
PERCEPTION AND UNDERSTANDING OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN EDUCATION OF PERSONNEL IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL AT SUAN SUNANDHA RAJABHAT UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

A Study on the Perception and Understanding of Quality Assurance in Education of Personnel in the Graduate School at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University This study aimed to examine the perception and understanding of educational quality assurance among personnel of the Graduate School, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, as well as to explore approaches for enhancing such perception and understanding. The results of the study revealed the following: 1) Among the 82 respondents, the majority were female (45 individuals or 54.88%), while 37 were male (45.12%). Most respondents were in academic positions (52 individuals or 63.41%), while 30 (36.58%) were in academic support roles. A total of 33 individuals (40.24%) had less than five years of work experience. 2) Regarding their exposure to information on educational quality assurance (AUN-QA): Source 1: 42 individuals (51.21%) had studied the AUN-QA quality assurance manual, while 40 individuals (48.78%) had not. Source 2: 39 individuals (47.56%) had participated in quality assurance training provided by the university, while 43 individuals (52.43%) had not. Source 3: 54 individuals (65.85%) had received knowledge and understanding from the university's Quality Assurance Division, while 28 individuals (34.14%) had not. Source 4: All 82 individuals (100%) had either attended briefings or received internal university memos providing information on quality assurance. 3) Overall, the perception and understanding of educational quality assurance among the personnel of the Graduate School were found to be at a moderate level, with an average score of $\bar{x} = 2.92$

Keywords: Perception, Understanding, Quality assurance in education

Introduction

The Graduate School of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University is an academic institution under the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research, and Innovation. Its missions are as follows: 1) To produce graduates and develop personnel to become experts and professionals with moral and ethical values. 2) To develop an educational management system, foster learning innovations, and elevate administration to meet international standards. 3) To conduct research and create innovations and creative works at national and international levels for sustainable utilization. 4) To establish academic service networks to drive national strategic development. To accomplish these missions and fulfill the responsibilities aligned with Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, it is essential to implement educational quality assurance as a mechanism for organizational development. This enables the institution to measure and evaluate performance for effective improvement and sustainable advancement. Currently, the

Graduate School adheres to the EdPEX (Education Criteria for Performance Excellence) framework as part of the university's policy. Therefore, personnel must possess a clear perception and understanding of educational quality assurance. A lack of awareness and understanding can become a barrier to the development and implementation of quality assurance within the organization. Jetsada Na Ranong (2014) emphasized that one of the most critical challenges in educational quality assurance is the need to build knowledge and understanding among personnel at all levels. This is vital for fostering awareness, promoting collaboration, and coordinating work efforts through the use of the PDCA knowledge management, incentive mechanisms, and recognition systems-all of which contribute to enhancing the performance and competencies of personnel.

Problems Encountered in Internal Quality Assurance at the Graduate School of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The internal quality assurance issues faced by the Graduate School of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University stem primarily from a lack of genuine understanding of the internal quality assurance criteria. Many personnel do not fully comprehend the proper procedures and practices involved in implementing internal quality assurance. Moreover, their heavy workload in their primary responsibilities leaves limited capacity to focus on quality assurance tasks, which are nonetheless an essential part of their duties. This issue reflects the underutilization of personnel potential and a lack of clear communication among staff, leading to misunderstandings or incorrect interpretations. Additionally, the frequent updates and revisions made by the Internal Quality Assurance Subcommittee, such as changes in the 2015 national standard curriculum criteria and the adoption of AUN-QA standards have contributed to the confusion. Therefore, this research study titled Perception and Understanding of quality assurance in Education of Personnel in the Graduate School at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University aims to address these knowledge gaps. By improving awareness and understanding, the research intends to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of internal quality assurance implementation, ensuring that all personnel share a consistent, accurate understanding and move forward in the same direction.

Research Objectives

1. To study the perception and understanding of educational quality assurance among personnel of the Graduate School, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.
2. To explore approaches for enhancing the perception and understanding of educational quality assurance among personnel of the Graduate School, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

Scope of the Research

1. The population and sample for this study consisted of 82 personnel, including academic and academic support staff, under the Graduate School of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.
2. This research focuses on studying the implementation of educational quality assurance with an emphasis on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of quality assurance operations, as well as enhancing the internal quality assurance system within the Graduate School of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.
3. The research was conducted over the period from October 2023 to August 2024.
4. This study was limited to the internal quality assurance practices of the Graduate School, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

Literature Review

The study titled Perception and Understanding of quality assurance in Education of Personnel in the Graduate School at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The researcher reviewed relevant literature and studies, which include the following topics:

1. Concepts of Quality Assurance in Higher Education Institutions

According to the Ministerial Regulations on the System, Criteria, and Methods for Education Quality Assurance B.E. 2553 (2010), Article 33, higher education institutions are required to develop quality assurance systems based on the principles of academic freedom and institutional autonomy. This is to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in continuously improving the quality and standards of higher education institutions and to prepare for external quality assurance. Therefore, institutions have the freedom to develop appropriate internal quality assurance systems consistent with their level of development. These systems may be nationally or internationally recognized quality assurance frameworks, or unique systems developed by the institutions themselves. Regardless of the system type, the process must begin with planning operations, followed by monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvement. This approach ensures that institutional missions achieve their goals and develop sustainably, while also providing public assurance that higher education institutions can produce quality educational outcomes.

Key Principles in Developing Quality Assurance Systems and Internal Quality Assurance Indicators for Higher Education

The fundamental principles in developing quality assurance systems are as follows:

1) To promote the core missions and supportive missions of higher education institutions in alignment with the criteria set forth in the Ministerial Regulations on the System, Criteria, and Methods for Education Quality Assurance B.E. 2553 (2010).

2) To establish an internal education quality assurance system that covers input factors and processes, which effectively promotes and leads to desired operational outcomes.

3) The new cycle of internal quality assurance systems in higher education includes quality assurance at the program, faculty, and institutional levels, effective from the academic year 2014 (B.E. 2557).

- The program-level quality assurance system encompasses quality control, quality monitoring, and quality development. The development of indicators and evaluation criteria will focus more on quality assurance systems rather than solely on quality assessment. This is to facilitate support, supervision, and follow-up of implementation in accordance with established standards, reflecting quality educational management.

- Internal quality assurance at faculty and institutional levels involves the faculty and institution developing their own quality assurance systems based on the principles of academic freedom and institutional autonomy. Evaluation will be conducted according to the internal quality assurance system developed by each faculty or institution, tailored to their potential and type of institution. This serves as an assessment of academic robustness.

4) Institutions have the autonomy to design their own internal education quality assurance systems.

5) The internal quality assurance system should be linked to other quality systems mandated and promoted by the Higher Education Commission (HEC), especially regarding the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, and external quality assurance by the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA). This linkage aims to avoid unnecessary duplication or excessive workload.

2. Concepts of Quality Assurance under the ASEAN University Network Quality Assurance (AUN-QA) Framework

The ASEAN University Network Quality Assurance (AUN-QA) framework serves as a pathway to internationalizing academic programs. Its principles emphasize eight key aspects:

- 1) the quality of graduates,
- 2) labor market expectations,
- 3) internationalization of professional fields and the push toward globalization,
- 4) consumer (graduate user) protection,
- 5) the expansion of higher education from elite institutions to the broader population,
- 6) responsiveness to societal needs,
- 7) strong emphasis on the quality of higher education, and
- 8) the promotion of student mobility and international collaboration.

(Source: AUN-QA Manual Version 4, Faculty of Business Administration, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, 2021)

A core principle of AUN-QA is its focus on Outcome-Based Learning, meaning the system emphasizes designing learning outcomes and aligning instructional processes to achieve those outcomes systematically. The AUN-QA operational approach includes the following key points:

- The goal is development, not merely scoring.
- The assessment focuses on program outcomes showing positive trends over 3–5 years (or at least 3–5 graduating cohorts).
- There is no fixed numerical benchmark; evaluations are contextual.
- Emphasis is placed on coherent curriculum planning.
- The framework consists of 11 criteria and 62 sub-criteria.
- A maximum score is 7; passing is 4. To date, no program has scored a perfect 7.
- Both English- and non-English-medium programs may undergo assessment, but the process must be conducted in English. This includes writing the Self-Assessment Report and translating necessary documents into English.

In summary, AUN-QA emphasizes the systematic alignment among Expected Learning Outcomes, Learning Strategies, and Student Assessment. A curriculum that incorporates these elements and manages them systematically can meet the needs of all stakeholders—not only students and employers but also instructors, institutions, and external organizations. Moreover, this systematic implementation benefits faculties by supporting their development efforts under frameworks like EdPEX. Managing academic programs according to AUN-QA also helps enhance core teaching and learning processes, one of the institution's primary missions.

3. Concepts of Perception of Educational Quality Assurance

Perception refers to the interpretation of various pieces of information that lead to an understanding of a particular matter. As Phansaita (2012, p. 7) described, perception is the process of understanding and interpreting stimuli from the environment to create meaning. Each individual may interpret the same stimulus similarly or differently. Similarly, Darapanitch (2012, p. 15) explained that perception is the process by which individuals experience external stimuli through the five senses—sight, touch, hearing, smell, and taste. The interpretation of these stimuli varies according to each individual's feelings and previous experiences, resulting in behaviors that can be either positive or negative. Perception also includes internal stimuli perceived through thought and expressed through behavior.

In summary, perception is the brain's process of interpreting information, influenced by various factors such as personal experience, motivation, emotion, and learning. These

Discussion

The findings from this study indicate that personnel at the Graduate School of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University possess a moderate level of awareness and understanding of educational quality assurance, particularly regarding the AUN-QA framework. While all respondents reported receiving some form of communication through internal meetings or official announcements, other sources such as quality assurance manuals, university-led training sessions, and departmental knowledge sharing were less uniformly accessed.

The moderate mean score (2.92) suggests that although basic exposure to quality assurance practices exists, there is a gap in deep comprehension and practical application, especially regarding the more technical aspects of AUN-QA. This is further evidenced by the low participation in external training opportunities, which had the lowest mean score (1.18). Such limited exposure to external best practices and professional development may hinder the overall effectiveness and sustainability of the university's quality assurance efforts.

Additionally, internal communication from the quality assurance unit has been somewhat effective, as shown by the relatively high scores in knowledge transfer and understanding of AUN-QA principles. However, the inconsistency in understanding among staff indicates a need for more structured and ongoing training. These results align with prior studies, such as those by Natcha Maneewong (2023), which emphasize that awareness alone is insufficient; deeper engagement and reinforcement are necessary to build a culture of quality. To ensure successful implementation of the internal quality assurance system, institutions must go beyond merely informing staff. There must be a comprehensive strategy that includes regular workshops, clear documentation, access to external learning opportunities, and continuous feedback mechanisms. Only through these measures can the Graduate School ensure that all personnel are not only aware of but also fully understand and actively contribute to the institution's quality assurance goals.

Recommendations

1. The AUN-QA standards are new criteria applied to academic programs starting in the 2022 academic year and were used for the first time in program evaluations in the 2023 academic year. Therefore, these standards are still unfamiliar to the staff in terms of awareness and understanding.

2. Staff members holding positions that are not directly involved or have no direct participation in quality assurance tend to have limited knowledge about the AUN-QA educational quality assurance process.

3. It is necessary to develop processes that promote awareness by organizing activities focused on building clear and accurate understanding of each specific aspect.

4. Knowledge dissemination should be carried out through diverse and easily accessible channels, along with opportunities for knowledge exchange with successful organizations, in order to enhance awareness and understanding more effectively.

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