

System Analysis of Quality Assurance in Online Education

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Abstract : Our society is in a constant state of change. Technology advancements continue to affect our daily lives. How we work, communicate and entertain ourselves has changed dramatically in the past decades. As our society learns to accept and adapt to the many different technological advances that seem to inundate every part of our lives, the education institutions must migrate from traditional methods of instruction to online education in order to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by these technology advancements. There are many benefits that can be gained for university and society from offering online programs by utilizing advanced technologies. But the programs must not be implemented carelessly. The key to providing a quality online program is the issue of perceived quality, which takes into account the viewpoint of all stakeholders involved. To truly ensure the institutional quality, however, a systemic view of all factors contributing to the quality must be analyzed and linked to one another — allowing education administrators to understand how each factor contributes to the perceived quality of online education. The perceived quality of an online program will be positively reinforced only through an organizational-wide effort that focuses on managed administration, augmenting online program branding, skilled faculty, supportive alumni, student satisfaction, and effective delivery systems — each of which is vital to a quality online program. This study focuses on the concept of quality assurance in the start-up, implementation, and sustainability of online education. A case of online MBA program will be analyzed to explore the quality assurance. The difficulties in promoting online education quality is the fact that universities are complex networks of disciplinary, social, economic, and political fiefdoms, both internal and external factors to the institutions. As such, the system analysis, a systems-thinking approach, on the issue of perceived quality is ideal to investigate the factors and how each factor contributes to the perceived quality in the online education domain.

Keywords : systems thinking, quality assurance, online education, MBA program

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