

# EXAMINATION OF ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS: A CASE OF HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHERS IN A STATE COLLEGE IN MINDANAO, PHILIPPINES

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**ABSTRACT.** *This descriptive-quantitative investigation on the attitude towards the accreditation process involved 55 teachers of a Higher Education Institution (HEI). For data collection, an adapted research questionnaire with a Cronbach's alpha reliability = 0.936 was utilized. The cross-sectional investigation analyzed the data with the use of both descriptive (mean and standard deviation) and inferential (independent sample t-test) statistics. It is disclosed that the respondents are possessing a positive attitude towards the external evaluation process. Moreover, analysis of the data revealed that the males are more positive than the females as suggested by the average mean; however, the difference is not statistically significant. Implications are herein provided.*

**Keywords:** Accreditation, Attitude, Philippines, Teachers, Quality Assurance, External Evaluation

## 1.INTRODUCTION

For countries to attain both national competitiveness and economic progress, the need to ascertain the quality of higher education comes to the fore [1]. The quality of a higher education system of a country determines either progression or regression of the said nation. Notedly, authors like [2] reported the decline of higher education in terms of quality most especially among developing countries such as the Philippines. This deterioration is indexed by the increasing number of unemployment which questions the relevance of training and education graduates received. A solution seen to solve this concern, realized by many countries, is the creation of mechanisms for external quality assurance such as the accreditation process [3]. It must be noted therefore, along this line, that external evaluation and certification are forms of quality assurance (QA) as maintained by [4].

The accreditation process is a means of attaining high-quality education on a voluntary basis [5]. Additionally, it is a form of external assessment realized to improve an institution's quality of education [6]. The academic community represented by various learning institutions is demanded to hone and produce graduates meeting both local and international standards. Against this, higher learning institutions submit themselves for accreditation which is a quality-management mechanism conducted through professional peer review determining whether or not set standards are met [6]. Hence, most often than not, the quality of a college or university is closely associated with its level of accreditation. This is supported by the empirical investigation of [6] who reported that more than half (56%) of the respondents believed that the accreditation level is associated with the quality of education students gain. In consonance to this [7] claimed that any recognition provided by an accrediting agency to a learning institution makes people believe that such an academic unit has the capacity to provide learning and training geared towards excellence for learners of today and tomorrow. With these pointed, accreditation serves as a seal of both quality and excellence which present stakeholders concern themselves as impacts and influences of globalization turns the market place of employment more competitive as ever.

Moreover, it is believed that the accreditation scheme is a way for the government to monitor and manage higher education specifically in the context of the Philippines [5]. In support of this, the Commission on Higher Education, otherwise known as CHED, supports and to an extent encourages HEIs across the country to undergo voluntary evaluation [4]. Moreover, incentives are provided to institutions such as autonomy, greater budget allocation, scholarships, bonuses, among others. These forms of reward afforded to agencies that underwent the accreditation process and have earned certifications are a form of encouragement and motivation.

Accreditation raises the bar and yields improvement of offered education to clientele of higher learning institutions (HEIs). Through the accreditation system, periodic evaluation is conducted not only to determine areas of strengths but more so the areas needing improvement [8]. One good thing about this practice is that weak points of an academic unit of higher learning are not only pointed out but studied and recommended with possible solutions.

Beyond doubt, accreditation is the call of the time. Thus, it has become the context of investigations across the most recent researches in education in the Philippines. Proofs of this are the numerous investigations about or related to accreditation carried-out aiming at various objectives. Illustrative of this is the investigation of [6] which investigated the insights, ideas, and experiences of the stakeholders on accreditation. Another example is the conceptual research of [4] which explored the importance of local accreditation and certification vis-à-vis gaining international recognition. Although the examples are limited and far from being exhaustive, these are some of the most recent investigations conducted on accreditation as a topic and construct contextualized in the Philippines as far as the researcher's knowledge is accounted for.

Accreditation, although a much-needed process to undergo, is not easy to do so. The standard, as provided by the Higher Education Act of 1994, demands from a higher learning institution excellent performance in the areas of instruction, research and publication, extension and linkages, and institutional qualification [4]. Accreditation does not happen

without the hard work of the concerned faculty members whose work and collaboration would determine certification or non-certification of programs subjected to evaluation. This means that involvement and participation of higher learning teachers matter most if not the sole determining factor of accreditation success.

Along this line, it is noted that attitude is claimed to be a determining factor [9] cited in [10]. This implies that if a person exhibits a negative attitude towards an attitudinal object it is most likely that the person would avoid the same. Conversely, if a person exhibits a positive one, participation and commitment could be expected. Therefore, attitude can serve as an enabling or disabling component as regards faculty participation in the accreditation process. Further, in spite of the importance of attitude as a construct, to the researcher's best of knowledge, no or at best-limited investigations of teacher's attitude towards accreditation was conducted. Hence, this current study intends to survey and explore the attitude of the frontlines of accreditation, the higher education faculty members. Moreover, the constructed gender, maintained by [11] cited in [12] to be consensually agreed by authors to be an essential factor across culture, is investigated with regard the positivity or negativity of respondents towards accreditation and is taken to mean as the classification of being male and female in this study.

**1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This present investigation primarily intended to determine the attitude of tertiary teachers towards the accreditation process. In addition, it specifically aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the attitude of the respondents towards the accreditation process?
2. Is there a significant difference in the attitude of the respondents when data are grouped according to gender?

**2. METHODOLOGY**

**2.1 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The study employed a quantitative-descriptive-non-experimental design to investigate the attitude of the respondents towards the accreditation process, and to determine whether or not the construct gender influences difference. The study is said to be quantitative as it intends to quantify the variable attitude, and the research includes processes such as the gathering, analysis, and interpretation of data [13] found in [14]. In this study, such was done through the utilization of a survey questionnaire. Moreover, the study is claimed to be descriptive as it intends to describe the investigated constructs through the use of simple statistics [15] cited in [16]. Additionally, [17] in [18] explained that studies classified to be descriptive would perform processes of gathering, computing and tabulating data to describe a trend or condition. Furthermore, the study is identified to be cross-sectional. According to [19], cross-sectional investigations conducted the gathering of data in a short period of time and usually are performed at an instance. Lastly, the study is considered to be non-experimental as manipulation of variables was done nor was a controlled or experimental group were established [20] in [21].

**2.2. THE RESPONDENTS OF THE STUDY**

The study employed a purposive sampling technique. Respondents have participated in at least one accreditation process. In total, 55 teachers of higher learning institutions form part of the sample size. Moreover, participation was purely voluntary and no incentive of any kind and form was provided. Out of the sample, only 30.9% are males. This suggests that the teaching force of the state college that served as the locale of the study is dominated by females. The statistics imply that the teaching career is more preferred by females than males. In terms of age, the youngest is aged 24 while the oldest is aged 62 (M = 40.53, SD=10.65). As regards years of service, the least number is two years and the most number is 30 years (M = 12.91, SD = 8.56).

**2.3 THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT**

Data gathering of the present study is realized through the used of a survey questionnaire which is deemed to be an effective and cost-efficient means when the sample size is large [22]. Towards this end, the study adopted the Attitude Towards Accreditation Questionnaire (ATAQ) of [23] which is only a subpart of the research tool used in the said study. Originally, the instrument is to be rated using a five-point Likert scale; however, in this study, the scale was modified to only four scales (4 for agree; 3 for somehow agree; 2 for somehow disagree; and, 1 for disagree). The said decision was anchored on the concept that an odd number of choice encourages respondents to choose neutral responses (e.i. the central tendency) which would provide no essential information for this investigation. Further, the instrument was the first pilot tested prior to the final administration for the gathering of data to 30 faculty members of HEIs who did not form part of the final sample size. The instrument yielded a Cronbach's alpha = 0.936. This means that the 15-item questionnaire is of excellent reliability.

**2.4 CODING PROCEDURE**

The analysis of the data was performed through the use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The variable gender was coded as 1 for male and 2 for female. Moreover, the scale ranging from agreeing to disagree was assigned with the following code: 4 for agree; 3 for somehow agree; 2 for somehow disagree; and 1 for disagree. In addition, to provide an interpretation of the mean scores (e.i. arithmetic mean), table 1 was used.

**Table 1.0**  
**Attitude towards Accreditation Scale**

Range	Descriptor	Interpretation
3.25 4.00	Agree	Positive
1.5 3.24	Somehow Agree	Somehow Positive
1.75 1.49	Somehow Disagree	Somehow Negative
1.0 1.74	Disagree	Negative

**2.5 STATISTICAL TOOLS**

To determine the attitude of the respondents towards the accreditation process, the responses solicited through the questionnaire were coded and analyzed using descriptive statistics – mean (M) and standard deviation (SD). As regards the objective of finding a significant difference in the attitude

towards accreditation between male and female respondents, an independent sample t-test was employed.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

Data solicited from the used questionnaire was coded, encoded and analyzed using descriptive statistics and was interpreted. Table 2 provides the results.

**Table 2.0**

*Attitude towards Accreditation of the respondents*

Variable	M	SD	Interpretation
Attitude	3.783	0.275	Positive

As evidenced by the results presented in the above table, the respondents hold a positive attitude towards the accreditation process. This means that accreditation, in general, is perceived to be something beneficial by the respondents. The low standard deviation means reported responses of the teachers are not extremes. In fact, further analysis of the data revealed that 94.5% of the participants' mean score ranges from 3.25 to 4.00 which is interpreted as positive, and only less than 5% hold a 'somehow positive' attitude. It is supposed that most teachers are convinced of the importance of accreditation and understand the need for the same. In addition, it is speculated that as the teachers find a positive impact of accreditation towards, but not limited to, improvement of facility, communication and work environment, appreciation of the process yields the noted result.

#### 3.2 DIFFERENCE ON THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS ACCREDITATION ACROSS GENDER

T-test for the independent sample was employed to determine the significant difference of the respondent's attitude towards the accreditation process between males and females. Table 3 presents the analysis.

**Table 3.0**

*Gender Difference in Attitude towards Accreditation*

Gender	M	SD	Sig.
Male	3.753	0.223	
Female	3.718	0.298	0.664

The presented analysis in the table above shows that there is no significant difference ( $p\text{-value} = 0.664 > \alpha = 0.05$ ) on the attitude of the respondents towards accreditation when data is grouped according to gender. This means that the attitude of the male respondents does not significantly differ from that of the female respondents. Although, scrutiny of the result disclosed that the males are more positive than the females as evidenced by their average mean; however, this difference is not statistically significant. This implies that gender is not a variable influencing difference on the attitude towards accreditation of the respondents. There are two reasons seen to explain this. One is that both males and females understand the importance of accreditation and how the process of external evaluation would impact them as faculty members regardless of gender. Second is that because the faculty, whether male or female, share the same aspirations for their college, all of them collaborate for the

realization of the same goals causing to neutralize the influence of gender.

### 4. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In consideration of the results of the study, the following are sound conclusions to make: One, the faculty members of higher education institutions are well aware of the impacts of accreditation. This means that they thoroughly understand the need for a college or university to undergo the external evaluation process. It is inferred that because the teachers clearly understand the direction to take as regards accreditation they are willing to take part in the process no matter how difficult and taxing the process is. This result provides essential implications that must be taken advantage of by heads of units. The greatest perhaps is that teachers would shrink from doing their tasks if understand well the process and the role they are to take. In this study, despite the fact that the accreditation process demands so much work and preparation, the frontliners remain hopeful and excited about the activity. Two, men and women may differ in many aspects, but both may share the same hopes and dreams for the institutions they work in. In this study, both males and females share the same positivity towards accreditation which implies that gender is not seen as an index to determine who should perform or give more for the accreditation to succeed; instead, the teachers, be they male or female, commit themselves for the benefit of the institution.

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