the community” were interventions that were documented in Case 1, while embedding entrepreneurship and the TOEIC preparation were documented in Case 3.

RQ 3. How does Quality manifest in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education in terms of Student Performance?

Schindler, et al., (2015)’s adopted definition of student performance indicators as a” set of quality indicators that pertain to student engagement with curriculum, faculty, and staff, and increases knowledge, skills, and abilities that lead to gainful employment also functions as the “output” of higher education (p.6). Whereas the conceptual framework of the study identifies indicators of quality as *exceptional* to be; prestige; ranking; reputation; legitimacy; and credibility.

Findings convey that aside from an institution’s performance in the national board examinations which is aligned with the conceptual framework both as an indicator of student performance and an indicator of quality as *exceptional*, quality in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education manifests in a *Positive School Culture* and *Stakeholder Satisfaction*, both of which were not captured in the conceptual framework and may be considered as new dimensions to understanding quality in private non-sectarian higher education.

Each of the three institutions enabled an environment that suited its own demographic and fomented student and faculty transformation across. The data suggests that a *Positive School Culture* may have contributed to the above-average performance in the national board exams and overall stakeholder satisfaction.

Coates (2012) states that *Stakeholder Satisfaction* “is one of the most commonly used measures of educational quality in contemporary higher education” (p.12) yet this is not captured in the conceptual framework of this study.

Administrators, faculty members, students and parents represented the stakeholders of each of the three institutions. While I found had numerous studies in student satisfaction (Astin;1993; Korobova & Starobin, 2015; Onditi & Wechuli, 2017; Uka, 2014), there were less empirical studies in administrator and faculty satisfaction (Hesli & Lee, 2013; Ott & Cisneros, 2015; Henard & Leprince-Ringuet, 2008; Chen, et al., 2006). More so, literature on parental satisfaction has been sparse as they are lumped together with the other stakeholders as “paying customers” (Harvey, 2006; Popli, 2005). Nonetheless, parental satisfaction in terms of increasing involvement was associated with greater satisfaction with college (Shifting the paradigm, 2015). Stakeholder satisfaction was common among across the three cases and observations and field notes I made during interviews with stakeholders elicited the more passionate replies from participants.

Juxtaposing the conceptual framework and the findings of the study in terms of themes and their associated Categories that surfaced relative to each of the research questions, the findings of the study suggest that institutional leaders of the three institutions are learning and borrowing from the literature of education management and leadership, and local and international industry best practices to establish quality within each of the individual institutions given that government regulators prescribe the provision of the minimum possible standards, it is left to the individual institutions to promote quality on their own accord which raises the question of the capacity for leadership of institutional leaders of private non-sectarian higher education in the Philippines.

Table 2 summarizes the findings of the study versus the Conceptual Framework.

Table 2
Juxtaposition of Conceptual Framework and Study Findings

| | Schindler, et al., (2015) | Study Findings (2019) |
|------|---|--|
| RQ 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountable Purposeful Transformative Exceptional | Theme 1. Success of Graduates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employability Theme 2. Surpassing Standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accreditation |
| RQ 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrative Functions Student Support Services Instructional (education content & instructor competency) | Theme 1. Instructional Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> English Proficiency Student Activities Curriculum Intervention Mentoring Theme 2. Leadership & Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human Resources Management Faculty Development |
| RQ 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Performance Indicators | Theme 1. Performance in National Board Exams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Topnotchers |
| | ** Emergent Themes | Theme 2. Positive School Culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transformation Nurturing Environment Theme 3. Stakeholder Satisfaction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty Student Parent |

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, three conclusions can be drawn from this study of quality in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education. First, the study found that stakeholders in Case 1 and Case 2 perceived Quality as securing the success of graduates which is aligned with the quality as *accountable* (Schindler, et al., 2015), and the CHED CMO 46 definition of quality as fitness of purpose (CHED, 2012) while common across the three cases was surpassing established standards set by the CHED for higher education institutions which is aligned with quality as *purposeful* (Schindler, et al., 2015).

The provision of educational offerings that go beyond minimum standards is associated with a “weaker notion of exceptional quality, as passing a set of required standards” (Harvey & Green, 1993, p.11) such that “a product that meets a higher standard is a quality product” (Harvey & Green, 1993, p.13). In the Philippines, it is CHED that sets the minimum requirements and local institutions believe, Tabora (2012 as cited in Conchada & Tiongco, 2015) states “Something is of high quality if it exceeds the norm set by a governing institution” (p.18).

The success of graduates in terms of employability was not found in Case 3 which may be attributed to the demographic of the majority of students who “come from well-off families” (personal communication, July 3, 2018), and the long-term goal of the college to see their graduates become business owners instead, as Case 3 administrator puts it “We want them to be running their own businesses” (personal communication, July 12, 2018).

Second, the study found that structures and procedures of Instructional Leadership that promoted quality in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education such as English Proficiency, and Curriculum Intervention are aligned with quality that is *accountable* while Student Activities and Mentoring and tutoring which are

Instructional (education content & instructor competency) are aligned with quality that is *transformative* (Schindler, et al., 2015).

Structures and procedures of Leadership and Governance that promote Quality were associated with the function of human resources management such as faculty development programs etc., were documented Administrative Functions that are aligned with the conceptual framework that describes “the competency of lecturers” as an indicator of quality that is *transformative* (Schindler, et al., 2015).

Finally, the study found that quality in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education manifests in terms of; Performance in National Board Examinations; Positive School Culture; and Stakeholder Satisfaction. Performance in the national board exams is an indicator of Student Performance as it “fulfils the achievement of exclusivity as through high standards” which is aligned with quality that is “*exceptional*” (Schindler, et al., 2015) and was common across the three cases which Tan and Decena (2015) state “represents the visible output measure of the quality of the HEI’s. In many studies, the institution’s passing rates in various licensure examinations were, in fact, used as a surrogate measure of quality” (p.163).

Two new dimensions to understanding quality emerged in this study; the presence of a Positive School Culture and Stakeholder Satisfaction were common across the three cases, but were not embodied in the conceptual framework employed in this study.

The results of the study suggest that these three Philippine private non-sectarian higher education institutions understood Quality within the context of the individual institution. Case 1 and Case 2 were both located in distant regions of the country where the population looked forward to the success of its graduates in terms of employability. Case 3 was located in a suburban area within Metro Manila whose stakeholders did not look at employability as an immediate need and therefore perceived quality higher education as one that is exceptional relative to other educational offerings in the area and positioned itself accordingly.

The findings of the study also suggested that the three institutions readily adopted evidence-based best practices in higher education that are found in the literature and adapted these practices to suit their demographic which also leads to the question of the capacity for leadership and management which is key to understanding why many private non-sectarian higher education institutions continue to provide a level of Quality below what has been shown to lead to the positive student outcomes experienced by the three institutions who participated in this study.

This study was limited to the analysis of data collected from the administrator, faculty member, student and parent in each of the three cases to better represent the typology of institutions with respect to quality that is found in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education; the autonomous, deregulated, and regulated HEIs first described in CMO 46 (CHED, 2012) without intention to generalize across a larger population.

This study in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education quality was also limited by the willingness of the individual institutions to participate in uncovering private non-sectarian higher education quality which may have again restricted the analyses to institutions with already established cultures of Quality.

Model of Quality in Philippine Private Higher Education

Based on the emergent themes that resulted from this study a conceptual model of Quality in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education is proposed and depicted as Figure 3. The model is a concentric circle with four annular rings that begins from the center outwards, the first three rings represent the structures and procedures that promote Quality, while the fourth ring represents the areas where structures and procedures are implemented, the four rectangles on each corner of the model show how Quality is manifested.

The nucleus of the model is leadership and governance which propels the other structures and procedures that promote Quality as leadership and governance is required to provide the necessary resources within private non-sectarian higher education as it operates as both education provider and business venture.

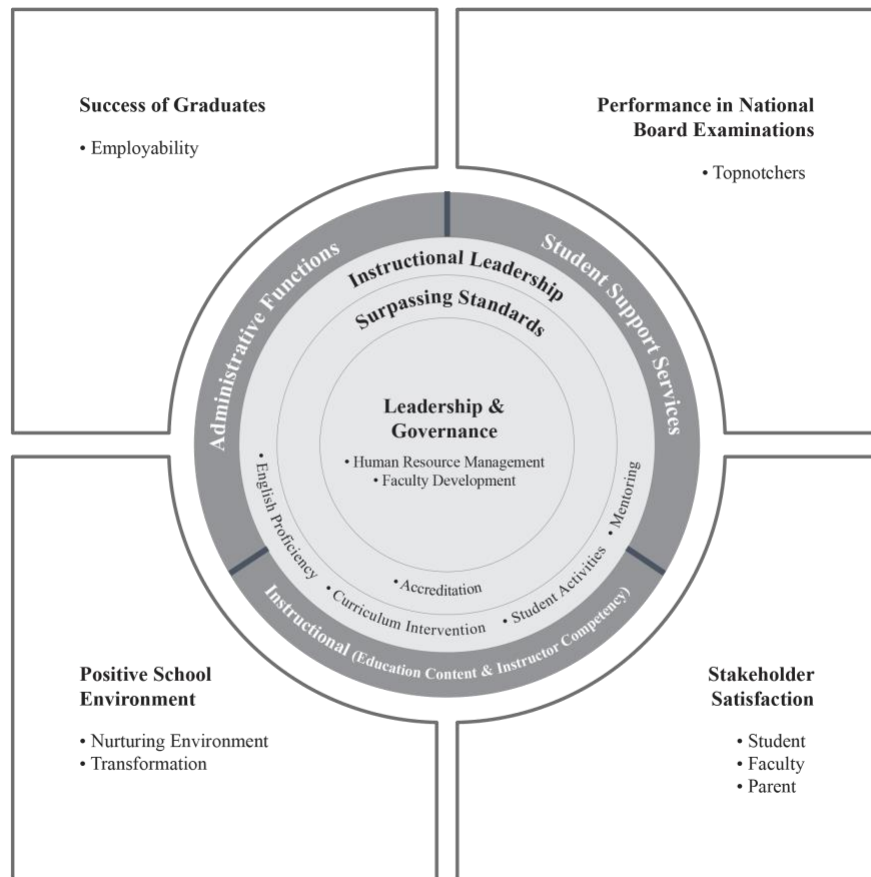


Figure 3: Model of Quality in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education.

Recommendations

The conclusions of this study leave implications for government regulators and institutional leaders.

1. Institutional leaders are advised to invest in collecting meaningful data about their own particular institutions, craft demographic-specific strategies, and invest in better quality personnel as findings of this study suggest that Quality is manifest across the three cases in the form of stakeholder satisfaction. When recruiting teaching staff, institutions are advised to place a premium on English communication skills as participants of the study suggest that English is correlated with employability and passing rates in national board exams for graduates.
2. Government regulators must be proactive towards the “dual-nature” of PNSHEI by categorically stating that education is a social good, and legislate mandatory accreditation. When engineering curriculum, government regulators need consider the findings of this study that have shown that student activities have been correlated with positive student outcomes and other empirical studies that suggest student activities are just as beneficial in-class activities (Banta, et al., 1996, in Harvey & Williams, 2010, Part Two, P.101) and issue the policy guidelines for its immediate inclusion for each university degree program.

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