



Quality Assurance of Higher Education in the Context of Performance Models: The Case of Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

The study provides a conceptual overview of the quality assurance models as a tool for higher education and presents a set of performance indicators for its assessment in case of Pakistan. It is interesting to note that different models are in use in different countries to ensure a provision of quality education in their Higher Education Institutes (HEIs). In Pakistan, Higher Education Commission (HEC) is also following a set of different models for the uplift of the higher education. However review reveals that performance funding and budgeting model is more effective as compare to its counterparts as it encourages universities to increase output to get performance-based funding because it constitutes 15% of total recurring grant provided by the HEC to the HEIs. However, the model can be improved by reshuffling the composition of the recurring grant. The share of performance based funding should be increased from 15% and share of base grant may be decreased from 65% to create space. Furthermore the study suggest that much more is required to enhance quality of education in HEIs in Pakistan for which HEC has to take drastic measures to modify and improve the quality assessment model keeping in view the socio-cultural environment of Pakistan.

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Introduction

"Ensuring quality higher education is one of the most important things we can do for future generations" Ron Lewis

The importance of higher education and research in the whole world with the liberalization ensuing into quality education has become a concern of top priority. "A quality education providing institute always proves to be a model for modern civil society (Batool and Qureshi, 2007)". According to Materu (2007) one of the key factors in determining the position of a nation across the globe is quality of higher education. Also Owlia and Aspinwall (1997) arrived at the same conclusion that in fact for any country to be continued existence in this competitive world a vital requisite is improving quality of education. Further in words of Frazer (1994) "quality in Higher education is important because universities must be accountable to society, to employers, to students, and each other".¹

According to Carley and Waldron (1984) quality assurance is a "planned, deliberate action or activities instigate and carried out with the intent and purpose of maintaining and improving the quality of learning for participants". According to Knight (2003) audit, accreditation and evaluation are the part of quality assurance in general. Many countries including Pakistan have developed quality assurance systems for higher education that focuses mostly on external monitoring that prefers

accountability to continuous improvement. The goals of higher education institutions are varied and multi leveled and every academic institution in its efforts towards actualizing its goals evolves its own functional modalities.

Institution characteristics and distinct environment are obvious from above mentioned modalities. With the aim to enhance information and experience in the assessment, improvement and maintenance of quality in tertiary education International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) was established in 1991. It declares that in higher education quality assurance is process that reinforces confidence of stakeholders that is at least as good as threshold minimum requirements. This process is based on input process and results (INQAAHE, 2005).²

This study is designed to provide a conceptual overview of the Quality Assurance as a tool for internationalization of higher education and presents a set of performance assessment for Pakistan. The rest of the paper is structured as follow: In section 2 main focuses is on the overview of some past studies and in section 3 we discuss models of quality assurance in general and show how developed countries used these performance models for quality of higher education along with discussion that which performance model can be used for Pakistan higher education.

¹ As a famous quote from a professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University India "If the university were a curry then internationalization would not be an additional ingredient - it would be a spice. It gets everywhere and changes the flavour of everything, often in unpredictable ways."

² Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC), National Computing Education Accreditation Council (NCEAC) and University of Lahore are the full members of INQAAHE while 25 associate members from Pakistan and COMSATS Institute of Information Technology joined INQAAHE as associate member in 2011.

Section 4 details the quality assurance in the case of Pakistan. Section 5 includes results, policy implications and pinpoints brief agenda for future research.

Literature Review

In this section quality assurance literature in Higher education is critically examined both in context of Pakistan and the world. The purpose is to provide theoretical background for the assessment of quality assurance model. Higher education role is a key to economic development and social growth of a nation. Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) are mostly responsible for Higher Education through creation of knowledge based society via research that transforms a nation (Meek et al., 2009; Bonn Declaration, 2007).

In 1950, Quality assurance became an important tool in business and industry in western nations for management (Bounds, 1994). It focuses the appropriate training of faculty and staff with the purpose to enhance their performance within the business and industrial sector as well (Dale, 1990). Quality assurance insures the fulfillment of quality through process and service, quality planning, training, critical problem solving tasks and motivating people (Dale, 1990). Quality assurance in higher education is defined as “systematic management and assessment procedures adopted by a higher education institution or system to monitor performance and to ensure achievement of quality outputs or improved quality” (Skilbeck, 2001). Quality assurance comprises curriculum design, development of employees, and the use of feedback from students and employers (Meade, & Woodhouse, 2000).

Now the question arises that how the quality of education can be enhanced in institutions. This is an interesting question and according to Birnbaum (2000) it requires thorough study of the evolution of the modern systems of education and consequently this information will help in designing future goals as performance indicators. However, such indicators have their own pros and cons and different systems serve different purposes (Birnbaum, 2000). Such techniques generally make matters more complex due to their over simplification. In addition these techniques encourage centralization of bureaucracy that weakens the role of education (Deed and Campbell, 2007). Since 1990s, quality assurance has gained a fundamental role in policy framework of higher education in most countries of OECD (Brennan and Shah, 2000) and about 60 countries over the last 15 years have established their own model for quality education (El-Khawar, 2001).

Batool et. al (2010) point out that in Pakistan, institutions have developed and implemented a Self-Assessment & Internal Quality Assurance process which is used to assess and evaluate effectiveness of materialization of its mission and achieving its goals. This self-developed mechanism also helps to monitor its compliance with quality assurance standards at national as well as international level. According to Khan (2010) a comprehensive model is required for quality assurance in HEIs in Pakistan. The major dimensions of the quality assurance model should include vision, leadership, evaluation and Process Control.

Batool and Qureshi (2007) report that institutes that provide quality proved to be a model for modern civil society. They also state that various measures have been taken to enhance performance of the university staff by Higher Education Commission (HEC). Safdar, (2009) is of the opinion that the universities in Pakistan neglect the importance of the ‘relevance’ and ‘service to community’ aspects in their functioning. This mismatch is increasing unemployment in Pakistan. The other difference is universities priorities as focus in Pakistan is on

teaching while in UK research gets more importance. However, some of the studies like Meek et al., (2009) and Coombs (1985) are of the opinion that the potential of HEIs have been reduced in different developing countries as number of factors restricts this role. Meek et al., (2009) report that students are responsible to compete with standards set by globalization therefore universities are supposed to accept this challenge and provide them the conducive learning environment that infuse in society the new spirit of acquiring, spreading and utilizing knowledge. The above cited studies stress the importance of quality assurance in HEIs and link quality of higher education in a country with its economic development. This link is easy to understand because well educated communities are potentially more capable of solving complex problems faced by these societies. Experts hailing from different disciplines present unorthodox solutions that help removing obstacles that slow down the economic development process in these societies.

Performance Models in Higher Education

Before discussing which quality assurance model is applicable in Pakistan and critically evaluating its performance it seems plausible to discuss different performance models that are adopted by different countries. Denise et al. (2008) purposed five models to assess the performance, credibility and quality related issues of higher education. These models include:

1. Quality Audit
2. Accreditation
3. Performance Funding and Performance Budgeting
4. Performance Reporting
5. Surveys and Tests

Most of the countries across the globe used these performance models for quality assurance in the higher education, especially developed countries such as Australia, USA, UK etc. but in the developing countries such as India, there results may not match their requirements.³ Because these performance models used a mixture of performance indicators that are related to each other when they are collected and the performance model used for quality assurance will be affected by these indicators. All these performance indicators are based on some assumptions that are intrinsic in the performance model used for quality assurance. These indicators may be qualitative and quantitative in nature and can be measured as peer review and empirically respectively.

According to Atkinson et. al (1999) these performance models are intended to improve the quality of higher education and the accountability of public funds for the higher education institutions and these performance models still continue to improve the quality of higher education (Denise et. al; 2008). These performance models are also designed to ensure the quality of new higher education institutions and encourage the competition within and between institutions and also used to assign the status to the institutions and endorse the transfer of authority between the state and institutions and make international comparisons possible.

According to Harris (1998) these models are not value-free for “the power to define performance is integral to establishing values, to controlling actions, and to centralizing management. Thus, the act of modeling performance may have critical organizational implications”. After introducing models formally now we describe some merits and demerits of each performance model and then state the implications of these models in case of Pakistan higher education sector.

³ See detail in Denise et.al (2008)

Quality Audit

Quality audits are generally administered by the Quality Assurance Agencies (QAA) appointed by the relevant government department of the respective country. According to Gibbs et. al (2000) quality audit is a “form of external review that restores a sense of ownership to higher education institutions and academics by using their self analysis to guide the review process”. While Harvey and Newton (2004) defines “quality audits are collaborative efforts that usually involve the auditee carrying out a critical self-analysis, and an external review team verifying the self-report, making recommendations for improvement, and following up on the progress”. For review process of universities, higher education commission of different countries take an external role of quality audit while some depend on internal quality audit process and some use both. Such as most of the European countries, like Italy, Sweden use external audit, while Australian University Quality Agency (AUQA) and higher education commission of United States of America (USA) use internal audit while United Kingdom (U.K) use both external and internal audit. Many European countries now move toward the internal review process because of increasingly interventionist role in higher education by mandating the external audit and now they move towards self-assessment and peer auditing. Pakistan Higher Education Commission (HEC) too use both internal and external audit for universities’ review process. Many countries across the globe used the quality audit as a performance model for their higher education institutions.⁴ There are some hitches in the audit model such as Guest and Duhs (2003) argued that “Whole-of-institution audits do not capture the variability of quality across departments, courses, and academic staff within an institution”. While Hodgson & Whalley (2006) oppose quality audit because it is time consuming and tremendously costly process and do not come with required results in the higher institutions of U.K.

Accreditation

Particularly in European higher education systems accreditation is an increasingly popular form of performance model. According to Joint Committee on Higher Education (2000) accreditation is a “process of assessment and review which enables a higher education course or institution to be recognised or certified as meeting appropriate standards”. Usually minimum standards are to be used for accreditation of any higher education institution and made with a “binary statement” i.e, institution or course receives accreditation, or not. Harvey (2004) states that there is an opportunity to reapply for accreditation if an institute or course not to be accredited and there should be an existence of probationary periods for that institute. Even though the accreditation and audit both have similar methods and purposes, however, accreditation and audit differ in the sense that in former applicants prove their suitability to come up with the criteria prescribed by the accreditation, while audit presumes that the auditee is functioning appropriately. Sursock (2000) also favours accreditation and explains that it makes institutional and regional comparisons with transparent and predefined criteria for quality assurance. While Westerheijden (2003) argue that binary statement is very simple criteria for judgement of quality and better for consumer protection. This performance model also suffers from some criticism. According to Anderson (2006) “minimum standards” are high enough to be debatable. While

Dickeson (2006) argued that accreditation “standards” always lag behind the latest quality practices because of predefined criteria and take some time to be adjusted. The criterion is based on binary statement (Pass/fail) so no incentive for quality improvement and also increases the homogeneity when most of the education sector institutions satisfy the minimum standards. However, despite these drawbacks, Dickeson (2006) supports accreditation and says that it has a long history in US where accreditation agencies are independent of the government and operate as self-regulated. Other forms of accreditation are professional accreditation programs of study (medicine, business, accounting etc) and international accreditation programs of study is the new phenomenon across the globe and is testified by the European Foundation of Management Development (EFMD). Two international accredited programs are developed by EFMD and one EQUIS is currently accredited in 32 countries with over 110 business schools.⁵

In Pakistan, like other countries higher education commission have a Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) to monitor the accreditation councils and these councils are serving the purpose of ensuring quality of the programs offered at institutional level. According to the Powers and Functions of the Commission as stated in Ordinance No. LIII of 2002, Para 10, Clause e “the Higher Education Commission may set up national or regional evaluation councils or authorize any existing council or similar body to carry out accreditation of Institutions including their departments, facilities and disciplines by giving them appropriate ratings. The Commission shall help build capacity of existing councils or bodies in order to enhance the reliability of the evaluation carried out by them.” There are 9 independent professional councils while 4 councils have been established under Higher Education Commission of Pakistan.

Existing Accreditation Councils/Professional Bodies:

1. *Pakistan Bar Council (PBC)*
2. *Pakistan Council for Architects and Town Planners (PCATP)*
3. *Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC)*
4. *Pakistan Medical & Dental Council (PMDC)*
5. *Pakistan Nursing Council (PNC)*
5. *Pakistan Pharmacy Council (PCP)*
6. *Pakistan Veterinary Medical Council (PVMC)*
7. *National Council for Homoeopathy (NCH)*
9. *National Council for Tibb (NCT)*

Accreditation Councils Established by HEC:

1. *National Accreditation Council for Teachers Education (NACTE)*
2. *National Agricultural Education Accreditation Council (NAEAC)*
3. *National Computing Education Accreditation Council (NCEAC)*
4. *National Business Education Accreditation Council (NBEAC)*

Source: Higher Education Commission of Pakistan website

Performance Funding and Performance Budgeting

Performance funding determines some indicators to judge the performances of universities and the funding they receive. These indicators are based on a strong assessment criterion which makes the funding decision more easy and transparent. So, institutions have a substantial incentive in the fulfillment of each specific indicator. Funding based on performance is an

⁴ For further detail see International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (2008).

⁵ Detail of countries can be seen in Denis et al. (2008).

important measure to achieve the goals of institutional leaders and state that ensures the judicious use of funds. While, in performance budgeting, the indicators list is longer than the performance funding.

Performance Funding

According to Miao (2012) performance-based funding is a “system based on allocating a portion of a state’s higher education budget according to specific performance measures such as course completion, credit attainment, and degree completion, instead of allocating funding based entirely on enrollment. It provides a fuller picture that how successfully institutions have used their state appropriations to support students throughout their careers and to promote course and degree completion”. Performance-based funding are distributed to higher education institutions for research performance that are financial incentives to teachers and important to government recognition of teaching in higher education. While Burke & Serban (1998) views about performance funding is “tied to the pursuit of external accountability and quality enhancement and is predominately found in North American states and Canadian provinces and territories, and has recently been introduced in Australia in the form of the Learning and Teaching Performance Fund”.

It facilitates institutional comparison and provides funding formula for the assessment of quality of higher education. This reduces the higher education institutions to lobby for funding. Even though this performance funding model had a lot of strengths but also suffer from some criticism. The major drawback of performance funding model according to Burke and Serban (1998) is that “Funding formula may be inflexible and unsuitable for the diverse higher education institutions”. While Barnettson and Cutright (2000) indicate that most of the indicators used in performance based funding are beyond the institutional control such as graduate employment rate. According to Noland et al (2006) to satisfy the requisite indicators for external based performance funding, most of the institutions manipulate the performance data to get the desired funding. While Noland et al (2004) identified that “performance funding used for a disciplinary measure for past performances tend to be controversial. Stable performance funding schemes tend to allow institutions time to improve, rather than withhold funding in revenge”.

Policy to provide Funding to Public Sector HEIs in Pakistan

In Pakistan each year public sector higher education institutes receive bulk of grants from federal government according to the Presidential Ordinance No. LI of 2002, under section 10(g) and 10(h). The Commission’s funding mandate as laid down in the said Ordinance is reproduced as under:

Section 10 (g): Submit to the Federal Government the recurring and development budgets for public sector Institutions and allocate funds to public sector Institution out of bulk financial provision received from the government and other resources on performance and need basis.

Section 10 (h): Review and examine the financial requirements of public sector Institutions: approve and provide funds to these Institutions on the basis of annual recurring needs as well as for development projects and research based on specific proposals and performance and while approving funds for a public sector Institution the Commission shall ensure that a significant proportion of the resources of the Institution are allocated to research support and libraries.

Source: HEC website

HEC started formula based funding in 2003-04 and continuously kept refining it according to the general principles

such as, transparency, fairness, facilitation and predictability. These funds are provided to HEIs according to the core strategic objectives: such as, support teaching and learning, research and innovation, relevance to national needs and requirements, equitable access for students and strengthening governance and management. All universities, degree awarding institutes, centres for excellence are eligible for these recurring grants to promote research activities and all HEC universities programmes. The tentative breakup these funds are divided into four main categories.

Table 1. Item wise Distribution of Recurring Grant to Universities

Category	Target
Base Grant	65 %
Need Grant	20 %
Performance Grant	15 %

Source: Higher Education Commission of Pakistan

The total annual recurring grant from HEC to universities / degree awarding institutions may be distributed as shown in the above Table 1. Which shows that base grant has the major share in recurring grants followed by need and performance grant respectively? As the HEIs has established now the base grant can be significantly decreased to provide leverage for performance grant that will encourage universities to increase their output to make them eligible for more grant. The suggested share of the performance grant is around 25 percent.

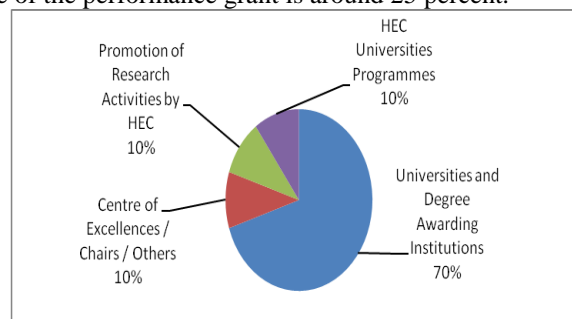


Figure 1. Disbursement of Recurring Grants by HEC (in Percent)

Source: Higher Education Commission of Pakistan

The performance grant which is 15 % of the total grants is divided according to the following parameters.

Table 2. Distribution of Performance Grant According to Different parameters

S.No	Parameters	Target
1	PhD Faculty	8 %
2	Research Programs, Research Publication/ Output.	2 %
3	Competitive Research Grants Obtained	2%
4	Quality Enhancement Cell/Regulatory Body Reports/ Accreditation Council	1%
5	Compliance with Commission’s policies	1%
6	Evaluations by professional bodies at national/ international	1%

Source: Higher Education Commission of Pakistan

The PhD faculty play a major role in the quality of education in HEIs. Although the share of PhD grant is the highest in the performance grant yet it is too low to be effective. Therefore its share should be increased significantly. Similarly research is equally important but it also gets the meagre share. Its share must be increased to catch up the quality education goals in Pakistan.

Performance Budgeting

Performance budgeting contains a longer list of the indicators not only regarding the institution’s performance but also circumstance as well. So, the advantage of this longer list is

that it is useful in evaluation of the broader scope of performance and circumstance of institutions and is more flexible by using multiple measures. Therefore, for these reasons, this approach is more preferred by the government and quality assurance boards. But, because each indicator in the list is not associated necessarily with reward, therefore its disadvantage is that institutions do not perform well on each indicator.

Despite some disadvantages of the performance funding, the published literature is in support of performance indicators. As, Burke & Serban, (1998) said these indicators to be outcome-focused. So, performance funding ensures that states are investing their scarce resources sensibly and efficiently. While, Ewell (1999) argued that these indicators represent the degree by which objectives and plans in higher education are achieved. Furthermore, OECD report (2008) says that performance indicators provide useful information regarding the quality of performance of the universities by directly communicating to the stakeholders.

However, Burke et al., (2000) ended up this dispute by saying that it is becoming difficult day by day to distinguish between the boundaries of performance budgeting and performance funding. Because, the initiatives by states often use elements from both forms of approaches to maximize the advantages of each method and minimise the disadvantages.

Performance Reporting

In literature, performance reporting means “the report of institutional performance to federal and state authorities”. But, this performance report is based on a selected set of indicators that are relevant to national and state goals. Burke and Minassians (2002) depict the performance reports as consumer reports that pursue the two main focuses of higher education of current era, customer-centred and market-driven. As compared to performance funding, this approach considered to be less costly and controversial because it does not involving any financial incentives. However, the performance reporting, Dill and Soo (2005) pointed out that it will considered to be dominant model of change especially at national and OECD countries reports.

Survey and Tests

Survey

To assess the quality of teaching and learning, a number of researchers (Carini, Kuh, & Klein, 2006, Ball, & Wilkinson, 1994, Anderson, 2006) and higher education institutes often use the student surveys as proxy measures of performance indicators. One of the important strength of survey based performance model is their students, the main stakeholders of higher education; contribute to the quality assurance process because usually much of the empirical work involve in the survey based models. These surveys based model also criticised in the empirical literature as other performance models such as most of the time students are unable to answer the some puzzled questions (Bedggood & Pollard, 1999, Anderson, 2006). While Anderson (2006) and Porter et al (2004) conclude that most of the general administered surveys no longer taken seriously by the student due to habitual process. Anderson (2006) also arrived at the conclusion that qualitative type surveys often receive less attention than surveys which has some quantitative or statistical information. He also indicates that these student surveys make them controversial when comparing the institutions on national basis. Most of the countries across the globe such as, Australia, Canada, U.K and USA administer annually surveys at national and sector level about student perception.

Tests of Learning

As Banta and Pike (2007) states that the goal of this performance model is “value added” which measure the growth and development that takes place in higher education institutions and provided quality education to students? These types of students learning standards can be widely found in USA higher education institutes. According to Chalmers (2007) tests of learning are one of the most debatable and questionable performance models and have a lot of criticism on these types of performance models. Such as, why students do better or worse and what purposes of such performance models are used, how can an institution could improve learning and performance and to obtaining a direct measure of learning the use of standardised tests is feasible. While Banta & Pike (2007) and Clerehan et al (2003) argue that this performance model is less sensitive to changes in educational programs for generic skills. This type of performance models do not measure how the learning relates to real world performance (AASCU, 2006).

This above section briefly explains the performance models for quality assurance in higher education across the globe such as Australia, UK, USA and European countries and especially with reference to Pakistan. The above discussion concludes that existence performance models for quality assurance in well explained at length. All of these models have common indicators and developed according to culture of the respective country environment. In Pakistan, like other developing countries, none of the models is so comprehensive to implement as it is. So therefore, it is looked-for that a comprehensive model for Pakistan higher education institutions which should be applicable in its true spirit.

Quality Assurance- the Case of Pakistan

The role of education in economic development cannot be denied as it raises productivity and efficiency of individuals, create knowledge and thus produces skilled manpower fulfilling a fundamental requirement for the uplift of a country. HEIs and HEC have realized their role in the improvement of quality of higher education (Khan, 2010).

In Pakistan Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) are major sources of to provide skill to manpower for the economic well being of the country (Iqbal 2004). However, it is a bitter reality that like many other developing countries, the situation of education sector in Pakistan is not very encouraging (Memon, 2007) and none of the Pakistani university stands amongst the 100 top ranked universities of the world. The number of universities both in public and private sectors has increased significantly since its inception yet the standard of higher education never matches the world standards even to India and Iran the quality of research and teaching is much poorer. This plight of higher education has been an outcome of number of factors including teachers, students, infrastructure and successive government’s improper handling of education for years on end. As Hoodbhoy (2009) pointed out that common wisdom can be solve all the systemic problems, such as increase funding etc which are faced by HEC of Pakistan. But during 2002-2008 a huge increased in university funding resulted in a little bit improvements in higher education sector which points to need for some fresh thinking. This new thinking should concentrate on the enhancement of quality of higher education that can solve many of the problems Pakistan facing today.

Now the question is; what does “quality” of higher education mean? Equivalently, how on the basis of quality, Higher Education Institutions are ranked? Therefore it calls for measuring “real access” to higher education. Judging quality task is much difficult and always controversial. It is very hard to

make comparison of universities across countries and even within a country and no such international agency has done yet a proper global comparison of universities except a limited attempt have been carried out by journals and newspapers. But their assessment is differing sharply and results are also not convincing as well, even though widely quoted results by Times Higher Education Supplement and Shanghai Jiao Tong University. Because the different criteria have been used by each source such as analytical techniques are much differs from the breath of surveys. Actual reason is that a lack of a strong theoretical background for comparisons. Here is a brief description of the measures that HEC of Pakistan has taken in Pakistan over the last decade.

Fundamental Elements of Quality Assurance

An institute recognized by HEC is supposed to demonstrate the following four fundamental Quality Assurance characteristics (Batool et.al, 2010):

(1) An efficient, compact and consistent system of Quality Assurance and Self-Assessment having evaluating process to realize institutional mission. (2) Use of institution quality assessment results to improve planning. (3) Documented strategic programs of the universities based on the Quality Assurance results. (4) Compliance of QA and Assessment System based on the integration of goals through established foundation provided in the mission of institute.

Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)

For the improvement of quality of education in HEIs, HEC constituted an advisory committee in 2003. In addition Quality Assurance Division (QAD) and Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) were given the responsibility to frame policies and implement work to enable them to carry out their functions independently. Although the committee has performed well on different fronts yet its performance cannot be said excellent.

Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)

The QAA was established on 2005 and its role was defined in the these words "set up national or regional evaluation councils or authorize any exciting council or similar body to carry out accreditation of institutions including their departments, faculties and disciplines by giving them appropriate ratings. The commission shall help capacity of existing council or bodies in order to enhance the reliability of the evaluation carried out by them". The major responsibility of QAA was capacity building and enhancement in higher education sector. The analysis reveals that QAA implemented number of programs to achieve its goal. In totality it can be stated that QAA has taken the enhancement of education task up to the satisfactorily level.

Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC)

To carry out the objective of QAA, QEC was established in various universities with the mandate for the award of degree and to strengthen public trust on the quality of education. Furthermore, it has the mandate to review the quality standards for improvement. By 2010, there were 62 QECs were established in public as well as private universities in Pakistan. (Annual Plan, 2010-2011). Critical views show that HEC has not fully been successful to implement its criteria as different universities, especially private institutions, are reluctant to fully follow the standards set by HEC due to their own limitations.

Conclusion

The focus of this study was to provide a comprehensive and conceptual overview of the different models used in the world to assess performance of HEIs as a tool for internationalization of higher education and find advantage and disadvantage of each model with the objective to see its applicability in context of

Pakistan. However, the main target of the study was to analyze Quality Assurance of higher education institutes in context of performance models for its assessment in case of Pakistan. The study finds that different models are used in different countries successfully. All of these models have common indicators and developed according to culture of the respective country environment. In Pakistan, like other developing countries, none of the models is so comprehensive to implement as it is [Raouf (2006) and Niazi & Mace (2006)]. So therefore, it is looked-for that a comprehensive model for Pakistan higher education institutions which should be applicable in its true spirit (Rana and Reid, 2008). No model is unique as each model can outperform its counterparts in specific socio-economic conditions [NEP, 2009; Azam, 2007; Raouf, 2006; Isani and Virk, 2005; Khalid, 1998; Khan, 1997].

HEC is less relying on performance base funding to improve quality of education in HEIs and more emphasis is on base grant. As the institutes have now been established, the performance of the model can be enhanced by reshuffling the recurring grant. The share of performance based funding should be increased from 15% and share of base grant may be decreased from 65% to create space. Furthermore funds can more be diverted to performance based funding grants by decreasing the share of need base grant from 20%. Furthermore the study suggest that much more is required to enhance quality of education in HEIs in Pakistan for which HEC has to take drastic measures to modify and improve the quality assessment model keeping in view the socio-cultural environment of Pakistan as it differs significantly from developed countries where this model is performing well. Another suggestion is to apply an alternate model to see the comparative effectiveness of the two models and choose the one which performs well to uplift standards of higher education in Pakistan. Bhatti and Tauqir (2006) report that an indigenous quality assurance model is needed to provide strength and stability and keep pace with international standards.

Furthermore the study suggests that much more is required to enhance quality of education in HEIs in Pakistan for which HEC has to take drastic measures to modify and improve the quality assessment model keeping in view the socio-cultural environment of Pakistan as it differs significantly from developed countries where this model is performing well. For this some new indicators should be included in the model that is in line with the ground realities. Rather than setting ambitious targets to achieve maximum in a minimum time period, it is better to set achievable targets and then follow concrete measures to ensure their applicability. Another suggestion is to apply an alternate model to see the comparative effectiveness of the two models and choose the one which performs well to uplift standards of higher education in Pakistan. It is noted that the results are the study are only suggestive as no empirical analysis has been carried out to support the results. The future research may take this route to validate the results. In addition the applicability of the other models can also be tested in context of Pakistan higher education.

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