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Quality Enhancement: Educational Monitoring and Evaluation at Higher Level

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Abstract

The study was designed to investigate the effectiveness of Monitoring and Evaluation in higher education institutions of Pakistan. The efficacy of higher education programs relies mainly on monitoring and evaluation practices. The study examined existing monitoring and evaluation practices of Public Sector University in the persuasion of set objectives for quality education. The study was delimited to one Public Sector University. The sample of the study was 20 chairpersons and experts responsible for monitoring and evaluation vis-a-vis quality assurance in different departments in the selected university. Data were collected through questionnaires from chairpersons and interviews with experts. Quantitative data were analyzed through percentages and qualitative through themes. The study concluded that the monitoring and evaluation system is not in compliance with the desired level specified by the Higher Education Commission due to resistance by some of the faculty members in different departments to adapt to change and lack of Monitoring and Evaluation skills. However, the majority of the departments were taking various steps to bridge this gap and improve the quality of their programs. It is therefore recommended; training sessions may be designed and arranged to bring conceptual clarity on quality issues to cope with faculty resistance. The staff needs to be capacitated with the necessary tools and techniques of monitoring and evaluation.
Keywords: Quality enhancement, Monitoring, and Evaluation (M&E), Monitoring Tools, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

Introduction

With time, every country understands the importance of monitoring and evaluating educational programs with comparable indicators. These indicators are linked with the activities performed by the educational institution to improve the effectiveness of their programs. The focus is on higher education as universities are higher degree awarding institutes all around the world and they are looking for efficient systems to deal with these rapidly growing disappointments with the performance of higher education that has been increased in the last decade (Mizikaci, 2006).In the last few years, higher education doesn't retain quality and effectiveness which creates grief among stakeholders. Improvements in higher educational institutes are the dire need of time to ensure culpability, effectiveness, and managerialism (Gordon, 1992). There is a great need to make sure effectiveness and accountability for improving the quality of education.

It has been seen that all persistent expansions are the results of good supremacy and accountability, for achieving this monitoring and evaluation system plays a vital role. Quality assessment is an important function of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system. M&E system is part of every education system; mostly it aimed to measure performance with pre-determined objectives in terms of continuous improvements in higher education, the capacity of staff, reliability, and accessibility of evidence-based information and data.

The participation of all stakeholders in the M&E process can increase its ownership. M&E system has passed through different stages of evolution, which started from broad input-output monitoring to project-based monitoring systems, it provides well-timed and reliable data on evidence-based indicators of development at different levels of execution. This will help to develop and execute a dynamic M&E system which would not only be helpful in monitoring and evaluation of

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the important issues of education but also help to fulfill their own special needs of quality improvement, relevance, and coverage of their education sectors.

Statement of problem

Vision 2025 suggests a significant increase in higher education institutions to meet the growing demand. Higher Education Commission of Pakistan is working to assure the quality of higher learning programs. Recently, several educational programs in different Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are either restricted or discontinued which has hampered the productivity and confidence of the students over them. It has become imperative to review and understand the prevailing system of monitoring and evaluation in departments of public Universities offering different programs of study to comprehend their effectiveness and directions in meeting the quality targets and compliance with statutory requirements. Relevance of prevailing system of quality assurance and effectiveness of M&E tools and techniques within departments and Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC) is important to explore and identify the gaps in capacity building and M&E system.

Research objectives

Objectives of the study were to;

1- Examine the existing practices of the university for monitoring and evaluation for quality enhancement

2- Explore steps taken by the University for Quality Enhancement.

3- Find out the gaps for improvement in the quality of educational programs at a higher level.

Significance of the study

Monitoring and evaluation are imperative for the achievement of a plan in any field. Identification of gaps in prevailing monitoring and evaluation system is important in the pursuit of quality enhancement. The study provides significant information regarding the M&E system of IIUI besides identifying gaps therein. This would be beneficial for the institution as well as for the stakeholders. The outcome of the study would be instrumental in devising strategies for improvements in the existing state of affairs and avoiding an undesirable situation in higher education institutions.

Literature review

According to Edmunds & Marchant (2008), one of the problems regarding monitoring and evaluation system is that it means different for different people over some time. These disciplines are in the state of evolution for the past quarter-century. In earlier times M&E was primarily seen as project-related activities. Furthermore, he defines monitoring as a continuous or ongoing assessment that organized gathering of data to gauge the progress of any project for achieving desirable objectives, outcomes, and long-term impacts. Whereas he defines evaluation as the well-ordered and unbiased assessment of any ongoing project or it could be any completed project, policy, or program, its design, implementation details, and finally results, which aims to measure the significance and accomplishment of objectives, effectiveness, and efficacy, long impact and sustainability. Monitoring is ongoing and gives information about the progress of the plan or project in terms of achievement of objectives whereas evaluation is a periodic assessment of efficacy, relevancy, achievement, and impact of the project in terms of its stated objectives. It measures ongoing achievement as well as the achievement of a project or plan after completion in terms of efficiency and effectiveness.

It is important for the institution to regularly monitor and evaluate its actions and achievements in compliance with its mission and goals. Evaluation provides reasonable and logical information for bringing improvement in academic programs. Evaluation allows any institution to validate its achievement for the completion of its goals qualitatively and quantitatively. The outcomes of evaluation tell about the effectiveness of institutional planning in terms of performance, allocating resources, and learning outcomes.

M&E and policymaking

Monitoring and evaluation system trends are moving towards great reliability and supporting more successful and efficient policymaking, new ideas and thoughts have been presented by diverse organizations, mainly development agencies, some of the important concepts associated with M&E are evidence-based policy-making and result-based management.

Evidence-based Policy-Making (EBP)

According to UNICEF (2008), the notion of evidence-based policymaking has been achieving prevalence in the last few decades. Simply by using evidence one can create a variance in policymaking in different conducts. Monitoring and evaluation are mostly required for accomplishing
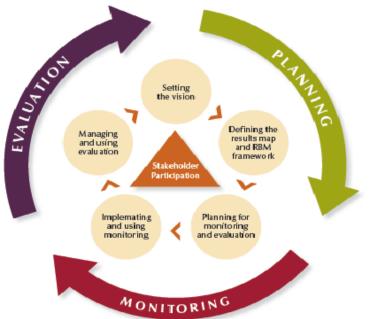
evidence-based policymaking, management as well as evidence-based accountability. The evidence-based policy provides more effective and desired results. Evidence must be based on relevant and reliable data, for achieving this, an efficient and inclusive M&E system is required. Data must be collected at each level and pay attention to particular aspects of concern.

Results-Based Management (RBM)

Result based management system was first introduced in the 1990s to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of organizations. According to Mayne (2007), Result Based Management (RBM) focused on learning from past experiences and making adjustments accordingly in the future. Whereas according to Kuzek and Rist (2004) results-based monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is an authoritative management tool that can be helpful for policymakers to keep progress on track. Results-based M&E is different from the traditional approach of M&E because it gives due emphasis on outcomes and impacts rather than input and output. Results-based M&E systems are not easy to build and sustain. Result based management entails all actors, that have contributed directly or indirectly in accomplishing results, ensuring that the products, process, and/or services help in achieving the anticipated results (outputs, outcomes, and higher-level goals or impact) using data and substantiation for achieving results for making an informed decision on the design, resourcing and distribution of programs and projects as well as for answerability. M&E is an important component to make sure that aligned activities are a source of achieving results and any deviation has been considered carefully without compromising overall direction. It provides valuable facts on lessons learned for making informed decision making

Canadian International Development Agency CIDA (2000) describes RBM as a management approach that describes and highlights development results in all phases of planning, implementation, learning, and reporting.

Figure 1: The RBM life-cycle approach

Source: UNDP, 2009

The monitoring and Evaluation system in result-based management is different from the traditional M&E system. The traditional approach was planned to deal with conformity, dealing with the "did they do it" question it usually does not provide reasons for failure or success of project, plan, or policy whereas the result-based management approach emphasizes monitoring and evaluating progress and performance of a project, policy or program. According to UNDP (2009), there are various risks and opportunities involved in pursuing results. RBM helps and provides awareness of risks and opportunities to managers, stakeholders, and partners to reduce risks and pursue opportunities.

Key factors in building an effective and efficient M&E system

According to UNESCO (2016), a high-quality M&E system is much more than a simple arithmetical task or an outsider duty. For an effective and efficient M&E system, it is necessary to be designed appropriately, handle powerfully and supply sufficient resources for its sustainability. Policymakers

must be aware of whether intended outcomes are achieved or not and the government is doing the right things. Effective M&E provides a way to collect and assimilate significant information and add it to the policy cycle. All of these aspects are connected, for an effective performance system, it is complicated to build the causal relationships between the diverse aspects. Equally, it is hard to establish the role of each factor regarding performance parameters like effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. The demand of planners and policymakers has been increasing for the comprehensiveness of data, advanced technology plays a vital role as a large volume of data is accessible. The importance of technology in monitoring and evaluation of education is acknowledged by stakeholders and planners. For example, Brazil is the only country that has the most concrete and composite M&E systems among all other developed countries. This comprehensive system is designed to plan, execute and evaluate programs, projects, and plans in three governmental tiers. Over time, some technical changes are made to enhance the effectiveness of the M&E system in education. A further example is Bhutan, National Education Assessment (NEA) was planned to examine and monitor the educational system. It aims to measure standards and compare performance with international standards which helps policymakers in making decisions for allocating resources and measuring performances etc.

Understanding M&E Systems in Education Sector
The main aim of monitoring and evaluation in the education sector is to provide equal and quality education to all people. Quality education contains diverse concepts input (teacher, material, budget), process (teaching-learning process), output, and outcomes (results). For the assessment of educational quality following typology can be used concerning input, process, output, and outcomes.

Types of Monitoring
The typology of the Educational Monitoring System given by Richard (1988) is as under.

1-   Compliance Monitoring
        This type of monitoring makes sure that educational institutions are obeying set standards, values, rules, and regulations. It involves input in terms of material, teachers, budget, facilities, audiovisual aids, etc. Lack of input generally affects the efforts to comply with changing needs. It is important to give due consideration while generating performance standards. Monitoring tools are devised keeping in view the available input resources.

2-   Diagnostic Monitoring
        This type of monitoring emphasizes instructional procedures like what is happening in the classroom, are the students learning in the way they are supposed to, teaching-learning process is also important. This type of monitoring helps explain that educational institutions are provided with a quality education. For this purpose, classroom activities play a significant role while designing and implementing diagnostic tools and improving the teaching-learning process. Quality standards are developed to encourage classroom activities in education systems. These tools are also very helpful for emerging societies.

3-   Performance Monitoring
        This type of monitoring focuses on students' achievement by seeing their results and performance that what they have learned? How they made difference? The rating of educational institutions is based on performance at different levels. Educational institutions rated high, not only secure their positions in a competitive market but set directions for quality educations.
        All of these types play a vital role in monitoring any educational institution by considering their performances against set standards and procedures or processes for quality education.

Monitoring criteria and tools
According to UNITAR (2017) for monitoring, any program or project, performance indicators are formulated consisting of baseline and target measures. Indicators should be made according to SMART (**Specific**: Indicator should be unambiguous and measure the project or program progress in terms of results, **Measurable**: trustworthy enough and should convert qualitative measure into numeric form, **Attainable**: indicator should be practically achievable, **Relevant**: should be relevant to activity, actually measured what it is supposed to measure and **Time-bound**: should be achievable within a specific period) criteria for efficient and useful result-based monitoring. To review the criteria several tools for monitoring purposes have been used by institutions for measuring the progress regarding outcomes and results include planning and resource allocation.

a)   Medium-term strategic planning

Medium-term plans should be formulated every two to four years which provide direction on a large number of priority areas against set indicators of achievement.

b)   Results based budget

The institute must monitor and report improvement on achieved set performance indicators. Result-based budget programs are established on a biennial basis that outline objectives and estimated results.

c)   Annual work plan

An annual work plan, it is obligatory for institutes to formulate and monitor work plans based on the approved budget

d)   Individual work planning

It is compulsory for every staff member or rewarded training and research fellow to prepare and monitor their work plans.

Evaluation criteria

According to UNITAR, (2017) any institute can adopt these widely renowned evaluation criteria that are recommended by Organization for Economic Corporation Development (OECD).

a)   Policy or program relevance

Program or policy should be according to country real needs rather than prescribed needs, which provide the foundation for funds.

b)   Effectiveness

It focuses on providing true and quality information to all stakeholders at the correct time. An efficient education program increases the chances to learn in an unbiased way.

c)   Efficiency

Efficiency is by using minimum resources and producing maximum output.

d)   Impact and sustainability

In the context of education, this approach focuses on the overall effect of any project or program on the community and economic development of the country. It sees whether the significant desired changes occur or not. Produced changes can be intended or unintended, negative or positive. Sustainability focuses on benefits that will continue over a long time after the completion of the project. It's not necessary to apply all criteria of monitoring and evaluation but any institution can use it according to the situation and need (UNITAR, 2017).

Quality assurance framework

According to Hamad & Hammadi (2011) quality education is given central value in higher education. The meaning of quality has long been contested in higher education as five discrete but interrelated ways of thinking about the quality are frequently cited as capturing the meaning of quality in the perspective of education: **Excellence**: quality is considered as something extraordinary, unique, and elicited. **Consistency** can be defined as quality being unified, reliable or sound outcome. **Fitness for purpose** means quality is accomplishing pre-planned necessities, essentials, or longings. **Value for money** is quality as a return of investment or venture (Latchem & Jung, 2012). **Transformation** means (e.g. improvement and authorization of students or the development of new knowledge). In this growing age, continuity of good quality education and criteria has become a foremost challenge for government and HEIs. Some other challenges are being confronted by higher education globally contain the requisite for quality assertion and standards besides in a framework of improved involvement, the extension in student's strength, the meeting of new anticipations in the context of the engagement of the graduates in the knowledge society, considering the needs of stakeholders and their involvement in the achievement of collective and administrative agendas like access, enclosure, and justice (Basheka, 2008). There is a great need for quality assurance to retain the trust and satisfaction of stakeholders. A variety of resources like human, physical, material, and financial resources should be provided to the educational institution for the maintenance of high-quality education. According to the Legal framework for all higher educational institutions Act, 2001 Uganda quality assurance framework was developed with the collaboration of stakeholders. Uganda higher education assures quality through Institutional certification, approval of individual programs, reinforcement of merit-based admittance in HEIs, credit accretion and transmission, enrichment of the quality academic staff, rearrangement of exam procedures, highlighting student's feedback for academic or teaching

staff, focus on sufficient institutional substructure, regulating cross-border higher education (Basheka, 2008).

Latchem and Jung (2012) stress the objective of quality assurance (QA) is just not only limited to finding evidence of inadequacies and deficit but the actual purpose is to learn from deficiencies and work hard. So, the purpose of QA should not merely be superficially used. Quality assurance is considered important for overall educational expansion, implanted in all structures, and plays the role of facilitator. Latchem and Jung (2010) notice that marketization and managerialism have a greater impact on higher education of western counties and there is a need for Asian universities to adopt international standards for quality assurance.

Role of Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in Pakistan

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According to Batool and Qureshi (2007), Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) is a monitoring body and its purpose is the formulation of policy for the enrichment of quality education. It ensures the execution of quality enhancement measures/criteria at an educational institution to achieve international competitiveness. QAA was established in 2005, Higher Education Commission sponsored and help for enabling QAA entirely efficient. QAA deals with the matters in association with the Quality Assurance Division of HEC while the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), consists of renowned educationists who serve its Advisory board. QAA is functioning to protect stakeholders' concerns by implementing acceptable practices and appreciating continuous development in the quality of higher education. QAA provides procedures for quality assurance in higher degree programs and also provides guidelines for the establishment of quality enhancement cells in higher education institutions and their monitoring and evaluation. It builds capacity to improve the standards of quality assurance in Higher Education Institutions, after getting international training experts from QAA will provide training to professionals of QEC for capacity building. The professional staff of QAA attended international training in the field of quality assurance in advanced countries and works as a master trainer and provides training to other professionals in their own country. QAA hires foreign experts for conducting workshops and training for the capacity building of QAA and QEC staff. QAA is responsible for monitoring and evaluating for maintaining quality principles of higher education in Pakistan (Quality Assurance Agency, n.d).

HEC outlined different performance evaluation standards for evaluation which focus on efficacy and upcoming expansion. These standards are mission statement and objectives, planning and evaluation, organization and Governance, integrity, faculty, students, institutional Resources, academic Programs and curricula, public disclosure and transparency, assessment & quality assurance, student support facilities. HEC evaluates universities' performance due to which different universities programs have been discontinued. The important function of QAA is monitoring and evaluation of all QECs at public sector educational institutes for assuring quality education at universities. The Head of the quality assurance agency is responsible for visiting QEC for monitoring and evaluation of standards and activities.

Role of QEC in Public Universities

To respond effectively to contemporary quality assurance demand institutions must move beyond recognition that assessment is a required activity to the development of a "culture of assessment" (Mizikaci, 2003). Fully committed assessment cultures have important advantageous in today's competitive higher education environment. Quality is via any educational institute can pledge with assurance and belief that their criteria of quality education prerequisite will sustain as well as improve. HEC anticipates from universities and HEIs to improve the quality of their educational programs in terms of their mission, objectives, assets, capacities, etc. Quality is a proficient responsibility possessed by the institution through which the institution recognize their responsibility of quality assurance and improvement (Buller, 2012).

Internal quality assurance process and self-assessment have been developed by institutions that help in monitoring and evaluating institutional efficiency and effectiveness for achieving its goals according to the mission and its acquiescence at national and international levels with quality assurance standards and external assessment.

Quality enhancement cell is accountable for encouraging public confidence in terms of excellent standards that should be maintained and enhanced. It reviews the quality of teaching-learning and quality standards in each educational program to meet the criteria of the Higher Education Commission. QEC is also liable to build up a qualification framework according to the expected abilities of qualification holders for example Bachelors, Masters, and M.Phil. /M.S and Ph.D. scholars. It ensures that university quality assurance processes are capable of maintaining and enhancing the quality of higher education to meet the criteria of HEC. QEC arranges training programs with HEC for the capacity building of its team. It is accountable to build up quality assurance procedures and techniques of evaluation to confirm that quality prerequisites and principles of reward are retained. It is liable to evaluate management standards and quality education of all academic affiliated institutions with the university. QEC specifies program provisions, set standards, attributes, and abilities that should be possessed by students after the successful completion of the degree furthermore, QEC coordinated with QAA (quality assurance agency) of HEC for assistance and guidance on all concerns associated with quality assurance. QEC prepared procedures for Program provision, Quality assurance of Master's M.S/LLM/M.PHIL and Ph.D. degree programs, feedback of employer, feedback of Student, authorization of new academic programs, monitoring and evaluation of program, faculty, student's feedback and opinion, review of departments, review of the subject, coordination with external offices, assessment of the institution, authorization of all respective, academic Programs offered at University, criteria for faculty appointment according to HEC, promote research in university, submit ranking data to HEC and other organizations, execution of all policies and procedures provided by HEC, implementation of plagiarism policy, quality framework

Methodology

The population of the study comprised 64 chairpersons and experts of QEC from one Public Sector University. The sample of the study was 20 chairpersons and experts responsible for monitoring and evaluation vis-a-vis quality assurance in different departments of Public Sector University. A semi-structured interview and questionnaire were used for data collection. A semi-structured interview was conducted with the deputy director of QEC and questionnaires were got filled by the chairpersons of departments. All the questionnaires and interviews were reviewed carefully and data analysis was done according to objectives. Data analysis is being presented in narrative form and percentages. Data obtained through an open-ended questionnaire was analyzed in percentages whereas the data collected through the semi-structured interview was analyzed thematically.

Data Analysis

Table 1 Analysis of Quantitative data

Statements	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
Do self-assessment	100	0	0
Perceive assessments for quality maintenance	92	8	0
Are you benefiting stakeholders	83	17	0
Set indicators for monitoring	83	8	9
Utilizing monitoring results	92	8	0

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Review academic performance of programs/courses	92	8	0
Academic program relevance with needs	92	0	0
Academic program continuation	75	9	8
Use results-based management (RBM)	42	58	0
Use evidence-based practices (EBP)	58	42	**0**
Effectiveness of Quality Enhancement Cell for monitoring and evaluation of your academic program	67	17	16
Satisfy with M&E criteria of QEC	33	67	0
Satisfy with indicators set by QEC for Performance measurement	50	25	25
Challenges encountered for effective academic programs delivery	92	0	8

Definition of quality concepts varies from department to department. Understanding of quality concepts is based on their perception and orientation whereas quality reflects the totality of characteristics. Understanding of self-assessment and quality maintenance is determined by QEC and communicated to them in the shape of assessment forms. Most of the respondents have full realization of the assessments for the effectiveness of their programs and they set indicators for performance monitoring. Respondents are enthusiastic to continue the pattern of their programs as they believe that their programs are being reviewed/improved based on monitoring results. Most of them consider their programs as relevant to real needs and thus benefitting the stakeholders. A growing number of youths in Pakistan has created high demand for higher education whereas expansion of higher education institutions is in process in Pakistan. Socio-economic benefits are linked with the well-being of the population.

Although a considerable number of respondents 67% realized the effectiveness of QEC which depict the good performance of QEC in term of monitoring and evaluation. Responses showed 33% are not satisfied with M&E criteria set by QEC and 50% are not even satisfied with indicators that were set by QEC for performance measurement of their programs which showed a lack of harmony among departments and QEC.

Approaches of management are instrumental for success and maintaining the quality of the program that are unfortunately not considered. It may be due to lack of orientation or/and awareness of modern tools such as the use of evidence-based practices and result-based management for the management of quality in any program as the responses showed 58% are using evidence-based practices and 42% are using result-based management approach. If planning and monitoring would be based on evidence-based practices and Result based management, quality practices will significantly improve. Without an understanding of the quality concept and effective communication collective quality targets cannot be achieved. Challenges are encountered when there is a lack of clarity between planning and implementation that's why responses showed a significant number of respondents 92% are facing different challenges during delivery of the programs.

Data Analysis

Table 2 Themes and Sub Themes of Qualitative data

Themes	Sub-Themes
1- Prospective outlook of programs 2- Steps were taken for quality enhancement	• Quality enhancement • Training programs • Evaluation of results
3- Practices for quality assurance	• Self-assessment report • Role of QEC
4- M&E practices 5- Effectiveness of programs	• Use of VLE • Employment • Admission demand

Prospective outlook of programs

Respondents consider a periodic review of their scheme of study, regular monitoring and performance reviews, classroom observation, training workshops, co-curricular activities, and recruitment of regular faculty as critical factors for quality enhancement. Whereas for some respondents, incentives for good performance**,** review of lectures delivery by visiting faculty members, and guidelines of QEC as approved by HEC are important for better results.

Most of the respondents emphasized the need for effective teamwork, course planning, teacher/ course evaluation, professionalism of regular faculty, facilities i.e. space and equipment, better coordination and cooperation with QEC/faculty for success and effectiveness of their academic programs. Some respondents pointed out that admission criteria need to assess necessary abilities and skills of candidates for admissions as poor quality of student's intake hampers efforts for quality enhancement. The data shows that respondents consider different factors for the success and effectiveness of their programs. Diverse viewpoints and directions towards quality enhancement reflect a lack of clarity and uniformity towards achieving the common goal of quality enhancement.

Steps were taken for quality enhancement

Respondents informed that different workshops, seminars, and training programs were arranged for teachers besides teachers and course evaluations for quality enhancement. Some respondents reinforced instructions of QEC and emphasized on virtual learning environment (VLE) for getting feedback from students. Some respondents have initiated an evaluation of course planner, midterm and final term paper reviews, class monitoring, evaluation of results, and improved coordination for quality enhancement. The disparity was found in steps taken by each department for quality enhancement.

Practices for quality assurance

For most of the respondents, self-assessment reports (SAR) furnished by each department to QEC for every course offered, provide the basis for developing their M&E system and achieving objectives of quality enhancement. Some of the respondents criticized the role of QEC for not being proactive in bringing clarity to quality programs.

Monitoring &Evaluation practices

It was reported that a web-based virtual learning environment (VLE) is used for the evaluation of courses and teachers by Deans, heads of departments, and program coordinators. Students are encouraged to provide their feedback on VLE, and based on their feedback, steps are taken for improvements. Based on information received through VLE, the performance of visiting faculty members is reviewed, whereas regular faculty members are provided training on the weaker areas. The majority of the respondents use VLE for the evaluation of their respective programs.

Effectiveness of programs

Some respondents believe that their students are competent and successful in their professional lives as they get good jobs after graduation. Most of the respondents consider their program of study as a source of value addition to different disciplines of life. Few respondents consider that the growing demand for admissions every year reflects the effectiveness of their programs.

Respondents defined program effectiveness according to their perceptions and beliefs. The majority of respondents' claims for program effectiveness remain unsubstantiated, in the absence of a proper database of Alumni and demographic changes/trends in the country.

Analysis of interview

Performance measurement approach

The performance of teachers, as well as academic programs, is evaluated through software designed by the University for this purpose. QEC periodically reviews the performance of each department, undertakes monitoring visits, and maintains performance reports of all courses. The effectiveness of the prevailing M&E system was not considered up to the desired level, due to the reluctance of the departments to fully understand and adopt the quality system. QEC carry out a SWOT analysis to bring improvements in the M&E system every year, besides maintaining and publishing quality record on the university website.

Participation, cooperation, and ownership of each department are crucial for the success of quality enhancement initiatives. The capacity of different departments, especially in the areas such as compliance monitoring, diagnostic monitoring, and performance monitoring is necessary to align their quality objectives with the objectives of QEC.

Quality Management Mode

It was emphasized that objectives of quality enhancement can only be achieved with the support and ownership of each department. Criteria for monitoring & evaluation are developed and adapted according to the needs and situation of each department. Monitoring tools are however devised, keeping in view the input resources including human resources. Whereas responsibilities related to M&E are assigned to different faculty members together with their normal teaching work. It becomes

difficult for faculty members to contribute effectively in monitoring and quality programs with little or no comprehension of related management concepts. Lack of input generally affects the efforts to comply with changing needs.

Self-Assessment Reports (SAR), periodically generated by each department, provide the objectives of each program. Quality objectives of each program, consistent with the objectives of QEC are not specified in SAR for better clarity and uniformity towards achieving the common goal of quality enhancement.

Quality assurance and compliance

Internal and external evaluations are carried out by the head of departments, QEC and HEC. As a result of the recent evaluation of Ph.D. programs, criteria set by the HEC was reinforced and supervisors were restricted to supervise up to an admissible number of students at a time. Other shortcomings identified during the evaluation were recorded and passed on to HEC to incorporate in their training programs for the faculty. Regular faculty, not meeting the desired criteria were referred for further training and counseling to the institute of professional development (IPD) which imparts quality and hands-on training programs for regular faculty of the university.

The internal quality assurance process needs to comply with quality assurance standards and external assessments besides monitoring and evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness towards achieving the objectives of programs according to their mission.

Summary of Interview

Parameters for quality assurance are established by the quality enhancement cell in compliance with the requirements of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). The overall objectives of QAA, Quality Enhancement Cell, and departments require to be in harmony for effective quality enhancement efforts. It becomes challenging for QEC to establish a working relationship with each department and communicate changing requirements. The ownership and cooperation of each department are mandatory to comply with the requirements of QEC and accordingly QAA. The effective role of QEC without due support of departments is merely not possible.

Discussion

The findings of the study showed majority are unaware of the RBM approach in the M&E system whereas Result Based Management is important that help in planning, diagnosing weaknesses, fault lines and help to be prepared in a better position for future problems, which does not support previous researches as according to RBM handbook of Canadian International Development Agency (2011) RBM is a management approach that describes and highlights development results in all phases of planning, implementation, learning, and reporting. The finding of the study showed lack of uniformity exists between departments and QEC whereas objectives of quality enhancement can be only achieved with coordination between QEC and departments that are not consistent with previous researches as according to UNESCO (2016) it is necessary to take corrective actions for ensuring ordered and indisputable harmonization between M&E system and stakeholders that include organization, community, and beneficiaries. Some of the respondents were not satisfied with the role and performance of QEC whereas QEC stated the prevailing M&E system was not up to the desired level because of the resistance by faculty to adopt. The finding supported shortcomings identified through performance reports are recorded and passed on to HEC to incorporate in training programs, Regular faculty is referred to IDP for further training where they received training based on their deficits. Which is according to previous studies, Hatry (1999) described performance reports include descriptions regarding deprived outcomes and discovering gaps, and taking steps to solve the trouble in terms of training, workshops.

Internal and external evaluation is carried out by the chairperson, QEC, and HEC, and results are utilized for improvement. Based on evaluation recently, Ph.D. programs were reviewed by QEC, and criteria set by the HEC were reinforced, wherein supervisors are restricted to supervise up to twelve students of MS / M.Phil / Ph.D. at a time. The findings of the study are consistent with the previous researches, evaluation feedback is defined as a vibrant process it provides information regarding evaluation findings, for ensuring learned lessons are integrated into new procedures (UNESCO, 2008).

The finding of the study showed monitoring was less focused than evaluation, respondents used to talk about evaluation criteria but they did not speak on criteria for monitoring while monitoring is as important as evaluation which is inconsistent with previous research as according to

UNESCO (2008) for ensuring the effectiveness of M&E system, relevant standards, and nationwide M&E framework was developed for ensuring monitoring at all levels.

There is a great need for monitoring and evaluation for enhancing the quality of education in public universities as most of the faculty is unaware of M&E skills due to little understanding of management concepts this finding is also supported by National Educational policy (2017) which emphasized introducing new reforms such as teacher training, assessment, monitoring and evaluation for the improvement of quality of education

1-   Investigate the monitoring and evaluation criteria for quality enhancement of educational programs at a higher level.
2-   Explore steps taken by the departments for quality enhancements at a higher level.
3-   Find out the gaps for improvement in the quality of educational programs at a higher level.

Conclusion

Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan and Quality Enhancement Cells (QECs) of universities share the responsibility to maintain the quality of higher education. QEC's set criteria for monitoring and evaluation of education programs in line with reporting procedures of HEC. Different departments of HEIs according to their scope and capacity undertake further initiatives for networking and/or accreditations of their programs with professional bodies. According to their needs and priorities, departments set and pursue their objectives. Inconsistency in departmental objectives and objectives set for quality enhancement triggers ambiguity and lack of clarity for monitoring of different results.

The people involved in investigating significant anomalies in the monitoring system lack the conceptual clarity on quality concepts which ultimately affect their willingness and commitment to quality enhancement. Training programs managed and arranged by HEC and QECs provide a basis to bridge the gap by capacity development of participants. To achieve desired results, monitoring criteria for quality enhancement need to be carefully developed in consultation with each participating department.

Recommendation

The findings and conclusions of the study enable the researchers to propose suitable suggestions for improvement. The recommendations of the study are following

1-   Quality objectives of departments might be in line/ consistent with the objective of QEC which are drawn from the quality objectives of HEC.
2-   Inservice Training for faculty members, QEC coordinators may be designed and arranged to bring conceptual clarity on quality issues to cope with faculty resistance.
3-   A person with the necessary background and experience in monitoring and evaluation might be assigned to each department because some of the respondents stated that they are unaware of the tools of monitoring and evaluation.
4-   The staff needs to be capacitated with the necessary tools and techniques of monitoring.
5-   Monitoring plans may be developed with mutual consent of each department specifying the desired results.
6-   Practical activities may be designed for the effective construction of monitoring tools.

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