



EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE PROGRAM OF BULACAN STATE UNIVERSITY: BASIS FOR PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT

Florentino G. Pineda, Jr.ⁱ

PhD, Department of English,
Bulacan State University,
Malolos City, Bulacan,
Philippines

Abstract:

The study dealt with the Effectiveness of International Graduate Programs at BSU as a Basis for Program Enhancement. The research aims to evaluate its purpose, and its standard as indicated by academic standards, such as standards of competence, service standards, and organizational standards. One of the primordial considerations of the Graduate School is its goal to produce balanced, competent, research-oriented, and globally competitive graduates. Thus, the researcher conceptualized the study; to accomplish the needed interactions with the officials and students of BSU – Hong Kong Lifelong Education Organization Limited; to unearth issues and modern trends, policies, and programs for BSU adoption to benefit the local students and; to initiate or trail-blazed foreign researches for the upliftment the Research and Extension Services of Department, where B.S.U. had fallen short during previous evaluation. The study used the descriptive, quantitative design using survey-questionnaire and interviews as the primary data-gathering instruments. Documented data on the demographic profile of students, number of graduates, and ranking of BSU Hong Kong were also utilized. The enrolled graduate students of BSU Hong Kong, faculty, and administrators of BSU Hong Kong were the respondents of the study.

Keywords: effectiveness, international graduate program enhancement program

1. Introduction

The International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE, 2001, p. 3) defines standards as follows: *“standards are seen as the expected outcomes of educational training. It concerns the knowledge, skills, and attitudes (competencies) that are expected from the graduates. This concerns both general standards (qualifications for a Bachelor’s and Master’s) and specific subject standards.”*

ⁱ Correspondence: email florentinopineda1@gmail.com

Georgia Department of Education (2009, p. 3) defines standards for student achievement (both academic and competence): standards are statements that define what students should know and be able to do upon completion of specific levels of instruction as well as how they will respond to their environment. Standards serve as a guide for excellence and are differentiated from minimum competencies or outcomes because they describe the challenging goals for expanding and improving education. Harvey (2006) sees academic standards as one of four broad areas in higher education where [standards](#) are set and assessed.

Thompson-Whiteside (2011) states: *“academic standards are largely unknown, especially to those outsiders of teaching and learning practice or outside of the particular discipline.”* As a result, employers’ understanding of quality and standards differ considerably from standards within the university. In essence, an academic standard is an abstract, multi-dimensional concept, used and interpreted in a variety of ways by different stakeholders. The setting and judgment of a ‘good’ standard are largely bound in the context of what is being judged and who is judging it. Standard is not the only factor that an institution has to consider, but as well as the effectiveness of the program to ensure quality education.

Effectiveness is the capability of producing the desired result. When something is deemed effective, it means it has an intended or expected outcome or produces a deep, vivid impression. In [management](#), effectiveness relates to getting the right things done. [Peter Drucker](#) reminds us that *“effectiveness can and must be learned.”*

Once the standard has been set and found effective, the quality of purpose has to be set. The services to the learners are assessed to quantify the intended objectives. The quality of the intended objectives of the program is evaluated based on how students are prepared for their selected future profession (Quality in Higher Education by Janne Parri, 2006, pp. 107-108). This is the definition used most frequently regarding higher education. According to this concept, we have to decide to what extent the service or product meets the goals set.

Bulacan State University in the Philippines caters not only to Bulacan students but also to international students as part of its International Graduate Programs. It is therefore that standard in giving quality education must be its priority. The effectiveness of its program for graduate education, its quality, and its purpose must be constantly evaluated. It is hence, relevant and economical to study and evaluate these international programs of BSU to find out if such programs are beneficial for the university, the students, and the country. It is very interesting to find out how these programs affect the financial stability of the university, the growth, and development of the university, the social and economic welfare of its students, and the Filipino people as a whole.

Generally, these programs have social, financial, and economic impacts on the university, its students, and the country. How these sectors are affected by international programs is worth studying. Specifically, what do these sectors benefit from the programs, and what is the extent and depth of these benefits if there are any? Descriptively and comparatively hoping to verify among others the fundamental issues

to include: Academic Organization and Control; Academic Freedom and Grant of Degree; Programs and Evaluation; and other related issues such as; Honourees cause, Equivalency, and Distance / E – class.

2. Background of the Study

International Graduate Programs of BSU exists for quite some time. But a descriptive study on its effectiveness has not yet been done. Many interesting questions to evaluate its effectiveness based on quality and standards are worth researching. What are the competencies of international graduate programs?, what are the teaching standards for these international programs?, how are these standards assessed?, what kind of learning activities or student engagement activities are provided in these programs?, what are the rules and regulations on standards which are implemented and maintained by BSU Philippines and BSU Hong Kong? and, do they set the same level of standards?

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the International Graduate Programs of BSU in terms of quality and standards, to be the basis for program enhancement. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of BSU International Programs?
- What are the opportunities and threats of BSU International Programs?
- How are BSU International Programs contributing to the financial stability of BSU?
- How does the program help the marginalized student of BSU?

In this study, the effectiveness of BSU International Graduate Programs will be assessed based on quality and standards. This is the research paradigm of the study as shown in Figure 1.

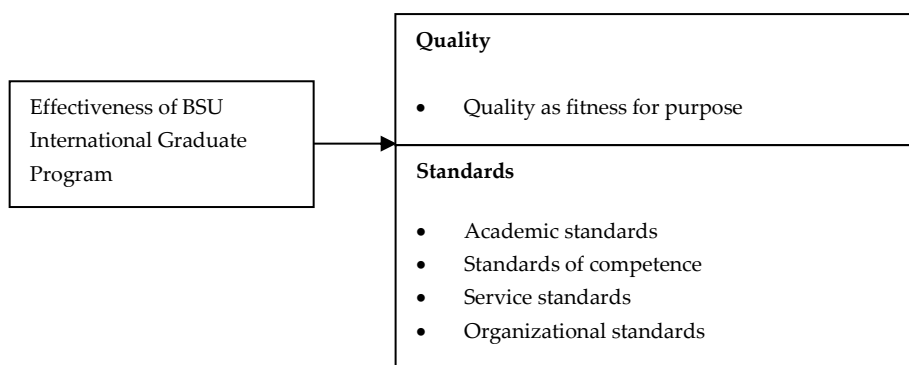


Figure 1: Research Paradigm

3. The Respondents and Data Gathering

The purposive sampling technique is used in this study. The subjects of the study were BSU and Hong Kong Lifelong Learning administrators, and HK Lifelong Learning graduate students.

To gather the needed data, interviews of administrators of BSU and Hong Kong Lifelong Learning administrators and students were done. A Questionnaire for Hong

Kong Lifelong Learning students was also used. The questionnaire is divided into two parts namely: Part I – Demographic Profile of the Respondents and Part II – Research questionnaires for the students. Part II of the questionnaire is further subdivided into three parts namely: A. Evaluation instrument for the students, B. Evaluation Instrument for the Administrators by the students, C. Evaluation Instrument for the members of the faculty by the students.

Using the Likert scale for the questionnaire, Hong Kong Lifelong Learning students evaluated BSU International Graduate Programs in Hong Kong in terms of strengths, engagement activities, and general assessment of the effectiveness of the program. Dedication and commitment in terms of program delivery, professional management of the programs by administrators, and the personal attributes as academic managers of faculty members were also evaluated by the students. The rating is as follows: 5 for Outstanding, 4 - Very Satisfactory, 3 – Satisfactory, 2 – Fair, and 1 - Poor or needs improvement.

The researcher requested permission from BSU administrators to conduct this study. Interview of the BSU President, vice-president, secretary for academic affairs, and dean of the graduate school of BSU is conducted last January. Interviews of Hong Kong Life Long Learning administrators and students and administration of research questionnaire to Life Long Learning students were conducted in Kowloon, Hong Kong. The research questionnaires were gathered by the vice-principal of Hong Kong Life Long Learning and were e-mailed to the researcher.

Descriptive statistics are used as a statistical treatment of data. The mean is computed to describe the level of effectiveness of the International Graduate Programs of BSU in terms of quality and standards, to be the basis for program enhancement.

4. Results and Findings

Table 1: Quality and Standards of BSU International Graduate Programs

Program Impact	Mean
1. Strength of the Program	
a. The curriculum meets the needs of the global market.	4.20
b. Faculty members are experienced, efficient, and resourceful in handling their classes.	4.23
c. Amenities are complete and proper in meeting the needs of the students.	4.27
d. Students are encouraged to conduct research that would develop their skills and potential.	4.27
2. Engagement Activities of the Students	
a. Students are required to present oral reports.	4.30
b. Students are encouraged to participate in class communication.	4.37
c. Lectures of the professors enrich students' information and develop significant thinking.	4.53
d. Examinations (oral/written) determine students' competencies and are based on lessons discussed.	4.47
3. Appraisal of the Program	

Florentino G. Pineda, Jr.
EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE PROGRAM OF
BULACAN STATE UNIVERSITY: BASIS FOR PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT

a. The program meets the needs of the universal market.	4.23
b. Tuition fees are practical, affordable, and fair.	4.47
Overall Mean	4.33

The descriptive study on the effectiveness of the International Graduate Programs of BSU in terms of quality and standards revealed that in terms of quality as fitness for purpose, the evaluation level of the respondents is very satisfactory as revealed by a statistical mean of 4.33. As John Biggs (1999) stated, a quality institution has high-level aims that it intends to meet, that teaches accordingly, and that continually upgrades its practice to adapt to changing conditions, within resource limitations.

Based on these standards, the respondents have evaluated that the curriculum of BSU Lifelong Education in Hong Kong satisfies the needs of the global market as shown by a mean of 4.20. The facilities are complete and appropriate in meeting the needs of the students as revealed by a mean of 4.27. The international graduate programs of BSU meet the needs of the global market as indicated by the mean of 4.23. The curriculum of the program has met the needs of the students in terms of knowledge needed, instructions, and examinations both oral and written to enhance the interest and skills necessary to become globally competitive.

Table 2: Quality and Standards of BSU International Graduate Programs

Delivery Assurance	Mean
1. Commitment and Assurance of the Program Delivery of Administrators	
a. The program established compassion for the emotional and mental needs of its external customers such as the students, as well as its internal customers such as members of the faculty and non-teaching personnel.	4.37
b. The program employment ensured that the availability of faculty members for consultation either online or face-to-face is accessible and reliable.	4.30
c. The program delivery serves the concerns of educational needs, interests, and safety of the students, members of the faculty, and personnel.	4.23
d. The program was delivered anchored from the objective of attaining the vision and mission of the Graduate School in particular and the BSU in general.	4.23
2. Professional Management of the Programs	
a. Creates opportunities for the extensive professional development of the students.	4.33
b. The program delivery treated the graduate students with the utmost professionalism and politeness.	4.43
c. The graduate program delivery manifested a venue for the creation of original ideas that stimulate students' professional development.	4.43
Total	4.50
Overall Mean	4.35

In Table 2, the student's evaluation of the program delivery and professional management of BSU International Graduate Programs by its administrators revealed a mean of 4.35, which means a very satisfactory level of evaluation. Altogether, the evaluation level of the respondents on the effectiveness of the International Graduate Programs of BSU in terms of quality and standards is set at a very satisfactory level as

revealed by mean results. This table also shows that BSU, in general, has served its purpose well. The program delivered is anchored on its mission and vision. Faculty members and administrators are always available for consultation. It is not only the intelligence concept that is served but, as well as the psychological and emotional needs that are prioritized. The program is so sensitive to the needs and welfare of its students. Students are treated holistically with the utmost care of professionalism. The curriculum of the program has met the needs of the students in terms of knowledge needed, and facilities that enhance the interest and skills needed by the students to become competitive.

The set objectives with its activities thus show commitment and dedication not only to its learners but as well as to its faculty members. The welfare and concern of the faculty members and personnel are sought, for this is one factor that motivates the faculty and personnel to serve well the students. This approach creates a good interpersonal relationship that makes the ambiance of learning more effective.

The management, also, designs a chance for advancement for its students. Students are treated with utmost decency which influences everyone to build a good character despite the knowledge they gained in the program.

Table 3: Quality and Standards of BSU International Graduate Programs

Professorial Leadership	Mean
1. Personal Attributes of Faculty Members	
a. Authority of the subject matter	4.40
b. Supremacy of the language used	4.50
c. Arrangement of the lesson	4.50
d. Administration of the class	4.53
e. Approaches, techniques, and systems used	4.53
f. Manners and grooming	4.57
g. Knowledge of global issues	4.60
h. Facility and articulation skills	4.53
i. Used of technological devices in lectures	4.47
j. Competitiveness in all aspects related to giving lectures.	4.47
k. Promotion of desirable morals and values.	4.53
l. Global competitiveness in terms of skills in reading listening speaking and research	4.50
m. Attendance and punctuality	4.50
n. Human relations skills	4.53
o. Orderliness	4.37
2. The Professor as a Scholastic Administrator	
a. Shows roles as catalyst, resource person, and inquisitor in leading the students, members of the faculty, and personnel in contributing knowledge and understanding concepts that are needed in the program.	4.43
b. Designs and creates good learning environment conditions that promote a healthy exchange of ideas and knowledge for professional development.	4.47
c. Structures learning context to enhance the achievement of collective learning goals	4.37
d. Motivates the student's desire and interest to pursue professional development for career improvement and advancement.	4.40
Overall Mean	4.48

Table 3 illustrates the dedication and commitment of its faculty in terms of quality and standard. Faculty members are equipped with the knowledge, technologically intelligent, globally competitive, possess the right attitudes of educators, and are morally boosted by strong commitment towards what is right and acceptable. They are equipped and so much dedicated to everything they do. Professors motivate their students to pursue professional achievements and encourage them to enhance themselves which would be beneficial not only to themselves but also to the community where they live. Everyone displays a good human relationship. Respect towards one another is so apparent. The environment advocates respect for authority and a healthy exchange of ideas without any hesitations or reservations. The professors stimulate good mental health that makes the students enjoy learning. There is an exemplary performance in terms of awareness of global issues among the faculty members. Faculty members are fluent, articulate, globally competitive in reading and listening, punctual, and organized in the presentation of their lessons. These are all based on how things were observed and perceived by the students. Good ambiances of learning conditions are prevalent and well-structured learning methods are applied to augment the learning capabilities of the students. The professors as academic managers display the good character of a facilitator. They lead the students, other faculty members, and personnel to improve their knowledge and understanding which are so essential to the implementation of the program.

Table 4: Summary of Statistical Mean

Stakeholder Feedback	Mean
A. Evaluation instrument for the students	4.33
B. Evaluation instrument for the administrators by the students	4.35
C. Evaluation instrument for the members of the faculty by the students	4.48
Overall mean	4.39

The level of effectiveness of the BSU International Graduate Program in terms of the quality and the standards of monitoring was very satisfactory as revealed by the overall mean of 4.39. This means the effectiveness of the standard set by the institution is achieved. The desired quality of education for its foreign students is attained. The evaluation instrument used for the students fared well in the assessment. The administrator's evaluation of their students is remarkable as well as the evaluation of the students by their professors. The program for international students taken as a whole serves its vision well. The objectives laid down for its success are made viable because of the dedication and commitment of the institution's administrators.

The different factors evaluated as bases in assessing the quality standards of BSU International Programs all fall at a very satisfactory level. The Personal Attributes of the faculty members got the highest rate which means that the assets of an institution are its faculty. Therefore, an educational institution needs to consider hiring the academic preparations and attitudes of its future faculty members. The faculty members should also have the potential of becoming school administrators for it shows in the bar that the success of the program of an institution lies also in the ability of the professor to manage

programs professionally. It is observed that the strength of the program got the lowest rate in the evaluation.

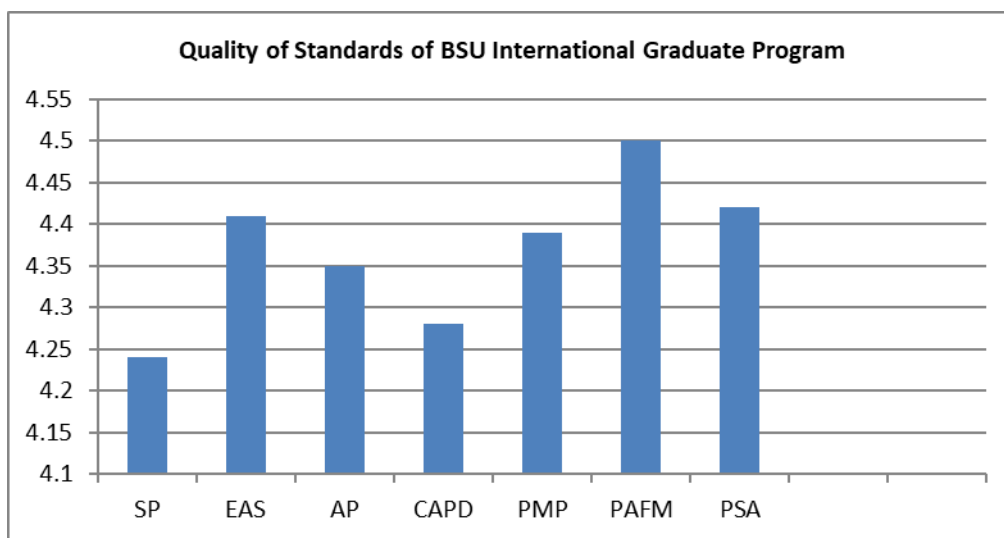


Figure 2: Summary of Evaluation

SP - Strength of the Program

EAS - Engagement Activities of the Students

AP - Appraisal of the Program

CAPD - Commitment and Assurance of the Program Delivery of Administrators

PMP - Professional Management of the Programs

PAFM - Personal Attributes of the Faculty Members

PSA - Professor as a Scholastic Administrator

5. Conclusions

The students of BSU Lifelong in Hong Kong positioned the level of effectiveness of the International Graduate Programs of BSU at a very satisfactory level. They were content with the graduate programs of BSU. The programs correspond to their needs, expectations, and society as well, as most programs were business-oriented. The program was accredited by Hong Kong and China Accreditation Agency. Lifelong Hong Kong was also validated and accredited by the United Kingdom regarding quality and standards.

Students of Lifelong stated that BSU improved their skills and helped their careers. Their analytical and presentation skills were developed. According to them, the standard of BSU was high, and it was good. The research-based program of BSU helped them solve problems. They were promoting BSU to their friends and colleagues.

The faculty members were energetic and knowledgeable. Most teachers were members of the Hong Kong Management Association. They had invited professors from Canada since they were assured that the delivery of the program was of quality.

Special lectures were held on Sundays. They used modular approaches in teaching. Most engagement activities were online. Enrichment and continuous modification of the curriculum were done to comply with global standards and maintain quality education in Lifelong Hong Kong.

The strengths of the program were: the curriculum satisfied the needs of the global market, the faculty members were competent, effective, and efficient in handling their classes, the facilities were complete and appropriate in meeting the needs of the students, and students were encouraged to conduct research that would enhance their skills and potentials.

It was an opportunity for BSU as it was promoted to other countries. BSU International Graduate Programs is expanding to Asian Countries as well as in other continents like Africa, and soon in New York and Canada.

BSU International Graduate Programs was contributing to the financial stability of BSU as it contributed a big income to the school and international students of BSU were sponsors of Barangay scholars for they were paying triple the payment of a regular Filipino student.

5.1 Recommendations

It is recommended that similar studies be conducted on the effectiveness of International Graduate Programs of BSU in terms of quality and standards in other countries where BSU was currently connected: Macau, South Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan, Singapore, Japan, Vietnam, and Ethiopia in Africa.

A follow-up study on its program objectives is recommended to ensure that quality education is provided to the foreign students at Bulacan State University. The quality of education provided by the international community may be considered.

Research on the weaknesses of the program should be emphasized the strength of the program got the lowest rate though, it falls under the very satisfactory level. Specific weaknesses must be identified which failed to be identified in this research.

Further research on the qualifications of the faculty members, mental, and emotional fitness are suggested for the strength of an educational institution lies more in the educational qualifications of its faculty.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

About the Author

Florentino G. Pineda, Jr. was born in Pampanga, Philippines. He finished his elementary and secondary education in San Fernando, Pampanga. His interest in English motivated him to finish a bachelor's degree in Secondary Education and major in English. He finished the degree with Magna Cum Laude honors at Holy Angel University in Angeles City. He pursued his Master of Education major in Guidance at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City. Pursued and finished another master's degree in

Language Education at Wesleyan University. He finished his Doctor of Philosophy at Bulacan State University in Malolos, Bulacan whose thesis is entitled "Communication Practice as Cultural Formation in the Educational Institution: Practices, Barriers, and Solution." He has taught in elementary, high school, college, and graduate school at known universities in the Philippines. He has written books on Literature, Speech Communication, Study and Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, and Technical Writing. He served as the Department Head of Mass Communication and Performing the Department of English at Bulacan State University.

References

- Åkerlind, G. (2003). Growing and developing as a University teacher- variation in meaning. *Studies in Higher Education* (28), 375-390.
- Askew, S. and E. Carnell (1998). *Transforming learning: individual and global change*. London; Washington.
- Biggs, J. (1993). From theory to practice: A cognitive systems approach. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 12 (1), 73-86.
- Defining and monitoring academic standards in Australian higher education*. Retrieved from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.462.4916&rep=rep1>
- Drucker, P. The effective executive. The Investors' Podcast. Retrieved from <https://content.theinvestorspodcast.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/07181822/TheEffectiveExecutive-Peter-Drucker.pdf>
- External examiner - Analytic quality glossary*. Retrieved from www.qualityresearchinternational.com/glossary/externalexaminer.htm
- UNESCO. *International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education*. Retrieved from www.unesco.org
- Lee, H. Quality assurance in higher education: Some international trends. Retrieved from <https://www.qualityresearchinternational.com/Harvey%20papers/Harvey%202004%2>
- Standards of competence - Analytic Quality Glossary*. Retrieved from <http://www.qualityresearchinternational.com/glossary/standardsofcompetence.html>
- The power of accreditation - Quality research international*. Retrieved from <https://www.qualityresearchinternational.com/Harvey%20papers/Harvey%202004%2>
- Thune, C. (1998). Enhancing the quality of higher education in Europe: The role of quality assurance. *European Journal of Education*, 33(3), 265-280.
- Whiteside, S.-T. Who sets the standards in higher education? – Australasian. Retrieved from <http://www.aair.org.au>

Creative Commons licensing terms

Authors will retain the copyright of their published articles agreeing that a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0) terms will be applied to their work. Under the terms of this license, no permission is required from the author(s) or publisher for members of the community to copy, distribute, transmit or adapt the article content, providing a proper, prominent and unambiguous attribution to the authors in a manner that makes clear that the materials are being reused under permission of a Creative Commons License. Views, opinions and conclusions expressed in this research article are views, opinions and conclusions of the author(s). Open Access Publishing Group and European Journal of Special Education Research shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage or liability caused in relation to/arising out of conflict of interests, copyright violations and inappropriate or inaccurate use of any kind content related or integrated on the research work. All the published works are meeting the Open Access Publishing requirements and can be freely accessed, shared, modified, distributed and used in educational, commercial and non-commercial purposes under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).