Quality Management in Higher Education

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to evaluate the quality in higher education. For this purpose, 190 members of academic staff of the faculties of behavioral and social sciences of the University of Tehran were selected by using stratified random sampling method and responded to the self-made questionnaire. The collected data were analyzed by using independent sample t-test. The results indicated that from the point of view of the members of academic staff of the faculties of behavioral and social sciences of the University of Tehran, the quality of the educational objects of this university is in a medium level and the quality of the process is in a weak level and the quality of the infrastructures, interactions and the quality of atmosphere is in a desirable level.

1. Introduction

Development of higher education centers in recent decade has created issues regarding the quality of these centers and in fact guaranteeing the quality of them. At the same time with the growth of the numbers of universities, authorities have tried to increase the quality of higher education and due to its sensitivity; numerous studies (Zineldin et al., 2011) have been conducted regarding it. It should be noted that quality in education is somehow different with quality in industry, etc. Vazzana et al., (2000) have introduced three areas of educational program, interactions with environment and educational centers for quality of higher education or in other words for universities.

Studying the students' Status and their knowledge are also among the matters which have attracted attention in management and improving the quality of higher education (Bayraktar et al., 2008; Houston et al., 2008). A university has always been known with characteristics such as: structure, students, staff, principals, professors and instructors of educational courses and each of these can have a significant and fundamental role in output and quality and even qualifications of the university. The goal of this paper is to study quality in higher education which is theoretically is based on Zineldin (2006) model. In evaluation of higher education quality, two approaches of service quality and process quality have been presented (Gronroos, 2000). Service quality refers to the quality of the provided services and process quality refers to the quality of the process through which the services are provided and in fact this view basically deals with processes (Zineldin, 2006). According to Asser et al., (1990) for improving the quality we cannot follow any approach rather than studying it and determining its characteristics. One of the models used in studying the service quality is the model proposed by SERVQUAL Model which is in fact adopted from Parasuraman et al. (1985) which is mainly focused on the studies centered on the view of service dimension. But due to the fact that in this paper we intend to study the quality from the view of higher education processes, we have adopted the five dimensional model of Zineldin (2006). This model includes 5 dimensions of: quality of objects, quality of processes, quality of infrastructure, quality of interaction and quality of atmosphere.

General talk of quality has been used so much in discussions in universities. This concept contains inputs to achievement of desirable results (Onocha, 2002). The characteristics of guaranteeing mechanism of efficient quality can be seen in factors such as efficient quality management system, continuous monitoring of the tasks implementation processes and controlling the implementation of targeted programs (Ogbodo & Nwaoku, 2006). The aim of quality guarantee is to decrease distortions and to increase the probabilities of success in achieving these goals. This would increase the necessity of a proper process more and more. This paper aims to study the quality management system in higher education in University of Tehran and it has tried that the obtained results would be clear for dear readers.

2. Methodology

The current research is applied research from the point of view of its aim; descriptive – correlation from the view of method; and is survey from the conduct point of view.

2.1. Research population and sample

The research population of this study includes all the professors of the academic staff of the behavioral and social sciences faculties of the University of Tehran including faculties of entrepreneurship, geography, physical education, economy, management and accounting, psychology, education sciences and social sciences. There is a total number of 376 professors in this university. The research sample has been selected from the population with the use of stratified random sampling method and the sample has the total number of 190 professors. For higher level of assurance regarding the return of acceptable questionnaires for analysis, 210 questionnaires were distributed among the research population and in the end we managed to collect the 190 required questionnaires and perform analysis on them.

2.2. Instruments

For studying the dimensions of quality in higher education, an author made questionnaire has been used in this paper. This questionnaire has been developed based on the model of Zeineldin (2006) in five dimensions of (quality of objects, quality of processes, quality of infrastructures, quality of interactions and quality of atmosphere) which has 24 statements in Likert's five points scale (so much bad to so much good). The validity of the questionnaire has been approved by the experts of this field and the reliability of the questionnaire has been also obtained equal to 0.83 with the use of Cronbach's Alpha test, which indicates a proper reliability for the questionnaire.

3. Results and Discussion

In this research single-sample t test has been used for the purpose of studying the status of the 5 dimensions of quality in higher education, the results of which has been shown in table 1.

Table 1. Results of independent sample t-test

Index t = 3					
Variable	Mean	SD	df	t	Sig.
Quality of educational object	3.04	0.28	189	1.796	0.07
Quality of processes	2.40	0.35	189	23.549	.00
Quality of infrastructures	3.82	0.52	189	21.477	.00
Quality of interactions	3.88	0.57	189	21.554	.00
Quality of atmosphere	4.02	0.54	189	25.873	.00

The results of independent sample t-test indicate that from the point of view of the academic staff of the behavioral and social sciences faculties of the University of Tehran, the quality of educational object is in a medium level and the quality of the processes is in a weak level which can be a result of lack of a consistent structure for evaluating the educational processes which has been manifested in the views of the dear professors as well. The average of the dimensions of the quality of infrastructures, quality of interactions and quality of atmosphere indicate that the status of these variables is in a desirable and good level in behavioral and social sciences faculties of the University of Tehran.

4. Conclusion

Quality in higher education is created with the performance of the members, organization and its structure. The regulations of the higher education centers have also an important role in quality of the higher education and the outputs of the universities. Professional qualities of the members of the academic staff and the relation of them with their students, is one of the factors which has an important role in guaranteeing the quality in higher education (Mikalauskas et al., 2012). The aim this paper is to study the quality of the educational processes of behavioral and social sciences faculties of the University of Tehran. Studies on reassuring concepts of quality in higher education (Rossi et al., 2003; McLaughlin et al., 2002) indicate that some of the universities will study their current status carefully for studying their quality, while some of the other universities emphasize on the role of self-evaluation, university building, recognizing current status and individual encouragement for improvement of their current status (Gudzinskiene, 2007; Ramanauskiene, 2008; Ramsden, 2000).

The aim of quality evaluation is to study and matching the evaluations, regulations and indexes which are responsible for the health of higher education and there is agreement in this regard (Stukalina, 2010; Serafinas & Ruzevicius, 2009; Grundey, 2008; Zafiropoulos & Vrana, 2008; Jasinskas Neverauskas & Stankevicius, 2008) that evaluation of higher education is a demanding and difficult task. Evaluation of the quality of higher education should become as a culture and therefore; evaluation of the quality of the inside of universities and guaranteeing its quality is one of the most important processes if each university and higher education institutes (Lea & Callaghan, 2008). Guaranteeing quality in higher education will be realized in the shade of having a desirable and optimized process. Training professors, processes and outputs, allocation of sufficient time, proper

education and capability of helping the students toward flourishing and group work have an important role in improvement of the quality in higher education and some of the scholars have emphasized on it (Raisiene, 2004; Parini, 2004; Ramsden, 2000).

According to Green (1994), in evaluation of education quality, clear concepts should be used, so that everyone can become aware of the results of these evaluations. Srikanthan & Dalrymple (2003) believes that four factors of 1- obtained results, 2- students and sustainable educational results, 3- social beneficiaries, 4- those in charge of education as the factors affecting the evaluation manner of higher education and Cheong Cheng & Ming Tam (1997) also believe that in so many of cases and in evaluations of the quality of education, these evaluations are performed to the output dimension of education and in other words the meaning of education quality is the satisfaction of students from the education.

Talking about quality is complicated and difficult due to the fact that we cannot name it as general criteria regarding the universities and it should be presented in a specific and operational manner (Katiliute and Kazlauskiene, 2010). Currently multiple studies have been conducted in the field of higher education quality. According to the report of UNESCO (2005), higher education centers should allocate some of their works to quality evaluation of their own center, so they can present clear and accurate information about the quality of their education. UNESCO proposes that evaluations should be performed in to different dimensions and from different points of view for a more reassuring status in quality of higher education. Effective relationship between internal resources and external results and fertilizing the educational inputs are dependent on having a proper and fruitful process. In this research we have tried to study the quality of higher education and specifically the quality of higher education of behavioral and social sciences faculties of the University of Tehran from the point of view of the professors in these fields. The results of statistical analysis on collected data from the research population indicate that from the point of view of the members of academic staff of these faculties, the quality of educational object is in average level and the quality of processes is in a weak level and also the average of dimensions of the quality of infrastructures, interactions and atmosphere indicate that the status of these variables is in a desirable level in the behavioral and social sciences faculties of the University of Tehran.

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