PROSCHOLAR INSIGHTS

Comparative Study of Quality Assurance Mechanism in Legal Education in Pakistan, Malaysia and United Kingdom

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Abstract: Quality assurance (QA) in higher education plays a vital role in maintaining and enhancing academic standards. The quality assurance also ensures that graduates reach the necessary level of academic achievement. This importance has been emphasized by scholars such as Boon and Webb. In the face of challenges like globalization and financial constraints, QA becomes essential in helping educational institutions provide high-quality programs that meet the evolving needs of society. The process involves systematically managing and evaluating educational programs to ensure standards are met and that students are not misled by substandard qualifications. Governments and educational institutions must collaborate to implement QA mechanisms, ensuring accountability and transparency, particularly in the use of public resources. Countries like Malaysia, the UK, and Pakistan have developed their own QA systems. In Malaysia, the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) is responsible for QA, while in the UK, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) oversees academic standards. These agencies work to ensure that educational programs, including those in law, meet both national and international standards, safeguarding the quality and reputation of higher education. Through these QA systems, higher education institutions aim to fulfill stakeholder expectations and promote academic excellence. Unfortunately, the quality assurance mechanism in many countries fails to provide international standards. Pakistan is one these countries which is striving for the improvement in its quality assurance mechanism in legal education. This doctrinal research explores the quality assurance mechanism three countries. The paper ends with recommendations for improvement in quality assurance in weakest country's legal education system.

Keywords: Legal Education, Quality Assurance Mechanism, MQA, QAA, PBC, HEC

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Introduction

Quality assurance in higher education has been employed to refer to processes that facilitate that consistent enhancement of quality standards, that is the level of achievement held by graduates from higher learning institutions (Dill, 2007). Using their perspective, Boon and Webb (2008) posit that when "focusing on outcomes rather than courses would unravel the extensive quality assurance mechanisms". The requirement of quality assurance and accreditation

of courses needs and desires are important and inevitable due to globalization and financial constraints in financing higher education in the respective countries (Darwish & Batool, 2017). However, to meet the human capital needs of these countries in the future, it is also required to launch an educational program that may be of high quality. Seyfried, and Pohlenz (2018) uses quality assurance to refer to the management of the programs, the systematic appraisal processes of these institutions and the programs they offer is one way of making sure neither the institution nor the programs or courses offered are inferior. This also confirms that some standard is kept but it also serves to discourage candidates from being misled or given a raw deal. This, in turn, will make it possible to ensure that the quality of the people being awarded such degrees meet the standard that are demanded of such careers. Quality assurance is a procedure adopted by the higher education institutions to assess performance so as to ensure that it meets a given standard. According to Dey (2011), quality assurance is therefore summed up as the sum of all measures that will guarantee satisfaction of the intended standards. This is done through a number of processes in order to validate and verify the results as indicated next. The objectives of quality assurance are therefore aimed at developing and sustaining the confidence of stakeholders concerning the management quality and performance (Dey, 2011).

In order to sustain the quality of programs delivered in higher education, it is essential to make rational decisions on the level of program goals' attainment and the importance and significance of that attainment (Matei & Iwinska, 2016). To the programs being offered it lies in the hand to search out the adequate and appropriate means actions or output within which such desirable features of standards or quality,complying with relevant norms which may be fulfiled. However, it is important to indicate that the subject matter of quality is quite vast. Quality can be credited to the manufacturing sector, business processes sector and the services sector, which are centres of excellence are understanding the needs of external as well as internal customers (Verma, 2016). In law the government is expected to educate the citizens as provided in the constitution of the country. It should also ensure that the quality of such an education was from time to time checked so that the quality/standard of the educational provisions were not compromised. The general public has the right to demand that the quality of education is prepared to answer for the spending of public funds on providing quality education to all those who are willing and qualified to continue education at universities (Pavel, 2012). All that can be stated is that the institutions of higher education and the authorities endowed with the accreditation powers must establish proper co-ordination and information sharing. This particular exercise would assist in guaranteeing that parties involved in the setting of the objectives act in a more ethical way, thus agreeing and implementing high standards of good practice. These should then be implemented to achieve the objective of quality appraisal and certification (Nandi & Chattopadhyay, 2016). To an extent there are some standards set internationally but there is no any particular standard which can be followed.

Malaysia and UK respectively embodies their quality assurance structures which are somewhat distinct from each other. The Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) of Malaysia established the Quality Assurance Division (QAD) and authorize the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) to exercise the quality assurance mechanism. In the UK, the Quality Code (A, B, C) for Higher Education is used as queality assurance mechanism. However, as I will show below, the standards espoused in the European Peer Review Manual are different. In relation to these three countries, the quality assurance of Pakistan is under the HEC and some guidance on the legal education is in the rules framed by PBC.

That is why the principles of quality assurance, in connection with Malaysia and specially the principles of public universities, is not newly-born. It was developed over the years in attempt to enhance the mechanism of quality assurance of the product. In this field of legal education, most of the law faculties of nearly all public universities and most of law schools have expended much effort on this. All these exercises fall under the Quality Assurance Division, the Higher Education Department, the Ministry of Education and the code that governs it, the code of practice (Malaysian Qualifications Agency, n.d.). Exercise is planned for the purpose of maintaining the quality assurance mechanism in order to assure the quality of the higher education to the people (Fadzil, 2004).

In general, that agency or body is responsible for a high standard of academic quality (Mokhtar et al., 2014). QAA of the UK was established in 1997 to decentralize the external quality assurance of higher education training that exist up to date (ENQA Agency Review, 2018). In the UK, directly academic criteria and character of awards are managed

by universities and colleges. It is therefore the QAA, which is the independent body that assures Standards and Quality on higher education within the United Kingdom. The QAA also undertakes quality assessment surveys, produces and disseminates reference points and guidelines for HE providers while it carries out or commissions research into related matters (ENQA Agency Review, 2018). The QAA monitors the manner in which the UK's universities, colleges and other alternative providers sustain their academic standard and profile. This is done by outside assessors from the QAA through external review. Hitherto, reviewers have concurred that the expectations of the Quality Code which has been agreed and selected by the UK higher education are reasonable (Quality assurance in UK higher education, 2019). In addition, QAA serves as a guideline for all the law degrees delivered in the country and which states categorically that, "law degrees are primarily an academic award and provide a pathway to several careers; legislation being only one of those career" (Ching, 2018).

Moreover, in Malaysia, the major role of the MQA is to continue to monitor and warrant quality across all dimensions of higher learning institutions in the country. It also had implement the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) to serve as a reference point for Malaysian qualifications. It is to establish with the most important stakeholders the standards, the criteria as well as the tools which will serve as a reference at the national level for awarding. It assists to ensure Institutions and Providers of Higher Learning, to accredit programs that meet criteria and quality standards, to enable credit and qualification recognition and transfer, and to develop, maintain and administer MQR and also to advise the Minister on matters pertaining to quality assurance in Higher Education (Malaysian Qualifications Agency, n.d.).

Quality assurance is quickly emerging as an important tool in higher education. Quality is a term used to describe many aspects such as, goodness, utility, fitness for use, improvement and added customer utility respectively (Li, 2010). In the same way, the Malaysian Qualifications Framework bestows on the MQA the pivotal roll of classifying qualification according to a hierarchy of levels that is based on criteria that are national and internationally benchmarked and results in acceptable academic performance indicators as Click here to view other papers by this author. Some of the learning outcomes outlined in the MQF documents are; knowledge; practical skills; social skills & responsibility; values & professionalism; communication, leadership & group skills (MQF, 2017). Likewise in their practical skills enhancement part, the documents encompass "Problem solving and scientific skills; Information management and lifelong learning skills; and Managerial and entrepreneurial skills" (MQF, 2017). Further, the MQA also prescribes very high standards of accreditation for institutions of higher learning in Malaysia. It sets three major indicators of quality assurance processes: The quality assurance frameworks identified includes (i) SETARA rating, (ii) Self-Accreditation Status (SAS) and (iii) ISO 9001:2008 accreditation.

The Regulatory Frameworks in Malaysia

The legal regulatory frameworks that govern the provision of higher education in Malaysia are:

Table 1

The Regulatory Frameworks In Malaysia

S. No	Frameworks
1	The Education Act 1996 (Act 550)
2	The Private Higher Educational Institutions Act, 1996 (amended 2009)
3	The National Council of Higher Education Act, 1996
4	Malaysian Qualifications Agency Act 2007 (replacing the previous namely National Accreditation Board Act 1996 which has been repealed)
5	The Universities and University Colleges (Amendment) Act, 1996 (amended 2009)
6	The National Higher Education Fund Corporation Act, 1997 (Amendment 2000)
7	The National Higher Education Fund Corporation (amendment) Act 2000
8	Private Higher Educational Institutions (Amendment) Act 2009
9	Akta Universiti dan Kolej Universiti Pindaan 2009

The Regulatory Frameworks in UK

Similarly, in the UK, QAA uses judgment to evaluate the extent to which the universities and college are performing their obligations and admissibility of the procedure in dealing with this. According to Jackson & Bohrer (2010), the QAA protects public interests in oversights of general standard of higher education qualifications.

○ Carrying out external assessment (including audit) in University and colleges
○ Describing clear academic standards through the Academic Infrastructure
○ Providing advice to the government on decisions on degree awarding powers and university title
○ Giving opinions concerning scholastic standards and ethical values.

UK degree-awarding bodies for the most part universities, establish specifications for the standing of the degrees they award (academic degrees). However, most classes are partially or entirely funded by public money and therefore there is need to undergo external review to verify that a national threshold standard has been met and that the quality is reasonable (ENQA Agency Review, 2018). Ryan (2015) explained that CHEA (2007) has listed that there are three considerations which defines quality assurance trends in international higher education as follows . First, quality assurance is considerably more competitive and more exacting than it has ever been in the past. Second, quality assurance is emerging as an issue of regional significance. Third, there is a necessity to identify an international quality assurance system, which will be acknowledged and mutually linked with countries. In addition, Boon and Webb (2008) also opined that there are several similarities on the process related with the methods applied by the QAA to accomplish the reviewing process, because it seems that the reviews done by the reviewers have those critical characteristics that are more or less same. Still, some of the peer monitoring processes of teaching standards are effective. These are reviewed so as to ensure that UK standards are met as Hoecht (2006) has suggested.

The QAA's central assessment systems approach suggest that shifting stress to courses will compel providers to educate for exams to the detriment of the learning process (Boon & Webb, 2008). Until now, this reviewing process has been undertaken by comparing the provisions against the QAA's Quality Code. Subject benchmark statements, other related and relevant standards of accreditation and credit frameworks together with institutions own regulation and handbook, professional standards provided by institutions professional bodies and the European Standards and Guidelines provided by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) are among these resources that offer a benchmark of academic criteria (Gover, 2018). That however has been viewed to be a problem by some agencies especially in Europe as suggested by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education ENQA in that, the agencies find it difficult to attract qualified students to participate in QA exercises (Ryan, 2015).

The Regulatory Frameworks in Pakistan

Law education in Pakistan is offered by the public universities and private law colleges, though the degree is approved by HEC the curriculum and standards are set in coordination with the PBC. It is also regulated by the Board of Governors of Law Colleges, Bar Council of the Provincials, Pakistan Bar Council, University Syndicates and the Law & Justice Commission of Pakistan. Pakistan Bar Council is an elected body of Lawyers of Pakistan and It was formed under the Legal Practitioner and Bar Council Act of 1973. The Pakistan Bar Council operates under general control and supervision of the Provincial Bar Council and controls the entry of lawyers into the practice of law (Pakistan Bar Council, n.d.). It is an autonomous institution which oversees the profession and legal education to a certain extend. It is also empowered to approve university, the degree in law shall be accepted as a qualification for registration an advocate (Pakistan Bar Council, n.d.). Moreover, the position of the PBC is to start activities for enhancing the quality of the legal education in Pakistan. On the other hand, there is Higher Education Commission of Pakistan which is the official sector for the university education in the country. This was established in the year 2002 by the Higher Education Commission Ordinance, 2002 (HEC Act, NO, XXXVI of 2002). Its function is mainly limited to advising on academic policies concerning the operation of public sector universities and to suggest the criteria and standard procedures of affiliation of the universities.

Pakistan Bar Council Legal Education Rules 2015

As an augmentation to the above mentioned, it was also discussed that the structure of the country's legal education and admission to legal practice are governed by Pakistan Bar Council [PBC] under the Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Act, 1973. This Act provides legal authorities to the PBC in making rules for the rebirth of legal profession for Lawyers and advocates of Pakistan and for the legal education of Pakistan. While exercising the powers provided by the Act, specific rules were therefore distilled under one legal instrument called The Pakistan Bar Council Legal Education Rules 2015 (PBCLER 2015).

There has been a slow process in building the framework of rules and regulations that are meant to improve the status of legal education in Pakistan. The first of these rules was the 1978 PBCLER, but over theathers, newer versions were made, and what we had now was the PBCLER 2015 version. In any case, the central goal of the PBCLER 2015 is undeniably the regulation and management of the routes towards the law subjects, through consolidation. Some of the rules that the PBCLER 2015 ordered include The Law Colleges Affiliation and University Recognition Rules 2005 or Pakistan Bar Council Recognition of Universities Rules, 2005.

Furthermore, there are many councils and committees for the MQA for enhancement of the higher education quality in Malaysia. The MQA establishes several councils with granted powers to assist in the promotion and ensuring of education quality of all the institutions of education, private or public (Malaysian Qualifications Agency, n.d.). Besides the councils and committees there is an important tool of the MQA known as the MQF. It has a crucial function to perform in as far as quality assurance and hence quality enhancement of higher education is concerned. When you are evaluating, there is a list of criteria that have to be put in place just like the quality assurance mechanism formulated by the MOHE of Malaysia shows. These criteria should apply to all the qualifications given by almost any recognized Higher Education Provider (HEP). Crudely, it can be stated, that the MQF is a matrix, which provides a framework for defining the academic levels, the learning outcomes and the credits based on the curriculum of the students. The framework also gives educational routes which are associated with these qualifications systematically. They allow individual learners to report to credit transfer and accreditation so that quality education is in pace. Among these are the two levels of program accreditation.

The process followed is somewhat reflected in the documents of the Quality Code. The UK Quality Code for higher education is the single authoritative source for all the requirements for UK higher education institutions. They are also unambiguous in how higher education providers are expected to behave, what information they are likely to receive from other providers and what the student and the general public should be able to expect from the providers (The revised UK Quality Code, 2018). The Quality Code also covers all four parts of the UK, and all providers of UK higher education wherever they are situated. Special attention should be paid to the fact that the Quality Code does not matter where the scholar is located, and whether he or she is full time or part time, an undergraduate, a graduate student, etc (College Higher Education Toolkit, 2015).

Table 2

Quality Code Part A, B, C

Parts	Chapter	Description
Part A Planting and Maintaining Academic Standards	Chapter A1	The UK and European Reference Points for Academic Standards
	Chapter A2	Degree-Awarding Bodies' Reference Points for Academic Standards
	Chapter A3	Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards
Part B Ensuring and Enhancing Academic Quality	Chapter B1	Plan Design, Development and Approval
	Chapter B2	Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education
	Chapter B3	Scholarship and Teaching
	Chapter B4	Enabling Student Development and Achievement
	Chapter B5	Student Engagement

Chapter B6	Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning
Chapter B7	External Examining
Chapter B8	Plan Monitoring and Review
Chapter B9	Academic Appeals and Student Complaints
Chapter B10	Managing Higher Education Provision with Others
Chapter B11	Research Degrees

Part C Information about Higher Education Provision

As mentioned in Table 2, a key reference for UK higher education, the Quality Code, is organized in three Parts: You will find Part A on 'Academic Standards'; Part B on 'Academic Quality'; and Part C on 'Information about Higher Education Provisions'. Section 1 is Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards in Part A. Again, these are divided into three chapters and seven expectations (Part A: The Quality Code: No date). Part B focuses on The Academic Infrastructure (Part B: Assuring and Enhancing Academic Quality, Part B, The Quality Code, n.d.). There are eleven chapters which are arranged as:

Table 3

Chapters of Part B

Chapter Part	Description
Chapter B1	Program Design Development and Approval,
Chapter B2	Recruitment Selection and Admission to Higher Education,
Chapter B3	Learning and Teaching,
Chapter B4	Enabling Student Development and Achievement,
Chapter B5	Student Engagement,
Chapter B6	Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning,
Chapter B7	External Examining,
Chapter B8	Program Monitoring and Review,
Chapter B9	Academic Appeals and Student Complaints,
Chapter B10	Managing Higher Education Provision with Others and
Chapter B11	Research Degrees.

Part C covers information on the High Education Provision and as anticipate in this section, there is only one Expectation (Part C, The Quality Code, n.d.). QAA conducts these inspections with a view to assessing whether or not these providers of UK higher education are compliant. The expectations listed in Part C and each Chapter of Part B are aligned with a set of Indicators. These indicators are as follows and all of them demonstrate good practice; a higher education provider can use these benchmarks to check whether it meets the criterion specified in the corresponding Expectation (UK Quality Code for Higher Education, n.d.). They are not intended to be used as a tick list of evidence, but it is believed that these indicators will assist providers when developing regulations, processes and drills and the output of which can be used to satisfy the evidence requirements of the outlooks for the new Quality Code. To detail how each of those is implemented, an explanatory note for the supporting Indicator is also offered (The Quality Code, n.d.). According to Roy Stuckey, the Quality Assurance Agency prescribes criteria that define the least expectation from undergraduate law degrees. All the law schools are required to set specific standards that are modal, meaning what a paradigm student should achieve, not the minimum levels that the worst students is capable of (Stuckey, 2017). Like Michael Gibson, quality measurement was described as the quantitative measurement of students' performance during study and in professional practice (Gibson, 2012).

In this Quality Code, a given heading contains the index numbers. Part A has no index numbers, while this is commonly seen in other parts of a learning plan as it will be discussed later in this paper. The explanatory text above specifically pertains to the Expectation and each Part and Chapter has been developed through consultations made through the providers of the UK higher education, their associations, the National Union of Students, professional, statutory and regulatory bodies as well as other stakeholders. The General Introduction of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education can be balanced with this text file Part A UK Quality Code (2014). However, the QAA presents quite complicated topics in simple clear language that can be understood by both academics and those of the quality staff. They set important benchmarks for providers interested in establishing new services, and service users interested in comparing what is currently available, against UK-wide bench-marks agreed with subject-specialist communities and professional bodies (Felce, 2019).

Likewise also in Malaysia the quality assurance mechanism is supervised by MQA under the MOHE banner. In the UK it is done under the QAA Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. Various higher education institutions in developed countries like the United Kingdom has quality assurance mechanisms and structures for enhancing higher education quality in the countries in terms of teaching, research, and public services delivery (Alperin et al., 2019). So, there isn't any doubt that the quality assurance mechanism is planned and systematic activities in terms of policies, strategies, attitudes, procedures, and activities that give confidence to stakeholders and those stakeholders feel that the organisation is maintaining or improving its quality on a regular basis. This maintenance is also valid for the products and services that are to be provided by the company so as to reach set quality standards (Henard & Roseveare, 2012). Therefore, quality assurance could be understood as all the systems, resources and information that are utilized to enhance or improve the quality and standards in terms of the course contents, methods of teaching, the quality of teaching staff, scholarship, research and, even the students' learning achievements (Fadzil, 2004).

Furthermore, in Malaysia, the quality evaluation process covers an extensive area comprising nine specific elements: the AQAF; vision, mission, educational objectives and purposes; curriculum and instruction; programmes of student assessment; policies and practices concerning selection of students and support services for learners; academic staff; instructional and learning resources; programme evaluation and assessment; leadership and management; and quality enhancement (MQA, n.d.). As the procedures mentioned above show, this procedure is very rigid and stringent from every point of view. This means that it must cover a lot of manpower and time to achieve its goals and objectives. As education is a service, the service providers must be informed and able to respond promptly to students' concern (Ali et al., 2018).

The higher education sector radically contributes to the formation of several countries' economy and belong to Malaysian ones.The concerned agencies seem to have mixed feelings about such procedures; however, it appears that many academicians dislike these processes because it diverts lecturers' attention from teaching as all forms availed by the agencies have to be competed satisfactorily (Ali et al., 2016). However, all the public universities also carry out their own auditing before these forms are sent back to the concerned agencies. Furthermore forms are often changed on a regular basis to fit other agency requirements, but the changes are never communicated in time to the users, and so the process involves a lot of wastage of time for all the parties concerned. However, the forms are meant to document every aspect of the teaching, assessment and final outcomes achieved by the students, on a semester basis (Jalil, 2013). This is a good practice because it updates what is happening for each course taught and highlights which particular student is doing well, in what way, and what marks he/she has been awarded. Thus; it is a very systematic way of checking the progress of each and every student. Moreover, the Malaysian quality assurance systems of higher education expects every minor process that is performed for the assessment of the students and for the examination to be well-documented. The processes require that before a course taught by academicians, such processes are checked by the respective teaching staff, in the end of the semester, the processes are certified by another academian making it fool proof because whoever is involved can be traced(7) (Assessment of Students, n.d.).

Table 4

Lists all the Relevant Bodies and their Respective Responsibilities COUNCILS and Committees Established Under the MQA

No.	Name	Responsibilities
1	Malaysian Qualifications Agency Council	○ approves plans and policies; ○ approves amendments and updates of the MQF; ○ approves policies and guidelines relating to audit processes and the accreditation of programs, qualifications and higher education providers; ○ receives monitor reports, returns, statements, accreditation, institutional audit; and evaluation; and guides the Agency in its function as a quality assurance body
2	Joint Technical Committee	○ responsible for accreditation process and course ○ overlooks all approvals of HEP ○ constitutes an evaluation panel ○ reviews the validity of the standards and procedures ○ evaluates the curriculum considering all application for accreditation and follow up appropriate actions
3	Accreditation Committee	○ There are five Accreditation Committees covering the major fields of study ○ to evaluate and analyze program accreditation reports ○ to make decisions on a HEP's application to grant, refuse, maintain or revoke Provisional Accreditation
4.	Institutional Audit Committee	○ to receive and analyze equivalency assessment reports ○ to make decisions on the equivalency of qualifications
5	The Standards Committees	○ to develop and review the guidelines, standards and criteria for program accreditation and institutional audit ○ to develop and review standards for specific disciplines to develop and review guides to good practices

According to Table 4, a broad range of powers has been decentralised to Malaysian Qualifications Agency Council (MQAC) in which among others, for the management of the Agency and MQF approval of plans, policies, amendment and updates. From the foregoing, we see that the quality assurance is measured using the set out policies and guidelines. MQAC also has the task to endorse policies and guidelines that are related to audit processes and accreditation of the programs on the one hand and to scrutinize the credentials of AQF providers in higher education on the other hand. Accreditation, institutional audit and evaluation related reports, returns, statements and any other information is received and tracked by the Agency. The MQAC also has the responsibility to continuously supervise the Agency in its activity as an incompetent quality assurance body and to perform all things which are required to execute the functions under the Act. Unlike the BCI or the PBC, these agencies have skilled aspirants to work in the related field, so their input is useful and essential most of the time.

In Malaysian context, there is also another of committee known as Joint Technical Committee (JTC) which is the main committee of MQA. In accordance to section 51 of the MQA Act 2007 (Act 679), the JTC is in charge of all the accreditation and syllabi of all the HEPs. It is also responsible for examining the reports of the above accrediting teams as well as presenting the endorsements of accreditation to the Council for ratification. The JTC also affirms the standards and processes together with assessing the curriculum and taking into account the plans of the HEPs in principle, as well as principles' execution during the first two years of the program. In addition to this, the JTC considers applications, assesses them and even provide recommendations where necessary. It also goes to where programs are to be provided. The major specialization areas include the Science and Medicine, Engineering and the Built Environment, Information Technology and Multimedia, Arts and Humanities and the Social Sciences, and these are covered by an additional five accreditation subcommittees; Accreditation of Courses Subcommittee, Accreditation of Programmes Subcommittee, Appeals Subcommittee, Site Visit Subcommittee and the Registers and AQAS

Subcommittee. The accreditation committees are responsible for the function of reviewing and assessing program accreditation reports; making and determining action on HEP application for preliminary or full accreditation for the program; deciding quality; and accrediting, rejecting, continuing or withdrawing the preliminary accreditation or full accreditation as per the programs and qualities.

The constitution delegates a plenary power in most subjects to the federal government including on issues of sharia law (Zin, 2012). As for quality standards there is only one document specifically developed for the subject of Law and Shariah Law program; 'The Program Standards for Law and Shariah Law'. These are set out to offer certain guide to the higher education providers in a sector to meet the MQF specifications. In addition, 'The Program Standards for Law and Shariah Law' are designed to encourage the generation of programs in Law and Shariah Law. These program standards are developed right form the diploma level to post graduate level. The 'The Program Standards for Law and Shariah Law' consist of guidelines regarding program purpose and learning/teaching goals, learning outcomes, and program organization. The programs standards include a framework that proposes the structural program, admission students, the method of students' assessment, criteria of the academic staff, resources and educational, IQA and QMS (MQA, 2015). It is of note that all the standards contained in the Program Standards have been prepared in accordance to the current status in the industry. The rules and regulations as to the CLP are merely guidelines arrived at through panels; therefore, they cannot be the opinions as well as policies of the Legal Profession Qualifying Board. The standards depict and illustrate the benchmark that the CLP should meet (MQA, 2015). If these guidelines are followed strictly and effectively, the programs can be built and sustained here in Malaysia which in return will create quality and make graduation better and also improve the employability and progression of graduates. A report on the future developments of the Malaysian legal education prepared for the Minister of Higher Education (MOHE) suggest that the Qualifications Agency (MQA) should decide whether the Program Standards for Law and Shariah need to be revised to reflect the legal skills and the generic skills which are deemed to be essential according to the report (Jalil, 2013).

In fact, the analysis of quality assurance mechanisms adopted in Malaysia is one that is perhaps thoroughly detailed, systematic and current. The agencies are especially very aware of its field because, of course, everyone is being trained for his or her position. In the universities themselves, academicians are trained to be formed into auditors or as leaders of curriculum review teams. In this regard it can be said that there is a good order in the quality assurance framework of Malaysia and can also be referred to professional as only trained personnel are involved. However, recently, the Chief Justice of Malaysia has raised a frown over Malanjum, 2019 a concern over the lower standards in legal education. Infuriated by this he used the microphone to give vent to his frustration in law universities and its students he was of the opinion that quality in the law profession had dwindled significantly. Besides, he said that new law graduates may join unemployment list if law schools did not equip them with industry requirements and newly admitted lawyers were not active. The Chief Justice therefore challenged higher learning law institutions and graduates In the country to make improvement; otherwise he had heard senior Lawyers that junior Lawyers are not well prepared (Tee, 2019). In the following points, the challenges faced by the legal education system in Malaysia can briefly discussed Most of the points are self-explanatory and hence only a brief discussion would be adequate here. As highlighted by Singham (2010), Malaysian legal education is still an exam based tradition; therefore, the resulting lawyers are unable to well express themselves. Moreover, he lamented the culture that forces students to focus only on memorising case references purely to pass examinations rather than developing the practical aspects of lawyering. He further argued that training is required for students to improve their practical legal skills such as negotiation, advocacy, time management and legal research, through compulsory moot sessions, simulations and role playing (Singham, 2010). This indicates that the legal education direly needs improvement in term of standards in the education system. A similar document can be seen in the UK, the Subject Benchmark Statements, which cover Law subject and gives proper guideline.

This paper analyzed that the UK, Malaysian, and Pakistani quality assurance authorities, indicating that their quality assurance coverage and efficiency are dissimilar. The UK's mechanism uses codes, divided into chapters to enhance

the control of quality compared to countries using the ASN approach (Lester, 2011; Smith, 2015). While being strict, they might prove disadvantageous for the stakeholders because of the degree of detail involved (Middlehurst, 2016; Vanistendael, 2001). On the other hand, Malaysian mechanism is documented and passes various elements of higher education (Grapragasem et al., 2014). The Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) contributes a lot with the help of committees and subcommittees it has for the accomplishment of its goals including the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) (Bateman & Dyson, 2018). Quality assurance is important since it can act as a benchmark for providers of education, and offer assurance of provider competency in certain areas (Faulconbridge & Muzio, 2009; Yingqiang & Yongjian, 2016).

Conclusion

In the case of Malaysia, the quality assurance mechanism is under its MOHE main body MQA, and out of the three countries, it looks like the quality assurance mechanism is the most controlled. Likewise in UK, another agency which is called QAA is assigned to quality assurance mechanism. There is a very weak quality assurance mechanism in Pakistan as compared to Malaysia and the UK. In Pakistan Bar Council Legal Education Rules 2015 , two rules only show the Quality Assurance Mechanisms. But in both Malaysia and the UK, they possess a full set of bureaucracy of quality assurance system. In so doing, this paper has demonstrated that not only are the mechanisms of QA in Malaysia, the UK, and Pakistan unique, but the effectiveness and the scope of the same are similarly different. The quality assurance mechanism in Malaysian mainly regulated at the MoHE under the MQA has a fairly sensible organizational structure that appears systematic. However, the Quality Assurance Agency in the UK has a still more sound check of Quality Assurance; as is established on the frameworks that are being used to measure the standards for academics, the quality of the teaching and learning environment and the experience of students. On the other hand, Quality assurance mechanism in Pakistan is not very strong there are meager rules and regulation.

This study points to the need for strong quality assurance frameworks with regard to quality and standards of legal education. In the interest of the students, employers, and the society, Pakistan has to improve its quality assurance landscape. From Malaysia and UK, Pakistan can learn how to make a strong foundation for any quality assurance scheme, how to set general rules and regulation and how to make it follow. This will assist Pakistan's higher education to achieve international compliance to produce required competent graduates in the global market. Pay close attention to the quality assurance will enhance the quality and the relevancy of Pakistan's higher education system to result in forming competitive and skilled work force. This paper acknowledges that sound quality assurance mechanisms are crucial in enhancing the quality of academic programs, rewarding excellence, and facilitating the development of an international quality higher learning system.

Recommendations

1. Develop adequate quality assurance systems in the Pakistani context, which should correspond to the highest quality standards of educational legal services.
2. Establish clear comprehensible rules and regulations on the higher education institutions in Pakistan specifically aspects to do with academic activities and requirements, faculty recruitment and certification procedures, and student's performance.
3. Enhance the authority, recognition and effectiveness for HEC and PBC in legal education and quality assurance compliance.
4. Organize professional development programmes for the faculty and officials of the higher education institutions in Pakistan especially in areas of quality assurance, Curriculum Development and Teaching methodology.
5. Promote the exchange of ideas and experiences and share the subject of enhancing the standards of quality assurance in higher education with Pakistani and foreign universities.
6. Follow the international standard very closely while formulating the national qualifications framework in Pakistan as an endeavor to ensure that this framework conforms to the international standards in order to achieve the objectives of qualification recognition and its parity in other institutions and other countries.

7. Develop a structure for the recognition of educational programs offered by the universities of Pakistan with the help of international benchmark for improving the quality of the academic programs.

8. Increase a sense of quality culture in higher education institutions in Pakistan for a passion towards enhancement, innovation and quality.

9. Make sure the quality assurance mechanisms of higher education in Pakistan are as accessible and as participatory as possible and the infants of quality assurance must remain responsible and open to all stakeholders of Pakistan higher education.

10. Conduct periodical assessments of the quality assurance documentation manual in Pakistan in order to improve on it and make it as relevant and effective as possible to best practices in the world.

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