Quality Assurance Practices In University: An Investigation Into The Effect On Students' Satisfaction And Retention

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Abstract

This quantitative study has been conducted to investigate the effect of the Quality Assurance Practices in university on the students' satisfaction and retention. For this purpose, a survey has been conducted on a sample taken from a Public University based at Lahore. The sample included the male and female students enrolled in the B.Ed Honors (Hons) along with their the faculty members concerning the Education department have been selected with the help of the Cluster sampling. There were 80 students and 30 faculty members who took part in this study. The data have been collected from the faculty members with the help of Quality Assurance Assessment Practices Scale. On the other hand, the data have been collected from the students with the help of Student Satisfaction Scale. The researcher has adopted these scale from (Andleeb & Jusoh, 2020). The Academic Retention Scale was also used to collect data from students regarding their retention. Based on the results taken from the Pearson's r and the Linear regression, it is concluded that the Quality Assurance has a moderately positive effect on the SS and SR.

Keywords: Quality Assurance; Satisfaction, Retention, University Students

Introduction

The quality assurance means the quality of the services which are provided to the clients. If we talk about the quality assurance in universities, that means the quality of the services is concerned which is provided to the students (DOAN, 2021). In this modern age the students have been considered as the clients of the universities as all of the services in form of admissions and instructions followed by the certifications are for the fulfillment of the students. It is stated the act the quality assurance is further divided into external as well as internal quality assurance (Hasan & Hosen, 2020). The process of admission announcement to the commencement of classes and the teachers instructions along with the physical facilities provided to the students by

the university all are concerned with the quality assurance process. This is not it, rather that transparency and efficiency of the examination department regarding the condition of the exams and certifications, degrees awarding are also concerned with the quality assurance process (Parahoo, Harvey, & Tamim, 2013). The physical infrastructure including the classrooms, computer labs, science labs and library for students and offices for the administrative staff are also greatly concerned by the quality assurance process (Rouf, Rahman, & Uddin, 2016).

As far as the quality assurance is concerned, it has remained in the higher educational institutions in the past two decades whereas it has been in the practice of the industries more than two decades ago. The quality assurance has been incorporated in the educational system for the improvement and betterment of the educational process and the institutes (Rojas-Méndez, 2009). The higher education Commission of Pakistan intends the Pakistani universities to work up to the international standard. Therefore the quality assurance has been specially focused and implemented in the universities (Martha-Martha & Priyono, 2018).

All of the IQA used by HEIs for EQA and IQA includes admissions standards, instructor assessment, program analysis, rules, procedures, and examination fairness. The most governments place a high value on educational quality assurance. Quality Assurance has been widely used in higher education for the previous two decades (Mamun-ur-Rashid & Rhman, 2017). There are several methods in which universities may be positively supervised in order to ensure that their education, establishment, and the interests of external stakeholders are met in order to satisfy stakeholders, quality assurance aids higher education institutions in enhancing their core values. IQA needs to take the lead in the universities. External and internal approaches are used to monitor quality in higher education (Jiewanto, Laurens, & Nelloh, 2012). The exterior and internal components of QA are intertwined in Pakistan. The Higher Education Commission is battling to the improvement of the quality of higher education to reach international standards. In that regard, HEC has a robust and well-defined quality assurance system in place to ensure the most significant possible result and dependability in a country's higher education (Fares & Kachkar, 2013).

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in Pakistan assesses the effectiveness of universities utilizing IQA and EQA. The Quality Assurance Agency is comprised of Quality Enhancement Cells (QECs) and accreditation committees that work together to improve quality. The Quality Accreditation Committee (QAC) is responsible for implementing EQA. IQA is a self-assessment mechanism that institutions use to ensure that their activities align with their stated objectives. QEC's policies are implemented through IQA (Andleeb & Jusoh, 2020).

Quality improvement requires adherence to globally accepted best practices and the integrity of the internal system. Various steps were taken at the national level in this respect. These included developing an evaluation framework, enhancing the academic world and its many associates, developing professional competence, and improving criteria, structure, and policy oversight of quality along with its standards and principles (DOAN, 2021). Pakistan has achieved a watershed moment in its development, integrating quality into higher education. As a developing nation, Pakistan's universities have difficulties implementing internal quality

assurance policies (IQAPs), particularly in guaranteeing and sustaining stakeholder expectations and satisfaction via rigorous EQA and IQA standards (Carvalho & Chima, 2016).

The Quality Assurance is focused to this extent by the HEC and the universities as well as the Students' Satisfaction (SS) of the services provided by the universities are linked with this. The Students' Retention (SR) is assumed to be linked with the students' satisfaction. Being the clients of the higher education, the students' satisfaction and the retention can be taken as the succees of the quality assurance process. However, there was a gap regarding the understudy. Therefore, this study has been carried out.

Literature Review
The Literature review has been stated as under:

Self-Assessment
It has been characterized as a technique that helps an organization determine where they are in their business operations and plan out the following stages in their business activities. The practice of self-assessment is used by organizations to learn about and improve their strengths and deficiencies. The self-assessment tries to discover and act on areas that need development while also recognizing and preserving established behaviors. Self-assessment is a management method based on a high-quality corporate vision (Asaduzzaman & Rahman, 2013). Performing and managing self-assessment methods pertaining to the achievement of quality is strategically necessary for establishing a better position in the marketplace. Organizations throughout the world use self-assessment to evaluate their quality practices and business achievement to the quality incentive model, which is used to motivate improvement and development. Self-assessment is recognized as a standard practice by institutions of higher learning in order to evaluate the students ' academic achievement in the subjects in which they are enrolled (Annamdevula & Bellamkonda, 2016). Self-assessment may be performed on an individual program, a department, or an entire company. The phrase "self-assessment of the program" refers to the structures or procedures designed to evaluate the program's progress in achieving the successes in contrast to a benchmark or a specific model with the goal of continuous improvement. The self-assessment allows assessors to demonstrate their success, regardless of whether they are happy (Carvalho & Chima, 2016).
Student self-assessment has been shown to promote student learning. They also determined that self-assessment has been conducted to be effective in increasing student self-awareness and growth processes. The defendants believe that self-assessment helps students identify their strengths and weaknesses while responding to questions, as well as the areas in the issue. Assessment of students' progress is on the rise, thanks in part to the positive effects of self-reflection on learning (Fares & Kachkar, 2013).
A study has been conducted to study the problems that students face during self-assessment procedures. The study used surveys, document and record analysis, interviews, resolution, and documentation to achieve its purpose. The investigation outcomes indicated that the same

problems plagued self-assessment methods at Alicante University and the Pikolinos. Lack of time and a lack of employee commitment to adopting self-assessment were two issues that came up in the discussion (Hasan & Hosen, 2020).

It has been investigated the perspectives of students and faculty members on a variety of evaluation topics. While instructors recognized assessment techniques as a tool for enhancing student learning and identifying problematic teaching procedures, students perceived assessment techniques as an unproductive, biassed learning and teaching activity, as indicated in the article. The six assessment points have been outlined in the paper by the Higher Education Academy are the following: learning promotion, fit for purpose, observation of areas that need to be corrected, development of society standards, integration of evaluation knowledge into the curriculum, and confirmation of the trustworthiness of expert judgment (Rouf, Rahman, & Uddin, 2016).

Self-Assessment Report Components

The Higher Education Commission formed Quality Evaluation Committees (QECs) in partnership with the Quality Assurance Agency to perform program assessments using the Self-Assessment Model. A program evaluation is a consistent and organized procedure for monitoring the quality of the performance of a program in any educational organization or degree-granting institution. This process evaluates teaching methods and learning tactics, and supporting resources, including computers, libraries, science labs, and other structural and control system facilities. Program assessment has evolved into a vital responsibility for quality assurance departments in higher education institutions. Qualified evaluation centers (QECs) commenced program evaluation even with a self-assessment required by the QAA-HEC (Andleeb & Jusoh, 2020).

This report will find eight principles and 31 sub-criteria that you may use to evaluate yourself (SAR). The Higher Education Commission has ordered that QECs submit SARs for each degree and diploma program. SARs are assessed by an assessment team (AT), which is made of topic specialists who confirm the report's conclusions and submit the AT's findings and a description of the implementation plan to the appropriate authorities. Five components are included in the implementation summary; these sections address the following topics: found problems, proposed adjustments, implementing date, accountable person, and necessary resources (Annamdevula & Bellamkonda, 2016).

The paper is organized around eight guiding principles:
1. Mission, Objectives, and Outcomes of the Program
2. Development and organization of curricula.
3. Laboratories and Information Technology Facilities.
4. Student assistance and counseling
5. Control of the Process
6. Academics
7. Institutional Infrastructure

8. Institutional Assistance

The components of self-assessment included in this study are as follows.

Mission, Objectives & Outcomes Of The Program

The mission statements are required in strategic planning but that they must be adapted to the institution in order for them to be improved and implemented (Martha-Martha & Priyono, 2018). Additionally, it helps to bring internal stakeholders (students and instructors) together and fosters the development of a critical characteristic for external stakeholders. Educators need to be aware of the requirements and expectations of parents and students and potential organizations and society to produce effective learning outcomes through excellent teaching. In order to meet the standards of regional and worldwide certification bodies, there must be a tangible link between the purpose, program, and module objectives (Rojas-Méndez, 2009).

Development And Organization Of Curricula

Students' understanding of a subject is gauged through assessments, which are used to establish whether or not academic learning goals have been reached. Teachers can assess if students have the requisite talents and values, the curriculum delivers key information and skills which students can integrate the course into an academic experience that prepares them for their future jobs. Because it serves as the basic framework for supporting and comprehending student learning, teaching and learning evaluation is essential at higher education institutions (HEIs).

Curriculum development is not complete without the inclusion of assessment. Assessing student learning, educational programs, and policies is also done in order to make decisions about them (Mamun-ur-Rashid & Rhman, 2017).

Laboratories And Information Technology Facilities

It's said that facilities are planned and designed to make things run smoothly in a school or other place of work. The equipment used in labs, computer-aided facilities, and demonstration units is an essential tool in higher education institutions. They need to be kept up so they can be used when required. The state of these infrastructures has an immediate effect on how well teachers can teach, how well they can teach, and how well educational sessions work (Hasan & Hosen, 2020).

Student Assistance And Counselling

Education counselors have long been part of instructors because of the medieval European group system's roots in higher education. A considerable rise in higher education during the 20th century led to a transfer of responsibility from instructors to administrators. The academic student assistance is based on educational considerations, teaching, and study-related issues supplied to students by highly educated individuals. Programs, departments, and faculties offer these sorts of support services (Fares & Kachkar, 2013).

Control of Process

The control as a systematized model that handles the cycle of measuring diverse resources and demands. Management and control processes are key components of embedding a continuous improvement culture into the educational quality. The higher education institutions are service organizations that require multimodal institutional frameworks to operate and evaluate processes. Each stage must be completed and improved in order to alleviate pressure on the overall quality system and contribute to meeting stakeholder needs (DOAN, 2021).

Academics

The faculty effectiveness as researchers and instructors determines the level of student satisfaction that affects the participation of HEIs and student learning. Thus, faculty engagement has an impact on the quality of HEIs. The HEIs effective in teaching-learning, community involvement, and research requires many skilled and motivated professors. The work satisfaction is critical for faculty motivation since it revitalizes their enthusiasm (Annamdevula & Bellamkonda, 2016).

Institutional Infrastructure

Institutional management and facilities contribute significantly to an institution's aim by providing adequate infrastructure for personnel and students. Additionally, institutional amenities have a significant role in influencing students' selection of HEIs, since high-quality facilities affect academic performance (Andleeb & Jusoh, 2020).

Institutional Assistance

In order to promote long-term viability, institutions and their management must take respectful measures. As a result, institutional support and leadership are sometimes called "institutional collaboration," which is inaccurate. This means that the institution and its administrators can be defined as providing support to employees in terms of how they conduct themselves and how they view their work (Aminuzzaman, 2011).

Student Satisfaction

Clients of higher education institutions are commonly known as students at those institutions. Student happiness plays a crucial role in determining the educational system's credibility and originality. The high student satisfaction suggests that students' capacity, knowledge, and mental ability are enhanced. In this context, student satisfaction evaluates student services by comparing the student's perspective and expectations (Abdullah, 2006). The concept of students as a consumer is not new. Students were previously viewed as consumers of services; in private institutions, students are given the right to treat themselves as partners in the learning process and have the right to treat themselves as customers. It has been suggested that learners' happiness is problematic because of the variety of factors that measure it. A wide range of factors influences student happiness in higher educationincluding campus climate, students' demands,

and course arrangement substantially influenced student happiness (Osman, Sarkar, & Islam, 2017).

Satisfaction of Students In HEIs

Improve student happiness is crucial to the success of universities and colleagues. Students are satisfied as a result of the extra prospectus, quality coursework assignments, and other supplementary components of the HEI. The lecturer or professor must be devoted to the pupils, showing empathy and understanding as well as providing assistance when required (Mamun-ur-Rashid & Rhman, 2017). Students may be satisfied with the quality of education they get if quality systems are designed and implemented in an adaptable manner. The importance of student happiness in higher education is a critical aspect. For students, the school's reputation, its reputation for education quality, and its teachers' knowledge and passion for their subject matter are all strong predictors of how happy they will be at the school (Carvalho & Chima, 2016).

Methodology

This quantitative study has been conducted to investigate the effect of the Quality Assurance Practices in university on the students' satisfaction and retention. For this purpose, a survey has been conducted on a sample taken from a Public University based at Lahore. The sample included the male and female students enrolled in the B.Ed Honors (Hons) along with their the faculty members concerning the Education department.. There were 8 sections (8 sections × 40 students= 320 total students) of the abovementioned program. Therefore, the Cluster sampling technique has been used by the researcher to select the sample. In this way, 25% individuals (2 sections × 40 students = 80 total students) out of the population. There were 30 faculty members including the top managers and the teaching faculty members. The data have been collected from the faculty members with the help of Quality Assurance Assessment Practices Scale comprising the 36 items bearing 0.71 Cronbach's alpha. On the other hand, the data have been collected from the students with the help of Student Satisfaction Scale consisting of 33 items and bearing 0.68 Cronbach's alpha. The researcher has adopted these scale from (Andleeb & Jusoh, 2020). The Academic Retention Scale comprising the 23 items was used to collect data from students regarding their retention. This scale has been adopted from (Carvalho & Chima, 2016) bearing 0.78 Cronbach's alpha.

Data Analysis & Results

The data has been analysed while applying the Descriptive Statistics and Inferential Statistics (Regression nalaysis) to the data. The detail is as under:

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of Quality Assurance

	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Quality Assurance	135.36	14.70	-.62	-.51
SS	132.76	12.00	-.17	-.39

SR	91.50	7.09	.75	.93

Note. N = 110

The Table 1 depicts the Mean Score; SD; Skewness and the Kurtosis of the concerning variables. The data from the Table 1 is found to be normally distributed as the Skewness as well as the Kurtosis values are within ±2.

Table 2 Correlation of Quality Assurance with SS

	Quality Assurance	SS
Quality Assurance	1	.542
SS		1

Note: N=110

On the basis of the results from the Pearson's r, a positive and moderate correlation is found between the Quality Assurance and the SS as r = 542 and $p<0.05$(p=.000).

Table 3 Regression Analysis Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	df	F	Sig
.542	.293	.268	1	11.62	.002

Based on the results of the Linear regression, it has been revealed that 54% variance has been found between the Quality Assurance and the SS. Further more, the results depicted by the Table 3 confirms the fitness of the model as p=.002 ($p<0.05$) alongwith the F value which is 11.62.

Table 4 Coefficient Regression Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	72.90	17.66		4.12	.000
Quality Assurance	.442	.13	.542	3.40	.002

Based on the results showed by the Table 4, a moderately positive effect of Quality Assurance has been found on the SS as Beta value $β^=.542$ and p=.002 ($p<0.05$). Therefore the "Ho: There is no significant effect of Quality Assurance on SS." has been confirmed.

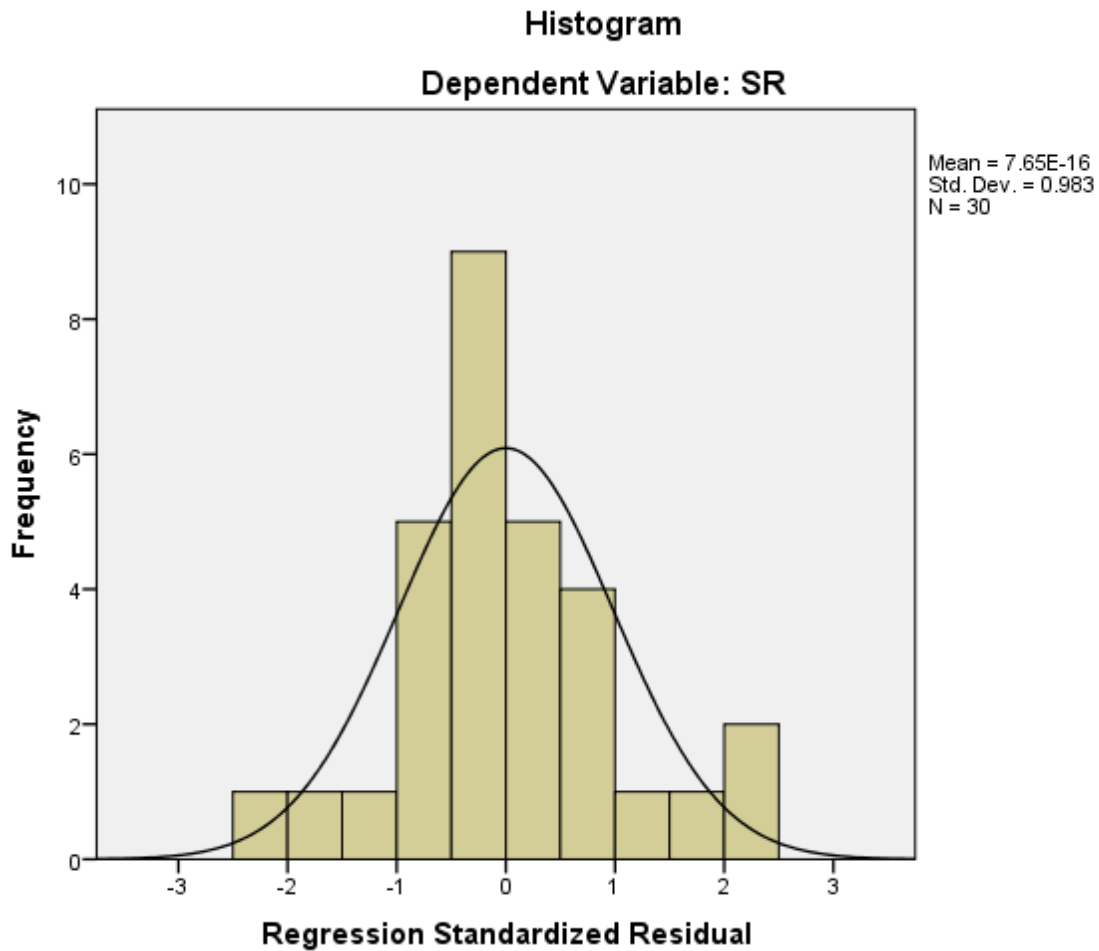The Histogram which is stated as under shows the normal distribution of the data.

Histogram
Dependent Variable: SR

Mean = 7.65E-16
Std. Dev. = 0.983
N = 30

Figure 1. Histogram of SS

Table 5 Correlation of Quality Assurance with SR

	Quality Assurance	SS
Quality Assurance	1	.477
SR		1

Note: N=110

Based on the results from the Pearson's r, a positive and moderate correlation is found between the Quality Assurance and the SR as r = 477 and $p<0.05$ (p=.000).

Table 6 Regression Analysis Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	df	F	Sig

.447	.228	.200	1	8.26	.008

Based on the results of the Linear regression, it has been revealed that 47% variance has been found between the Quality Assurance and the SR. Further more, the results depicted by the Table 6 confirms the fitness of the model as p=.008 (p<0.05) alongwith the F value which is 11.62.

Table 7 Coefficient Regression Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	60.32	10.91		5.52	.000
Quality Assurance	.230	.80	.47	2.87	.008

Based on the results showed by the Table 7, a moderately positive effect of Quality Assurance has been found on the SR as Beta value $\beta^\wedge$=.47 and p=.008 (p<0.05). Therefore the "Ho: There is no significant effect of Quality Assurance on SR." has been confirmed.

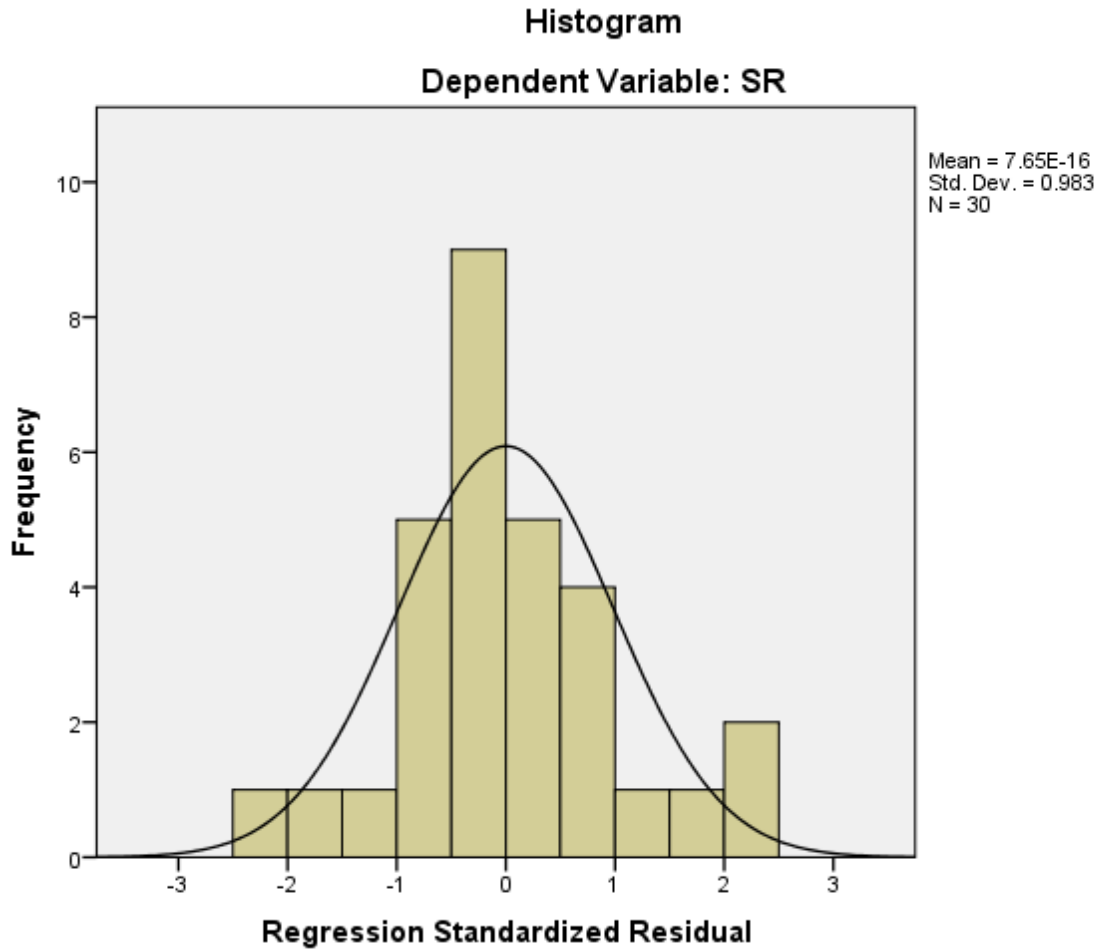The Histogram which is stated as under shows the normal distribution of the data.

Figure 2. Histogram of SR

Conclusion and Discussion

Based on the results taken from the Pearson's r and the Linear regression, it is concluded that the Quality Assurance has a moderately positive effect on the SS and SR. The similar research was conducted by (Andleeb & Jusoh, 2020) whose findings have been supported by this study. Similarly, this study also supported the results taken from the study conducted by (Hasan & Hosen, 2020). On the same pattern, this study has also supported the prior studies conducted by Annamdevula & Bellamkonda, 2016; DOAN, 2021; Fares & Kachkar, 2013).

Recommendations

It has been recommended on the basis of the results that the Quality Assurance should be greatly and intentionally focused by the universities as well as the HEC so that the students could be satisfied and they may be retained by the concerning university.

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