
EDUCATIONAL QUALITY MODELS AND PERFORMANCE: A CASE STUDY OF JORDANIAN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

Authors of Quality have used different quality of education models previously. (Lloyds TSB, 2003), Yin (2003) and Carbutt (1996). All claim that these models impact the quality of education. Some rely upon accreditation and/or inspections of these models; others are based on international business quality models, such as, European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) and Malcolm Baldrige (Kanji, 1995). However, when it comes to critically discussing the differences between the impacts of these models on the quality of education, the literature is poor in that Respect. Hopefully, this paper will fill this gap by addressing the impact of these models on the performance of Jordan's Private Universities. In addition, we will try to outline the areas that needed improvement to support these Universities.

Keywords: Quality Models, Performance, EFQM, Malcolm Baldrige, Educational Process, Accreditation.

INTRODUCTION

Since the establishment of the first public university in Amman, Jordan "The University of Jordan" in 1962, followed by the establishment of Yarmouk University in 1976, Mu'tah University in 1981, Jordan University of Science and Technology in 1986, the University of Al al-Bait in 1994, the Hashemite University in 1995, Al Balqa Applied University in 1997, Al Husain Ben Talal University in 1999 , The German –American University in 2005, and recently The international Islamic Scientific University ,they took responsibility for the re-organization of their colleges and the activation of new programs. These universities offer diplomas, bachelor degrees, and Master degrees and some of them went up to grant PhDs in different fields. Due to that progress the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) has developed modern and dynamic standards to help and assess the educational process at these universities.

Students at these universities are coming from more than 76 different nationalities and in order to cater the needs of those students, Jordan universities offer a wide range of programs which offer

all kinds of curriculums, such as British curriculum, American curriculum, and the International one. The number of public universities is 11 with a total number of students (undergraduate and graduate) 198539, while the number of private universities is 16 with 62008 students. Table (1) and table (2) bellow show the Names of Private & Public Universities in Jordan and the number of registered students at these universities for the years 2015-2016.

Table (1)

Name of University	No.	Name of University	No
Al Batra University	6364	Ajloon National University	808
Al Isra University	4752	Applied science private university	6320
Philadelphia University	6491	Prince Sumaya University	2652
Jerash Private University	3622	Amman Open University	2269
Al Zaytoona University	7003	Amman Private University	5324
Middle East University	2560	Jadara University	2627
Amman Arab University	1039	American University in Madaba	1507
Private Irbid University	2651	Al Zarqa Private University	6019
Total			62008

Table (2)

Name of University	No.	Name of University	No
The University of Jordan	45524	Al Hashmeya University	21352
Al Yarmuk University	26097	Al Albait university	16779
Mu'ta University	15487	Applied Balqa University	36335
Science & Tech University	24193	Al Husain Ben Talal University	4370
Al Tafeela Tech University	3797	German/Jordan University	4105
Int'l Scientific Islamic University	4500		
Total			198539

Although public and private universities are open for all nationalities but it is more expensive to join the private ones. Competitiveness between private universities has two elements: firstly, the number of high school graduates who join this university or that each semester; secondly, the reputation and the location of the university. Attracting new students to private universities is very difficult compared to government ones because private universities would wait till registration is over at public universities then they will take the leftovers of the public universities.

In an effort to become more efficient and more competitive in the education field, universities started looking for specific, rare and contemporary programs to improve their performance and to make them more competitive. That is why; they started applying for accreditation for the university in general and for new programs in particular by using the educational quality models.

Accreditation is the best way to achieve world class education standards and move towards international accreditation (Khaleej Times, 2008). Accordingly, an educational quality model had emerged for distinguishing the academic performance of universities to undertake the task of upgrading the educational performance in all its stages and sectors that are under the supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education. The development of the award model is based on the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM). The program has mechanism to appraise distinguished universities, teachers, best practices, and school management (Yin, 2003).

METHODOLOGY

The aim of this paper is to assess the impact of educational quality models, accreditation programs and/or inspection on university performance and to highlight the key improvements made on particular private universities who applied these different models.

The data collection was carried out using primary and secondary sources. The primary resource includes data from journals, books, thesis and dissertations, magazines, conferences, search engines, and seminars. Data from secondary sources were gathered by developing and designing questions and making interviews with key people at the above private universities.

RETROSPECTION

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan insists on “Education, Education, Education” which clearly states the importance of education to improve achievement of students and ensuring all people have an access to quality education. This is a key strategic thrust to achieve the social development objectives.

In addition, international comparison of the drivers that sustain economic growth show that only those countries with an infrastructure supporting effective social development are able to sustain a level of continuous economic growth Niger S. (2011). That identifies the importance of all social development sectors and education is considered as a key sector, therefore programs to evaluate universities’ performance emerged.

Since there is a huge demand for educational development and improvement, there should be an understanding and evaluation of the impact of programs which are presented and implemented in universities. As Jordan is an emerging host of international universities such as The American University in Madaba, The German-Jordanian University and others it attracts students from a wide range of nationalities and its reputation is on stake.

In industry, performance indicator/criteria and benchmarking are used to assess organizations’ performance and people. These are also being increasingly used in education (Garbutt: 1998).

Thus, it is important to understand the impact of similar quality programs on universities' performance.

Despite the number of publications and the amount of research into educational quality models, the literature is poor when it comes to discussing this topic in the Middle East region and Jordan in particular. This paper therefore fills the mentioned gaps in literature and it aims to capture the best practices at universities as a result of applying these educational models, accreditation and/or inspection.

DISCUSSION

The analysis of the interviews showed that most of the universities that went through both educational quality models and accreditation have a positive impact on improving their performance. That is because both accreditation and inspection models were used and implemented and the criteria that had been used cover all aspects of the university systems (Leadership & management, Curriculum, faculty members, teaching methodologies, learners, university environment, facilities & infrastructures and community engagement).

Part of the positive impact of the implementation of the educational quality models in universities is to conduct self-evaluation which encourages a culture of continuous improvement (Zink and Schmidt, 1998). Accordingly, universities ensure that they are working on finding better ways of delivering education to their students.

Both accreditation and educational quality models appreciate the role of the leadership and the importance of staff involvement and engagement in making universities' decisions. As a result, universities started to work in teams effectively and universities leadership started delegating power to universities' faculty and administrators, which raises the awareness of faculty and administrators about each other's responsibilities.

In addition to that, both of these models encourage universities to develop their vision, mission and strategic objectives. That in turn has positively affected the universities in making sure that their staff is having the same vision, which supports the university in the delivery of its objectives. There is a huge emphasis on stakeholder stratification, which encourages universities to open new channels for receiving feedback.

Thus, some of these universities established a suggestion schemes for their students, employees, and administrators. Other universities send questionnaires to parents and other stakeholders on regular basis to receive their feedback on universities performance.

Teaching methodologies is a key criterion in evaluating universities' performance; which exists in both accreditation and educational quality models. As a result of that, there was a significant improvement in faculty teaching methodologies which was agreed upon by most universities' top management.

Most of universities' top management who were interviewed agreed that both models support their university in making effective documentation systems of their accomplishments, activities, projects and students' achievements. They also provide opportunities for faculty members to start developing their own projects which encourages them to be creative and innovative within their university environment.

Overall, majority of universities' administrators indicated that when their university went under either accreditation models or educational quality models, the performance of their university is highly improved. Accordingly, university reputation within the community improved, which affect positively the number of students registering in the university.

However, some of the universities pointed out that the educational quality models which exist in Jordan are mainly based on the award system (recognition). Therefore, they believe that it has a short term effect since some of the work that had been done was for the recognition and not for the continuous educational improvement. In terms of universities with accreditation, all of the interviewees agreed that accreditation is achieving the continuous improvement performance in universities by getting visits from the MOHE in a regular basis to renew their accreditation license.

CONCLUSION

Despite the fact that both accreditation and educational quality models have positive impact on universities' performance, the analysis of focus group session as well as the feedback from the interviewees showed that there are some areas need certain improvements.

In terms of the educational quality models followed in Jordan, a major issue was noticed. The communication of the culture of excellence and the importance of the educational quality models are limited to the top management and administrators. Thus, there is a need to pay more attention communicating that to all university staff to encourage culture of excellence within the universities' environment.

In addition to that, there should be a clear link between the outcomes of these programs and the local educational authorities for universities to see the consequences from a personal and governmental level.

In conclusion, both accreditation and quality assurance programs raise the performance of the universities and encourage the continuous improvement of their culture.

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