

**AN ANALYSIS OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THAI PUBLIC
UNIVERSITIES: A CASE STUDY OF MASTER OF
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PROGRAMS**

Warut Ingkhathawornwong

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
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ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation	An Analysis of Quality Assurance in Thai Public Universities: A Case Study of Master of Public Administration Programs
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This study aims 1) to study the implementation of internal quality assurance systems in the context of Master of Public Administration programs in Thailand, 2) to investigate the effects of the internal quality assurance system to the quality of Master of Public Administration programs in Thailand, and 3) to propose guidelines to develop an internal quality assurance system in the Master of Public Administration programs in Thailand. This study is qualitative and uses a thematic analysis of information obtained through document data collection and in-depth interviews of the management, instructors and quality assurance implementers in case studies, which consist of public administration programs in 6 public postgraduate schools: Chulalongkorn University, National Institute of Development Administration, Chiang Mai University, Prince of Songkla University, University of Phayao, and Ubon Ratchathani University.

The study reveals that the implementation of quality assurance in public administration programs in Thailand can be divided into 3 periods: the first was the pre-quality assurance period (1994-2007), which focused on the development of voluntary quality assurance within the Office of Higher Education Committee (OHEC) policy framework, the second was the OHEC manual-based quality assurance period (2007-2014), which focused on standardization as required by OHEC, and the third period is the transitional quality assurance period (2014-present), that emphasizes international-level quality creation suitable for the organization, and focuses on standardization and exploration for the most suitable quality assurance for each context.

The study on the effects of the internal quality assurance system to the quality of Master of Public Administration programs in Thailand reveals that programs in the case studies similarly define education quality in 4 aspects: graduate quality, academic work quality, instructor quality and management quality. In the case studies affiliated to research universities, there is a definition of international accreditation which constitutes an additional quality aspect. Overall, the case studies indicate relatively low effects between their own quality and internal quality assurance, the effect emphasizes awareness building in involved actors and the quality creation process in program and faculty management, rather than program output quality, such as graduate quality and academic work quality.

The study on development guidelines for the implementation of quality assurance in public administration programs in Thailand reveals that, at the policy level, development of quality assurance should be continuous and clear, with a balance between quality control and institute-level quality assurance autonomy, with consideration of the relatively high disparity between public administration programs. For the development of quality assurance criteria, the criteria should be reviewed and defined so as to be more consistent in a public administration program learning management context. At the faculty- and program-level management, it is desirable to design a director preparatory system to instill quality assurance understanding in order to integrate quality assurance into work aspects of the faculty or program. Also, development of information technology based on reality to allow realistic quality management and reduce paperwork and data preparation for quality assurance, an evaluation system that satisfies minimum quality assurance standards of the faculty, and the creation of personnel proficiency for long-term program sustainability, are also recommended.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the Problem and Background of the Study

Higher education plays a vital role in knowledge building and innovation, which helps improve graduates and develops the country in today's global world. The quality of higher education is one among many issues that have caught the public's attention. It is doubtful whether higher education in today's world will serve the needs of the changing economy, politics, and the society. In the 21st century, the century of higher education reform, programs are designated to meet social needs and to be able to compete in a changing world.

According to the study of international organizations' policies regarding higher education, the quality of higher education has caught many institutes' attention. Some of these are the European University Association (EUA) and the ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN). These institutes' attention is aimed at standardizing the criteria of quality and to encourage collaboration among universities to build quality assessment systems, quality monitoring, and quality development. This has been done in the hope that universities in the network will learn from one another and that reformation in higher education will be fostered. Some processes are the improvement of higher education quality, systemic procedures in management along with evident methods, plausible and acceptable goals and objectives, strategies for development, etc. Hence, quality assurance is a vital part of administrating, improving, and reforming the management of higher education (Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization, 2008).

In addition, in the context of the recent competition among universities over the last decades, university rankings have compared the quality of universities throughout the world, both at institution and faculty levels, including evaluation by the following organizations: Times Higher Education, Quacquarelli Symonds (QS),

The Academic Ranking of World University Rankings (ARWU) by Shanghai Ranking Consultancy, Global University Ranking (Russia), Centre for World University Rankings (Saudi Arabia), U-Multirank (European Union), Eduniversal (France), High Impact Universities (Australia), and U.S. News & World Report Best Global University Ranking (United States). This has led to ferocious competition to be in the spotlight of universities around the world, and many universities have paid serious attention to adopting the university ranking criteria in order to develop their quality.

In Thailand, higher education expanded tremendously in the late 90's to the early 2000's. Thai higher education grew from 2% in 1965 to 32% in 2000 (UNESCO, 2006), and the number of higher education student enrollments increased from 1.82 million in 2000 to 2.5 million in 2010. Additionally, graduate level student enrollments increased tremendously-from 5.24 million in 2000 to 9.0 million in 2010 (Office of Higher Education Commission, 2013b). This phenomenon has made policymakers and academics concerned about the vast differences in the quality among universities, which has led to many policy alternatives for dealing with the issue of the quality of Thai higher education.

In order to contextualize the quality of higher education in Thailand, it is important to mention the conference of the Council of University Presidents of Thailand (CUPT) held in 1994. This was the first time that higher education quality was discussed in Thailand, and it led to the development of a national strategy to deal with the quality of higher education. The CUPT proposal to develop a quality assurance system was considered a part of the 15-Year Plan for Higher Education (2008-2022). The objective of the plan was "to improve the quality of the higher education and personnel in the long term along with knowledge creation and innovation to push the country to be competitive on the global stage." The plan was hoped to be sustainable in terms of good governance, finance, quality supervision, and university networks, based on academic freedom, diversity, and unity of the system. Moreover, various governments' policies paid attention to quality assessment, and there was law enforcement to supervise the procedures of quality assurance in higher education. The National Educational Act 1999 (amended in 2010) indicated that universities adopt Quality Assurance in Education to apply to their organizations, and

this must be done continually, covering the whole system, including input, process, and output (Office of Higher Education Commission, 2010). The Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (public organization) is another organization supervising external quality assurance and the framework imposed by the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (public organization) must be adopted. One aspect of quality assurance is effective management in terms of strategic planning. This creates quality for process and output in accordance with strategic plans and the missions of universities.

1.1.1 Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Public Administration Education

Public administration is a practical science aims to translate the state's philosophy into instruments to deliver public services effectively. Nowadays, the focus of the study of public administration has been expanded from government agencies to public affairs. Hence, public administration sometimes deals with new sectors such as non-governmental organizations, non-profit organizations, and civil society. Since 1987, the teaching of public administration in universities has expanded in both undergraduate and graduate programs. These programs allow executives of the private and public sectors to experience academic knowledge of the field, which helps to broaden their horizons in terms of how they view problems and make decisions. Public administration is widely popular that a large number of executives are interested. The programs of public administration are broadly opened not only in the universities in Bangkok but also in those in other provinces throughout the country (Uthai Laohavichian, 2008). At present, there are seventy-four master of public administration programs all over Thailand, some in public and autonomous universities, others in private universities.

Due to the phenomenal expansion of MPA programs throughout the country, critics doubt whether the programs are of quality. People have attempted to define the meaning of the term "quality" and even those MPA programs themselves have made such an attempt. The government of Thailand is also trying to scrutinize the way in which these programs are operated in order to maintain their quality, using the Thai Qualifications Framework (TQF) for Higher Education in terms of curriculum, the

teaching process, etc. In addition, some MPA programs choose to use international criteria to insure the quality of their own education, e.g. EdPEX, CUPT-QA, AUN-QA, and the accreditation of international and reliable institutes or the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA). The adoption of these standardized criteria creates complexity and dynamics for the MPA programs. This is challenging for the executives of these programs. All of the information mentioned above encouraged the author to study how these programs define the term “quality,” how they use quality assessment systems, and how all of these affect the actual quality. This will lead to an in-depth understanding of quality assurance in the MPA programs in Thailand.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

This study has the following objectives:

- 1) To study the implementation of the internal quality assurance system in the context of master of public administration programs in Thailand
- 2) To investigate the effects of the internal quality assurance system to the quality of master of public administration programs in Thailand
- 3) To propose guidelines to develop an internal quality assurance system in the master of public administration programs in Thailand

1.3 Research Questions

This study has sought to understand the implementation of internal quality assurance in Thai higher education, emphasizing master of public administration programs. The study aimed to answer the following questions:

- 1) How did the quality assurance system become formulated and implemented in the context of the evolution of Master of Public Administration Programs in Thailand?
- 2) What is the definition of ‘quality’ in the context of Master of Public Administration Programs in Thailand?

3) How does the internal quality assurance system affect the quality of Master of Public Administration Programs in Thailand?

4) What are the influential factors affecting the implementation of internal quality assurance systems in the context of Master of Public Administration Programs in Thailand?

5) What should be done to increase quality assurance implementation effectiveness in the context of Master of Public Administration Programs?

1.4 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The following is what the author expected from conducting this research.

1) In terms of content, this research aims to study the development of quality assurance in higher education in regarding policy levels, the policy instruments utilized in the quality assessment process, supporting factors and obstacles to quality assessment in practice at the institutional and program level, and the results of quality assurance. The research focuses on internal quality assessment in accordance with the quality assessment system of the Office of higher education commission in the context of MPA programs.

2) Regarding the area of study, the focus of this research is on the case study of MPA programs in older Thai universities under the Ministry of University Affairs, both public universities and autonomous universities.

3) In terms of time, the duration of the study is from 2008, when internal quality assurance was officially implemented, to 2015.

1.5 Expected Benefits of the Study

The following are the benefits expected to be gained from this research.

1) In the academic aspect, this research is expected to help improve the framework of quality assurance in MPA programs in Thailand, and this will help broaden the knowledge of both public administration education and quality assessment.

2) In terms of policies, it is hoped that the in-depth information from this research will help improve the governmental administration in Thailand, and improve the way in which quality assessment systems work, leading to true quality improvement of MPA programs.

3) In terms of management, it is hoped that this research will be beneficial to instructors, executives, and even personnel in the field of public administration. The research will help them obtain and comprehend the “whole picture” of different quality assessment systems, all of which are suitable for different organizations depending on the contexts.

1.6 Definitions of Terms

Higher education institutions refer to universities that teach students and give them a degree after graduation. There are three major types of universities in Thailand: public universities, autonomous universities, and private universities.

Public universities or so-called “government universities” are universities that are given financial support from the government’s annual budget and for this reason the university administration, such as the administrative structure, the budgeting system, and personnel administration, is regulated by the government. In general, they include limited-admission universities, open universities, Rajabhat universities, and Rajamangala universities. However, in this study, a public university refers only to a limited-admission university.

Autonomous universities or “national universities” are universities that have their own administrative structure and budgeting system for self-governance and full autonomy, which allow them to make their own decisions regarding administrative and management matters. They still get block grants from the government annually for necessary expenditures and to maintain quality. Most autonomous universities were formerly public universities.

A faculty refers to a department in a university that specializes in a particular field or subject. A department is a smaller unit in a faculty. Normally, a department and its faculty work together.

Quality assurance in higher education is the system that controls and scrutinizes components and criteria in accordance with the indicators imposed in the quality assessment system. This research primarily aims at the quality assessment system imposed by the Office of higher education commission.

Compulsory quality assurance refers to the quality assessment that is enforced by law. Universities and faculties have to carefully follow the manual of the Office of higher education commission and the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (public organization).

Voluntary quality assurance or alternative quality assurance is defined as any quality assessment system chosen by a university. This also means any accreditation of reliable international institutes. In other words, the assessment systems mentioned are not enforced by law, as for example with CUPT-QA and AUN-QA.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature related to quality of higher education is relatively extensive and unsystematic. Contributors to the relevant literature have come from a variety of fields and areas of study, including public administration, policy studies, education, business management, economics and industrial engineering. The endeavor to put the collection of information into a systematic order was apparently a huge task. However, a deliberate literature review was conducted in light of a deeper understanding of quality assurance in the extent of Master of Public Administration programs. In this chapter, the literature can be categorized as follows:

- 2.1 Quality
- 2.2 Quality Assurance
- 2.3 Implementation of Quality Assurance in Higher Education
- 2.4 Quality Assurance System in Higher Education
- 2.5 Thailand Qualification Framework (TQF)
- 2.6 Graduated Studies in Public Administration in Thailand
- 2.7 Tentative Conceptual Frameworks

2.1 Quality

In this section, the concept of quality has been elaborated on in a general sense and in the context of higher education.

2.1.1 Quality in General

The concept of “Quality” is complicated, flexible and not easy to define. Many scholars from various fields of study have attempted to define quality from their perspectives. From the linguistic perspective, “Quality”, as Cicero translated, was derived from “Qualitas” or “Qualis” in Latin, which means property or qualification

(Barfield, 1988, pp. 18-19). From the management perspective, the concept of quality emerged from the industrial and commercial sector. It has been defined in many terms, including excellence (Peters & Waterman, 1982), value (Feigenbaum, 1951), fitness of purpose (Juran, 1970), zero-defected (Crosby, 1979), responding or exceeding customer's expectation (Parasuraman, 1988). The most comprehensive perspective of "Quality" has been proposed by Garvin (1988, pp. 40-46), who identified quality into five principal approaches, as follows:

1) Transcendent quality cannot be defined precisely. It is absolute and universally perceptible, a mark of uncompromising standard and high accomplishment.

2) Product-based quality, which first appeared from the economic literature, quality can be measured precisely in terms of the quantity of attributes that product contained.

3) User-based quality was perceived by customer satisfaction. Thus, it is individualistic and subjective.

4) Manufacturing-based quality was defined in a manner which simplified engineering or product control to prevent a product or service that deviated from its specification.

5) Value-based quality was defined in terms of product's cost and price. So that, a quality product was one which provided performance or conformance at an adequate cost or price.

2.1.2 Quality in Higher Education

Higher education plays a significant role in advancing the development of the country, especially in the globalization era. The role of higher education is connected to the learning society, the labor market and support of national economics (Yorke, 1999). Managing quality in higher education is a challenging task for the following reasons:

First, quality is perceived differently from stakeholders. Either internal or external stakeholders in higher education have different or contradictory definitions of quality. Cheng and Tam (1997, p. 23) stated that "quality in education is a rather vague and debatable concept". Likewise, Pounder (1999, p. 156) debated that the term "quality" is ambiguous, so that different stakeholders perceives its meanings differently.

Second, higher education's results are complicated to measure. They could be both tangible and intangible. Tangible results, such as examination scores, employment, earnings, and student satisfaction could be measured immediately after the students has graduated. However, there is no evident higher education's final product as the transformative process continues to create impacts after the higher education's completion (Harvey & Green, 1993).

Third, higher education has a distinctive set of external drivers for change. They have specific concepts of what establishes quality such as the conflict between quality of teaching and accountability, and politics around quality (Mahoney & Garavan, 2012).

An extensive debate on the nature and concept of quality in the context of higher education has occurred over the years. Harvey and Green (1993) distinguished the comprehensive conceptions of quality in higher education as five following concepts: 1) Quality as "Exceptional" in the sense of beyond high standards; 2) Quality as "Perfection" in the sense of consistency or zero-defect as measured against process standards; 3) Quality as "Fitness for purpose", as stated by an institutions, faculties, and programs objective; 4) Quality as "Value for money", which is considered as a return on investment; and 5) Quality as "Transformation", which is a qualitative alteration from one state to another as applied to the learners' development by creating the original knowledge, and conducting the learning process.

From all of mentioned above concepts, the concepts of "Fitness for Purpose" and "Exceptional" were highly influencing the quality assurance systems' development in the worldwide higher education context. This is because "Fitness for Purpose" approaches obviously acknowledged the differences in higher education institutions' missions and goals. In addition, "Exceptional" approaches stressed on "what higher education institutions should have in common", particularly in terms of their nature and their level of student's expected learning outcomes to demonstrate in their higher education studies (James, McInnis, & Devlin, 2002).

2.1.3 Types of Quality in Higher Education

Quality of higher education can be categorized into five different types (Seymour, 1992) as follows:

1) Transcendent quality. Quality is perceived as “a result of the educator’s professional standing”. It is a result of the proficiency and lecturer’s reputation.

2) Manufacturing-based quality. Quality is defined as the product complying with specific standards and fit to be used in accordance with the way it was designed. From this view, it assumes that producers are capable of appropriate self-regulations. This definition of quality is beneficial in higher education as it equalizes the resource view of quality. On the other hand, it allows instructors to make the critical decisions about curriculum invalidates the external environment and overlooks the scholars’ desires and needs.

3) Product-based quality. Quality is illustrated as assessment. It focuses on student learning’s increase, produced by the faculty and program. According to Bennet (2001), product-based quality is not accurate since the data, which connected to the strategy-retention rates, and graduate admission test scores, do not take into account the group of items that they learned during their studies. Nevertheless, they are measurable and, can be adopted to improve learning and teaching.

4) Value-based quality. Quality is perceived as “acceptable performance at an acceptable price”. This perspective is effective in higher education as the price of attending university has soared, exceeding the consumer price index (CPI), inflation, and household incomes (Freed & Klugman, 1997). International systems of higher education often serve as a similarly powerful approval of value.

5) User-based quality. This is the user-defined type of quality. It emphasizes the customer’s needs, demands, and preferences. This approach is a difficult for higher education to harmonize since it has the highly irregular nature of consumer preferences.

2.1.4 Approaches to Study Quality in Higher Education

1) Stakeholders Approach, was developed from organization theory and system theory, it has been the mainstream paradigm in the study of quality in higher education from the beginning. It emphasizes efficiency and effectiveness. Quality assurance has been perceived as a tool to standardize this process in order to

produce the outputs that meet the stakeholders' expectations. Stakeholder perspectives (Srikanthan & Dalrymple, 2003, p. 127) can be addressed as follows:

(1) Provider, funding both bodies and communities. To provide an effective way to make sure that resources would be optimally utilized for an acceptable level of quality in the delivery. From this perspective, quality is perceived as "Value for Money" that funding providers expect a good return of investment.

(2) Users of Product, e.g. students. To offer relatively high standards to ensure their comparative advantage in future career. From this perspective, quality is interpreted as "Exceptional" which leads the student's choices.

(3) Users of Output, e.g. the employees. To deliver relatively high levels of the graduates' competencies to work with complex jobs in order to guarantee competitive advantage. From this perspective, quality is interpreted as "Fitness for Purpose" that employers are looking for competent graduates who match with their functions.

(4) Employees of the sector, both academics and practitioners. They focus on a different set of outcomes by demonstrating high levels of respect such as recognition and remuneration. From this perspective, quality is perceived as "Perfection" in terms of behavioral norms and core ethos.

2) Situated-perception Approach, developed from ethnography, organizational behavior theory, and policy implementation studies, it has been the competitive paradigm to study quality since 1990. It focuses on the front-line academic perceptions of quality in order to deconstruct the meaning of "quality" in the context of higher education from the dominant traditional "Formal" perspective, e.g. quality as perfection, quality as fitness for purpose, and quality as good return for investment, (Harvey & Green, 1993), and provide the situated 'Real-life' meaning of quality in higher education, e.g. quality as burden, quality as impression management, and quality as game playing (Newton, 2001, p. 7). It argues that faculty's staffs, especially front-line academics, "attach meaning to the various aspects of the quality system as they interact with it" (Newton, 2001, p. 19). They are not passive policy recipients, but they actively respond, adjust, or even resist policies imposed by the administrators. Thus, what academics think and do should be emphasized in order to find out the real meanings that the academics attach to the different aspects of policy, and how they "work around" policy (Trowler, 1998).

2.2 Quality Assurance

In this section, the concept of quality assurance will be reviewed in both a general and in the higher education context.

2.2.1 Development of the Quality Assurance Concept

Quality assurance is one step in quality management, which had originally emerged in the industrial and management sectors. Therefore, to understand the concept of quality assurance, the evolution of quality management must be reviewed. In the evolution of quality management, it can be separated into four fairly discrete stages: (Garvin, 1988; Dale & Plunkett, 1990).

1) Quality inspection is the first stage of quality management evolution. It is a simple system in which some features of a product or service were examined before it is compared with requirements to assess its conformity with a standard. In public service situations, the quality inspection system is applied at key points, called appraisal points, in the production and delivery processes. (Dale, 2003, p. 22)

2) Quality Control emphasizes achieving certain quality requirements. It was developed from “quality inspection” activities in aspects of systems and techniques’ sophistication. The key activity is “self-inspection” by approved operators, uses of information, the tools and techniques. Many of quality activities, for example, product and performance specifications, raw material and intermediate-stage product-testing and reporting activities, procedures control system, logging of elementary process performance data, and feedback of process information to appropriate personnel and suppliers, have been employed. (Dale, 2003, p. 23) Quality control aims to better process control and reduce non-conformance incidences.

3) Quality Assurance focuses on providing the confidence by fulfilling quality requirements. It is a prevention-based quality management which aims to enhance products or services’ quality and increase productivity by engaging on product and process design and integrating quality into the planning. Quality Assurance yields benefits by preventing the production of non-conforming products or non-conforming services delivery in the first place. This is a proactive approach for

quality management, emphasizing “from downstream to upstream processes and from product to process” (Dale, 2003, p. 25). This approach could be considered in terms of the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle.

In quality assurance, the process as defined by input of men, materials, machines, management and environment is recognized. Likewise, it conveys a richer sense of responsibility for quality and gets rid of the causes of non-value adding activities or wastes to those actually producing and delivering the product and/or service. To implement quality assurance, it requires to develop both management tools and techniques, and new management philosophy and approach, involving a change in management style. In addition, it requires the departments and functions working together in cross-functional teams to determine the root cause of problems and pursue their elimination (Dale, 2003, p. 25).

4) Total Quality Management (TQM) focuses on bringing quality management doctrines to apply to all aspects of the organization, including suppliers and customers (Dale, 2003, p. 27). TQM requires quality management to be applied at every level in the organization, emphasizing on business practices’ integration and a balance between managerial, technical and human resource issues. It is an organizational-wide approach to quality, based on continuous improvement upheld by organization’s members.

2.2.2 Quality Assurance in the Context of Higher Education

The concept of quality assurance was adopted in the context of higher education in the 1980’s in the United Kingdom before it was rapidly widespread all over the world. From a variety of both national and international contributors, “Quality Assurance” has been defined within the context of higher education as follows:

Stebbing (1989) proposed that academic quality assurance is the integration of conditioned components for teaching including quality of students, instructors, curriculum, materials for research and teaching, information technology, and academic services.

Ellis (1993) added that quality assurance is about ensuring that products or services are consistently met specified standards. The term was derived from the

manufacturing and service, and health care sector before it was adopted in educational sector rapidly and pervasively.

Woodhouse (1996) stated that quality assurance in education is systems, processes, procedures, and operations which lead to the curriculum's goals. It also includes maintaining, monitoring, and improving quality.

Vanchai Sirichana (1996) proposed that quality assurance in higher education is a process or mechanism, implemented to maintain the highest educational standards.

Uthomporn Jamornman (2000) argued that quality assurance in higher education consists of quality control, internal quality inspection, and external quality assessment. Then a judgment is made according to that standard and criterion.

According to the above mentioned definitions, Quality Assurance in higher education is a system and mechanism which aims at controlling, assessing, and measuring the operations of the universities, faculties, and programs according to the standard set by the quality agencies, ensuring that they will deliver quality graduates and academic works. The main purpose of quality assurance in higher education is continuous improvement by providing the universities, faculties, and programs feedback from quality assessments in order to improve their missions: teaching, research, academic services, and faculty or program management. In addition, it informs the public about the institution's performance in order to make a decision for choosing the program to study. The quality assurance system can be classified as internal quality assurance (IQA) and external quality assurance (EQA)

1) Internal quality assurance (IQA) is a self-reflection process consisting of quality monitoring, quality assessment and quality evaluation. It's conducted by the host institution, faculty, or program to provide feedback for continuous improvement in its operation and performance.

2) External quality assurance (EQA) is a system consisting of quality monitoring, quality assessment and quality evaluation, conducted by third party agencies responsible for quality assessment to inform the public about the performance of the host institution, faculty, or program. Agencies could be a public organization or professional association.

2.2.3 Quality Assurance Model in Higher Education

Quality assurance models were originally developed in industrial and commercial sectors before they spread to other sectors. In higher education, worldwide scholars propose the quality assurance model adapted from popular quality models such as Balanced Score Card, Total Quality Management, and Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award in order to improve the institutions' and programs' management. In this study, quality models can be summarized the following table:

Table 2.1 Quality Models in Higher Education

Model	Contributors (Year)	Country	Key Issues
Model for Quality Management in Higher Education	Srikanthan and Dalrymple (2004, 2002)	Australia	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The model is developed based on educational literature 2) It emphasizes program quality to develop a learning university strategy in which students are participants, focus on their learning. 3) There are two versions: the 2002 model emphasizes philosophies and student learning's approaches and methods of producing a dynamic collaboration around student learning 4) The 2004 model adds on collaborative teaching and research issues.

Table 2.1 (Continued)

Model	Contributors (Year)	Country	Key Issues
			5) The study recommends a change from the ritual of teaching to concentrate on outputs, including, academic productivity, student learning, and organization performance
Excellence Model	Da Rosa, Saraiva, and Diz (2001, 2003), Portugal	Portugal	<p>1) The model is developed based on empirical research to propose criteria supporting self-analysis to improve faculty's quality and leading strategic development.</p> <p>2) The criteria consists of the following nine components: external standard, leadership, organization strategy and culture, organization structure, partnership, stakeholders, managerial resources, process, and output</p> <p>3) The study found that quality management is positively associated with evaluation activities covering teaching and research.</p>
Academic Award Model	Badri and Abdulla (2004)	United Arab Emirates	1) The model focuses on teaching, research and services to develop a more explicit method to faculty rewards or awards.

Table 2.1 (Continued)

Model	Contributors (Year)	Country	Key Issues
			2) There are seven criteria applied to this model: diversification, course development, student evaluation, material production, teaching portfolio, course files, and contributions to conferences and workshops
Model to Assess Quality of Student Experience and Learning Outcomes	Tam (2006, 2002)	Hong Kong	<p>1) The model is applied with quality assessment in higher education context.</p> <p>2) The model emphasizes measurement in terms of student growth: stressed on student outcomes, including cognitive and non-cognitive aspects of learning, skills and satisfaction with the higher education institution environment</p> <p>3) The study explores the relationship between the university experience and student outcomes as a means to determine a university's success in achieving its educational goals and proposes an orientation approach.</p>

Table 2.1 (Continued)

Model	Contributors (Year)	Country	Key Issues
Multi-models of Quality in Education	Cheng and Tam (1997)	Hong Kong	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The model was developed by identification of 7 models of quality in education which emphasizes the complexity of pursuing educational quality. 2) The study emphasizes effectiveness and quality, which is adopted to make understanding of performance. Therefore, comprehensive approach and longer term goals consideration is needed. 3) The study found that cross cultural issues require further investigation for this model.
Performance Measures for Academic Departments	Al-Turki and Duffuaa (2003)	Saudi Arabia	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The model is based on a systems approach to identify performance measures in order to evaluate departments' productivity, efficiency, effectiveness, internal structure, growth and development. 2) The study also developed a "hierarchical performance measurement model" which is based on outcome measures for each category.

Table 2.1 (Continued)

Model	Contributors (Year)	Country	Key Issues
Internal Audit	Reid and Ashelby (2002)	United Kingdom	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The model identifies tangible benefits from internal audits, e.g. significant cultural changes which can re-enforce quality enhancement, create greater staff involvement, as well as benefits to the institutions. 2) This is applied to the study of program management, program development and evaluation, staff development, students' assessment, external examining processes, collaborative provision and added value.
Internal Audit	Becket and Brookes (2006)	United Kingdom	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The model was proposed to evaluate quality management approaches in departments. 2) The study is identified in 6 dimensions: internal and external perspective, quantitative and qualitative information, snapshot and longitudinal time span, quality dimension assessed, and system elements.
Quality Management Framework	Grant, Mergen, and Widrick (2002, 2004)	United States	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The model identifies 3 dimensions of quality in Higher Education: quality of design, conformance and performance.

Table 2.1 (Continued)

Model	Contributors (Year)	Country	Key Issues
			2) The study found that quality of performance was least likely to be considered.

Source: Adapted from Mishra, 2007; Brookes & Becket, 2008.

According to the table, most of the quality models were developed from the industrial or managerial literature based on the Total Quality Management concept. This yielded a key benefit, informed to institutions' or programs' requirement to adopt a strategic approach to quality management (Brookes & Becket, 2008). However, they were criticized in that they concentrated too much on managerial efficiency and economy, which were the supporting functions of the program, but overlooked the student learning experience as the effectiveness of the institutions' or programs' management.

On the other hand, there were some models developed solely on educational literature, e.g. Model for Quality Management in Higher Education (Srikanthan & Dalrymple, 2004), which emphasized the student learning experience at the center of quality management.

2.3 Quality Assurance in Higher Education's Implementation

In this section, the concept of implementation in general and in the context of quality assurance in higher education has been reviewed as follows:

2.3.1 The Concept of Implementation

The study of policy implementation was established in 1970s in the United States before it was disseminated worldwide. Scholars were attempting to define "policy implementation" as follows:

Pressman and Wildavsky (1984) the founders of this policy implementation study provided the meaning of “implementation” as written in Webster and Roger dictionary in terms, as the operation perfectly attaining or accomplishing its missions or goals. It is what the government was attempting to do. In fact, this meaning is attached to the nature of the basic definition of “policy” as whatever government chooses to do or not to do (Dye, 1984). Therefore, the first duty of the government organization is to turn policy into practice and to achieve the target goals in all of their aspects. In other words, the term is regarded as an interactive process between the targets and practices at the point where they met. The underlying characteristics of implementation can be observed as follows:

First, the process of implementation involves the interrelation between all relevant factors.

Second, the core process involves the interrelation between the determination of the target of the policy goals and the actions taken to achieve them.

Third, the evaluation of the achievement is defined in terms of a score framework with a precise criterion that is clear for the practitioners.

Fourth, intangible to tangible conversion of the goals relates to people that work together in a large group, including both members within the organizations or between organizations.

Sabatier (1986) argued that policy implementation is the process of turning the fundamental policy such as law, cabinet resolution, or judgment of the court, into practice.

Hood (1984) proposed the concept of policy implementation as a policy tool. Based on the degree of enforcement of the policy, from inducing to enforcing practitioners to forming their behaviors, it is an influential factor in making decisions to choose a policy.

Voradej Chandrasorn (2009, p. 25) shared his comments on implementation, “it was the extent to which the organizations owning the policy could guide and stimulate human resources management, as well as all relevant mechanisms to work in attaining the goals.” In other words, to study implementation, we should pay attention to the ability to push all important mechanisms to function for the pursuing of the goals.

From the contributor's point of view above, we could summarize that policy implementation is a continuous interrelated process to turn the policy into practice in order to achieve the goals.

2.3.1.1 Approaches to Study Implementation

The approaches could be listed out as follows:

1) Structural approach: this approach is based on organizational theory. It focuses on the appropriateness of synchronizing different structures under different missions and settings (Sombat Thamrongthanyawong, 2011, p. 419). The concept is embedded in the term "planning of change" concerning the process of clearly controlling the direction, time, management, and characteristics of work, as well as the interrelation among influential factors. Also, "planning for change" involves the external environment or the procedural changes that are difficult to predict or take control of. Barrett and Fudge (1981) added that the process of policy development should be iterative. Policy implementation requires an applied process. The relation between policy and practice of the policy should be consistent and dynamic in a continuous loop.

Burns and Stalker (1961) proposed that an organizational structure which is suitable for "planning for change" might be characterized as that of a government organization. According to Weberian's ideal type of bureaucracy, structure is set up in a hierarchy. Planning for change, in contrast, means different structures are more appropriate for being adjusted since their organic features make them highly flexible.

Hogwood and Gunn (1984, pp. 209-210) concluded that the organizational structures formulation for "planning for change" is not simple in a government system. This is because a government structure has many limitations. Thus, blending the characteristics of both vertical structure and horizontal structure would be necessary for more effective coordination within the organization.

2) Managerial Approach: this approach is based on system theory. It focuses on designing implementation procedure in accordance with the goals. Hogwood and Gunn (1984, p. 210) argued that designing an appropriate structure for implementation is less important than developing processes and procedures, as well as a managerial system that is applicable to the techniques being

used. The concept of “Planning of change” and “Planning for change” could be useful to analyze procedure and managerial systems. For planning of change, implementation is considered as a technical problem. The management for operations usually involves work scheduling, planning, and controlling. Thus, after identifying the problems comes choosing the most effective policy. The steps in policy implementation could be described as follows:

First step, design the plan in accordance with the expected outputs, done by clearly setting goals, working standards, and a timeline.

Second step, take the plan for action, done by appropriately designing the operational structure, selecting staff, sourcing and allocating budgets and resources, and formulating operational regulations.

Third step, define operational scheduling, operational monitoring, and controlling devices, this is done to ensure that the process is kept on target.

The management techniques were then adopted for implementation. Lang (1977) asserted that Network Planning and Control (NPC) is a guideline for planning in terms of how to define and control the policy for practitioners to follow and take action, to ensure that the missions would be covering the plan, and to determine the interrelations among the missions and expected outcomes. Sapolsky (1972) added that Program Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT) could also be useful as a tool to implementation. The plan might not have very much effect on achieving the target date, but it can be quite active in cultivating the confidence of decision-makers regarding the effectiveness of the management plan, resulting in less interference from politicians and less time for consideration of the approval of the plan.

3) Behavioral Approach: this approach is based on organizational behavior and organization development theory. It focuses on the staff's roles and influential factors surrounding the organizational culture, including the staff's behaviors and their attitudes towards the organization. It emphasizes problem-solving procedures, rather than suggestions for solutions (Eddy, 1970).

4) Political Approach: this approach is based on group theory. It is one of the most important fundamental approaches in analyzing policy

implementation. In this approach, “politics” is defined as the forms of power and influence between organizations and within the organization. In this sense, the analysis of politics is not complicated. Although implementation could be conducted through organization planning, formulation of regulations, organization management, and the application of managerial techniques, the lack of political concerns could lead to the implementation’s failure (Hogwood & Gunn, 1984, pp. 215-218). Additionally, the interrelations among policy determination and relevant factors are actually dependent. Therefore, analysts usually consider them both together.

5) Top-Down Approach: this approach has been called a “Policy-Central Approach” (Barrett & Fudge, 1981, p. 12) or “the Prescriptions for Success” (Younis & Davidson, 1990, pp. 5-8). This could imply that the image of the policy output is foreseen by the policymaker. In the top-down process, the policy is defined from the top view of what it is supposed to be, and is broken down into practices at the operational levels for making it possible. It aims at generalizing the policy proposal by using formal steering (Matland, 1995). Sabatier (1986) commented that policy implementation effectiveness depends on the clarity of the organizational goals. Moreover, this approach is consistent with the model of a perfect administration, as the conditions include the ability of the provision of external resources, and political support, integrated with good management, to perfect implementation (Hood, 1984). Gunn (1980, p. 5) added that a perfect administration in accordance with rational decision making, which has never existed in the real world, could support practitioners to have a systematic concept of the rationales used in analyzing the causes of failure, and that concept could then be used to increase the efficacy of the implementation. In sum, it could be implied that the top-down approach is rather idealistic and is impractical for setting all of the relevant factors in their assigned conditions.

6) Bottom-Up Approach: this approach has been called as “Radical Change Approach” (Younis & Davidson, 1990, pp. 8-10) since it opens up the opportunity for lower-level staff to make decisions on policy. In this approach, policy outputs or policy externalities are believed to occur from the use of lower-level staff. Hjern and Porter (1981) commented that the Bottom-up Approach yields benefit for its applicability in a democratic society in terms of increasing the roles of

practitioners. Consistent with Kaufman (1976), analysts are familiar with the procedure of making appeals to government officers in expecting to join their parts or authority in formulating the policy. Later, in response to the phenomenon, Lipsky (1971) proposed a concept of street-level bureaucrats, which supports the core value of the bottom-up approach. Elmore (1978, p. 605) determined the advantage of the bottom-up approach is that it provides more prompt solutions to the encountered problems because the lower level staff is closely related to the problem sources. Attention to this approach is placed on the operational staff decisions as they're enforced by the policy to solve public problems. Basically, they used their skills and experience in considering a solution to the problem. Thus, the policymakers should take the role of supporter or facilitator or provider of resources instead of a controller.

2.3.1.2 Process of Policy Implementation

Berman (1978) proposed the concept of “Macro and Micro Implementation” as a framework to analyze policy implementation. It focuses on the dynamics and interactions between the central agencies (Policy formulators) and the local agencies (Practitioners) to improve policy performance. The relationship between policy and its institutional setting must be taken into account to analyze implementation. Macro implementation emphasizes how the government policy has been administrated in order to make the local agencies adopt it. Whereas micro implementation emphasizes how the local agencies implement the adopted government policy within their settings. Influenced by Berman’s work, many scholars divided the process of policy implementation into two levels: macro level and micro level.

1) Macro Level: it involves the process of turning the government policy into a local agency’s policy. It can divide macro implementation into two levels:

First level, it involves transformation of the government policy into plans, programs, projects, and activities. The process usually begins with defining the policy in the form of a cabinet resolution or a consensus of government authorities. Organizations would be assigned to take accountability for the policy. Crucial success factors include the clarity of the goals of the policy, the relationship between the goals, and the understanding of the policy goals of accountable

organizations or stakeholders, as well as the participation of political authorities and the sincerity of the members in the implementation (Voradej Chandrasorn, 2009, p. 35). Once the organizations obviously recognize their missions, they will take responsibility for the implementation of plans and projects.

Second level, this is the operation process or mission acknowledgement of the central government or agencies in taking action to employ the policy. When the policy is administrated into a plan, it is difficult for local agencies to conform if it fails to gain the stakeholder's acceptance. This inconformity could lead to resistance or public protest. The central government needs then to seek ways of gaining acceptance from the locality. It might be a benefit dispute between the public and private sectors. Insufficient resources could lead to a delayed project. In many cases, if there is inconsistency between the policy and the demand of the localities, the policy could be taken by them as an unavoidable task. Therefore, the result could shift away from the target goals (Voradej Chandrasorn. 2009, p. 36).

2) Micro level: this involves the adopted policy implementation within the local agencies. It could be broken down into three steps: mobilization, implementation, and institutionalization or continuation (Berman, 1978).

Step 1: Mobilization. This step might be called the acceptance step. It's operated by the local parties through two types of activities: considering the acceptance of the policy and finding support for the policy (Van Horn & Van Meter, 1976). The key success factor in implementation is the support of the stakeholders in local areas. In general, the support could be in the form of a plan or a project. Occasionally, it could be a sort of academic support, technique or participation by the people, community leaders, and local organizations.

Step 2: Implementation. After the policy has been accepted by the stakeholders, this step is taken place to put policy into action. The success of the implementation step depends on ways to make adjustments to the plans or projects in order to align them with the demands of the locality. As well, the local organizations need to find ways to adjust their behaviors to be consistent with the assigned plans or projects.

Step 3: Institutionalization or Continuation. In this step, administrators at the local level are required to act in pursuing and raising the

awareness of the practitioners regarding the importance of policy. Practitioners need to be ready and willing to follow and to accept the policy as a daily routine. If the policy is consistent and well-accepted, the local stakeholders will perceive it as agreeing with their demands. Then, the process of Institutionalization or Continuation becomes possible. On the contrary, if there is a political change, such as government reform, or policy adjustment, some of the cases will not be able to receive consistent support, and this step would never take place. (Voradej Chandrasorn, 2009, p. 41).

2.3.1.3 Influential Factors in the Success of Policy Implementation

In this section, influential factors in the success of policy implementation have been investigated. They include the source of the policy, the clarity of the policy, the support of the policy, management complexity, motivation of the practitioners, resource allocation, and the adequacy of the support in pushing policy into action. (Pressman & Widavsky, 1984).

Source of the policy: the process of policy development usually begins with the policy formulation and continues throughout the implementation stage. As a result, numerous different forms of policies are launched for public practice and targeted to goals. Some common components of the policy could be reflected as: attributes of the policy, key contents of the policy, collaboration between the legislative and the administrative divisions, roles and responsibilities of the public organizations, the judgments and decisions of the Supreme Court.

The key reason that many scholars pay more attention to the source of the policy as a factor of the success in implementation is that lawful policy is normally constituted by influential parties, the administrative that issued it and the legislative that approved it. They have the power to negotiate with each other. The administrative division might use its influence with the government organization or take accountability of the policy (Pressman & Widavsky, 1984). In addition, it should be concerned with hidden conflicts against implementation. Some hidden conflicts could be developed into opponents or obstacles to implementing the policy. The analysts should put effort into minimizing and avoiding those conflicts, otherwise, negative effects could come in return in terms of waste of time, manpower and opportunity to solve public problems (Lazin, 1973, pp. 263-273).

Clarity of the Policy: it has been called a “programmed implementation.” (Berman, 1978). The clearer the policy is, the more likely it is that the policy will be successful. A lack of clarity could happen in policy formulation, even with some of those defined by high-ranking government officers. An unclear policy could be caused by confusion in the policy that the policymakers have regarding laws and regulations. Any imprecise concept affects the direction or goal setting of the policy (Stevens & Steven, 1970, pp. 348-425).

Support for the policy: this factor was considered based on a political view. Relevant parties include government parties, such as politicians, government organizations, budget allocation authorities, non-government parties such as people in the constituencies related to the problems, influential groups, stakeholders who received effects from the problems, and the public. Policy alternatives should be selected based on the deliberation of the appropriateness of budget allocation, resources, and expenses for policy implementation.

Incentives for Implementers: incentives are very important for the success of policy implementation. They vastly effect the implementer’s motivation. A lack of information received on market signals in the government system can result in difficulty in identifying the right kinds of incentives, rewards, or punishment for practitioners (Halperin & Kanter, 1973, p. 11). However, a limitation in incentives provision could occur when unsystematic allocation of the budget is made, resulting in failure of the policy implementation. (Bardach, 1980). Negative incentives could be misleading in terms of goals, whereas positive incentives could motivate the practitioners to push their effort towards the goals. (McLaughlin, 1975).

Complexity of the Administration: the more stakeholders engage in policy formulation, the more complex the policy will be. If the policymaker is distant from the practitioners and stakeholders, the policy will be complicated (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1984). Consequently, the policy is likely to alter from what was anticipated, and finally become an impediment. The effective policy should avoid complexity of the organizational structure or a lengthy hierarchical structure of the organization (Banfielf, 1971, pp. 34-45).

Resource allocation: resources are one of the crucial factors for implementation success (Sombat, Thamrongthanyawong, 2011, p. 444). They included

budget, time and manpower, as well as technology and the essential tools. Commonly-found problems were a shortage of resources, as every society has limited resources. Hence, effective use of resources should be based on prioritizing, as well as using resource management strategies. The limitation caused by limited resources has a great effect on the success of policy implementation. Therefore, appropriate allocation of budget, time, and resource distribution would help in reducing the shortfall (Brever & DeLeon, 1983, pp. 273-274).

2.3.2 The Implementation of Quality Assurance in Higher Education

At present, quality assurance in higher education is one of the educational policy issues that has been studied by worldwide scholars in various settings. The level of analysis due to its nature involves many stakeholders, from the supranational level to the local level, and its contents that controversial. Studies on quality assurance implementation can be divided into two levels: quality assurance implementation at the macro level, and quality assurance implementation at the micro level.

1) Quality assurance implementation at the macro level: this was very influential at the early stage of quality assurance implementation studies. They generally focused on the big picture of quality assurance policy, involving national quality policy in higher education, quality tools, and quality assurance infrastructure at the national level. The early macro level studies tended to describe the overall system of quality assurance within each context.

Westerheijden, et.al. (1994) surveyed the study of quality assurance in the United States, Canada, and European countries, and found that most of the studies at the macro level utilized a descriptive model. Issues of the studies were generally about the role of the assessment agencies, self-assessment, peer-review assessment, results and impacts of quality assurance, and the relation between quality assurance and decisions on budgeting. Whereas in the Asian context, Ng (2008) adopted a phase model to analyze the development of quality assurance implementation in Singapore. The study found that quality assurance had been developed in three phases: standardization, local accountability, and diversity and innovation. Each phase had its own characteristics and challenges. In addition, quality assurance affected to the nature of higher education's change.

2) Quality assurance implementation at the micro level: these studies focused on the quality assurance adoption and implementation within each university or program. The key issues were about the role of policy actors in universities, quality assurance management within each university, and factors influencing quality assurance's implementation.

2.3.2.1 Factors Influencing Quality Assurance's Implementation

In this section, the studies on factors influencing quality assurance implementation are reviewed as follows:

1) Leadership and commitment of the top management factor. This has emerged as a major factor influencing quality assurance implementation. The senior management of higher education institutions play an important role in the quality assurance management of higher education, since leadership is the predecessor of the quality assurance process (Mishra, 2007). The effective implementation of quality assurance in higher education was caused by the commitment and sponsorship of the institution's or program's leaders. A range of leadership characteristics are emphasized from the studies (Sakthivel, 2007), including integrity, responsiveness, knowledgeable, courage, passion, and capable to change and adopt a collaboration to gain support for quality management initiatives (Sebastianelli & Tamimi, 2003; Ehlers, 2009; Mahony & Garavan, 2012).

2) Communication factor also plays a vital role in quality assurance management in higher education. It is like a linking pin to implement each component in quality assurance. Many of the terms used in quality assurance embrace business values, which some faculty members may find inappropriate and possibly threatening to higher education's traditions (Wong, 1999). For example, the student is "a customer", the lecturer must be "productive". Thus, developing a communication strategy is necessary to make the faculty's staff have the sufficient information and understand the right purpose of quality assurance. Moreover, communication should also be useful as a monitoring tool to report on the progress and results of quality assurance (Mishra, 2007). Key issues concerned with communication include, language and discourse of quality within the faculty, mode of communication, and channel of communication. (Lagrosen, Seyyed-Hashemi, & Leitner, 2004; Mishra, 2007; Ehlers, 2009).

3) Participation of faculty's members factor. Creating the environment and encouraging participatory management and teamwork for the faculty's members is crucial for quality implementation success. It is also a challenging task. Mahony and Garavan (2012) stated that transferring quality assurance principles developed for industry to higher education environments is difficult task because higher education institutions have their particular environments. Quality assurance systems are relevance to supporting functions in faculties than teaching and research areas. Thus, issue of autonomy of the academic staff and the role of students within higher education as customers or co-producers are difficult to understand. This leads to problems in implementing quality assurance and includes the lack of acceptance and application of quality management (Mahony & Garavan, 2012). Key issues concerned with participation of the faculty's members are stakeholder engagement and involvement, and recognizing the efforts of staff without creating a competitive environment in the quality assurance implementation process (Lagrosen, Seyyed-Hashemi, & Leitner, 2004; Mishra, 2007; Mahony & Garavan, 2012).

4) Faculty culture and faculty staff attitudes toward quality assurance factor. Quality culture is the factor that put the quality management systems' key elements together. A supportive organizational culture will lead to the quality assurance system implementation effectiveness (Corbett & Rastrick, 2000). It supports alteration of the faculty member's perception on quality. Sinclair and Collins (1994) emphasized that organization culture "may support or inhibit the implementation process. Nevertheless, its inertia is remarkably strong in higher education settings." Trowler (1998) argued that organizational culture in higher education institutions is "strong, tenacious, and can be a barrier to quality improvement initiatives." Asklang and Stensaker (2002) observed that quality improvement in higher education contexts relies on a process of social construction, rather than imposed by the authorities. Organization culture varies significantly within the higher education sector. Lomas (1999) classified it into four groups: collegial culture, bureaucratic culture, entrepreneurial culture, and corporate culture. Csizmadia, Enders, and Westerheijden (2008) commented that the bureaucratic decision is opponent to quality management implementation. In addition, continuous improvement is emphasized as a core feature of quality management initiatives. Tovey (1992) observed that academics are not against continuous quality

improvement, but they have to be persuaded that it can be achieved without a reduction of their academic freedom and personal welfare.

5) Faculty management factor. This might be seen as process administration in quality assurance implementation. The aspects of quality assurance systems consist of a range of factors, including: self-assessment, benchmarking, internal audits, process management, measurement, information analysis and accreditation of the quality management system (Sayeda, Rajendran, & Sai Lokchari, 2010), which relates to the routine administration, including planning, organizing, staffing, and budgeting. Self-assessment is considered to be an essential component of quality assurance systems that provides comprehensive, systematic review of the organization's activities and results (Van der Wiele et al., 1995), which highlights the organization's strengths and improvement initiatives (Oakland, 2000). In addition, internal audits are gradually important element of quality assurance in higher education, because of the requirement "to demonstrate accountability to stakeholders and ensure the most effective use of resources" (Hoecht, 2006). Quality audits usually are adopted to sustain the quality management program but are also required to get accreditation (Rajendran & Davadasan, 2005).

According to the mentioned factors above, the influential factors regarding the success of the implementation of quality assurance in higher education can be summarized in the following table:

Table 2.2 Factors Regarding the Success of the Implementation of Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Factors	Contributors	Key Issues
Leadership and commitment of Top Management	Sebastianelli and Tamimi (2003); Mishra (2007); Ehlers (2009); Ardi, Hidayatno, and Zagloel (2012); Mahony and Garavan (2012)	1) The role of the faculty's or program's executives in implementing quality assurance 2) The determination and support from the faculty's or program's executives in implementing quality assurance

Table 2.2 (Continued)

Factors	Contributors	Key Issues
Communication	Lagrosen, Seyyed-Hashemi, and Leitner (2004); Mishra (2007); Ehlers (2009)	3) Faculty or program executive's necessary knowledge and skills in implementing quality assurance 4) Faculty or program executive's ability to gain support for quality management initiatives 1) The use of language and discourse of quality assurance within the faculty 2) Mode and channel of communication supporting quality assurance implementation 3) The creation of an environment of trust in communication
Participation of faculty members	Lagrosen, Seyyed-Hashemi, and Leitner (2004); Mishra (2007); Mahony and Garavan (2012)	1) Encouraging participatory management and teamwork from faculty members to quality assurance implementation 2) Engaging stakeholder's involvement, and recognizing the efforts of staff without creating a competitive environment in the quality assurance implementation process
Faculty Culture and Faculty's staff Attitudes toward QA	Liu et.al. (1997); Lomas (1999); Mishra (2007); Mahony and Garavan (2012)	1) Creating a continuous improvement culture 2) Encouraging a supportive organizational culture to implement a quality assurance system

Table 2.2 (Continued)

Factors	Contributors	Key Issues
Faculty Management	Liu et.al. (1997); Lagrosen, Seyyed-Hashemi, and Leitner (2004); Mishra (2007); Ehlers (2009); Ardi, Hidayatno, and Zagloel (2012); Mahony and Garavan (2012)	1) Integrating quality assurance with the faculty's strategic planning 2) Integrating quality assurance with the routine administration, including organizing, staffing and budgeting 3) Designing a supporting management infrastructure to implement a quality assurance system 4) Utilizing quality assurance results to improve the faculty's and program's operations

2.3.2.2 Context and Conditions Factors to Quality Assurance Implementation Effectiveness

In this section, factors relating to the context and conditions which support quality assurance implementation are reviewed. The literature presented prerequisite factors and how to implement them in the context of developing countries, as follows:

1) The possession of a doctorate. PhD graduates are required for entry into the workforce. This is because they are seen to provide the fundamental knowledge of the subject in the program and the essential basic methodological skills to conduct research (Lim, 2001, p. 106).

2) Full-time job employment. Academics must be employed in one full-time job to live securely with their family. The short-term consultancy work for government agencies, or private companies is possible, according to their interests (Lim, 2001: 106). Remuneration packages should be provided for a comfortable current and post-retirement standard of living (Lim, 2001, p. 108).

3) Adequate supporting equipment and infrastructure. The presence of adequate physical, and administrative support services such as well-equipped laboratories, an individual or shared office, computers and personal webpage or e-mail is needed to support the academic's mission (Lim, 2001, p. 106).

4) Merit-based system. Appointment and promotion must be based on a merit system, not on political or social connection. The procedure adopted must be stated clearly, widely disseminated and carried out in a transparent manner (Lim, 2001, p. 107).

5) The presence of a fair degree of academic freedom. Constructive criticism of the university management, or government is encouraged or at least tolerated.

The key condition for the success of implementing quality assurance for universities in developing countries is that it must suit the conditions prevailing there. This requires that it should not duplicate quality assurance systems used in developed countries. To make the effective quality assurance implementation for universities in developing countries, the following components should be considered (Lim, 2001, p. 124):

1) University's Mission. Universities in developing countries aim to serve their countries and the geo-political regions. Nevertheless, for most of them, their missions are too ambitious with their resources. The main priority of urban-based and rural-based universities should be to serve the regions of their location. They should not extend to serve the whole country (Lim, 2001, p. 125).

2) University Function. In the context of developing countries, universities need to urgently improve their quality of teaching, research, and direct community service. They should focus on direct community services than those in developed countries. In research, it should be concentrated in areas of direct relevance to the country's needs. (Lim, 2001, p. 126).

3) Management Plan. The management plan should be tailored to fit conditions in developing countries. It should be kept simple and realistic because of the shortage of academics skilled and experienced in management and of statistical data (Lim, 2001, p. 127). The objectives of universities should be different. Issues such as cost-effectiveness, program prioritizing, equity of providing appropriate

learning opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds, relevant research and community service should be granted concern.

4) Quality audit. The academic, administrative, and data requirements of the assessments must be consistent with the resources available. In most developing countries, the internal assessment is likely to exaggerate the quality assurance effectiveness when it's riddled with patron-client relationships that are dominated by a do-not-question-authority culture or official tolerance of criticism and self-censorship (Lim, 2001, p. 130). Thus, the external assessment is expected to reflect the real quality of universities. Different models from developed countries were chosen with care in order to implement them within the developing country universities' context. They can be classified as follows:

Whole-of-institution assessment model: this focuses on the management processes of all functions of the institution, including teaching, research, and direct community service. This model is the more popular one because it suits the universities who have never been assessed or those who were absent from assessment for a long period. Its purpose is to make universities aware of the importance of quality assurance. Also, it is more cost-effective.

Department or discipline assessment model: this focuses on the management process and standard of the outputs delivered by all functions of the department or program, including teaching, research, and direct community service. This model is opted from some elite universities because it helps them be spotlighted at the worldwide level, but it demands high financial support and expert assessors.

To make the audit successful, each university was asked to submit a quality portfolio to demonstrate the role of the self-assessed output according to the function of the audit and the evidence.

In implementing the assessment model in developing countries, most universities adopted a whole-of-institution assessment, especially those universities who had never been assessed or those who were absent from assessment for a long time. By the way, most countries have difficulty in finding an adequate number of experts to sit on external quality audits.

2.3.2.3 Relationship between the Quality Assurance System and the Quality of Higher Education

In this section, the relationship between the quality assurance system and the quality of higher education is investigated. It is not a simple one. Quality assurance is a significant driver to enhance the higher education's quality. Both practitioners and academics can work together to bring about new ideas and new practices that originate from a quality assurance domain. Furthermore, it should be known that "where external or internal quality reviews have succeeded in engaging staff in new ways of thinking, this may not have occurred had there not been any quality assurance." (Newton, 2002) This points out two key issues. First, awareness-raising and the quality assurance experience are important methods of quality enhancement. Second, we play an important role to make progress in learning and teaching's improvement. Even so, when the question of quality assurance impact is reflected on, it must be acknowledged that national systems in quality assurance differ in each context, audience and group of stakeholders.

According to a review of published quality assurance research in the *Quality of Education Journal* during 1995-2010, it has been found that most quality topics were about the impact of quality assurance to the quality improvement in the following issues: student assessment, quality of teaching, student learning, faculty development, quality policy adoption, and policy impact on quality improvement (Harvey & Williams, 2010).

Newton (2001) studied external quality monitoring in Wales during the mid-1990s and found that while the internal quality assurance system was observed as meeting both external and internal accountability requirements, it was less likely to be associated with staff or student-related quality improvement. Various factors influence academics' views and responses, and it exposed a disagreement between the administrators and the front-line academics, and between external and internal views. Vilgats (2008) investigated curriculum accreditation in Estonia during the late 1990s-2000s. Findings from the curriculum director's interviews and accreditation reports analysis show a mostly low level of impact with the exclusion of the curriculum and the study process. Where some positive impact was obvious they found less effect on university management and on the quality assurance policy and process. Haapakorpi

(2011) inspected the impacts of the audit process in Finland by conducting document analysis, interviews with senior managers, faculty members, and administrators and found both direct and indirect the impacts of the audit process. For direct impact, it includes greater transparency and collegial learning about quality processes. On the contrary, indirect and immediate impact is shown by an increase in the discussion of quality issues included in the focus of the quality audits. Newton (2012) commented that although the studies are interesting, most of them fail to demonstrate an evident impact on improvement in teaching and learning as the necessary experience of higher education.

Asking (1997) conducted a seven-year period study of the indirect impact of external monitoring based on a partnership model between institutions and the quality agency in Sweden. The study found that this approach “encouraged team-based action planning, dissemination of good practice, and perceived improvement in aspects of the student experience.” Newton (2001) observed that research which stresses the complexity of “impact” has to be acknowledged. For example, Stensaker (2003) inquired whether quality improvement can actually be revealed the result of external quality monitoring. He argued that the data was unclear and it was difficult to separate the side effects of external quality processes. Additionally, control and compliance were more common rationales for external monitoring than improvement (Harvey & Newton, 2007).

According to the mentioned studies, they indicate that internal quality assurance processes in both national and institutional contexts are still in developing. Additionally, the linkage between internal processes, external processes, and teaching and learning improvements seem to be weak and unreliable (Harvey & Williams, 2010). Newton (2001) added that there were lack of substantial research into the impact of quality assurance processes, on teaching, learning, and the student experience.

2.4 Quality Assurance Systems in Higher Education

2.4.1 Quality Assurance Systems in Thai Higher Education

Quality Assurance in Thai Higher Education was initiated by the Ministry of University Affairs (MUA) in 1996, which oversaw twenty-three public universities and fifty-three private universities at that time, it launched its policy to encourage all universities to establish their quality assurance systems “as a driver towards maintaining high standards teaching’s quality” based on a system theory: the input-process-output concept. The system would serve as a tool for the institution’s continuous improvement (Kanjapanyakom, 2011).

The quality assurance system was officially implemented after the endorsement of the 1999 National Education Act, which called for “a system of educational quality assurance to ensure improvement of educational quality and standards at all levels” (Muangkeow, 2009, p. 166). The system is consisted of the Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) system and the External Quality Assurance (EQA) systems.

2.4.1.1 Internal Quality Assurance: IQA

The formation of the internal quality assurance system was directed by The Office of Higher Education Commission (OHEC) for all higher education institutions in order to adopt it as a framework of internal academic quality assurance. The IQA concept is based on three pillars of quality: quality control, quality audit, and quality assessment; three philosophies of higher education management: academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and accountability; and four primary missions of universities: teaching, research, academic service, and preservation of art and culture (Vanchai Sirichana, 1996; Kanjanapanyakom, 2011).

Internal quality assurance aims to “control, audit, and assess the higher education institutions’ operation” (Office of Higher Education Commission, 2014, p. 28) in order to make them be aware of their performance. This leads to the formation of strategic plan and continuous development of quality in accordance with the predetermined standards.

The IQA framework has been proposed as the fundamental criteria to develop quality standards and key performance indicators to assess quality, consisting

of nine components: 1) Philosophies, Commitment and Objectives 2) Teaching and Learning 3) Student Development Activities 4) Research 5) Academic Services 6) Preservation of Art and Culture 7) Administration and Management 8) Finance and Budgeting and 9) Internal Quality Assurance System and Mechanisms. (Office of Higher Education Commission, 2014).

In 2007, internal quality assurance was officially implemented in all higher education institutions. It focused on assessing quality at the institutional level and faculty level. There were 44 indicators, developed from the nine quality components covering input, process, and output. After that in 2009, the IQA indicators were adjusted, there were 23 indicators, emphasizing the process, assessing institutional, faculty, and department quality.

In 2014 internal quality assurance dramatically changed. First, the quality assessment focused on the institutional, faculty, and program level. The assessment criteria was altered from the nine quality components for all levels of assessment to be five quality components at the institutional and faculty levels, including, 1) teaching 2) research 3) academic services 4) preservation of art and culture and 5) management, with 13 indicators. At the program level, there are six quality criteria, which include 1) curriculum standards 2) graduates 3) students 4) lecturers 5) curriculum and student assessment and 6) supporting staff for learning, with 13 indicators. Second, the institution, the faculty, and the program may adopt the international quality standard or accreditation instead of the IQA system conducted by the Office of Higher Education Commission.

To implement the internal quality assurance, the institutions, the faculty, and the program are mandated to establish their quality assessment process according to the PDCA cycle: Plan, Do, Check, and Act (Office of Higher Education Commission, 2014). The process details are as follows:

Plan (P), it is the first activity of internal quality assurance, starting from the beginning of the academic year. The organization uses the previous year's assessment result for planning. In case of changes in the quality assurance system, criteria, or indicator, there will be an announcement to all institutions to realize and prepare themselves for the changes before the beginning of the academic year.

Do (D), it involves operating and collecting organization's performance results throughout the academic year, from June to May.

Check (C), it is the quality assessments at the program, faculty, and institutional levels, by the internal quality assessment committee. It mostly conducts during June and August.

Act (A). The program, faculty, and institution make improvement plans according to the assessment's results and the recommendations provided by the internal quality assessment committees to plan for operation improvement and submit the assessment report to the office of higher education commission in order to utilize the information to improve the nation's quality of higher education.

2.4.1.2 External Quality Assurance: EQA

External Quality Assurance (EQA) is conducted by The Office of the National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA), a public independent body established in 2000 responsible for external assessment of all educational institutions at all levels. The assessment will be conducted every five years.

The ONESQA's external assessments aim "to ensure that higher education is developed to the standards of international levels to uphold the quality of academic standards in higher education institutions. Also, they aim to assure and support the implementation of internal quality assurance system within the institutions" (Office of National Education Standards and Quality Assessment, 2012).

The assessment process employs specific Thai characteristics, "amicable assessment procedures without lessening the integrity of transparency and accountability" (Office of National Education Standards and Quality Assessment, 2012). It considers quality development dimensions within the institutions: quality awareness, institution's attempt, and achievement. Each institution is to submit a self-assessment report and its evidence to the Office of National Education Standards and Quality Assessment before the external assessment site-visit is conducted. Supplementary documents and IQA assessment reports might be requested to enhance understanding of the institution. The external review committee, consisting of academics and experts in related fields then make the site-visit according to a schedule. After the visit, an assessment report, which provides the quality assessment results and recommendations will be sent to the institution and published to the public (Kanjapanyakom, 2011).

The external quality assessment is conducted as follows:

The First Round of Assessment was conducted during 2001 to 2005, it aimed to develop the external quality assurance standards and indicators for institutes, and to establish the factual baseline data and information for the improvement of the assessment process. It also expected to train assessors and to disseminate knowledge to universities getting ready for the external quality assurance. The quality assessment framework consisted of eight quality criteria with twenty-eight indicators, including quality of graduates, teaching and learning, academic support, research and innovation, academic services, preservation of arts and cultures, administration and management, and internal quality assurance system.

By the end of the first round of assessment there were 260 higher education institutions assessed. The result showed that 91.92% of all institutions' quality levels were considered to be acceptable.

The Second Round of Assessment was conducted during 2006 to 2010. In this round, the higher education institutions were classified according to the higher education standard into these following groups: Research university, Teaching and community service university, Teaching university, and Preservation of arts and culture with teaching university. The quality assessment framework had been adjusted and consisted of seven criteria with 48 indicators, including quality of graduates, research and innovation, academic services, preservation of arts and cultures, institutional and staff development, curriculum and learning process, and internal quality assurance system.

By the end of the second round of assessment there were 252 higher education institutions that were assessed. The result showed that 94.83% of higher educational institutes were accredited.

The Third Round of Assessment was conducted during 2011 to 2015. The assessment emphasized on reinforcing universities to conduct their internal quality assurance for sustainable development, collaborating with campaigning institutions to conduct self-assessment to match up with the external quality assurance in order to advance their quality of education.

The quality framework was adjusted, consisting of 4 criteria with 18 indicators, including quality of graduates, research and creative work, academic

services to society, and institutional administration and development. The indicators can be categorized into the following three groups:

1) Basic Indicators, which are used for evaluating performance of educational institutions. These indicators and criteria are required for all institutions to implement. They indicate results and impacts, linking to internal quality assurance.

2) True Identity Indicators comprise a group of indicators for output evaluation, based on the institution's philosophy and mission. They indicate its successes through its main achievements and strengths, representing the identity of the institution.

3) Social Responsibility Indicators: educational institutions are required to be active in providing protection, recommendations and solutions to social problems. These indicators are used for assessment extended to the context of society as a whole.

In the round of assessment, two projects to enhance the overall quality of educational institutes were introduced. An Area-Based Assessment (ABA) is a provincial-basis education development, aimed to create collaboration between educational institutions and local communities which are encouraged to take more active roles in providing promotion and support for education. Also, the "1-4-9" project, which is for high-quality volunteer institutions to participate in strengthening national education by helping the less-quality institutions improve their qualities.

2.4.1.3 Education Criteria for Performance Excellence: EdPEX

Education Criteria for Performance Excellence (EdPEX) is an alternative quality assurance criteria, developed from Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA) by the office of Commission of Higher Education, which has been presented to organizations that demonstrate quality and performance excellence in the United States since 1987. At the beginning, the award was presented to manufacturers, services, and small businesses, it established the education category in 1999 before it was spread worldwide.

In the Thai higher education context, MBNQA has been adopted to develop Education Criteria for Performance Excellence (EdPEX) by the office of higher education commission. In 2009 the office of higher education commission

released the manual of 2009-2010 Education Criteria for Performance Excellence. Then, the first phase of the pilot project was launched during 2009 to 2014. The participants were from 41 faculties in 30 universities. In 2014, after the first phase of the pilot project had finished, the office of higher education commission released the manual of 2014 Education Criteria for Performance Excellence and launched the second phase during 2014 to 2016. Most of the criteria were similar to the preceding version. EdPEX started to become widely held after the office of higher education commission permitted the institutions, the faculties, and programs to adopt the international quality standard or accreditation instead of the mandatory IQA system in 2016. EdPEX was the first selected choice for many higher education institutions who adopted it for internal quality assurance at the institutional and faculty levels.

The underlying concepts behinds EdPEX can be summarized as follows

- 1) EdPEX is a total organization quality assessment, emphasizing organization strategy, practice, and process. It helps to analyze causal factors which lead to organization outputs and outcomes.
- 2) It aims to make organizational quality sustainability, which could be forecasted from process and outcome assessments.
- 3) It emphasizes organization maturity in coordinating and integrating internal systems. This requires commitment and support from the organization's executives to reach excellence.

The EdPEX framework consists of the seven following components: leadership, strategy, customers, measurement analysis and knowledge management, workforce, operations, and results. Each component has its basic requirements, interrelated to each others. To assess each component, the organization must answer the following key questions:

In terms of leadership, key questions are, how does upper management lead the organization, and how does the organization lead within the community?

In terms of institution's strategy, the key question is how does the organization establish plans to implement strategic directions?

In terms of customers, the key question focus on how does the organization build and maintains strong, lasting relationships with customers?

In terms of measurement, analysis, and knowledge management, the key question is how does the organization use data to support key processes and manage performance?

In terms of workforce, the key question emphasizes how does the organization empower and involve its workforce?

In terms of operations, the key question is how does the organization design, manage and improve key processes?

In terms of results, the key question focus on how does the organization perform in terms of customer satisfaction, finances, human resources, supplier and partner performance, operations, governance and social responsibility, and how does the organization compare to its competitors?

To score each component, there are six levels of score to assess organizational performance in each components: 1 (not evident), 2 (beginning), 3 (basically effective), 4 (mature), 5 (advanced), and 6 (role model).

2.4.2 Quality Assurance System in Foreign Countries

In this section, the quality assurance system from developed countries, which are the role model for the Thai quality assurance system, including the United Kingdom and United States, and a comparative of the quality assurance systems in selected ASEAN countries, are presented as follows:

2.4.2.1 United Kingdom

Quality assurance in the United Kingdom consists of two major activities: quality audit and quality assessment. Quality audit is under the authority of the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC), it emphasizes quality assessment at the institutional level. Quality assessment is under the authority of the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFC), which emphasizes teaching efficiency at the subject level.

Quality assurance in the United Kingdom is conducted for both internal quality assurance and external quality assurance, as with the following:

- 1) Internal Quality Assurance focuses on quality assessment at the department, faculty, and institution levels. The assessment is conducted every four to five years, emphasizing the operation's quality and efficiency. The assessors are

appointed by the faculty. The assessment's results provide benefit for improving the operation, and preparing the faculty for the external examination.

In addition, internal quality assurance is also conducted for the sake of maintaining academic standards. Many elite universities may randomly invite the external examiner to be thesis examiners or comprehensive examiners before the student graduates to ensure that their graduates are well-qualified in academics.

2) External Quality Assurance consists of:

(1) Quality assessment from the Public Agencies: the most influential authority for quality assessment in the United Kingdom is the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFC), which has a Quality Assessment Committee to assess the quality of the selected subject. The assessment's results are classified into four level: excellent, highly satisfactory, satisfactory, and unsatisfactory, which links to public funding.

(2) Quality Assessment from Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), is an independent body established in 1997 and funded by subscription fees of universities and colleges and by the Higher Education Funding Councils of England and Northern Ireland (HEFCE), Scotland (SHEFC) and Wales (HEFCW). The QAA's assessment consists of two types: an annual review of all degree programs, and validations of new programs and every four to six years of existing programs. The assessment is in accordance with the UK quality code for higher education, which is a quality guidebook for universities designed programs of study and policies on academic standards, also to review higher education providers. The guidebook contains criteria, standards, and indicators, which is categorized into three parts: setting and maintaining threshold academic standards; assuring and enhancing academic quality; and information about higher education provision (Quality Assessment from Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2011).

(3) Quality assessment from the professional association: most of the departments in the United Kingdom have applied to be members of their professional associations. The associations play an influential role in suggesting new programs, faculty development, and other departmental plans related to the association.

2.4.2.2 United States

Quality assessment in the United States is emphasized on quality accreditation. It was first started in the late 19th century by cooperating educational institutions. At the present time, there are plenty of accrediting agencies in various levels, including the following:

1) The Federal Agency Council in Post-secondary and Accreditation (COPA) was formerly the accreditation agency at the federal level before it was dismissed in 1992. After that, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (2011), a non-governmental organization, was established to coordinate and provide guidelines, resources, and relevant data for the accrediting agencies. has applied the following six standards to accrediting agencies: Advance in academic quality; Demonstrate accountability; Encourage self-scrutiny and planning for change and for needed improvement; Employ appropriate and fair procedures in decision making; Demonstrate ongoing review of accreditation practice; and Process sufficient resources.

2) Regional Associations. There are six regional associations responsible for accreditation throughout the United States, including Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA), New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA), Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges (NASC), Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). Each regional accreditor involves the vast majority of educational institutions in its region. They accredit and include among their members, elementary schools, junior high schools, middle schools, high schools, public and private universities, colleges, and institutions.

3) Professional Associations play vital roles to accredit institutions and programs. There are more than fifty professional associations, which are recognized as national accrediting bodies such as Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, Inc. (ABET), Accrediting Commission on Education for Health Service Administration (ACEHSA), The American Academy of Certified Public Managers (AACPM), National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA), etc.

The process of quality assessment and accreditation varies among the accrediting agencies. However, an overall shared-common process could be summarized as follows:

1) The accrediting agencies and the higher education institutions mutually set the accrediting standards.

2) The higher education institution files a petition for accreditation to the accrediting agency. Then, they conduct a self-assessment review in accordance with the accreditor's standards, including, mission, teaching plan, research plan, and management plan. In this stage, all of the faculty members are expected to get involved.

3) Higher education institutions submit the self-assessment review to the accrediting agency, then a site-visit assessment takes place. The site-visit team makes a final report to submit to the accrediting committee to make a final decision to accredit the institution.

Institutions are accredited for a period of 5-10 years. However, the accrediting agency may randomly visit the accredited institutions without warning during the accredited period.

2.4.2.3 ASEAN Countries

The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) (2012) surveys the quality assurance system in ASEAN countries, all the countries' quality assurance systems are separated between internal and external quality assurance.

For internal quality assurance, all countries have their own internal quality assurance mechanisms, which were developed in line with the international systems, including AUN-QA and ENQA. The key characteristic of internal quality assurance in ASEAN countries is that it's legalized and centralized by their governments to standardize the countries' quality across the board. The study found that the IQAs in Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and the Philippines are quite active, but those in Vietnam, Lao PDR, and Cambodia have been designed but not yet fully implemented. Brunei is in the process of establishing policies and procedures, and the IQA in Myanmar is responsible by its institutions.

For external quality assurance, all countries except Myanmar have their own external quality assurance systems to supplement their internal quality assurance systems for the sake of accountability, quality enhancement, and providing information on the institution's quality to the public (Aphijanyatham, 2010). Most of the agencies responsible for EQA are non-governmental bodies.

2.4.3 International Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency

At present, quality assurance has caught the attention of international organizations on higher education around the world. At the regional level, many organizations are attempting to develop their own quality assurance frameworks, focusing on the regional standardization of higher education to support the free-flow of students within their regions. In this section, a review of quality assurance and accreditation at the international level is presented as follows:

2.4.3.1 European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) was officially founded in 2000. It represents quality assurance organizations from European Higher Education Area (EHEA) member states, aims to promote co-operation in higher education quality assurance and to exchange information and expertise among its members and stakeholders to develop and to share good quality assurance practices, which lead to the European dimension of quality assurance.

ENQA has developed "The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)" as an instrument for quality guidelines covering the areas which are critical for successful quality provisions and learning environments in higher education. The ESG was approved by the European ministers who oversee the quality of higher education in 2005. After it was implemented, ESG has been adjusted twice, in 2012 and 2015. The current version of ESG aims "to contribute to the common understanding of quality assurance for learning and teaching across borders and among all stakeholders." It has been adopted by universities and quality assurance agencies in Europe as a reference standard for implementing internal and external quality assurance systems in higher education (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2015).

The ESG's standards for quality assurance can be classified into three following parts (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2015).

Standards for internal quality assurance consists of ten criteria, including the institution's policy for quality assurance, program design, student-centered learning, student admission, teaching staff administration, learning resources and student support, information management, public information, program monitoring, and cyclical external quality assurance.

Standards for external quality assurance consists of seven criteria, including consideration of internal quality assurance, EQA's methodology design, process implementation, peer-review experts, criteria for outcome, reporting, and complaints and appeals

Standards for quality assurance agencies consists of seven criteria, including activities policy and process for quality assurance, official status, independence of agencies, thematic analysis, resources, internal quality assurance and professional conduct, and cyclical external review of agencies.

2.4.3.2 ASEAN University Network Quality-Assurance: AUN-QA

ASEAN University Network-Quality Assurance (AUN-QA) network is a regional quality assurance body made up of a group of Chief Quality Officers (CQOs) appointed by the member universities, consisting of more than thirty universities in ASEAN, to coordinate activities "to make understanding the mission of harmonizing educational standards and pursuing continuous improvement of academic quality of universities in ASEAN" (ASEAN University Network, 2016).

AUN-QA activities are derived from the Bangkok Accord adopted in 2000. They are carried out by the CQOs to provide guidelines to endorse the quality assurance systems' development as tools for maintaining, improving and enhancing teaching, research and the overall academic standards of its members.

Development of the AUN-QA framework began in 1998 based on an empirical approach where quality assurance practices were tested, evaluated, improved and shared. The AUN-QA Framework is a Holistic Quality Assurance System (HQAS), which is designed as a transnational quality assurance framework to support students and faculty members' cross-border mobility in accordance with

ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) policy. It is aligned with internationally recognized quality criteria, including AQAF's Internal Quality Assurance (Asia), EHEA's Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (Europe), and Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework in Education (America) (ASEAN University Network, 2016).

The framework is comprised of strategic, systemic, and functional quality assurance. According to AUN-QA guidelines, key mechanisms of AUN-QA are comprised of internal quality assurance (IQA), external quality assurance (EQA), and accreditation. It helps to benchmark the quality among its members. Based on the AUN-QA framework, there are two types of AUN-QA assessment: at the institutional level, and at the program level.

1) AUN-QA Framework for the Institutional Level

The AUN-QA Framework for the institutional level is designed as a holistic quality assurance framework, covering twenty-five criteria in strategic quality assurance, system quality assurance and functional quality assurance (ASEAN University Network, 2016).

It starts once the stakeholder's needs are translated into the strategic quality assurance system, which contains eight quality criteria, including vision, mission, and culture; governance; leadership and management; strategic management; policies for education, research, and services; human resource management; financial and physical resources management; and external relations and networks.

After that, the strategic quality assurance is cascaded into the systemic quality assurance, which might be called the internal quality assurance (IQA) system. This systemic quality assurance covers four quality criteria, including internal quality assurance systems; internal and external quality assurance assessment; IQA information management; and quality enhancement.

Consequently, the systemic quality assurance is cascaded into the functional quality assurance, which is comprised of three functions of higher education institutions: education, research, and service. The quality assurance in education contains five quality criteria, including student recruitment and selection; curriculum design and review; teaching and learning; student assessment; and student

services and support. The quality criteria in research covers three quality criteria, including research management; intellectual property management; and research collaboration and partnerships. Quality assurance in service contains a quality criterion which is community engagement and service.

This sequentially drives the institution's results which serve as feedback to the quality assurance system for continuous improvement and to fulfill stakeholders' needs. The quality of results consists of four quality criteria, including educational results, research results, service results, and financial and market results.

2) AUN-QA Framework for the Program Level

The AUN-QA framework for program level emphasizes teaching and learning with respect to these following quality dimensions: quality of input, quality of process, and quality of output, covering eleven quality criteria (ASEAN University Network, 2016).

It starts with the expected learning outcomes. Then, two questions relating to such expected learning outcomes are asked: how the expected learning outcomes are translated into the program; and how they can be achieved via teaching and learning strategy and student assessment. Four quality criteria: program specification, program structure and content, teaching and learning strategy, and student assessment, are addressed to answer those questions.

The quality of inputs are considered, including academic staff; support staff; student quality and support; and facilities and infrastructure. Also, the quality assurance process of teaching and learning, staff development and stakeholders' feedback will be addressed. Last but not least, quality of output, including achievements such as students' pass rates and dropout rates, the average time to graduate, employability of the graduates, research activities, and international benchmarking are all assessed.

2.4.4 Quality Assurance and Accreditation for Public Administration Programs

There are efforts from around the world to improve the quality of Public Administration programs. Accreditation agencies from different parts of the world endeavor to enhance the overall quality of public administration programs. In this

study, the renowned accreditation institutions of NASPAA, an agency for the accreditation of public administration professional Master's degree programs in public affairs, policy and administration in the United States, and EAPAA, an agency for providing accreditation for academic public administration degree programs in the European Union countries, is reviewed as follows:

2.4.4.1 National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA)

The National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) is a non-governmental body accreditation agency in the United States. It was established in 1977 when its representatives of member institutions voted for a voluntary peer review system at their annual meeting (NASPAA, 2014). The accreditation is performed under the supervision of NASPAA's accreditation committee, called the "Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation" (COPRA).

NASPAA's accreditation has a mission-based process in which the program's mission and its approach to public administration teaching, research and academic service play a vital role (NASPAA, 2014). During 2012 and 2013, NASPAA adjusted their standards to put more emphasis on public service values and student competencies. Also, it changed its name to "the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration."

NASPAA's accreditation process takes at least twenty-three months. It starts when the program applies to become a member of NASPAA. Then the four accreditation phases: Prerequisite, Eligibility, Self-Study, and the Accreditation Cohort, begins.

Prerequisite Phase emphasizes on program preparation before submitting the self-study to COPRA. Once a program becomes a NASPAA member, it is demanded to build faculty and administrative support for accreditation within the program, to attend at least one accreditation institute or workshop at a NASPAA conference or at a regional venue in the two year period before submitting its self-study report, and to complete the self-study report, which asks for three or more year's data on accreditation standards.

Eligibility Phase starts when a program submits its eligibility application and its fee. Then, it will be reviewed by the Eligibility Committee. The Committee makes a recommendation to the Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation (COPRA), who in turn recommends whether or not the program continues to the self-study phase. COPRA may provide feedback to the program to help guide it through the self-study process to ensure that the self-study report is thorough.

Self-Study Phase. After the program has been through the eligibility application, it has to submit its self-study report within three years. The report gathers the needed data and addresses any items of feedback from COPRA to demonstrate the program's performance. At this phase, NASPAA may provide mentors to assist the program in preparing of its self-study report if requested.

Accreditation Cohort Phase. This stage takes eleven months to complete. At the beginning, COPRA reviews the program's self-study, writes an interim report, and recommends a site-visit. Then, the program responds to the interim report and works with a NASPAA team to plan for a site-visit. The program's site-visit is usually conducted between January and March of the cohort year. After the site-visit has finished, the site-visit team prepares the site-visit report for the program and COPRA. The program may be requested to provide any information for the commission's final review.

Once the Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation Programs has reviewed and approved the final report of cohort programs. The final decision letter will be sent to the program by the end of July. The university's chief academic officer is also notified of the decision. Programs are accredited for a period of seven years.

NASPAA's current accreditation current standard was amended in 2014, and is comprised of the following seven categories, (NASPAA, 2014):

- 1) Managing the Program Strategically. The key assessment issues include mission statement, performance expectations, and program evaluation.
- 2) Matching Governance with the Mission. Key assessment issues include administrative capacity, and faculty governance.

3) Matching Operations with the Mission: Faculty Performance. Key assessment issues include faculty qualifications, faculty diversity, and research scholarship and service.

4) Matching Operations with the Mission: Serving Students. Key assessment issues include student recruitment, student admissions, support for students, and student diversity.

5) Matching Operations with the Mission: Student Learning. Key assessment issues include, universally required competencies, mission-specific required competencies, mission-specific elected competencies, and professional competencies.

6) Matching Resources with the Mission. The key assessment issue is resource adequacy.

7) Matching Communications with the Mission. The key assessment issue is communications to stakeholders.

2.4.4.2 The European Association for Public Administration Accreditation (EAPAA)

The European Association for Public Administration Accreditation (EAPAA) was established in 1999 as the accreditation agency for Public Administration programs within Europe. The EAPAA's accreditation system was modelled after the NASPAA system, it attempts to improve and assure the quality of European public administration programs. At present, EAPAA is the only quality assurance agency in Public Administration which is active throughout Europe. More than fifty Public Administration programs across Europe are by now accredited (EAPAA, 2013).

EAPAA's program evaluation is based on a peer-review system and assessed by internationally-recognized and experienced academics in Public Administration. It is a mission-based evaluation, which concerns the program's backgrounds and conditions while maintaining general quality standards. The accreditation will be granted for a seven year period. EAPAA's evaluation framework is comprised of these following standards, (EAPAA, 2013, pp. 5-10):

1) Domain of Public Administration is defined in the broadest sense, as a multidisciplinary character, which embraces the consideration of

democratic values. Accredited programs are considered for both technical proficiency and teaching Public Administration according to academic standards.

2) Mission-based accreditation. These standards are interpreted based on the program's mission and objectives and its achievement in fulfilling its mission.

3) Level. The program's expected learning outcomes correspond in accordance to general qualifications for the international academics of a Master degree.

4) Relation to practice and internships. The standard focuses on a provision of adequate training for practical skills in correspondence with the program's mission and objectives, which relates to the public administration profession.

5) Curriculum. The standard emphasizes the following components: Curriculum content, to cover the general idea of public administration as a multidisciplinary field of study, and contributing to the students' preparation for professional academic level roles in the public sector or academic public administration teaching or research positions; Curriculum Length, to be consistency with the program's objectives; and Results, the program's graduates achieve the expected learning outcomes.

6) Quality improvement and innovation. The standard emphasizes the following components: Program accomplishment of its objectives; Curriculum development, in which all relevant stakeholders are involved; and external reviews, which provides evidence that the recommendations received during previous reviews have led to the program's changes.

7) Student assessment focuses on the evaluation of students' performance with respect to the curriculum's objectives.

8) Program jurisdiction focuses on the framework of the institutional organization, responsible selected person for the program, according to the organizational regulations.

9) Faculty. The standard emphasizes the following components: Faculty nucleus, those who are responsible in the teaching, the research, and the academic service aspects of the program; Faculty qualifications, including a

proportion of the professional faculty nucleus actively involved in the program who hold a doctorate or other equivalent terminal academic degree in their field. Also, their academic qualifications, professional experience, and teaching ability; and, Diversity of faculties, including their gender and races which is in accordance with the societal targets.

10) Admission of students. The admission goal, policy, and standards, must be in accordance with the program's mission objectives. The program should attempt to balance a percentage of gender among its students, which is in accordance with the principles of gender equality as specified by the host institution of the program.

11) Supportive services and facilities must be adequate to comprehend the program efficiently and effectively.

12) Student services, including advisement, progress appraisal, and career guidance, must be adequately provided to the program's students according to the program's mission

13) Public relations focuses on the provision of adequate information on the program to the candidates and the public.

2.5 Thailand Qualification Framework: TQF

The Thailand Qualification Framework (TQF) is an education qualification system adapted from The Australian Qualification Framework (Paitoon Sinlarat, et al., 2009). It was adopted to standardize the quality of education, which helps facilitate credit transfer between institutions and ensure the systematic improvement of education delivery in the following five areas; knowledge, ethics and morals, cognitive skills, interpersonal skills and responsibility, and technical skills, so that the graduates from various institutions will have the same conformance (Office of Higher Education Commission, 2006).

In the context of higher education, the Thailand Qualifications Framework was designed to support the implementation of higher educational guidelines enforced by the National Education Act 1999. The framework does not only standardize the quality of various degrees, it also is a means that enables a clear correspondence of

academic degrees granted by overseas higher education institutions. As it was stated in the National Qualification Framework, "Framework will help to provide appropriate points of comparison in academic standards for institutions in their planning and internal quality assurance processes, for evaluators involved in external reviews, and for employers, in understanding the skills and capabilities of graduates they may employ" (Office of Higher Education commission, 2006).

2.5.1 Levels of the Framework and Core Contents of the Programs

The levels in the framework are categorized into six levels: 1) Advanced Diploma level, 2) Bachelor level, 3) Graduate Diploma level, 4) Master level, 5) Higher Graduate Diploma level, 6) and Doctorate. The framework collects the students' expected learning outcomes into five following domains: ethical and moral development, cognitive skills, interpersonal skills and responsibility, analytical and communication skills, and numerical analysis, communication and information technology. The Thailand Qualifications Framework consists of two strands, which are not mutually exclusive.

1) Academic studies emphasizes the developing of the student's capabilities that will be of substantial value in employment and in everyday life.

2) Professional programs emphasizes comprehensive understanding of theoretical knowledge and research in their fields, and development of problem-solving skills that are appropriate in any context.

However, differences in emphasis between academic studies and professional programs will be reflected in the programs' content and in the titles of awards.

In the context of Public Administration, the program's content on professional subject specification is detailed in Thailand Qualification Framework for Graduate Program in Public Administration, which consists of the five groups of knowledge that reflect the identity of Public Administration, including Public Administrative Theory, Organization and Management, Public Policy, Human Resource Management, and Public Finance and Budgeting (Office of Higher Education Commission, 2015).

2.5.2 Thailand Qualification Framework Implementation and Quality Assurance

The Thailand Qualifications Framework is an essential policy instrument used in the current program-level internal quality assurance. It is imposed by the Ministry of Education for every university in Thailand to follow by producing program self-assessment reports. These consist of TQF 1 to TQF 7.

TQF1 is the curriculum standard, formulated by the Higher Education Commissioner with a subject matter subcommittee which outlines the curriculum. In the field of Public Administration, TQF 1 was launched in 2015. Its details cover department name, degree and program, program description, desired characteristics of graduates, learning outcomes, related professional organizations, program structure, core content of the program, learning strategy and assessment, TQF verification, teacher and instruction support, resources for instruction and administration, instructor development, quality assurance on curriculum and instruction, and putting graduate standards into practice.

TQF2 to TQF 7 are documents which each program must fill out, as follows: TQF 2 is program specification, TQF 3 is course specification, TQF 4 is field experience specifications, TQF5 is a course report, TQF 6 is a field experience report and TQF7 is a program report (Office of Higher Education Commission, 2009).

In terms of quality assurance, the TQF imposes that institutes that provide programs must have quality assurance on the curriculum and instruction according to graduate qualification standards. The main indicators are defined in accordance with the institute's educational quality assurance standards or the indicators.

2.6 Teaching Public Administration in Graduate Studies Programs

In this section, the literature on public administration instruction, in both a general and a graduate studies context, will be reviewed in order to draw out the whole picture of Public Administration education.

2.6.1 The Evolution of Public Administration's Concepts and Thoughts

Public Administration is "a broad ranging and amorphous combination of theory and practice to promote a superior understanding of government and its

relationship with the society it governs, as well as to encourage public policies more responsive to social needs and to institute managerial practices attuned to effectiveness, efficiency, and the deeper human requisites of the citizenry” (Henry, 2009). It is field of inquiry with a diverse scope to advance the necessary knowledge to administrate public affairs.

The establishment of modern public administration came from western countries. In Europe, Von Stein (Singelmann & Singelmann, 1986) proposed that “Public Administration relied on many pre-established disciplines such as political science, public law, sociology, and public finance.” Whereas in the United States, Wilson (1887) proposed that Public Administration is supposed to be a practical science needed to run what was framed in the constitution and practiced efficiently and effectively. Many worldwide scholars have attempted to categorize the Public Administration paradigm (Bidhya Bowornwathana, 1983; Henry, 2009; Pakorn Siriprakob, 2015) to explain the evolution of Public Administration thoughts and concepts. In this study, the paradigm of Public Administration can be categorized as follows (Pakorn Siriprakob, 2015):

Old Public Administration, this paradigm can be described by Weber’s Ideal Type of Bureaucracy (1946). It emphasizes the best form and the most efficient way to design and manage an organization. Hierarchical structure and rule-driven management are the prominent characteristics.

New Public Management, this paradigm was influenced by Osborne and Gaebler’s (1992) *Reinventing Government* and Hood’s (1991) *Public Management for All Seasons* (1991). It focuses on a business-like doctrine to be applied to public organization management, that government and management are entrepreneurial and customer-oriented.

New Public Service, this paradigm was proposed by Denhardt and Denhardt (2000). It reconsidered democratic values, which have been served as the cornerstone of public administration in the context of modern management. The third party’s role: civil society, volunteerism, individual altruism to deliver public service, is emphasized.

2.6.2 The Overview of Master of Public Administration Programs

2.6.2.1 The Overview of Master Degree Programs in Public Administration Worldwide

Supachai Yavaprabhas et al., (2014) surveyed the Master of Public Administration curriculums from high-ranking universities in Asia, Europe and America. It can be summarized as follows:

1) Program's Philosophy

The MPA program's philosophy aims to make Public Administration relevant in each country's administration context and have an impact on the international level, as well as responding to its citizens' demands. Consequently, MPA programs are sought out to produce professional graduates who have a profound understanding of Public Administration core concepts, are able to conduct research, communicate in many languages fluently, use information technology effectively, and have the moral standards and public mind to elevate public services delivery and create well-qualified academics.

2) Program's Objectives

(1) To prepare students with profound understanding of Public Administration on the basis of interdisciplinary standards.

(2) To prepare students with skills for planning and developing public administration.

(3) To prepare students with skills for research in both quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis.

(4) To develop students with leadership.

(5) To prepare students to conduct advanced research in Public Administration.

According to the program's philosophies and objectives, trends in the teaching of Public Administration include the following:

(1) It is interdisciplinary, issue-based learning rather than administration principles and theories. The issues include contemporary issues: political issues, social issues, economic issues, and environmental issues.

(2) Advanced information technology will be utilized to conduct research and management.

(3) Internationalization of the program, for which language skills are highly in need.

3) MPA Programs in Asia

Most MPA programs in the high ranking universities in Asia are international programs concentrating on Public Policy. The course duration is 1-2 years. Most programs are designed for bachelor's graduates from any field to pursue a master degree and serve as a training course for public and private organizations.

The teaching of many programs is in collaboration with elite program in other countries in order to make them into global schools. It emphasizes both theory and practice to prepare students to have relevant skills for working as professional practitioners and high caliber academics in their countries.

For the coursework, almost every program insists that the student learn the politics of the country as a basic requirement, to make the student understand the context of the country's public administration. The elective courses will be selected by the student's interests.

4) MPA Programs in Europe

Most MPA programs in the high ranking universities of Europe concentrate on Public Policy. The course duration is 1-2 years. The courses are designed for international students to exchange their knowledge and expertise, aimed at developing elites, political leaders and government officers, to be highly qualified professional managers with perfect leadership.

The teaching adopts a collaboration monitoring framework from the local, national, and international levels to research and produce a body of knowledge and management innovation for public affairs.

For the coursework, there are majors available for students to study according to their interests.

5) MPA Programs in United States

Most MPA programs in the high ranking universities in the United States concentrate on Public Affairs and Public Administration. The course duration is 1-2 years. They aim at creating the best institution for learning and establishing a foundation for social sciences, and be the best public institution for public services by producing and developing well-qualified researchers, lecturers, and

leaders for advancing science and bringing about knowledge for public affairs at the national and international levels, with a sense of morality and equality.

The teaching attempts to urge students to challenge the old paradigm of Public Administration thought and foster critical thinking to make it relevant to the contexts. There are various elective courses for the students to study according to their interests in order to make specialized academics and professional practitioners.

The subjects in courses are specific to Public Administration, such as Leadership, Public Affairs Administration, Public Finance, and Research Methodology, both Quantitative Analysis and Qualitative Analysis.

2.6.2.2 MPA Programs in Thailand

Most MPA programs in Thailand are operated in the faculty of Political Science. They aim to produce internationally-qualified graduates with multi-disciplinary knowledge of public administration with a moral standard, especially in good governance. Their program philosophy includes producing graduates with excellence in public administration, producing well-qualified graduates who understand their social context and are capable of applying their knowledge toward working with moral standards, and giving opportunities for bachelor's graduates from any field to pursue a Master degree (Supachai Yavaprabhas et al., 2014).

Most MPAs in Thailand are two years programs. The teaching style is lecture-based, supplemented with case-based study. The programs are designated mainly for two targets: academics, and practitioners. For academics the program is designed for full-time students, most of them are new bachelor's graduates from Public Administration programs or related fields such as Political Science, Sociology, Social Administration, or Management Science. The teaching style is lecture-based with group discussion. Students are expected to do a dissertation and publish a research article in a national or international qualified journal.

For practitioners the program is designated for part-time students, most of them are executives or officers in a variety of fields who want to pursue a Master degree. The classes are conducted on weekends or in the evening of weekdays. The teaching style is mostly a block-course, lecture-based and supplemented with case studies. Students are expected to do individual studies and have a comprehensive exam before graduation.

2.7 Tentative Conceptual Framework

In this study, a tentative conceptual framework has been developed based on the Macro-Micro Implementation Concept (Berman, 1978) and a synthesis of literature on factors influencing quality assurance implementation in higher education. The framework proposes two stages of QA implementation to be investigated, the macro level and the micro level.

1) Macro implementation: the study investigates quality assurance implementation at the national level, from the central agency to the universities. The studied factors are roles of supranational and national policy contexts, policymaker factors, and policy content factors.

2) Micro Implementation: the study investigates quality assurance implementation at the institution level, from policy adoption by the universities to their implementation. The studied factors are the contexts of institutions, faculties and programs, i.e. leadership, communication, participation, attitudes, and management factors.

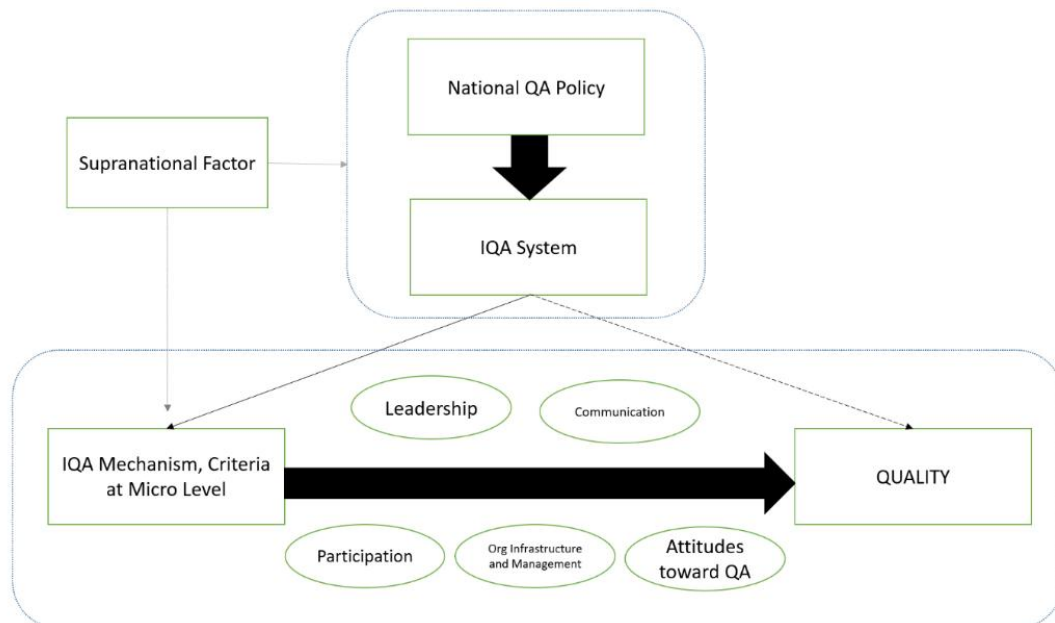


Figure 2.1 Tentative Conceptual Framework

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present qualitative research employed a case-study approach to answer the research questions through various different methods. During two years of research, the author collected data through document analysis and semi-structured interview methods, and also applied observation techniques to gather information from relevant meetings regarding the internal quality assurance and academic standards of Master of Public Administration programs. The research methodology of the present study can be described as follows.

3.1 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is a philosophical framework that guides researchers on how to identify assumptions about a phenomenon and define theoretical perspectives of their research. The interpretivism paradigm was applied in the present research based on the concept of Burrell and Morgan (1979) that focuses on identifying a conceptual framework by using both the nature of social science and the nature of studied phenomenon. According to this interpretivism paradigm, one common assumption about the nature of social science is that social phenomena are constructed and interpreted according to the experiences and perspectives of each person. Therefore, there is an element of subjectivity in the reality of each social phenomenon. In terms of the nature of society, it has been viewed that social changes occur under the same mechanisms. Thus, in the process of finding an explanation for a studied phenomenon, it is important to focus on how to make social mechanisms work in a coordinated way in order to propel the society forward. In the context of the present research, that phenomenon refers to “quality assurance,” which is a systematic mechanism taking place in a dynamic social system based on established guidelines or regulations. Therefore, the phenomenon of quality assurance that was selected for

study in this research has also ordered and changed according to a defined system and mechanism. Considering the nature of social science, in order to understand the implementation of quality assurance in each context, it is essential to understand the feelings and attitudes of each group of social actors within a quality assurance system towards that quality assurance system and its mechanisms, which are different and subjective to each person. This made the author think that an interpretivism paradigm was appropriate to be used in the present research.

3.2 Research Design

A qualitative approach was applied in the present research based on the interpretivism paradigm, which is the philosophical framework that the researcher selected to use. Merriam (1997) suggested that a qualitative approach is ideal for studies that do not aim to test theories or measure variables, but rather focus on understanding a phenomenon through the viewpoints of relevant social actors. This approach has the advantage of enabling researchers to seriously study a phenomenon and obtain more all-round and insightful information so that they can better reveal the complexity of their studied phenomena (Geertz, 1973). In addition, a qualitative approach also enables researchers to answer questions on why and how a phenomenon occurs. Due to these advantages, the author thought that a qualitative approach should be used to investigate “the implementation of the internal quality assurance system in the context of master of public administration programs,” which is a phenomenon dealing with a number of actors and various program contexts. Thus, a wide range of insights, both in terms of data sources and key informants, were required in order to thoroughly understand the implementation of the internal quality assurance system in the context of master of public administration programs, study how each program defines and drives the internal quality assurance system towards quality excellence, examine the roles and attitudes of related actors towards the implementation of the internal quality assurance system, and find out the factors that facilitated or obstructed the implementation of the internal quality assurance system.

The author employed a case-study method in the present research, which is in line with the recommendations proposed by Yin (2014), as follows:

1) A case-study method is suitable for studies that focus on seeking empirical knowledge and examining phenomena, especially contemporary happenings or cases that require in-depth understanding in the context of the real world.

2) A case-study method is usually used in situations where there may be more interesting variables than what is expected and requires several data sources to verify the credibility of data according to a triangulation technique. Theoretical frameworks or propositions that were previously developed can be used as guidelines for data collection and analysis.

Due to the key characteristics of the case-study method discussed above, the author believes that this research method is suitable for the present study that intends to investigate the implementation of the internal quality assurance system in the actual context of master of public administration programs. Moreover, the internal quality assurance that the author selected to study was considered a contemporary phenomenon with high dynamics during the research period. The conceptual framework and variables obtained from the literature review could be used as a rough guideline for data collection. In addition, during the study the author could also add more variables relevant to the implementation of the internal quality assurance system and the linkage between the internal quality assurance system and the quality of master of public administration programs found in each case study. The author relied on a variety of data sources, namely formal documents, annual reports, self-evaluation reports, laws, announcements, and regulations related to the internal quality assurance system of each case study, including in-depth interviews with the policy-makers, inspectors, faculty and program administrators, faculties and support staff involved in the internal quality assurance process, in order to clearly illustrate the implementation of the internal quality assurance system and the linkage between the internal quality assurance system and the quality of master of public administration programs in each case study.

An internal quality assurance policy is implemented in all instructional programs with differences in background and implementation contexts, such as duration of program, type of university, and location. Therefore, in order to reflect the diversity of what actually happened in the implementation of the internal quality assurance system in the context of master of public administration programs, and

compare the similarities and differences between the case studies, a multiple case-study method was employed in the present research.

3.3 Selection of Case Studies

The unit of analysis was the master of public administration programs provided by both public universities and autonomous universities. A purposive sampling technique was applied to select the case studies. The details are as follows.

1) Type of university offering MPA programs: an MPA program is one of the fastest growing programs in Thailand. Based on information from the Office of Higher Education Commission and research on graduate education in public administration, it was found that there are more than 100 MPA programs offered in Thai universities. “However, the growth of MPA programs tends to rely on marketing campaigns, focusing on one same product without creating something new. All MPA programs were quite similar. There were only 4-5 original programs (Anthika Uthaiboot, 2011).” All original MPA programs were found to be provided by public and autonomous universities. In addition, the teaching style and lecturers of the pioneer MPA programs had a strong influence on many other MPA programs. The lecturers of the pioneer MPA programs were regularly invited to give a lecture or criticize the curriculum of other MPA programs. As the MPA programs provided by the public and autonomous universities were considered the original models of other MPA programs in Thailand, public and autonomous universities were selected as case studies in the present research.

2) History and development of MPA programs: Thai MPA programs have been developed for over a half century. However, they have been rapidly growing during the last 20 years. Meanwhile, quality assurance has played an important role in educational management in the past 10-15 years. The researcher alleges that the history of each MPA program would be helpful for illustrating the dynamics of the implementation of the internal quality assurance systems in the context of master of public administration programs. In the present research, the researcher divided the case studies into three groups: 1) old-age MPA programs that initiated MPA education in Thailand, 2) middle-age MPA programs that were

established during the beginning of the expansion of MPA, and 3) new-age MPA programs that had been established less than 10 years ago.

The old-age and middle-age MPA programs were established before the quality assurance policy of the Office of Higher Education Commission was enforced. Therefore, the case studies in these two groups could reflect what happened before and after the implementation of the quality assurance policy. The new-age MPA programs were established after quality assurance was enforced.

3) Location: Public Administration is a practical science that deals with problem-solving in actual contexts. According to a study on the distribution of MPA programs in Thailand, it was found that there are MPA programs offered to students in all regions of the country. Therefore, the researcher selected case studies from every region of Thailand in order to clearly present the implementation of the quality assurance systems in master of public administration programs, both in Bangkok and other regions.

Regarding the selection of case studies, based on information from the Office of Higher Education Commission in 2013, there are 24 MPA programs provided by public and autonomous universities in Thailand (not including Rajabhat Universities). The author selected 6 universities to study in the present research by taking into account the history of programs and location in order to show the differences in dynamics and consequences of the implementation of quality assurance systems in master of public administration programs. The case studies selected by the researcher could be divided into three groups:

1) Old-age MPA programs, which consisted of the MPA program of Chulalongkorn University and the MPA program of the National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA).

2) Middle-age MPA programs offered by regional urban universities, which included the MPA program of Chiang Mai University and the MPA program of Prince of Songkla University.

3) New-age MPA programs offered by regional rural universities, which comprised the MPA program of the University of Phayao and the MPA program of Ubon Ratchathani University.

Table 3.1 Summary of the MPA Programs that are Case Studies in the Present Research

University	Faculty	Region	Year of Establishment
NIDA	Public Administration	Bangkok	1966 (1987)
Chulalongkorn University	Political Science	Bangkok	1983 (1987)
Chiang Mai University	Political Science and Public Administration	North	1988
Prince of Songkla University	Management Sciences	South	1992
Ubon Ratchathani University	Political Science	Northeast	2007
University of Phayao	Political and Social Science	North	2008

Note: The year in brackets is the year in which the part-time MPA program was first offered, in addition to the regular MPA program.

3.4 Data Collection

In order to gain complete information and ensure the validity of data, the author collected the information through various methods, including documentary research, interviews, and observation at national conferences on the quality assurance and educational standards of public administration programs.

3.4.1 Documentary Research

In the present research, the author applied a documentary research method to investigate the rules, regulations, background, work plans, and projects that were relevant to internal quality assurance. This information was helpful for answering questions about the evolution of the quality assurance system in the context of master of public administration programs, determining interview questions, and explaining the context of each case study. The documentary sources of the present study can be summarized as follows.

1) Laws and government policies: the data were collected from the National Education Act B.E.2542, the 15-year Higher Education Framework, the Ministerial Regulation regarding the Systems, Criteria, and Procedures for Internal Quality Assurance B.E.2553, the Ministry of Education's Announcement on Higher Education Standards B.E.2554, the Graduate Program Standard Criteria B.E. 2558, the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education in Public Administration, and the Statement of the Higher Education Commission.

2) Guidelines and criteria for internal quality assurance: the data were collected from the manual for internal quality assurance of the Office of Higher Education Commission, the manual for internal quality assurance of the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Public Organization), the Educational Criteria for Performance Excellence, the Council of the University Presidents of Thailand Quality Assurance (CUPT-QA), and the ASEAN University Network Quality Assurance (AUN-QA).

3) Annual reports and self-assessment reports of higher education institutions: the data were collected from the annual reports and self-assessment reports submitted by the universities and faculties that offer MPA programs.

3.4.2 In-depth Interviews

An interview method is widely used in qualitative research. It is very useful for establishing good relationships and interactions between researchers and informants, and obtaining complete and insightful information. The author selected the key informants for the in-depth interviews using a purposive sampling technique. The key informants of the present study could be divided into four groups, as follows:

1) Three policy administrators in the central organizations responsible for internal quality assurance in Thailand, consisting of the Deputy Secretary General of Higher Education Commission, the Director of the Bureau of Higher Education Standards and Quality, and the former director of The Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Public Organization). The interview questions focused on overall policy and assumptions about internal quality assurance systems in Thailand, an overview of the results of the implementation of the internal quality assurance system, and comments about the internal quality assurance system and the

quality of MPA programs, which would be used to answer the research objectives regarding the internal quality assurance systems in Thailand.

2) A group of faculty and program executives, consisting of the faculty executives responsible for internal quality assurance and the program director or administrative committee. Interview questions concentrated on the definition of curriculum quality, the overview results of the implementation of the internal quality assurance system at the faculty and program levels, comments on the current and previous tools and criteria for internal quality assurance, and recommendations on an appropriate internal quality assurance system in the context of each faculty and program. The obtained data would be analyzed in order to find answers for the research objectives regarding the linkage between the internal quality assurance system and the quality of MPA programs, and propose effective measures to develop an internal quality assurance system in the MPA programs.

3) A group of program faculties were questioned about their attitudes towards the quality of the MPA programs and the implementation of the internal quality assurance systems in the MPA programs, the linkage between the internal quality assurance system and operations, and recommendations on an appropriate internal quality assurance system in the context of each program. The obtained data would be analyzed in order to find answers for the research objectives regarding the linkage between the internal quality assurance system and the quality of MPA programs, and propose effective measures to develop an internal quality assurance system in the MPA programs.

4) A group of support staff taking care of the internal quality assurance system in each faculty or program were questioned about implementation of the internal quality assurance system at the operational level. The obtained data could reflect the actual operations involved with the implementation of the internal quality assurance system in each faculty and MPA program and would be used to answer the research objectives regarding the linkage between the internal quality assurance system and the quality of MPA programs, and propose effective measures to develop an internal quality assurance system in the MPA programs.

Table 3.2 Number of the Key Informants for the In-depth Interviews

Group of Key Informants	CU	NIDA	CMU	PSU	UP	UBU	Total
Faculty and program administrators	3	3	2	2	3	2	15
Program faculties	1	1	1	1	2	2	8
Support staff responsible for the internal quality assurance of the faculty or program.	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Total	5	5	4	4	6	5	29

A semi-structured interview was selected to collect the data because it could be used to obtain all relevant information involved with the research questions. This technique was also flexible enough to additionally collect new information from the key informants in each case study. This enabled the researcher to better understand implementation of the internal quality assurance in different contexts.

Considering the design of research tools, the researcher developed 4 sets of semi-structured questions for the 4 groups of key informants: policy administrators in the central authorities responsible for internal quality assurance, faculty and program administrators, the program faculties, and the support staff taking care of the internal quality assurance in each faculty and program.

The following steps were carried out in order to ensure the validity of the research tools.

- 1) The author reviewed documents and previous research related to internal quality assurance in order to establish interview topics and questions. The scope of questions was set to mainly focus on the overall internal quality assurance procedures in higher education institutions.

- 2) The author drafted the interview questions and semi-structured interview forms and presented them in a group seminar in order to receive feedback

and suggestions from the lecturer and fellow students. The obtained comments and suggestions were used to modify the interview questions.

3) The author presented the modified questions to the advisor, the experts in internal quality assurance, the administrators, and the internal quality assurance practitioners in order to ensure the appropriateness, clarity, and content validity of the interview questions.

4) The modified questions were tried out in Prince of Songkla University and Ubon Ratchathani University. The author found that there were additional topics that should be added in the interview, especially for internal quality assurance at the program level and the Thai Qualifications Framework for Graduate Program in Public Administration, which were seriously implemented during the data collection period. Therefore, the author added these topics in the interview form.

5) The author used the final interview form to collect data.

3.4.3 Observations at the National Conference on Internal Quality Assurance and Educational Standards of Public Administration Programs

The author participated in the national conference on internal quality assurance that was organized by the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Public Organization), and a brainstorming session on quality assurance in public administration education and the qualifications framework for higher education in public administration, in order to collect related data through an observation technique. The information obtained from the observations would be used to analyze implementation of the internal quality assurance system in the context of master of public administration programs in Thailand.

3.5 Data Analysis

An inductive approach was applied in the process of data analysis. The author identified topics for analysis and classified the data obtained from the data collection and temporary conceptual framework based on different contexts. Data analysis is involved with data editing, data reduction, and data summarizing, including creating a

theme, designing a diagram to explain relationships between data, and drawing conclusions (Barnard & Ryan, 2010).

Data analysis is concerned with two main areas: finding the pattern of phenomena, and explaining why and how those phenomena occur. Researchers need to identify, develop, modify, and interpret the main concept before presenting it through their point of view (Bernard & Ryan, 2010, pp. 109-111). As for the present study, the author wanted to describe the pattern and linkage between the internal quality assurance tools, the factors supporting or obstructing the implementation of the internal quality assurance system, and the quality of public administration education by focusing on the context of the master of public administration programs that were the case studies in the present research.

In the present study, a thematic analysis was carried out in order to create a theme. The author used the conceptual framework derived from the literature review as a guideline for studying all key issues. The data obtained from the fieldwork were also utilized according to different contexts. The author believes that the thematic analysis method was appropriate and useful for the present study since it helped to identify, analyze, and report relevant issues by referring to the obtained data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This method basically helped the author to organize and describe sets of data in a thorough manner. Moreover, this method also helped the researcher to better interpret the data in various aspects (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In many cases, the results of this method were more advanced than what was expected according to the conceptual framework. The strength of this method is that it functioned as a lens, usefully enabling the researcher to analyze the data in a flexible and independent way. At the same time, it could provide more insightful analysis results and clearly reflect the complexity of the data. This method was appropriate for the nature of the present study which aims to present various dimensions of the internal quality assurance system in the context of master of public administration programs in various dimensions. In each case study, there were new aspects that should be additionally discussed apart from the topics shown in the research questions and the conceptual framework.

In order to analyze the data, the 5 steps of data analysis that were adapted from the concept of Braun and Clarke (2006), comprising 1) becoming familiar with the

data, 2) generating initial codes, 3) searching for themes, 4) reviewing and naming themes, and 5) producing the report, were completely carried out. The details are as follows.

1) Becoming familiar with the data

At this stage, the author had to get familiar with a large amount of data through data organizing. All related documents were classified into groups, including formal documents, transcripts of the interviews with various groups of key informants, and fieldwork records. This step enabled the author to systematically prepare all documents. It also made the author familiar with the data and able to analyze the collected data in terms of trends and overview.

2) Generating initial codes

This step had to be carried out after transcribing the interview data. The key initial codes gained from the interview data were identified in the form of a group of words which were related to the research topics, such as quality of graduates, quality of teaching, quality of research, publication of articles, leadership of deans, leadership of program administrators, communication, positive attitude, and negative attitude. The initial codes were generated based on the obtained data and the context of each case study. In this step, a software program for qualitative research analysis was used to generate the initial codes, which was useful for collecting sets of answers obtained from the interviews in each case study. These answers were beneficial for explaining a cross-case study analysis.

3) Searching for themes

The codes generated in the previous step were categorized in order to find themes and patterns in the data gained from the interview and documentary research. The codes were reclassified using broader terms, for example, the codes “quality of research” and “publication of articles” were reclassified into the theme “quality of academic works”, or the codes “leadership” and “communication” were reclassified into the theme “factors supporting the internal quality assurance system.”

4) Reviewing and naming themes

In this step, the themes were reviewed and reclassified for analyzing. After the previous step was completed, the researcher waited for some time before reviewing and reclassifying similar themes into the same group. The final themes

were defined by taking into account the content and information obtained from the interview and documentary research and the temporary framework derived from the literature review, including related concepts and theories. This was to make sure that all relevant issues were included in the analysis.

5) Producing the report

This was the step through which all data were thoroughly and completely understood. The themes were used to explain the research results in an organized way, which were beneficial for understanding all the topics and their relationships with each other and useful for writing the final report.

3.6 Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of qualitative research is involved with the reliability and validity of research results. Scholars in the field (Johnson, 1997) have proposed many strategies to verify data reliability. One method that has been widely used to verify the reliability of data is triangulation, which can be variously carried out in the dimension of data, methodologies, and theories. In the present study, the author applied the following two types of triangulation.

1) Data triangulation, which mainly verifies the reliability of the data by taking account of data sources. For the present study, the author collected the data from various groups of informants, including faculty administrators, program administrators, faculties and support staff responsible for the internal quality assurance system, in order to obtain insightful data about internal quality assurance.

2) Methodological triangulation, which is associated with using different methods to collect data. In the present research, documentary research, semi-structured interviews, and observation techniques were all used to collect the data from each case study.

3.7 Summary of Research Methodology

The research methodology was summarized and matched with the research objectives, data sources, data collection techniques, and research tools, as shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Summary of Research Methodology

Research Objectives	Data Sources	Data Collection Techniques	Research Tools
1) To study the implementation of the internal quality assurance system in the context of master of public administration programs in Thailand.	1) Legal documents, governmental policies, resolutions of the Higher Education Commission, and manuals for the internal quality assurance. 2) Policymakers and scholars' point of view.	1) Documentary research 2) In-depth interview	1) Semi-structured interview form for the in-depth interview with the policymakers and scholars.
2) To investigate the linkage between the internal quality assurance system and the quality of master of public administration programs in Thailand.	1) Manuals for the internal quality assurance and self-assessment report of each case study 2) Faculty and program administrators, faculties, and support staffs' point of view.	1) Documentary research 2) In-depth interview 3) Observation	1) Semi-structured interview form for the in-depth interview with the faculty and program administrators. 2) Semi-structured interview form for the in-depth interview with the program faculties. 3) Semi-structured interview form for the in-depth interview with the support staff.
3) To propose measurements to develop an internal quality assurance system in the master of public	1) Manuals for the internal quality assurance and self-assessment report of each case study	1) Documentary analysis 2) In-depth interview	1) Semi-structured interview form for the in-depth interview with the policymakers and scholars.

Table 3.3 (Continued)

Research Objectives	Data Sources	Data Collection Techniques	Research Tools
administration programs in Thailand.	2) Policymakers, scholars, Faculty and program administrators, faculties, and support staffs' point of view.		2) Semi-structured interview form for the in-depth interview with the faculty and program administrators. 3) Semi-structured interview form for the in-depth interview with the program faculties. 4) Semi-structured interview form for the in-depth interview with the support staff.

CHAPTER 4

THE DEVELOPMENT OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PROGRAMS IN THAILAND

In this chapter, the development of quality assurance in public administration programs in Thailand is discussed. The data for this chapter have been gathered by interviewing policymakers in the office of Higher Education Commission, renowned academics in the field of quality assurance in education, and MPA program' executives, as well as by collecting information from several documents. All of the information in this section was gathered in order to answer the research question regarding how the quality assurance system was formulated and implemented in the context of master of public administration programs in Thailand.

The development of quality assurance in public administration programs in Thailand can be divided into two major periods: the pre-quality assurance period and the quality assurance period.

4.1 The pre-quality assurance period involves the quality of education before quality assurance in higher education was formulated and implemented.

4.2 The quality assurance period can be divided into three phases as follows.

4.2.1 Quality assurance, introduction phase: 1994-1997

4.2.2 Quality assurance, implementation phase: 2007-2014

4.2.3 Quality assurance during the transition phase: 2014-present

4.1 Pre-Quality Assurance Period

It has been over a hundred years since the first university of Thailand, Chulalongkorn University, was founded in 1916. In those pioneer days, public administration was one of the first four courses taught in the university as a result of King Chulalongkorn's attempt to construct his new bureaucratic system to modernize

Thailand. Graduates from the university primarily served the state's departments. Ostensibly, the evaluation by quality assurance in education did not exist then. During the period of time following, the level of quality of teaching and learning in public administration was subject to each university or faculty. Thus, the levels of quality of teaching and learning were different. In 1959 the Office of the Educational Council was established, which is an organization intended to centralize universities under the authority of various departments of the government. This was a significant turning point since, instead of the universities themselves, there was a central organization to scrutinize the quality of the universities (Vanchai Sirichana, 1994, p. 29)

In 1972, the Ministry of University Affairs was founded in order to control the quality of education in universities and faculties. This decision-making authority was decentralized to universities because the ministry became flexible in examining the quality of the bachelor program curricula of each university. There was a committee that carried out the examination, but after 1972 universities were able to evaluate the quality of their curricula on their own (Vanchai Sirichana, 1994). At that time, universities were allowed to open courses by themselves. This meant that no other organizations took part in quality checks. Furthermore, the ministry was not really strict with the quality of universities (Nongluck Paholvej, 1998).

4.2 Quality Assurance Period

This period began after the declaration of governmental policy related to quality assurance in education. It can be divided into three phases as follows.

4.2.1 Quality Assurance's Introduction Phase: 1994-2007

During this period of time, the term quality assurance in education was initially used among Thai university communities. The Council of University Presidents of Thailand initiated the system in 1994. This is the point at which the development of quality assurance in higher education began. The focus of quality assurance in this period was on the prestigious universities of the country while less well-known universities did not actually participate in the process. Moreover, the universities were not even forced to join the evaluation; they had the opportunity to

choose whether to join or not. In fact, universities in general did not really have awareness in this regard. Despite the standard proposed by the Ministry of University Affairs, universities had their own way of organization. Furthermore, the idea of this quality assurance announced in 2002 was only a loose framework and was not really effective.

4.2.1.1 The Context of Quality Assurance

The development of quality assurance in higher education in this period was driven by the following factors.

1) Pressure from the Higher Education Academic Community

The attempt to initiate quality assurance in Thai higher education began in 1994. The Council of University Presidents of Thailand, which is an organization that consists of members from universities throughout the country, was the first to initiate the project. There were guidelines, measurements, and methods fostering the project, all of which were formulated by a committee, to find a way to establish principles, spot problems, and to find approaches to improving the quality assurance system (Nongluck Paholvej, 1998, p. 23). Some of the problems found in this early process were that university professors were ineffective at work, there were few leading scholars at that time, and most importantly, the transition in Thai bureaucratic system impeded further improvement.

Because of the mentioned problems, the Council of University Presidents of Thailand proposed the three following policy alternatives for quality assurance: quality assurance by regulating personnel administration, quality assurance through the review of the faculty's performance, and quality assurance according to the faculty's structural and system development.

2) Government Policy

On 7 July, 1996, the government launched a policy encouraging quality assurance in education among universities and demanded them to comply with the regulations (Lao, 2013). This policy concentrated on how to produce a graduate of quality in every field. Therefore, there had to be a set of rules establishing how universities managed their organization in accordance with international standards. Coordination was encouraged among universities, especially in the process of quality assurance. There was also the idea that the budgets to be granted to each university

should be based on the performance measured by quality assurance assessment. However, not all universities in the country were forced to join. This only raised awareness among the university personnel only the individuals in university education knew what it was and why it was crucial and so the plan was not capable of bringing about any change.

Nonetheless, in 1999, the National Education Act was enacted, which forced all the universities to use quality assurance in education. At this time, quality assurance was becoming widespread and participation in the process, which once was only by choice, became an obligation.

3) International Support

There was international support in terms of technical support during this period of time, and the emergence of quality assurance in education came along with the help of international institutes. The Ministry of University Affairs was given a hand by two world-leading educational institutes: The British Council, the UK's international organization for cultural relations and education, and the Fulbright Scholar Program, a program of the United States Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Due to this assistance, the ministry was able to use the methods learned as a prototype for further use in the quality assurance system.

4) The Expansion of MPA Programs

Since 1997, the master of public administration programs have expanded to serve the needs of students throughout the country. This is why the quality of the courses taught in different universities varied. The expansion of the programs was a result of the fact that many government officers wanted to have a higher education, and the master of public administration programs were so popular that some courses were taught nearby official places for the convenience of the students. For example, Chulalongkorn University had a course especially for people working in the Royal Thai Air Force and even taught in the Air force camp. Moreover, some universities opened more campuses in order to teach courses outside the capital city. Most importantly, all of these courses were taught after office hours and on weekends.

4.2.1.2 Quality Assurance Key Actors

The focus on quality assurance in higher education during this period primarily involved policymakers and the scale of the universities and faculties. There were two levels of key actors: the national level and the institutional level

At the national level, there were four key actors playing a role.

1) The Council of University Presidents of Thailand is an organization that has played an important role in quality assurance in higher education since 1994. There was a committee whose responsibility was to improve the system in the academic context. Moreover, it also proposed policy alternatives for the quality assurance process, and this encouraged authorities to be active in the development of higher education quality in Thailand.

2) The Ministry of University Affairs is an organization that is known to be the main authority regarding Thai higher education. The ministry proposed nine components of internal quality assessment, based on three higher education management philosophies—academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and accountability—as a guideline to develop the criteria and indicators of internal quality assurance. The components included the following: philosophy, commitment, objectives, and implementation plans; graduate production; student development activities; research; academic services; preservation of arts and culture; administration and management; finance and budgeting; and a system and mechanism for quality assurance (Office of Higher Education Commission, 2014).

3) The Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Public Organization), ONESQA, is an organization that has the duty to conduct the external quality assurance by relying on eight quality criteria: quality of graduates; teaching and learning; academic support; research and innovation; academic services; preservation of arts and culture; administration and management; and the internal quality assurance system. In order to implement these external quality criteria, ONESQA was still not ready or well-organized enough. Thus, there were excessive indicators and the duration of the evaluation was limited as well. The quality measured was a concentration that relied on the indicators, not the efficacy of the process.

4) The Office of the Public Sector Development Commission, OPDC is an organization played a role in the system called Thailand International Public Sector Standard Management System and Outcomes, PSO, which state universities were required to pay attention to.

All four organizations during this period worked individually and separately, and the lack of cooperation brought about overlapping duties in terms of the quality assurance among them.

At the institutional level, when quality assurance policy was implemented in universities, the executives of universities and faculty members were significant actors.

1) Executives of universities were always the people setting approaches to adopt quality assurance and to implement it in the university. Mostly top universities such as Chulalongkorn University, Chiang Mai University, and Prince of Songkla University were the prototypes that other universities followed. In all three universities mentioned, faculty members from different faculties were selected to be on the university's board and most of them were people in the science fields such as the Faculty of Health Science, the Faculty of Engineering, or the Faculty of Education. It was rare to see faculty members in the fields of the social sciences sitting on a board.

2) The deans of faculties were the people that adopted the university's quality assurance policy to be implemented at the faculty level. The present study found that most of the deans followed the policy of their own universities, and they did not really understand the concept of quality assurance in higher education and did not even think it was important.

4.2.1.3 Policy Instruments for Quality Assurance Implementation

In this period of time, the quality assurance system still did not exist in Thai higher education. The pre-audit of curricula by a committee at the Ministry of University Affairs was a key instrument for curriculum quality control. It assumed that the curriculum approved by the committee of the Ministry of University Affairs was certified.

In 1995, the Ministry of University Affairs proposed a guideline concerning the quality components for developing quality assurance criteria and indicators. This became the foundation of the internal quality assurance in Thailand.

4.2.1.4 The Implementation of Quality Assurance

There were two levels in the implementation of quality assurance in higher education: the policy level and operational level. At the policy level, the Council of University Presidents of Thailand proposed policy alternatives for quality assurance in higher education, including quality assurance by regulating personnel administration, quality assurance through the faculty's performance review, and quality according to the faculty's structural and system development. After that, the Ministry of University Affairs launched an "Announcement on Quality Assurance in Higher Education," which helped to encourage implementation. Two subcommittees were appointed to develop the regulations and the tools to implement the quality assurance, as listed below (Office of Higher Education Commission, 2014).

1) The Subcommittee on Higher Education Standards was responsible for formulating quality assurance policy and practices, and for supervising the accreditation process. The committee consisted of representatives from the Ministry of University Affairs, several academic associations, professional associations, experts in each field, and representatives of employers of graduates.

2) The Subcommittee on Quality Assurance System Development was responsible for developing three manuals to be used in implementing quality assurance, including IQA's indicator manual, a self-assessments writing manual, and an IQA assessment manual.

At the operational level, the universities participating in the programs of quality assurance joined on their own. The universities then further improved the quality assurance system under the framework imposed by the Ministry of University Affairs. Not surprisingly, the leading universities of the country were the pioneers that were enthusiastic about quality assurance, while other universities claimed that they were still not ready for this change, or did not actually think that quality assurance was vital. This was perhaps because the criteria from the Ministry of Universities were not clear enough. Moreover, quality assurance in higher education was not obligatory.

Later, the Ministry of University Affairs changed its name to the "Office of Higher Education Commission" and launched a pilot project for quality assurance, especially among the faculties in the field of science.

4.2.1.5 The Effects of Quality Assurance on Higher Education

The quality assurance in higher education during this period did not affect much the higher education system. There were policies and the quality assurance prototype led to further assurance rather than assurance in action. Most of the higher education institutions did not pay serious attention to quality assurance. In addition, those institutions that adopted the quality assurance lacked comprehension of the whole assurance system. There were a few universities that did well. For example, Chulalongkorn University developed its own criteria to improve the quality of education on its own. The system was called “CU-QA 84,” which was suitable for internal departments.

4.2.1.6 The Effects of Quality Assurance on MPA Programs

During this period, there was no evident effect of quality assurance on MPA programs. As mentioned above, MPA programs did not take quality assurance seriously. In addition, the criteria became difficult to follow. Further, most of the universities did not develop their own quality assurance system. Executives and faculty members of MPA programs were not even aware of the issue.

4.2.2 Quality Assurance Implementation Phase: 2007-2014

During these years, quality assurance in higher education was taken into account as a national standard in order to bridge the quality gaps among universities. This was also helpful for students in terms of their choice of universities and courses since quality assurance in higher education came with accountability and standardization. The standards could be reached by following the lists in the internal quality assurance manual carefully. Nine components developed by the Ministry of University Affairs influenced to the quality assurance of this period. The analysis in this part of the present discussion will focus on what happened during these seven years differently from the earlier period.

4.2.2.1 The Context of Quality Assurance

The development of quality assurance in higher education in this periods was driven by the following factors.

1) Government Policy

Despite the political instability during this period, all government policies emphasized educational quality. First, the Abhisit Vejjajiva

government's educational policy aimed at leveraging vocational education quality and making higher education excellent. The government launched "The Stronger Thailand Project," which provided special funding to encourage national research universities' missions on research and development in order to make them world class universities. (Abhisit Vejjajiva, 2008) Second, the Yingluck Shinnawattra government's educational policy aimed at developing higher education to make it relevant to the demands of the market. The government also launched projects funding researchers in hope that Thai higher education would reach the international standards (Yingluck Shinnawattra, 2011).

2) International Competition

During this period, university ranking caught the public's attention. There was a wide variety of ranking institutes, namely, QS University Ranking, Time Higher Education, Webometric. Consequently, there was some pressure among Thai leading universities to be seen high in the rankings. Moreover, accreditation from international professional associations was taken into account.

In Southeast Asia, the ASEAN University Network (AUN) launched a quality framework to foster and encourage Thai universities to be more active and keen on quality assurance in education.

3) The Continuous Expansion of MPA Programs

As mentioned earlier, public administration was so popular that there was a huge expansion in the number of universities offering courses in this area throughout Thailand. Not only was the bachelor's degree well admired by students but also the master's degree was very marketable among officers of the government wishing to pursue their education. As a result, there was a high demand for hiring professors that had graduated from prestigious universities to teach these courses as part-time professors. There was also the need to hire more professors that could conduct thesis defenses. At the same time, many began to question the excessive number of graduates in public administration and the competence of these new graduates. Hence, the Office of Higher Education Commission, which was responsible for this issue, realized the consequences of the situation and attempted to keep a close eye it.

There was another problem during this period. Scholars and sharp professors of famous universities whose age was near retirement were increasing while new graduates could not live up to the standards of these retiring professors.

4.2.2.2 Quality Assurance Key Actors

The focus on quality assurance in higher education during this time primarily involved policymakers and the scale of universities and faculties. There were two levels of key actors: the national level and the institutional level.

At the national level, the Office of Higher Education Commission and the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Public Organization) played important roles.

1) The Office of Higher Education Commission was the authority in imposing indicators and regulations relating to evaluation. It made an attempt to make quality assurance interdisciplinary and universal for all organizations involved, and it made an effort to carry out more internal evaluation as well as raise awareness among the personnel working for universities throughout the country. The organization sometimes managed conferences disseminating the important information that it felt that personnel should grasp. The focus was on executives of universities and deans of faculties.

2) The National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Public Organization) was an organization that conducted external quality assurance in universities and faculties, resulting in solemnity in adopting quality assurance among universities. During this period, there were two rounds of external quality assessment. The first one was conducted from 2006 to 2010 and contained seven standards which included 48 indicators. The second one was conducted from 2011 to 2015 and contained only four standards along with 18 indicators for the universities to achieve.

At the institutional level, when universities adopted the policy of quality assurance, they applied the policy by using micro implementation. Executives of universities, deans of faculties, and faculties' members were getting involved.

1) Executives of universities were those that took care of the quality of their own universities taking into consideration the whole picture. They

encourage their personnel to follow the steps of quality assessment in order to attain the standards of internal quality that the Office of Higher Education Commission imposed. They even took care of communication from their university to the public and public relations so as to gain trust among people in general. They became very serious about quality assurance. Some even put more pressure on their faculties which did not perform well enough. Furthermore, prestigious universities even adopted the standards of assessment from international organizations to be used by some faculties just to make sure that their universities were really qualified and of high standard.

2) Executives of faculties and departments mainly followed the policy of their own universities without participating in creating or devising steps and methods in quality assurance. Most executives had a good understanding about quality assurance and were responsible for supervising the faculties' quality assurance in accordance with university policy. In 2010, quality assurance at the departmental level was implemented, and the departmental executives then had more important roles.

3) Faculties' members during the early period, and supporting staff of faculties responsible for assessment, helped to prepare piles of documents to be used during the process of assessment. This was because before the staff that took care of academic plans had to do this, and the process of preparation gave them a lot of work. Later, the assessment was more complex and complicated in several aspects, especially in terms of documents. Thus, to make the work easier, some people were assigned to be responsible for this job specifically.

4.2.2.3 Policy Instruments for Quality Assurance Implementation

There was one important policy instrument in the implementation of the internal quality assessment—a handbook named the “Manual for the Internal Quality Assurance for Higher education Institutions.” This book was significant in three ways (Office of Higher Education Commission, 2014).

First, this manual focused on the quality of the faculty and its departments in a comprehensive way, including input, process, and output.

Second, the assessment focused on objective assessors that strictly followed the lists of indicators and gave points to universities relying on the manual. Some of the indicators concerned the qualification of professors, academic

production, and research. All of these were intended to go along with the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) principle.

Third, the components of the assessment concerned differences among universities. Generally, universities had their own missions and target groups and were assessed, based on their categorized groups. Some were in the group concentrating on teaching and conducting research, some teaching and community service, some teaching and preserving art and culture, and some simply teaching. In 2010, there were more newly-categorized groups of universities according to the Thai Higher Education Standard, including universities mainly teaching undergraduate students, those mainly teaching graduate students, those that specialized in specific subjects mainly teaching undergraduate students, and those concentrating on doing research and teaching graduate students.

4.2.2.4 The Implementation of Quality Assurance

There were two levels in the implementation of quality assurance in higher education: policy level and operational level.

At the policy level, creating understanding and raising awareness of quality culture was a priority for the Office of Higher Education Commission's missions on quality assurance since they helped improve the assessment system and made it a process of continuous improvement. During this period, quality assurance in higher education was implemented by law enforcement. Hence, executives were invited to attend conferences and trainings related to this issue. The outcome from the process of assessment would be taken into account so as to recommend measurements for faculties' improvements to reach standards. When the personnel in the setting grasped the assessment, the task would go more smoothly.

In 2010, the Office of Higher Education Commission initiated a project named Education Criteria for Performance Excellence (EdPEX), which was a development of the Malcom Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA). This was created so that universities and faculties could follow some simple steps first before improving themselves to achieve excellent quality. The participants in the project were voluntary, and many of them were faculty in the field of health sciences and engineering.

At the operational level, due to the aforementioned law enforcement, universities and faculties had to conform to the criteria imposed by authority. The assessment process during this period primarily concentrated on the structure of the academic institutes and their document preparation, including self-assessment reports. Each faculty reported its performance as a whole, and the documents were evidence of this. In 2010, some universities began to attend EdPEX projects as well as to adopt other quality criteria that they assumed suitable to apply to their organization's quality improvement. For instance, Chiang Mai universities adopted the criteria of the Thailand Quality Award, TQA, in their administration together with trying to use other international criteria that were approved by official organizations. In addition, many universities formed an affiliation of their own so that they could exchange and share ideas related to problems and solutions in the process of quality assurance.

Apart from document preparation, interpreting the criteria written in the manual was strict. However, to relieve the tension among universities, the team of assessors performed the assessment in an amicable manner. In other words, the assessors would pay attention to the documents relevant to the self-assessment of each institute as well as follow the steps of standardized evaluation on site visits. The process of evaluation usually took two days. Thereafter, the group of assessors would give some unofficial comments. Many universities, however, paid more attention to the scores received from the evaluation because they were competing with other universities rather than take the comments into consideration for further internal improvement of their organization.

4.2.2.5 The Effect of Quality Assurance on Higher Education

Overall, the universities were enthusiastic about the quality assurance during this time. They imposed policies of their own in order to conform to the criteria of the assessment. Complying with the manual, they planned and managed their structure, systems, and work processes to achieve the expected quality. This yielded some positive results in the management of newly-established faculties and encouraged professors to create more research and publications. However, critics argued that the consequences of the assessment were ineffective for five reasons.

First, universities concentrated on the scores given in the assessment. This was because the criteria imposed in the manual misled the readers to follow only

the written indicators instead of improving the quality of the organization. This was not sustainable according to some people.

Second, universities and agencies responsible for quality assurance assessment lacked clear communication. Accordingly, document preparation became the focus of the assessment since universities misinterpreted the objective of the assessment.

Third, the criteria were frequently changed. This caused difficulties among universities because they had to use new documents and begin working from the beginning just to make certain that the reports would be in accordance with the new criteria. Moreover, a lot of human energy and a large amount of paper were wasted.

Fourth, the general goal was just to attain the minimum standard. This did not really cause any change and was not beneficial for the participating universities. This goal seemed not to be challenging for those leading universities whose standards were high, while it was difficult to achieve on the part of newly-established faculties and universities.

Fifth, many universities distorted the information in their self-assessment documents. This was a result of the wish to achieve high scores in the process of the evaluation. Numbers and figures gave more pressure on executives and real quality improvement was overlooked.

4.2.2.6 The Effects of Quality Assurance on MPA Programs

Faculty executives and supporting staff dealing with the quality assurance of MPA programs become more active towards quality assurance while most lecturers still lacked awareness of it.

However, the whole picture of the MPA programs cannot be thoroughly reflected in the IQA criteria during this period. Even though the faculties started to follow the criteria set forth in the manual, the details in each curriculum were the most-used data that faculties included in their self-assessment report. The staff responsible for dealing with the assessment was those individuals that worked on the facility's curricula and they tended to highlight the aspects of information with which they were familiar. Another thing that they would do was to collaborate with other

faculty's staff, which was responsible for other activities in the faculty in order to complete the self-assessment report.

There was opposition from most faculty members that only taught in class. Due to their workloads and confusion in the course of dealing with the assessment, they argued that this activity was not in harmony with the nature of public administration regarding public value as of the utmost importance, while the quality assurance in the education assessment system was a system exceedingly focused on strengthening efficiency.

The overall picture of MPA programs was not subject to much modification. At the department level, more faculty members became aware of the assessment and they managed the activities in their departments more effectively, and the assessment reflected the curricula more clearly. MPA programs that were only a small department in a big faculty had to reconsider their own quality and efficiency. Furthermore, research courses were forced to produce more academic papers and publication. The reason for the lack of change was because the scores from the assessment still could not affect any faculties' closure.

4.2.3 Quality Assurance in the Transition Phase: 2014-Present

In 2014, the quality assurance of higher education was greatly modified in terms of structure—it was regarded as a national standard to help faculties and programs achieve a level of excellence. Leading universities competed with each other in gaining higher scores from the assessment process in the hope that they would become world class universities. Curricula were the focus of the assessment. Universities were trying to integrate strategies and processes of work to live up to the criteria in the manual and to suit themselves. The assessment was qualitative and included peer-review. International quality assessment criteria were chosen to be utilized in universities, faculties, and programs. Moreover, the Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, TQF, was also used in the process of assessment, making it another important tool to indicate quality.

4.2.3.1 The Context of Quality Assurance

The implementation of quality assurance in higher education during this period was driven by the following factors.

1) Government Policy

Overall, the policies, plans, and regulations governing the quality assurance system were still the same as they were in the earlier period and included the following: a Higher Education Plan: from 2008 to 2023; a Higher Education Development Plan: from 2012 to 2016; Higher Education Curriculum Standards; and a Framework for University Personnel Qualification, and Thailand Qualifications Framework for Higher Education.

The Prayuth Chanocha governments also took part in quality assurance because they hoped that the assessment would help foster the education of the country and support their key policy, Thailand 4.0. However, the assessment did not go smoothly since the high-ranking government officials in the Ministry of Education often changed. This affected the continuity of quality assurance policy and its implementation (Prayuth Chanocha, 2014).

2) International Competition

There has been interest in university rankings and accreditation on the part of international institutes in universities throughout the country and this is the reason why universities have been competing with one another more intensively. Moreover, in order to outperform other universities, leading universities whose rank was already at the international level opted to adopt internationally-acclaimed criteria instead of those existing in the country.

3) Higher Education Institutions' Complaints

The universities in Thailand realized that the quality assurance that was being performed was ineffective; there were frequent changes in the criteria and the general objective was merely to achieve the least standard imposed. Many of them made an effort to actually reconsider the situation and work out the problem. If successful, the higher quality achieved would guarantee their position on the global stage.

4) The Erosion of MPA Programs

Fewer students applied for the MPA programs because some of the requirements of universities that tried to follow the criteria in the quality manual were too high. Standardized English scores were among the tough criteria frustrating many students. Then, the requirements were lowered in negotiation. Some courses

accepted students with poor English scores to sit and learn in classes on the condition that they would attain the minimum score before graduation. Social media were also used to advertise the courses with the hope of raising the number of students since students recently do not seem to care much about the reputation of programs as long as they can get a degree.

4.4.3.2 Quality Assurance Key Actors

In this period, the universities and faculties were allowed to choose their own criteria, with the approval of the internal quality assessment committee. The leading universities in the country choose to adopt international criteria rather than domestic criteria, while other universities felt relieved to be able to choose the criteria on their own. Hence, there were two main types of criteria. First, there was the set of criteria imposed by Office of Higher Education Commission. Second, there was the set of criteria chosen by the universities themselves. There was a phenomenon during this period called mimetic coercion, where universities were forced to choose the criteria of the universities that were in the same group. For example, the members of the Council of University Presidents of Thailand were under pressure to use CUPT-QA, while Chiang Mai University, Khon Kaen University, and Prince of Songkla University were coerced to choose AUN-QA and EdPEx. The three universities had even used the criteria before the Office of Higher Education Commission allowed universities to choose their own criteria. At the national level, there were some important actors during this period of time.

- 1) Office of Higher Education Commission the organization has launched the new regulations on internal quality assurance, which allowed universities to choose the criteria they wanted. However, the criteria chosen were not arbitrary but had to be approved by the internal quality assurance committee. The overall mechanism for the internal quality assurance system was similar to that of the previous period. The Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education was the center that universities had to conform to. Moreover, the Office of Higher Education Commission disseminated the information related to the assessment of the personnel under its power. The organization demanded that the executives of universities and professors attend workshops in order to have a deeper understanding of the assessment system.

2) Council of University Presidents of Thailand CUPT is an organization that offered policy alternatives for universities. Seeing and grasping the root of the problem of the uneven quality among the universities in the country, it devised a system called “The Council of University Presidents of Thailand Quality Assurance: CUPT-QA,” which was developed from the ASEAN University Network Quality Assurance-AUN QA’s criteria so that new universities and those not familiar with the evaluation could adopt the newly-devised criteria to use in a more comfortable manner. The Council of University Presidents of Thailand, in 2015, approved of this notion. The new idea helped to solve the problem—it eradicated some overlapping tasks among institutes and adopted the EdPEX to use as well. There was a pilot project testing the use of the criteria in three universities, King Mongkut’s University of Technology Thonburi, King Mongkut’s University of Technology North Bangkok, and King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, before the actual manual of the CUPT QA was published in 2015 for other universities to follow (Council of University Presidents of Thailand, 2015).

At the institutional level, there were the following key actors.

1) University executives played significant roles in determining strategies for gaining a high score in the evaluation so that their universities would live up to the minimum standard imposed in the quality manual. Some university executives were very serious about the quality assessment as a value that they had to maintain, and there were sometimes special committees within universities taking care of the international criteria to be used. Moreover, universities were in search of criteria that could help them achieve excellence in quality.

2) The executives of faculties and departments still played vital roles in adopting the universities’ policies and implementing them within the faculties. During this period, there were some organizational structural adjustments in response to the implementation of quality assurance at the program level. The division of work between the associate deans responsible for the quality assurance became more precise, and the associate dean on quality assurance was responsible for quality assurance at the faculty level, while the associate dean for academic affairs or the program’s director was in charge of quality assurance at the program level.

3) The supporting staff for quality assurance mainly prepared documents and gathered information and data in several aspects, as done during the earlier period. Sometimes, the staff working on the faculties' curricula had to participate in the process of document preparation in response to quality assurance at the program level.

4) Program lecturers were significant and vital in the process of quality assessment and followed the Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, which was a very important part of the process. Some of them were sent to attend conferences regarding quality assurance on several occasions.

4.2.3.3 Policy Instruments for Quality Assurance Implementation

The Manual for the Internal Quality Assurance for Higher education Institutions was definitely the most important quality assurance instrument during this period of time. Still, there were some alterations that needed to be considered.

1) Quality assurance in higher education was implemented and enforced at both the faculty and curriculum level. The criteria for each varied. In terms of faculties, there were five criteria along with thirteen indicators. They covered several duties of each faculty, including production of graduates, research, art and culture preservation, and administration. Concurrently, in terms of curricula, there were six criteria with thirteen indicators, all covering curriculum quality, graduates, students, faculties, teaching and student assessment, and learning support.

2) The universities and faculties were allowed to adopt the quality criteria on their own, and at present the criteria being used are those mandated by the Office of Higher Education Commission. Universities can even use the accreditation from professional associations or those they have created themselves as follows.

At the program level, the AUN-QA, which are renowned criteria among the ASEAN countries, were chosen by many programs. Some program accreditation was caught attention of specific programs in the fields, for example, ABEST21 and EPA for Business Administration programs, NASPAA for Public Administration programs, WFME, for Medical programs. In addition, some universities developed their own quality assurance criteria at the program level, such as Chulalongkorn University's CU-CQA100.

At the faculty and institutional level, EdPEX, which was developed by the Office of Higher Education Commission, was the first priority for many universities, while some institutional accreditation was adopted from faculties in the leading universities such as AACSB or EQUIS for faculties in the field of business management. Moreover, some universities developed their own quality assurance criteria, such as Chulalongkorn University's CU-QA84.

3) The method of peer review by those who are in the related fields has been adopted. It yields the benefit that faculties will have the opportunity to share thoughts. Thus, the process of assessment does not rely on objective assessors who strictly following the criteria in the manual. Peer review provides the participants with relevant and plausible comments from those experiencing the same problems.

4) The Thailand Qualifications Framework for Higher Education which covered all aspects of educational provision, became an important tool for internal quality assurance and it was integrated into the internal quality assurance criteria. In addition, the Office of Higher Education Commission mandated that the programs would fail the assessment if they were not capable of fulfilling all of the criteria imposed in the TQF.

4.2.3.4 The Implementation of Quality Assurance

The implementation of educational quality assessment during this period can be analyzed according to two main levels.

At the policy level, the Office of Higher Education Commission was still a significant authority in running all of the processes regarding higher education quality assurance. It influenced not only the steps in the process but also all of the indicators for higher education quality assurance. This office implemented a policy whereby every university program had to pass the quality assessment. This was in line with Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, which governed the quality of the curricula—if a course does not meet the criteria of the Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, the course would risk closure. Meanwhile, the Office of Higher Education Commission allowed universities to choose the criteria on their own. This was effective because the criteria adopted would suit each university and program, as they were diverse in nature. The Office of Higher Education Commission allowed a committee to approve the criteria that the

universities chose and to set one of their own, which was the EdPEX. The principle of EdPEX was that it would attempt to link all of the aspects in the system in order to make the educational system leap to the future in a sustainable way.

Moreover, training assessors was another factor fostering the quality assurance system. All personnel were categorized into groups in the process of improvement: experienced assessors that wanted to learn the concepts of the entire new assessment system, faculty or program executives, and faculty members in general. The training was conducted in two sessions: lectures and workshops, where the participants could learn to collect information and data from case studies along with peer review. According to an experienced assessment trainer, there were still some participants that misunderstood the central idea of the new version of quality assurance in higher education. Some were too strict about the criteria in the handbook as it was during the earlier period, and some were stuck in the seniority of Thai society and based their judgments on elderly assessors.

The Council of University Presidents of Thailand also played a part in the quality assurance implementation. It assisted with the development of the CUPT-AQ so that domestic universities could adopt it to be used in accordance with their own contexts. After passing this level of evaluation, these universities should have been ready to prepare themselves to be assessed by international criteria further in the future.

At the operational level, universities, faculties, and programs were still coerced to adopt the internal quality assurance system by law enforcement. Most university organizational structures were almost the same. However, there were some alterations in the division of work in response to the implementation of quality assurance at the program level: the associate dean for quality assurance was responsible for quality assurance at the level of the entire faculty, while the associate dean for academic affairs and the program's director were in charge of quality assurance at the program level.

In addition, some universities determined the minimum acceptable score for their faculties and programs in order to encourage the faculties and programs to pay serious attention to the quality assurance results.

4.2.3.5 The Effect of Quality Assurance on Higher Education

Generally, quality assurance in higher education brought about changes in the work process of universities, faculties, and programs. In this period, almost every faculty member realized the importance of it more than before. Due to the fact that the quality assurance results will be published to the public, many programs have paid serious attention to the quality assurance assessment. If they failed in the quality assessment, it might lead to program or faculty closure.

In addition, the Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education is very strict in terms of the details of program management, including program structure, curriculum mapping, the students' expected learning outcomes, feedback on teaching, and problems and solutions during the activities of teaching. Many informants pointed out that they already did this habitually because they were part of their job. Still, the Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education made it more difficult since there were piles of documents and pieces of paper involved in the assessment.

In terms of the criteria of the universities' choice, many universities began to adopt high standards that surpassed those of the Office of Higher Education Commission, such as AUN-QA or EdPEX. The executives of faculties paid close attention to the criteria adopted since the goal was to achieve high quality while the goal set by the Office of Higher Education Commission was mediocre. The assessment as a document project turned out to be an assessment that encouraged true improvement of each university.

4.2.3.6 The Effects of Quality Assurance on MPA Programs

Overall, the MPA program executives were more enthusiastic about the quality assessment. The TQF criteria for higher education were stricter than those of the Office of Higher Education Commission's IQA, especially regarding issues relevant to professors and the curricula. This can be analyzed as follows.

First, program executives were those that acted "passively" (QA data's provider by requested) in terms of quality assurance at the faculty level, and had to become "active" (QA implementer) regarding quality assurance at the program level.

Secondly, the process in improving program administration integrated more relevant issues. To begin with, there were five expected learning outcomes

imposed by the TQF. In fact, critics argued that this was a formality and not real quality improvement since they relied on documents too much. In addition, the qualifications of lecturers determined by the TQF were too high. This indicated that there was a need for developing program quality and the department's quality. This is still an issue because the existing lecturers have not raised to the level of the TQF standards and senior lecturers have no motivation to increase the rank of their organization.

Table 4.1 Summary of Development of Quality Assurance and its Implication to MPA Programs in Thailand

Phase	Key Contexts	Key Actors in Macro Implementation	Key Actors in Micro Implementation	Policy Instrument	Effects to Higher Education Institutions	Effects to the MPA Programs
Quality assurance, introduction phase: 1994-1997	1) Pressure from the Higher Education Academic Community to establish principles, spot problems, and find approaches to improving the quality assurance system by CUPT 2) Government Policy encouraging quality assurance in education among universities and demanding them to comply with the regulations	1) CUPT, to propose policy alternatives for the quality assurance process 2) MUA, to propose nine components of internal quality assessment 3) ONESQA, to conduct external quality assurance by relying on eight quality criteria 4) OPDC, to assess the management quality of state universities	1) Executives of universities, setting approaches to adopt QA to implement in the university 2) Deans of faculties, to adopt the university's quality assurance policy to be implemented at the faculty level	1) The Pre-audit of curricula by MUA's committee 2) Quality components for developing quality assurance criteria and indicators imposed by MUA	1) Most of the higher education institutions did not pay serious attention to quality assurance 2) Some universities such as Chulalongkorn University developed their own criteria to improve their quality of education	1) MPA programs did not take quality assurance seriously 2) Executives and faculty members of MPA programs were not aware of the issue

Table 4.1 (Continued)

Phase	Key Contexts	Key Actors in Macro Implementation	Key Actors in Micro Implementation	Policy Instrument	Effects to Higher Education Institutions	Effects to the MPA Programs
	3) International Technical Support by The British Council, and the Fulbright Scholar Program 4) The Expansion of MPA Programs made the quality of the courses taught in different universities varied					
Quality assurance, implementation phase: 2007-2014	1) Government Policy, all government policies emphasized educational quality to reach international standards.	1) OHEC, imposing indicators and regulations related to IQA assessment 2) ONESQA, to conduct two rounds	1) Executives of universities became very serious about quality assurance, encouraged their personnel to follow the steps of quality	1) Manual for the Internal Quality Assurance for Higher Education Institutions, focused on the quality of the	1) Universities were generally enthusiastic about quality assurance. They imposed their policies in order to conform to the criteria of the assessment.	1) Faculty executives and supporting staff dealing with the quality assurance of MPA programs become more active towards QA while most lecturers still lacked awareness of it.

Table 4.1 (Continued)

Phase	Key Contexts	Key Actors in Macro Implementation	Key Actors in Micro Implementation	Policy Instrument	Effects to Higher Education Institutions	Effects to the MPA Programs
	2) International Competition, university ranking caught the public's attention and taken into account for universities' management	of external quality assessment	assessment in order to attain the OHEC's	faculty and its departments in a comprehensive way, including input, process, and output; focused on objective assessors that strictly followed the lists of indicators	2) Critics argued that the consequences of the assessment were ineffective because of focusing too much on documents, frequently changed criteria, Score-oriented rather than quality improvement-oriented assessment	2) MPA programs' whole picture cannot be thoroughly reflected in the IQA criteria during this period because they focus on faculty and departmental level quality.
	3) The Continuous Expansion of MPA Programs many began to question the excessive number of graduates in public administration and the competence of these new graduates		2) Executives of faculties and departments mainly followed the university policy on quality without participating in creation or devising steps and methods in QA. 3) Faculties' members, during the early period, supporting staff was responsible for			

Table 4.1 (Continued)

Phase	Key Contexts	Key Actors in Macro Implementation	Key Actors in Micro Implementation	Policy Instrument	Effects to Higher Education Institutions	Effects to the MPA Programs
			assessments, helped to prepare documents to be used in the process of assessment.			
Quality assurance during the transition phase: 2014-present	1) Government Policy, took part in QA because they hoped that the assessment would help foster the education of the country and support their key policy, Thailand 4.0 2) International Competition, university rankings	1) OHEC - allowing universities to choose the criteria they wanted led to the adoption of voluntary QA in many cases. - integrating TQF to the IQA at the program level 2) CUPT, launched CUPT-QA to be	1) University executives, determined strategies for gaining a high score in the evaluation and were in search of criteria that could help them achieve excellence in quality. 2) Executives of faculties and	1) The Manual for the Internal Quality Assurance for Higher Education Institutions with some alteration in criteria and universities and faculties including allowing them to adopt a quality criteria on their	1) QA brought about changes in the work process of universities, faculties, and programs because the QA results would be published to the public and a failing QA might lead to program or faculty closure 2) TQF affects to the strictness of program management, which	1) MPA programs were more enthusiastic about the quality assessment. The TQF criteria were stricter than previously implemented IQA, especially regarding issues relevant to professors and the curricula. 2) Some programs were closed since they did not achieve the IQA standards.

Table 4.1 (Continued)

Phase	Key Contexts	Key Actors in Macro Implementation	Key Actors in Micro Implementation	Policy Instrument	Effects to Higher Education Institutions	Effects to the MPA Programs
	and accreditation were on the part of international institutes in universities throughout the country 3) Higher Education Institutions' Complaints that the compulsory quality assurance was ineffective 4) The Erosion of MPA Programs, Fewer students applied for the MPA programs, many programs lowered their students' qualifications.	adopted by its members.	departments, adopting the universities' policies and implementing them within the faculties. There are two key persons: Associate dean on QA responsible for faculty's QA; Associate dean on academic affairs responsible for QA at program level 3) Program lecturers are significant in the process of quality assessment and followed the TQF standards.	own, or use OHEC's IQA criteria 2) TQF became an important tool for IQA and was integrated into the IQA criteria.	leads to resistance from faculty members. 3) Universities began to adopt alternative QA criteria to enhance the excellence their quality assurance program.	

CHAPTER 5

QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM AND THE QUALITY OF MPA PROGRAMS IN THAILAND

In this chapter, it focuses on cross-case study on quality assurance system and the quality of MPA programs in Thailand. There are six cases taken into account: Chulalongkorn University, National Institute of Development Administration, Chiang Mai University, Prince of Songkla University, University of Phayao, and Ubon Ratchathani University.

In this chapter, the analysis can be categorized into four main aspects: contexts of case studies, case studies' quality assurance systems, the definition of "quality" in the context of MPA programs, and effects of the quality assurance criteria and the Thailand Qualification Framework (TQF) to the quality of MPA programs.

5.1 Contexts of Case Studies

To contextualize the Master of Public Administration programs' quality assurance systems, the selected programs have been studied in three different aspects: historical context, structures of the curriculum and philosophy, and the programs' students.

5.1.1 The Historical Context

According to their development, the Master of Public Administration program in Thailand can be classified into three groups:

1) Pioneer Master of Public Administration Programs

The group of pioneer Master of Public Administration programs consists of elite universities, including Chulalongkorn University and National Institute of Development Administration. The programs were founded in order to

produce personnel to work in the government sector. They were influenced by programs in the United States and several European countries.

In their early years, these programs had only a “plan A” program, which aimed to produce academics in public administration. In 1987, the “plan B” program, or so-called “Executive Program”, was first launched at Chulalongkorn University. This program was interested in those who want to pursue their master’s degree and work at the same time. There were both evening and weekend programs. In 1990, National Institution of Public Administration opened an MPA for executives program, which was conducted in a block teaching style. These programs later became the prototypes of MPA programs in Thailand in both an administrative aspect and academic aspect.

2) Master of Public Administration Programs in Expansion

After 1987, master of public administration programs were expanded to regional urban universities, including Chiang Mai University and Prince of Songkla University. Most of these programs’ objectives were to produce graduates who understood social problems and had practical skills to work in different sections of the government in the upcountry (Piyakorn Whangmahaporn, 2011). There were both plan A and plan B programs like those in Bangkok. At the early stage these programs caught the attention of students, mostly who were officials in the area who could work and learn together. This led to an expansion of the Master of Public Administration programs in the upcountry.

3) Master of Public Administration Programs in Popularity

Since 2005 programs are widespread and have opened up all over the country. Almost all universities, even those in rural areas, have opened Master of Public Administration programs, for example, Ubon Ratchathani University, and University of Phayao.

The popularity of Master of Public Administration programs in this period was in line with the government’s policy to provide scholarships for its staff, or even politicians in local areas to get a master’s degree in public administration. This was suitable for the students who wanted to study nearby their workplaces instead of travelling to Bangkok on weekends to study. However, a rapid expansion of these programs made them be questioned as to whether they were programs of quality.

5.1.2 The Objectives and Structures of Master of Public Administration Programs

From cross-case analysis, the author found that the curriculums of Master of Public Administration programs were quite similar. Each consisted of a plan A and a plan B. Plan A programs aimed to encourage students to adopt theories learned in class to apply at work, to be able to conduct research, and to be moral and socially responsible. Meanwhile, plan B programs were intended to foster students to be competent, visionary, and skillful administrators. Also, they wanted the students to be able to apply their knowledge from class to their career life with a moral standard. The programs in the capital city primarily expected the students to be capable of working effectively in their organization, while those of regional areas focused on the competency to work within specific areas.

In terms of subjects in the curriculum, the pioneer programs had the most number of subjects in their courses. Chulalongkorn University had 45 credits. Meanwhile, National Institute of Development Administration, Chiang Mai University, and Prince of Songkla University had 39 credits. The newer MPA programs in regional rural universities: Ubon Ratchathani University, and University of Phayao, have 36 credits for the students to achieve their degree.

In terms of compulsory courses, Chulalongkorn had the highest number of credits, which was 24, while Chiang Mai University had merely 15 credits, which was the least of all.

In terms of electives, the pioneer program provided a number of electives. National Institute of Development Administration provided 9 elective groups, including organization and management, human capital management, financial and fiscal administration, public policy and strategic management, local administration, justice administration, non-profit organization administration, management for executives, and urban administration. Chulalongkorn University had 7 elective groups. Meanwhile, regarding programs in regional universities, Chiang Mai University allowed its students to opt for electives of other fields. However, Prince of Songkla University and Ubon Ratchathani University offered electives which were not categorized into groups like those of the universities mentioned above.

Table 5.1 Case Studies' Program Structure

Topic	CU	NIDA	CMU	PSU	UP	UBU
Numbers of Credit	45 Credits	39 Credits	39 Credits	39 Credits	36 Credits	36 Credits
Number of Compulsory Course Credit	24 Credits	1) Plan A: 21 Credits 2) Plan B: 24 Credits	15 Credits	18 Credits	21 Credits	18 Credits
Number of Elective Course Credit	1) Plan A: 9 Credits 2) Plan B: 12 Credits	1) Plan A: 6 Credits 2) Plan B: 12 Credits	1) Plan A: 12 Credits 2) Plan B: 18 Credits	1) Plan A: 3 Credits 2) Plan B: 15 Credits	1) Plan A: 3 Credits 2) Plan B: 9 Credits	1) Plan A: 6 Credits 2) Plan B: 12 Credits
Number of Thesis and Independent Study Credit	1) Thesis: 12 Credits 2) IS: 6 Credits	1) Thesis: 12 Credits 2) IS: 6 Credits	1) Thesis: 12 Credits 2) IS: 6 Credits	1) Thesis: 18 Credits 2) IS: 6 Credits	1) Thesis: 12 Credits 2) IS: 6 Credits	1) Thesis: 12 Credits 2) IS: 6 Credits
Examples of Elective Course Subjects	The elective was offered in 7 groups: 1) Advanced Issues in Public Administration 2) Organization and Management in Public Organization 3) Research Methodology in Public Administration	The elective was offered in 9 groups: 1) Organization Management 2) Human Capital Management 3) Public Finance and Fiscal Management 4) Public Policy and Management	The students can choose elective courses from both internal and external MPA program The MPA electives were offered in 2 groups: 1) Human Resource Management	The elective course included: 1) Public Administration Theory 2) Strategic Management for Public Sector 3) Performance Management	The elective was offered in 2 groups: 1) Public Policy: (1) Policy Analysis and Public Policy (2) Political Culture and Policy (3) Decentralization and Policy (4) Organizational Accountability	The elective course included: 1) Moral and Ethics in Public Service 2) Statistics and Programs for Research in Social Sciences 3) Public Sector Reform

Table 5.1 (Continued)

Topic	CU	NIDA	CMU	PSU	UP	UBU
4) Fiscal Administration and Public Budgeting	5) Public Policy and Planning	5) Local Government	2) Public Policy and Development Administration	4) Management Information System	2) Management (1) Non-profit Organization	4) Modern Organization
5) Public Policy and Planning	6) Human Resource Management in Public Sector	6) Criminal Justice Administration	Administration	5) Organization Behavior	Organization Management	5) Program Management and Planning
6) Human Resource Management in Public Sector	7) Public Law	7) Non-Profit Organization Management		6) Human Resource Management	(2) Seminar on Public Sector Collaboration	6) Policy Evaluation
7) Public Law		8) Management for Executives		7) Conflict Management	(3) Techniques for Management in 21 st Century	7) Human Resource Management
		9) Urban Administration		8) Leadership and Change Management	(4) Leadership	8) Fiscal Administration
				9) Ethics and Management		
				10) Marketing in Public Sector		
				11) Urban and Rural Administration		
				12) Seminar in Social, Economics, and Management in Southern of Thailand		

Table 5.1 (Continued)

Topic	CU	NIDA	CMU	PSU	UP	UBU
				13) Environment Management		
				14) ASEAN politics and government		
Examples of Elective Course Subjects	The elective was offered in 7 groups: 1) Advanced Issues in Public Administration 2) Organization and Management in Public Organization 3) Research Methodology in Public Administration 4) Fiscal Administration and Public Budgeting 5) Public Policy and Planning 6) Human Resource	The elective was offered in 9 groups: 1) Organization Management 2) Human Capital Management 3) Public Finance and Fiscal Management 4) Public Policy and Management 5) Local Government 6) Criminal Justice Administration 7) Non-Profit Organization Management	The students can choose elective courses from both internal and external MPA program The MPA electives were offered in 2 groups: 1) Human Resource Management 2) Public Policy and Development Administration	The elective course included: 1) Public Administration Theory 2) Strategic Management for Public Sector 3) Performance Management 4) Management Information System 5) Organization Behavior 6) Human Resource Management	The elective was offered in 2 groups: 1) Public Policy: (1) Policy Analysis (2) Political Culture and Public Policy (3) Decentralization and Policy (4) Organizational Accountability 2) Management (1) Non-profit Organization Management (2) Seminar on Public Sector Collaboration	The elective course included: 1) Moral and Ethics in Public Service 2) Statistics and Programs for Research in Social Sciences 3) Public Sector Reform 4) Modern Organization 5) Program Management and Planning 6) Policy Evaluation

Table 5.1 (Continued)

Topic	CU	NIDA	CMU	PSU	UP	UBU
	Management in Public Sector	8) Management for Executives		7) Conflict Management	(3) Techniques for Management in 21 st Century	7) Human Resource Management
7) Public Law		9) Urban Administration		8) Leadership and Change Management	(4) Leadership	8) Fiscal Administration
				9) Ethics and Management		
				10) Marketing in Public Sector		
				11) Urban and Rural Administration		
				12) Seminar in Social, Economics, and Management in Southern of Thailand		
				13) Environment Management		
				14) ASEAN politics and government		

5.1.3 Students of the Programs

There are two main aspects in contextualizing students of the programs: student backgrounds, and program qualifications for applicants.

1) Student Backgrounds

In the early years, pioneer programs provided only the plan A program. Most students at the time were those who primarily wished to pursue their career path in academic circles as lecturers and researchers. These students were usually new bachelor's graduates from universities in Bangkok, with some from regional urban universities. When plan B programs became available these programs became popular among students who were high-ranking government officials, executives in businesses and politicians at the national level. Later, the programs also caught the interest of middle-line management officers and junior officers in both public and private organizations.

In the Master of Public Administration programs in regional urban universities, the teaching and learning processes, as well as the curriculums were most similar to those of the Pioneer programs. There were both plan A and plan B programs available. Students of plan A were usually graduates of the same university or students of other neighboring universities. These students were required to be academics in local universities. Meanwhile, most students of plan B were those who worked for local government organizations. Some of them were executives and employees of private businesses in local areas.

For newer programs in regional rural universities, the teaching aims to practicum. Most students are government officials of local authorities, local politicians, and even Buddhist monks.

2) Program Qualifications of Applicants

The qualifications of applicants are the tools in which programs use to select students. Overall, the qualifications of applicants of several programs are relatively similar. Educational background, work experience, English proficiency score as well as written and oral examination are taken into consideration. Written examination is mainly used in selecting students of plan A, while oral examination or simply a casual interview is for those applying for plan B programs. The Pioneer programs' qualifications for applicants were stricter than the newer programs. For

plan A programs, a written test on basic and specific knowledge concerning public administration must have a score exceeding 60 percent. The score of the English proficiency test must be submitted by the date of the interview. In some cases, a research proposal was compulsory. For plan B programs, work experiences in both position and length were carefully considered.

Nowadays, the overall program's qualification of applicants has become more flexible. A written test is perfunctory. An English course is in place of an English proficiency score submission in some programs. Inexperienced students are welcomed for plan B programs. These loose student selections have brought about two consequences:

First, expansion of the Master of Public Administration programs continued to grow rapidly over the decade. Due to the flexible requirements, students flocked to the programs. As a result, there is an oversupply of MPA graduates.

Second, the quality of a program has ceased to bother candidates, who study for the MPA's degree certificate rather than the process of learning for the sake of learning. These students hope to benefit from the degree only to upgrade their position and salary when they go back to work. Moreover, some programs give them the opportunity by reducing their teaching standards along with being flexible in the process of admission.

5.2 Case Studies' Quality Assurance Systems

Since 2007 quality assurance in higher education has been implemented. Universities had started to be assessed. All the universities then participated in the assessment because of the legal enforcement implemented by two authorities: Office of Higher Education Commission and Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Public Organization). However, some older universities including, Chulalongkorn University, Prince of Songkla University, and Chiang Mai University had developed their own quality assurance systems to use before the quality assurance system imposed by the office of Higher education. The quality assurance system adopted by the case studies can be classified into the following three categories:

5.2.1 Compulsory Quality Assurance Systems

The compulsory quality assurance system refers to quality assurance systems which are enforced by the National Education Act 1999. There are two kinds of compulsory quality assurance: internal quality assurance, and external quality assurance.

First, the internal quality assurance imposed by the Office of Higher Education Commission which has been annually performed since 2007. It contains 9 components of quality based on the system theory: input, process, and output. In its early years, internal quality assurance focused on quality at the faculty level. The quality criteria were mostly quantitative. The quality assessment was conducted in a checklist style in which assessors graded each faculty's quality component. Then, a quality score from each component was calculated for an average quality score. In 2014 the quality assessment system emphasized quality at the program level. In addition, the Office of higher Education Commission allowed universities to choose or develop the voluntary quality assurance system that was suitable by themselves, or adopt a compulsory internal quality assurance system imposed by the Office of higher Education Commission. Most of the case studies adopted the criteria as minimum standards to do their missions. They were awarded over-average to good scores from the internal quality assurance, except some newly established programs in rural regional universities which had below average to average scores in the early years.

Second, was the external quality assurance imposed by the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Public Organization) which was conducted once every four years. External quality assurance focused on quality at the faculty level, its assessment procedure was similar to the internal quality assurance. The quality criteria were mostly quantitative, emphasized on outputs. The assessment was conducted in a checklist style. The assessment results would be used to make the decision to accredit faculties and institutions. All case studies were accredited.

5.2.2 Voluntary Quality Assurance System

The voluntary quality assurance system refers to the quality assurance systems which were developed from domestic or international accreditation, or professional organizations whose case studies adopted them voluntarily in order to improve their

quality. Most of them were developed based on the Total Quality Management (TQM) concept. They helped faculties and programs apply them to the faculties' and programs' strategic management, which would encourage them to attain quality in their particular contexts. In this study, the voluntary quality assurance systems are as follows:

1) Education Criteria for Performance Excellence (EdPEX) was adapted from the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA) by the Office of Higher Education Commission, consisting of 7 interrelated components, including; leadership, strategy, customers, measurement, analysis, and knowledge management, workforce operations, and results.

EdPEX has been adopted by National Institute of Development Administration, Chiang Mai University, and Prince of Songkla University since 2014. These institutions' executives reflected that EdPEX emphasized their quality in the context that would lead them to excellence, rather than using one-size-fits-all compulsory internal quality assurance criteria.

2) ASEAN University Network Quality-Assurance (AUN-QA) is a holistic quality assurance system for members of the ASEAN University Network. It was designed as a transnational quality assurance framework to support students and faculty members' cross-border mobility. It consists of strategic, systemic, and functional quality assurance to help benchmark quality among its members. It can be applied to the assessment at the institutional level and the program level.

AUN-QA was adopted by National Institute of Development Administration, Chiang Mai University, and Prince of Songkla University. These institutions adopted AUN-QA to internationalize their quality assurance systems. Also, these criteria focus on teaching, curriculum planning, and encouraging student-center learning, which is believed will help their programs attain real quality.

3) The Council of the University Presidents Quality Assurance (CUPT-QA) is a quality assurance system imposed by the Council of University Presidents of Thailand. It was adapted by the AUN-QA system in order to prepare members who were not ready for assessment and accreditation by international agencies to improve their quality with an internationally recognized standard. CUPT-QA was adopted by the University of Phayao.

4) The Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA) Accreditation is a mission-based accreditation. It emphasizes public service values and student competencies in accordance with the program's mission and its approach to public administration teaching, research and academic service. The accreditation process can be divided into four stages: prerequisite, eligibility, self-study, and the accreditation cohort, which took at least twenty-three months. The NASPAA accreditation's standards are comprised of the following seven categories: managing the program strategically, matching governance with the mission, faculty performance, serving students, student learning, matching resources with the mission, and matching communications with the mission.

NASPAA accreditation was adopted by the National Institution of Development Administration's Master of Public Administration program from 2014 to 2016, so as to be in accordance with the institution's vision to be a world-class university.

5.2.3 Institution Quality Assurance System

Some universities developed their quality assurance systems after the Office of higher Education Commission launched a policy on quality of higher of education, which encourages universities to develop their own quality assurance systems, in 1996. The systems developed by each institution were mostly based on international quality standards: ISO-9000, Malcolm Baldrige Quality Award.

For example, in 2000, Chulalongkorn University developed an internal quality assurance system called "CU-QA84" to assess its quality of faculties. The system was based on Thai higher education quality criteria proposed by the Office of higher Education Commission, ISO-9000 and Malcolm Baldrige 2000: Education Criteria for Performance Excellence. Later, in 2014, the university launched a quality assurance system at the program level called "CU-CQA 100", containing 16 quality criteria, including directions and objectives of program, program administration, program development and assessment, resource management, human resource development, environmental and safety management, information system, student admission, learning environment, quality of thesis, graduates quality and research assessment, continuous quality improvement, international collaboration, and knowledge management for developing the curriculum.

Table 5.2 Case Studies' Quality Assurance Systems

Case	Compulsory QA		Alternative QA			International Accreditation	Institution QA
	OHEC	ONESQA	EdPEX	AUN-QA	CUPT-QA		
CU	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	-	CU-QA84 CU-CQA100
NIDA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	NASPAA	-
CMU	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	-	-
PSU	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	-	-
UP	Yes	N/A	No	Yes	Yes	-	-
UBU	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	-	-

5.3 “Quality” in the Context of Case Studies

Quality is what every program in the world must have. Particularly, if government money is used to support management of the program, we need to be even more responsible because we do not aim at profits like other private firms. (Dean of Faculty of Political Science, Chiang Mai University, personal communication, July 7, 2016)

Quality is one of the significant goals associated with the instructional management mission of each program of study. Thus, in the present research the author wanted to explore the paths to achieving educational quality of the master of public administration programs. The starting point of the present research was to define “quality” according to the context of the case studies. The author applied a thematic analysis method to analyze the data obtained from the interviews and documentary research in order to understand two aspects of quality: 1) the ability to respond to organizational goals, and 2) the ability to meet the standards of quality assurance authorities. Then the scope of “quality” was determined based on the context of the case studies so as to reflect a conceptual image of quality, which was

derived from interpretations within organizations and compliance with the central standards of external agencies. The details could be summarized as follows.

5.3.1 Quality of Graduates

Quality of graduates is the key aspect in curriculum management that every program has paid attention to even before internal quality assurance was enforced. Based on the study, it was found that the assumptions that are used to define and establish graduate quality targets consists of meeting labor market needs and responding to required standards of the central organizations responsible for internal quality control, such as the Thai Qualification Framework for Higher Education of 2009.

According to the documentary research and in-depth interviews with the faculty administrators, program administrators, and instructors, the quality of graduates are comprised of the following elements.

1) Meeting labor market needs: a common focus of the case studies was producing qualified graduates in accordance with the objectives of each program. The older MPA programs place their emphasis on producing knowledgeable and skilled graduates to work in leading agencies at the central regional and local levels rather than just focusing on specific areas such as academics in universities and organizational employees in government, private, and civil society sectors. Further details are shown in the philosophies of the programs below.

The master of public administration program aims to produce graduates knowledgeable in the process of exercising administrative power of the government and other involved organizations as specified in the Constitution, which can be achieved through the application of the managerialism and legal approaches, and to enhance the national capacity in terms of academic personnel and practitioners in public, business, and non-governmental organizations. (Philosophy of Chulalongkorn University's MPA Program, personal communication, July 7, 2016)

The master of public administration program intends to produce professional executives, who are equipped with knowledge, ideas, and innovative management techniques for the era of globalization and able to act as change agents. (Philosophy of NIDA's MPA Program, personal communication, July 7, 2016)

The data obtained from the interviews also indicate that graduate production in Chulalongkorn University's MPA program clearly places importance on the quality of graduates with respect to a response to market needs, as prescribed in each curriculum plan. The MPA's Plan A aims to produce academics, researchers, and lecturers for universities throughout the country, whereas the MPA's Plan B focuses on producing practitioners who can apply their knowledge in actual work settings. The National Institute of Development Administration's MPA Program is similarly comprised of a Plan A and Plan B. However, as public administration is regarded as a practical science, both Plan A and Plan B aims to produce quality graduates with work experiences or operational skills.

As for the MPA programs in regional areas, they mainly aim to produce academics or practitioners to respond to local and regional needs, as specified in their philosophies below.

Producing graduates with knowledge, management skills, ethics, and morality in order to foster the quality of executives in public, state enterprises, and private sectors and ensure that they have knowledge and skills to analyze and solve the problems of regional and local administration, especially in the southern area of Thailand. (Philosophy of Prince of Songkla University's MPA Program, personal communication, July 7, 2016)

To produce MPA graduates with high knowledge and ability to work in the governmental management, academic, and research fields and develop public administration knowledge that demonstrates consciousness of social situations, care for local communities, and adherence to good governance. (Philosophy of Ubon Ratchathani University's MPA Program, personal communication, July 7, 2016)

2) Having public administration knowledge: this element places importance on graduates' "public administration" knowledge, which is specific and different from similar sciences such as business management or political science. This element of quality is reflected in the content of the curriculum. The survey data suggests that most MPA programs were similarly designed in accordance with the public administration mainstream and cover all courses specified in TQF 1, which includes courses in public administration theory, organization and management, human resource management, public policy, and fiscal administration. Some programs also provide additional knowledge to respond to contemporary issues and the operational needs of learners, for example, the National Institute of Development Administration offers courses on criminal justice administration, nonprofit organization management, and urban management. The MPA programs in regional areas usually offer courses about local administration or additionally provide specific courses that are in line with the local context in order to respond to local labor market needs, for example, Prince of Songkla University offers a seminar course on social, economic, and administration issues in the southern provinces of Thailand.

3) Having the ability to work or apply knowledge at work: this element of quality focuses on the operational skills of graduates. All case studies were found to clearly place emphasis on this element. Compared to other case studies, the National Institute of Development Administration's MPA program seems to pay more attention to graduates' operational skills, since its objective is to produce professional executives. Moreover, it is the only program where students are required to do an internship in order to enhance their operational skills.

Regarding learners' skills that were emphasized by the case studies, a key informant stated that Plan A of the MPA programs not only concentrates on research skills and abilities to produce academic output, but also places an emphasis on operational skills, as public administration is a practical science. This is reflected in the instructional practice that focuses on case-study methods and internships for students with no work experience.

Our goal is to create professional-degree graduates rather than producing graduates with only academic knowledge. We are different from other programs, as we aim to develop professionals. We not only produce academics, but also create graduates with management skills and abilities to create knowledge and innovations. (MPA Program Director, National Institute of Development Administration, personal communication, May 23, 2016)

Considering Plan B of the MPA programs where most of the students are practitioners, all case studies agreed that the students need to have operational skills and knowledge about management tools and be able to apply their knowledge at work in different contexts. The program administrator gave more details as follows.

In terms of Plan B, we emphasize that graduates must be able to apply what we taught in actual situations. What we taught covers not only academic knowledge but also practical know-how, as our goal is a collaboration between teachers and students and an application of solutions. We are all local people. Our students sometimes include monks and village headmen. Therefore, unlike other programs in Bangkok that aim at world-class success, we mainly focus on local achievement. (MPA Program Director, Chiang Mai University, personal communication, May 31, 2016)

4) Having ethics, morality, and professionalism: this element of quality is considered to be the foundation and spirit of public administration, since modern public administration was established to produce professional public servants that can respond to public opinions and to create authoritative critics. Based on the context of the case studies, the quality of graduates in the dimensions of ethics and professionalism are defined to include having public consciousness, role-model behavior, expected ethical behavior, and public values.

A graduate that meets the expectations of society must be incorruptible and can be a role model. (MPA Program Director, Chiang Mai University, personal communication, May 31, 2016)

5.3.2 Quality of Academic Works

After the enforcement of internal quality assurance measures and the emergence of world-wide university rankings, many case studies were found to place importance on the quality of MPA programs in the dimension of academic works, as this dimension is linked to the internal quality assurance system and the world's university rankings. The results of the documentary research and interviews with the program administrators suggest that the term "academic work" is differently defined by the case studies in terms of publication formats such as textbooks, articles published in a book, research papers, articles published in a journal, and articles published in a newspaper. The importance of each academic work varies according to the time period. The key informants in the case studies similarly stated that educational quality in the dimension of academic output could be summarized into three groups, as follows.

1) Publication of research studies and academic articles: in this context a quality program refers to a program that can produce and publish academic output according to the requirements of the Office of higher Education Commission. Thus, the quality of academic output is closely related to the survival and creditability of the program.

For the older MPA programs, the publication of research studies and academic articles at the national and international levels is given importance because it represents their readiness, creditability, and long-term reputation, and helps strengthen their "identity" in the global academic arena. Moreover, it's in line with the mission of research universities. This key informant provided more details as follows.

The mission that mostly matches the current situations is the mission about research because it is an indicator affecting the university and program rankings. The most obvious indicator is generally academic articles and

research papers, which we should pay more attention to because they help increase the assessment score for the rankings. (Associate Dean for Quality Assurance, Faculty of Political Science Chulalongkorn University, personal communication, March 10, 2016)

In terms of the newer MPA programs, they were found to place emphasis on the publication of research studies and academic articles by complying with the Office of Higher Education Commission's minimum standards in order to get qualified and create confidence for students.

Regarding the quality of program, academic output is currently a major issue because it is associated with the survival of program and adequate qualifications of instructors. In our context, the quality of academic output is the publication of research works. (MPA Program Instructor, Ubon Ratchathani University, personal communication, December 15, 2014)

2) Practical application of academic output: in this aspect, it is emphasized that an MPA program should pay attention to knowledge creation and application of created knowledge by focusing on relevance with actual governmental administrations. This is very important in the field of public administration, which is regarded as a "practical science." Considering the application of research output by instructors, the old-age MPA programs in the central area place more emphasis on application at the national level, while the MPA programs in the regional areas place more importance on application at the local level, or on building a network with other universities.

3) Application of academic output in teaching and learning: in this context, academic output should be applied as a tool in the curriculum management process in order to provide students with actual experiences and the up-to-date knowledge that can make them quality graduates for the future. This academic output could variously be applied in teaching and learning, for example, it could be applied in investigating case studies or conducting joint-fieldwork between instructors and students.

As for the quality of academic output in the dimension of process, research studies should be done and further applied in teaching and writing a book. This is considered the practical quality that we should take into account rather than counting how many research papers produced by an instructor. (MPA Program Committee and Instructor, Chiang Mai University, personal communication, May 31, 2016)

5.3.3 Quality of Instructors

The quality of MPA programs in the dimension of instructors is defined based on a systematic assumption that the instructor is an input factor in the process of teaching, learning, and curriculum management who can contribute to the production of quality graduates and academic output.

Educational quality in the dimension of quality of instructors consists of the following components.

1) Qualifications: this component is regarded as the work capacity of instructors, which is reflected in the recruitment methods that each case study uses to select program instructors. The case studies use the following qualifications to recruit program instructors.

(1) Educational qualifications: all case studies similarly state that the program instructors and other main instructors should have doctoral degrees in public administration or related fields, with consideration given to courses in the curriculum such as political science, public policy, and economics.

(2) Graduated educational institutions: most case studies needed instructors who had graduated from educational institutions in foreign countries or famous universities in the country. Based on the qualifications survey in each case study, it was found that the qualifications regarding graduated educational institutions were broadly specified. There were some case studies that used candidates' graduated educational institutions in their selection process, as shown in the recruitment announcement that "...graduated from the universities listed in Time Higher Education Top 400 or QS World Ranking Top 500." However, this qualification was cancelled later.

(3) Work experience: the key informants had similar points of view on this issue. They thought that the work experience of the instructors help make their teaching and research in line with the real world. As for older MPA programs, most of their instructors are experienced practitioners who have worked in large public or private organizations before. On the other hand, the instructors in the new-age MPA programs are mostly academics with no work experience.

2) Performance: the quality of instructors is determined based on their performance in various aspects. In the context of the case studies, the performance evaluation was conducted to assess four main missions of instructors: teaching, research conducting, academic service providing, and cultural preservation. However, the interview data indicates that the key informants at all levels paid more attention to teaching and research conducting.

There were differences in opinion among the key informants regarding the importance of those four missions and which mission worked better as an indication of overall quality. The differences in opinion are quite evident in the case studies affiliated with research universities. The key informants who are administrators paid more attention to research conducting because it is a focus of their university's mission and a central quality standard, while the program instructors were found to have different points of view. Some of them gave more importance to research conducting because research output has an effect on the assessment of program quality and instructional knowledge creation. Some thought that teaching was more important because the main mission of instructors is teaching.

3) Role model in ethics or professionalism: this component focuses on the "role of teachers" in the context of Thai society which adheres to a traditional "teacher-and-student practice". In addition, the nature of public administration discipline is concerned with public affairs management knowledge and aims to develop students' public minds. Thus, issues concerning ethics and morality are raised and given importance. Many senior instructors in the older MPA programs confirmed that instructors should act as inspirational role models for students in order to maintain their academic reputation and recognition as well as their operational roles, which are not specified in any quality standards or rankings and also hard to evaluate. This key informant gave more information as follows.

The quality of instructors is important to the quality of graduates. The quality of instructors can be measured in two dimensions. The first dimension is capability such as knowledge, major of study, and academic works. The second dimension is teacher spirituality, which is quite abstract. In my opinion, I think that teacher spirituality weighs more than capability because capability can be developed but teacher spirituality cannot be trained. (MPA Program Administrator, Chulalongkorn University, personal communication, March 8, 2016)

5.3.4 Quality of Curriculum Management

The quality of curriculum management is defined based on a systematic assumption that good curriculum management leads to good productivity. It's emphasized that curriculum management should be continually carried out according to the PDCA cycle in order to achieve continuous quality improvement. The quality of curriculum management can be divided into two groups, as follows.

1) Quality of program planning: the key informants who are program administrators placed importance on this kind of quality because it can determine the program's direction and other quality targets according to the mission of the program. As each program has a different philosophy, target students, and rapid contextual changes, a common focus among the MPA programs is creating a clear operational strategy and guideline that covers all related missions and is suitable for their context. This key informant explained the importance of management in the dimension of a quality program as follows.

In terms of management, a quality program refers to a program that possess clear goals, has adequate number of target students, produces knowledgeable graduates according to the its intent, and has a clear curriculum management process. (Dean of Faculty of Political Science, Chiang Mai University, personal communication, July 7, 2016)

2) Quality of work processes: the key informants focused on the quality of a work system that effectively supports the implementation of the faculty's and program's mission in various aspects, such as providing student service,

information management, and organizational knowledge management. The key informants suggested that although the work processes are not their direct quality targets, they contribute to the quality of productivity. Therefore, in this dimension, the work processes of support systems should be improved in accordance with the context of each program. A key informant provided further comments, as follows.

Quality is associated with work processes that are relevant to the program and PDCA cycle. There are many small processes that are overlooked but important such as collecting the data from related activities, assessing, and discussing the results. The results may not be used for improvement. (Associate Dean for Quality Assurance, Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University, personal communication, March 10, 2016)

5.3.5 Quality in Respect to International Recognition

This dimension of quality was defined after the emergence of world-wide university rankings and the accreditation of faculties and programs. It is important in terms of making the faculties of programs establish their identity in international academic circles. The old-age MPA programs pay attention to this dimension of quality more than the new-age MPA programs because it is included among their key strategic issues.

International quality recognition can broaden other dimensions of quality, especially the quality of academic output, which is considered an important component of international quality control standards. The details can be summarized as follows.

- 1) Publication of instructors' academic output at the international level: this is a basic criterion widely used in university and program rankings at the international level. It enables the faculties or programs to receive recognition in international academic circles.

Nowadays, international quality recognition is very important because many good programs are provided by global schools. I think that the quality of instructors and academic output helps enhance our visibility in the

international stage. It matters if the academic output of our instructors are recognized at the international level or listed in international channels such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and Research Gate. (Dean of Faculty of Political Science and Public Administration, Chiang Mai University, personal communication, July 7, 2019)

2) Accreditation from international accreditation organizations and application of international quality assurance standards: the key informants thought that this dimension of quality helps enhance the reputation and recognition of their programs among other universities at the international level, which would then lead to further cooperation in terms of international student networks and international academic support.

The international dimension of quality is another issue that our institution has paid attention to. Our vision is to become a world-class university that gains recognition from other international organizations. One way we have tried is driving our program to receive accreditation from globally recognized bodies such as NASPAA. (Former Associate Dean for Quality Assurance, Faculty of Public Administration, NIDA, personal communication, October 26, 2016)

5.4 QA Criteria and Key Performance Indicators and the Quality of MPA Programs

In this section, the author presents the findings in three sections: 1) Internal Quality Assurance criteria of the Office of Higher Education Commission and dimension of quality in the context of the case study, 2) results of the quality assessment on the case study, and 3) opinions of the faculty and program directors, and the policy implementer on the Internal Quality Assurance criteria of the Office of Higher Education Commission and creation of quality in the Master of Public Administration Program.

5.4.1 Internal Quality Assurance Criteria of the Office of Higher Education Commission and Quality.

The Internal Quality Assurance for Higher Education Institutions by Office of Higher Education has been implemented since 2007, with 3 revisions, in 2007, 2010, and 2014. Regarding the connection between the criteria and quality of the faculty and program, its connection can be analyzed as follows:

5.4.1.1 Criteria and Indicators of Internal Quality Assurance and the Quality Mission of the Faculty.

The Internal Quality Assurance criteria of the Office of Higher Education cover the achievement quality of the faculty: teaching, research, academic services, preservation of arts and culture, and internal administration. In the beginning, the number of indicators was 42. When taking individual facets into consideration, it was found that learning management had the most indicators (13 indicators), followed by, research (5 indicators), academic services to community (5 indicators) and administration and management (9 indicators). The 2010 revision reduced the indicator numbers to only 23: 8 for learning management, 4 for administration and management, and 3 for research. Later, in the latest revision, the number of indicators at the faculty level was further diminished to 13 indicators in 5 new facets. Comparison between the new and original facets reveals that the facet with the most indicators was Graduate Provisions (6 indicators), which is comparable to the original learning management and research (3 indicators). Additionally, the 2014 Quality Assurance Criteria introduced a program-level QA criterion, consisting of 13 indicators in 6 facets, which bear resemblance to indicators for learning management in comparison of both.

The aforementioned information suggests that in the beginning, the Office of Higher Education's Internal Quality Assurance criteria stressed learning management that covers the most important facets, such as graduate provisions and instructor quality, followed by management and research. Later on, research was given preference over management.

5.4.1.2 Criteria of Internal Quality Assurance and Quality in Context of the Case Study.

In light of quality as defined by each case study, early Internal Quality Assurance criteria emphasized faculty and program management quality, followed by

graduate and academic work quality. Later on, after separation of faculty- and program-level quality assurance criteria, it was discovered that at the faculty level, academic work was the main priority; while the program-level criteria prioritized graduate quality.

In this section, the internal quality assurance criteria were categorized by quality, as follows:

1) Quality of graduates, the informants in the case studies have presented important aspects, as follows: 1) Responsiveness to the labor market Related criteria are, for example, graduate development based on desirable graduate attributes, employment of graduates, and quality of graduates in accordance with the Thailand Qualification Framework. 2) Knowledge in public administration Related criteria are, for instance, graduate development based on desirable graduate attributes, research productivity of graduates, and quality of graduates in accordance with the Thailand Qualification Framework. 3) Workability and knowledge application ability For instance, graduate development based on desirable graduate attributes and quality of graduates in accordance with the Thailand Qualification Framework. 4) Good morality, ethics and professionalism. This aspect concerns graduate development based on desirable graduate attributes, morality and ethics, and quality of graduates in accordance with the Thailand Qualification Framework.

In conclusion, the Internal Quality Assurance criteria, in the aspect of graduate quality, focuses on desirable graduate properties and quality in accordance with the Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education. Five facets are defined by the Framework as a minimum: Morality and ethics, knowledge, intellectual skills, interpersonal skills and responsibility, and numeral analysis, communication and information technology skills.

2) Quality of academic works, as defined by informants in each case study, they are: 1) Publication of academic work in academic journals Part of the related elements are the system and mechanism of research and creative work development, a system and knowledge management mechanism developed from published research and creative work, publication of academic or creative work, and academic works under the responsibility of a program's instructors or researchers. 2) Practical application of academic works Related criteria are system and development

mechanisms along with creativity, system and knowledge management mechanisms from research and creativity, the application of academic or creative works, academic work of the professor and researcher, and lastly, public academic service. 3) Application of academic work in learning management Much of the discussion is on early criteria related to the system and development mechanisms of research and creative works. This aspect of quality assurance required integration of research and academic service into instructing activities. Later, the Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education statutes related to research or academic work of the course instructor included this criteria group.

In conclusion, most of the academic criteria appear as learning management related to academic work by the faculty, research and academic services. Since the split between faculty and program quality assurance, academic work quality criteria is mostly used at the faculty level. However, when taking criteria details in consideration, many academic work quality criteria are subtly apparent in the Thailand Qualification Framework, which is related to program quality.

3) Quality of instructors, as defined by the informants in each case study, they are: 1) Qualification, background and educational and occupational profile This aspect relates to criteria such as the proportion of full-time instructors with doctorate degrees to the entire faculty, the proportion of instructors with academic positions, and instructor requirements of the Thailand Qualifications Framework for Graduate Program in Public Administration, which is used in program quality assessment. 2) Performance Early related criteria are the proportion of instructors participating in social services, advisory roles, thesis defense committees, academic committees and national occupational committees for the faculty. However, the later performance criteria is based on the instructor criteria group in program-level quality assurance, and instructor requirements of the Thailand Qualifications Framework for Graduate Program in Public Administration, which is used in program quality assessment. 3) Role model or professionalism. Some relevant criteria are the promotion of instructor occupational ethics, and instructor assessment criteria for program-level quality assurance.

In conclusion, the aspect of academic performance reveals that most criteria in the past were primarily related to learning management. Later, in the

advent of program-level quality assurance, instructor quality was defined as one explicit facet of quality assurance. Many instructor requirements are stipulated in the programs' quality standard evaluation sections, with reference to the Thailand Qualifications Framework for Graduate Program in Public Administration.

4) Efficiency in management and administration, which is defined in multiple aspects by the informants as: 1) Quality of program planning Related criteria include a definition of philosophy and aspiration, procedures for strategy development, an operational plan, plan development, and the overall performance of program administration. 2) Quality of program management Related criteria include the system and mechanism of program development and management, information technology for administration and decision making, risk management, finance and budgeting, and the system and mechanism of internal quality assurance.

In summary, this category's criteria were numerous in the early period, in response to the prevailing quality assurance objective: establishment of the quality assurance system for the faculty and the institute. The criteria were later streamlined and categorized.

5) International recognition At the beginning, there were explicit criteria for this aspect: patent or petty-patent registration of published research and creative works and the national or international application thereof, or percentage of citation in refereed journals or national or international databases, compared to the number of full-time instructors. Later, this criteria group was incorporated into quality of instructors and academic works.

5.4.2 Result of Internal Quality Assessment in Accordance with the Criteria of the Office of Higher Education Commission

According to the study of 2011 to 2013 internal quality assurance in the case-studied faculties, no significant difference was found in the result of each faculty; most were rated "good" to "very good". The case-studied institutes with good ratings were Chulalongkorn University, National Institute of Development Administration, and Prince of Songkla University. Conversely, Ubon Ratchathani University had the lowest overall quality assurance rating at "moderate". The IQA assessment scores can be summarized in the following figure.

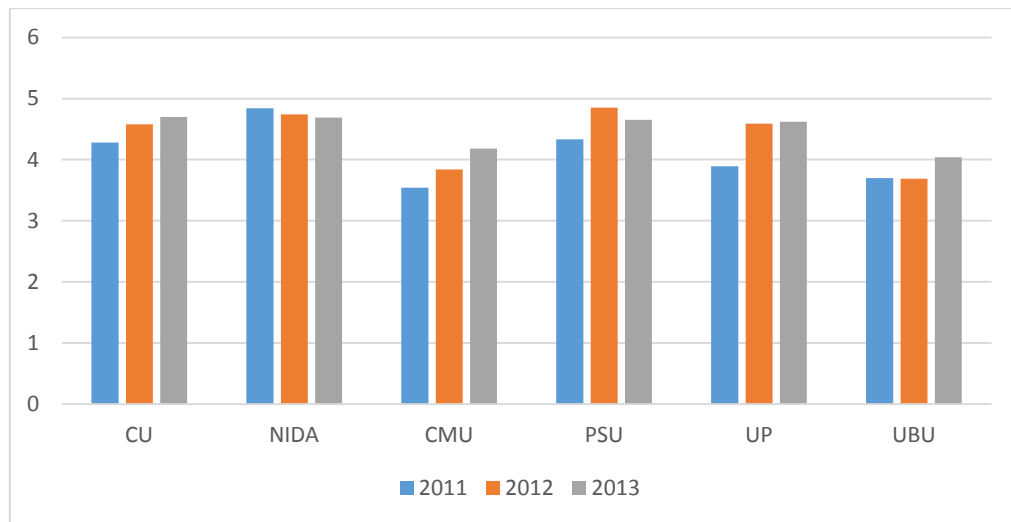


Figure 5.1 2011-2013 IQA Assessment Scores

Source: Office of Higher Education Commission, 2017.

It was found in the by-quality aspect examination of IQA assessment scores of the studied universities that organizational management and quality assurance were rated “good” and “very good” respectively, while instructing and research were rated relatively low despite the latter two aspects’ relationship with quality in the main faculties’ missions. Examination of each case study also found that while the old central faculties received lower ratings on instructing and research compared to their other aspects, those said facets nevertheless received “good” and “very good” ratings, while the regional universities received a wider range of scores, from “very good” to “moderate”, which reflects problems in the QA criteria’s depiction of its main objective achievement by the faculty and program, which is learning management and academic service.

After the revision of quality assurance criteria in 2014, the focus of the evaluation aimed at the program. Most programs in the case studies were rated “moderate”. Older programs received very good to mediocre overall ratings, and the instructors were rated good due to being highly experienced and continuously productive faculty members. In comparison, the aspects that received low ratings were related to graduate quality, such as published works of graduates and post-graduates, and provision of instructional aid.

By contrast, ratings of new programs ranged from low to moderate, with comparatively good ratings on program quality, instructing and learner assessment, and relatively poor ratings on instructor and learner quality. It was also discovered that some programs failed the quality assurance assessment due to an inadequate amount of qualified instructors as required by the Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education.

In this section, the author has processed opinions of the key informants, including directors and faculty members, on the criteria and results of the quality assessment in order to explain the connection between internal quality assessment and educational quality in the context of each case study.

5.4.2.1 Opinion on the 2010 Internal Quality Assurance Criteria

The 2010 internal quality assurance criteria were notable for being the longest applied criteria in use since formulation of the quality assurance system. Despite the prominent use of its criteria at the faculty level, many criteria were also related to “program quality” and were later developed and categorized for the 2014 internal quality assurance criteria. Opinions of the informants on the criteria and results in the case study can be summarized as follows:

1) Philosophy, Aspiration, Objective, and Procedure

This aspect consists of one indicator: plan development process. Two additional identity indicators, performance of institute identity development and performance of identity-based development from the Office of Nation Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Public Organization) (ONESQA), are also used. The latter two indicators are related to management quality as defined by the informants.

The assessment results illustrate that all the programs and universities in the case studies received good to very good ratings. Overall, the informants accepted that the criteria were suitable, practical, and achievable in their contexts. However, obstacles found in many programs included definite implementation of vision and formulation of a vision that genuinely reflects the developmental direction of the faculty. The case studies of newer programs collectively reflect that the definition of a philosophy, aspiration, objective and implementation plan at the program- and faculty-level relies predominantly on their

university counterpart and quality assurance criteria, instead of an independent organizational orientation.

2) Teaching Activities

This aspect consists of 8 factors: 1) System and mechanism of program administration and development, 2) Program instructors with doctorate degrees, 3) Program instructors with academic positions, 4) Instructor and support staff development system, 5) Library, learning tools, facilities, and learning environment, 6) The system and mechanism of the teaching process, 7) The system and mechanism of educational achievement development of graduates, and 8) Achievement level of moral and ethics promotion in students. Moreover, the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Public Organization)'s criteria are used in concurrence, such as graduate quality based on the Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, published works of masters, and instructor development and internal quality assessment, all of which are in relation to graduate and instructor quality as defined by the informants.

The results of the assessment reveal that older programs in central universities have good ratings in quality assurance, in contrast to regional programs which have an issue with inadequate amounts of instructors with academic positions, and especially, in the case of new programs, an inadequate amount of instructors with doctorate degrees.

Interviews of the directors and faculty members reveal varied opinions in connection with the criteria and quality creation of the faculty or program, with highly controversial criteria stated below:

Instructor Qualification: this aspect regards the requirements of doctorate degree and academic position for the program instructors. This criteria group has different standards for each higher education institute group.

There are both supporting and detracting opinions on the aforementioned criteria. Supporters state that appropriateness of the criteria is due to different weighing for each university group, which allows ample flexibility for new programs to further develop their instructors. Also, validation of an instructor's academic and educational qualifications potentially assist in learning management or

thesis quality control in accordance with the learning management requirements adopted by all qualified international programs.

On the other hand, detractors of the criteria state that while the criteria are theoretically concrete, practical application is difficult, especially in newer programs where most instructors have only recently-graduated and are without academic positions. Thus, many new programs are forced to employ instructors from other institutes or simply “hang” qualified instructors’ names on the program in order to pass the annual quality assurance evaluation, while said instructors might not actually participate in teaching or program management, which leads to problems in the creation of sustainable, genuine quality for the program.

Publication of Master Works: it is noticeable that academic work publication of graduate students in virtually all case studies was rated low, due to the high proportion of plan-B students which require only special research for graduation. Most of the special research is performed in the final semester, which leads to time constraints and a lack of publication or presentation of the work per graduation requirements. Most published works are in the form of conference proceedings which have low weight.

3) Student Development Activities

This aspect consists of 2 indicators: system and mechanism of consulting and information service, and system and mechanism of student activity promotion. These criteria are related to graduate quality and management quality as defined by the informants. Internal quality assessment reports suggest that all case studies were rated good and very good in this specific aspect. Problems reflected on by the assessors in some case studies included development of an alumni database, and more comprehensive student development activity, for example. The informants considered this criteria group to be suitable in the contexts of their faculties and programs.

4) Research

There are 3 indicators in this aspect of quality: the system and the mechanism of research and creative work development, the system and the mechanism of research and creative work knowledge management, and the proportion of financial support for research and creative works to program instructors and full-

time researchers. In addition, the Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education imposes more indicators for this aspect of quality: published research and creative works, applied research and creative works, and quality-certified academic works. This aspect relates to academic work quality as defined by the informants.

Results of the assessment acknowledge that research was rated the lowest in most case studies in comparison with other aspects, with significant differences in quality assessment results, as some cases were found to be rated low, and others were rated very good. Examination of past results for the last 3 years reveals high rating fluctuations in each case study in comparison with other aspects. The aspect with a “good” rating was system, mechanism and support related to research, in contrast to published or disseminated research or creative works, and applied research or creative works, which indicates that process quality assurance criteria might not always lead to a good-quality final product. The informants’ opinions on the low rating of these aspects can be summarized as follows:

First, unsuitability of the criteria in terms of academic work publication, as the criteria emphasizes publication for academic use, e.g. publication in academic journals. However, Public Administration research, by nature, is a practical science aiming to solve problems in the government agency or local community, and thus some academic works are in the form of policy suggestions, alternative solutions, or useful projects unable to be included for evaluation with said criteria.

Secondly, priority on publication in international journals is a major obstacle for Public Administration academicians in Thailand, because many journals have a high rejection rate of articles written by non-native English speakers, in contrast to higher acceptance rates in the science fields. Therefore, calculation of a weighing index in this manner is inconsistent with the nature of Public Administration.

Thirdly, the criteria’s requirements are in conflict with the workload and support of newer programs, which have relatively few instructors (of newer generations) and little research experience. As a result, the instructors have inadequate skills or time for research while being under heavy teaching and administrative workloads. Some newer universities also have small publication budgets for the faculty members.

5) Public Academic Service

There are 2 indicators in this aspect: the system and mechanism in public academic service, and the procedure for useful public academic service. Moreover, 3 indicators from the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Public Organization) are used: the result of knowledge and experience application in teaching and/or research, result of the learning and strengthening of communities and external organizations, and the result of social problem solutions or prevention. These criteria in this respect are connected to academic work quality, as defined in the interview. Ratings, as given by the quality assurance report, were at good and very good.

The informants reveal that, in all case studies, criteria in this aspect are appropriate for their faculty and program contexts. Criteria-related problems result from fastidious and ambiguous assessment details, such as the term “integration”, or interpretation of “public benefit” that requires evidence of benefit from the customers. Acquisition of said evidence is impractical in many cases and deemed to be nothing more than the completion of paperwork rather than a focus on actual results.

6) Art and Culture Preservation

Here there is only one indicator: the system and mechanism of art and culture preservation, with two additional indicators by the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Public Organization): the support and promotion of art and culture, and art and culture aesthetic development. These indicators have no relationship with the definition of quality as given by the informants. The internal quality assurance report shows that performance in most case studies was rated good to very good.

Interview results suggest that despite a high score in this facet, there exists only a tenuous relationship with the main mission of the faculty. Therefore art and cultural missions are for the quality assurance score, rather than actual benefit for the main mission. Typical activities under this aspect include the hosting of festivals such as *Wai Kru* or *Loi Krathong* festivals, or Thai dress day.

7) Administration and Management

There are 4 indicators related to this aspect of quality: leadership at all levels of the university, improvement of the institution into a learning

institute, information technology for management and decision-making, and risk management systems. Moreover, there are two more indicators from the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Public Organization), which are, adherence to institute council duties, and adherence to directorial duties. This criteria group is related to management quality as defined in the interview. Results of the internal quality assurance show good to very good ratings on performance in the case studies. The informants gave the opinion that the criteria for this aspect is suitable for, and achievable in, their contexts.

8) Finance and Budget

There is one indicator in this aspect: the system and mechanism of finance and budget. The criteria in this group have connections to management quality as defined by the informants. Internal quality assurance results suggest good to very good ratings for most of the case studies. As in the previous aspect, the informants opine that the criteria of this aspect is suitable for, and achievable in, their contexts.

9) The System and the Mechanism of the Quality Assessment System

There is one indicator in relation to this aspect of quality assessment: the system and mechanism of internal quality assessment. There is also one additional indicator from the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Public Organization): the affiliation-certified internal quality assurance result. The criteria are related to the aforementioned management quality. Ratings in most case studies were good or very good. The informants also state that these criteria are likewise appropriate for their contexts, and they are achievable.

5.4.2.2 Opinion on the 2014 Internal Quality Assurance Criteria

In 2014, the Office of Higher Education Commission introduced new criteria for internal quality assurance. The major revision was for program-level assessment and criteria references to the Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education. As a result, the current internal quality assurance criteria have a substantial effect on Public Administration Program learning management.

The author primarily focused on processing of the faculty and program directors' comments on the criteria and application of said criteria in their own

contexts, while the evaluation result itself was not prioritized on, because this study collected information only at the time of criteria enactment and the first annual evaluation, this can be summarized as follows:

1) Standard Control

Standard control, as defined by the Office of Higher Education Commission, contains the following components : the number of full-time instructors, qualifications of full-time instructors, qualifications of lecturers, qualifications of thesis and special research advisors, qualifications of thesis co-advisors, qualifications of thesis committee members, publication of graduate research, workload of thesis and special research advisors, productivity of thesis and special research advisors, periodic program revisions, and lastly, adherence to the performance indicators for program quality assurance, as defined by the Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education.

Criteria in this aspect are related to instructor and management quality, both in result and process. Many case studies confirm that this aspect is critical, in principle, for a definition of the common minimum standards. However, there are differences in practice, as older programs with some nonconforming faculty members (due to substandard academic position or nonconforming educational background) are easily able to solve the problem with instructor replacement, or the recalling of retired, qualified lecturers, or recruitment of alumni lecturers.

Conversely, these criteria represent major obstacles for newer programs, as most of the full-time faculty members are only recently graduated and thus have neither academic positions nor a satisfactory amount of published works. A solution employed by many later programs is “borrowing” of qualified lecturers from other programs, or employment of retired senior lecturers. It has been found in some programs that faculty members recruited in the aforementioned manner are not actually involved in activities, or have only a related educational background without genuine expertise in Public Administration and understanding of the program’s context. The intent of the instructor and program management quality control criteria is therefore distorted in practice, as programs that have an insufficient number of faculty members simply “hang” qualified instructors’ names on the program in order to legitimately open the program, while those mentioned instructors who do not

actually participate in teaching or program management might see this option as merely a source of income, which leads to problems in the creation of long-term, sustainable quality for the program.

2) Graduates

Here, there are two indicators: quality of graduates under the Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, and employment or research of graduated students, both of which are associated with graduate quality and academic work quality as prescribed by the informants. In practical application of the criteria, most case studies have low assessment scores on published graduate works due to a heavy emphasis on Plan-B learning management in many programs. In academic year 2014, the number of published graduate works was less than 10% of the total number of graduated students, which can result in rapid adaptation in many programs, such as more motivation to publish works, and reorganization of the courses to allow timely work publication and graduation.

3) Programs' Students

There are three indicators in this aspect: Student admission, student promotion and development, and student achievement. These indicators relate to the quality of graduates as set forth by informants, who comment that in practice the criteria resemble the past faculty-level quality assurance criteria with more systematic reorganization. As most case studies already have some familiarity, there is only a minimal amount of problems in the program's preparation for student admission. In some case studies, there are concerns about thesis and journal supervision because of the large number of students, which the proportion, as described in the criteria, might not be suitable for. Also, the issue of "Learning skills improvement in the 21st Century" is poorly understood by, or of interest to, many lecturers.

4) Instructors

Three indicators are in this aspect: instructor development and management, instructor quality, and instructor's prospective result. Criteria related to instructor quality have issues with the raising of minimum standards for PhD-holding lecturers, lecturers with academic rank, and the definition of the academic work standard, all of which are related to instructor quality as described in many case

studies. Practical application of the criteria reveal that older programs invariably have no issue with the requirements, as they already have readiness in qualification, academic position, academic works and creation of successors, which reflect how program-level quality criteria have minimal impacts on quality improvement in this particular facet, as they are already satisfied by the current situation.

For the moderately newer programs, the informants comment that the overall criteria are still achievable, though with a few issues concerning academic position, academic achievement, and preparation for the eventual retirement of faculty members. Moreover, it is crucial for faculty members with academic rank to be productive in order to retain their rank.

For recently-establish programs, the criteria are deemed as major obstacles for their short-term operation, due to a lack of qualified full-time faculty members, which compels the program to recruit external specialists or lecturers as an ad-hoc solution, along with a more intense effort on achieving academic position for the faculty members in order to satisfy the requirements.

5) Curricula and Learners' assessment

Here, there are three indicators: course content in the program, formation of the instructor system and education process, and students' assessment. These criteria are related to graduate quality as defined by the informants. The informants comment that this criteria group, in practice, is closely related to the criteria put forth by the Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education. Nevertheless, many case studies reflect that the program modernization process must be revamped to better suit the context. Also, learning management assessment and re-assessment have not been seriously performed in practice with a definite goal. In other words, from the beginning, the modernization effort is only confined to on-paper changes or minor modifications.

6) Learning Support

In this aspect, there is only one indicator, and that is educational supplies. The informants accept that leading universities are capable of achieving this indicator. But for the newer or off-campus programs, the informants reflect that supporting facilities such as libraries and educational tools are potentially insufficient for research. Also, follow-ups on improvement and provision of educational supplies are necessary.

5.4.3 The Effects of Internal Quality Assurance Criteria and Indicators on the Educational Quality of the Case Studies

Based on information gained from the documentary research and in-depth interviews, it can be concluded that the internal quality assurance criteria basically covered all dimensions of the quality, as defined by the case studies. It was found that those criteria helped motivate the faculties and programs to establish work processes and mechanisms for supporting the program's administration, which contributed to better quality in terms of process and productivity in order to comply with the requirements of the central organizations responsible for the quality assessment, rather than directly aiming at developing the quality of the faculties' or programs' output and outcome, such as the quality of graduates or academic performance.

The data obtained from the interviews with faculty and program administrators similarly indicate that although internal quality assurance enabled the faculties and programs to establish systematic mechanisms for achieving better quality, it still could not be said that those mechanisms were able to enhance all the dimensions of quality and productivity.

In addition, as regards to the results of the quality assessment, most case studies were found to similarly receive good assessment results in the component of process, while the results concerning productivity and the quality of input were clearly different. This was in line with the information obtained from key informants in each case study, which indicated that the studied faculties and programs could adjust themselves and comply with the criteria concerning process compliance within a short period of time. On the other hand, the case studies needed some time to adjust to the criteria on productivity. This was particularly the case with the assessment results of the new-age MPA programs concerning their productivity criteria, such as the number of instructors, and graduate research papers and publications, which were found to be clearly lower than those of the older-aged MPA programs.

The author summarized these themes according to the key informants' points of view regarding the effects of the internal quality assurance criteria on the quality of the programs. The key informants' points of view could be divided into two groups: 1), agreeing that the criteria had an effect on the quality of their faculty or program, and 2), disagreeing that the criteria had an effect on the quality of their faculty or program.

The key informants in group 1), who agreed that the criteria had an effect on the quality of their faculty or program, explained the linkage between the internal quality assurance criteria and the quality of the faculty and MPA program as follows.

5.4.3.1 The internal quality assurance criteria were central standards, which were considered the minimum requirements for achieving high-quality faculty and curriculum management.

Many case studies agreed that the internal quality assurance criteria of the Office of Higher Education Commission (OHEC) helped establish the minimum standards for operations, since it focused on the “standardization of process” within each faculty. They were considered a tool that was useful for determining management approaches and placed emphasis on maintaining quality of the essential operational elements. The new-age MPA programs thought that these criteria could enhance the quality of their operational system. The key informants gave more information, as follows.

The internal quality assurance criteria of the OHEC contribute to the establishment of the faculty’s administrative and operational systems, including the operational planning of the faculty. It makes the faculty’s operations more organized, compared to the previous system that focused on solving immediate situations. (Associate Dean for Quality Assurance, Faculty of Political Science, Ubon Ratchathani University, personal communication, December 15, 2014)

The internal quality assurance criteria helped the old-age MPA programs by reviewing their operations, modifying documentation in the organization, and improving the performance of their support staff. However, they did not have a strong effect on the key aspects of operational excellence, namely learning/teaching and research. This was because the OHEC’s criteria placed importance on an average value, and the old-age MPA programs were found to have already passed all the criteria.

If asked how much the QA system contributes to the changes occurring in the faculty, I think at least it helps us to establish a data collection and storage system. In terms of teaching, it helps ensure that every lecturer has prepared a course syllabus. It may not strongly affect the quality of the faculty but it helps motivate some people to do their own jobs in a more proper way. (Associate Dean for Quality Assurance, Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University, personal communication, March 10, 2016)

5.4.3.2 The internal quality assurance criteria contributed to raising awareness and perception of the faculties and programs.

The internal quality assurance criteria concentrated on measuring the quantitative productivity of each faculty and program, such as the number of academic articles and research papers of the program instructors. Although there were questions as to whether these criteria could truly reflect the actual quality of each faculty and program, they helped indicate the overall performance and reflect the quality of each faculty and program through its “work,” which was considered more concrete evidence compared to the “discourse of quality.” Some old-age MPA programs had a problem with the discourse of quality, as some of their instructors were not willing to produce new academic work and always talked about the quality of their faculty and program by referring to the long history of their faculty and program, or its recognized background of producing quality graduates for the labor market. This key informant provided more information, as follows.

Some of the faculty’s members are very proud of our brand. They always talked about our reputation and long history. When the IQA criteria are enforced, it makes us realize that recently many faculty members have not produced any new work. The criteria about the quality of instructors makes the faculty aware of our status. (Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University, personal communication, November 1, 2016)

As for the key informants in group, who argued that the criteria had no effect on the quality of their faculty or program, their points of view could be summarized as follows.

1) The indicators of the internal quality assurance criteria covered the whole system but the assessment was carried out in a separate manner, resulting in unsystematic quality assurance.

The indicators of the internal quality assurance criteria had already covered all the operations of each faculty and program. However, when considering the pattern of internal quality assurance, it was found that in the internal quality assurance process the performance of the faculties and programs was measured separately according to each individual indicator. Then the results would be calculated to find the “average quality level” rather than focusing on the quality created through the PDCA cycle, which was the main assumption of the internal quality assurance system. Therefore, the application of these criteria in several case studies was like playing the “Indicators Chasing” game, aiming to obtain good results or high scores from easy indicators instead of taking into account the logical linkage between the indicators. This might lead to a problem of “Quality Illusion.” Some case studies with good to excellent scores in their overall quality assessment were found to receive quite low scores in the components related to the main duty of teaching and conducting research. This was because they obtained good assessment scores from the components covering the teaching support process. A key informant shared his point of view about this issue as follows.

We need to accept that many internal quality assurance criteria are difficult to achieve within a short period of time. For example, the criteria about input and output such as the number of associate professors and assistant professors or the number of the instructors’ research papers. In order to meet the internal quality assurance standards, we need to obtain high scores from the criteria about support functions or systems. Although they are not completely related to the quality of our faculty or program’s output, they are associated with the quality of our work system. (Research Executive, Faculty of Political Science, Ubon Ratchathani University, personal communication, December 15, 2014)

2) The internal quality assurance criteria focused on setting a single standard for all organizations, which was not suitable in the context of the faculties and programs.

The internal quality assurance criteria placed importance on establishing a minimum standard for the assessment of all faculties and programs. As each faculty and program had many differences in terms of objectives and availability of resources, these criteria were considered unsuitable in that context. The old-age MPA programs stated that, in the aspect of process, the internal quality assurance requirements overlapped somewhat with what they were doing. Although many old-age programs were found to obtain high assessment scores in terms of defining target values of productivity according to the mission of the faculty and program, the faculty administrators still thought that the criteria were not in line with the work context and not conducive to the faculty's development. On the other hand, the new-age MPA programs thought that the target values of many internal quality assurance components were too high in their context, such as the components concerning the qualifications and academic rank of instructors, and the number of research papers, making it difficult to achieve the targets within a short period of time. Therefore, although the faculties seriously carried out the internal quality assurance in aspects of process, their assessment scores were still at a moderate level.

The OHEC's internal quality assurance criteria only allow us to prove that we can pass the minimum standard. However, this mechanism is not indicative of excellence. Thus, the OHEC's internal quality assurance is rarely related to the direction we are going. It just indicates how confident you are about quality. The minimum standard is used in the assessment. If asked about the direction of quality, I can say our faculty definitely aims to move towards excellence. (Associate Dean for Quality Assurance, Faculty of Management Sciences, Prince of Songkla University, personal communication, July 28, 2016)

In addition, the interpretation of internal quality assurance criteria, so far, was rigid and too narrow to be applied in the context of Master of

Public Administration programs. This could lead to a mismatch regarding context. For example, the definition of “academic output of instructors” placed more emphasis on articles published in an academic journal but did not include consultation or practical research work that could be used to solve problems in the country, organizations, and communities.

3) The internal quality assurance criteria placed importance on system efficiency but ignored the values that are at the heart of public administration.

The assumptions regarding internal quality assurance were mainly concentrated on building system efficiency. As a result, the internal quality assurance indicators were designed to standardize the process, increase work efficiency, and emphasize quality in terms of quantitative output. Public administration in the context of governmental management generally places importance on public values. However, it was found that internal quality assurance criteria in Thailand still don't pay much attention to this issue of value. Therefore, those criteria can't effectively reflect quality in terms of professionalism at this point. The key informants in each case study defined this issue as an important quality dimension concerning the quality of graduates and the quality of instructors in the context of MPA programs.

4) The assumption about the people of internal quality assurance criteria was not consistent with the work culture in the context of universities.

The original internal quality assurance criteria were developed based on the business concept of managerialism. When this business concept was applied in the educational context, though, there was the assumption that faculty members were like laborers who produced graduates. When academic output had to rely on external controls, the faculty members might feel “forced” or “examined” during their work. The value of some specialists was reduced to that of “academic workers.” This seems to conflict with the organizational culture in universities, as universities are considered professional bureaucracies that focus on internal control and respect among fellow professionals. The key informants gave more comments, as follows.

I thought that university is a professional bureaucracy, where internal control is more important than external control. Quality refers to “qualitative” standards, not “quantitative” ones. When we established the criteria that focused on external control and were suitable for a machine bureaucracy or traditional bureaucratic organization, they could not reflect professional aspects in each university. The activities specified in the quality assurance can make a university look better in the report but can they contribute to better teaching? Teaching is an artistic craft of molding desirable graduates. You cannot mold the graduates in a mass way. (MPA Program Committee, Chulalongkorn University, personal communication, March 8, 2016)

The above situations caused many case studies to try and apply alternative quality assurance standards in their faculties and programs. They thought that the alternative standards placed more importance on organizational context, integration of internal quality assurance into strategic planning of each faculty, and a linkage between quality components within each faculty and program. The characteristics of alternative standards could be categorized according to these themes as follows.

- 1) Focusing on the goals of faculties and programs

Alternative quality assurance standards were used as a tool for determining the goals of faculties and program such as EdPEX and AUN-QA. When EdPEX was applied at the institutional level, each faculty needed to start by creating an organizational profile, so they had to review their organizational environment and objectives. AUN-QA was developed based on the concept of outcome-based education, which enabled the programs to review and determine their expected learning outcome in accordance with the philosophy of the program. These alternative standards were different from the traditional internal quality assurance criteria that specified all indicators and ordered every faculty and program to comply with those indicators without taking into account differences in the objectives of each program. This made many programs with high assessment scores unable to develop themselves in the desired direction of the university. This key informant provided more information, as follows.

I think the AUN-QA is only a mean. We can determine what we deem appropriate. It is outcome-based education. If we want to focus on academic aspects, the program needs to be differently designed. As MPA is a professional-degree program, we cannot force students to publish their works or extremely focus on academic output. We can do all that, if it is “Master of Philosophy.” We have to be clear about the objectives of each program. I think that the AUN-QA is more appropriate than the OHEC’s criteria. It is just a mean. We can determine the end-results that we want. (MPA Program Administrator, National Institute of Development Administration, personal communication, November 1, 2016)

2) The linkage between the quality components of the internal quality assurance system implemented in faculties and programs

The alternative internal quality assurance standards paid attention to the logical linkage between the quality components, while the traditional internal quality assurance criteria focused on each quality component separately. The alternative standards allowed the personnel responsible for each related task to take part in internal quality assurance. Therefore, internal quality assurance could be integrated into the operational tasks and implemented in an effective manner. This was different from the traditional and central quality assurance criteria, where the personnel responsible for the internal quality assurance in each faculty and program, mostly the plan analysts and internal quality assurance officers, had to prepare documents and write reports in order to receive scores. A key informant provided further information, as follows.

Applying the EdPEX in our context, we need to integrate everything, including the leader’s support, strategies, and organizational leading. Now, what we have to do is find ways to strengthen our analysis base in the aspect of knowledge management. We need to establish a systematic operating system and ensure that it can survive on its own. As we are not working in separate silos like before, we have to build a collaborative team, which is a very difficult task. Lastly, the Dean and Associate Dean must pay attention to both

academic and support staffs and encourage them to grow according to their ability and potential to develop. At the program level, we have the AUN-QA that is perfectly in line with the EdPEX. The expected learning outcomes are involved with both the lecturers and customers. All mechanisms must be adjusted in accordance with the work cultures, which is considered a good thing. (Associate Dean for Quality Assurance, Faculty of Management Sciences, Prince of Songkla University, personal communication, July 28, 2016)

5.5 Thailand Qualifications Framework and the Quality of MPA Programs

The Thailand Qualifications Framework (TQF) is an essential policy instrument used in current program-level internal quality assurance (IQA). The framework consists of 7 standards named TQF 1 to TQF 7. TQF 1 is the curriculum standard, formulated by the Higher Education Commissioner with a subject matter subcommittee outlining the curriculum. TQF 2 to TQF 7 are documents in which each program must fill in its details as follows: TQF 2 is for program specification, TQF 3 is for course specification, TQF 4 is for field experience specification, TQF5 is the course report, TQF 6 is the field experience report and TQF 7 is the program report (Office of Higher Education commission, 2009). In 2014 a quality assurance system at the program level was established and the Thailand Qualifications Framework for Higher Education was adopted as an important policy instrument for internal quality assurance. Their standards were integrated with the internal quality assurance's quality indicators, including program quality scrutiny, the quality of graduates, and program performance.

On this topic, the author shall elaborate on the results of a study on the connection between the Thailand Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and Master of Public Administration program quality creation, in 3 parts: Thailand Qualifications Framework and overall Public Administration program quality management, the Thailand Qualifications Framework for Graduate Program in Public Administration, and the quality of Public Administration programs.

5.5.1 Thailand Qualifications Framework and Program Quality

The Thailand Qualifications Framework aims to improve the quality of Thai educational standards to be compatible with international standards, and to facilitate the transfer of students and credits between countries. In Thailand, the Office of Higher Education commission had a resolution in 2006 to connect the framework with postgraduate standards and internal quality assurance due to the prevailing perception of their relationship. Thus, the TQF became one crucial tool for program quality management. The author will describe the connection between the Thailand Qualification Framework standards and all 5 facets of program quality as conceptually defined in the case studies, as follows:

5.5.1.1 Quality of graduates is the first, and deemed the most important by the Thailand Qualification Framework as the main objective of the framework, which is improvement of learning management quality to bring it up to the international standard, and the facilitation of student and academic credit transfers. The TQF includes numerous statutes on graduate quality, which can be summarized as follows:

TQF 1 specifies the desirable characteristics of graduates from all MPA programs, which are based on the Thai Qualification Framework for Higher Education with some modifications to better suit the 5 contexts of Public Administration: Ethical and moral characteristics, academic and professional knowledge in public administration, analysis, synthesis and application of public administration knowledge, ability to adapt to a highly-diverse society, and information technology utilization efficiency, including the definition of a learning standard that is consistent with desirable graduate characteristics.

TQF 2 specifies curriculum mapping to make a connection between the learning result standard from each course in the program, in accordance with the program's planning for graduate provision.

TQF 3 and TQF 4, which are similar to the course syllabus, includes a definition of course objectives and the contents of study that all graduates are required to be aware of, and a definition of the learning achievement standard and course content in accordance with curriculum mapping.

TQF 5 and TQF 6 requires analysis of instructing activities in comparison with the pre-defined plan, and includes a re-assessment of learning achievement, as feedback for further improvements to learning management.

TQF 7 is a definition of the quality assessment of graduates and students in accordance with program quality assurance.

5.5.1.2 Quality of academic works is in the form of statutes in the TQF, which is connected to instructor quality, as such, TQF.1 requires the instructor to regularly publish academic works for a period of time in order to qualify as the program instructor or program coordinator.

5.5.1.3 Quality of instructors, as defined in the Thai Qualifications Framework, emphasizes the processes of instructor recruitment, instructing, and instructor product, since the basis of the TQF focuses on supply-side quality controls. Issues on instructor quality as stipulated in the TQFs can be outlined as follows:

TQF 1 defines the qualifications of program instructor, Program coordinator, lecturer, thesis/journal advisor, and thesis/journal examiner, based on their educational background, academic position, experience and academic works. TQF 1 has more stringent standards than the 2015 program standard criteria that is used in other programs.

TQF 5-6 requires an instructor assessment and feedback from the student.

TQF 7 requires an assessment of instructor quality in conformity with the program quality assurance criteria.

5.5.1.4 Quality of program management is an aspect defined in management as the main mission support and implementation of quality criteria. The TQFs have specifications in this aspect as follows:

TQF 1 has a guideline for the implementation of the TQF statutes.

TQF 2 has a description of the connection between the program and the university's mission, and program learning management as it relates to plans such as student admission and budget.

TQF 5-6 requires the identification of problems and effects on operations.

5.5.2 Thailand Qualifications Framework for Graduate Programs in Public Administration (TQF 1) and Quality Assurance of the Public Administration Program

The OHEC states that public administration is one of the most numerous and problematic programs. As a result, they have to work on quality assurance which can be done in 2 ways, qualification screening of students, and that of instructors.

We largely leave the students alone, while divide the instructors into general instructors and Program coordinators. Most general instructors will focus on courses, but the supervisors will have more responsibilities. That is the principle. The OHEC views that if we make a move, quality and understanding of program learning management should be improved. Another thing the OHEC look at is the published work of the instructor and graduated student. (Head of Thailand Qualifications Framework for Graduate Program, in Public Administration research project, personal communication, December 19, 2015)

Formulation of the Thailand Quality Framework for graduate programs in Public Administration was initiated by the Office of Higher Education Commission to control the quality of public administration graduate programs which have been significantly expanding. Significant policy actor contexts during the formulation period can be grouped as follows:

- 1) The Public Administration academic community – overall, growth of the Master of Public Administration program is high, especially in regional areas, which mostly emphasize the provision of practitioners rather than academicians, and have large disparities in program management. Issues reflected by many programs are related to program quality, for example, readiness of personnel, including leadership of the management, sufficiency of faculty members with a direct education in Public Administration, instructor-to-student ratios, a disparity in educational tools such as libraries and international journal databases, and questioning of the Public Administration course's identity in geographic and student diversity contexts.

2) The students overall have a high willingness to enroll in Master of Public Administration programs, especially older, employed students. Their main factors are career advancement, self-value creation through the master's program, and the perception that the public administration program is relatively easy and fast for graduation (Anthika Uthaibut, 2012).

3) The government authorities on quality assurance, such as the Office of Higher Education Commission, began to focus on the quality of Master of Public Administration programs when they witnessed rapid expansion and a high number of complaints on quality. Therefore, efforts in program quality assurance became relatively more intense, with the main emphasis on instructor quality. In conjunction with the OHEC's own policy that implements the TQF in graduate studies quality and standard management, there are studies on the potential definition of the Thailand Qualifications Framework for Graduate Program in Public Administration as being a "contraception" tool for newer programs that are lacking in readiness or quality.

From the aforementioned situation, the Thailand Qualifications Framework for Graduate Program in Public Administration serves as a policy agenda for a definition of the details for consideration of actual enforcement. In the development process of TQF 1 Public Administration, it was found that members of the public administration academic community were generally lacking in awareness of the process. In this case, most member programs are also members of the Public Administration Association and are special experts in the Public Administration group. They also undergo brainstorming to define the desirable graduate traits and courses to be included in detailed descriptions of TQF 1 Public Administration.

5.5.3 Implementation of the Thailand Qualifications Framework for Graduate Program in Public Administration and Outcome of the Quality of Master of Public Administration Program

The Thailand Qualifications Framework for Graduate Program in Public Administration was enacted in 2014 which, in this study's context, is used by the researcher as a critical policy tool for internal quality assurance.

The overall result of implementation of TQF 1 reveals that in most case studies most programs have either awareness of or participation in formulation of TQF 1. In the cases of Chulalongkorn University and Chiang Mai University,

program coordinators from both universities had participated in the study to formulate TQF 1, and as a result, their programs had ample preparation prior to enactment. Concurrently, it was found in other case studies that some also sent representatives to acknowledge or comment on the TQF 1 formulation process.

Results of TQF 1's implementation suggest that while the older programs' management were affected by the TQF.1 criteria, they were able to make modifications and adaptations with less difficulty due to an accumulation of expertise and academic work among the faculty members because of existing resources in the faculty or program, such as rotation of the program instructors or alterations to learning management in some courses to better suit the criteria. On the other hand, newer programs were significantly affected, especially regarding program instructor qualification, as most did not satisfy the criteria.

In this study, the researcher will present issues defined by TQF that are related to program quality, consisting of public administration program course grouping, and instructor qualification criteria.

Program Courses as Outlined in the Thailand Qualifications Framework for Graduate Program in Public Administration

Program courses are related to the aspect of graduate quality. In this case, TQF 1 has a detailed definition of compulsory courses for all programs in 5 course groups, they are: Organization and Management, Public Policy, Human Resource Management, Public Administration Theory, and Public Finance and Budgeting. This is an attempt to create a standard for minimum knowledge in the Thai Masters of Public Administration, based on a study on both domestic and leading international Public Administration courses in the United States, European countries, and ASEAN members.

5.5.3.1 Overview of Courses Opened in the Case Study.

From a survey of the selected programs' structures, it was found that most case studies already had all 5 course groups by the time of the definition in TQF 1. The author will describe the overview of the opened courses, categorized by case study, as follows:

Pioneer MPA programs in Bangkok, as "the original" MPA programs in Thailand, they have accumulated knowledge and resources as the models of

mainstream MPA, with readiness in faculty members and expertise in Public Administration programs, including the participation of many faculty members as experts in the foundation of public administration course groups in TQF 1. Therefore, pioneer programs have comprehensive courses that already exceed the requirements. Surveys of the course structures in this group reveal that all courses in the 5 groups have been compulsory in both programs.

In the case of Chulalongkorn University, there are seven elected courses; Advanced Issues in Public Administration, Organization and Management of Government Sector, Research Methodology in Public Administration, Public Finance and Budgeting, Public Policy and Planning, Human Resource Management in Public Sector, and Public Law.

In the case of the National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), there are nine courses; Organization and Management, Human Capital Management, Public Finance and Budgeting, Public Policy and Strategic Management, Local Government, Criminal Justice Administration, Non-Profit Organization Management, Management for Executives, and Urban Administration.

Other programs in the case studies found that Chiang Mai University and the University of Phayao complied with 5 compulsory courses prior to the definition of TFQ 1, while Prince of Songkla University satisfied TFQ.1's requirement at the beginning, but only with the later inclusion of formerly-elective Public Administration Theory as a compulsory course, in contrast with other programs that have that subject as originally compulsory. Lastly, Ubon Ratchathani University has specified compulsory courses with an emphasis on Public Administration Theory, Public Policy and research, while other courses are elective for students in each group.

In addition, course planning in most case studies focus on satisfying the TFQ 1 criteria, but there are additional courses in numerous programs in order to focus on answering to program identity and students' needs, for example, public law courses in Chulalongkorn University and the University of Phayao, local administration and urban development courses in NIDA and Prince of Songkla University, and non-profit organization management and criminal justice management in NIDA.

From in-depth interviews with the programs' administrators and instructors revealed that the TQF 1 requirements did not have a significant impact on course improvement of the MPA programs, as the existing courses already satisfied the requirements. In this case, TQF 1's requirements contribute to quality-building in all Thai Public Administration graduates to ensure that they have knowledge of Public Administration as the core for similar courses. Nevertheless, some informants commented that the compulsory 5 public administration course group requirements might have an adverse effect on graduate quality, which can be concluded with 2 issues, as follows:

1) TQF 1 potentially suppresses the identity of each public administration program. TQF 1 requires all programs to teach at least 5 course groups, which is difficult for programs in smaller universities to sustain given the constraints of instructor numbers and expertise, resources and cost-effectiveness. As a result, smaller programs often choose to comply only with the minimum standard, as they are unable to consistently and comprehensively provide all the courses specified in TQF 1 and additional elective courses, all at the same time.

2) Obsolescence and rigidity of a learning management which is unable to keep up in a highly dynamic context. Although courses specified in TQF 1 are necessary for knowledge and have been accepted since formation of the Public Administration program, a highly-dynamic modern public administration, along with its more interdisciplinary-oriented study of public administration, nowadays means that the life cycle of various courses are severely shortened. Thus, a rigid definition of course groups actually impedes the adaptation, innovation, and modernization of Public Administration programs in Thailand.

5.5.3.2 TQF 1's Instructor Qualification Requirements

TQF 1's requirements highlight the issue of instructor quality, with an important thought on supply-side quality assurance for learning management. Thus, TQF.1's statutes for Public Administration are relatively strict on instructor qualifications. There is a definition on program-level internal quality assurance, particularly regarding standard control, with sub-issues on qualifications of various types of instructors in the program, such as having instructors involved in program

management (program instructor, program coordinator) and regular instructors (full-time instructors, special instructors, and thesis/journal instructors).

The study suggests that instructor qualification requirements in TQF 1 have their minimum requirements referred from the Announcement of the Ministry of Education: Guideline for Postgraduate Program Standard Criteria Management of 2015. However, the policymaking informants are of the view that, in the context of Master of Public Administration Programs, the programs rapidly expand with a rather significant disparity in quality resulting in a higher standard definition for Public Administration instructors than the specification in the Guideline for Postgraduate Program Standard Criteria Management of 2015, which can be summarized as follows:

1) Program Administrator

Criteria for the program administrator can be divided into 2 groups; program instructors and program coordinator.

The statute on program-managing instructors has provided the definition of a program instructor as, “The instructor should have conforming or related qualifications to the courses offered in the program, have instructing and research duties in such courses, and ability to serve as a full-time instructor in multiple programs in any given time” (Office of Higher Education Commission, 2015). In this case, TQF 1 requires the full-time instructor to graduate in public administration or related fields in accordance with the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). For full-time instructors with Master’s degrees, they must be associate professors at a minimum, and have at least 8 years of teaching experience. For the instructors who have a Ph.D. qualification, they must be assistant professors, and have at least 2 years of teaching experience.

In addition, TQF 1’s requirements on the academic works of full-time instructors specify that the instructors must have 2 research papers published in accordance with the criteria for consideration of academic journals by the Civil Service Commission in Higher Education Institutions.

For the program coordinator, the Higher Education Qualification Criterion of 2015 defines a program coordinator as “a full-time instructor assigned to manage and develop the program and instructing activities.

They must remain with the program throughout the learning period. The program coordinator is not allowed to coordinate more than one course at any given time, except in multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary courses [when] the program coordinator is able to supervise one more course.” (Office of Higher Education Commission, 2015). In this case, requirements on qualifications and academic works of the program coordinator are identical to the full-time instructors.

Implementation of full-time instructor criteria and quality of the case studies: Program directors in many case studies agreed that, in principle, the criteria are beneficial in controlling and screening of new courses that do not have instructor readiness. This contributes to overall “image of quality” improvement in the Master of Public Administration Program in Thailand. In practice however, each case study was affected by the criteria and had different management approaches to meet the requirements, as seen in the following:

Old MPA programs in Bangkok and regional areas. TQF 1 did not significantly affect the quality of full-time instructors because most of the instructors in this group have already satisfied the requirements of TQF 1. However, the informants reflected on issues regarding the qualification of full-time instructors and program coordinators, which can be summarized as follows: 1) There is an insufficient number of full-time instructors for the MPA programs with off-campus classes. As a result, these programs have to employ retired instructors, external instructors, or qualified alumni as full-time instructors in order to adequately staff the off-campus learning centers. 2) The full-time instructors are qualified but do not produce continuous academic works. As a result, the number of academic works in the last 5 years does not comply with the requirements of TQF 1, which leads to their disqualification as full-time instructors or program coordinators. Many programs either request for more academic productivity or rotate other qualified instructors into the programs. 3) A lack of succession planning for program instructors, which potentially leads to the issue of insufficient numbers of qualified full-time instructors and program coordinators in the future.

In the case of new MPA programs, the requirements on qualifications of full-time instructors and program coordinators are the main problem in program management, because most of these full-time instructors have only a

Master's degree, or a recent Ph.D. without any academic position. Therefore, they are not qualified for full-time instructors and program coordinators as required by TQF 1. Many programs work around this problem by employing experts, who mostly are retired instructors from other universities, or by borrowing qualified instructors from other faculties. The document study found that most experts serving as full-time instructors are qualified in related fields, such as liberal arts and law, rather than Public Administration. Most of these experts do not actually perform work and have high rotation rates. This forces the program to constantly seek replacement experts as interim solutions due to the lengthy process of full-time instructor development.

The requirements of TQF 1 partly force various programs to take an interest in instructor management processes in order to provide satisfactory numbers and qualifications of instructors, as required in the higher education standards. However, it is still inconclusive that the qualification requirements of the full-time instructors and program coordinators genuinely contribute to quality creation. The author will describe this section as follows: 1) The requirements of TQF 1 instill program management awareness in the recruitment of lecturers qualified and able to supervise and orientate the program, and create long-term sustainability. Most programs in the case studies have a long-term plan. However, due to the context of implementation of the program standard and TQF 1 as it currently exists, many new programs have not been ready from the very beginning, so the results of this matter cannot yet be seen during this study period. 2) The requirements of TQF 1 result in an "illusion of quality" rather than a genuine instructor standard for the program, as they work around the requirements by employing external qualified instructors instead of developing their current personnel. This might be considered as goal displacement of the standard definition, which depends on the concept that a high-quality program instructor will lead to improvements in program management. Instead, qualified personnel are included in the program only by name, without actual utilization of expertise and experience in order to continue the operation as per the intent of the criteria. This method represents an obstacle in the creation of sustainable program quality.

2) Lecturers

The criteria for instructors can be divided into 2 groups; full-time instructors, and visiting instructors.

Full-time instructor according to the higher education program standard of 2015. A full-time instructor is “a person who holds the position of professor, assistant professor, associated professor, and lecturer in the higher education institutes that offer such program, and has responsibilities according to higher education’s mission and full-time employment”. In this case, TQF 1 requires the instructors in the Master of Public Administration Program to be directly graduated in Public Administration or related fields, and have at least two research papers published in accordance with the criteria for the academic journal of the Civil Service Commission in Higher Education Institutions. The instructors who have a Master’s degree must have at least 5 years of teaching experience, and at least 2 years teaching experience for the instructors with Ph.D. qualification. New instructors may receive a teaching permit despite having no academic work after graduation.

A visiting instructor is “*a teaching instructor who is not a full-time instructor*” according to the higher education program standard of 2015, with teaching hours not exceeding 50 percent of the entire course. Also, the program instructor will serve as the course coordinator. TQF 1 requires the visiting instructor to have a Master’s degree or higher in public administration or any other related field, or occupational experience deemed as expert or specialist in public administration or any related field.

Implementation of instructor and visiting instructor criteria for quality of the case studies: Generally, MPA program directors in the case studies commented that the requirements for lecturers and visiting lecturers did not have an effect on their programs.

For older programs, most instructors hold Ph.D. qualifications, but there are some Master instructors working in the Master’s program. Most of these instructors hold academic positions from assistant professor onwards, and have over 10 years of teaching experiences.

On visiting instructors, it was found that they are also assigned classes in some courses (most are elective or special courses) and have academic ranks of at least assistant professor, and more than 10 years of experience.

For newer programs, it was discovered that all full-time lecturers had Ph.D. qualifications, except in some orientation courses, such as English which had Master's of language instructors in some of the case studies.

It was found that some programs employ academicians from reputable metropolitan universities as visiting directors on an occasional basis, with a faculty member serving as the coordinator and paperwork manager in that particular course. Later on more full-time instructors in the program are assigned classes, while most instructors are recently-graduated and without academic rank.

On the effects of TQF 1 on lecturers, the informants' viewpoints can be summarized in 2 major issues: 1) Emphasis on academic aspect in faculty member recruitment, or in other words, the definition of instructor qualifications in many case studies desired a person who was able to publish academic work in academic circles, and be used by the faculty or the university in its ranking process or international accreditation, rather than as motivation for practical work applicable in social and national issues, this is an aspect historically deemed strong and reputable in many case studies. The informants clearly reflect an instructor image disparity in the case studies. Part of senior and intermediate faculty members in many programs, especially older programs, were former implementers in national or local government agencies. Conversely, most of the new faculty members are PhD graduates without substantial working experience, although having satisfied the TQF requirements. This phenomenon possibly leads to a lack of understanding regarding public sector operations as a context, as well as what would have been a potentially beneficial network with various agencies, and could sever the Master of Public Administration Program courses' connection with reality. (In practice, most students are supposed to be implementers). 2) An emphasis on instructors with direct public administration education, is visible in many programs that have shifted to recruitment of "pureblood" instructors that have graduated in public administration at all 3 postgraduate levels, instead of "hybrid" instructors. This method is used in many case studies. In this case, the informants from many case studies noted nonconformity of this issue with regard to the current and future development of public administration learning management, which is more interdisciplinary. Therefore a requirement of "pureblood" instructors potentially causes "extinction" of the program or the field in

the future due to incompatibility of the program in the social context that requires public administration knowledge in problem-solving.

Currently many things are interdisciplinary, and it is like that everywhere in the world. So, the criteria that says the instructors should graduate in the exact or related fields have wider interpretation. As a result, the Public Administration Program, which is a social science that should have been open to innovative knowledge, is impossible to be open and innovative with this criteria. (Director of MPA Program, NIDA, personal communication, April 27, 2016)

3) Thesis and Independent Study Supervisors

There are no explicit criteria on thesis and independent study advisors in TQF 1. However, the higher education program standard of 2015 categorized thesis and individual study supervisors into 3 groups; main thesis supervisors, thesis co-supervisors, and thesis and independent study examiners.

A study on thesis and independent study advisor criteria yields major issues emphasized by the higher education program standard of 2015:

Qualifications of the thesis and independent study's supervisors are categorized as follows: 1) Main supervisor should only be a full-time instructor of such program, who holds a Master's degree and at least associated professor in rank, or who holds a Ph.D. qualification. The supervisor should produce 3 academic papers every 5 years, with at least one on them being a research paper. 2) Co-supervisor, if a full-time instructor for the program, should have the same qualifications as the main supervisor. In the case of an external expert, the person should have a Ph.D. degree and have published at least 10 papers in journals listed in the nationally-recognized database. Said papers must be related to the thesis or independent study's topics. 3) Thesis examiners can be assigned from full-time instructors and external experts. Qualifications of the examiners are identical to the main supervisor, with a condition that the examiners must consist of both full-time instructors and external experts, and the examination chairman must not be the main advisor or co-advisor.

Thesis student-to-main-thesis-advisor ratio has determined that instructors with Ph.D. degrees, but without any academic position, can take a

maximum of 5 students. For instructors with Ph.D. degrees and being either assistant professors or associate professors, they can have no more than 10 students in consultancy. In addition, instructors with Ph.D. qualification and the academic rank of professor can have no more than 15 students in their consultancy.

Overall, case study informants reflected that the definition of qualifications and the proportion of supervisors to students were paramount in the creation of graduate quality in terms of the supervisor's ability to thoroughly supervise theses. However, in practice, each case study illustrated a different outcome, as follows: first, qualification that the instructors in older programs have satisfied the criteria for thesis advisor and thesis examiner, because most of the faculty members are of senior to intermediate generations with academic eligibility and academic work. Nevertheless, some case studies reveal that there are also senior instructors with Master's degrees and assistant professor ranks. While they have extensive experience in both teaching and academic writing, the 2015 criteria disbar them from being both advisors and instructors in academic writing courses. An administrative solution for many programs is to have this instructor group prepare the students in academic writing before assigning them real, qualified instructors. In addition, some case study informants expressed that their programs have issues regarding highly-qualified instructors, for example, associate professors or full professors that have vast knowledge but have not produced any recent work and thus got disqualified from being advisors or thesis examiners.

For newer programs, it was found that in the aspect of overall instructor quality, the number of advisor-eligible instructors is higher due to recruitment of only PhD instructors. On the other hand, as most instructors are relatively new, the problem is an insufficient number of academic works, and experience in thesis or independent study supervision.

Simultaneously, the high requirements for external thesis examiners are highlighted in many case studies, that should these criteria be strictly adhered to, it is neither feasible nor practical to find external thesis examiners. Moreover, this may create a "monopoly" of external thesis examiners, as most of them are senior instructors who have comprehensive works in many aspects, according to this informant's opinion that:

The faculty's original requirements for the thesis examiners were already strict. Then there is the TQF 1 above all that and make the Public Administration harder to the next level. Principally, it is a good idea. But the problem is, practically, how many of those examiners are fully qualified anyway? (Director of MPA Program, NIDA, personal communication, April 27, 2016)

Secondly, proportion of thesis students per thesis supervisors used to be a major problem in many programs, when the MPA Programs were extensively expanding at the time. Currently, however, it's been found that there are sufficient instructors for thesis supervision in most cases, with the exception to the National Institute of Development Administration, which has many off-campus MPA programs. This program director, as an informant, reflected on the problem of thesis student numbers:

We understand that, as the Office of Higher Education Commission is responsible for quality assurance, they must create the central criteria to control. But in the midst of that, there are problems. Some are not suitable for National Institute of Development Administration, because we do not have Bachelor's Degree, so the number of students per an instructor may not suit us... In the matter of numbers of IS or thesis supervisors, the criteria that says one instructor could supervise no more than 10 students, should be more flexible, because we have provincial campuses too. (Former Deputy Dean of Academic Affairs, Faculty of Public Administration, NIDA, personal communication, May 23, 2016)

5.5.4 Relationship of the Thailand Qualifications Frameworks and the Quality of the Program

It can be concluded from this study that, in principle, the requirements of the Thailand Qualification Framework affect the creation of program quality as defined in two main areas by the case studies; quality of graduates, and quality of instructors.

Quality of graduates is determined by the qualification framework in terms of productivity, through definition of desired characteristics of the graduates, and definition of the expected learning outcome in each course within the program. In addition, in terms of the graduate provision process, the teaching arrangements and course content in domestic MPA programs are standardized through a specification of course groups in TQF 1 - Public Administration that requires every program to teach at least the defined 5 course groups, as well as a definition of instructing and course improvement processes. However, in practice, said criteria causes major problems in terms of graduate quality, such as loss of identity, locality, or deep knowledge within the unique context of each program, as all programs are forced to adopt mainstream public administration as defined in TQF 1, which might rapidly become obsolete in its highly-dynamic, and increasingly more interdisciplinary, context.

Quality of instructors is the main issue that the qualification framework is extensively involved in, through stipulation of various details in order to have instructors and program administrators with higher qualifications than in the general courses of each program. In practice, said methods have an impact on many programs, especially newer ones, as they are forced to develop their instructors to the standard. But at the same time, many unqualified programs resort to employment of qualified external instructors, and in some cases, said instructors are employed only by name, to allow continuation of the program.

In conclusion, the Higher Education Qualification Framework has a principle that links with various aspects of quality, although in practice only results in changes of the structural or formal operational process in accordance with the TQF, but not of operational behavior of the instructors. Thus, the policy implementers, both the management and the instructors, refer to problems connected with the requirements of the TQF and their creation of educational quality, which can be summarized as follows:

5.5.4.1 The assumption of TQF: although the quality concept of the TQF comprehensively covers all aspects of quality, it is deemed excessively rigid and single-minded for higher education management, especially in a social science like Public Administration programs. In terms of instructor requirements, for example, emphasis is placed on a public administration education background, continuous

academic productivity, and control of course learning management through TQF documentation, which covers course design, (TQF 1-2), course description (TQF 3) and learning assessment and verification of achievements (TQF 5). Said concept inadvertently focuses on external rather than internal control, which is in direct conflict with the university's context.

In addition, although the attempt to communize graduate quality by requiring all Public Administration Programs to provide courses in the 5 course groups for a definition of the basic minimum knowledge for all public administration masters, in practice it is difficult for all programs to provide instructors with similar expertise in the core courses due to the specialized nature of higher education. This criterion therefore inhibits diversity of public administration learning management and identity, while not conforming to a modern public administration management that is dynamic and interdisciplinary.

5.5.4.2 Objectives and Practices: there is a goal displacement in the Thailand Qualification Framework, from its goal to instill program quality in order to achieve an international standard and common, transferable learning credits, to an excessive criticism of the very effort to satisfy the TQF. In other words, the instructors and program administrators comply with the TQF to eliminate potential problems to the overall program management by focusing on paperwork to exhibit their operations to the central agency and the quality assurance committee, but in the process they do not consider the use of the TQF to generate genuine program quality. For example, it was found that paperwork in many programs is performed by support staff, or in some case studies the informants were personally involved in the paperwork, but they only perform token efforts to meet the requirements of the TQF without the dedication or understanding of the principle as defined in the TQF.

As for the program, I feel that the Curriculum Mapping is something I do to get it over with. For example in the subject I am in charge, I tried to add contents to meet the requirements, but some instructors did it without understanding, or some even ask the staff to do it for them. (Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University, personal communication, November 1, 2016)

5.5.4.3 Implementation details: the criteria in the TQF are quite difficult to implement due to an excessive amount of documentation, and the creation of various processes with an intent to alter instructing behavior. However, in practice, these criteria are too burdensome for the instructors despite the introduction of information technology to assist in the process. Ultimately, many instructors refuse to actively adhere to the TQF, as voiced by the following informant:

Chulalongkorn University has created the CU-CAS system, which is similar to the TQF, but we did it first. Principally, it was good. Says, I finished the teaching and I went to see it every week then I replied, which it actually not that hard to respond. Really, it may take no longer than half an hour per subject each week. It is the reflection of our teaching, which is convenient because we do not have to collect anything. But we normally are not that attentive to have a look at it every week. If you ask whether the system helps, yes it does, in terms of reminding us, but sometimes we are just too lazy because it takes too much time. (Dean, Faculty of Political Science, personal communication, December 19, 2015)

CHAPTER 6

FACTORS INFLUENCING POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN THE CONTEXT OF MPA PROGRAMS IN THAILAND

In this chapter, the author will present factors influencing the implementation of internal quality assurance systems in the context of Master of Public Administration programs in Thailand, so as to recommend guidelines for improving the internal quality assurance systems' implementation.

6.1 Factors Influencing Policy Implementation in the Context of Master of Public Administration Programs in Thailand

Factors influencing policy implementation on quality assurance can be divided into three major levels, a macro level, a meso level, and a micro level.

6.1.1 Macro Level Factors

At the macro level, factors influencing the implementation of internal quality assurance systems can be categorized into the following: a policymaker factor, and a policy content factor.

In this topic, the author will explain and analyze the factors, which will consequently affect policy and quality assurance implementation as follows:

6.1.1.1 Policymaker Factor

This factor influences implementation of the quality assurance systems, Thailand's quality assurance system was developed by a group of education scholars with support from overseas, as follows: Fulbright (The United States) and British Council (The United Kingdom). After that, the quality assurance system was considered and approved by the higher education commission. In addition, there was another commission called the "Internal Quality Assurance Commission", responsible

for considering the quality assurance criteria. Commissioners mostly were scholars in the fields of education, health sciences, and engineering. Since there scarcely were any scholars from public administration in the commissions, they were criticized by the informants who were public administration scholars, that they were not well-defined by all policy stakeholders' perspectives. Thus, they did not fit within the context of public administration, and although the criteria did support the implementation in a scientific context, they did not fit within the context of public administration. For example, the focus on quantitative criteria that emphasizes the importance of published academic research, but not academic research or service that could immediately be implemented on an organizational or local level, or the issue of students' academic work having dissemination at the international level. Hence, if considering the policy as a result that reflects the value of the policymakers (Dye, 1984), it can be concluded that internal policy and quality assurance are not defined by the perspective of all-around actors, especially the lack of perspective from the social science and humanity factors. It reflects how recent policymaker factors are obstacles to impelling a quality assurance system in the public administrative program context.

6.1.1.2 Policy Content

In implementing a quality assurance system, key informants from most case studies agree that the quality assurance system has caused radical change in managing the program in the past. That is to say, although the Council of University Presidents of Thailand and the Office of Higher Education Commission have announced a quality assurance policy and have supported the affiliated universities in finding their own way to perform for quite some time before starting to enforce the internal quality assurance system, it has been found that most of the affiliated institutions have yet to seriously develop their own quality assurance system, to date only Chulalongkorn University has developed its own system. In addition, if considering implementation within the Master of Public Administration Programs context, the informants who are now working as executives and their staffs on quality assurance, all agree that it is more like compliance that focuses on documentation and preparation of the information for assessment procedures. For the newer programs, quality assurance is rarely stated or given importance. For this reason, it creates a

culture shock when there is internal quality assurance enforcement in many case studies. This can be analyzed as a main cause of policy content, as follows:

1) The assumption that quality assurance systems are not in accordance with the value and the past experience of those who get policy results. The assumption that quality assurance is adapted from quality control in the industrial sector or business is highlighted on the quality control all over the organization by thoroughly using an assessment procedure, which is different from the universities' working process, which focuses on screening instructors from the beginning and using working quality control according to their own codes of conduct. This causes negative attitudes towards the quality assurance system from lecturers, especially the senior ones, as they consider the mentioned assumption as work condemnation, and have the assumption that academic work, which is considered a craft, becomes work that is considered a factory production. For them this means a dignity reduction, and for the faculty or university, which is a professional bureaucracy, constitutes work custom resistance.

2) The lack of a clear objective. Although the quality assurance policy specifies principles and objectives in order to continually improve on quality assurance at the faculty and program level in the long term, academic freedom, autonomy, and accountability need to be considered. However, the quality assurance tools that were adopted early, in order to create standardization in the universities and faculties and are assessed by the same criteria for every organization all over the country, are opposed to the freedom of process of the academy or the later criteria, which are more flexible. For example, the universities are able to select their own quality assurance systems, but there are other controls by tools and mechanisms, such as standardized terms of national higher education qualifications. Thus, the objective of the quality assurance is unclear and incompatible as to whether it should focus on the usage of the quality assurance system to survey its own status in reality for continual development, or whether it is an assessment for benefits or penalties of the program, which affects the program's survival. This causes problems concerning compatibility of the policies. When it comes into practice, in several programs the affiliated faculty and institute will try to do their best to pass the quality assurance assessment so as to "save face" and allow the program to continue their teaching.

3) The communication of unclear objectives. This causes the actor in the group that is most affected by the system's implementation to be unable to understand it, and have no guidelines to prepare for a systematic assessment. Several case studies show that evidence preparation and self-assessment reports in the early stage are hastily prepared before assessment and often leave the burden to the faculty's staff. This causes rather low assessment results for many case studies in the first round, and some of them receive "should be urgently improved" feedback, which causes some of the case studies to become marked by the original affiliation institute. This can cause seriousness among the chancellor, faculty and program management, and lecturers, which arouses opposition and negative attitudes toward the quality assurance system.

6.1.2 Meso Level Factors

This topic focuses on the roles of the host institutions, as a coordinator between the quality central agencies, the faculty and the program. It has been found that the original affiliation institutes take it seriously regarding quality assurance, and adopt it as a tool for management. The management of the original affiliation of the program policy can be divided into the following groups:

6.1.2.1 Central pioneer universities. There is a quality education policy that focuses on excellence on both the international and national levels. For example, Chulalongkorn University, which has "Pillar of the Kingdom" as its slogan, developed its own internal quality assurance system before the Office of Higher Education Commission promulgated the internal quality assurance system. This includes impelling the faculties to use international quality assurance criteria, such as AUN-QA or EdPEX, and placing importance on the world's university rankings or, in the case of the National Institute of Development Administration, focuses on itself as a "World Class University", which received the acceptance from accreditation institutes and impels itself to adopt international quality assurance criteria, which has management's support. For example, to provide faculties the development of the information systems in order to support the university's internal quality assurance and resources, such as research grants and compensation for publication.

6.1.2.2 Regional urban universities, including Chiang Mai University and Prince of Songkla University. The university's policy during the quality assurance period is the transitional period from being a university that is certified to produce graduates or academic work in a regional context, into a national research university. This is to prepare it for being a world class university, which causes the university's policy to place the importance on propelling its faculty and program staff to produce research or publish papers, and has the mechanism to increase the publications of the graduates for quality rankings. They provide research funding support measures and incentives, as well as continued contract coercive measures, which can be considered an accelerator to implement quality assurance at the faculty and program level. However, it creates incompatibility between the faculty's and program's readiness at the regional or national level, and university's management direction, which focuses on becoming world class.

6.1.2.3 Regional rural universities, including University of Phayao, and Ubon Ratchathani University. Although the target of these universities is to focus on the expansion of educational opportunity for students in rural areas, the issue of quality recognition from the nation's central authority is thoroughly emphasized. In the case of Ubon Ratchathani University, it focuses mainly on quality assurance according to the Office of Higher Education Commission and Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment requirements, and is starting to do EdPEX for the faculties that are ready to do. In the case of the University of Phayao, it also endeavors to use international standards, namely AUN-QA, to apply to its quality assurance at the program level. These universities use the drive method in policies or regulations issued in the university and let the faculty or programs operate. In some cases, there is not a sufficient budget or resource support.

6.1.3 Micro Level Factor

On this topic, the author has compiled the factors that the informants in each case study regard as having the most importance to implementing the quality assurance system in their own context, which they consider is important to create a quality curriculum of their own contexts, as follows:

6.1.3.1 Leadership Factor

Leadership is the factor that in every case study considers it to be the key factor for implementing its own quality assurance system. The informants in each case study think that the leadership factor supports implementing their own quality assurance system. They are summarized as follows: roles of the leaders to implement a quality assurance system, the leader's knowledge of quality assurance, the ability of the leader in accepting or collecting support from various sources, both in and out of the organization, and the leader's continuity.

1) Roles of the leaders to implement the quality assurance system

From cross-case analysis, it has been found that the highest role of an organization is the dean. Most case studies support the implementation of internal quality assurance. For the most part, the role of the dean in each case study will focus on being "Reactive", which follows the central authorities who supervise the universities' quality requirements in order to let the faculties and programs continue proceeding from top to bottom, this takes the assigned policy to be mainly in practice. A delegation through the management structure and performance evaluation system is used so as to assign the quality assurance work among the staff. However, it was found that in some cases, at some stages, the dean shows his or her role performance proactively, to prepare in advance before there is new quality assurance enforcement, such as in the NIDA's Master of Public Administration program case, which tries to be a member of NASPAA in order to receive accreditation. In Chulalongkorn University's case, sometime in the past, the dean was the one who followed the quality assurance work from various departments and beforehand prepared for amending the curricula so as to match the requirements of the Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education in Public Administration.

Those who have the role of truly impelling various case studies are the associate deans that take care of quality assurance work. The drive of most associate deans will mainly be to compromise, which in several case studies reflects the picture of the executive who impels the quality assurance system, and be mostly "Friendly, and reachable", as in the view of these informants:

The main thing that must be considered for those who implement the quality assurance system is to compromise. You cannot take the quality assurance system to force anyone to do as you may want. (Associate Dean on Quality Assurance. Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University, personal communication, 10 March 2016)

The quality assurance work is like chores, which you have to uncontrollably ask for the cooperation from every team. Hence, the QA person will have to get along well with every team: the heads, lecturers, and staff. Associate Dean on Quality Assurance. Faculty of Political Science, Ubon Ratchathani University, personal communication, 15 December 2014)

From comparing the cross case studies, the roles of the head that assist in impelling the quality assurance system under the case studies contexts can be concluded into 3 groups, as follows:

(1) Central pioneer programs. The role of the organization director will be to use his/her power to focus on implementing authority in supervising the organization's formal structure, as well, the roles of most executives are to follow up on their subordinate's work, there may be some executives whose dean will follow up or perform it by himself.

(2) Regional urban programs. The role of the organization's highest executive will be to impel focusing on implementing authority in supervising the organization's formal structure, but the roles of the executives whose duties are to impel the associate dean and head of the department levels will be close, and focus mainly on compromising and reachability of the staff.

(3) Newer regional rural programs. The roles of the executives are to use teamwork, to foster informal relationships and familiarity between the directors and staffs.

2) The knowledge and understanding of the executives about quality assurance

From cross case analysis, it was found that most of the program management have a rather good knowledge and understanding of the system and internal quality assurance criteria, as they have the experience of a quality assurance

assessor. They are able to put quality assurance criteria into practice for the faculty's planning and action. However, it has been found that some case studies, such as at Chulalongkorn University and Chiang Mai University, the executives take part in the rule setting work in quality assurance at the Public Administration program level, this is to conduct research for formulating the Thai Qualifications Framework for Graduate Program in Public Administration, which helps their programs to be prepared in advance, both in the perspective of program development and regarding agreement with internal faculty staff.

From comparing these cross case studies, it was found that in the pioneer programs in Bangkok, the executives who understanding the quality assurance system will be those who directly supervise the quality assurance work. While the other executives still lack the understanding of quality assurance, this makes it into separate work and driven by the quality assurance executive and staff. However, for the new programs, it has been found that the faculty executives understand quality assurance criteria and try to integrate the quality assurance requirements in explicit work plans and drives it with teamwork.

3) The ability of the leader in accepting or collecting support from various sources, both in and out of the organization

The informants in several case studies think that "the leader's glory" results in propelling the quality assurance system. However, in the pioneer program, the organization's executives, both at the dean and associate dean level, have an important role in causing the faculty or program to have bargaining power or to be supported by external actors, either the quality supervising authorities or a public administration professional association, that can assist in quality assurance implementation, such as training internal assessors at the faculty level, receiving information in advance on quality assurance that helps the faculty and program to prepare for changes, and finding assessors who understand organizational context.

As for the new programs, most of the organizations' executives are still not able to be accepted or supported by external actors, both from within and out of the university, since in several case studies it was found that the program, which is in the original affiliated university that is a comprehensive university focusing on the science fields, causes the negotiation on social policy field issues to

be rather weak. The original affiliated faculties in these case studies are mostly new-born faculties where most of the directors are in their middle and young ages, so they have less power to negotiate various criteria than the older faculties in the institute. This causes the leader's leading styles in quality assurance to be more defensive when putting the policy into action.

For the ability of gaining support from the internal organization, it was found that the members in a newer program provide more support, and cooperation with the executive than the older ones. The informant notices that the lecturers in the older programs mostly have high individualism and contexts concerning the politics inside the organization, causing conflicts among staff inside the organization. This makes the executives, accepted and supported by external faculties, to not receive support from the internal organization, causing pauses and discontinuity in policy actions and some parts of quality assurance. On the other hand, in the new programs, the organization is small in size, causing a short hierarchy, and most of the staff are experienced and of approximately the same age, causing this group of informants in the case studies to think that the relationship format among the staff in the organization is close and reachable, which makes them drive to gain more cooperation from the lecturers in the program and faculty.

4) Executives' Continuity

From the cross case studies, it was found that the original affiliated faculty of various case studies changes the executive team by terms. However, in many programs, even though the dean is changed, the associate dean, supervising quality assurance, is usually the same person. This causes the faculty's quality management to be smoother than in case studies that often change the director of quality assurance. When considering the relationship between the continuity of the executive and the faculty's quality assurance system implementation, it was found that in the pioneer programs, the continuity of the executive results in more quality assurance implementation than in the newer ones, because in such programs, each executive generally has his own working mode according to the term of reference, but in the case of the new programs, it was found that the executives work as a team. Hence, when it comes to the change of executive, they will have a shorter learning time for the work during the transitional period.

6.1.3.2 The Communication Factor

Communication is a factor that the informants from many cases consider a second priority. The theme that the informants concur with concerning the role of communication is the message that relates to quality assurance, causing a big change in a faculty's staff. It mostly is an increase in work, both in the aspect of documentation and workloads that the lecturers must do, such as academic and research publication, to accomplish quality assurance requirements. This causes the staff to have conflicts, so the communication issue is an important one for the executive and staff who supports a quality assurance working group, in order to place importance on implementing a quality assurance system.

The themes that the informants have provided about the communication factor that affects the implementation of the quality assurance system is concluded as follows:

1) Communication Channels

Most case studies use communication regarding quality assurance via formal channels, including faculty meetings and program meetings, so as to explicate the criteria and indicate the responsible person in various areas of the quality assurance criteria, and to use main channels for the faculty's executive in following the proceeding result of each sector. It was found that the result of using formal communication channels in most case studies is to create legitimacy, a standard of the working system, and to have concrete evidence within various areas. When considering effectiveness, most informants think that the formal channel affects the methods of in time working. However, there are also limitations to the positive attitude creation or cooperation in a faculty's internal quality assurance staff.

Another communication channel is that of informal communication, which has many modes, such as the informal talks of the staff at work, and the use of social networks by setting up a group of the faculty's members. Most of the informants agree that the result of informal communication is positive in terms of establishing a carefree feeling in communication or asking questions among executives, lecturers, and staffs, which is two-way communication, causing better working cooperation. Mostly, this channel is often used in the aspect of support for the formally aforementioned quality assurance stimulation.

From the cross case studies, it was found that informal communication channels are used more in the context of new programs than old ones, including the feature of the organization that is medium in size, and the working area arrangement, and is found where the staff works in a co-working space, making the lecturers and the staff have rather much interaction. Meanwhile, in the old programs each lecturer would have their own “working space” and have their explicit separate layout between lecturers and staff, and between director and general lecturers. Moreover, the age and education being almost the same among the lecturers causes the relationship in this group to be more of a “family” than only interactions by position.

2) Ways of Communication about Quality Assurance

Ways of communication is an issue that each case study uses differently for persuasion on creating attitudes or points of view towards quality assurance among the staff in order to receive acceptance and cooperation on quality assurance. It can be established into the following groups:

(1) Straightforward communication by emphasizing that quality assurance is work that everyone has to do so as to make the faculty able to survive, and that it is a regulation. The ways of communication as it appears in the case study, include times such as the calling for a meeting in order to provide the criteria of quality assurance and share the work to various parts by the director, or informing about the quality assurance results to the lecturers so as to request workings for quality assurance reference. This kind of communication was much used in the first era of quality assurance, since the director who was in charge of supervising the quality assurance work then mostly did not clearly understand what quality assurance was. Moreover, most informants think that this way of communication creates an effect in terms of creating an alienated image of quality assurance that makes the staff in the faculty feel that quality assurance is document work and not routine work that is part of the staff’s “work load”, causing conflict or opposition in many case studies. While the opposite effect resulted in the case study in which a new program had a rather negative quality assurance result. The director has a way of communication in order to stimulate the internal faculty’s staff to be eager to coordinate at some time, as in the following informants’ attitude:

Here, when talking about quality assurance, we will use direct communication in order to make everyone to understand in the same direction and to let them know the real problem of the faculty. For example, there was a period that the faculty had very bad quality assurance result in terms of lecturers' workings, we, consequently, used the direct communication to ask them if they would help publish so as to increase the score, otherwise, we would not be able to pass the ONESQA's assessment. This made the score in this part to be almost full in that year. (Associate Dean on Quality assurance, Faculty of Political Science, Ubon Ratchathani University, personal communication, December 15, 2014)

When talking about quality assurance, we often do not want to do it, as some staff always squeeze ourselves, which creates a lot of obstacles in the work. Instead of helping to solve the problems, they will reprehend or constrain us. (Former director of MPA Program, NIDA, personal communication, April 27, 2016)

(2) Communication about quality assurance, which focuses on integration of the faculty's missions, is a guideline as the informants describe, "it is quality assurance without saying quality assurance." In this way of communication, the quality assurance directors will have to have good knowledge and understanding of the criteria so as to "*be able to read the quality assurance mind*" before coaching the lecturers and the faculty's and program's staff. The informants have the opinion that this method is good for quality assurance system drive in terms of making lecturers starts to realize the importance of quality assurance in terms of a thing that directly affects working, as an informant's opinion indicates:

Communication and criteria are important. If we use the criteria to reprehend, there will suddenly be a problem. For quality assurance here, we think of the problems as using criteria as communication that is inefficient. For instance, if there is a lecturer asking why we have to have do at least 2 research projects in order to teach Master's Degrees, we must be able to answer him that the reason is to supervise research projects. If the lecturers do not have an

experience in doing them, how would they be able to supervise students' thesis? We will use this kind of communication more than using the direct communication that we have to do this because of the setting of quality assurance. (Director of MPA Program, Chiang Mai University, personal communication, May 31, 2016)

(3) Communication about quality assurance in terms of organization development is a method that several case studies choose to do in order to advise an alternative quality assurance system to be used in an organization, both the old programs, which focus on the alternative quality assurance and is the spotlight of the organization in academic circles for building excellence in an organizational context, and the new curriculum that focuses on the communication of quality assurance for developing teaching and management with internationally-accepted criteria. This guideline of communication of various case studies will place emphasis on comparing the benefits and advantages of these new criteria and the traditional quality assurance guidelines of the Office of Higher Education Commission in order to make their case. The following informant observed that communication about quality assurance in terms of organization development helps to impel quality assurance in terms of building interactions of the in-organization staff to be more positive than with communication about traditional quality assurance that focuses merely on following the criteria, as this interviewee's opinion points out:

Generally, we will refuse quality assurance, but in the latter, it is like we are brainwashed by the frequent sayings of the director, 'we will not anymore focus on the evidence but instead assessing ourselves on our goals.' We have tried this and realized that there are some points that are like the older ones. However, there are several points that we see the area of designing or more freedom in designing the teachings. (Director of MPA Program, University of Phayao, personal communication, October 10, 2016)

6.1.3.3 Participation Factor

The participation factor of the lecturers and the faculty's and program's internal staff is important for supporting various policies and plans that are formulated by management in order to be effective and concrete. However, it has been found that there is the participation of actors who are concerned with the quality assurance system, and the pioneer programs have less participation of the faculty's and program's internal staff than the regional newer programs. On this topic, participation presents 2 themes: case study participation level, and case study participation mode.

1) Case Study Participation Level

On this topic, the author gathered the informants' comments that reflect an overall image by considering various roles of the staff in the faculty, which become case studies in terms of participation in quality assurance. It can be divided into the following groups:

(1) Group with less participation. The case studies that belong to this group are mainly the older programs, the informants provide a picture of participation that has the same or similar features as most of the staff in the organization and pays little attention to, and has little cooperation with, quality assurance. There merely is a group of the director of the faculty and program that participates in quality assurance activities. Moreover, in some cases it was found that it was the director who drives it at some level. For example, a director who supervises quality assurance at the program level, or a director at the faculty level, does not fully show supervisory roles in quality assurance at some times. They will have support staff do it. Thus, this causes the quality assurance activities to be the director's and support staff's burden. The main role of collaboration of the staff in the organization will be as follows: providing the data to prepare the faculty's self-assessment report, and participating in quality assurance activities. Generally, the faculty members' participation is forced rather than voluntary. This is because most of them do not understand the real purpose of quality assurance, and they think that quality assurance is extra, non-necessary work for them. In addition, some senior faculty members may deny participating and let this be the junior faculty members' duties. So, there is a state in which the organization's quality assurance result and overall image turns out to be rather positive, but this comes from the support staff or some of the quality directors' presentation, as this informant's opinion shows:

Quality assurance work is quality assurance department's duty...in the past, the staff from various departments that are not directly involved with quality assurance and the staff from various centers, they do not have any interest or prepare for quality assurance, as they do not consider it as their work...when quality assurance starts to have an impact on program, its side effect is conflict between central staff. As for the lecturers' side...many of them have no knowledge and interest in it. Some of them, who are directors, they do not do it either...on the period that I supervised the quality assurance work, an expert was invited to train the assessors at the faculty or a week, but there were only a couple of lecturers taking part in. Mostly was the director's team. (Former Associate Dean on Quality assurance, Faculty of Public Administration, NIDA, personal communication, October 26, 2016)

When talking about quality assurance, it is admitted that people more than half of the faculty do not understand, including in system, idea, and the director's policy. Sometimes they think that it is just about document. For example, Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education must be shown, when mentioning about Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, some of them are opposed to it in the first stage. This causes non-participation. (Director of MPA Program, Chiang Mai University, personal communication, June 22, 2016)

(2) Group with more participation. The case study of this group is mostly in the new program. The informants of this group provided a picture of participation that has the same or similar features as most of the staff in the organization, having an interest and collaboration in quality assurance of the faculty and curriculum, including support of the work that supports quality assurance procedures, such as providing information, taking part in various trainings, or in terms of involvement in direct quality assurance and such things as being the university's internal assessor or writing a self-assessment report. The director and the quality assurance staff act in the role of coordinator in preparing information for assessment or introducing new criteria and systems to be used in the faculty or the programs. Since the organization is small in size, it causes the structure of management among

the staff to be close, and a background of education, age, and experience in work that is not very different between the lecturers and the support staff, who are mostly of the younger generation who enjoy learning from work. Moreover, almost all of the operators' statuses are university staff, as the informant's opinion makes clear:

Generally, the faculty is not opposed to QA, but rather good cooperated, as being a new faculty, almost all the directors are at the same age and have a teamwork. There scarcely are problems among directors. (Assistant Dean on Quality assurance, Faculty of Political Science, and Social Science, University of Phayao, personal communication, October 10, 2016)

Quality assurance is a big issue of the faculty, as our faculty has always received the lowest score in the university. Hence, there was a time when the dean formed the team by asking new lecturers in the faculty to be a director, which the quality assurance topic is the important thing that the team director has an interest in. Due to being a small faculty, and there being a close relationship and reachability among the directors, making the image of quality assurance work to be easy to ask for coordination. (Associate Dean on Quality assurance, Faculty of Political Science, Ubon Ratchathani University, personal communication, December 15, 2014)

2) The Case Studies Participation Mode

On this topic, the author has collected data on participation about the quality assurance of various case studies. It can be concluded as follows:

(1) Being an assessor. Many original affiliated institutes of the cases demand the faculty and program directors to take part in quality assurance assessor training in order to understand quality assurance criteria for implementation in their management tasks. Especially after the implementation of quality assurance at the program level, many institutes need to produce internal assessors at the program level to be adequate in peer review assessments. This makes the group of directors, both at the faculty level and the program level, take part in the assessment. From the interview, it was found that in the new programs, apart from the directors, some lecturers have taken part in assessing.

(2) Information cooperation for quality assurance assessment.

It is the most fundamental participation format that all staff at every level of the faculty and program takes part in quality assurance. However, many case studies show that at the first stage of quality assurance there were information cooperation request problems. Several lecturers never kept their own information or wondered what the faculty wanted the information for, and why. In some cases they gave the information but it was not what the faculty wanted, causing many repetitive requests and conflicts between quality assurance staff and the lecturers and staff from various parts of the faculty. However, nowadays this part has been getting better in every case study.

(3) Help Writing Self-assessment reports. This is the task given to planning staff, in most case studies, at the first stage. In some cases, there is a quality assurance director taking part in this before he starts to divide the work to relevant directors, lecturers, and staff. As the content and procedure in many works that appear in the self-assessment report must rely on the writer who really does the work, it is better than letting quality assurance staff be narrators. However, the reason many case studies show the cause as to why the lecturers do not help do the self-assessment report is that they do not know the writing process, and think that it is document work, making many case studies that have the staff always prepare various documents for the lecturers and not adequately receive cooperation from them. However, when quality assurance gets to the program level, doing self-assessment reports for every program is required, causing an obvious big change in many case studies as the program director and lecturers start to take part in the program's self-assessment report.

(4) Participation in quality assurance activities. The activities regarding quality assurance “are pluralistic, occur throughout the year, and cover every group of staff in the faculty”, including various criteria training, self-assessment report writing training, and assessor training. Especially nowadays, quality assurance is implemented at the program level and many faculties and programs are studying to adopt alternative quality assurance systems. Each original affiliated university in the case study often provides an alternative quality assurance training session, such as AUN-QA, CUPT-QA, and EdPEX, throughout the year. Generally,

the participants are the same group, including faculty directors, program directors, quality assurance assessors, and quality assurance staff. However, it was found that many case studies use performance management in order to stimulate other staff to take part in the activities, such as scoring in the performance appraisal.

From cross case analysis, the formats of participation in the faculties and programs regarding quality assurance are similar. The participation of staff in most cases emphasizes providing information support for quality assurance, and attending quality assurance activities, which are activities that directors and support staff in every case study, and lecturers in most of the case studies, attend. Both kinds of the above mentioned participation are participation in terms of the quality assurance support mission, but the main mission in quality assurance will be writing the self-assessment report, which mostly is the role of faculty and program directors, and quality assurance staff. Moreover, it was also found that groups of staff in the new programs take part in quality assurance more than the old ones, especially the groups of lecturers.

6.1.3.4 Management Factor

The faculty management is an important factor to quality assurance implementation. When implementing the quality assurance system the central authorities implement the policy and regulations, which are rather strict and cover program management procedures, from input, to process, and output. Implementing the quality assurance system under the context of case studies is still loose, and various case studies have set guidelines in management that vary in their own contexts.

From this study, it was found that the quality assurance system played an important role in establishing the planning guidelines and faculty management procedures, so as to lead to quality. At the same time, the faculty management systems have parts in supporting the effective implementation of the quality assurance system. The quality assurance system itself reports on the faculty's and program's status, which leads to the faculty and program's improvement. However, it is not able to directly assign or command the faculty's departments to improve their work. For example, in case studies that obtain low assessment results in the number of researches, quality assurance work is only able to report to the directors who are

responsible for that faculty's research in order to establish measures to increase that faculty's research., but it is not directly able to impose any measures for stimulating or supporting faculty members to produce more research.

Here the main factors of management play a part in driving the quality assurance system, including organization structure, personnel management, incentive system, and budget.

1) Organization Structure

In implementing the quality assurance system, organization structure is important for making the department responsible for the quality assurance work. This shows how each case study places importance on quality assurance. On this topic, the organization structure is categorized into two themes: in terms of departmentalization, and in terms of supervisors.

(1) Organization structure in terms of departmentalization.

From comparing the case studies, it was found that at the first stage that the quality assurance system was implemented, most case studies still did not establish a structure to supervise quality assurance. This has caused the quality assurance organization structure of many case studies, such as at Chiang Mai University and Ubon Ratchathani University, to have a temporary structure that focuses on special occasional work of the staff and lecturers, or "depository work" in other words, for the faculty planning department to supervise. The main duty of the mentioned structure is for faculty self-assessment report preparation in order to receive assessment from the board.

Some cases developed a formal structure to implement quality assurance after the IQA had been enforced for a few years. There are many structured features, such as the establishment of a quality assurance department at the faculty level, and the arrangement of the quality assurance work's scope at the faculty, in the planning department. However, it was found that in arranging the job specifications in a faculty's quality assurance in various cases, the point that helps support the implementation of the quality assurance system in the organization in the aspect of focusing on preparing for the organization to be assessed includes information gathering, progress in various sectors, document preparation, and self-assessment reports, more than focusing on the organization's development result. That

said, however the organizational structure was, one of the discoveries that was similar in each case study was that there would be only one or two quality assurance staff in each case study.

After quality assurance has been implemented at the program level, since 2014 it was found that the work starts spreading among quality assurance at the former faculty level. Quality assurance at the program level in most case studies is assigned to the academic department which used to supervise the academic work, and supervises the quality assurance at the program level. In this regard, there are executive committees to supervise this and prepare for quality assurance assessments at the program level.

(2) Organization structure in terms of supervisors. It was found that the directors who supervise the quality assurance work are usually associate deans, who have various position names according to their organizational contexts, and are divided into former director positions that supervise the quality assurance work, such as associate dean in the planning and development department of the National Institute of Development Administration, associate dean in the planning and management resources department of Prince of Songkla University, and associate dean in the management, planning, and quality assurance department of Ubon Ratchathani University. Moreover, there is also an appointment of a director, supervising only on quality assurance work, such as in Chulalongkorn University's case, which has an appointment of associate dean in the quality assurance department, and University of Phayao's case, which has an appointment of dean's assistant in the quality assurance department. After quality assurance is implemented at the program level, various case studies assign the associate dean in the academic department to supervise at the program level, or in some cases, they assign the director to take part in the supervision.

Moreover, it was found that, structurally, every case study appoints the faculty's quality assurance committee and most of the mentioned committee's frames consist mainly of the faculty's director and support staff who work in the quality assurance area. The chairman of the committee is usually the dean or the associate dean who supervises in the quality assurance field.

From the cross case studies, it was found that for the management structure to be effectively used, the original affiliated institutes of various case studies have to use the guidelines so as to support the drive, along with the management structure, as follows: 1) The assignment for the faculty and program directors to take part in training for being a university's quality assurance assessor, for which he would receive a quota. The faculty directors who supervise the quality assurance work and the directors of other associated areas have to participate in the training to be an assessor so as to have an understanding of the quality assurance system and its criteria for implementing it in management work. It was found that each case study receives rather good cooperation from the directors, especially in the new programs where the faculty's directors take part and are quality assurance assessors for the whole team. 2) The assignment to have a coordinator representative mechanism in quality areas at the faculty level means that the faculty has to appoint a quality management representative, or QMR, to coordinate with the university's central quality assurance department, the associate dean who supervises the quality assurance work will generally take up the position. At the faculty level an appointment for a quality representative, together with the department level, connects the quality assurance at the department level with the faculty level, making the quality assurance coordination be smooth.

2) Personnel Management

Personnel management is an important factor for building quality and implementing a quality assurance system in terms of arrangement and supervision of the staff's work in each case study. Various themes will be presented on this topic, as follows:

(1) Lecturers' Recruitment An issue that various case studies consider important is the process of screening input factors for quality building. However, the case studies, as a whole, mainly place the importance on the lecturers' qualifications; Doctoral Degree, direct qualifications in Public Administration or a related field, mainly considering applicants with Bachelor's to Doctoral Degrees. This is different from the past, which recruited graduates from various fields of studies, but related to Public Administration, in accordance with the requirements of the Office of Higher Education Commission and guidelines in the

university's quality development. From a comparison of the case studies, it was found that in some case studies, apart from the mentioned qualification issue, there are still ranking considerations of the university that the applicant graduated from. However, the mentioned guidelines were abolished at a later time.

Moreover, in several case studies other factors are focused on, such as position suitability, work experience, and ability to grow as academicians. Many case studies use the lecturer consensus system in the field of lecturer recruitment more than merely following the recruitment committee's discretion.

However, various case studies experience a variety of obstacles in their lecturer recruitment. For the pioneer programs the problem was to have qualified applicants, but when considering the position or growth in the organization's suitability, some case studies chose not to accept this group of lecturers. For the regional programs, especially the group of newer programs, it was found that the main problem comes from lacking applicants who are qualified for the faculty. This causes disability of recruiting the faculty's and program's lecturers, making the guidelines of lecturer recruitment in this group of universities use university scholarships or accept students that receive government scholarships. However, it was found that the mentioned guidelines will have to take a lot of time to produce personnel to be lecturers, causing this group of case study to face the problem of a lecturer's quality in a short period of time.

(2) The staff's status. It was found in the case study that the older programs had a higher proportion of civil servant staff than the newer ones where most of the staff are university officers. However, the informants stated that the status of "civil servant" in most of the older programs will scarcely affect the lecturers' working ambience. Some case studies show that "civil servant", which has lifetime employment, helps to have high stability, resulting in developing this group of lecturer in accordance with the guidelines in quality assurance. In their own contexts that is a hard thing to do, especially in terms of work production, academic position, attitude and motivation, which is the criteria that many programs face concerning the problem of low quality assessment results.

(3) Performance Appraisal. In general, various case studies design work assessment systems that cover their main missions, including teaching,

conducting research, academic services, and art and culture preservation. Several pioneer programs, both in Bangkok and urban regional areas, are in a group of research universities that have emphasized their own work assessment criteria. Nowadays universities focus on research and academic publications, while in some case studies they focus on international publication.

For the case studies that are of newer programs, performance appraisal criteria are less strict than in the old programs. At the first stage, there is neither a requirement in these case studies' assessment criteria that the lecturers have to do all the missions, nor weight limits of each mission. When considering this within the organizational context of having few lecturers, most of the lecturers' missions will mainly be focused on teaching. However, at a later time, these groups of case study start to place an importance on assigning their staff to handle all the missions and start to place more importance on research missions. However, there is compromise and less strictness in the work assessment of the lecturers in this group of curriculum than with the pioneer programs.

In performance management, the employment contract is an important tool for supervising faculty staff performance. From an interview with the directors and lecturers, important requirements that are used by the original affiliated institute to stimulate the lecturers who are university staff include assignments that lecturers have to ask for the academic position within the required period, 5-7 years for renewing the contract, or in some case studies, there is the assignment in which the lecturers must have publications in international journals with a required volume within the contract period. This is one of the conditions that help the institute have adequate work for the university rankings or have good quality assurance results, causing these lecturers, who are university staff, to be eager to do academic work for stability in their profession, more than the group of civil servants.

3) Incentives

Incentives in various case studies play a part in supporting the implementation of the quality assurance system. They consist of incentives that directly concern the quality assurance system and the incentives that have an effect on quality assurance.

Incentives that directly concern the quality assurance system consists of formal motivation, such as rewarding groups of staff that have excellent quality assurance results, in forms of both money and accreditation, and informal incentives, such as quality assurance result reporting in the university's executive meetings so as to praise the staff that have a good quality assurance result, and motivate those that have poor results to improve.

As for incentives, which have an effect on the faculty's and program's quality assurance, this focuses mainly on research and publications, which every case study provides research support backing, both at the faculty level and the institute level, to the lecturers in the monetary rewards.. However, from the cross case studies, research grants and monetary reward for the lecturers who produce academic work in the case studies are rather different between the case study that is one of the central pioneer programs, and the newer regional rural programs, resulting from the program's budget constraints. Apart from that, the focus point of the original affiliated university of the well-known old university's case study focuses mainly on research and publication at the international level. This will receive a rather high amount of monetary reward compared with the national dissemination. However, in many cases there is a reward or accreditation for the lecturers who have an excellent research or academic work publication each year for non-monetary incentives. For example, Prince of Songkla University will provide Prince of Songkla University's value reward for lecturers who have excellent research or academic work publications.

In addition, in some case studies there are teaching incentives that assist in producing graduates, both in terms of process, for example the National Institute of Development Administration has a quality assurance competition in order to implement teaching, and in terms of the lecturers in that many institutes have a selection of the most outstanding lecturers, voted by the students.

4) Budgeting

The budget can be classified into 2 groups, these are the budget for direct quality assurance activity support, and the budget supported by the faculty's process, in which its result is used in quality assurance.

The case studies, in general, have a budget that supports quality assurance activities and the activity processes in accordance with quality assurance

criteria that are rather different. These are the main factors that the informants think will make for quality of the product from each case study different, especially between the old curriculum that has a much bigger budget, and the new one that has budget constraints.

(1) The budget for direct quality assurance activity support. Various case studies set the budget at the beginning, which focuses on quality assurance activities, both in terms of assessor's compensation which has expenses: documents and food, and mainly the expense support that the faculty's internal staff take part in for the evaluator training meetings. Each case sets the budget for compensation for each assessor according to the university. For example, Chulalongkorn University and the University of Phayao set an hourly-rate budget for the evaluator committee in return, while Prince of Songkla University, Chiang Mai University, and Ubon Ratchathani University set lump-sum budgets for them. The compensation payment rate varies in evaluation level (faculty or curriculum), evaluation format (desktop assessment or site visit assessment), evaluation committee position (director, committee, or secretary), and whether it's the faculty's internal or external staff.

From the budget survey regarding compensation for quality assurance evaluators, in some case studies the old pioneer program, in general, sets a higher compensation for the assessors than the newer programs. For example, for the hourly-rate payment group, Chulalongkorn University sets compensation for evaluation directors and committee at not more than 1,200 Baht/person per hour, and the quality assurance committee coordinator at not more than 200 Baht/person per hour, the university also sets lump-sum compensation of quality assurance management for lecturers at not more than 5,000 Baht each time. The University of Phayao sets compensation for an external committee at 500 Baht/hour and internal committee at 250 Baht/hour. In the lump-sum compensation payment group, such as Prince of Songkla University, it sets compensation for evaluators at the faculty level who are the chairpersons and their committee at 4,000 Baht/person, and the evaluator secretary at 1,000 Baht/person. Ubon Ratchathani University sets compensation for external evaluators at 3,000 Baht/person, external committees at 2,000/person, internal committees at 1,500 Baht/person, and the internal secretary at 750 Baht/person.

(2) Budget that supports the missions whose performance result is implemented in quality assurance.

The budgets that support the missions which are used in the quality assurance of various case studies will focus on research and publications, such as research grants within the faculty or institute and academic work publication with monetary reward. Each case study has rather explicit and different criteria and financial amounts, when approving support, between the pioneer program and the newer one. The pioneer programs have a higher support budget amount and internal budget financial amount. For example, the National Institute of Development Administration has an activity support budget that is concerned with the work production of the lecturers, from textbook writing, case study writing, domestic work and international presentation, seminar participation, work observation, training, domestic academic conferences, textbook writing compensation, research grants for creating new knowledge, to case study compensation. Meanwhile, Prince of Songkla University assigns its faculty to receive donation money from an annual government statement of expenditure of not less than 10 percent, and faculty's income of not more than 10 percent, for joining the university research fund to use in research promotion and the lecturers' academic work production.

As for the new programs, most of internal budget allocation focuses on providing research grants for lecturers who are new academicians and have little experience in conducting research, so they are not able to ask from external capital sources for grants. It focuses more on providing a modest research grant for conducting small research, than providing a large amount of money like the older programs. For example, in the faculty of Political Science, Ubon Ratchathani University's case, it allocates its budget within the faculty, which is a small amount for a research grant, not more than 20,000 Baht, or in the case of the University of Phayao, it provides for its lecturers 10,000-40,000 Baht per capita. Moreover, these groups of case study have somewhat of a budget limitation in allocating reward money for persuading the staff into academic work production. Although there is criteria for allocating reward money, there is a rather limited volume each year and not much money, causing some groups of informants to have the opinion that this amount is too low to persuade the staff to produce adequate academic work.

6.1.3.5 Faculty Members' Attitudes Towards Quality Assurance

Staff perceptions and attitudes is one of the main factors when implementing a quality assurance system, since "attitude" has an effect on change acceptance or amendments that will often occur. This is the main idea of quality assurance that focuses on "continuous improvement", as well as a willingness to cooperate on the quality assurance process, which always changes.

The informants in various case studies think that the attitude factor is important to impel the quality assurance system in principle. Yet, practically speaking, from comparing cross case studies the informants appear to think that the faculty member's attitude factor that is concerned with implementing the quality assurance system is an obstacle in quality assurance drive, as most of them have a negative attitude towards quality assurance. The older programs faces this quality assurance negative attitude problem more than the new ones. Therefore, the negative attitude that the informants express, which is a barrier to impelling the quality assurance system in its own context, can be concluded as follows:

- 1) Quality assurance is a document task that increases work more than creating quality in teaching.

The attitude of this group has been deeply cultivated since the introducing of the quality assurance system, in several case studies, especially with the older programs that started to do quality assurance from the beginning without any preparation at the faculty level, and also at the institute level, but there still is unclarity about the work guidelines. Hence, when the Office of Higher Education Commission proclaimed a quality assurance policy, it caused each faculty to rapidly prepare for "making document" in some case studies, so as to be a part of self-assessment report writing for upcoming assessments from the committee. This made the director and lecturers who were in charge of "quality assurance" see the first picture of this as "supplementary tasks and many of them are not involved in the faculty work", more than using the quality assurance process to assist in developing teaching or doing the missions that truly are concerned with the teaching. This attitude becomes an "engraved picture" that is primarily rooted in the quality assurance's concerned staff.

2) The task of quality assurance falls more on the quality assurance support staff and director than everybody in the faculty.

This topic results from the attitude of thinking that quality assurance is a document task of a document being made ready for assessment. This makes various staff consider this as a duty on the quality assurance side and therefore not want to join in. The informants from several case studies expressed almost the same opinion towards the cause of the attitude from most of the lecturers, “still do not understand the assumption and the quality assurance work system and mostly hear recounts or complaints from others.” This makes the lecturers refuse to coordinate in quality assurance or assign the task to their staff, which results in the quality assurance staff in many case studies to think that “various lecturers seldom coordinate”, and be considered from the faculty internal staff that “the quality assurance sector causes work problems, since they force the faculty internal staff to strictly follow the criteria.” Meanwhile, the lecturers on duty have the viewpoint that “the quality assurance sector sets too strict framework to create work obstacles.” Or, “the quality assurance sector requires too much information and too many times.” This situation creates work conflicts or haggles among the staff, which is an obstacle to implement the quality assurance system.

3) Quality assurance is a special task that is not able to integrate practically with the work.

This results from having no “person in charge” of quality assurance tasks from the beginning, which had the impact on several case studies to create a “quality assurance season” when the director, the assessors, and the support staff who are responsible for quality assurance could get together and prepare the quality assurance documents and reports for assessment. Many case studies have more systematic action on quality assurance, such as quality assurance committees set up for supervising the quality assurance tasks throughout the academic year, and quality assurance criteria implementation for planning and setting work targets. Since quality assurance criteria rather often changes, this results in having special actions in many case studies when reaching close to the assessment day in order to prepare for the assessment each year, and making the drive more periodic than focusing on continual improvement and PDCA integration. However, later on when quality assurance gets

down to the program level and provides the chance for each faculty to be able to choose alternative quality assurance systems, the informants in some case studies had the opinion that the attitude of this group has been unwound and starts to try to integrate quality assurance more with other work.

4) Quality assurance decreases academicians' value.

For this group of attitude, there is an agreement among informants' opinions that the quality assurance format, which defines criteria for measuring and evaluating the faculty's and lecturer's work, has a complete feature that goes against the feature of institutes of higher education and requires time and interest or expertise from each lecturer. Thus, the criteria from several issues that come from quality assurance, such as the requirement for lecturers to do various document work, following the Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, can be considered as a kind of lecturers' academic freedom intervention and "more of rendering the lecturer's labor in the graduate and publication production factory." This has caused conflicts from some lecturers in several case studies.

6.2 Proposals for Developing a Quality Assurance System in the Context of Public Administration

In this section, the author will provide suggestions on the development of quality assurance systems in public administration programs, which are synthesized from the analysis of factors presented in the previous section and suggestions from case study informants. In this case, the author presents proposals in 3 groups: policy-level development proposals, quality assurance criteria development proposals, and program and faculty management guideline proposals.

6.2.1 Proposal for Policy-level Process Development

1) Clear and Continuous Quality Assurance

Formulation of a quality assurance policy, guideline and system under public agency supervision should have clarity and continuity, both in content and the main quality aspects expected from the faculty or program, without the excessive frequent change that follows management turnover, in order to allow the institute,

faculty or program implementing the QA to define a clear quality assurance orientation and integrate the QA into their operation in accordance with the PDCA cycle. A problem that has persisted throughout the period of serious QA implementation after enactment of the National Education Act B.E. 2552 (Revised, B.E. 2555) to the present day is a lack of policy clarity on whether evaluation or development results should be focused on, and frequent management changeover, as seen in the 13 Minister of Education replacements and 10 OHEC Secretary replacements, which has resulted in policy continuity issues, as visible in many case studies. This causes sudden alterations of central authority requirements during the period, when the university, faculty or program have already committed extensive preparations of QA communication, understanding and foundation. Ultimately, implementation becomes unstable and quality assurance is rendered an ad-hoc work to primarily satisfy the central evaluation indicator.

Moreover, there should be internal and interagency cooperation on designing a QA system for the central QA authority to reduce redundancy and facilitate QA operations, such as definitions of faculty and program reports based on the CHE-QA system, which is the common QA report standard, or coordination between the OHEC (responsible for internal quality assurance) and other agencies to expedite a more stable QA support system.

2) The QA system with balance between quality control and autonomy in institute quality management

Past quality assurance had been criticized by the implementers as excessively curtailing instructor liberty in many aspects, despite the well-intentioned goal: establishment of the minimum standard for postgraduate educational quality, through criteria on qualification, academic publication or operational process of the instructor or the Thai Qualification Framework which is integrated into quality assurance, which in turn becomes a single-aspect quality creation tool with absolute control. As a result, the faculty and program are required to frequently perform QA activities, at a rate detrimental to normal operations.

Future guidelines for quality assurance improvement should be focused on 2 important assumptions: enforcement of the minimum standard for the program and faculty in order to protect the student's interest, while at the same time granting

freedom to the institute and the faculty in the selection or development of a quality assurance system and mechanism suitable for them. The 2014 Announcement of the Postgraduate Internal Quality Assurance Committee allowed for said selection or development, with OHEC supervising program quality assurance. This method was deemed a measure for future quality assurance development, but nevertheless criticized by the informants as “Overburdening for the faculty or the teacher as the process needs to be done every year and in each year there is much TQF paperwork and activity preparation to be done.” Compilation of the case study informants’ proposals indicate that quality assurance design may be done by separating QA issues into 2 sections:

(1) Quality assurance related to the lecturer’s mission, which covers teaching and academic production. QA processes in this section may require designing it to be a part of routine work for the instructor and a factor in consideration for academic position. Said system is in use in the United States and a similar system is found in Chulalongkorn University, which requires the academic rank candidate to submit the TQF of the evaluated course.

(2) Quality assurance related to development of content and instructing methods in conformity with the science’s development might need to be performed in consideration of the program’s life cycle rather than annually, so as to allow clearer improvement and changes, and prevent the QA activity from encroaching on the main instructor mission.

3) Quality assurance system considerate of context differences but reflecting the identity of public administration

Formulation of quality assurance’s policies, guidelines, and criteria is dominated mostly by policy elites and academics in the education and science fields. As a result, many case studies reflect on many parts of the system and criteria as being incompatible with the social science characteristics of Public Administration. Hence, formulation of quality assurance’s policies, guidelines, and criteria ought to increase the role of public administration actors such as academicians or implementers in the creation of alternative quality assurance specifically for public administration, this will have more conformity in the context of the science and responsiveness to the provision of graduate and academic work and more consistency

with world practicalities, while at the same time communalizing program or faculty quality. Said approach has been used in countries with advanced postgraduate studies, such as the United States which sees the establishment of an academic association (National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA)) and practical association (The American Academy of Certified Public Managers (AACPM)) for public administration program quality assurance. For development of a similar system in Thailand, the Public Administration Association of Thailand is a possible mechanism, as a non-government organization with members from both public and private universities that teach public administration, in definition of alternative quality assurance dedicated to public administration programs in Thailand.

6.2.2 Proposal for Quality Assurance Criteria Development

Past quality assurance criteria has been heavily criticized in several case studies for creation of a rigid, monolithic framework that is used in every institute and faculty regardless of context, due to a focus on the program's management efficiency. For this reason, approaches on quality assurance criteria development should consider balancing between management efficiency and competitiveness of the program, which is prioritized by the current QA system along with academic liberty for the instructor and creation of public value, the heart of public organization learning management. However, some issues on future quality assurance criteria development worthy of attention are:

- 1) Expansion of educational quality assurance definition congruent to the social science characteristics of Public Administration, from the original definition that focuses on assessment in terms of efficiency and quantitative output, to include an addition of the qualitative aspect, especially its impact on the society, or public service, which is currently a highly-mentioned and prioritized public sector management approach. Minor criteria potentially in need of consideration are:

A definition of graduate quality, as originally the definition has been focused on productivity, employability, employer satisfaction and academic achievement through thesis or independent study upon graduation. The definition should include qualitative goals such as public service and social or local responsibilities of the graduate. The evaluation process might be longer than the current process that emphasizes annual data collection and evaluation.

Definition of academic works for instructors, as the original definition focuses on publication in national or international journals for academic use, which is an important aspect for university or program ranking. The definition should be expanded to cover practically-applicable academic works, such as research that solves national, agency or local issues, or research for local problem resolution, in order to allow production of varied, broad and relevant academic works, which has been the long-standing philosophy of public administration since the very first practice of New Public Administration, the principle deemed by public administrators worldwide as the standpoint of modern public administration.

2) Granting freedom to the faculty and program in formulation of quality assurance criteria that reflect their identities with consideration of quality assurance criteria that separately reflect the program's ability to produce academicians and implementers, because the OHEC's QA criteria in the past has tended to favor provision of academicians, which does not synchronize with the public administration program's learning management which produces mostly implementers in order to conform to graduate quality criteria with actual workforce graduate quality.

3) Support and encouragement to formulate relationships between integration quality assurance and strategic planning, and work processes in the organization. Nowadays, most case studies use alternative quality assurance criteria, including EdPEX, AUN-QA, or CUPT-QA, by which the criteria facilitate integration in the aforementioned manner. Thus, these alternative quality assurance criteria may be used in this group as initial tools for criterion setting and the future faculty's and curriculum's quality assurance guidelines.

6.2.3 Proposal for Faculty and Program Management.

In the previous section, the author proposed faculty and program factors deemed by the case study actors as vital for quality assurance efforts in their organizations, and reflected on the factors' effects on organizational quality assurance, which are concluded into faculty and program quality assurance effort development recommendations, as follows:

1) The Role of the Executive

All case studies comment that the key actor in the effort is the associate dean on QA duty. The chief responsible actors are the associate dean in charge of QA

and the associate dean in charge of the academic department. The interviews reveal that case studies with a director having a clear understanding of the criteria contribute to the stability of the effort. Therefore, a director must be instilled who understands the system, mechanisms and criteria of the quality assurance through mechanisms such as participation of the university- or program-level co-assessor to gain experience in proper planning and communication with the personnel, and gaining cooperation or support from personnel or the university.

Moreover, some case studies have experienced problems concerning quality assurance system implementation, which results from discontinuity of the executive responsible for quality assurance, which in some cases happens when there is a sudden replacement of the director. Hence, the faculty or program has to develop a quality assurance knowledge management system and mechanism for the director in order to maintain continuity of the process in case of said turnover.

2) Communication

This factor is related to personnel participation and attitudes towards quality assurance. In this case, many case studies reflect how formal communication channels such as faculty meetings or formal circular notifications potentially create compliance but not full cooperation from the personnel. Therefore QA communication should be of a less formal type, such as social media in conjunction with the more formal channels in order to create an organization-wide two-way communication and formulate communication freedom for personnel, which results in better coordination and feedback. The best practices in the case studies revealed that the method which fosters cooperation and reduces internal opposition is the QA communication that integrates QA criteria with the organizational mission under the recipient's responsibility, which might be called "QA communication without mentioning the QA", or use of communication for organizational improvement.

3) Internal Faculty Management.

Some managerial factors are crucial for quality assurance efforts in order to be conditions that facilitate faculty and program quality, as follows:

(1) Work system. It was found in many case studies that operational-level quality assurance has a high reliance on the implementer in knowledge, expertise and relationship formulation with other departments within the

faculty. On this issue, development of quality assurance efforts might be required to create a QA-essential knowledge management system and mechanism to sustain the operation despite staff turnover. The faculty and program should build an operational and up-to-date information database on faculty-level quality assurance to formulate management-by-fact.

(2) Personnel management. It was found that faculty and program personnel management are substantially related to quality assurance, especially in newer universities where virtually all instructors are employees subjected to quality assurance and contract renewal tools of the faculty and program for behavioral and operational control. In this case the author has processed and summarized the informants' comments into performance appraisal recommendations. In other words, sustainable quality assurance effort requires creation of a quality assurance system that is able to satisfy minimum quality assurance requirements, most case studies require the instructors to perform all missions as befitting their expertise in order to formulate deeper expertise and organizational specialization useful for long-term effort. On this issue, instructor performance appraisals might be altered to focus on each instructor's proficiency, for example, an instructor skilled in research, or another skilled in teaching. Each area of proficiency will have a comprehensive job description but with different weights for individual parts. An individual scorecard will be utilized to encourage productivity in every personnel member according to their ability in connection with the overall organizational picture, so the instructors are able to produce genuinely beneficial output for the program and faculty.

(3) Budgeting. There was no noticeable difference in direct quality assurance support budgets in the case studies, but there was a considerable disparity in faculty mission support budgets (the mission that is used in quality assurance) such as the research budget, personnel training budget and academic production budget. In this case older programs rarely encounter this problem due to their higher affordability, revenue, and ability to request external funds, while on the other hand this problem represents a major obstacle for newer programs due to their limited budget and ability to request external funds. One possible method for academic productivity is a clear definition of faculty research topics and allocation of funds for small-scale research as a basis for external fund requests in the future.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

This section is divided into 2 sections: Conclusion and discussion of research results, and recommendations.

7.1 Conclusion and Discussion

The purposes of this research study, entitled “An Analysis of Quality Assurance in Thai Public Universities: A Case Study of Master of Public Administration Programs”, were 1) to study the implementation of internal quality assurance systems in the context of Master of Public Administration programs in Thailand, 2) to investigate the effects of the internal quality assurance system to the quality of Master of Public Administration programs in Thailand and 3) to propose guidelines to develop an internal quality assurance system for the Master of Public Administration programs in Thailand. The data were collected from six Master of Public Administration (MPA) programs, in Chulalongkorn University, National Institute of Development Administration, Chiang Mai University, Prince of Songkla University, University of Phayao, and Ubon Ratchathani University, respectively. Results of this study are described as follows:

7.1.1 Results of Implementation of Quality Assurance Systems in Public Administration Programs

It was found that the implementation of quality assurance in the Master of Public Administration programs first began as part of a university- and faculty-level quality assurance system in 1994, as initiated by the Council of University Presidents of Thailand (CUPT). Later on, the Office of Higher Education Commission declared policy and implementation guidelines for postgraduate quality assurance in 1996, which could be divided into 3 phases:

Phase 1: Pre-Internal Quality Assurance introduction phase (1994-2007). In this period, quality was perceived as honor or prestige for the university. This had two important contexts, one of promotion from leading universities by way of the Council of University Presidents of Thailand, and secondly in a political and management context, consequently the National Education Act was enacted to establish a quality assurance system for education quality improvement at all levels. The quality assurance system in this period focused on voluntary quality assurance development at each university, or implementation of an international standard such as ISO or MBNQA, as a basis. As most universities did not seriously implement the quality assurance, the system in this period was “individually-developed” under a loosely-defined policy (as declared in the Announcement of Ministry of University Affairs). One notable program quality assurance mechanism from this period was the program pre-audit.

The effect of the quality assurance system in this period on public administration programs was not evident, as there was no serious assessment, and several case studies have not mentioned the issue of quality assurance in their faculty and program management.

Phase 2: Quality assurance implementation phase (2007-2014). In this period, higher education quality was considered as a common national standard. The main driving contexts were political and management, as the law required completion of criteria definitions and evaluations. In addition, successive governments in this period emphasized an improvement of educational quality to get it up to the international standard. International context was also a factor, as university ranking and certification gained more attention during this period. The quality creation process in this period stressed standardization through enforcement of internal quality assurance, and one-size-fits-all criteria, with an important tool being the Internal Quality Assurance manual.

The effect of the quality assurance system in this period on public administration programs was the creation of enthusiasm, mainly among the faculty executives and the lecturers. However, the quality assurance system was unable to notably reflect the real quality in the public administration program because the quality assurance was performed only at the faculty and department levels. The

outcome of said assurance was therefore an overall result, rather than a detailed result of the public administration programs. In this case, the role of the program was that of a raw data provider to the faculty-level authority for a self-assessment report. Regarding the effect on operational behavior, it was found that unproductive public administration programs, especially those established by research universities, were forced by the criteria to publish more academic works. Nevertheless, said change was relatively obscure.

Phase 3: Quality assurance during the transition phase (2014-present). Quality at this time is considered as a national standard, much like in the previous phase, but more attention is given to excellence in an individual context, as well as international competitiveness and gaining world-class university status for leading universities in Thailand. The main driving contexts are political and management contexts, which focus on specialization of postgraduate institutes to support the government's "Thailand 4.0" policy, and international context in world university ranking and accreditation which has now gained significant attention from around the world. Moreover, competition between regional or international universities is increasingly intense. The focal point of quality assurance in this period is on program-level quality assurance, which focuses on more integration of quality assurance into the strategic planning and working processes of each context, adjustment of evaluation criteria to be more qualitative, introduction of peer review in the evaluation process, and allowing universities to develop or select quality assurance from international agencies in place of the compulsory system. In addition, the Thailand Qualifications Framework for Higher Education standard has been integrated with the quality assurance criteria.

The effect of the quality assurance system in this period on the public administration program is that the course has more attentiveness to quality assurance than in the preceding periods, since a poor quality assurance result could lead to program discontinuity. Moreover, program quality assurance is now implemented concurrently with the enactment of Thailand Qualifications Framework for Graduate Program in Public Administration, which has stricter criteria than its Higher Education Curriculum Standard counterpart, especially on lecturer qualification. Most Master of Public Administration programs still use OHEC's compulsory quality

assurance system, while alternative quality assurance systems such as EdPEX, AUN-QA and CUPT-QA are mostly adopted by the top universities' programs, as required by university policy. The alternative quality assurance systems used are AUN-QA and CUPT-QA, though some programs, such as Master of Public Administration at NIDA, attempt to obtain accreditation from NASPAA.

From the research findings, the author has synthesized a model for explaining the formulation and implementation of quality assurance in Master of Public Administration Program courses, as shown in the following figure.

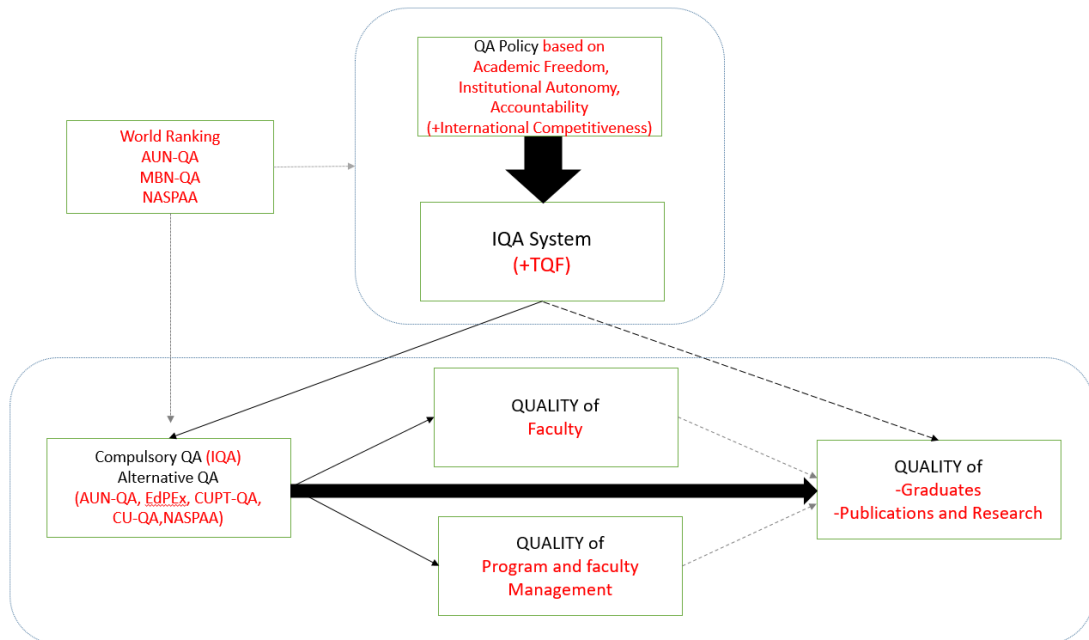


Figure 7.1 Formulation and Implementation of Quality Assurance in the Master of Public Administration Program

According to the above figure, the quality assurance system in the Master of Public Administration Program is established in accordance with the country's quality assurance policy, which is influenced by the international quality assurance criteria and the national higher education standard. There are three assumptions to consider, academic freedom, institutional freedom, and accountability before the addition of international competitiveness. Said policy is transformed into a national policy through the definition of internal quality assurance, with tools such as quality

assurance criteria, assessment systems, assessors, and later the Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education for program quality assurance. All these tools are used as micro-implementations in postgraduate institutes which have policies that comply with the national policy. Subsequently, many universities are influenced by international quality assurance and mimetic coercion from other similar institutes. This leads to an expansion of quality assurance in each case study, from adherence of compulsory OHEC regulations to alternative quality assurance, so as to answer the institute's development goals with a transfer to faculties and programs in order to define objectives and quality creation methods that cover a systematic concept. In this case, the concept consists of input quality (instructor), process quality (program and faculty management) and product quality (graduated student and academic work).

7.1.2 The Effects of the Quality Assurance System and the Quality of Master of Public Administration Programs

In this section, the author addresses three questions: 1) Definition of “quality” in the context of Master of Public Administration Programs in Thailand, 2) Type and manner of quality assurance tools that are used in Master of Public Administration Programs in Thailand, 3) Effects of the quality assurance in use to quality of the Master of Public Administration Programs in Thailand, all of which can be concluded as follows:

7.1.2.1 The Definition of Quality

Results of the study reveal that the case studies define program quality by using a systematic assumption that considers input, process, product of the program and responsiveness to the quality criteria as defined by the quality assurance agency, which can be concluded in 5 aspects, those being:

1) The quality of graduates is the dimension of quality prioritized by all case studies as the final output of the program. Important components include: a provision of graduates who have a high responsiveness to the labor market, knowledge of public administration, ability to apply knowledge to real-life situations, and ethics, moral and professionalism in line with public values.

2) The quality of academic work is the aspect awarded by the case studies in the form of the program's final output. Incidentally, process quality also leads to creation of the final output, which is the graduated student. This quality

aspect has three important aspects, the publication of academic work among academic circles, practical application of that said work, and application of the work in learning activities.

3) The quality of instructors and professors is the quality related to input factors in the provision of graduate and qualified academic work, the main components of which are qualification, background, potential, performance, and moral leadership, or professionalism.

4) Quality of management is the quality related with the process that supports the main duty of the faculty and program. The main factors of this aspect are operational planning quality, and process quality of the program.

5) International acceptance quality has vital components, such as publication of the instructor's academic work in international journals or international dissemination, and accreditation by international quality assurance agencies. Quality in this aspect is emphasized in order to expand the quality of academic work and the instructor, also, this emphasis is mainly placed on older programs in research universities.

7.1.2.2 Quality Assurance Systems and Tools Used in Each Case Study

It was found that most of the case studies use only the compulsory internal quality assurance criteria to conform to requirements of the Office of Higher Education Commission. However, there were efforts in some case studies to use alternative quality assurance criteria to improve the organization's quality, such seen in the move to obtain NASPAA accreditation by the Master of Public Administration Program at National Institute of Development Administration, which later on, adopted other alternative quality assurance criteria, those being EdPEX at the faculty level, and AUN-QA at the program level. Another example is the use of CUPT-QA, which was developed by the Council of University Presidents of Thailand at the University of Phayao, or development of an institute-level quality assurance system at Chulalongkorn University, when they developed their CU-QA84 system for quality assurance at the faculty level, and the CU-CQ100 system for quality assurance at the program level. Said outcome is in accordance with the early implementation of quality assurance systems in several developing countries that focused on compliance with government policy instead of independent quality assurance development.

7.1.2.3 Effects of the Quality Assurance System and Its Tools to Quality in the Context of Case Studies

The study shows that, overall, internal quality assurance (IQA), up to 2014, had little effects to the quality of the Master of Public Administration Program, as IQA, then, focused on standardization of the process by using quality assurance tools such as quality assurance criteria, self-assessment reports, and quality assessment that coerced the faculty and program to comply with the requirements and create systems and mechanisms as stipulated, with an expectation that said systems and mechanisms would create product quality in accordance with the faculty's and the program's mission. In practice, though, it was found that implementation of quality assurance by the case studies were only an occasional token effort to pass the OHEC's annual evaluation, rather than a continuous development and improvement cycle. In this case quality was created on paper rather than in real-life, which is in concurrence with research on quality assurance in various international contexts, such as Newton's (2002) work that studied the implementation of quality assurance in Wales during the mid-1990s, which found that IQA had a relatively tenuous relationship with student and lecturer quality development, as it mainly emphasized responsiveness to the requirements of internal and external authorities. Stensaker (2003) also found that a willingness to improve the quality of institutes mainly stemmed from control by and compliance to the authorities, or Vilgats' (2008) study on program quality assurance in Estonia from the late 1990s to 2000s, which discovered that the quality assurance process had little effect on the excellence of program and teaching processes.

After the revision of the quality assurance system in 2014, the study found that the internal quality assurance guidelines pressured the faculty and program into more implementation of an alternative QA system in their own management. However, the Office of Higher Education Commission also uses another policy tool, the Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, to establish a rigid and strict program management process.

When considering the factors of the quality assurance system, the relationship between the IQA tools and program quality might be described as follows:

1) Quality assurance criteria. It was found that IQA covers the quality aspects defined by the case studies. While the criteria have little impact on product quality creation, which is the graduates and their academic work, their role is more notable in creating eagerness with the faculty and curriculum in definition of the process or mechanism that supports product quality, according to the central criteria established by the Office of Higher Education Commission. Such mechanisms include improvement of the work management structure, regulatory improvement of the mission, and improvement of the documentation management system. Quality assurance results highlight the fact that many courses have relatively good process quality assurance results, such as in planning, and work support systems, compared to the product and result criteria. This indicates that the past quality assurance criteria had issues with the demonstration of quality in the faculty's and the program's mission execution, which is instructing, research and academic service.

However, various case studies show a discrepancy between IQA and overall program quality, such as quality assurance criteria that have comprehensive indicators but divided evaluations, which result in a lack of logical connections between the aspects. Secondly, quality assurance criteria that focuses on the creation of a single standard for all organizations regardless of individual contexts within each faculty or program. Also, criteria that emphasize systematic effectiveness but not the norm that represents the core of public administration, and human-related assumptions of the criteria that are not compatible with a university working culture.

2) Thailand Qualifications Framework for Higher Education is an important policy tool used in program IQA. However, the Thailand Qualifications Framework for Graduate Programs in Public Administration (TQF 1) has an issue with the program's quality, such as course grouping and instructor criteria, which are related to quality assurance for the program, graduate, and instructor, and can be summarized as follows:

(1) Program courses defined by TQF 1, requires every program to have courses in the 5 groups, Organization and Management, Public Policy, Human Resource Management, Public Administration Theory, and Public Finance and Budgeting. The results found that courses in the case studies had already satisfied TQF 1 before its promulgation. However, this kind of course grouping is

criticized in various case studies as an attempt to communize all courses, potentially diluting the unique identity of each program in the process. Moreover, rigid grouping is probably inconsistent with today's modern fast-changing and complex public management, which makes public administration more interdisciplinary, while the rigid TQF 1 requirements will prevent a timely adoption of interdisciplinary courses and disassociate public administration knowledge from the student's needs and real-life management.

(2) Lecturer qualification criteria is highlighted in the study, as defined by the Thailand Qualifications Framework for Graduate Programs in Public Administration (TQF 1), to be more strict than the program standard criteria of 2015 that is used in general programs, in the hope to reduce disparities in teaching quality that resulted from a rapid expansion of the program. This is obtained by using quality control measures on the supply side, which can be concluded as follows:

Program Administrators, consists of lecturers and program coordinators. The study found that the program coordinator qualification requirements do not have a noticeable impact on quality creation of the program, as various programs practically focus on fulfilling the TQF 1 obligations by appointment of program instructors and coordinators on paper but without attention to their actual performance, as intended by TQF 1. In the case study on old programs, most program coordinators in this group already exceed TQF 1's minimum requirements. The study found that only in some case studies were full-time program instructors replaced due to nonconforming qualifications, or, because of an insufficient number of full-time instructors for multiple off-campus programs, retired or external qualified instructors were employed as program instructors.

In the case of newer programs, the full-time instructors are unqualified as program instructors and coordinators as defined in TQF 1. In order to continue teaching, the programs work around the problem by hiring experts who are mostly retired instructors from other universities, or borrowing qualified instructors from other faculties. It was found that most of these borrowed instructors are not on full-time employment and have a high turnover rate, which inhibits utilization of their knowledge and experience, as intended by TQF 1.

Instructors such as full-time instructors and special instructors were found in the study to have mostly satisfied TQF 1's requirements, with only some newer programs established prior to the enactment of TQF 1 using special instructors, which consist of renowned public administration academicians from reputable metropolitan universities. In some courses they are at a higher proportion than the limit imposed by TQF 1, while the full-time faculty instructors only serve as coordinators and paperwork administrators. However, after the enactment of TQF 1 the programs began using their own recently-graduated, full-time instructors to satisfy the requirements.

Thesis Supervisors in the older programs are found to have satisfied the TQF 1 requirements, as most instructors are of intermediate or senior generations with adequate academic positions and academic works. Conversely, newer programs have issues with thesis supervisor qualifications due to their being relatively new as intermediate instructors without academic positions or an adequate number of academic works. As a result, the programs are forced to demand applications for academic positions and academic productivity from the instructors in order to satisfy TQF 1 requirements.

From the study, issues on the relationship between the Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education in Public Administration, and program quality, can be concluded as follows:

- 1) TQF's Assumptions. Although the quality concept defined by the Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education comprehensively covers all quality dimensions, it is a one-size-fits-all approach with excessive rigidity and inconsistency in a public administration instructing context, including the matching degree requirement for the instructors, an excessive focus on the amount of work published in journals, and control of course instructing activities through various Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education documents, which cover the program's design (Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education 1-2), definition of course syllabus (Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education 3), and the learning evaluation and achievement re-evaluation (Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education 5), which inadvertently focus on external controls instead of internal ones, and control by occupational ethics, which is incompatible with the operational context of the university.

2) Goals and practice of the Thailand Qualifications Framework are found to be displaced. The TQF that is supposed to be a tool toward the goal, which is the creation of internationally-reputable program quality and facilitation of student mobility, is distorted by the implementer into a fault-finding tool against the instructors. Another issue is that genuinely unready programs attempt to create a working process and paperwork that satisfies the TQF requirements in order to open the programs, regardless of the true intention of the TQF and program quality.

3) Implementation details and requirements in the Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education are widely criticized for creating difficulties in the implementation, as the program and instructors become overburdened by additional paperwork, or the creation of various processes in the hope of altering instructing behavior. In practice, these criteria excessively encumber the instructors despite introduction of information technology in some case studies. Consequently, many instructors simply refuse to comply with the TQF guidelines.

7.1.3 Guidelines on Implementation of Public Administration Program Quality Assurance in Thailand.

The author has two relevant research questions: 1) What are facilitating or impeding factors in the implementation of public administration program quality assurance in Thailand, and 2) what are the development guidelines for public administration program quality assurance in Thailand? To answer these questions, the author proposes driving factors in quality assurance to analyze the quality assurance development method, along with the opinions of the informants in various case studies.

7.1.3.1 Facilitating or Impeding Factors in Quality Assurance Systems in the Context of Master of Public Administration Programs.

From the study on implementation of quality assurance in the case studies, the author has summarized the factors in quality assurance in a public administration program context. This aspect is divided into three levels in accordance with the policy implementation concept: a macro-, a meso- and a micro-aspect. The model is synthesized into the following diagram:

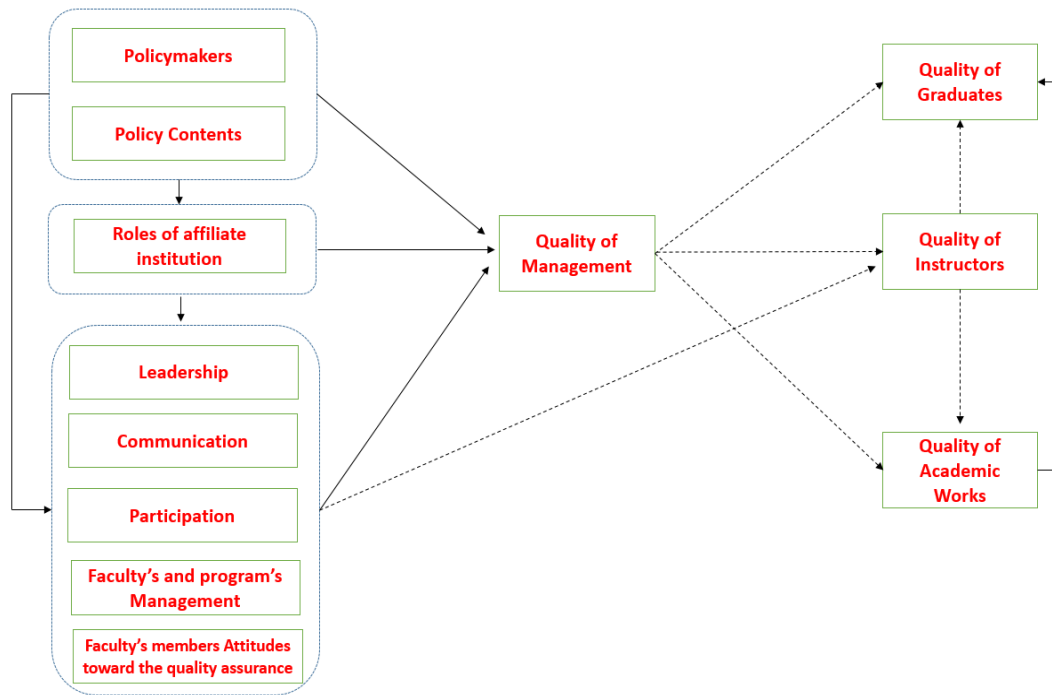


Figure 7.2 Facilitating or Impeding Factors in Implementation of Quality Assurance

From the diagram, the author has concluded, by induction, that the factors on QA implementation in MPA programs are as follows:

1) At the macro level, the author is interested in factors related to policy and the role of policymakers. The study found:

(1) Policymakers

Overall, this factor impedes QA implementation in MPA programs, as the policymaker group that drives QA policy comes from a policy elite consisting mainly of educational and health science academicians. As there is virtually no public administration or social science academic in this group, many issues in the policy are not consistent with the instructing nature of a public administration program.

(2) Policy Content

Overall, this factor group also impedes QA implementation, as the QA policy content causes a radical change in faculty and program management. As a result, there are many conflicts with the norm and experience of the policy target group. For example, interference with all instructing processes or encumbrance of

instructors with paperwork, including unclear communication on the objective of quality assurance as to whether the focus is on evaluation or development outcomes, which render all implementers (university, faculty and program) confused and can result in QA preparation problems for institutes and faculties. Moreover, due to said problems the personnel, outside of management or direct QA supporters, refuse to wholeheartedly cooperate in QA.

2) At the meso level, the author is interested in the role of the postgraduate institutes and their affiliation with the case studies in QA implementation. Overall results of the study found that affiliation of the case studies contributes to QA implementation, because each institute is devoted to IQA implementation with a focus on conformity with central policy and transformation of said central policy into institutional policy, which then leads to enforcement and implementation at the faculty and program level.

Cross-case studies analysis reveals that older, metropolitan universities have a QA policy that focuses on excellence at both the domestic and international levels with full management and resource support for the faculty. Therefore, in this case the role of the university is a facilitating factor in QA at the program and faculty level.

For case studies affiliated with older regional urban universities, their policies were formulated during the transition from a region-centered university into a national research university, in preparation for attaining world class university status, resulting in a university policy that stresses academic productivity in its faculty and program personnel. There is also a mechanism for increasing the published works of its graduates for use in quality ranking in the form of research funds, compensation, incentives or coercion (in the form of contract renewal requirements), which accelerate program and faculty quality assurance. At the same time, however, this mechanism creates a conflict between the readiness of its regional or national programs/faculties, and the university's aspirations at the international level.

In the case of affiliates of newer regional rural universities, although their objectives emphasize the expansion of learning opportunities to satisfy local needs, accreditation by the central authority is also focused on. In this case,

efforts by the university in this group are in the form of university policies or regulations, which the faculty or program are required to adhere to. In some cases there is insufficient budget or resources to support this, which limits the facilitating degree of the university's role in quality assurance at the program and faculty level.

3) At the micro level, the author determines the Public Administration Program as the units of analysis, with factors deemed by the case studies as related to their quality assurance, which can be summarized as follows.

(1) Leadership

All case study informants consider leadership to be the most important factor in the implementation of quality assurance. Important issues include the role of the dean in most case studies by focusing on a passive role in the implementation of university policy, meanwhile the genuine main actor is the deputy dean in charge of quality assurance. In this case, a facilitating role in the effort visible in the case studies is a compromising attitude of "friendly and accessible", which reflects leadership in Thailand's unique quality assurance effort. In addition, the leader's understanding and ability to obtain acceptance or internal and external support are crucial for the quality assurance effort at the faculty and program level. It's been found in older programs that the organizational leadership has considerably more ability to obtain acceptance and support than the newer programs, while the latter has higher internal support than the former. Another crucial leadership factor in quality assurance is leadership continuity, the cross-case study analysis revealed that continuity of quality assurance orientation correlates with continuity of the quality assurance leadership itself.

(2) Communication

Communication was deemed the second most important factor by the case studies. The informants comment that communication contributes to quality assurance implementation and has a linkage to the participation and attitude of their personnel on quality assurance. The study reveals that all case studies use formal communication channels such as faculty meetings and formal circular notifications, which result in compliance, but not the full support of internal personnel. Therefore there was a suggestion from the case studies that quality assurance communication should be informal, such as the use of social networks in tandem with the more formal

channels in order to create an organization-wide two-way channel with a more relaxed and liberal atmosphere, which could lead to more cooperation and feedback from the personnel.

(3) Participation

The study found that the participation factor facilitates quality assurance in newer programs more than in older programs. Personnel participation in older programs has a common characteristic, that being a lack of interest and cooperation from personnel while only the director is extensively involved in quality assurance. The role of personnel is largely in the form of information support for, or occasional (or obliged) participation in, quality assurance. Conversely, the personnel in newer programs are highly interested and cooperative with quality assurance at the faculty and program level in the form of data provision, training attendance, or in more direct manners such as assuming the role of internal auditor or writing self-assessment reports. In this case, the director and the quality assurance personnel mainly serve as coordinators in data preparation for the assessment or introduction of new criteria and systems in the faculty or program.

(4) Management

The study has found that the quality assurance system contributes to orientation in the faculty quality planning and management processes, at the same time, faculty planning and management also facilitates the effective implementation of quality assurance. The important aspects are: 1) Organizational structure: The study discovered that there was no dedicated quality assurance unit in the early quality assurance implementation phase, when QA was under the responsibility of the planning department. Later, as quality assurance expanded, many case studies separated out quality assurance as an independent unit, with the deputy dean or assistant dean in charge of the quality assurance unit. In general, faculty organization is based on university organization, but after the introduction of program quality assurance, the overall and program quality assurance was divided up, with the quality assurance department supervising faculty quality assurance, and the academic department supervising program quality assurance. 2) Personnel management: personnel management is another important factor in the quality assurance effort. There are related secondary factors, such as the status of the faculty and program

personnel, which in turn relates to the performance appraisals used in control of faculty and program personnel behavior in compliance with the TQF requirements. The study reveals that in new programs, in which most of the personnel are contract-based university employees subjected to periodic evaluation, the faculty and the program are able to enforce the desired objectives and quality better than the older programs, where some of the personnel have the status of government officers with lifetime employment. For performance appraisals, it was found that most case studies have systems covering their missions, such as teaching, research, academic service and art and cultural preservation. Currently research is prioritized, especially in the case studies affiliated with research universities, and thus their performance appraisals put more weight on research and international publication. 3) Incentives: It was found that there are incentives directly related to quality assurance and incentives in missions affecting faculty and program quality assurance. Also, the incentives can be categorized into monetary and non-monetary types. For incentives directly related to quality assurance, affiliates in many case studies have rewards for “very good” faculty ratings in the form of monetary prizes and commemoration, and informal pressure in the university board meeting. For incentives in missions affecting faculty and program quality assurance, it was found that the incentives are focused more on research and academic output. All case studies have research support funds for the instructors, both at the faculty and institute level, as a form of monetary incentive. It can be highlighted that old programs have more incentive variety and comprehensiveness than newer programs, due to superior resource readiness. 4) Budget: Results of this study established that the case studies have comparable support budgets dedicated to quality assurance, such as compensation for the assessor or funds for faculty or program personnel attending quality assurance training, but the disparity between old and new programs is quite notable in faculty mission support budgets for quality assurance, such as for research support or academic work support budgets for instructors. The study shows that older programs have considerably more academic production budget for the instructor than newer programs.

(5) Attitudes toward quality assurance

The study affirms that the attitude of the actors related to quality assurance implementation impedes the faculty and program QA effort. Most

informants were skeptical of quality assurance, which can be processed into the following themes: QA is a type of paperwork that overburdens the personnel rather than facilitates instructing quality, QA is the duty of quality assurance department personnel or the director rather than of everybody, QA is a specific duty unable to be genuinely integrated into a routine job, and QA reduces academician value.

Thus, in explaining the correlation between the aforementioned factors and program quality, the factors facilitate the implementation of quality assurance, which has a direct impact on faculty and program management process quality, for example, the use of QA criteria in guideline definition or improvement of faculty and program missions, which eventually leads to quality improvement of the instructor, academic output and the graduate. In addition, the factors mentioned also have indirect impacts on instructor quality as they build awareness in some instructors (mostly the program administrators or assessors) of academic production or academic self-development to attain accreditation or standards for the program in order to be operational. Nevertheless, information from the interviews and document analysis is inconclusive as to whether the faculty-level facilitating factors directly lead to quality creation of the instructor, academic output and the graduate.

7.1.3.2 Guidelines for Developing Internal Quality Assurance Systems in the Context of the Master of Public Administration Programs

The guidelines for developing internal quality assurance systems in the context of master of public administration programs were generated and proposed in this part. The author divided the guidelines into 3 groups: guidelines for policy development, guidelines for developing internal quality assurance criteria, and guidelines for developing faculty and program management conducive to quality improvement.

1) Guidelines for policy development

(1) Internal quality assurance systems should be clear and continuous. The government agencies responsible for the internal quality assurance should determine clear and consistent policies, guidelines, and systems in terms of essence and key elements of expected quality. The essence of expected quality should not be changed every time the management team changes. This is to ensure that all

universities, faculties, and programs that adopt the determined policies can set clear operational direction for the internal quality assurance and effectively integrate it into their work in accordance with the PDCA cycle.

(2) Internal quality assurance systems should balance between quality control standardization and freedom to conduct quality management at the institutional level. In the future, the improvement of the internal quality assurance systems should focus on two main areas: ensuring that each faculty and program complies with the minimum standards in order to protect the right of students and giving freedom to each faculty and program to select or develop internal quality assurance systems that are appropriate to their context.

(3) The differences in context and the identity of Public Administration should be taken into account and reflected in the process of determining internal quality assurance policies, guidelines, and criteria. In the future, academics and practitioners in the field of public administration should play more roles in developing alternative internal quality assurance systems to be applied in the Public Administration programs. This is to ensure that the developed internal quality assurance systems are appropriate for the context of Public Administration education, meet the needs for producing graduates with relevant knowledge and practical academic output, and can comparatively measure the quality of faculties and programs at the same time. This approach has been used in many countries with advanced higher education systems. For example, in the United States, there are many professional accreditation associations in the field of public administration such as the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA), which focuses on academic accreditation, and the American Academy of Certified Public Managers (AACPM), which concentrates on practical operations. In Thailand, the mechanisms of the professional association of public administration, which has public and private university members nationwide, can be used to develop an internal quality assurance system.

2) Guidelines for developing internal quality assurance criteria

(1) The definition of educational quality should be broader and more in line with the social science aspect of public administration. As the existing definition focuses more on the quantitative performance and efficiency, the

qualitative dimension should be added, especially in terms of social effects and public service because they are the public administration issues that are presented and promoted in the present day.

(2) Each faculty and MPA program should be allowed to determine internal quality assurance criteria that can reflect its identity. It may be necessary to separate the components about producing academics from the components about producing practitioners. This is because the Office of Higher Education Commission's previous and current criteria tend to place more emphasis on producing academics, which may not reflect the instructional management model of the master of public administration programs, where the practical approach is applied and most of the students are practitioners.

(3) A logical integration between the internal quality assurance criteria and the strategic planning and work processes of each organization should be supported and promoted. At present, several case studies have already applied alternative internal quality assurance criteria such as EdPEX, AUN-QA, and CUPT-QA, which are conducive to a logical integration. Therefore, these alternative criteria can be used as a starting tool for defining appropriate internal quality assurance criteria and guidelines in the future.

3) Guidelines for developing faculty and program management

(1) Role of administrators: administrators should be provided with knowledge about the internal quality assurance criteria through various mechanisms. For example, they should be sent to participate as quality assurance inspectors in other universities or programs so that they can use the obtained knowledge to determine a plan and communicate with people in their organization in an appropriate way. This is one of effective approaches to gain cooperation and support from internal personnel within an organization or university and develop knowledge management systems and mechanism on internal quality assurance for administrators in order to achieve operational continuity.

(2) Communication: informal channels should be utilized. For example, social media should be used together with formal channels in order to facilitate two-way communication within an organization and create a sense of freedom to communicate among internal personnel, which is beneficial for gaining cooperation, participation, and work feedback.

(3) Faculty Management

Work process: there should be a work system or mechanism that helps in managing the knowledge needed for the internal quality assurance in order to ensure smooth operations, even though the responsible team changes. Each faculty and program should have an internal quality assurance database system available at the faculty level. The data should be regularly updated so as to facilitate “management on the actual basis,” which enables each faculty and program to use the internal quality assurance as a key tool for organizational development rather than focusing solely on the assessment results specified in a document report.

Human resource management: there should be a performance evaluation system that complies with the minimum internal quality assurance requirements. As for this issue, most of the case studies required all faculty members to complete their missions in all related aspects. However, the capacity of each faculty member should be taken into account so that they can build on their aptitude and develop specialized knowledge, which is beneficial for long-term sustainability of the program. In this regard, the performance evaluation of faculty members should be adjusted by focusing on their aptitude. For example, research-oriented faculty members and teaching-oriented faculty members should be differently evaluated according to their assigned missions and weight of each mission.

Budget: as for the new-age MPA programs with limited budget to support their quality development operation, they should encourage their faculty members to develop research proposals in order to obtain research funding from external organizations.

7.2 Recommendations

The recommendations from the present study can be divided into 3 parts, which are policy recommendations, management recommendations, and recommendations for future research.

7.2.1 Policy Recommendations

Based on the research results, the policy recommendations for the central organization responsible for the quality of higher education were proposed as follows.

1) A clear and continuous internal quality assurance policy should be formulated in order to make each university, faculty, and program establish its own operational direction concerning the internal quality assurance in a more stable way. The preparation should be made prior to the adoption of new criteria at least one academic year. The round of the internal quality assurance should be set at 5-10 years without any major changes in the criteria, making each faculty and program has enough time to operate and monitor the actual results from the implementation of the policy or criteria.

2) Regarding the proportion of policymakers, in the future the government should increase the diversity of those participating in the formation of higher education quality policy. Apart from educational and scientific academics that originally involved with the policy formation, a group of academics in the fields of humanities and social science should also be included in the Higher Education Commission in order to make the national policy on higher education more relevant to the actual curriculum management in the fields of humanities and social science. In addition, non-state actors, who are graduate employers or specialists in the public administration field, such as the Public Administration Association and relevant practitioners, should increasingly participate in the quality control of the public administration programs in order to develop appropriate guidelines and criteria and monitor the implementation of the internal quality assurance system. This is to ensure that the internal quality assurance system is truly appropriate for the context and key values of the public administration programs.

3) In order to minimize duplication of internal quality assurance activities, responsible government agencies should coordinate with each other regarding the establishment of systems and infrastructure necessary to facilitate the internal quality assurance and the integration of governmental quality assurance standards. Meanwhile, each program should be allowed to openly select and develop an internal quality assurance system that suits their context rather than having to select from the alternative criteria defined by the central organization responsible for the internal quality assurance.

4) Effectiveness review should be carried out together with the improvement of internal quality assurance tools such as the Thai Qualifications

Framework for Higher Education, which has been widely criticized by academic communities. This is to ensure that all internal quality assurance tools and systems can be practically applied in actual work contexts.

7.2.2 Management Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following management recommendations are made for faculties and programs.

1) Faculties and programs should establish a system or mechanism to prepare their administrators, program instructors, lecturers, and support staffs for the internal quality assurance system. The administrators at the faculty and program levels should be required to attend an internal quality assurance training in order to gain knowledge useful for planning and managing the operations of their faculty or program.

2) Faculties and programs should collect basic data and information required for the internal quality assurance in a systematic and up-to-date way. An information management system can be developed to gather factual and updated information for “Management by Fact,” which will contribute to the practical development of programs.

3) Faculties and programs should place importance on human resource planning in order to have enough instructors with quantitative and qualitative quality for providing a MPA program in the long run. The new-age programs often had a problem of insufficient instructors so they needed to hire special lecturers, specialists, or retired instructors to be their program instructors. In order to achieve a more sustainable quality, in the medium or long term, internal personnel should be developed to meet the required qualifications of a program instructor.

4) Faculties should design an evaluation system that covers all main missions of a program instructor and allows their instructors to complete other tasks according to their aptitude and interest. For example, a faculty may determine the evaluation criteria by dividing its instructors into groups of research-oriented instructors and teaching-oriented instructors instead of using a single indicator to evaluate all organizational personnel. This will help to develop instructors' expertise based on individual interests and respond to the needs for quality at the faculty and program levels.

5) Faculties and programs should take advantage of social networks to increase “quality” communication channels between internal personnel and service recipients.

6) In terms of curriculum structure management, the organization of courses in many new-age programs should be adjusted to make students have enough time to publish their academic output through various channels and graduate within specified period of time. This will also help to improve the quality of program in respect of students’ academic output.

7.2.3 Recommendations for Future Research

The recommendations for future research consist of the following.

1) Unit of analysis: future studies should be carried out using a cross-case analysis approach with larger case studies, covering the MPA programs affiliated with private universities and Rajabhat Universities. Moreover, future cross-case research should also be carried out with other programs in the field of social science such as law, social work, and economics in order to gain insightful knowledge about the implementation of the internal quality assurance system in the context of social science programs.

2) Methodology: the results of the present study, which were obtained using an inductive qualitative method, should be reconfirmed using a quantitative method.

3) Follow-up research: future studies should be carried out to examine the results of an alternative internal quality assurance system after it has been implemented for 5 years in order to compare with the results of the implementation of the Office of Higher Education Commission’s internal quality assurance system.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Interview Questions for the National Postgraduate Quality Assurance Policymakers

- 1) In your opinion, what is “education quality” in context of postgraduate studies?
- 2) What is your overall opinion on the current postgraduate quality assurance policy in Thailand?
- 3) What is your opinion on system and mechanism of postgraduate quality assurance policy, such as criteria, assessor readiness or support system?
- 4) In your opinion, what is the system and mechanism of postgraduate quality assurance policy’s, from the past to the present, contribution to changes in Thai postgraduate studies?
- 5) What is your comment on problems and obstacles in policy implementation, including system and mechanism of postgraduate quality assurance policy up to the present day? How should the problems be remedied?
- 6) What are key factors in IQA implementation in Thailand in your opinion?

2. Interview Questions for the Faculty and Program Directors

- 1) Please briefly tell me about your program and how the Quality Assurance System is implemented in your faculty.
- 2) In your opinion, what is “education quality” in context of postgraduate studies?
- 3) What is a facilitating factor in your faculty’s quality assurance?
- 4) What is the concept of quality assurance criteria and indicator development in your faculty, and what criteria from branch, national or international agencies is used? How compatible are the adopted criteria with your context?

5) After implementation of quality assurance, what are the effects on your faculty's management, output and outcome?

6) In your opinion, what is the distinction, unique characteristics, or good practice of quality assurance in your faculty?

7) Do you think the Thailand Qualification Frameworks affect internal quality assurance? How?

8) What are problems and obstacles in quality assurance implementation in your faculty, and how does the faculty handle said problems?

9) In your opinion, how could the quality assurance be improved or modified in the future?

3. Interview Questions for the Instructors

1) How much is your involvement in quality assurance?

2) In your opinion, what is "education quality" in context of postgraduate studies?

3) What is your overall opinion on the current postgraduate quality assurance policy in Thailand?

4) What is your opinion on system and mechanism of postgraduate quality assurance policy, such as process, indicator, faculty and assessor readiness or support system?

5) In your opinion, what are the effects of Thai quality assurance policy on your operation?

6) How does the Thai Qualification Framework on Public Administration affect internal quality assurance, in your thoughts?

7) What are factors in quality assurance implementation in your faculty?

8) What are obstacles caused by past and current quality assurance?

9) In your opinion, how should the future postgraduate quality assurance look like?

4. Interview Questions for Quality Assurance Implementers

- 1) What is your involvement in quality assurance?
- 2) In your opinion, what is “education quality” in context of postgraduate studies?
- 3) What is your opinion on system and mechanism of postgraduate quality assurance policy, such as process, indicator, faculty and assessor readiness or support system?
- 4) In your opinion, what are the effects of Thai quality assurance policy on your operation?
- 5) What are factors in quality assurance implementation in your faculty?
- 6) What are obstacles caused by past and current quality assurance?

APPENDIX B
KEY INFORMANTS LIST

1. Policymakers on Quality Assurance

No.	Name	Position	Interview Date	Interview Place
1.	Professor Somwang Pittiyanuwat	Commission of Higher Education / Former Director of ONESQA	4/9/2014	Office of Higher Education
2.	Mrs. Waraporn Sihanart	Deputy Secretary Commission of Higher Education	15/9/2014	Office of Higher Education
3.	Professor Wutthichai Thanapongsathorn	Chairman of Subcommittee for Developing KPI in Internal Quality Assurance, OHEC	14/10/2014	U-Place Hotel, Ubon Ratchathani University
4.	Miss Nujnapa Ruenobshery	Director Bureau of Higher Education Standards and Quality	22/12/2015	Office of Higher Education

2. IQA Assessors

No.	Name	Position	Interview Date	Interview Place
1.	Associate Professor Nualjara Pathrarangrong	Assistant Vice- President for Quality Assurance, Prince of Songkla University	17/2/2015	Office of President Prince of Songkla University
2.	Associate Professor Sikarin Sukto	Specialist and IQA Assessor, Khon Kaen University	29/1/2015	Office of President Khon Kaen University
3.	Associate Professor Ussanee Khamprakob	Vice-President for Academic and Quality Improvement, Chiang Mai University	31/1/2015	Office of President Chiang Mai University
4.	Associate Professor Dejpol Preechakom	Vice President for Quality Assurance, Khon Kaen University	17/6/2015	Faculty of Management Science, Khon Kaen University

3. Executives, Faculties and Supporting Staffs in Case Studies

No.	Name	Position	Date	Place
1.	Professor Supachai Yavaprabhas	Dean Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University	19/12/2015	Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University
2.	Associate Professor Pakorn Siriprakob	Associate Dean for Quality Assurance, Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University MPA Program Committee	10/3/2016	Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University
3.	Associate Professor Wanchai Meechart	Associate Dean for Administration, Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University MPA Program Committee	8/3/2016	Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University
4.	Assistant Professor Pojana Pichitpatja	Associate Dean for Academic, Faculty of Political Science and Public Administration, Chiang Mai University MPA Program Committee	31/5/2016	Faculty of Political Science and Public Administration, Chiang Mai University
5.	Associate Professor Thanyawat Rattanasak	Director of MPA Program Chiang Mai University	22/6/2016	Faculty of Political Science and Public Administration, Chiang Mai University

No.	Name	Position	Date	Place
6.	Assistant Professor Ora-orn Poochareon	Dean, Faculty of Political Science and Public Administration, Chiang Mai University	7/7/2016	Nawanintratiraj Building, NIDA
7.	Associate Professor Pornchai Likhiththamaroj	Director of MPA Program Prince of Songkla University	20/6/2016	Faculty of Management Science, Prince of Songkla University
8.	Assistant Professor Theerawat Hungsapruerk	Associate Dean for Planning and Resource Management, Faculty of Management Science, Prince of Songkla University	28/7/2016	Faculty of Management Science, Prince of Songkla University
9.	Assistant Professor Chandranuj Mahakanchana	Associate Dean for Academic, Graduate School of Public Administration, NIDA	27/4/2016	Graduate School of Public Administration, NIDA
10.	Associate Professor Boon-Ana Pinaitrap	Director of MPA Program, NIDA	23/5/2016	Graduate School of Public Administration, NIDA
11.	Miss Dararat Kampeng	Assistant Dean for Quality Assurance, Faculty of Political Science and Social Science, University of Phayao	9/10/2016	Faculty of Political Science and Social Science, University of Phayao
12.	Miss Chattip Chaichakan	Associate Dean for Research and Planning, Faculty of Political Science and Social	9/10/2016	Faculty of Political Science and Social Science,

No.	Name	Position	Date	Place
		Science, University of Phayao MPA Program Committee		University of Phayao
13.	Miss Piyawadee Rohitarachun	Assistant Dean for Graduated Studies and International Affairs, Faculty of Political Science and Social Science, Phayao University MPA Program Committee	9/10/2016	Faculty of Political Science and Social Science, University of Phayao
14.	Mrs. Raksri Kiattibutr	Director of MPA Program, University of Phayao	10/10/2016	Faculty of Political Science and Social Science, University of Phayao
15.	Miss Nisachon Prommarin	Head of Department of Political Science, Faculty of Political Science and Social Science, University of Phayao	10/10/2016	Faculty of Political Science and Social Science, University of Phayao
16.	Assistant Professor Thanapan Laiprakonsap	Associate Dean on Academic, Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University	26/10/2016	Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University
17.	Assistant Professor Kasemsarn Chotchakornpant	Vice President for Planning, NIDA MPA Program Committee, NIDA	1/11/2016	Office of President, NIDA

No.	Name	Position	Date	Place
18.	Miss Ratchanee Kaewpong	Staff for Quality Assurance, Graduate School of Public Administration, NIDA	1/11/2016	Graduate School of Public Administration, NIDA
19.	Miss Sirisuda Saenew	Associate Dean for Quality Assurance, Faculty of Political Science, Ubon Ratchathani University	15/12/2014	Faculty of Political Science, Ubon Ratchathani University
20.	Miss Siriporn Yosmoon	Associate Dean for Administration, Faculty of Political Science, Ubon Ratchathani University	15/12/2014	Faculty of Political Science, Ubon Ratchathani University
21.	Mr.Ekkarat Boonreang	Head of Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Political Science, Ubon Ratchathani University	15/12/2014	Faculty of Political Science, Ubon Ratchathani University
22.	Mr.Siriwit Issaro	Former Staff for Quality Assurance, Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University	26/4/2016	Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University
23.	Anonymous	Staff for Quality Assurance, Faculty of Political Science, Ubon Ratchathani University	15/12/2014	Faculty of Political Science, Ubon Ratchathani University
24.	Anonymous	Staff for Quality Assurance, Faculty of Political Science and Public Administration, Chiang Mai University	22/6/2016	Faculty of Political Science and Public Administration, Chiang Mai University

No.	Name	Position	Date	Place
25.	Anonymous	Staff for Quality Assurance, Faculty of Management Science, Prince of Songkla University	28/7/2016	Faculty of Management Science, Prince of Songkla University
26.	Anonymous	Staff for Quality Assurance, Faculty of Political Science and Social Science, University of Phayao	10/10/2016	Faculty of Political Science and Social Science, University of Phayao

BIOGRAPHY

NAME

Mr. Warut Inghathawornwong

ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

Bachelor's Degree in Political Science (Public Administration), Chulalongkorn University (2005)

Master's Degree in Public Administration, Chulalongkorn University (2008)

PRESENT POSITION

Lecturer in Public Administration, Faculty of Political Science, Ubon Ratchathani University (2008-Present)

PUBLICATIONS

Inghathawornwong, W. (2014). The Study of Policy Implementation: How Far Could We Go?. *Journal of Political Science and Law Kalasin Rajabhat University*, 2(July-December), 71-93.