

## **COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS OF PHILIPPINES AND BELGIUM: BASIS FOR EDUCATIONAL REFORMS**

**THERESA JUDITH A. ORINA, Ph.D.**

College of Education Graduate Studies, De La Salle University-Dasmariñas,  
Dasmariñas, Cavite, Philippines  
Email: theresajudith.orina@yahoo.com

### **ABSTRACT**

This comparative study was conducted to describe and analyze the higher education governance systems of Philippines and Belgium using the set of five governance dimensions of state regulation, managerial self-governance, academic self-governance, stakeholder guidance, and competition as the analytical tool to reflect the ongoing changes and the evolving relationships between the policy actors in the higher education system. It focused on five governance mechanisms of funding, quality assurance, academic staff, curriculum, and research. The findings revealed that in both higher education governance systems, the governance dimensions of state regulation, managerial self-governance, academic self-governance, stakeholder guidance, and competition not only exist but compete with each other. Further, each country has similarities and differences in the national and institutional level and manifests distinct weaknesses and strengths in some aspects of the governance mechanisms included in this study. In view of the findings, the study recommends educational reforms to improve the higher education governance systems of both countries.

*Keywords:* comparative studies, higher education governance system, governance mechanisms, governance dimensions, governance reforms

### **INTRODUCTION**

Higher education is the most important part of every country's educational system. Yet, its structures, its development, its curricula and educational thrusts, and its governance and organization vary greatly and tend to be deeply rooted in national, cultural, and policy context of each country (Schwarz & Teichler, 2002).

Despite the diversity, higher education faces similar problems and challenges. All these systems have budgets to balance, standards to maintain, faculty members to satisfy, and social demands to meet. These challenges are said to be common to all systems of higher education regardless of their size, structure, and history.

Diversification of higher education funding mechanism, improved method of quality assurance, recruitment and selection of academic staff, curriculum development, and the conduct of research are some of the most important mechanisms that have undergone reforms in higher education governance.

Higher education systems are confronting and adapting to the changing economic, social, and educational environments. The focus is on how the higher education systems can learn from

one another and how higher education institutions collaborate to address new challenges (Chapman, Cummings, & Postiglione, 2010). One way of assessing the actual veracity of this statement is to engage in cross-national comparisons. This will give account of the differences and similarities of the systems developed in several national settings and place these differences/similarities within the broader context of their production: the national systems of higher education, governance, funding, quality assurance, policies and reforms.

To be comparative, studies must focus on more than a single institution or even a single nation state. Rather than attempting to study the entire systems of higher education or even the whole institutions across several countries, we can focus on a network or networks that capture what we seek to study and explore. For this study, cross-national comparison between the Philippines and Belgium's higher education system was explored, focusing on the changes of their higher education governance and management in relation to important governance mechanisms of funding, quality assurance, academic staff, curriculum, and research. These mechanisms were chosen as these are inherent in all higher education institutions. These are the basic areas that each member of the academic community is facing every day, hence its inclusion.

This present study was undertaken to analyze the contrast and understand the changes in the governance of two higher education systems, one of which is a European country and the other is an Asian country. Each of these countries has a distinct method of administering its system of higher education. Comparing the higher educational system of these two countries stimulate critical reflections about how Belgium, being a federal republic and has complex governing bodies, manages its educational system; and how the Philippines, being a unitary republic, does its own. The study is needed to create new comparative knowledge on systems of higher education in countries which are diverse geographically, politically, socially, and economically.

Recently, De Boer, Enders, and Schimank (2007) were able to discern five dimensions that provide an analytical tool for the study of governance in higher education and research. They argue that these can be present in the governance of each and every higher education system, but that their importance differs across time and location. This set of five governance dimensions help to identify and compare changes, which makes it a valuable tool for the research project, as the main question is concerned with investigating the governance modes in higher education systems. In this study, I compared governance changes at two different points in time: first I looked at Belgium and the Philippines governance configuration in 2006 up to the present time. These "selected frequencies in the higher education spectrum" are derived from already existing typologies in higher education research. The new modes of governance dimensions that redistribute responsibility, accountability, and decision-making power among the respective external and internal stakeholders are:

- State regulation describes the traditional notion of top-down authority, which is vested in the state. This dimension refers to 'regulation by directives' where the government prescribes behaviors under designed circumstances. The state has a regulatory role, exercised mainly through legal rules, describing the conditions under which activities may be undertaken. The actor's behavior is controlled through mechanisms like monitoring, standard setting, inspection, warranty approval, arbitration (Leišyte, 2007).
- Managerial self-governance is a dimension with the central element of hierarchical steering within the universities. Here, the role of university leadership and management in goal setting and decision-making is at stake (Leišyte, 2007).
- Academic self-governance is concerned with the role of professional communities within the universities. Academics control their own work with institutionalized mechanisms like

collegial decision-making and peer review-based self-steering of academic communities (Leišyte, 2007).

- Stakeholder guidance concerns activities that direct universities through goal setting and advice. A framework with provisions of general objectives and procedural rules is set, in which actors have room to maneuver. The government is likely to be an important stakeholder in public university systems, but is certainly not the only player in this respect. Certain powers can be delegated to other stakeholders (national agents) regulated by the state law. Students in this context can be stakeholders as well (Leišyte, 2007).
- Competition for scarce resources is seen as a tool for achieving order in a system. These resources are money, personnel, and prestige, which are, e.g. competition for university funding to attend conferences, competition for external grants, competition for a permanent position, customer satisfaction, school ranking, and competition for publications in top quality journals (Leišyte, 2007). Deregulation and the establishment of a new powerful leadership result in a greater competition for resources between and within universities (Leišyte & Kiziene, 2006).

The five dimensions resemble and are built on more traditional work on governance and coordination in the social sciences and higher education studies. State regulation, academic self-governance, and competition are built on Clark's (1983) classical triangle of state authority, academic oligarchy, and market forces. Managerial self-governance and stakeholder guidance extend the list of forces and actors beyond Clark's triangle of coordination. They take into account recent discussions regarding the capacities for hierarchical self-steering of universities and the guiding hands provided by the state and other stakeholders in higher education (Leišytė, 2007). Altogether, these dimensions provide a valuable perspective of the external and internal aspects of governance used to focus my attention in the analyses of shifts in governance.

## METHODS

The research design chosen is a comparative study, analyzing the change in higher education governance among five governance mechanisms of funding, quality assurance, academic staff, curriculum, and research in two countries – the Philippines and Belgium. Case studies that focus on the changing higher education governance systems in the Philippines and Belgium were used for comparison because the paces of change of higher education governance differ. The units of analysis and the focus of this study are the higher education system of the respective countries. Consequently, the units of observation and carriers of information are the higher education governance modes involving a variety of actors.

Considering that the research question deals with how higher education institutions are governed, the case study design is particularly useful because it can answer how, what, and why questions. Taken the mentioned points above into account, it can be concluded that a case study design is most suitable.

In this study, purposive sampling method was used wherein the participants were selected non-randomly. The main goal of purposive sampling is to focus on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest, which will best enable to answer research questions. It is applied to situations where the researcher already knows about the specific people or events and deliberately selects particular ones because they are seen as instances that are likely to produce the most valuable data. Eight (8) participants were selected non-randomly, that is, one participant each representing the selected types of public and private higher education institutions coming from the

Philippines and Belgium. All of the eight participants have knowledge of the research issue, both in terms of relevance and depth.

Since this study is a descriptive qualitative multi-case study, the range of majority of sources was drawn from existing sources such as; national and international policy documents, government manuals, national media, national and international surveys and statistics, and information available on the internet, as well as higher education literature on the respective higher education systems representing the macro-level changes. The responses from the questionnaires with representatives from the higher education community in the countries included in the sample (four for each country) represent the micro level in the analysis of the case studies of Philippines and Belgium. The data were analyzed using the operationalization of five governance dimensions in relation to five governance mechanisms to study the modes of governance changes to five governance mechanisms from 2006 up to the present.

Among the types of higher education institutions in the Philippines, the public and private higher education institutions were selected. These are the State Colleges and Universities (SUCs) and Local Colleges and Universities (LUCs) representing the public higher education institutions, and sectarian and non-sectarian representing the private higher education institutions. The same types of higher education institutions were considered from the different Belgian communities.

The survey questionnaire used was developed by the Center for Higher Education Policy Studies (2006), University of Twente, for the European Commission, Directorate-General Education and Culture, which was revised to suit the study. Permission was obtained via email. The revision used some components taken from manuals, government policies, and other sources. The survey form is the most appropriate research instrument as it gives detailed questions on higher education governance modes applicable in any type of higher education institutions. It is meant to provide a broad overview of 'who decides what in higher education'? What generally speaking, is the national picture regarding the higher education governance structure in each country? It distinguishes in this respect the questions 'who is involved' and 'what kind of authority and responsibility do they have'.

The survey was carried out through a questionnaire to the participants as mentioned via email, personal delivery of the survey by the researcher, and/or by the researcher's representative with permission.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The study aimed to describe the changes in higher education governance of the Philippines and Belgium during the past decade. Specifically, it showed their major similarities and differences in terms of their academic landscape and their main policy actors and regulatory framework; examined their governance on funding, quality assurance, academic staff, curriculum, and research; identified their weaknesses and strengths; discussed their governance aspects where each country can learn from one another; and proposed reforms to help improve the performance of higher education system of both countries.

The assumptions were proven to be relevant that the classical social forces of state regulation, academic self-governance, managerial self-governance, stakeholder guidance, and competition not only exist, but also compete with each other in the higher education governance system.

In this study, the governance dimensions were established to be existing and influencing all of the governance mechanisms included in the sample based on the operationalization of the governance dimensions.

As can be seen from Table 1 below, the Philippine academic landscape has some aspects of similarities and differences with that of Belgium. Huge differences can be noticed from their government structure, geographical area, population, academic calendar, and the types of their higher education institutions. Minor differences can be seen from their requirements to access higher education, their cycle of programs, and their overall rank on the global competitiveness report based on global competitive index as reported by Professor Klaus Schwab published in the World Economic Forum, 2014.

**Table 1**

*Major Similarities and Differences of the Philippines and Belgium Higher Education System indicating their Academic Landscape*

Indicators	Philippines	Belgium
Government Structure	Unitary Republic	Federal Republic
Geographical Area	300,000 km <sup>2</sup> .	30,528 km <sup>2</sup>
Population	100.1 million	11.18 million
Types of HEIs	Public HEIs Private HEIs	Flemish Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officially Registered HEIs</li> <li>• Private Registered HEIs</li> </ul> French Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public HEIs</li> <li>• Private HEIs</li> </ul> German-Speaking Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Autonomous HEI</li> </ul>
Total No. of HEIs	2,374	101
No. of students enrolled (2014)	4,168,771	478,000
Access to Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secondary Education Diploma</li> <li>• Passing the admission exam <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- College Scholastic Aptitude Test (CSAT)</li> <li>- Admission Test for Colleges and Universities (ATCU)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secondary Education Diploma</li> <li>• a foreign qualification which is recognized as being equivalent by a Flemish law/Belgian law</li> <li>• Passing entrance exams for Medicine and Dentistry</li> <li>• Passing an admission test for Arts programs</li> <li>• Command of languages from corresponding regions</li> </ul>
Cycle of Programs (Courses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor's Degree Program</li> <li>• Master's Degree Program</li> <li>• Doctoral Degree Program</li> <li>• Post-Doctoral Program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor's Degree program</li> <li>• Master's Degree Program</li> <li>• Advanced Master's Degree Program</li> <li>• Doctoral Degree Program</li> </ul>
Academic Calendar	June to March	September to June
Ranked in the Global Competitiveness Report (2014)	52 <sup>nd</sup>	18 <sup>th</sup>

In Table 2 below, both countries have the same main policy actors in the national level which are the agencies of their government as their executive head. The main policy actor in the Philippines higher education system is the Commission on Higher Education (CHED); while in Belgium, it is headed by the Ministry of Education. Each country has main advisory bodies that help the agency/ministry in creating and implementing higher education policies. In Belgium, however, the main advisory bodies are separate and distinct from each community.

**Table 2**

*Major Similarities and Differences of the Philippines' and Belgium's Higher Education System indicating their Main Policy Actors and their Regulatory Framework*

Indicators	Philippines	Belgium
National Level Executive Head	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CHED</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Education</li> </ul>
Main Advisory Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Education</li> <li>• Technical Education and Skills Development Authority</li> <li>• Professional Regulation Commission</li> <li>• Department of Labor and Employment</li> <li>• Accreditation Agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flemish Education Council</li> <li>• The Interuniversity Council of the French Community of Belgium</li> <li>• German-Speaking Community Pedagogical Council Inspectorate and Counselling</li> <li>• Accreditation Agency/Quality Assessment</li> </ul>
Institutional Level Executive Head	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rector/Director of the Governing/Executive Board</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rector/Director of the Governing/Executive/Management Board</li> </ul>
Advisory Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic Council/Academic Staff/</li> <li>• Student Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic Council/Pedagogical Council/Student Council</li> </ul>
Academic Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic Council</li> </ul>
Decision-Making Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governing Board</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governing/Management Board</li> </ul>

On the institutional level, their executive heads are similar. Higher education institutions of both countries are headed by the governing or executive board in the institutional level. They also have similar main advisory, academic, and decision-making bodies.

Tables 3 and 4 are shown separately for Philippines' and Belgium's higher education governance systems. Both tables show that all the governance mechanisms can be linked to the five governance dimensions of state regulation, managerial self-governance, academic self-governance, stakeholder's guidance, and competition.

**Table 3**  
*Philippines' Higher Education Governance System*

Dimension/ Mechanisms	Funding	Quality Assurance	Academic Staff	Curriculum	Research
State Regulation	SUCs/LUCs are financially supported by the government through CHED  Private HEIs have indirect subsidy from government through faculty development	Institution-based mechanism (IQuAME) handled by CHED	Qualifications of academic staff are based on Civil Service Commission for SUCs/LUCs.  For private HEIs, qualifications are based on CHED minimum criteria	Promulgation of New GEC curriculum  Minimum unit requirement for specific academic programs	CHED grants technical and financial assistance through NHERA I&II
Managerial Self-Governance	Governing Board manages and controls all the funds  Collection of tuition fees	Internal management plans, designs, implements, and evaluates for accreditation	The hiring is delegated by the Board to the President.  Selection goes through the hiring process.	Curriculum planning, design, implementation, and evaluation  Curriculum and academic programs are approved by the Council and/or the Board	Conducting research seminars/trainings  Identifies faculty who will be recipient of financial assistance for professional growth
Academic Self-Governance	Criteria for normative funding involve accreditation of program and institution	Academic personnel are involved in self-study and peer evaluation	Periodic peer evaluation	Academic programs are proposed by faculty	When research outputs become part of the policies of the HEI or help improve the quality of an HEI
Stakeholder Guidance	Parents pay for tuition fees  The influence of student's protest on tuition fee hike  Student's scholarship granted by NGOs, local/national officials  Resources generated from sponsoring organizations	Accreditation by accrediting agencies  Students and community are involved in preparation for accreditation  ISO certification	Periodic evaluation by students  Involvement in community service	Academic programs and curriculum are designed in consultation with the business industry or other government agencies.	Collaborative research between HEI and the industry or other government agencies
Competition	School competes for more enrollment to obtain fund through tuition fees  Criteria for normative funding require good performance in licensure exams	Granting awards by CHED involves competition as HEIs strive to attain and fulfill CHED's criteria	Incentives given for professional growth	HEIs with autonomous status can design their own curricula free from CHED regulation.	Systems of rewards and incentives are institutionalized for research undertakings

In the Philippines, public higher education institutions (HEIs) are government funded and private HEIs rely on tuition fees as their main source of funding for their institutional operation. The quality assurance is handled by accrediting agencies specific for public and private HEIs. The academic staff in Philippine private HEIs is strongly managed by the central and middle management. Practices of academic staff in public HEIs are governed by the Civil Service Commission (CSC). Curricula are prepared by HEI management provided that the minimum standards set by CHED are met. HEIs have their own institutional research mechanisms. The system of rewards and incentives has been institutionalized.

**Table 4**  
*Belgium's Higher Education Governance System*

Dimensions/ Mechanisms	Funding	Quality Assurance	Academic Staff	Curriculum	Research
State Regulation	All HEIs are public funded based on a funding formula.  The Ministry of Education directly funds the HEIs.  Amount of tuition fees are determined by the Ministry.	The Flemish Government established the Institutional review assessment framework.  The Belgian French Community created the Agency for the evaluation of the quality of HEI.  The German-Speaking Community made mandatory the internal and external evaluation of HEI.	The Flemish government lays down regulations regarding leave, order, employment grades, and end of employment.  Defines categories of staff and eligibility criterion.  Salaries are based on decrees and decision of the Government.	Curriculum must comply with the general objectives in compliance with legal provisions.	Funding for research
Managerial Self-Governance	Collects and manages the use of private funds.  Increases autonomy in financial management.  Creates commercial companies.	Quality Assurance Agency of the University Council.  The internal monitoring system is a part of the institutional review.  The HEI monitors the quality of education by developing their own evaluation culture.	Wider autonomy on the management of the academic staff.  The university management decides on the number of staff, appoints, assigns, and develops rules according to the assigned task.	High degree of autonomy in drawing up their curriculum.	HEIs pursue their own policy on fundamental and pioneering research.
Academic Self-Governance	Consultancy services and the use of research results.	The HEIs conduct self-evaluation report.	Formulating academic policies by the academic council in which all the faculty and staff are represented by their deans.	The curriculum is drafted by course committees and the course teachers.	They decide on what research they do and how they go about it.  They manage their own research work.
Stakeholder Guidance	Joint research projects between HEIs and private contractors.  Some professorial chairs are sponsored by the business community.  Loans and public-private partnership.  Donations and legacies	Students and external specialist are included in the quality assurance process.  Evaluates the quality of education in cooperation with international HEIs or third party institutions.	Evaluation of academic staff is an integral part of internal quality assurance.  Procedures are drawn by HEIs assisted by quality assurance agencies and international associations.  Students are involved in evaluation process	Provision of work placements during training.  Curriculum is adjusted to the labor market.	Main provider of financial resources is industry
Competition	HEIs compete for more enrollment as the subsidy is based on the total number of enrollments.		Tenure and promotion are based on the quality of research and teaching and performance.		The award of funding via a competitive bidding procedure for research programs.



	<p>Funding formula includes performance criteria related to outputs achieved by the HEI. HEIs collect tuition fees.</p> <p>Hire staff and researchers and fund other costs with their resources.</p>				<p>Performance indicators stimulate HEIs to compete to achieve higher quality research</p>
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In Belgium, all HEIs whether publicly-registered or privately-registered HEIs, are funded by the government but the institutional management are given full autonomy in their fiscal management. All HEIs from the three communities have quality assurance mechanisms although they differ in the way they are carried out. Academic staff are regulated by the government in terms of recruitment and eligibility criterion, salary scale, leave, order, employment grades, and end of employment; but the central management and middle management are given autonomy starting from the initial recruitment until the end of their term. HEIs are free to prepare their curricula with strong participation of external stakeholders. They have a very strong research culture since research funding is provided by the government and external stakeholders. The conduct of research is also the basis for academic staff’s tenure and promotion.

Table 5 shows that both higher education systems of the Philippines and Belgium have strengths and weaknesses.

**Table 5**  
*Strengths and Weaknesses of the Philippines’ and Belgium’s Higher Education Governance*

Governance Mechanisms	Strengths/Weaknesses	Philippines	Belgium
Funding	Strengths	<p>Public HEIs are funded by the central and local government and enjoy fiscal autonomy.</p>	<p>All HEIs are funded by the government. They have autonomy in fiscal management.</p> <p>Merging of HEIs to optimize the use of public funds through large economy of scale.</p> <p>Tuition fees are very low and the supply for degree programs is regulated by the Ministry.</p>
	Weaknesses	<p>Insufficient state budget funding for SUCs and LUCs.</p> <p>Private HEIs impose high tuition fees.</p>	
Quality Assurance	Strengths	<p>Existence of different accreditation bodies specific for public and private HEIs. Accreditation undergoes the different stages of the accreditation process and benefits and incentives are granted according to the level of accreditation.</p>	<p>Quality assurance in the three communities of Belgium differs but each HEI from the same community whether it is public registered or private registered HEIs, undergoes the same quality assessment.</p>
	Weaknesses	<p>Proliferation of SUC. Lack of quality in education as some secondary schools have been converted to collegiate schools.</p> <p>Private external accreditation is voluntary; hence, quality of education in private HEIs depends only on its willingness to undergo accreditation.</p>	<p>There is not one accrediting agency established to accredit all the HEIs in Belgium; hence, result cannot be generalized as a whole in Belgium’s higher education.</p> <p>They do not have level or stages of accreditation and corresponding incentives and benefits cannot be concluded.</p>

Academic Staff	Strengths	<p>CHED provides scholarships to upgrade the academic qualifications of HEIs faculty (private and public) to masters and doctorate degree levels and training for Continuing Professional Education (CPE).</p> <p>Public HEIs enjoy relatively high academic and management freedom through their BoRs.</p> <p>University of the Philippines (UP) system, where the university is authorized to draw up its own position classification and compensation plan, as well as to fix and adjust salaries.</p>	<p>Some professorial chairs are sponsored by the business community</p> <p>Strong criteria for academic staff based on the criteria set by the Ministry.</p> <p>All HEIs enjoy a great autonomy in hiring academic staff. The institutional autonomy regarding the staff policy guarantees freedom and autonomy for the academic staff within the institution.</p>
	Weaknesses	<p>Some HEIs become commercialized and hire mediocre, untrained, inexperienced academic staff.</p>	<p>Tenure of younger academic staff is not guaranteed.</p>
Curriculum	Strengths	<p>Autonomous and deregulated HEIs are exempted from regular CHED monitoring, and have the freedom to determine and prescribe their curricular programs.</p>	<p>Implementation of the Bologna Process where degree program curricula are equivalent across all Europe HEIs.</p> <p>The HEIs are free to define the content of the programs leading to the award of an academic degree as defined in the legislation</p>
	Weaknesses	<p>Mismatch between needed qualifications and the competencies of graduates.</p>	
Research	Strengths	<p>The R&amp;D Centers are mobilized to help CHED in promoting higher education research and bringing closer the assistance necessary to strengthen research and development functions of HEIs. These centers are also tapped to enhance the research productivity of the HEIs in terms of intellectual property generation.</p> <p>CHED provides funding for the conduct of research in identified priorities.</p> <p>Funding is in the form of Grants-in-Aid or commissioned research grant.</p>	<p>Funding for research is provided by the Ministry of Education.</p> <p>The key responsibilities for Research and Innovation policy is with one Minister who can oversee both policy domains.</p> <p>Strong performance of the Belgian research and innovation system.</p> <p>The quality of its research and the education of its workforce. Universities in Belgium do have a relatively high academic output</p> <p>The high quality of the public research and higher education system and its relevance for businesses, the strong international openness of the research and innovation system.</p> <p>Close and strong ties between HEIs and the industry. Manifested by the demand-driven research and innovation.</p>
	Weaknesses	<p>Research funding in the institutions of higher education is inadequate.</p> <p>Weak research even in better universities. Lack of linkages with knowledge hubs and multiple stakeholders in the Philippine technology innovation system.</p>	

The Philippines' higher education governance system manifests degree of strengths and weaknesses in all the governance mechanisms included in this study. On the other hand, Belgium

manifests degree of strengths in all the governance mechanisms and some weaknesses in quality assurance and academic staff.

The strengths and weaknesses of both countries are discussed separately to make emphasis and further elaborate each of the issues cited as shown on the table and to point out the variety of nuanced ways in which a particular factor may simultaneously be both a strength and weakness. Strengths and weaknesses cited are institutional characteristics that are broad and evidently observed in the HEI systems of both the Philippines and Belgium.

Strengths of Philippines HEIs are strongly manifested by the freedom to fix and adjust salaries, exempted from regular CHED monitoring, freedom to determine and prescribe curricula when an HEI becomes autonomous and deregulated. Autonomous and deregulated Philippine HEIs are those that have integrity and untarnished reputation; have consistently adhered to the existing laws, rules, and regulations; and have no record of confirmed violations of Philippine laws (CHED Memorandum No. 44 series of 2008). The existence of different accreditation bodies specific for public and private HEIs and the benefits and incentives granted to HEIs according to the level of accreditation are additional strengths of Philippine HEIs.

Weakness can be seen in the financial support which is the biggest problem currently facing public HEIs. The financing simulation for the Philippines similarly projects large and increasing recurrent expenditures. With large education needs and little leeway in public funding, most countries in the region are starting to rely more on student fees to finance their institutions. In accreditation, there are several issues which are now seen as a weakness. For one, the voluntary nature of accreditation among HEIs only puts pressure on those who are willing and able to undergo the process. Since accreditation for HEIs is voluntary, one of the drawbacks is that only a few colleges and universities go through accreditation. The voluntary nature of the accreditation system among HEIs may work only to the advantage of those who have the means to prepare and undergo accreditation. In order to operate, the assumption is that they have already reached the minimum standards imposed by CHED, which makes them complacent, thus not motivated to improve their programs. Job skills mismatch has also been identified as critical concern affecting the Philippines and the growing demand for skills is becoming a constraining factor for the growth of the economy. This occurs when education and training institutions teach skills that employers no longer demand or when competencies of graduates do not meet the requirement of industries. This mismatch problem appears to span job categories ranging from the relatively low skilled to highly specialized ones. It is also a problem seen in both the private and public sectors. Inadequacy of research funding is also an issue. The shortage of university funds for research purposes, especially for private HEIs, is due to the fact that their source of income depends largely on students' tuition fees only.

Strengths of Belgium HEIs are seen in terms of funding, academic staff, and research since all HEIs are funded by the government and have autonomous fiscal management. Tuition fees are very low and the supply of degree programs is regulated by the Ministry. The implementation of the Bologna Process where degree program curricula are equivalent across all Europe HEIs is the strongest aspect of Belgium's HEIs. The Bologna Process is a rather unique approach to reform and internationalize higher education systems and institutions, and establish regional convergence. Since degree program curricula are equivalent across all Europe, student mobilization is possible without hindering their degree level. The strong performance of Belgian research and innovation system makes Belgium higher education ranks high in the international standards. Belgium has a strong criterion for academic staff based on the criteria set by the Ministry. Since 1991, the category of teaching staff at universities has been abolished. The academic staff must both conduct scientific research and provide academic education. Members of the autonomous academic staff are formally

required to hold a degree of doctor while the assistant academic staff need to hold a degree of master. One of Belgium's strong points is the quality of its research and the education of its workforce. Universities in Belgium do have a relatively high academic output. Belgium scores higher than the EU average for the vast majority of the indicators. In particular, it has high quality public research characterized by a strong international openness. The quality of the Belgian research system is evidenced by the high share of its scientific publications within the top 10% most-cited scientific publications worldwide, the country's strong position in the context of the EU R&D Framework Programs, as well as its attractiveness for foreign doctoral students.

Its weaknesses are manifested in the tenure of younger academic staff since they are just often hired on temporary basis. Senior academic staff has tenure and job opportunities for younger academics are scarce because of the limited professorship positions. Also, there is not one accrediting agency established to accredit all the HEIs in Belgium. The quality of their HEIs and their programs are evaluated independently by the Education Ministry of each community and not the whole country itself; hence, result cannot be generalized as a whole in Belgium higher education.

## CONCLUSIONS

Philippines' higher education governance system shows that state regulation exerts a large degree of involvement and influence on the higher education governance system on the kinds and number of government regulations and the level of detail of regulations. It also shows that managerial self-governance, academic self-governance, and stakeholder guidance have a large degree of involvement and influence when an HEI undergoes accreditation, curriculum preparation, conduct of research, and management of academic staff. The influence and involvement of competition are seen in the differentiated tuition fees and the institutionalization of rewards and incentives.

Quality assurance for Philippine HEIs is voluntary; hence, some HEIs continue to operate without any external assessments or evaluation. Since accreditation for HEIs is voluntary, one of the drawbacks is that only a few colleges and universities go through accreditation.

In Belgium, state regulation is involved to a large degree and shows extreme large influence in terms of its regulations on tuition fees, program offerings, quality assurance system, and operational and research funding of all HEIs. Managerial self-governance is also involved and shows influence to a large degree in terms of the autonomy given to their HEI management in financial decisions, external cooperation, and accreditation/quality assessment. There is a strong involvement of academic self-governance in curriculum and research, and some degree of involvement on quality assurance and academic staff. The cooperation and participation of external members in the advisory bodies, and the external research funding received from industry and business sector indicate a strong influence and large involvement of stakeholders' guidance and competition.

The internalization of Belgium's HEIs and the active participation of stakeholders' organizations, which represent higher education community and society, are an important feature of the Bologna Process.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Recommend for the change of the academic calendar for all Philippine HEIs and the curricular reforms should be designed to avert mismatch between needed qualifications and the competencies of Filipino graduates.

2. Strengthen the power of executive authorities within the higher education institutions and increase the participation of external stakeholders in the internal governance of higher education institutions.

3. Establish a common accrediting agency for all HEIs in Belgium to have an appropriate benchmarking tool in order to generalize the result of the quality of all HEIs from the three Belgium communities.

4. Make the accreditation of academic programs and institutional evaluation binding for all Philippines' HEIs, including SUCs.

5. Encourage more amalgamation or mergers in Philippines' public and private HEIs to use economies of scale.

6. Strengthen research culture in all Philippines' public and private HEIS as research undertakings are only active among autonomous and deregulated HEIs who have been recognized as Center of Excellence or Center of Development.

7. To strengthen research culture, require all academic staff to conduct research as part of their evaluation for their tenure and promotion.

8. Increase government operational and research funding and increase accountability measures holding institutions accountable for performance via powerful enforcement mechanisms including funding and quality recognition.

9. Conduct similar comparative studies with other governance mechanisms in order to affirm or negate the findings of this study. Researchers may also consider not just two but more higher education governance systems of countries which are diverse geographically, politically, socially, and economically.

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