

Review

The accreditation of state universities and colleges in the Philippines: Governance, hegemony relationship and dichotomy of ownership

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ABSTRACT

The study is a review of literature in accreditation of state universities and colleges (SUCs) in the Philippines vis-à-vis its implications in governance, hegemony relationship and dichotomy of ownership grounded on some research studies. Specifically, this paper is limited to the discussion of the definition and nature of accreditation, distinct differences of program accreditation and institutional accreditation in terms of its definition, scope, and criteria, AACCUP as CHED-authorized accrediting agency for SUCs, benefits of program accreditation, conceptual and theoretical framework and its application, dichotomy of ownership, and overview of accreditation system in some countries, including Philippines. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) created by virtue of RA 7722, otherwise known as the Higher Education Act of 1994 of the Philippines, is one of the trifocal governing agencies in the country's educational system mandated by law to oversee the tertiary and advance education; an agency directly under the Office of the President of the Republic of the Philippines. In one of its promulgations, i.e. CHED Memorandum Order No.1 series of 2005 (CMO No1 s 2005) also known the Revised Policies and Guidelines on Voluntary Accreditation in Aid of Quality and Excellence in Higher Education is set for the guidance and information of all concerned for things concerning accreditation. Further, in one of its provisions, it recognized the Accrediting Agency for Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines, Inc. (AACCUP) as the sole accrediting agency that has claimed legitimacy from the State or government thru CHED, taking charge of accreditation of SUCs in the Philippines. While it is an acceptable educational practice that private higher institutions subjected itself for private entities for their accreditation - a remainder issue is raised, what is the implication in terms of governance, hegemony relationship and ownership if SUCs being state-owned entities were accredited by private, legitimized accrediting organizations? Is it not a rightful take that check-and-balance mechanism for quality assurance of education of the state should be inherent and rest solely with SUCs? A caveat is noted here that the reader be informed that the schema herein presented is viewed in general yet limited to the context of program accreditation for SUCs in the country by AACCUP. The perspective on it is derived from the personal lens of AACCUP accreditors and do not necessarily reflect the views of AACCUP or any organization herein cited.

Keywords: Accreditation, Governance, Hegemony, Dichotomy of Ownership

INTRODUCTION

Accreditation *per se* is a tool for quality assurance and a mechanism for check-and-balance in administration and

governance of any entity whatever their nature and characteristic may be. Accreditation to some extent

becomes a seal of excellence and a status symbol of prestige.

While accreditation may not be a new idea in today's educational milieu, over time, accreditation vis-à-vis the discourse on quality and quality assurance in higher education is significantly a perennial issue. Thus, quality and quality assurance are often addressed when an educational institution submits itself for accreditation, which is by nature, a private and voluntary endeavor.

The praxis of accreditation in the Philippines can be traced back as an outgrowth during the time when the private higher education sector gained power and control "as evidenced by its rapid expansion of private colleges and universities from 259 in the late 1940s to 1,665 in 2002, one of the highest rates of privatization in the world, (Maca and Morris, 2012; Gulosino, 2003). The state allowed this sector to ensure its own quality and manage the accreditation of colleges and universities (Maca and Morris, 2012; Gulosino, 2003; Arcelo, 2003). The sector grew unhampered, driven by the profit motive and even acted as conduits for the state's labour export policy – effectively abetting the transformation of the Philippines into an 'emigration state' (Maca and Morris, 2012; Ruiz, 2006).

At one hand, the state universities and colleges (SUCs) were not spared from this sort of check-and-balance mechanism termed as accreditation, and that was when accreditation became popular and considered the 'cult of the moment' to date.

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) created by virtue of RA 7722, otherwise known as the Higher Education Act of 1994 of the Philippines, is one of the trifocal governing agencies in the country's educational system mandated by law to oversee for tertiary and advance education, an agency directly under the office of the President of the Republic of the Philippines. Thus, one of its promulgations that served as a basis and entails the bearing of accreditation in higher education, especially among State Universities and Colleges (SUCs). Hence, CHED Memorandum Order No.1 series of 2005 (CMO No.1 s. 2005) also known the Revised Policies and Guidelines on Voluntary Accreditation in Aid of Quality and Excellence in Higher Education is set for the guidance and information of all concerned.

In Article I of CMO No.1 s. 2005, CHED acknowledged the pioneering works and efforts of the accrediting agencies, now federated under the Federation of Accrediting Agencies in the Philippines (FAAP) namely, Association of Christian Schools, Colleges and Universities Accrediting Agency, Inc. (ACSCU-AAI), the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools and Universities (PAASCU), and the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities – Commission on Accreditation (PACU-COA). Further, CHED acknowledged the existence of the National Network of Quality Accrediting

Agencies (NNQAA), now made up of Accrediting Agency for Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines, Inc. (AACCUP) and the Association of Local Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (ALCUCOA). These private accrediting agencies along with their scheme and mechanism have acclaimed legitimacy from the state thru CHED. While it is an acceptable praxis that private institutions subjected itself for private entities for their accreditation, it may sound paradoxical that SUCs being state-owned entities were accredited by private, legitimized accrediting organizations.

Given the afore cited premises and scenarios, this review of literature attempts to present perspectives of accreditation of SUCs in the Philippines, its general implications in terms of governance, hegemony relationship and dichotomy of ownership grounded on some research studies, specifically focused on the following:

1. Definition and nature of accreditation;
2. Distinct differences of program accreditation and institutional accreditation in terms of its definition, scope, and criteria;
3. AACCUP as CHED-authorized accrediting agency for SUCs, its background vis-à-vis with other accrediting agencies and its relation to CHED policies, standards and guidelines (PSG's), and policies in terms criteria and levels of accreditation;
4. Benefits of program accreditation;
5. Conceptual and theoretical framework and its application;
6. Dichotomy of ownership; and
7. Overview of accreditation system– the case of Colombia, India, USA, Hungary and Philippines.

A caveat is noted here that the reader be informed that the schema herein presented is viewed in general yet limited in the context of program accreditation, for SUCs in the country by AACCUP. The perspectives on it are derived from the personal lens of AACCUP accreditator and do not necessarily reflect the views of AACCUP or any organization herein cited.

Definition and nature of accreditation

The Commission on Higher Education or CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 1 series of 2005 Article II defined Accreditation as a process of assessing and upgrading the educational quality of higher education institutions through self-evaluation and peer judgment. This leads to the grant of accredited status by an accrediting agency and provides public recognition and information on educational quality.

Accreditation is said to be a private and voluntary endeavor, that is to say, the government through its arm, CHED does not accredit rather encourage the use of

Table 1. Matrix for program accreditation showing the following

Type of Visit	Level	Rating Required	Validity/Term	Accreditation Status	Implication
Preliminary	-	2.5	2 years	Candidate	Can apply for accredited status within 2 years
1 st Survey	I	3.0	Valid for 3 years	Accredited	Passed the threshold of what can qualify as accredited or described as "good"
2 nd Survey	II	3.5	Valid for 3-5 years	Level II Reaccredited	Accreditation requirements are met or described as "very good"
3 rd Survey	III	4.0	Valid for 5 years	Level III Reaccredited	Programs of International Standards or described as "excellent"
4 th Survey	IV	4.5	Valid for 5 years	Level IV Reaccredited	World-class Programs or described as "outstanding"; may entitle the institution to institutional accreditation status

voluntary, non-governmental accreditation systems in aid of the exercise of its regulatory functions. (Article I of CMO No.1 s. 2005). Though, CHED in its power inherently has sets of program-based quality assurance mechanisms like Regional Quality Assessment Team (RQAT), the authority to open and operate program, the PSG's that provide minimum mandatory standards, the granting of Center of Excellence (COE's) and Center of Development (COD's) for the different programs of disciplines, the conduct of program accreditation by CHED-authorized accrediting agencies, the fact remains that the existing CHED-authorized accrediting agencies are private agencies, that is, if it is right to say that accreditation is by nature, a private endeavor of every state-owned colleges and universities.

On the other hand, accreditation is also a voluntary endeavor. SUCs are not compelled to submit for accreditation. However, the State is serious in achieving the goals of education, that even if accreditation process is a voluntary endeavor, virtually, it is becoming mandatory because accreditation levels will be used by CHED and Department of Budget and Management (DBM) in recommending budgetary allocation (Article V of CMO No.1 s. 2005). That is to say, the accreditation levels or the number of accredited programs the respective SUCs have, bear significant influence in budgetary allocation.

Program accreditation

Program Accreditation refers to the evaluation of individual programs of a higher education institutions (Article II of CMO No.1 s. 2005). Say, Elementary Teacher Education Program, Computer Engineering Program, Nursing, Marine Transportation, and Hotel Restaurant Management which are among the top 20 programs, in no definite order, noted to have the most of enrollees (Lagrada as cited by Colinares (2010) in his

book entitled, 21st Century Trends, Issues and Challenges in Philippine Education).

The accreditation by program is a way of evaluating the quality and quality assurance of education through assessing its inputs defined in ten (10) criteria or areas: Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives (VMGO's), Faculty, Curriculum and Instruction, Support to Students, Research, Extension and Community Involvement, Library, Facilities, Laboratories, and Administration.

Each criterion has specified standards higher than the minimum standards set by CHED and is evaluated quantitatively in terms of adequacy and qualitatively in terms of effectiveness. The above mentioned criteria is based on AACUP accreditation policies, standards and guidelines (PSGs), so to speak, the most of it are harmonized with CHED's PSG's.

Among the 10 criteria, the VMGO's are evaluated but not given weight and is not included in the computation of the overall rating of the program. Table 1.

Institutional accreditation

Institutional Accreditation refers to evaluation of a whole educational institution of which the guidelines and standards shall be formulated in collaboration with existing federations/networks of accrediting agencies to be approved by CHED (Article II of CMO No.1 s. 2005).

Institutional accreditation used the whole institution as the sole subject and the unit of measurement, thus the criteria (along with its benchmark description) employed in the evaluation comprise and cover the following:

Governance and management

The institution adopts a sufficient system of governance and management to manage existing operations and has the ability to respond to the development and change.

Teaching, learning and evaluation

The institution has clearly defined mission and academic programs with set objectives and learning outcomes at appropriate levels and has effective mechanisms of delivery and testing to ensure success in meeting these objectives to enable students to achieve intended outcomes.

Faculty and staff

The standard of the institution is measured to a great extent by the qualification and performance of its faculty. It maintains highly qualified faculty members in terms of their academic qualifications, experiences and professional competence.

Research

The institution maintains an environment fostering creative and scientific researches that produces scholarly outputs and appropriate technologies.

Extension, consultancy and linkages

The institution demonstrates the capability to conduct extension programs that take into consideration the economic and developmental needs of the country, local, regional and national level for people empowerment and self-reliance. The institution is likewise valued as a partner by other higher educational and professional institutions, government organizations and industries, within the Philippines and the international community.

Student support

The institution demonstrates the capability to provide the resources and services to support its students throughout their academic life in order that they can attain their maximum potential and total development, thus becoming worthy citizens of the country.

Infrastructure and learning resources

The institution provides an environment conducive to effective teaching and learning and supports the educational programs offered by the institution. The adequacy of physical plant and facility, library, classrooms, shops, laboratories, information technology, multimedia center, student center and general education laboratories are paramount.

Financial generation and management

The institution has sufficient resources to support the educational programs and services which are efficiently managed and utilized.

Healthy practices

The institution adopts certain healthy practices which are not common among average quality institutions. It adopts a system of continuous examination and improvement of its programs and operation. In some cases, it has earned recognition of and is even given award by, other entities or groups. It has respectable image to the community, region, or country.

The criteria are based on ACCUP Institutional Accreditation format.

Accrediting agency for chartered colleges and universities in the Philippines, Inc. (AACCUP)

In Article I of CMO No. 1 s. 2005, CHED acknowledges the pioneering work and efforts of the accrediting agencies now federated under the Federation of Accrediting Agencies in the Philippines (FAAP) namely, Association of Christian Schools, Colleges and Universities Accrediting Agency, Inc. (ACSCU-AAI), the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools and Universities (PAASCU), and the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities – Commission on Accreditation (PACU-COA). Further, CHED acknowledges the existence of the National Network of Quality Accrediting Agencies (NNQAA), now made up of Accrediting Agency for Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines, Inc.

(AACCUP) and the Association of Local Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (ALCUCOA). Below is the matrix showing the five (5) CHED – authorized accreditation agencies (with indicated year of establishment) under two (2) prevailing umbrellas. Table 2

AACCUP's main function is to accredit the curricular programs particularly those of the SUCs in the country. It is organized in 1987, though officially registered and recognized under the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) on September 4, 1989. Under its charter, one of the functions, if not the main purpose of AACCUP, is "to develop a mechanism of, and conduct the evaluation of programs and institutions" (AACCUP Manual of Accreditation, 2005). Further, "since accreditation is recognized as aiming toward improvement in quality, the standards adopted by accrediting agencies are higher than the minimum requirements set by the government (Corpuz as cited by

Table 2. Matrix showing the five (5) CHED –authorized accreditation agencies

Federation of Accrediting Agencies in the Philippines (FAAP) (for Private Institutions)	National Network of Quality Accrediting Agencies (NNQAA) (for Public Institutions)
Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools & Universities (PAASCU) (established in 1957)	Accrediting Agency for Chartered Colleges & Universities in the Philippines, Inc. (AACCUP) (established 1987)
Philippine Association of Colleges & Universities-Commission on Accreditation (PACU-COA) (established in 1973)	
Association of Christian Schools, Colleges & Universities Accrediting Agency, Inc (ACSCU_AAI) (established in 1976)	Association of Local Colleges & Universities Commission on Accreditation (ALCUCOA) (established 2003)

Colinares in 2010 in his book entitled, 21st Century Trends, Issues and Challenges in Philippine Education).

The AACCUP is a member of the:

- ❖ National Network of Quality Assurance Agencies, Inc. (NNQAA), formed by AACCUP and the Association of Local Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation, Inc. (ALCUCOA).
- ❖ Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) with AACCUP as member of the Steering Group based in Hong Kong, China.
- ❖ International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) based in The Hague, The Netherlands.

AACCUP is now closely allied with the Association of Local Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation, Inc. (ALCUCOA).

The PSG's of AACCUP have been harmonized under CHED PSG's, the CMO No.1. s. 2005. To mention one of among, the Master Survey Instrument used by AACCUP has been revised to make its program-specific and to incorporate CHED policies and guidelines prescribed for specific programs, eventually, all program accreditation will be program-specific (23rd AACCUP National Conference Proceedings 2010).

An AACCUP Representative sits as one of the members of Coordinating Council of Accreditation (CCA) with the other representatives of CHED-authorized accrediting agencies. The composition of CCA is chaired by CHED Commissioner, with a Director In-charge the CHED –OPS Director. The said composition was under the mandate of EO No. 705-A (Lagrada as cited by Colinares, 2010 in his book entitled, 21st Century Trends, Issues and Challenges in Philippine Education)

AACCUP is a non-profit, non-stock corporation composed of 109 State Universities and Colleges (SUC's). In the official website of AACCUP, it posted its 109 Institutional members and counting. AACCUP has accredited programs in 109 out of 110 SUC's in the country and two (2) of which are Level IV Accredited, the Central Luzon State University (CLSU) Muñoz, Nueva Ecija and Visayas State University (VSU) Baybay City, Leyte.

Benefits of program accreditation

Article V of CMO No. 1 s. 2005 stipulates all the Benefits of the Accreditation Program. For public institutions like SUC's, the accreditation levels determine the annual budget allocation and other benefits like, it shall enjoy priority in funding assistance from CHED for scholarship and faculty development, facilities improvement and other development programs. In addition, AACCUP identified the following benefits of accreditation:

1. as a rational basis for budgetary requests;
2. for normative financing;
3. as a factor in the selection of Center of Excellence (COEs) and Center of Development (CODs);
4. for SUCs leveling;
5. as a requirement for the conversion of a college to a university;
6. as a factor in assessing the appointment/transfer of an SUC President; and
7. for matching-fund schemes where requirements for accreditation are matched with funds from CHED

Theoretical and conceptual framework and its application

The perspectives presented herein are grounded to some concepts of governance, the hegemony relationship is anchored on the Theory of Power and Hegemony of Michael Apple, Michel Foucault and Antonio Gramsci, and the dichotomy of ownership is described using the study of Martin (2008) on Policy Rationales and Organizational and Methodological Options in Accreditation: Findings from an International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) Research Project.

Governance defined

In the study Good Enough Governance Revisited by Merilee (2007), she cited the World Bank's definition of

governance which is ‘the process and institutions through which decisions are made and authority is exercised’ (p.3). The accreditation in the country is said to be both a process and institutions through which decisions are made and authority is exercised through the state and CHED institutionalizes the process and mechanism of accreditation, also institutionalizes the structures, institutions and relationships outside it, in this case, the accrediting agencies. CHED as an institution is one of the trifocal agencies created by virtue of RA 7722 tasked to oversee undergraduate and graduate education in the country.

In the same vein, Ewalt (2001) in her study, “Theories of Governance and New Public Management: Links to Understanding Welfare Policy Implementation”, cited that essentially, governance is a political theory while new public management (NPM) is an organizational theory, and as describes,

Governance refers to the development of governing styles in which boundaries between and within public and private sectors have become blurred. The essence of governance is its focus on mechanisms that do not rest on recourse to the authority and sanctions of the government...Government for (some) is about the potential for contracting, franchising and new forms of regulation.

In short, it is about what (some) refer to as the new public administration. However, governance ... is more than a new set of managerial tools. It is also about more than achieving greater efficiency in the production of public service.

It is worth to note that, governance refers to the development of governing styles in which boundaries between and within public and private sectors become blurred. In the case of accreditation system in the country, the public and private partnership (PPP) have been established for quite some time, CHED and AACUP for instance – is it to be considered a development of governing styles? Apparently the answer is yes, however, boundaries between and within public and private sectors have become blurred, which brought the aspect to revisit the entire concept of allowing private, and CHED-recognized accrediting agencies to evaluate and accredit programs of state-owned universities and colleges. While this may be a virtually acceptable way of contracting (services of accreditation) and forms of regulation (through which curricular offerings of SUCs are screened for quality and quality assurance), thereby achieving efficiency in the production of public service (i.e. ensuring quality education through accreditation), the state in a way is hewing to the notion that private sector is most efficient than in the production of public services. This fixation to this kind of governance indirectly and impliedly suggests mistrust to some extent. In a survey, the government is the least trusted among six institutions, i.e. business sectors, NGOs, media,

church and academe according to the 3rd Philippine Trust Index (PTI) (Business Insights of Malaya Newspaper, October 28, 2014).

In a study entitled, “What Is More Important to effective Governance: Relationship, Trust, and Leadership, or Structures and Formal Processes? Restructuring Shared Governance in Higher Education” by Kezar (2004), cited that governance is a matter of leadership, trust and relationships that supersede structures and processes in effective decision making. A governance system can operate with imperfect structures and processes, but if leadership is missing and relationships and trust damaged, the governance system will likely fail for lack of direction, motivation, meaning, integrity, sense of purpose, ways to integrate multiple perspectives, open communication, people willing to listen, and legitimacy. In Monroe Survey’s severe criticism of the Philippines education system in 1925 was on its excessive centralized control which accordingly resulted in the lack of initiative in various branches (Bautista and Ocampo, 2009; Smith, 1945). Is it correct to presume then that the emergence of private CHED – recognized accrediting agencies was brought in due to the missed leadership and damaged relationship and trust to the state? Is the education system which have been characterized as excessively centralized control and lacking initiative a compelling factor for the private sector to takeover for accreditation matters in the country? Had it been that the state lost control over these accrediting agencies who have been members of private higher education sector who gained power and control by its rapid expansion gave in to the challenge and allowed the private sector to rule out on accreditation of colleges and universities?

A locally-based study in basic education by Juan Miguel Luz (2009) in one Discussion Paper Series, entitled, “The Challenge of Governance in a Large Bureaucracy (Department of Education): Linking Governance to Performance in an Under-Performing Sector” defines governance as the system by which organizations are directed and controlled. The governance structure specifies the distribution of rights and responsibilities among different participants in the organization, such as the board of directors, managers, shareholders and other stakeholders, and also spells out the rules and procedures for aiming at decisions on organizational affairs.

With the concepts and theories of governance cited above, an encompassing spectrum of governance is seen. Drawn from various authorities and legitimate sources of the ‘operational’ definitions of governance, governance per se is a matter of process and institutions through which decisions are made and authority is exercised’ (World Bank definition of governance as cited by Grindle, 2007), also, governance is a matter of ‘governing styles...managerial tools for achieving greater efficiency in the production of public service (Ewalt,

2001), a governance as a matter of 'leadership, trust and relationships that supersede structures and processes in effective decision making' Kezar (2004); Luz (2009) cited a governance as a matter of 'the system and its structures'. Such that, whatever operational definition a certain government takes, may be one those afore cited, or could be its very own definition of governance coupled with political will (that is not highly politicized), might be it is safe then to presume that in its truest sense governance is "of the people, for the people, and by the people".

Hegemony relationship

The study of Castle (2012) entitled, "Power and Status Theories in Teachers' Professional Development", cited the following theories of power and hegemony. The same theories are utilized to establish proper grounding in the discussion of its application to the particular context of this review of literature.

1. Michael Apple (2000, 2004) theoretical approach to power, argued that educational policy and practice are influenced greatly by struggles between powerful groups and social movements.
2. Michel Foucault (1980) Theory of Power and Hegemony argued that knowledge and power are inextricably linked. He determined that those who have the power can subject others to their rule, that same power can also be used by the people being ruled.
3. Antonio Gramsci (1971) adopted the term hegemony to refer to the ideological rule of one social class over another, thus defining it as an ideological rule – a means of controlling dominant ideas and the way in which people think and behave as workers. Further, he stated that, ideological rule or control of dominant ideas and people's way of thinking is referred to by Gramsci as the highest form of hegemony.

To apply Apple's theory, 'that educational policy and practice are influenced greatly by struggles between powerful groups and social movements', in this regard, the struggles of every SUC to be "accredited" and the powerful group and social (educational) movement- the AACCUP. The seduction of accreditation has brought drastic paradigm shifts in terms of educational policies and practices.

To apply Foucault's theory, 'that knowledge and power are inextricably linked. He determined that those who have the power can subject others to their rule, that same power can also be used by the people being ruled', in this regard, the legitimacy of AACCUP and its PSG's granted by virtue of CMO No.1 s. 2005 held as its power to rule over SUCs, that same power is virtually transmitted to SUC's which in turn will be used by SUCs in their claims for support. Moreover, accreditation status that a

particular SUC holds implicitly gives certain degree of dominance over the other, and that is how it started because SUC had become the subject of the power of AACCUP. While SUCs are being subjected to its power through compliance of its recommendations in respective durations, in a way, once the level of status of accreditation had been granted and raised, it becomes a status symbol, and that same status symbol is used to dominate and enjoy the power accrued to it.

In the same vein, to apply Gramsci's theory, which holds that 'ideological rule or control of dominant ideas and people's way of thinking is referred to by Gramsci as the highest form of hegemony', in this regard, when SUCs endeavor to be accredited, it has to embrace first the ideologies of AACCUP, and when that happens, the seduction of accreditation begins.

Oftentimes, overhauling the whole operation of the business in SUCs occur, and that is when dominant ideas and people's way of thinking (which is referred to by Gramsci as the highest form of hegemony) on "matters of accreditation" change and become attuned to the ideologies of the same. The SUCs now operates and run its business as dictated by the ideological and controlling rule of AACCUP, in doing so, to certain extent, it runs counter and impinges what SUCs shall be doing, e.g. the right to enjoy academic freedom, send its faculty for continuing professional development for that agenda and may not be truly or solely for professional development of faculty i.e. some faculty members pursue their Masters and Doctorate degree to secure their position, to comply to accreditation requirements vis-à-vis the University agenda and the agenda of the administrators, politicians and local authorities. The hegemonic power now becomes in flux and can be adopted by different groups or even perpetuated as a matter of tradition handed in from one succession of administration to the other. Figure 1

In summary, a concept map is presented in attempt to figure out a framework. It explains that CHED governs every SUC through its regulatory functions (presented by arrow #1). AACCUP has been legitimized by CHED through CMO No.1 s. 2005 as CHED-authorized accrediting agency, and indirectly have relationship with them (presented in broken line #2). SUCs with programs accredited by AACCUP directly have been the subject of hegemonic power of AACCUP (presented by an arrow #3). The same power accrued to the status of accreditation received by SUC will be used in support for its claims (presented by an arrow #4). Further, as SUC dominates the College (presented in arrow #5), in returned, the College can claim what is due for it (presented by an arrow #6). In another hand, within the SUC, a college with most numbers of accredited programs dominates its Department (presented by arrow #7) and the same dominates the division (presented by arrow #8). SUC directly dominates the Colleges with least

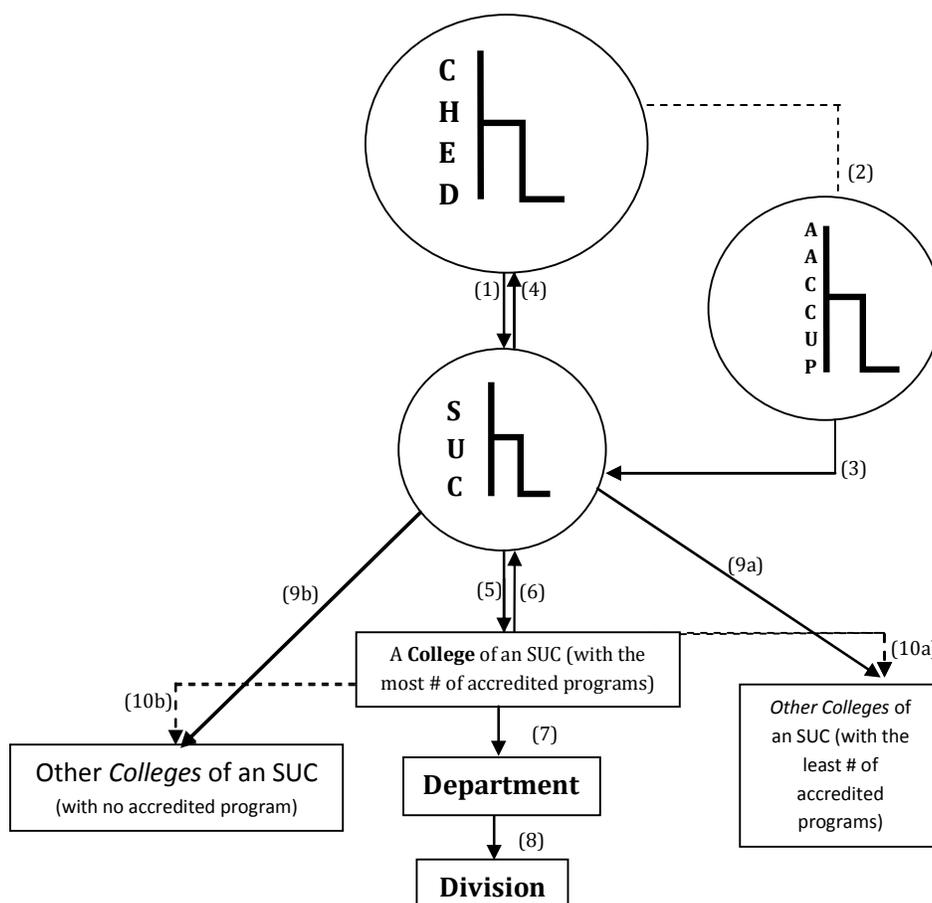


Figure 1. Hegemonic concept map

number of accredited programs to strive and be more like the College with most number of accredited programs (presented in arrow #9a), the same is true with the Colleges with no accredited programs (presented in arrow #9b). Further, that same College dominates other colleges with least number of accredited curricular programs (presented by broken line with arrowhead #10a), more so with those colleges with no accredited program at all (presented in broken line with arrowhead #10b).

The circle suggests the idea of an entity, organization or agency, while the chair inside the circle suggests the idea of authority of the one seated as chairman, president or director.

Dichotomy of ownership

Who has the legitimacy of ownership on accreditation systems? The government or non-governmental agencies? What implications can be drawn if accreditation rests on the government, or left at the hand of non-governmental agencies?

Ownership of accreditation systems is a highly debated

issue and generally related to considerations linked to the fundamental purpose of accreditation. If the government has ownership of accreditation, it may be conceived as control-oriented and geared towards accountability. If the ownership is the affair of the higher education sector, often through their collective bodies, then it is understood that the system has a higher chance of becoming more improvement-oriented (Martin, 2008).

Be that as it may, “if the government has the ownership of accreditation, and may conceived it as control-oriented and geared to accountability” (Martin, 2008), is it not just a rightful take for the government - who poured the most of its bulk in the annual budget to education? Is it not an investment worth most of the attention? “If the ownership is the affair of the higher educational sector, often through their collective bodies, then it is understood that the system has a higher chance of becoming more improvement-oriented” (Martin, 2008), does it mean, that if it rests on the hand of the government, it has no or little chance of becoming more improvement-oriented? Seemingly, it gives an impression that if it is of the government, the influence and impact of bureaucracy will be inevitable which in turn and over time have the “pejorative connotation generally associated with

Table 3. Matrix showing an overview of accreditation system in some countries

Characteristics	Colombia	Hungary	India	Philippines	USA
When it started?	1992	1992	Between 1986 & 1992	Between 1950's & 1970's	Late of 19 th century
Causality and/or Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thru the mandate put forth by the higher education law The creation of the accreditation system was supported by a World Bank Project for higher education that provided the financial support for its creation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Came mainly in response to the political changes in 1991 which eventually led to the conception of an Accreditation Committee in early 1992 – a supported project of World Bank 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basically the expansion of the system and the growing diversification of institutions within the context of diminishing public resources for higher education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A group of educators from private higher education institutions decided to establish a common standards for Catholic institutions 4 accreditation agencies were created successively for each segment of the higher education system, each of which developed its own accreditation standards & structures. In 1976 an umbrella organization called the Federation of Accrediting Agencies of the Phils. (FAAP) was created. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occurred during the period of growing student enrolment; Due to absence of a strong coordinating state; Due to increasing call for collaboration among institutions to ensue the comparability of standards, in particular for the transition from secondary to higher education; & Due to concerned with outcomes (programme accreditation), i.e. how well the colleges and universities prepared their graduates
Nature of Focus	Program accreditation	Joint program and institutional accreditation	Institutional Accreditation	Generally, Program accreditation	Institutional Accreditation, then later programme accreditation
Ownership	Public or <i>semi-autonomous agencies</i>	Public or <i>semi-autonomous agencies</i>	Public or <i>semi-autonomous agencies</i>	Private	Private

inefficiency, incompetence, corrupt behavior or other form of negative practices” (Reyes, 1993). However, I for one would say, that is not a generally accepted notion, with due regard to the University of the Philippines who did not subject itself to accreditation yet through times have transcended the national goals of education and was able to sustain the same here and abroad. In fact, the University of the Philippines did not compete with the universities in the country, but with universities outside the country, it will never be compared to the universities of the country but with universities outside the country, for it is a national university of the Philippines. Now, what is

the difference between a national university and the state universities and colleges (SUC's) in terms of ownership? Are they not owned by the state and created by law? Are they not run with their respective charter and mandate? For one common ground, both the national university and the SUC's are owned by the government.

At one hand, accreditation agencies have extensive administrative responsibility and attached it to the expectation of utmost credibility of the accreditation system. It is one of the points of argument on why it has to be left at the hands of non-governmental agencies, as when it has to be of the government. Thus, the free

exercise of objectivity and credibility and independence of accreditation system in this context are the considered link to the fundamental purpose of accreditation per se. The results of accreditation process are real and are objectively drawn to bring about good changes in the institution being accredited. In a way, it should not be tainted with politics in the government.

This dichotomy of ownership of accreditation of SUC's in the Philippines reveals the contentions of, and on grounds through which considerations of the existing practices might be contested, unsettled for further value-free deliberations.

An overview of accreditation systems: A case of Colombia, Hungary India, Philippines, and USA

The findings derived from an International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) on Policy Rationales and Organizational and Methodological Options in Accreditation authored by Michaela Martin published IIEP and UNESCO 2008. The case studies were chosen from contexts or varied development and from within diverse continents and types of higher education systems:

- ❖ Colombia, a highly diversified system of higher education in Latin America;
- ❖ Hungary, a country in economic transition in Central Europe;
- ❖ India, a low-income South Asian country with a huge higher education system;
- ❖ Philippines, an East Asian medium-income country; and
- ❖ USA, a western industrialized country that was the first to develop accreditation, providing many other countries with a model for the development of their own accreditation.

CONCLUSION

Accreditation is a tool for governance, more or less, from which mechanism is akin to the notion that predominantly manifests "reinventing the government which emphasized on the domains like competition, privatization, decentralization, innovation and empowerment. Primarily, the idea of competition is good and the logic behind it is a compelling force to address the pressing need for competitiveness in this 21st century. Moreover, the idea of privatization and decentralization is no longer a fad but a fact to embrace due to its surmountable advantages.

Agreeably, accreditation has all the good intentions for whatever purpose it may serve best to the one being subjected to, but what is paradoxical is that, the mechanisms of the check-and-balance of quality and quality assurance of education should have been inherent and rests solely with SUCs being state-owned

entities and not from private legitimized accrediting organizations. As such, if a SUC will not submit its programs for accreditation by all means, it can transcend through excellence because it is governed by its own mandate (their respective charters creating them) along with the authority and accountability and compliance to four-fold functions: instruction, research, extension and production. By its inherent power (and authority) and knowledge as State University, as State College, it can claim whatever is due for itself, the name, the status symbol, the prestige and not because it had been borrowed and granted from the outside, after all it is a state-owned entity.

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