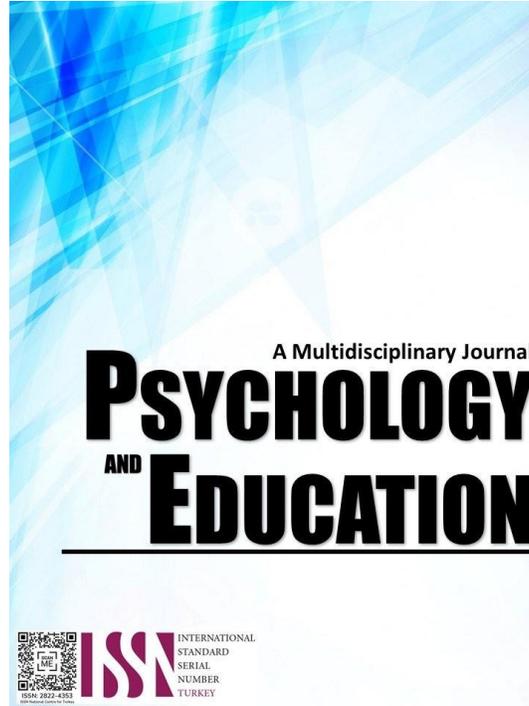


# PERSPECTIVES ON PROGRAM ACCREDITATION: LIVED EXPERIENCES OF FACULTY FROM STATE UNIVERSITY EXTERNAL CAMPUSES



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## Perspectives on Program Accreditation: Lived Experiences of Faculty from State University External Campuses

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### Abstract

Accreditation is an ongoing process managed by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), aimed at maintaining quality standards in HEIs. State universities with external campuses undergo both program and institutional accreditation, with faculty playing key roles in ensuring quality. The dissertation aimed to determine the perspectives on program accreditation of faculty from state university external campuses. The lived experiences of the faculty were drawn by getting their responses to the three research questions that delved into the program accreditation experiences, challenges encountered, and the participant's views on how to prepare their campus for the next program accreditation. This qualitative research used the hermeneutic phenomenological design. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews. Triangulation was made to validate the data using field notes, reflexive journals, documentary analysis, and validation from other data sources. The data collection procedures were meticulously performed. Data gathered were analyzed following the Thematic Analysis procedures by Moustakas (1994) and the use of QDA miner software. From the analyses, six themes emerged: Experience-Based Definitions and Impressions on Program Accreditation, Work in Accreditation: The Overkill, Challenges Encountered in Program Accreditation, Causes of Program Accreditation Issues, Applied Strategies in Overcoming Accreditation Challenges, and Towards a Successful Program Accreditation: Bolman and Deal's Four-Frame Model. From these themes and the theoretical underpinnings of the study, it was found that the perspectives of faculty on program accreditation differ based on their experiences. The faculty had clear ideas on how difficult the work in accreditation is, the problems they encountered, the reasons why the challenges were met, the strategies they applied to overcome the challenges, and their set of recommendations that were classified by the researcher using the Bolman and Deal's Four-Frame Model.

**Keywords:** *program accreditation, faculty perspectives, lived experience, state university external campus*

### Introduction

Quality assurance has been the aim of higher education institutions (HEIs) worldwide as it guarantees recognition that programs and institutions offer courses and services with standards and quality that fit their purpose. (Obllor & Ikpa, 2022) It is through the method of accreditation that the level of quality and standards of an institution and its programs are measured and known with effect of improving the quality of education. (Tingco (2021)

Accreditation is advantageous and contributes to upgrading the university's status based on the perceptions of faculty and students (Batoon, 2022). Al-Kassem et al. (2022) in their study found that the participants in accreditation have positive attitudes towards accreditation. They further determined that the attitude caused improvement in the working environment according to their respondents. The same results are in the study of Rosales (2019). On the contrary, studies like that of Wilson-Hail et al. in 2019, presented questions, worries, worries, and concerns of faculty on national accreditation. The authors presented in their results that the participation and voices of teachers were unvalued or given less importance in accreditation. There are very few studies that delved into the actual perceptions, challenges, and experiences of program accreditation of teachers according to Absor and Hairunas (2022). Teachers serve and play big roles in accreditation. Them having importance in the activity should be given ample attention and be heard.

The researcher, a faculty member of a state university external campus who has been involved in program accreditation for years, believed that a study on the lived experiences of faculty on program accreditation is essential especially now that accreditation has become a trend in the HEIs and is considered to be a continuous activity for it has become an active function of the head agency of all the HEIs, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). Furthermore, the institution that the researcher serves was recognized as the top-performing state university in the country with the highest Level 1 accredited programs in 2022. The external campuses contributed to the award. Hence, the faculty on the said campuses have done much for quality assurance being the main players of accreditation. Their perceptions and insights should be determined and described. Since there are no published studies that centered on the perspectives on program accreditation of faculty serving on external campuses, this study was conducted to fill in the detected empirical gap.

### Research Questions

The purpose of the study was to determine the perspectives on program accreditation of state university external campuses faculty using qualitative research-Hermeneutic Phenomenological. This study was conducted to contribute to the literature on the program accreditation phenomenon, serve as a basis for strategic planning for those who will apply for program accreditation, and express the voices of the focal persons to provide a better picture of what they went through and how to ease the challenges they met for a better

accreditation system for future quality assurance activities. The following research questions guided this qualitative study:

1. What are the program accreditation experiences of the participants?
2. What are the challenges encountered by the participants in program accreditation?
3. How can the external campuses use a shared understanding of the accreditation standards and system to prepare effectively for the next program accreditation?

## Literature Review

The Philippines places a high priority on education, and CHED oversees the accreditation of HEIs to ensure quality standards as per R.A. 7722. Accreditation, defined by Cambridge Dictionary (2023), is vital for maintaining high standards in education and operations.

Studies highlight accreditation's role in evaluating and ensuring quality among HEIs in the Philippines (Hapinat, 2022). It helps educational institutions adapt to societal changes while maintaining quality (Duarte & Vardasca, 2023). AACCUP's accreditation has led to significant improvements in university structure and policies, outweighing its costs (Batoon, 2022). Quality Assurance Systems protect the institution's credibility and drive continuous improvement (Rebistual, 2022).

Accreditation also provides incentives such as increased budget allocation and scholarships, motivating HEIs to improve quality (Al-Kassem, 2022). Additionally, it prepares graduates for the global job market by ensuring education meets international standards (Diocos & Reso, 2023). Accreditation thus plays a crucial role in maintaining and enhancing the quality of higher education in the Philippines.

## Methodology

### Research Design

The qualitative research method was used in the study to assist in materializing the aims of the paper as the method could provide first-hand and authentic data from the participants. The method is further described to be the means of organizing data about the phenomenon and then testing them by holding them against ideas, hypotheses, and categorical definitions.

The hermeneutic phenomenological research design fully matches the goal of the researcher in determining the experiences of the faculty on program accreditation, the main Phenomenon, described and interpreted in the proposed study (Moustakas (1994). At the same time, the design was selected to determine and expose the hidden meanings from the statements and narratives of the study participants. This idea and use of Hermeneutic Phenomenology was taken from the study of Dangal and Joshi (2020).

### Participants

Ten (10) participants composed the sample size of this study. The sample size covered the ten areas of Program Accreditation (Areas I-X).

Faculty members who were selected to serve as participants of the study were full-time faculty members assigned to the selected external campuses; had served as focal persons in Areas I-X of Level 1 and/or Level 2 Program Accreditation; assigned to the external campuses of PSU; and prepared and led in the presentation of documents of a Program Accreditation Area or more in the last 3 years.

Based on the criteria set in this study, the participants were selected through purposive sampling. The researcher sought AACCUP Program Accreditation of the PSU campuses data from the University Quality Assurance Center (UQAC). From the list of data that was acquired, the researcher then looked into the different programs accredited in the external campuses and then selected the focal persons assigned in particular areas in program accreditation from the PSU External Campuses. The participants selected respectively served in and presented Areas I to X of the AACCUP Program Accreditation.

### Procedure

Request letters to the University officials were secured before the researcher went to the different external campuses selected for the study.

The participants were invited for an in-depth, one-on-one interview with the researcher. The schedule and venue for each semi-structured interview were set based on the convenience of the participants. The consent form was signed by each invited faculty. An orientation was done before the interview to discuss the mechanics of the research procedure. Upon acquiring every participant's willingness and indication of readiness for the interview, the interview was conducted with the researcher asking questions to the faculty to collect responses that answered the dissertation's research questions and determined their lived experiences on program accreditation. The duration of every interview session and procedure lasted for about an hour for every participant.

A voice recorder and camera were used to document every session with the permission of all the participants. Each set of conversations between the researcher and participant captured during the recorded interview was transcribed. After the transcribing, the researcher presented the transcriptions to the participants for checking and acquisition of approval and certification that the conversations were properly transcribed. Anything that the participants commented, suggested, or requested on the transcriptions was entertained by the

researcher to earn the full approval of the participants on using their data for the study.

To ascertain the data from the interviewees, field notes were written right after as the researcher took down notes and observations during data collection and informal discussions with school personnel from the different external campuses. A reflexive journal for every interview was also made to present the researcher's impressions of the participants, data collection techniques done to gather authentic data and served as another means of validating the responses of the participants through the sole senses of the researcher as how she remembered every essential moment with the participants with the phenomenon under deep observation. Documentary analysis and validation from other data sources were done and conducted to triangulate and validate the data of the study.

### **Data Analysis**

After the interviews were conducted, the audio recordings were transcribed. Statements were read thoroughly by the researcher to get a good sense of the phenomenon under study. The researcher highlighted statements or phrases that are essential to the experience under study which were seen as consistent within and between faculty-participants. Responses were later grouped by codes and then formulated categories. From the categories, themes were generated.

The researcher used steps in analyzing the data according to the set of procedures given by Moustakas. First is horizontalization which was done by extracting significant statements, putting them parallel to each other, and removing overlaps and repetitions. Then, the horizons were clustered into themes. It was followed by writing the textural description (the "what" of the experience; the textural qualities). To describe and give further understanding of the text, writing the structural description (the context or setting that influenced how the participants experienced the phenomenon, the conditions that must exist for something to appear, and imagining possible structures of time, space, materiality, causality, and relationships to self and others) was done. The final step was the synthesis and finding of the essence (descriptive passage—a paragraph or two—focused on the common experiences of the participants, a blend of the textural and the structural descriptions).

The QDA Miner, a user-friendly software designed for qualitative data analysis, was also used in the analysis and organization of themes, categories, and codes of this dissertation. The software assisted in visualizing the distribution of responses from the interviews.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The researcher included a consent form for the participants to sign when they agreed to be part of the study. A brief orientation was done before the interview to inform the interviewees about the confidentiality and the protection of their identity. Collected data and audio records were kept safe by the researcher in personally owned-password-protected devices so that no person who had no connection with this research activity could see or use them. Transcriptions and other confidential files were not part of the printed copies of the paper intended to be circulated or shared with the public. Furthermore, the consent, the validated interview guide, a copy of the research proposal, and other documents were sent to the PSU Research Ethics Review Committee for the approval, guidance, and observance of the PSU's Ethical Policies in the conduct of the study.

The study participants were presented with the transcriptions of the interviews they took part in so to ensure that their exact responses were recorded for use in the study. The researcher made sure that the responses were carefully presented avoiding any inclusions or omissions of ideas in the transcripts.

The identity of the participants was properly secured by the researcher. Forms and photos taken during documentation that would reveal their identity would be treated in a manner to cover or blur some parts to rid the chances of being recognized by the readers of this paper.

There was no conflict of interest applied in the conduct of the research and no vulnerable participants took part in the study. Data collected from the participants were used solely for this dissertation.

### **Results and Discussion**

The discussions in this section present the themes that emerged from the responses of the participants during the interviews, the observations of the researcher laid down in the Field Notes, and how the data were collected as well as the data collection experiences were personally sensed and assessed by the author in the Reflexive Journal.

The perspectives of the faculty on program accreditation were classified into six (6) themes namely: Experience-Based Definitions and Impressions on Program Accreditation, Work in Accreditation: The Overkill, Challenges Encountered in Program Accreditation, Causes of Program Accreditation Issues, Applied Strategies in Overcoming Accreditation Challenges, and Towards a Successful Program Accreditation: Bolman and Deal's Four-Frame Model. Each theme had categories with codes that provided details of the lived experiences and challenges faced by the participants during their involvement in program accreditation that formed their perspectives on the phenomenon.

#### **The Experience of the Participants in Program Accreditation**

This first research question determined the lived experiences of the participants throughout the program accreditation process. Based

on the experiences shared, two themes emerged: Experience-based Definitions and Impressions on Program Accreditation and Work in Accreditation.

### **Theme 1: Experience-based Definitions and Impressions on Program Accreditation**

The theme, Experience-based Definitions and Impressions on Program Accreditation, has three categories that showcase the perspectives of the participants on the meaning of program accreditation. Their work involvement, feelings, thoughts, and dispositions on the phenomenon conform with the theories on experience by John Dewey, Cognitive Dissonance, and the JD-R Model. This theme answered the problem of the dissertation strategically extracted from the responses of the participants from all the research questions.

#### **Category 1: Definition of Program Accreditation**

Program accreditation refers to the process of evaluating if a course provided by an educational institution aligns with its intended objectives (Obilor & Ikpa, 2022). The participants defined program accreditation based on what they knew, what they observed, and based on their lived experience of the phenomenon. They defined program accreditation as a form of program assessment, an institutional assessment, a form of recognition, an activity that presents quality education improvement of the program being assessed and the campus; as well as has an impact on students and stakeholders. On the other hand, some participants stated ambiguity of the meaning and essence of program accreditation.

#### **Category 2: Program Accreditation: The Good and The Bad**

The program accreditation focal person participants had both good and bad perspectives on the phenomenon. Their opposing dispositions on the program accreditation are presented in this category. The set of results is another display of the theory of Cognitive Dissonance. The perceived quality of education and standards assurance of program accreditation, faculty efficiency, willingness to work for accreditation, questionable quality and results, and negative dispositions on the next accreditation are the contrasting codes that emerged from the participants. These positive and negative insights are explained by the theory of Cognitive Dissonance which the faculty still managed to get their work done despite the rise of opposite dispositions on the phenomenon (Mangi et al., 2021).

#### **Category 3: Program Accreditation Culture of External Campuses**

Understanding people and the way they act can be seen through knowing their culture. The participants shared how quality assurance activities are observed on their campus, how they work, and follow the recommendations of accreditors through compliance and campus development. It is in this category that the techniques for the sake of compliance were included as they are observed to be part of the external campuses' culture in program accreditation.

The culture of the institution under accreditation should be proper and appropriate if it wants to have a positive outcome on program accreditation. The culture of the external campuses is not promising based on the accounts of the participants. It is resistant to change and also affected by the attitude of staff cited in the study of Alshamsi and Santos (2020). Nevertheless, culture may be rehabilitated and the desired acts and attitudes toward the phenomenon can be achieved once the culture of the campuses is transformed into the "right" accreditation culture. Attitude towards accreditation is a known impact according to Prado (2020). If such cannot be done and the campuses continue to dilly-dully and perform with a lack of belief in accreditation, the process will be hindered and good results may not be anticipated from these campuses, an idea taken from the study of Albdr (2020) with positive and negative culture and administrators to look into according to Coyle et al. (2020).

### **Theme 2: Work in Accreditation: The Overkill**

This theme is composed of categories that present the strenuous work of faculty in program accreditation.

#### **Category 1: Workload**

Teaching in PSU has 4 facets: instruction, research, extension, and production. Teaching loads may be enough to fill the required number of hours to work in the institution. Aside from teaching, the instructors and/or professors are expected to contribute to research, extension, and if capable, production. The faculty workload and the Individual Performance Commitment and Review (IPCR) of the institution reflected a fully loaded faculty or an overloaded workload which is a usual picture of an external campus faculty's work and reported performance. During the period that there is program accreditation, faculty members are assigned to work on programs and areas to be accredited (Albdr, 2020). Being assigned to accreditation is not an excuse for faculty members even to those with local designations. It is a display of mismatch between the tenure or contract of work from reality discussed by Coyle et al. (2020).

#### **Category 2: Working Relations**

Considered of importance in a job are the people one works with and his relations to them. The participants mentioned both positive and negative relations with peers, their administrators and managers, and the stakeholders.

A faculty cannot work alone for program accreditation. One may prepare the documents on his own but evidence and attachments would come from different units and individuals in the campus, other campuses, and even outside the university. Every institution must also be aware that working for program accreditation should not be expected to be done by the faculty members only. It should be an

effort from all school personnel and as suggested by Obilaor and Ikpa (2022), the institution should be unified and departments should all work together but this will take time. The university should learn how the units should work together for program accreditation.gttttttt

### **Category 3: School Transactions**

Transactions have to be made in preparing documents for program accreditation. Documents to be asked and taken from co-teachers, from offices in their external campus, from the main campus and other campuses, and from offices outside the school from those of the stakeholders. Still, despite the detected difficulties in transactions, the faculty maintained good relations with peers, co-workers, other personnel from other units, and the stakeholders even though collaborations would take a while as units may not at once consider collaborating for accreditation based on the study of Obilar and Ikpa (2022).

### **Category 4: Well-Being Detriments**

The participants relayed that they had to work overtime and stayed in school for a very long period, some days and some stayed in school for a few months. Some got sleep deprived, experienced hunger, suffered from exhaustion, had burnout, got emotionally stressed, got ill, and endured work-life imbalance. Also worth noting is that the participants did not hide nor keep their difficulties in program accreditation to themselves. They were open about them. Even during times that they conversed with the researcher in the company of other personnel, they did not make the experience a secret. Rather, other faculty, the QA coordinators, and even the campus directors who had informal discussions with the researchers and the participants validated the statements of the participants about those listed in this category. (Field Notes 7, 9, 12, and 14). These sufferings were open books. Everyone on each campus was aware of these.

Quality assurance is considered to cost the external campuses and any institution a lot (Tingco, 2021). The costs are not just financial but also, physical, mental, emotional, and social for the faculty and other personnel that the school could not even compensate. The voices of the faculty had traces of great agony and despair because of the overkill they experienced in program accreditation.

### **Challenges Participants Encountered in Program Accreditation**

The second research question focused on knowing the challenges of program accreditation experienced by the participants. Upon determining the issues they faced, three themes emerged from their accounts: Challenges Encountered in Program Accreditation, Causes of Program Accreditation Issues, and Applied Strategies in Overcoming Accreditation Challenges.

#### **Theme 3. Challenges Encountered in Program Accreditation**

This theme presents the challenges encountered by the participants during program accreditation. The study of Albdr (2020) enumerated the following as the six challenges experienced by faculty during accreditation: inadequate preparation, insufficient knowledge, lack of skills and experience, time limitations, scarce resources, and ambiguous roles. A careful look at the codes that emerged in this study would reveal that the faculty from the external campuses experienced all of the challenges mentioned in Albdr's paper.

#### **Category 1: Hazards in Instruction**

Institutions apply for program accreditation to showcase their performance in offering course programs applied for. They wanted to have the seal of quality of education and standards. However, during the process of accreditation, faculty assigned to work for it tended to miss or not hold classes, shortened meetings, lacked focus in instruction, and conducted remedial classes; be it their decision or orders in their campus. Albdr (2020) also saw these negative effects in his study.

Quality assurance activities are done by institutions and evaluated by accrediting agencies to display the assurance of quality education. This, for the participants and their lived experiences, is now in question considering the classes not met, the lack of focus, and the presence of pressure on faculty during accreditation affected instruction big time. The more would be the question of recognition as the campuses placed instruction on the side for the sake of being recognized with quality education and standards. Cognitive dissonance had again been in the middle of this period of the phenomenon. The challenge of managing classes is merely one of the many hurdles in accreditation, as highlighted in Albdr's 2020 study. It raises the question of the extent to which faculty on external campuses can endure additional burdens.

#### **Category 2. Novice Experience and Performance**

Being assigned as a focal person in program accreditation is a big responsibility. Not everyone in any campus or institution is entrusted with this important designation. Still, in the case of the external campuses where the faculty is very limited in number, the campus administrators could not avoid assigning new or inexperienced faculty to work in program accreditation. Some were even assigned to lead as focal persons in the different areas for evaluation.

The feeling of not being able to perform well does not satisfy a faculty. Program accreditation is not a simple task (Albdr, 2020). It requires knowledge and skills that training, and experience could provide. Without any training or knowledge, faculty members from the external campuses might still succeed if they persevered. But, given the needed knowledge and training could make things more assuring for the campuses.

### **Category 3: Inadequate Resources**

Applying for program accreditation means going through a lot of costs for an institution. Inadequate resources are among the big challenges in accreditation according to the studies of Albdr (2020) and Obilor and Ikpa (2022). Those found insufficient by the participants from the external campuses during accreditation include materials, personnel, equipment and facilities, and budget or funding.

Addas (2020) found that faculty members often face significant challenges during the accreditation process, including managing their time, finances, and resources. In the case of the external campuses' faculty, these challenges on resources were unavoidable during program accreditation for their campuses lack a lot and often have problems with funds. The campus heads attested to this as what was recorded in Field Notes 9 and 12. Faculty members found it very difficult to work for program accreditation because of their inadequate resources.

### **Category 4: Bracing the Accreditors**

Program accreditation involves the verification of documents. In this procedure, the accreditors meet with the focal persons to check for the validity of the attached documents and ask for the lacking ones that should be submitted right away. Accreditors, professionals as they are, mostly possess traits that are fit for the assignment. Unfortunately, there were some occasions when focal persons faced accreditors who might have gotten upset or irritable with the documents that ended up not treating the focal persons well.

Transacting with the program accreditation accreditors put additional spice to the demanding work of faculty members in the quality assurance activity. The accreditors differ. Those appreciated by the faculty were those who empathized with them. On the other hand, some of the accreditors added more pressure on the faculty by demanding files that they required to be submitted while they were at the campus and some accreditors were harsh in transacting with some of the focal persons during the previous accreditation.

### **Category 5: Management**

Each campus has a director who manages all operations in the campus including the program accreditation activity. There were some problems met by faculty from the different external campuses caused by some flaws in management.

The participants had experienced problems due to the irregular shuffling of positions of administrators, the lack of support, and the pressure they felt on their preparations for accreditation. De Carvalho & Reyes-Chua (2021) believed in the importance and role of leaders as they led the quality assurance procedures and this was seen by the authors as vital for the attainment of the accreditation goals of the external campuses. The faculty had the same respect and beliefs about the school administrators. Those who were serving the external campuses long for attention from the administrators. Despite pressures and management flaws, the participants mentioned that they did not see the short-term services of campus directors positively. They found the short-lived services of administrators as a challenge for it created difficulties for faculty in terms of campus plans and preparations.

### **Theme 4: Causes of Program Accreditation Issues**

The participants shared what they think caused the problems that they encountered in program accreditation. As much as they were mindful of the problems that they were in accreditation, the participants were also aware of the causes or reasons why they had those problems.

#### **Category 1: Organizational Structure and Management Flaws**

The participants identified organizational structure and management flaws and inefficiencies in the distribution and assignments of tasks, teaching load, abrupt change of administrators, turnover of documents, budget and utilization, and the purchase system of their campus and institution. These match with the challenges on the faculty experience and performance, resources, and management provided by the participants.

#### **Category 2: Human Resource Management Inadequacies**

Managing personnel affects the operation of any institution or organization. Any form of inadequacy in human resource management could result in problems in operations and the achievement of institutional goals for schools. The participants shared the lack of personnel, problems with peer relations, the lack of assistance from the management and other personnel, and the lack of knowledge in accreditation work as some of the causes of challenges they encountered in program accreditation concerning human resource management.

All units should collaborate well during program accreditation as suggested by Obilar and Ikpa (2022). This can be made possible if the management would look into the needs of the human resources and lead them well to avoid encountering challenges in the already challenging field of education and the demands of program accreditation.

#### **Category 3: Operational Problems**

This category presents the operational problems that affected the poor system of preparation of documents according to the participants of this study.

Applying for program accreditation means that the institution is ready for evaluation. If the external campuses and the persons assigned for accreditation are not ready and could not operate well for it, the application should be thought of again carefully. Numerous issues and problems could arise if such operational problems would still be present in the next program evaluation.

Self-study of the institution and program should be done to analyze whether such management shortcomings are present as suggested by Khojah and Shousha (2020). The external campuses would benefit if they follow the said suggestion by the authors and avoid facing the same set of challenges that they met in their previous program accreditation.

### **Theme 5: Applied Strategies in Overcoming Accreditation Challenges**

This theme emerged from the perspectives of the participants as they were aware of the challenges that they encountered during program accreditation, and they used strategies to overcome them. The use of personal resources, strategies showing self-reliance, and management techniques were the ones they applied effectively against the issues they met in accreditation.

#### **Category 1: Personal Resource Management Strategies**

Limited resources in school for the program accreditation tasks prompted the participants to use their resources to accomplish their work and have good sets of documents and presentation of evidence for accreditation.

The participants used their laptops and printers in preparing documents, online meetings with the accreditors, and compliance. Thus, throughout the phases of program accreditation, the faculty used their own devices and materials whenever the school lacked them.

These strategies applied by the participants showed their unselfishness and generosity for their campus and their work. However, this should be brought to the attention of the administration as most of the faculty on the external campuses are contractual employees (Contract of Service/Contract of Employment). For these employees to spend for the expenses on accreditation may be too much of a sacrifice considering the Instructor I position and unstable status that they have at work. It should also be recognized that these employees shared much of what they have to contribute to the goal of the course program(s), their assigned campus, and the university.

#### **Category 2: Self-Reliance Strategies**

When some participants did not get any help from anyone, they had to realize and resort to do things on their own whether they knew how to do them or not as long as they could accomplish the tasks that they were given. Even when hopes were gone in getting support and assistance for accreditation, even when they saw that they may fail, even when they foresaw more difficulties; the faculty relied on themselves. They did not wait for failure. Rather, they employed their strategies and did things to the best that they could and the way they knew how. Had they not done those strategies, they could have doubted their efficiency and strength under pressure. Also, with these traits, a glimpse of hope was seen for the next program accreditation.

#### **Category 3: Workplace Management Strategies**

Problems depend not only on the period they were encountered, and who encountered them, what were encountered, how they were encountered but also on the environment and workplace where one dwelled. The workplace strategies applied by the faculty fit the issues met and the campus they are serving. Minding the applied strategies of the participants, their resourcefulness and management know-how are evident. In educational accreditation, those working in the activity use and apply strategies and solutions to challenges they meet according to Bigdeli et al. (2021).

### **External Campuses' Shared Understanding of the Accreditation Standards and System in Preparing Effectively for the Next Program Accreditation**

The third research question sought to determine the perspectives and recommendations for the next program accreditation of the participants. The theme, toward a Successful Program Accreditation: Bolman and Deal's Four Frame Model emerged from the shared statements of the faculty.

### **Theme 6: Towards a Successful Program Accreditation: Bolman and Deal's Four Frame Model**

After the recall of experiences and challenges and the sharing of strategies and perspectives on program accreditation, this theme that answered the third research question emerged when the faculty laid down their recommendations and perceived solutions for effective preparation for the next program accreditation in their respective external campuses. The consolidated recommendations were the shared understanding of the participants based on their program accreditation lived experiences.

The recommendations were classified using Bolman and Deal's Four Frame Model as utilized and suggested in the study of Staub (2021). The participants were able to show their leadership and management knowledge for the suggested solutions to alleviate the burden of facing program accreditation.

#### **Category 1: Structural Frame**

This frame is centered on the mechanics of change. It's driven by tasks and emphasizes strategic planning, establishing quantifiable objectives, defining roles and responsibilities, setting up reporting structures, agreeing on performance indicators and timeframes, and

developing systems and processes. The faculty recommended suggestions under this perspective of Bolman and Deal's Four Frame Model.

To succeed in the next accreditation, the external campuses should follow and comply with the recommendations of the accreditors during their last program accreditation. Following established procedures and guidelines from a previous evaluation reflects a structural approach to managing organizational challenges like program accreditation.

Ahmad and Kahif (2022) stated that workplace tension can be lessened with the provision of a conducive working environment. What was recommended is having an accreditation area on every campus. Thus, the faculty are looking for conducive areas to work in for accreditation which could lessen their stress when they face program accreditation. This was also suggested in the study by Coyle et al. (2020)

### **Category 2: Human Resource Frame**

The study participants laid down recommendations under the Human Resource Frame. The frame emphasizes people's needs. It focuses on empowering employees to perform their jobs well while addressing their needs for human contact, personal growth, and job satisfaction.

The focal persons needed a lot of things during the previous accreditation. Aside from asking for incentives and professional development, they were looking for means to work and perform better the next time. The concern shared by them under this frame was not only after their own personal and professional betterment but has the achievement of the accreditation purpose in mind. Once they improve, their outputs and work outcomes will also improve. Then, this frame should be included in the priorities of the administration on quality assurance.

### **Category 3: Political Frame**

This frame recognizes that people and groups often have different goals, especially when there's not enough for everyone. It's about understanding who has power, creating partnerships, and solving disagreements. The administration has to be on the lookout for this frame while the participants have seen this among those that need to be improved on the next accreditation.

The provision of resources to be used for accreditation is within the responsibilities of the administration. Aside from this, the faculty asked for encouragement, recognition, and moral support. Such are the intangible needs that they would like to "feel" from the administration that they are working for. The participants would also like to see better leadership and management strategies from the administration glancing through the suggestions they gave under the political frame for they foresee better work, harmonious relations, smooth process, and good outcomes with a supportive set of superiors – the school administration. Appropriate leadership and management support were cited in the study of De Carvalho and Reyes-Chua (2021).

### **Category 4: Symbolic Frame**

The symbolic frame caters to individuals' desire for purpose and significance in their work. It aims to motivate individuals by showing the organization's path as important and unique. The AACCUP accreditors and school administrators often mention this saying that is more of a suggestion to the external campuses: "Make every day an accreditation day." They may have succeeded in embedding this to the faculty as they came out recommending the same in the study. This shows that the faculty knows that the external campuses should observe quality education and follow the recommendations of the accreditors regularly.

The shared recommendations of the participants are the perceived solutions to the problems encountered in accreditation and the things that need to be prepared for by the external campuses to be effective in the next program accreditation. These showed that the faculty investigated the phenomenon through all the lenses of Bolman and Deal's Four Frame Model. This is a display of their perspective of the phenomenon, their leadership know-how, and the products of their lived experiences on program accreditation. Their great contribution to program accreditation should be recognized and not disregarded or unvalued as was cited by Wilson-Hail et al. (2019). Thus, the administration should consider valuing, consulting, and involving faculty in accreditation planning and decision-making as their work motivation affects their job satisfaction (Akogli et al., 2022).

## **Conclusions**

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher arrived at the following conclusions:

The perspectives of the faculty were based on their lived experiences on program accreditation. They have good and bad notions about the assurance of accreditation as a seal of the quality of education and standards. Moreover, the participants have both positive and negative dispositions on working for the next program accreditation due to their lived experiences and the accreditation culture in the external campuses at the same time found the work in accreditation in the external campuses too much as the work posed as detriments to their well-being.

There were many challenges met by the participants during program accreditation and they were aware of what caused them. The faculty applied effective strategies in overcoming the challenges they encountered in program accreditation. Still, they need support to

be able to perform and serve better in program assessment activities.

The participants from the external campuses shared their understandings and recommended solutions based on their program accreditation lived experiences that were under all lenses and frames of Bolman and Deal's model perceived to create an accreditation system effective for the next program accreditation.

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