The Online Journal of Quality in Higher Education

Message from the Editor-in-Chief

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Prof. Dr. Muzaffer ELMAS

Prof. Dr. Aytekin ISMAN

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Editors

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FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION: IT'S GROUNDS, AIMS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

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ABSTRACT
The aim of this study is to introduce the concept of first year experience, which is used to facilitate university students' adaptation to their schools. The study is a review study. As a requirement of this study, the studies carried out in national and international level are reviewed, some evaluations and recommendations are made. The basic function of education is to bring up good people and adaptation to the society contributes a lot to realize this function. University students' adaptation to their schools contributes them a lot in terms of a number of dimensions. First year experience or first year seminar is one of the most effective implementations that can be used to realize this aim. Universities in Turkey should assign importance to the adaptation of students to their universities and they should solve the problem of adaptation by using first year seminar.
Keywords: Adaptation, higher education, first year experience

Introduction

The most important mission expected from education for hundreds of years is raising "good" people (Karakaş, 2015). For governments, the basic duty of education is to train good citizens. The most apparent indicator of being a "good" person or citizen is adapting to the society one lives in. It is not expected from an individual who has successfully adapted to the society to exhibit the behaviours not desired by the society or the government as the society generally leads people to good and positive traits. The concept of adaptation, which is the key construct for the well-being of the individual and the society has been explained in detail below.

What is adaptation?

Adaptation is, though being a dynamic process, the reactions of the individual to the changes taking place around him/her (Geçtan, 1995; LeVine, 2018). Rathus and Nevid (1989) explain adaptation as behavioural patterns that enable people to cope with the challenges of life. Santrock (2006) defines adaptation as a psychological process directed towards the problems and circumstances of daily life. Özgüven (1992), on the other hand, defines adaptation as the level of building and sustaining good relations with oneself and the people around. Yavuzer (1996) puts forth a similar definition and suggests that adaptation is the ability to build and sustain a balanced relation between individual's self and the environment he lives in.

Adaptation and Society

The biggest factor that launches the process of adaptation is the changes in human life (Özkan and Yılmaz, 2010). The presence of the society necessitates the need for adaptation. Individuals are expected to adapt to the society they live in. Individuals guarantee that they will comply with the unique patterns the society has formed for years while they are trying to adapt to the society with a common culture (Coştu, 2009). Unless the individual behave in line with the behavioural patterns determined by the society, it is highly possible that s/he will be isolated by that society and this is the option which is usually not preferred by individuals. Society regards education as the most important means to transmit its culture to individuals.

Adaptation and University

The period of puberty is undoubtedly the hardest and most troublesome time for adaptation. Especially entrance to university, which coincides with the last phase of puberty and the initial years of university are the periods, in which individuals reach the peak of their both social and biological development. In addition to the general chaos of puberty, a lot of factors such as leaving home, changes in friendship relations, feeling neither as an adolescent nor an adult, relations with the opposite sex, expectations of the society and academic adaptation process lead to the social and psychological maladjustment of individuals. What is expected from

the individual at this point is to overcome all these hardships and incur responsibility despite all the new developments (Mercan and Yıldız, 2011).

The students who start university in different cities find themselves in a different social context. Again, these students face great differences mainly in their social life, human relations and educational life as a result of switching to a new phase of life. At the same time, students have to bear the brunt of difficulties of this different environment that they experience for the first time and hardships of individual life completely alone. As a result of the sudden termination of family and friend support, students should try to adapt to this new situation by using their individual talents and potentials (Karahan et al., 2005).

The majority of students look forward to starting this new life hopefully and excitingly before they start university (Jackson et al., 2000). What students look forward to experiencing as they start university is a life away from family control, meeting new people and a world with interesting events. Also, students develop expectations from their universities to provide opportunities regarding these issues (Pancer et al., 2000). Some students, in the process of adapting to university, stated that, after a while, it was hard and stressful to cope with the ease of university life, and the combination of the ease and freedom with the hardships resulting from loss of family support and home was deemed responsible for this hard period (Wintre and Yaffe, 2000).

It is obvious that especially the first year of university is full of stress and difficulties. It is considered to influence adaptation to university in the short term and have a considerable role that may lead students to even drop out of school in the long term. The problems that were listed most frequently concerning university life were missing home and friends (Paul and Brier, 2001), depression and other psychological disorders (Fisher and Hood, 1987), the feeling of loneliness (Brooks and DuBois, 1995), and low marks or GPA (Levitz and Noel, 1989). These problems are more common among the students who leave home to attend university as not only the academic life but also social life change (Wintre et al., 2008; Buote et al., 2007). Adaptation to university, which also means overcoming most of the difficulties listed above, is correlated with coping with stress (Aspinwall and Van Roojen, 1986) and academic motivation and performance (Sharma, 2002).

It can be claimed that the students living in developed countries with high mobility rates are more successful in adaptation to university compared to those living in developing and underdeveloped countries. The underlying reason here is that the students who are used to getting in touch with people easily as a result of the high mobility rates in their countries don't have difficulty in integrating their new environment when they move to another city for university. In this context, the individuals living in developing or underdeveloped countries with relatively low mobility rates can't easily get in touch with people as they rarely meet new people in their everyday life.

The anxieties of higher education students such as accommodation, nutrition, use of economic resources, cultural adaptation, safety and acceptance may cause intensive stress especially in the initial years of the university. How students perceive and interpret the problems ranging from simple difficulties to complicated conflicts, from trivial maladjustments to depression and what effects these problems have in cognitive, academic and social aspects were the subject of a number of researches (Mercan and Akyıldız, 2011).

What is First Year Experience?
The term "first year experience" denotes the collection of the experiences a student has in the first year of university. In academic aspect, however, the term denotes a programme that is specifically designed for the students in the first year of higher education to help them overcome all the potential problems in the process of adaptation to university and their new environment. It is widely employed in lots of colleges and universities in United States. The duration of the programme may range from one week to one year.

The History of First Year Experience
Although the origins of the programme aren't known clearly, lots of researchers state that South Carolina University is the first reference for the programme. The reason of this is a department founded at the university called "National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition". The main aim of the first year seminar at South Carolina University was to build up trust, understanding and open communication lines among students, faculty, personnel and administrators, introduce the institution to students and to change the teaching style of undergraduate students. In 1972, the president of the university,

Thomas Jones introduced a course named "University 101", which was developed to improve the experiences of first year students. The University's programme became a model for colleges and universities around US and representatives of 175 schools in the US came to South Carolina to get information about first year seminar in 1982. John N. Gardner, a professor at Carolina University, organised a conference about first year experience in the year 1983. In 1986, Carolina University started a partnership with Newcastle-upon-Tyne Polytechnic to organise the first "International Conference" on first year experience.

The Aims of First Year Experience
The general aims of first year experience can be summarised under six categories. These aims are as follows; academic excellence, integrity, inclusion, participation, empowerment and social responsibility (www.easternct.edu/firstyearexperience). What is targeted with academic excellence is a smooth transition of high school students from the academic studies at high school level to the ones at university level and to reach academic achievement eventually. Secondly, integrity is included to enable first year students to assign importance to model the good behaviour and to respect to both themselves and the society. Next, inclusion is included to provide opportunities for students to be sensitive to cultural diversity and to develop cultural competence. It is aimed with the title "participation" to establish interpersonal relations with university community and to sustain it in addition to informing students about the resources of campus and facilities available in the process of commitment to the university. The activities under the category of empowerment aim at helping students to develop effective personal leadership skills to develop their leadership skills to contribute to the society they live in. Finally, social responsibility is included to encourage students to take part in the social duties and social service practices at the campus and its vicinity and to be socially responsible.

Developing an Efficient First Year Experience Course
Higher education institutions have developed a range of first year intervention programmes. Some of them were called first year seminar while some were called first year experience. It was stated before that first year seminars contribute to the academic and social integration of students in the study carried out by Tinto in 1975. Tinto's studies paved the way for the organisation of these courses (Kleain, 2013). Moreover, students' experiences in the first year of university were analysed using scales (Baker and Siryk, 1986; Holmbeck and Wandrei, 1993; Petersen, Louw and Dumont, 2009) and the findings of these studies contributed significantly to the development of an efficient first year seminar. In the studies using these scales, adaptation was used both as a dependent and an independent variable and the other variables used were academic achievement, motivation, self-esteem, and attitude.

With the development of this course and following attention of universities in the last twenty years, the integration process of universities that started with short-term orientation programmes was spread to the whole academic year (Barefoot, 2000). Porter and Swing (2006) have observed in their study that first year experience courses also contribute to the institutions in many respects. These contributions can be summarised as follows; registering the students who pay the tuition fee, observing the prospective students and making use of the data obtained in increasing the quality of the university, following the annual college rankings and to operate accordingly to be included in the lists and to monitor the graduates and their careers.

The Contribution of First Year Experience to Students
With the help of University 101 programme, students were supported a lot in discovering their purposes, determining their strengths and adapting their academic plans. The activities, classroom discussions and homework assigned in this course have made great contributions on academic and social adaptation. In this context, one of the basic benefits of first year seminars is to enable students to constantly interact at campus. Thanks to these interactions, students will expand their social environment and take a step to suppress their longing for their home and family. A comprehensive curriculum assessment including the monitoring of academic results and evaluation of students' attitudes and behaviour has demonstrated that the students who completed "University 101" course integrate to university and academic life more quickly. For instance, in a study carried out in 2006, the GPA of the students who took "University 101" was 2,72/4 whereas that of the ones who didn't take this course was 2,49 (Hutson, B. L., and Atwood, J. A., 2006). Also, Weawer (2018) indicated that there were significantly higher rates of retention for those students who participated in a first-year seminar course than those students who did not.

Related Studies

There are a lot of studies in Tukey and abroad which focus on higher education students' adaptation to school. The fact that this subject was studied so frequently demonstrates the importance assigned to this issue. Academic issues are generally focused on in the studies discussing adaptation in Turkey (Erdem and Tanrıöğen, 2002). Researchers such as Baymur (1960), Kışlalı (1974), Özdemir (1985) and Akbalık (1997) focused on the subjects regarding adaption levels of students. Some of the studies discussed the academic integration of students (Aypay, 2003), academic achievement (Akpınar and Üstüner, 1999; Keçeli-Kaysılı, 2000; Buyurgan, 1999), perceptions and attitudes towards learning (Ergür, 2000), attitudes towards the job of teaching (Çapa and Çil, 2000), and expectations from school (Kiraz 2001). Other studies discussed the subjects such as personal characteristics of students (Akta, 1997; Gümü, 2000), student profiles (Çitil et al., 2006), smoking habits (Çelik et al., 2004), depressive symptoms (Özdel et al., 2002), loneliness levels (Karaoğlu et al., 2009), trust in university (Özdoğan and Tüzün, 2007), and spending habits (Kaşlı and Serel).

Arı (1989) observed that the students having dominant adult self could easily adapt to their environment. Akay (1990) stated that academic situation affected adaptation. Balabanlı (1990), on the other hand, emphasized that gender didn't affect social adaptation significantly. Aslan (1991) indicated in the study, carried out on third year students, that individuals with androgen qualities had higher personal and social adaptation levels. It was concluded in Kalı Soyer's (1992) study that the general, personal and social adaptation levels of extrovert students were higher than introvert ones.

Students' adaptation to universities is one of the subjects intensively discussed in international literature, especially by developed countries. Baker and Siryk (1986) studied university adaptation scale on university first year students. In addition, Holmbeck and Wandrei (1993) discovered in their study on first year students that the separation–individuation, family relations, and personality variables were better predictors of adjustment than were the cognitive indicators or home-leaving status. Moreover, Engels, Finkenauer, Meeus and Deković (2001) studied adolescents' commitment to parents and sensitive adaptations and prediction of these qualities. Petersen, Louw and Dumont (2009) observed in their study that psycho-social factors such as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, self-esteem, stress and internalisation affected adaptation. Furthermore, Kyalo and Chumba (2011) indicated that the critical factors that affect students' social and academic adaptation were interpersonal and academic adjustment. Finally, Yau, Sun and Cheng (2012) studied the effect of social adjustment on academic adaptation (Aslan, 2015).

Christensen and Johns (2018), studied on a theory that use a preclinical course to develop clinical reasoning skills of first-year medical students. They reached the conclusion that the students who took a precilinical course before the main year are more successful than the ones who didn't.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Students' adaptation to the life at university provides a number of advantages for both students and university. If students perceive their social life and school life holistically, they can both benefit from instructional activities at their best and develop their social skills through social activities. First year experience or first year seminar is a prominent model specially designed to realise this aim and it has been implemented at universities for a long time successfully.

Students' adaptation to universities is pretty important in many respects. Students who have adaptation problems in higher education can't achieve the educational outputs and they can't contribute to their country adequately as they fall short to make use of precious higher education properly. If students feel that they are alone in coping with the problems and challenges of their "new life", they will possibly have a negative attitude towards university and a low level of motivation, which may cause them to fail or drop out of school. Moreover, it is obvious that the students, who get professional help throughout primary and secondary education on adaptation to schools and problems they encounter, need more professional support at a time when they leave their family, relatives and environment. As students usually leave their hometown for university, the first one or two months of the university is the time when students are probably the most vulnerable in their lifetime. At this point, students should be provided with conscious, professional and deliberate help on adaptation to whatever is new for them. Although a new city and a new environment may excite some individuals, it may also bring with it some problems that the individual must overcome without

any external help. A lot of students may face serious troubles while coping with possible problems though some distinctive individuals with advanced problem-solving skills and resilience can resist.

Therefore, universities should take the required precautions for their students' adaptation and orientation. Taking the necessary precautions is essential for universities to realise the mission expected of them completely. Although the awareness on this issue is increasing day by day, it is hard to say that higher education institutions in Turkey try to help their students adapt to their new life except for some rare instances. The short span of orientation activities must be spread to the whole term or year in accordance with the demands of students. As the universities in Turkey have generally finished with the Bologna process, the main target of which is transparency and standardisation, and focused on quality and accreditation, the adaptation and orientation of students has gained much more importance. Having a professional adaptation process for all students is a prerequisite of competing with world universities and attracting more foreign students. First year seminar or university 101 seminar is an implementation that has the potential of contributing considerably to obtain the outcomes excepted of higher education institutions. The countries like USA which have utilised this seminar efficiently have contributed to the well-being of university students, made greater use of higher education and made considerable progress in education. First year seminar has a lot to offer for the problems of students at universities in Turkey if it is examined thoroughly and adapted to Turkish context successfully.

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FROM ESG 2005 TO ESG 2015: THE TIGHTENING OF A COGNITIVE FRAMEWORK

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INTRODUCTION

A number of critical analyses have addressed the effects of quality assessment focussing, in particular, on the managerialization of higher education (Harris, 2011) through the introduction of New Public Management principles (Moorley, 2003), which are transforming the governance of universities (Kosmützky, 2016), and the power relationships between higher education institutions (Worthington & Hodgson, 2005). Other analyses have emphasised the market and competitive neo-liberal principles inherent in quality assurance in a globalised world (George, 2006; Jarvis, 2014), in which a university is expected to contribute to the growth of a knowledge-based economy (Olssen & Peters, 2007).

The contents of this article come in line with those analyses. The focus is on quality assurance within the Bologna Process, and the highlighting of the interconnection between European higher education policy and European Union lifelong learning policy, developed as part of the growth and employment strategy. In 2005, European ministers of higher education adopted the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) (Bergen communiqué, 2005). The ESG are the one of the most important instruments of the Bologna Process. They were drafted by the E4 group, which is made up of European institutional actors: the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) representing national quality assurance agencies of higher education, the European Students Union (ESU) representing students, the European University Association (EUA) representing universities, and the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE) representing University colleges and other professional schools.

The ESG define a set of norms for evaluating higher education institutions, with which national quality assurance agencies are invited to comply. The ESG of 2005 (ENQA, 2005) were quite generic – this was because of concerns that existed over State-level reluctance to see their national sovereignty being undermined (Huisman & Westerheiden, 2010). Agencies were given a wide scope in their interpretation. In 2012, European ministers of higher education invited the E4 group to draft the new version of ESG (Bucharest communiqué, 2012). In 2015, the efforts invested in the process review resulted in the publication of the new version of the ESG, its main thrust being the introduction of more precise standards - thereby making them more restrictive insofar as there was less scope for differing interpretations.

This article considers the 2015 ESG to be the material expression of a cognitive framework. The ESG are a discourse encompassing a specific conception of higher education at European level in which a managerial vision of accountability is aimed at improving effectiveness. They anticipate the involvement of stakeholders at varying degrees of proximity to a university in programme design and evaluation as well as the empowering of higher education institutions, and the expectation that a culture of quality will be disseminated. They also advocate a student-centred approach.

This article delivers an analysis of the latent meaning of the ESG 2015. On one hand, the adoption of more accurate version of the ESG is an expression of the tightening of a cognitive framework that has progressively imposed itself from 1998 onwards through the Sorbonne Declaration. On the other hand, the cognitive framework - implemented via the ESG 2015 - extended its reach to encompass the European lifelong learning strategy, which aims to provide a flexible workforce able to adapt itself to the labour market's rapidly changing skillset requirements. It is in this way that the ESG have contributed to bringing higher education into line with the European Union agenda's targets focussing on knowledge-based economy growth, as first defined in the Lisbon Strategy (European Council, 2000) and later in the Europe 2020 Strategy (EC, 2010).

THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE APPARATUS

The concept of apparatus, defined by Foucault (1994) as a set of discursive and non-discursive heterogeneous elements that orientate the directions and thinking of involved parties, turns out to be a particularly heuristic

way of studying the way the cognitive framework, propounded within the ESG, has become tighter between 2005 and 2015. However it can also be employed to study the latent meanings of the ESG 2015 by considering them in relation to other instruments:

"the apparatus is the system of relations that can be established between all the heterogeneous elements that compose it. Thus, the relations between these elements give the sense of the apparatus and of all the elements that compose it. Every element is carried by strategic actors aiming at a precise objective. But these actors are forced to place their element, whatever its nature, in the existing apparatus. By being absorbed by the apparatus, every element modifies it and is modified by it at once. These modifications concern just as much the use made of each of these elements as the meaning which is given to it" (Charlier & Croché, 2011:306).

More specifically, this paper focusses on the "European higher education apparatus" constructed to study the Bologna Process's development and history (Croché, 2010). The apparatus elements are all discourses and objects - abstract or concrete - that are directly or indirectly related to each other. These steer the behaviour of parties involved in European higher education. It is therefore impossible to describe the European higher education apparatus exhaustively, so the research work concentrates on surveying the most significant elements – in other words, those with the greatest influence and visibility (Charlier & Croché, 2013; Charlier & Panait, 2015; Croché, 2010; Souto Lopez, 2016).

This article concerns itself with a specific category of objects: policy instruments (Lascoumes & Le Galès, 2007). Their architecture and durability ensure that the apparatus is stable. The architecture imposes constraints of use, and imposes meaning that is more or less flexible. So, whilst the ESG are open to interpretation, they cannot be used to evaluate anything other than higher education institutions and the way in which national evaluation agencies carry out their evaluations. The instruments enable action as much as they restrict it. The durable nature of the instruments also ensures that the device is stable – they have a history behind them, and they continue to exert their influence as long as human beings agree to engage with them. Over time, elements appear and disappear while other elements transform themselves: the apparatus is reconfigured every time, impacting on the relationship between its elements. In this way, the ESG were adopted in 2005 and were then revised in 2015, establishing new or more pronounced links with other elements of the apparatus.

Each element of the apparatus is connected to the others both directly and indirectly. Direct relationships are these in which two elements are linked without the intervention of a third element. Indirect relationships are those in which two elements are connected with each other by way of the intermediary existence of a third element. So, we have elements A, B and C: were A and B to be in a direct relationship and B to be in a direct relationship with C, then A and C would be indirectly linked. The link may be direct in one direction whilst being indirect in another direction. In essence, A cannot establish a direct link with C, whereas C establishes a link towards A. This means that A is in an indirect relationship with C via B, and C is in a direct relationship with A. This can be mapped out as follows:
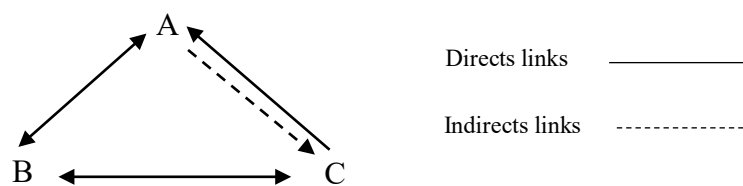
Figure 1. Directs and indirect links of the apparatus

The apparatus is an interpretative concept of the social order. The term "order" refers to an overall structure of the elements that make up the apparatus whose relationships are organised in line with an overall coherence. The structure is both what governs the elements and their relationship and the outcome of the order itself: the order is not a fixed, immutable state as such. The apparatus is an ongoing, evolving process whose outcome is always temporary, and this temporary aspect therefore requires a socio-historical analysis.

METHODOLOGICAL ELEMENTS

This article posits that the 2015 ESG contribute to integrating higher education into the European lifelong learning and education policy. This premise is made concrete in two ways: first, by the adoption of the new version of the ESG by European ministers of higher education: in this way, the 2015 ESG became an element of the European higher education apparatus. Secondly, the explicit connections established by the ESG between the learning outcomes and the overarching framework of qualifications of the European Higher Education Area

(QF-EHEA) indirectly link the ESG to the European Qualification Framework for lifelong learning (EQF), and therefore to the European lifelong learning and education policy. Those two instruments will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

To test this hypothesis, we will proceed with a comparative lexicometric analysis of the 2005 and 2015 versions of the ESG, combining this with a socio-historical perspective based on institutional documents produced during the Bologna and Copenhagen Process. The Copenhagen Process, launched in 2002, is directly coordinated by the European Commission. It anticipates cooperation between European higher education systems and professional training, leading to the fulfilment of the European growth and employment strategy. The EQF was constructed within the confines of this process.

FROM THE 2005 ESG TO THE 2015 ESG: UNDERPINNING THE COHERENCE OF THE COORDINATION

Shortly after the adoption of the 2005 ESG, the E4 group and the European Commission published a series of reports emphasising the perfectibility of the 2005 ESG. In 2007, the E4 group published a report in which it stated that "Care should be taken to make sure that the European Standards and Guidelines do not become a simple checklist for compliance purposes and that any revisions reflect the needs of higher education more broadly" (E4 group, 2007, p. 14). In 2009, a European Commission report (EC, 2009) recommended a revision of the ESG that, since its publication, has been reiterated systematically during the various encounters among entities involved in higher education. (E4 group, 2011). European higher education ministers expressed a wish in 2009 to see the E4 group continue to work towards strengthening the European quality dimension (Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve communiqué, 2009).

In 2011, the E4 group published the findings of a survey carried out in 2010 relating to the usage of the ESG in the various countries in the Bologna process, all within the scope of an ESG revision project (E4 group, 2011). The main conclusions of this survey showed that the ESG exerted a considerable influence on quality development in the countries, and was to be one of the most significant achievements of the Bologna process. In that respect, the revision of the 2005 ESG relates more to their formulation than to their contents and principles. The report emphasised the observed differences in interpretation. These were attributed to terminological issues, confusion between standards and guidelines, differing visions of quality, and diversity of national and institutional contexts. Such differences would be accompanied by the risk of inconsistent interpretations and implementation. In 2012, ministers invited the E4 group, together with the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), Education International and Business Europe, to work on revising the ESG (Bucharest communiqué, 2012).

BETWEEN THE HARMONISATION OF POLICIES AND THE DIVERSITY OF EUROPEAN SYSTEMS

The 2005 and 2015 ESG express a tension between the diversity of the European higher education systems and the drive to harmonise practices. On the one hand, overly restrictive standards risk triggering reluctance among States, while on the other hand overly flexible standards would result in an excessive diversity of interpretation and practice. In order to resolve this tension, it was decided that standards would be put forward that were aimed at encouraging the adoption of common policies among the Bologna signatory countries, whilst also triggering the allegiance of the States. Such a balance is referred to in an identical fashion in the 2005 and 2015 versions of the ESG, indicating that the EHEA: "with its 40 states is characterised by its diversity of political systems, higher education systems, socio-cultural and educational traditions, languages, aspirations and expectations. This makes a single monolithic approach to quality, standards and quality assurance in higher education inappropriate" (ENQA, 2005:11 & ENQA, 2015:8).

This clearly demonstrates the emphasis in the 2005 and 2015 ESG on the diversity that characterises the countries engaged in the Bologna process, and their higher education systems. For this reason, the two versions assert that there can be no monolithic vision of quality. In 2005, this diversity is presented as "one of the glories": "In the light of this diversity and variety, generally acknowledged as being one of the glories of Europe" (ENQA, 2005:11). In the ESG 2015 version, this quote has been removed from the document.

Hence, we observe a shift in which the diversity of European systems, considered as "one of the glories" (ENQA, 2005), is transformed into an obstacle to the harmonisation of practices (E4 group, 2011). This is a far from trivial development. It demonstrates the tightening of the cognitive framework of the ESG, in which the concern over the reluctance of States who might feel that their sovereignty is being undermined is dissolving. This was a good time to be gearing up for a reinforcement of the restrictive nature of the ESG through a reduction in the margin for interpretation. National agencies, who are in principle independent of any national

public authority, remain free to comply or not comply with the ESG. However, compliance with ESG raises an important issue: agencies' engagement with the EQAR, adherence to the ENQA as a full member, and therefore involvement in the definition of a quality evaluation policy at European level.

DISAMBIGUATION OF GUIDELINES, CLARIFICATION OF STANDARDS

A first clarification lies in the distinctions between standards and guidelines. Standards are objectives formulated in generic terms that have to be achieved by higher education establishments and agencies, while guidelines are formulated in a far more precise way but constitute only suggestions as to how the standards are to be reached. Tables 1 and 2 below show the respective frequency with which the words 'should' and 'must' appear in the 2005 and 2015 versions. The corpus composed of the 2005 and 2015 ESG has been split into two sub-corpus texts in order to analyse the changes in these frequencies of appearance in the standards section on the one part, and the guidelines section on the other.

For the standards section, the table below shows the stability of the frequency of the prescriptive form 'should' in the two versions:

Word	Standards 2005	Standards 2015
Must	0	0
Should	36	37

Table 1: Frequency of words "must" and "should" in the Standards 2005 and 2015.

For the guidelines section, the prescriptive forms "must" and "should" have completely disappeared from the guidelines in the 2015 version of the ESG:

Word	Guidelines 2005	Guidelines 2015
Must	3	0
Should	44	0

Table 2: Frequency of words "must" and "should" in the Guidelines 2005 and 2015.

The equally high frequency of prescriptive forms in the 2005 guidelines are a source of confusion as to what is actually required by the ESG (standards) and what is not (guidelines). Table 2 shows that these prescriptive forms were removed from the 2015 version of the ESG, suggesting that the drafters of the 2015 ESG were seeking to resolve the ambiguity between standards and guidelines, which, however, does not take anything away from the prescriptive nature of standards: "The standards make use of the common English usage of "should" which has the connotation of prescription and compliance" (ENQA, 2015:7).

A detailed comparative analysis of the 2005 and 2015 standards published in 2016 by Equip (Enhancing Quality through innovative Policy & Practice) focusses on the standards reconfiguration during the revision of the ESG. Although the document recalls that "The ESG 2015 continue to recognise the diversity of European higher education systems, institutions, and quality assurance agencies and continue to maintain, as in 2005, that 'a single monolithic approach to quality and quality assurance in higher education' in the EHEA is not appropriate" (EQUIP, 2016:2), the fact remains that the clarification of the standards restricts the agencies' room for manoeuvre insofar as the scope of application of what has been prescribed is reduced. EQUIP asserts that:

"the ESG 2015 take account of the developments in European higher education since 2005, such as the shift to student-centred learning and the need for flexible learning paths and the recognition of competencies gained outside formal education. In addition, the increased internationalisation of higher education, the spread of digital learning, and new forms of delivery are listed as important developments influencing the quality assurance of higher education. The ESG 2015 also make reference to other tools at the European level that contribute to transparency and trust in higher education, such as the qualifications frameworks, the ECTS, and the diploma supplement" (id.:1).

This quote demonstrates the link established with lifelong learning and education through the attention to the recognition of skills obtained outside the confines of formal education, as well as links with other instruments. The linking of the 2015 ESG with other instruments is also a linking of the cognitive framework of the 2015 ESG to the cognitive framework of each instrument. The following sections demonstrate that the most clearly expressed link is the one to the qualifications frameworks.

REINFORCING THE EFFECTS OF QUALITY THROUGH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER INSTRUMENTS

The comparative lexicometric analysis shows the lexical forms that mark the 2015 version of the ESG compared to those of 2005, as shown in the graph below.
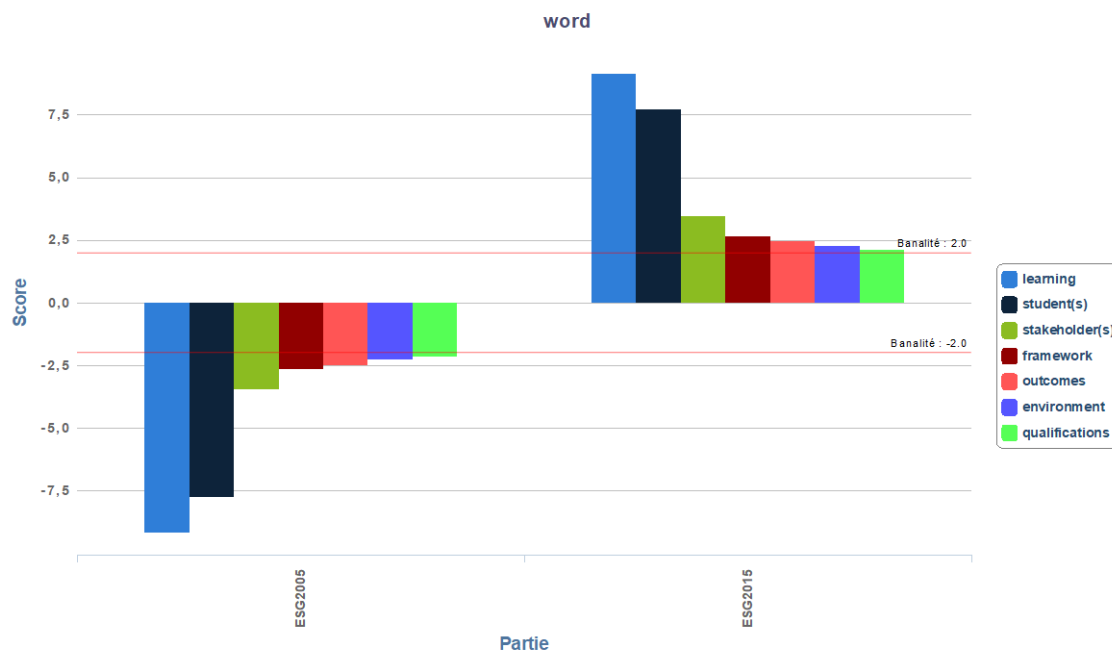
Figure 2. 2015 ESG: the interconnection of the Bologna instruments.

From the over-representation of the terms 'learning', 'student(s)', 'framework', 'outcomes' and 'qualifications' in the 2015 ESG, three observations can be made. First, the 2015 ESG emphasize the student-centred learning approach. Secondly, they advocate greater stakeholder involvement. Thirdly, and probably the most relevant point for this paper, there is an explicit relationship between the ESG, the learning outcomes and the qualifications frameworks. In the tables below, this relationship is illustrated by two observations. First, the phrase 'learning outcomes' appears more frequently in ESG 2015 than it does in 2005. Secondly, the expressions 'qualification framework(s)' and 'framework for qualifications' first appear in 2015:

Phrase	Frequency	ESG 2005	ESG 2015
Learning outcomes	10	3	7

Table 3: ESG 2005 & 2015: phrase with the form "learning".

Phrase	ESG 2005	ESG 2015	Total
framework for qualifications	0	1	1
qualifications framework	0	1	1
qualifications frameworks	0	2	2

Table 4: ESG 2005 & 2015: phrase with the form "framework (s) and qualifications".

The 2015 ESG emphasize the relationship between 'learning outcomes' and establish new links to the qualification frameworks. This interconnection between ESG, learning outcomes and qualifications frameworks is illustrated in particular by standard 1.2 "Design and approval of programmes" in the 2015 ESG:

"Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area" (ENQA, 2015:11).

This lexicometric analysis does no more than highlight the most significant differences between the 2005 and 2015 ESG versions, including the explicit linking of the ESG to learning outcomes and the QF-EHEA, and their evolution from 2005 to 2015. This observation does however demand a consideration of the construction of these links within a sociohistorical perspective. The next sections will describe the direct links constructed between these instruments and the indirect links constructed between the ESG and the EQF, through the intermediary of the learning outcomes and the QF-EHEA.

DIRECT LINKS TO THE LEARNING OUTCOMES AND THE QF-EHEA
It was in Berlin in 2003 that learning outcomes were first brought up by European higher education Ministers as a way of describing the qualifications expected at the end of each higher education cycle, so that they could be made comparable over and above the diversity of national systems (Berlin communiqué, 2003, p. 4). Ministers also took the opportunity on the same occasion to discuss the future QF-EHEA. An informal network of experts financed by the European Commission – the Joint Quality Initiative – was working on just that, and was also tasked with considering the evaluation of the quality of higher education. The Joint Quality Initiative put forward what became known as the Dublin descriptors in 2002 to cover the first two cycles of higher education (Adam, 2003), extended to the third cycle of higher education in 2004.

During that same year – 2004 – the Bologna Follow-Up Group approved the constitution of the Bologna Working Group on Qualifications Framework (BWGQF), set up to put together the QF-EHEA. This group drew very heavily on the Dublin descriptors, and in February 2005 the group published a report (BWGQF, 2005) that defined the QF-EHEA. This dealt with the three cycles of higher education and set out the number of ECTS credits that a student had to achieve at the conclusion of each cycle apart from the third cycle, the doctorate. The report defined 5 generic descriptors: knowledge and understanding, applying knowledge and understanding, making judgements, communications skills, and learning skills (id.:65). For each cycle and each descriptor, a set of specified learning outcomes corresponds to what the student has to fully understand at the end of each cycle.

The QF-EHEA is an instrument that aims to bring European higher education systems into line and make them compatible with each other. Each higher education system is to put together its own national higher education qualifications framework in line with the specific characteristics of its institutional context. Each higher education programme must be positioned on the national framework, and each position on the national framework must be in line with a QF-EHEA position. One of the quality assurance roles is to ensure that positions are set within the national framework, and to ensure that the ways in which they are brought into line are consistent (ibid).

So there is a close relationship between learning outcomes, quality assurance, QF-EHEA and ECTS. It is no coincidence that the 2005 Bergen conference was the point at which ministers all adopted the ESG and the QF-EHEA. Furthermore, the BWGQF suggests that it has taken into account the E4 group and also the future European Qualification Framework for lifelong learning that was tried out as part of the Copenhagen Process. In this way, a connection is established between the Bologna Process instruments and the EQF. This connection with the ESG is indirect since it is enacted via the QF-EHEA and the learning outcomes. The next section will show that this connection contributes to placing the Bologna Process within the context of the European lifelong learning and education policy.

INDIRECT LINKS TO THE EQF
On April 23rd 2008, the European Parliament and the European Union Council published a Recommendation […] on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (OJEU, 2008). This is the most iconic of the instruments within the European lifelong learning and education policy, and it sets out 3 descriptors (knowledge, aptitudes and competencies) divided into 8 levels from the most elementary (level 1) to the most advanced (level 8). A set of learning outcomes is defined for each descriptor and each level.

The principle of the EQF is the same as that of the QF-EHEA, the main point of difference being that the EQF relates to other kinds of training (formal, non-formal and informal education) aside from higher education. The idea is to draw on a common reference framework to position certifications delivered by the educational, vocational training and validation of prior experience systems.

The EQF could be considered an element of the European higher education apparatus in the same way as the instruments already referred to herein, as it is directly linked to the QF-EHEA. There is explicit reference to compatibility between levels 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the EQF and respectively between the short cycle of the first cycle, and then the first, second and third cycles of higher education. Furthermore, European higher education

ministers have been emphasising the importance of complementarity since 2005 between the QF-EHEA and the future EQF when the QF-EHEA was adopted in Bergen (Bergen communiqué, 2005, p. 2).

The EQF was drawn up within the framework of the Copenhagen process launched on 29th and 30th November 2002, when ministers in charge of vocational education and training from 32 European countries signed the Copenhagen declaration (Copenhagen Declaration, 2002) in which they agreed – along with the European Commission – to strengthen their cooperation in professional training and teaching. For lifelong learning, the objective is to integrate vocational training and education systems into the Lisbon strategy: "The development of high quality vocational education and training is a crucial and integral part of this strategy, notably in terms of promoting social inclusion, cohesion, mobility, employability and competitiveness" (id.:1). Among the four major priorities defined for vocational education and training is one that relates to the potential for recognising skills and qualifications and introducing a quality assurance process. The priority given to skills and qualifications recognition is suggestive of the concept of a European Qualification Framework, whose orientation was clearly announced in 2004: "There is a need to develop a European framework, based on national frameworks, to stand as a common reference for the recognition of qualifications and competences. The recognition of diplomas and certificates everywhere in Europe is essential to the development of a European labour market and of European citizenship" (OJEU, 2004a:1).

The idea is to encourage permeability between all types and levels of education, training and validation of prior experience. Such permeability means that an individual must be able to move from one system to another at any time in their life, and must be able to acquire competencies or get them recognised and have them certificated. The European Union thereby aims to deliver "the smooth and effective functioning of the European, national and sectoral labour markets" (Maastricht communiqué, 2004, p. 4).

The drive towards permeability between the various forms of learning, recognition and transferability of qualifications foreshadows a network organisation of learning and validation of prior experience systems. According to the Commission, this organisation within the network works as long as "people need to want and to be able to take their lives into their own hands – to become, in short, active citizens" (EC 2000:7). For the Commission, the active citizen is characterised first and foremost by being employable (EC, 2000).

In 2005, the European Commission drew up a proposal for a recommendation aimed at establishing the EQF (EC, 2006). Citing the speed of economic and technological change along with the ageing of the European population, the Commission stated that "lifelong learning is essential if the Lisbon objectives are to be achieved" (id.:7) but that it is hindered by a "lack of communication and cooperation between education and training providers and authorities at national as well as at international level" (id.:8). The obstacles criticised by the Commission relate to the isolation of the learning systems from each other both within a country and between countries. The network sought by the Commission can only come about through the fluid circulation of communication and cooperation between the actors – only then, says the Commission, will it be open and lead to learner and worker mobility.

The transparency that the EQF has to deliver is considered to be all the more necessary given that European training and educational systems are particularly diversified. This diversity can become an obstacle if there is no Europe-wide common reference framework to translate these differences. Transparency should, therefore, encourage the fluid circulation of information, learners and workers within an open network.

On May 22nd 2017, the European Union Parliament and Council published a new recommendation relating to the EQF that cancelled that of 2008. The new recommendation further tightened the relationship with the Bologna quality assurance process by recalling that the ESG served as a basis for defining the quality assurance principles within the confines of the EQF, and that these are presently compatible with the ESG:

"Trust in the quality and level of qualifications that are part of national qualifications frameworks or systems referenced to the EQF (hereafter 'qualifications with an EQF level') is essential in order to support mobility of learners and workers within and across sectoral and geographical borders. The recommendation of […] 2008 […] contained common principles on quality assurance in higher education and vocational education and training. They respected the responsibility of Member States for quality assurance arrangements applying to national qualifications in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity. The [ESG] and the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training build a basis for such common principles" (OJEU, 2017:16).

The role of quality is clear: to ensure that there is confidence in training levels in order to generate worker and learner mobility. Through the EQF, the ultimate purposes of lifelong learning are also those of higher education. Links are also intermingled with transferable unit systems such as ECTS and their equivalent in vocational and education training, the European Credits for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET), with a view to facilitating the transition from one learning system to another:

"Credit systems can help individuals to progress in learning by facilitating flexible learning pathways and transfer across different levels and types of education and training and across national borders, enabling learners to accumulate and transfer different learning outcomes acquired in different learning contexts, including online, non-formal and informal learning" (ibid.).

In addition, the document already anticipates other links with the Bologna process, most notably where it refers to the creation of a register equivalent to the EQAR: "The possibility of developing a register, outside the field of higher education, for bodies monitoring quality assurance systems for qualifications could be explored" (ibid.).

CONCLUSION

Since its activation in 1998 with the Sorbonne Declaration (Croché, 2010), an increasing number of elements have fed into the European higher education apparatus, with some of these elements having a particularly significant effect - among them the instruments described in this article. Over time, some elements have appeared and then gone on to be replaced by others, such as the transition from the 2005 ESG to the 2015 ESG. Other links have also been created with other elements that do not on the face of it directly concern higher education such as the Lisbon strategy first of all, and then Europe 2020.

The cognitive framework of the ESG 2005 was flexible to begin with, and was then tightened up with the adoption of the 2015 ESG. Prior to the adoption of the 2005 ESG, those involved in European higher education had to accept that higher education quality evaluation policy was coordinated at European level, with the foundation of ENQA in 2000, a consequence of a European recommendation (OJEU, 1998). Then also had to agree to refer to the common standards that constituted the ESG. Later on, they had to agree to EQAR evaluating and accrediting the conformity of national agencies to the ESG. They then had to agree to clarify the ESG, thus reducing their potential margin of interpretation and also their room for manoeuvre. The 2015 ESG are the material manifestation of this tightening - in other words the European institutional actors' willing subjugation that is gradually coming to fruition.

This willing subjugation concerns not just the overt meaning of the 2015 ESG relating to the way higher education systems and national evaluation agencies should be assessed but also their latent meaning, which becomes accessible by linking the ESG with other instruments as the QF-EHEA and the EQF – in other words, bringing the cognitive framework embedded within the ESG into a relationship with those embedded respectively by the QF-EHEA and the EQF. This linking between those cognitive frameworks specific to these instruments results in a broader framework that refers to the European "narrative" (Radaelli, 2000) which tells a story about the world, about Europe and its place in the world. This narrative, based on the *Memorandum on lifelong learning* (EC, 2000), the Lisbon Strategy (European Council, 2000) and the *Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe* (OJEU, 2004b), can be summarized as follows (Souto Lopez, 2016).

Europe has entered into a knowledge-based economy whose growth engine relies on technological innovation. The qualification needs of the employment market are changing rapidly as the population ages, and these changes carry with them a dual risk: an increase in structural unemployment, and the occurrence of manpower shortages. In circumstances like these, European citizens need to play an active role in the European Union's social and economic development, and as far as the EU is concerned this involvement has to take the form of having a job. Individuals therefore have a duty to keep their skills up to date and to acquire new ones throughout their lives. They must be active citizens: this means being flexible, adaptable, mobile, multi-lingual and employable. The European Union and member States must, in return, create the right conditions for individuals to be in a position to enjoy lifelong learning opportunities by connecting the educational, vocational training and validation of prior experience systems. All this is to be achieved through the mutual recognition of certificates issued by each State. We would thereby be witnessing the definition of a social contract embedded within an active social State - one that manifests itself in general discourse through the stated intention of building a vast European network of the production and certification of skills useful to the employment market.

The relationship between the Bologna Process and a lifelong learning policy already existed with the Sorbonne Declaration (1998) which indicated that "education and training throughout life becomes a clear obligation"

(id.:1) in a context in which diversification of vocational careers had now become the norm. The idea was above all to encourage universities to offer educational programmes that enabled individuals to pick up their studies at any point during their career. Croché (2010) showed how the European Commission took over the leadership of the Bologna Process when, in 2003, ministers agreed the Lisbon Strategy objectives (Berlin communiqué, 2003). Considering the fact that we are seeing the Lisbon objectives being integrated along with the establishment of a relationship between the ESG and the EQF and the creation of ever closer links between European lifelong training and education policy and certain elements of the Bologna Process, it appears that we are at a tipping point. The issue is no longer to integrate lifelong learning into higher education policy, but rather to integrate higher education into European lifelong learning and education policy.

We now find ourselves within a discourse register positioned at European level. This does not at all mean that individual actors have interiorised this cognitive framework, nor that they have adhered to it. In order to study the concrete effects of the ESG in greater detail, it would be worth studying the ways in which these objects have been re-appropriated by individual actors in their daily practice. It is also worth shedding light on something of a blind spot in the literature by measuring the extent to which countries that are not members of the European Union and not seeking European integration assimilate these objects. Do these countries also contribute to the development of the European social project? Questions like these raise further issues. This article has dealt with processes that have resulted in a convergence in the behaviours and practices of the entities involved, but what about the process of resistance?

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ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS AFFECTING RESPONSIVENESS TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY IN LEBANON

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ABSTRACT

Since the 1980s, quality assurance in higher education has developed world-wide. Nevertheless, differential implementation in pace and scope has also been demonstrated. Using a quantitative research approach, this research provides evidence on the organisational factors contributing to the variance in implementation by taking the Lebanese business schools as a case study.

The research concludes that responsiveness is associated with a number of factors; the size and vertical differentiation of the business school have been found to impact responsiveness to quality implementation with large business schools offering a doctoral degree being more likely to implement quality assurance measures.

Keywords: quality assurance, higher education, business schools, organisational characteristics.

Introduction

Due to the fast variations in the higher education environment including political, economic and socio-cultural forces that emerged in the latter part of the twentieth century, the consideration of quality assurance in higher education has gained momentum from the late 1980s onward indicating a rising concern in the concept and the way it is practiced (Papadimitriou, 2011). This was also precipitated by the massification of education, the provision of a wide variety of programmes, the diversity of student types, the necessity to match programmes to labour market needs, diminishing resources, and the call for increased accountability. These factors required institutions to set formal (explicit and systematized) quality assurance measures (Dill, 2007; Westerheijden et al., 2007).

Nevertheless, actual implementation of quality assurance has not operated as expected (Tight, 2003) and differences in the pace and scope of implementation continue to be evidenced in several contexts (El-Khawas, 1998, Billing, 2004).

In Lebanon, in 2014 a new higher education Law was ratified by the parliament calling for all higher education institutions to implement a quality assurance plan and citing its main pillars.The law also set the structure for the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance (NAHEQA) with the responsibility to inspect and audit universities in order to ultimately confer accreditation. Nevertheless, to this date, of the 46 higher institutions currently in operations, 11 have implemented a quality assurance system. Thus, this study aims to investigate the factors driving responsiveness to the implementation of quality assurance taking the Lebanese business schools as a case.

The organizational characteristics

Distinctive organisational characteristics play a role in either facilitating or inhibiting the implementation of a quality assurance system; universities and business schools are not an exception in this regard (Dill, 1992; Csizmadia, 2006). A review of literature reveals that the following elements differentiate higher education institutions and thus influence the decision to implement quality assurance.

a. Type of business (for profit or not-for-profit): is relevant to responsiveness to quality assurance because the implementation process is costly (Woolston, 2012), and questions arise as to whether the ownership is able and willing to dedicate funds for the endeavour.

b. Age of the business school: **O**rganisational members' long-standing and shared values and beliefs about proper organisational forms and behaviours restrict the organization's adoption of policies and programmes (Scott, 1995). On the other hand, age has been found to be associated with the experience and the capacity of organizations (Kahsay, 2012). Thus, the older the school, the more experience and knowledge it possesses to assimilate and implement a new management paradigm such as quality assurance.

c. Size of the business school: According to Rogers (2003), the size of an organisation can dependably be used to predict the adoption of a management innovation such as quality assurance. The size is defined as the number of employees and is considered to have a major influence on the organisational structure and processes (Damanpour, 1991). In this research, the size of the business school is defined as the number of students as

supported by Papadimitriou (2011) and Csizmadia (2006). Hitt et al. (1990) contend that large organizations have more slack resources for experimentation and innovation; they are financially able to engage in new projects and can withstand operational failures. However, others argue that in large organisations processes are slow due to bureaucracy which slows decision making and rejects innovative ideas; thus any initiative that is perceived to disturb the organisational stability will be faced with scepticism and may be resisted (Dougherty, 1996).

d. Business school complexity: Complexity is commonly identified as the combined effect of three elements: horizontal differentiation, vertical or hierarchical differentiation and geographical dispersion (Hall & Tolbert, 2005). Horizontal differentiation refers to the subdivision of the tasks performed by an organisation (Hall, 1982). Vertical differentiation is defined by Csizmadia (2006) as the hierarchy of the conferred degrees, bachelor, master, and PhD and the geographical dispersion refers to the number of locations where a university/school has campuses.

e. Tuition fee level: In private universities, fees are the main source of funding (Tempus-Lebanon, 2012). When they are set at a high level, students require value for their money (Machin and Wilson, 2005) which can be demonstrated and represented by the quality of education (Mora, 2005). Therefore, plausible expectations regarding quality of education by students are higher in private higher education institutions than in public universities (Garcia et al., 2005)

Participants

The sample for the study is constituted from the population of 33 private business schools in Lebanon for two reasons: First, the private system is by far the largest comprising 36 universities (the others are "university colleges" and "university institutions") and 63.6% of the total students' population of 199,679 in 2015-2016; the one public university takes in 36.3% of the total students' population. Second, the business schools in general attract the highest number of students (CERD, 2016). In 2015-2016, business school students comprised 11% and 35% respectively of the one public university students and private universities students. Overall, business schools students make up 25% of the total number of university students in Lebanon. Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that quality assurance, if implemented, would serve a large constituent of the academic system and specifically the private sector.

Research Methods

The research is quantitative using secondary data published on the Lebanese universities for the year 2017 by Centre for Educational Research and Development (CERD) in addition to data collected from the universities websites. Secondary data analysis was performed to test the relationship between each business schools organizational characteristic and responsiveness to quality assurance and to determine the organisational characteristics mostly associated with its implementation. The following sections describe the results.

Descriptive analysis results

Quality assurance at a business school can be either internal and/or external. Responsiveness to quality assurance in this research is defined as the implementation of any type of quality assurance within a business school; whereas non-responsiveness is defined as the absence of any quality assurance activity. In searching the websites of all the business schools, the researcher searched for key terms that could indicate a quality assurance activity. These terms were: quality, quality assurance and accreditation. Accordingly, the following Table summarizes the categorical frequency distribution of the business schools according to their responsiveness type:

Table 1: Frequency table: The level of responsiveness and the number of business schools

Type of responsiveness	Number of Business Schools
No quality assurance	22
External accreditation/ Institutional accreditation	3
Internal quality assurance	8
Total	**33**

The results reveal that two-thirds of the business Schools (n=22) have not engaged in any activity related to quality assurance and one-third (n=11) is responsive with different types of quality assurance. The overall result indicates that quality assurance implementation is slow and has not proceeded according to the state's expectations.

The descriptive statistics used data-specific measures of central tendency to describe the independent variables (the organisational characteristics). Therefore, nominal data were described using the mode, whereas interval

and ordinal data were described using the median which is not affected by extreme values. The following table summarises the variable types and the measures of central tendency.

Responsive schools have implemented at least one type of quality assurance; non-responsive schools have not implemented any type of quality assurance.

Table 2 Results of descriptive statistics

		Responsive Business schools		Non-Responsive business schools	
		Median	Mode	Median	Mode
1	Type of business (0=not-for-profit, 1= for profit)		0		0
2	Age (years)	56		18	
3	Size (number of students)	2063		280	
4	Tuition Fee ($ per credit)	196		163	
5	Number of Programmes	6		8	
6	Number of Branches	4		1	
7	Level of conferred degrees (1=BA, 2= MBA, 3=PHD)		3		2

The descriptive analysis of the two groups of business schools (responsive/not responsive) suggests that responsive schools tend to be older and larger (in terms of students' numbers and branches), receive a higher tuition fee and have fewer programmes. Both groups of schools are mostly not-for-profit. The following table shows the business types of the schools and their frequency.

Table 3 Type of business

	Responsive business schools	Non-responsive business schools
Not-for-profit	9	12
For profit	2	10
Total	**11**	**22**

Four of the 11 responsive schools (36%) offer a doctoral level degree, whereas the Master degree is offered at the majority of the non-responsive schools (n=14, 64%) and only one school offers a doctoral level degree. The following table shows the number of schools and their offered degrees level.

Table 4 Level of offered degrees

	Responsive schools	Non-responsive schools
Bachelor degree only	0	7
Bachelor and Master degree	7	14
Doctoral studies	4	1
Total	**11**	**22**

Inferential statistics results

To test for the correlation between the organizational characteristics of the 33 business schools in operation in Lebanon and the implementation to quality assurance, Fisher's exact test of association was run between each of the independent variables and the dependent variable. As a special type of chi-squared test, it is the preferred association test to use when the sample size is small (Upton, 1992; Chen, 2011). The data was retrieved from the websites of the business schools and published data from the Centre of Educational Research and Development.

The p-value associated with the Fisher's test at the 95% level of confidence, revealed that the type of business (p= 0.249), the age of the school (p=0.071), the number of programmes (P=.465), the number of branches (p=.136), and the tuition fee level (p=.282) are not statistically significant in predicting the implementation of quality assurance.

Whereas, the business school size (n>609, p=.001) and the level of conferred degrees (doctoral, p=.033) are statistically significant. Goodman and Kruskal's gamma test confirms that there is a strong, positive correlation between the size of a business school ($G = .928$, $p =.0005$) and the level of conferred degrees ($G = .846$, $p= .042$) and responsiveness to quality assurance. Therefore, in this research large business schools and/or those offering doctoral level degrees are more likely to implement quality assurance. Nevertheless, out of the 16 large

Lebanese private business schools (3 offering a doctoral degree) 11 have implemented a degree of quality assurance.

Discussion and conclusion

The research results suggest that large business schools that offer a doctoral degree and that are engaged in international academic agreements and partnerships tend to be more responsive to quality assurance implementation. The results are in line with previous other research in higher education investigating the influence of organisational characteristics (Csizmadia, 2006; Papadimitriou, 2011). In particular, small business schools may struggle financially to cover the expenses tied to the process. Hence, the government is encouraged to financially support the implementation of quality assurance by providing funds and setting up a financial incentive scheme through which institution are supported and rewarded for implementing quality assurance. This would mitigate their profit generation concern and motivate implementation. Training, seminars and workshops on quality assurance implementation should also be provided free of charge. Not only will they lift the financial burden but would also help build the knowledge and skills of higher education stakeholders.

The study has practical implications. It provides pertinent and timely information concerning the existing systems of assuring quality to the Lebanese public, to higher education institutions and to business and governmental organizations. Additionally, the study helps to raise the awareness to key stakeholders of the factors that converge to influence the implementation of quality assurance. To the Lebanese public (particularly students and their parents), this research may serve as an empirically-founded base of information about the current state and the future prospects of quality assurance in business schools in Lebanon; it may assist student in making an informed decision when choosing a university or business school. To higher education policy makers, this study has the potential to inform the reform of the quality assurance policy specifically in terms of providing funding and financial support.

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UNDERSTANDING QUALITY IN PHILIPPINE PRIVATE NON-SECTARIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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

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

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

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

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

On top of this very predictable opportunity, RA 8424 -the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, allows private educational institutions some form of "equitable relief" in return for its contribution to national development:
> According to Sec 27 (B):
> A 'Proprietary educational institution' is any private school maintained and administered by private individuals or groups with an issued permit to operate from the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS), or the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), or the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), as the case may be, in accordance with existing laws and

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

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

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

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

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

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

Quality in Higher Education
The literature on education quality is both numerous and confusing resulting in no single definition of Quality that can be applied in the study of higher education quality, just as there was no single definition of quality in the manufacturing and services sector as theorized by Deming (1982;1986B), Juran (1992), and Crosby (1984). Ruben (1995 as cited in Cao and Li, 2014) differentiates quality in education from other Quality found in other products and services:
> According to Redmond, et al., (2008 as cited in Cao & Li, 2014):
> First, the product of education is not a physically tangible object; instead, it is hinged upon life-long, value-laden processes and outcomes. Second, students, the primary customers, are not the only stakeholders; parents, prospective employers and even the society as whole are also involved in the service (p.70).

Ruben (1995 as cited in Cao & Li, 2014) suggests that education quality is defined across three dimensions:
> 1. Administrative quality that pertains to governance, leadership, management and planning;
> 2. Academic quality that pertains to instruction, service, and outreach;
> 3. Relationship quality that pertains to the relationship of and among the faculty and students, staff and students, and the HEI and the public (p.71).
> Harvey and Green (1993) define education quality as having five dimensions. These five dimensions
are:
> 1. Traditional concept of quality

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

> (a) Administrative indicators are defined as:
> A set of quality indicators that pertain to the administrative functions of an institution, including developing a relevant mission and vision, establishing institutional legitimacy, achieving internal/external standards and goals, and procuring resources for optimal institutional functioning (Cheng & Tam, 1997; Commonwealth of Learning, 2009; Hill, et al.,2003; Iacovidou, et al.,2009; Mishra, 2007; Online Learning Consortium, 2014; Owlia &Aspinwall, 1996; Zineldin, et al., 2011, in Schindler, et al., 2015, p.6).
> (b) Student support indicators are defined as:
> A set of quality indicators that pertain to the availability and responsiveness of student support services, e.g., the degree to which student complaints are adequately addressed (Garvin, 1987; Hill, et al., 2003; Iacovidou, et al.,2009; International Organization for Standardization, (n.d.); Lagrosen et al., 2004; Mishra, 2007; National Institute of Standards and Technology, 2015; Oldfield & Baron, 2000;

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

(c) Instructional indicators are defined as:

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

(d) Student performance indicators are defined as:

A set of quality indicators that pertain to student engagement with curriculum, faculty, and staff, and increases knowledge, skills, and abilities that lead to gainful employment, e.g. increased critical thinking skills (Bogue, 1998; Cheng & Tam, 1997; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Knight, 1996; Haworth & Conrad, 1997; Iacovidou, et al., 2009; Scott, 2008 in Schindler, et al., 2015, p.6).
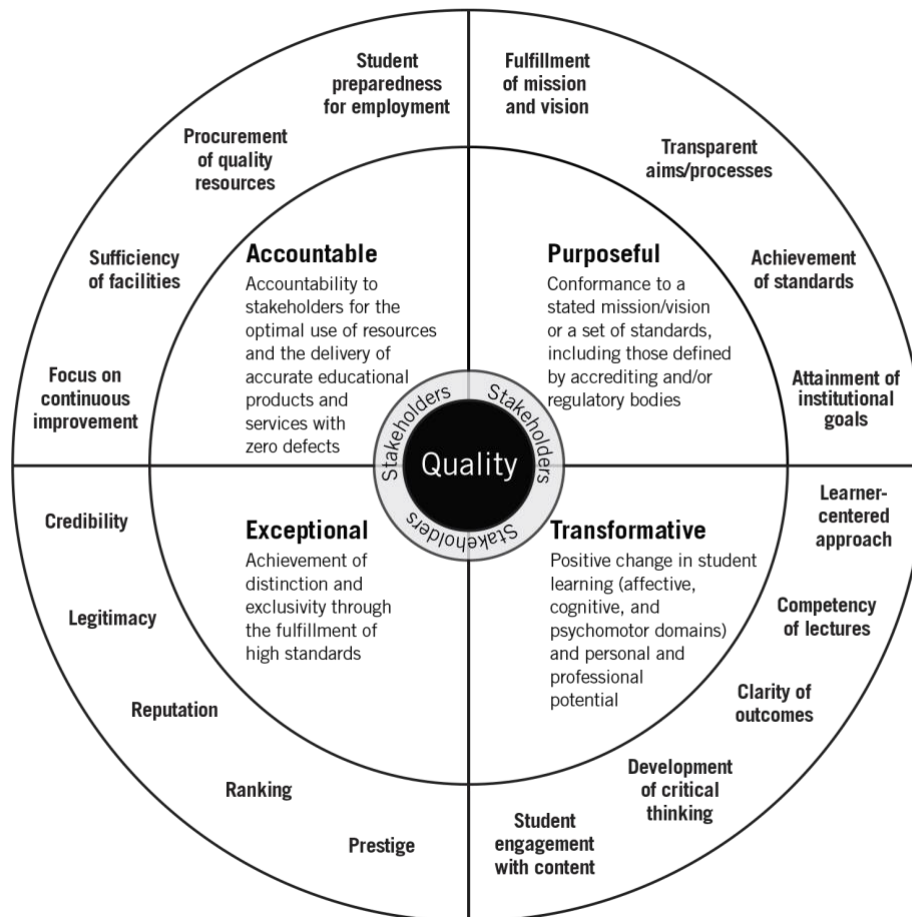
Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Quality Depicting Broad and Specific Strategies for Defining Quality in Higher Education (Schindler, et al., 2015).

Quality is not Quality Assurance

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Private Higher Education in Asia

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

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

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

Private Higher Education in China

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(a) Quality as "fitness for purpose" is generally used by international bodies for assessment and accreditation. This perspective requires the translation of the institutions vision, mission, and goals into learning outcomes, programs and systems;

(b) Quality is "exceptional" means either being distinctive; exceeding very high standards, or conforms to standards based on a system of comparability using criteria and ratings, the third characteristic underlies CHED's definition of "exceptional";

(c) Quality as "developing a culture of quality", is the transformational dimension of the CHED notion of quality (CHED CMO 46, 2012, p.3).

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

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

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

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

Article 1, Sec. 4:

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

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

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

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

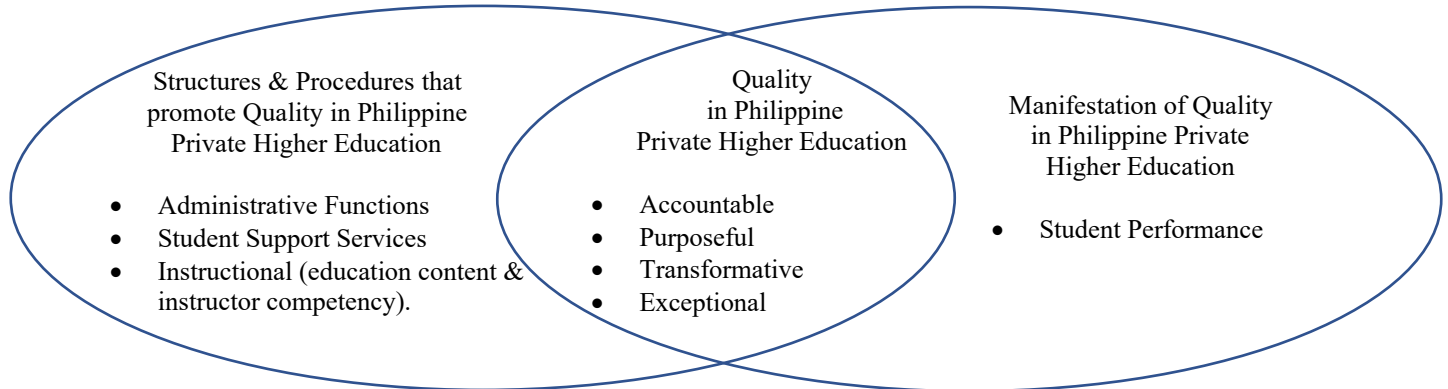The conceptual framework that will guide this study is depicted as Figure 2.

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

Research Questions

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

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

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

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

THE STUDY

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

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

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

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

(b) Deregulated HEIs (by Evaluation) demonstrate very good institutional quality and enhancement through internal QA systems, and demonstrate very good program outcomes through a good proportion of accredited programs, the presence of Centers of Excellence and/or Development, and/or international certification. In particular, they show evidence of very good performance with their horizontal type.

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

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

> The criteria for selection of the institutions for inclusion in this multiple case study is as follows:
> 1. The private non-sectarian higher education institutions is owned by a family or group of private individuals without any religious affiliation.
> 2. The autonomous and deregulated private non-sectarian higher education institutions must be listed on CHED CMO 58 s.2017, while the regulated private non-sectarian HEI must have current CHED recognition.
> 3. The private non-sectarian higher education institution exhibited evidence of quality

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FINDINGS

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

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

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

Theme 1: Success of Graduates

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Theme 1: Instructional leadership
Structures and procedures in instructional leadership promote quality in Philippine private non-sectarian higher
education. Instructional leadership was a common theme across all cases. Among structures and procedures that
promoted quality higher education and held true among stakeholders in all three institutions was English
proficiency. The English proficiency of faculty, staff and students was mentioned across institutional documents
across all cases.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Theme 2: Leadership and Governance
Structures and procedures relative to leadership and governance promote quality in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education. The theme Leadership and governance was common across the three cases. The similarities shared across the three cases borrow from the function of human resources management and within each institution is a unique approach to leadership and governance that promotes quality private higher education.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Theme 1: Performance in National Board Examinations
Performance in national board examinations is evidence of quality in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education. Not surprisingly, performance in the national board examinations was common theme across the three cases as Tan & Decena (2015) states "The national passing average of the HEI's in licensure examinations represents the visible output measure of the quality of the HEI's. In many studies, the institution's passing rates in various licensure examinations were, in fact, used as a surrogate measure of quality" (p.163).

Theme 2: Positive School Culture
A positive school culture is evidence of quality higher education within each institution. The transcripts of interviews with stakeholders, and the analysis of observations and documents, made a positive school culture palpable through the lens of the participants. A positive school culture was similar in description and in its

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

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

Theme 3: Stakeholder Satisfaction.
Stakeholder satisfaction is evidence of quality in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education and was a common theme across the three cases. Satisfaction among stakeholders "is one of the most commonly used measures of educational quality in contemporary higher education" (Coates, 2010, p.12).

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

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

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

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

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

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

RELATIONSHIP OF FINDINGS TO CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

RQ 1. What is Quality in terms of: (a) accountability; (b) purposefulness; (c) transformation; and, (d) exceptionality in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education?
Schindler et al., (2015) identified four classifications of quality in their *conceptual model of Quality – accountable, purposeful, transformative, and exceptional*. The findings of the study reveal that quality in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education is understood as securing the success of graduates in terms of employability and surpassing established standards, both of which are aligned with the conceptual framework where "student preparedness for employment" is an indicator of *accountability* to stakeholders, and "achievement of standards" is an indicator of *purposefulness*.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Table 2
Juxtaposition of Conceptual Framework and Study Findings

	Schindler, et al., (2015)	Study Findings (2019)
RQ 1	• Accountable • Purposeful • Transformative • Exceptional	Theme 1. Success of Graduates • Employability Theme 2. Surpassing Standards • Accreditation
RQ 2	• Administrative Functions • Student Support Services • Instructional (education content & instructor competency)	Theme 1. Instructional Leadership • English Proficiency • Student Activities • Curriculum Intervention • Mentoring Theme 2. Leadership & Governance • Human Resources Management • Faculty Development
RQ 3	• Student Performance Indicators	Theme 1. Performance in National Board Exams • Topnotchers
	** Emergent Themes	Theme 2. Positive School Culture • Transformation • Nurturing Environment Theme 3. Stakeholder Satisfaction • Faculty • Student • Parent

CONCLUSIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The nucleus of the model is leadership and governance which propels the other structures and procedures that promote Quality as leadership and governance is required to provide the necessary resources within private non-sectarian higher education as it operates as both education provider and business venture.
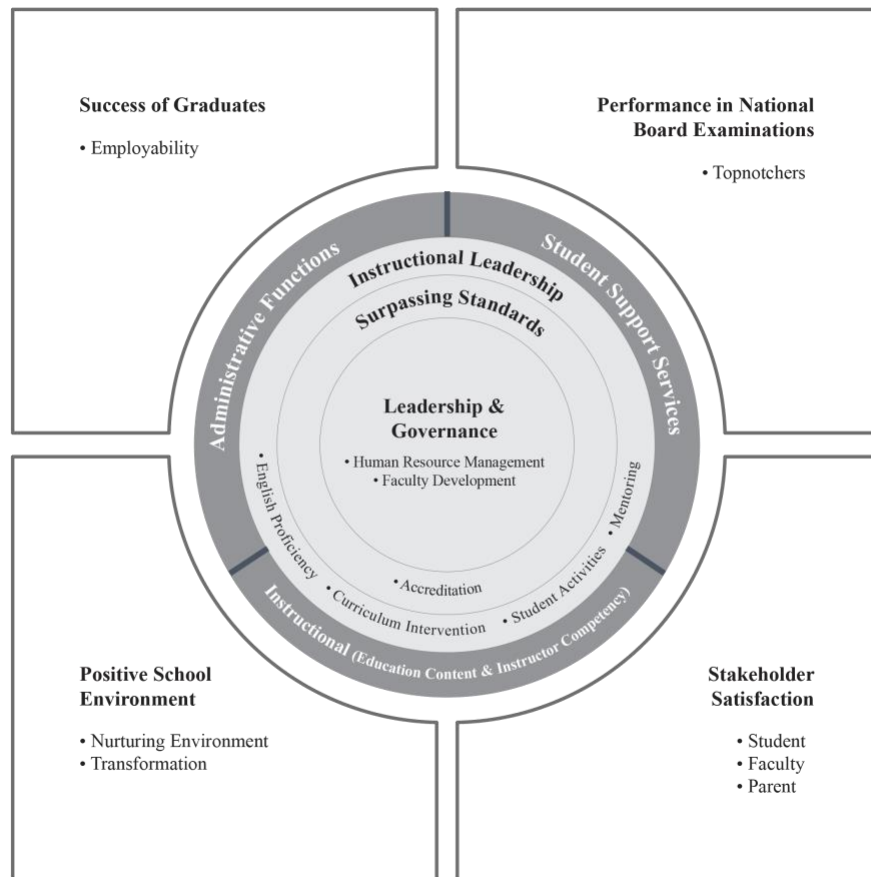
Figure 3: Model of Quality in Philippine private non-sectarian higher education.

Recommendations

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

1. Institutional leaders are advised to invest in collecting meaningful data about their own particular institutions, craft demographic-specific strategies, and invest in better quality personnel as findings of this study suggest that Quality is manifest across the three cases in the form of stakeholder satisfaction. When recruiting teaching staff, institutions are advised to place a premium on English communication skills as participants of the study suggest that English is correlated with employability and passing rates in national board exams for graduates.

2. Government regulators must be proactive towards the "dual-nature" of PNSHEI by categorically stating that education is a social good, and legislate mandatory accreditation. When engineering curriculum, government regulators need consider the findings of this study that have shown that student activities have been correlated with positive student outcomes and other empirical studies that suggest student activities are just as beneficial in-class activities (Banta, et al., 1996, in Harvey & Williams, 2010, Part Two, P.101) and issue the policy guidelines for its immediate inclusion for each university degree program.

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