



THE CONCEPT OF QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

Quality is a major concern to everyone interested in higher education. Quality has become a bigger interest as the demand for higher education has increased and the expectations of government and society have diversified. Measuring quality has been an ongoing effort as it is inevitable to address the expectations of people both inside and outside of higher education. Defining and measuring the quality of higher education programs is thought to be difficult for number of reasons, such as what quality exactly means according to everyone or what methods are appropriate to use for measurement. Therefore, this study aims to present a sketchy look at the history of higher education, including its long-standing concern with quality.

This study aims to present a sketchy look at the history of higher education, including its long-standing concern with quality. Various scholars' perspectives will be discussed to elaborate the concept of quality. Additionally, five views of program quality identified in the higher education literature will be discussed along with the different views and shortcomings as to what really makes high quality academic programs.

This paper presents the literature review of a previous study and therefore is limited to resources obtained at the time. All the materials discussed in the literature have been collected by the researcher in hard copy format at libraries located at a State University campus in the United States.

The literature has serious shortcomings on the views of quality of academic programs. The discussion focuses either on quantitative or qualitative evaluation of higher education programs. Most studies are empiric in nature and fail to introduce a comprehensive theory the higher education program quality discussions need at all degree level academic programs. Since the concept of quality has multidimensional attributes, an integrated approach to measure quality that embraces both quantitative and qualitative indicators mentioned in the literature is necessary.

Keywords: Higher education, quality, views of quality, program quality indicators