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Research Article

Iridescence The Powerful Impact of Accreditation to Osias Colleges, Inc.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the transformative effects of accreditation on an educational institution, focusing on various areas including philosophy and objectives, faculty, curriculum, laboratory facilities, research, library services, student services, social orientation, community involvement, physical plant, and administration. Utilizing a phenomenological historical research design, the research examines the institution's status before and after its voluntary accreditation by PACUCOA, highlighting significant changes such as the alignment of the Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objectives (VMGO) with academic programs, enhanced faculty engagement in research, and improved infrastructure, including the establishment of a new six-story building. The findings reveal that accreditation not only facilitated substantial improvements in institutional quality and student services but also fostered a culture of continuous growth and development, ultimately positioning the institution as a more competitive and respected educational provider in the region.

Keywords: Accreditation transforms institution, improves curriculum, develops faculty, enhances student services, community involvement, infrastructure, quality assurance

Introduction

True to its purpose, accreditation has undoubtedly served as a guiding light in many institutions' journey to excellence and quality. In Osias Colleges, Inc., the impact of accreditation is prevalent. From a seemingly ordinary learning institution whose long existence in the field of education has earned its prototype description, to an emerging giant as it pushed its way out with iridescence when the light of accreditation shines upon it. The attractive effect of the iridescent that appears and changes gradually in different angles of illumination represents the stages of improvement that transformed

the OCI to what it is today. Truly, OCI proves that every learning institution has the capacity to transform into an extraordinary one by embracing the challenges of accreditation.

At a glance...

Osias Colleges, Inc. is the brain child of two intellectuals whose inclination to education drove them to continue their passion on educating the youth after retiring from public service – Mr. Telesforo Concepcion, a retired division supervisor and Senator Camilo Osias an advocate of education in the senate.

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Founded in 1949, the school has undoubtedly weathered the tests of times. Its philosophy "To educate is to serve" has always been its inspiration and light in achieving its goals. But along its journey, this light has to constantly be refueled as the school faced storms of challenges that cast shadows of varied sizes and shapes.

The emergence of many other schools around its vicinity that causes decline in enrolment, paradigm shift in education and the demise of its former president, Ms. Paz Concepcion, to name a few, are only some of the struggles it went through.

In 2011, with the able leadership of the present president, Atty. Jesus A. Concepcion, OCI started to rise again with renewed vigor and broader perspectives. Additional programs were offered, continuous improvement of facilities took place and the boldest attempt to submit the school for voluntary accreditation through PACUCOA was thought of.

In 2013, the consultancy visit of the graduate school program materialized and this was followed by five more programs. This timely voluntary submission to accreditation helped the school to face more challenges brought about by the advent of the K-12 curriculum which changed the clock of all learning institutions and the total paradigm shift in the higher education. Now, inspired by the standard of PACUCOA for a quality service OCI has emerged into a more promising learning institution.

Statement of Objectives

The study is undertaken to look into the changes brought about by accreditation in the institution. Moreover, it looks into the impact of accreditation visits in the following areas.

1. Philosophy and Objectives;
2. Faculty;
3. Curriculum and Instruction;
4. Laboratory;
5. Research;
6. Library;
7. Student Services;
8. Social Orientation & Community Involvement;
9. Physical Plant and Facilities;
10. Organization & Administration

Conceptual Framework

No organization can afford to stand still. There are always new challenges to meet, and better ways of doing things. However, every change you need to make should be planned and implemented with care, otherwise, it could end up doing more harm than good.

This study is anchored on four principles of change management which draws theories from all disciplines and believes that no change ever happens in isolation. In one way or another, change impacts the whole organization and all of the people in it. With good change management, one can encourage everybody to adopt to and embrace a new way of working. The four principles of change management (1) Understand Change (2) Plan Change (3) Implement Change (4) Communicate Change should be considered to effect a better reception to change itself. The reason for change should be understood by people who are going to be affected by it in order for them to embrace the change. They should know the benefits that the change will bring them. Planning for the change that is yet to happen is also important, making sure that it will not harm anyone although it might be difficult at first due to certain adjustment. Once the man has been ironed out, implementation and communication follow. The process of implementation should be observed and along with the implementation should be clear communication between and among people involved in the change. (The Four Principles of Change Management.mindtools.com)

Methods

The study used the phenomenological method of historical research design in determining the impact of accreditation in the institution showing how the institution used to be, prior to its voluntary submission for accreditation and what happened to it after the first visit. It describes also the process by which the institution has gone through during the compliance period and what did it become after being granted with the Level I and Level II award for Basic Education and Undergraduate Courses and for the Master of Arts in Education.

Empirical data were used which are based on actual experiences and obvious visible

changes in the institution as bases of the impact of accreditation. Documents submitted to the PACUCOA for evaluation as well as the evaluation report of the accrediting team were used as supporting data.

Results

Impact of Accreditation

Responding to the challenges of globalization, the institution committed itself to voluntary accreditation. The only one in Tarlac City who sought the help of PACUCOA and accepted all the standards it set for quality and world class education. It is very fulfilling to note that through PACUCOA, the institution has gradually emerged into a more promising and highly regarded learning institution in the province.

The rise of a new six storey building is one of the most tangible impact of accreditation to OCI.

Philosophy and Objectives

Prior to accreditation, the VMGO was seldom revisited and considered in the crafting of plans nor have been posted in strategic areas for stakeholders to see and be informed. Although the VMGO were discussed during students' orientation, a student handbook where they have to be incorporated was not provided. The alignment of the VMGO to the different programs was not also apparent making the program objectives and learning outcomes not congruent with the VMGO.

After Accreditation

In its commitment to quality service and world-class education and by embracing the PACUCOA's comments and recommendations, the institution took a 360° turn as remarked by Dr. Rosita Navarro during their first formal visit for the graduate school program of the institution.

The school's philosophy along with the VMGO were revisited. The philosophy was reinforced while the VMGO were reinvented to align with the philosophy, and for the first time, the institutions' core values were identified.

Students, faculty, administration and operations handbooks were published with the VMGO and the school's rich history and core

values were incorporated for better dissemination.

The philosophy, VMGO and core values were also posted in strategic areas as recommended by PACUCOA which resulted into better students' awareness of the school and its reasons for existence.

The VMGO and core values were also posted in all classrooms and offices to ensure that they are carried on systematically. Aside from these, the VMGO and core values were also integrated in instructions and ensured their alignment and congruency to the outcomes of each program.

In addition, during strategic planning sessions, all departments were guided to formulate their own programs and activities based on the institutions' VMGO.

Faculty

Before Accreditation

For a long period, the school hired teachers without Master's degree or with only some earned units in the graduate school to teach in the undergraduate while those with Master's degree were assigned in graduate school. Expertise was not so much an issue in giving teaching assignments as well, which compromises learning. There was also a very limited instructional materials particularly instructional technology.

Moreover, faculty members become mediocre and confined themselves with using the lecture method in teaching with little interest in upgrading their knowledge in teaching. Since most of them are retired teachers from public schools, they are more on using the traditional method of teaching and are indifferent to technology driven instruction. They are not open to conducting researches and attending seminars specifically if the seminar will take several days which can be attributed to lack of motivation.

After Accreditation

A massive change on educational perspective took place after accreditation. There was learning, unlearning and relearning. Teachers without graduate degrees were assigned to the Basic Education department and those with Masters and Doctorate degrees were assigned

to teaching subjects along their line of specialty.

The faculty development plan was reviewed and implemented and for the first time, a standardized ranking and promotion system was also conceptualized.

Scholarships for full-time teachers to pursue graduate studies was also offered and likewise, teachers were also sent to seminars and trainings to enhance their teaching competencies and to keep them abreast with the latest trend in education.

Regular faculty orientation for the new members of the faculty has also become a practice to make the newly hired teachers aware of the performance evaluation, faculty ranking and promotion and to the duties and responsibilities expected of them in the academe.

The active involvement of the faculty in crafting the institutional development plan and in regular evaluation of the plan of activities were also sought as recommended by the PACUCOA.

The faculty were also empowered to conduct researches and present them in national and international forum. Publication of faculty researches in the institutional research journal and in PAFTE III Research Journal and their first research presentation in Hong Kong Conference on Education, Psychology and Society were a few of the faculty achievement brought about by accreditation.

Curriculum & Instruction

Before Accreditation

Prior to accreditation, instruction was more on traditional method. Classroom activities are focused on lectures, class discussions and examinations. It is a subject centered mode of instruction in which students become passive learners.

Although there are efforts to improve instructions, the lack of clear standard and motivation among teachers seem to be the problem which is exactly what PACUCOA has observed.

Students were not allowed to attend seminars especially when it is overnight or outside the school because of the responsibility it may post upon the school. There are also limited occasions for seminars conducted in school

because of the additional financial burden it may require.

Teachers just exert a little effort to help the graduating students in free review classes but seldom do follow-up to non-performing students.

Syllabi were prototype and seldom reflect the program outcomes so the students were not aware of what their courses expect of them. Research is not also included as an output in every program.

After Accreditation

When OBE approach in teaching was introduced, the school's first visit for accreditation has just concluded. The comments and suggestions of the accreditors to improve instruction have become an eye opener and so Outcome – Based Education was positively accepted. The school spearheaded several seminars in the province about OBE after sending the teachers to regional and national seminars.

There was a massive review of the syllabi to ensure their alignment with program outcomes and that they follow the standard format for OBE. Moreover, curriculum mapping was also conducted involving both the faculty and students for better crafting of the syllabi.

Students and teachers were given opportunity to attend seminars and trainings as the administration has opened its eyes to a new dimension and broader perspective on the field of education. Results of board exams for the last three years have also improved which is a manifestation of improved instruction. Research outputs of students have increased considerably.

Laboratory

Before Accreditation

The school laboratories used to exist just for compliance of the minimum requirement of the CHED. Rare do activities held there for there are very limited laboratory equipment so classes are more on theories.

Microscopes are seldom calibrated although a number of them exist, chemicals for chemistry laboratory have expired without being used and the crime laboratory lacks equipment needed for subjects that require the

use of laboratory. Nobody was assigned as laboratory technician or coordinator to facilitate the evaluation and monitoring of laboratory equipment, apparatuses and activities.

After Accreditation

When accreditation came in, everything has changed. From the installation of fume hood and wash room in the chemistry laboratory to the purchase and upgrading of laboratory equipment and apparatuses. Microscopes were regularly calibrated and proper disposal of chemicals used have been observed.

Crime laboratories were also given attention and somebody knowledgeable in the maintenance and upgrading of laboratory equipment and apparatus was assigned as laboratory technician.

Laboratory activities were conducted and theories were turned into practice. Indeed, accreditation paved the way to the improvement and upgrading of laboratories for better student learning.

Research

Before Accreditation

The accreditation process initiated by PACUCOA has significantly influenced the research landscape at the institution, particularly under the leadership of the new Vice President for Research. Recognizing research as a pivotal element of education, the administration implemented various initiatives aimed at enhancing faculty engagement in scholarly activities. This included conducting research seminars to empower educators and integrating research incentives into the development plan for 2015-2018, thereby fostering a culture of inquiry. The establishment of "Aninag," the school's inaugural research journal, provided a platform for faculty and graduate students to publish their findings, while organized research colloquia and participation in external forums further enriched the faculty's expertise. Additionally, encouraging membership in research organizations and facilitating presentations at international conferences marked notable achievements in elevating the institution's research profile.

After Accreditation

After the first visit of PACUCOA, the new V.P. for Research gained a thorough understanding about the importance of research as one of the focus of education. Research seminars were conducted to empower the teachers to conduct researches, and research incentives was included in the crafting of the development plan for 2015 – 2018.

Another improvement was the publication of the "Aninag" the first research journal of the school where faculty and graduate students' researches were published.

Research colloquium was also organized in school and teachers were asked also to attend research forum in other HEI's in the city to enhance their knowledge on research. Membership in research organization was also encouraged and the faculty of the graduate school applied for membership. Moreover, the publication of some researches of the teachers to research journal of PAFTE III and the presentation of researches of selected faculty to the international forum were some of the notable achievements.

Library

Before Accreditation

The library prior to accreditation is a one-man department. The Librarian used to do all the library works which hampers her to do an inventory of all the library holdings most of the forms. As a result, books are outdated and very few are added every year, only those requested by teachers. There were no library staff and even a book committee to evaluate the needs of the library. This was observed during the orientation visit of the PACUCOA and they suggested that additional staff have to be assigned to help in the library undertakings. Books and other materials should be purchased and the library room should be refurnished.

The consultancy visit of the PACUCOA for the graduate school program was an eye-opener to the management. They started to consider all the observations and recommendations of the PACUCOA for realistic improvement. The library holdings increased according to standard set by the accrediting team, the library facilities were restructured and

additional chairs and tables were also purchased. A separate graduate school area in the library was provided including consultation and discussion areas. The chief librarian was provided an office and an archive room and work area and lounge were also constructed.

Moreover, additional computers were purchased to suffice the number of students that the library caters and the internet access was also strengthened. There was indeed a massive improvement of the library from personnel to library holdings and facilities all because of the sound recommendations of the PACUCOA. Through this, the library has truly become the center of learning in OCI.

Student Services

Before Accreditation

Prior to accreditation, the Student Services and the different areas it covers function independently from one another. There was no specific head-in-charge of operating the services who will monitor and evaluate all the activities of the department. Each area implements its own policy and schedule of activities without consulting other areas. As a result, there were some overlapping of schedules which caused delay of other activities. Moreover, most activities are not evaluated and so there were no basis for improving them other than observation and speculation.

After Accreditation

Accreditation pushed the management to rethink and to restructure the different services it offers to students. The first step was the appointment of a director for student affairs to organize, monitor and evaluate the activities of the different areas under Student Services department. This was followed by improvement of services offered particularly by making the campus a free wi-fi zone, providing a wider and more comfortable student lounge, more spacious school canteen and regular dental and medical check up among others. Students were also encouraged to showcase their talents by participating in different school activities and by creating a different organization that will help them enhance their talents and skills.

There was also an improvement in the enrollment system from purely manual to computerized and the latest is the installation of the MIS for students' easier access to their records particularly during enrollment and after every periodical/major examination, additional office staff were provided to help the director of student affairs and offices of the NSTP, SSC was separated from the OSA. An instructional materials room for student teachers was also provided as recommended by the accreditors. These improvements can be attributed to the positive response of the school management to PACUCOA.

Social Orientation and Community Involvement

Before Accreditation

OCI is known for its advocacy of helping the needy through gift giving and feeding programs. Never did it fail to see the lot of the less fortunate that's why it finds a way to help them and make them happy especially during Christmas seasons. However, it didn't have any specific adapted community to concentrate its service on, not until accreditation came. The reason was somewhat to reach as many as it can by spreading the butter.

Every year, it prepares more or less five hundred bags of groceries for the less fortunate and conducted a feeding program in public schools with a big number of undernourished or severely wasted pupils. The feeding programs usually run for twenty-two school days to ensure that the weight of the recipients have improved. The person behind this advocacy is none other than the school president's mother Mrs. Consuelo A. Concepcion who was a former teacher and now the V.P. for Finance.

After Accreditation

Accreditation paved the way to a more organized community and extension services with a long term yet sustainable program. The school concentrated its efforts in Brgy. Bora in Tarlac City as an adapted community.

Aside from feeding, it conducted lectures and seminars about drug prevention, food production and financial literacy. Despite having an adapted community, community outreach

programs were never neglected. The gift-giving during Christmas seasons was sustained including the feeding programs organized by different student organizations. Truly, when the light of PACUCOA overshadows the school, it shines like an iridescent-emitting different attractive colors represented by its improvement in all areas

Physical Plant & Facilities

Before Accreditation

Prior to accreditation, OCI was used to be a three-storey building. All students from the Basic Education to collegiate and graduate school occupy the same building. Although they are all accommodated, the classrooms are too small for big classes especially for general education courses. There was also only one student canteen to cater to more or less one thousand students and faculty members and staff. This made their service not so efficient although the crew always give their best.

The library was very small which can accommodate more or less eighty students and there was no research room available. There was no function hall for school activities. The comfort rooms are always crowded due to their limited number which has been one of the school's challenges especially when the student population increased. The head of Student Affairs has no office and the guidance room and school clinic were too small. NSTP and instructional materials room are not also available which made the persons in-charge stay in the faculty and resulting to limited activities and lack of information dissemination.

After Accreditation

After accreditation a gradual change has taken place. From the first visit to the succeeding visits, there were always some changes and improvement. The library was restructured, a research room was provided, and audio-visual room and speech laboratory was constructed and provided with the equipment needed. These are but only a few of the first phase of improvement that have taken place.

Today, a new six storey building arises, with air-conditioned classrooms and offices and fully air-conditioned function hall with more or less five hundred sitting capacity. The

college library was also separated from the basic education library and a research room, instructional material's room and graduate school lounge were all provided including an NSTP room. Indeed, there is much to be proud of about the improvement of the school facilities brought about by accreditation.

Organization & Administration

Before Accreditation

There was a lack of delegation in the operations of the school and so confusions on who to turn to or talk to about on matters concerning students were not clear. The registrar's office accommodates all the concerns, from student's enrollment, activities and academic needs. It is in-charge of class scheduling, student evaluation and even faculty loading due to lack of HR department. The assistant registrar acts as the liaison officer the HR personnel and the academic head. And to add more to his burden, he was also in-charge of student activities.

After Accreditation

The light brought about by accreditation have done so much in organizing the school operations. The first organizational chart was crafted by the administration and positions were designated. The faculty, administrative, staff and student's manuals were provided for everybody to be enlightened about the school policies, job descriptions for different positions, discipline and even the enrolment procedure. This gave direction to the operations of the school. There were appointments of committee chairs, academic, research, operations and finance heads, including the director of student services, culture and alumni office. All of these improvements are attributed to accreditation.

The accreditation process at Osias Colleges Incorporated (OCI) has led to significant improvements across various dimensions of the institution, particularly when benchmarked against practices observed at Nigeria University in Jarkat, Indonesia. Prior to accreditation, OCI faced numerous challenges, including a lack of alignment between its Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objectives (VMGO) and its academic programs. In contrast, Nigeria University demonstrated a more integrated approach to

its educational philosophy, which facilitated clearer communication of institutional goals and enhanced stakeholder engagement. The establishment of a structured framework for continuous improvement at OCI post-accreditation mirrored the practices seen at Nigeria University, where regular evaluations and updates to the VMGO were commonplace. This proactive approach allowed both institutions to create a more cohesive educational environment that prioritizes quality and accountability.

In terms of faculty development, OCI's pre-accreditation phase was marked by inadequate qualifications among teaching staff and a reliance on traditional teaching methods. Conversely, Nigeria University emphasized faculty qualifications and ongoing professional development as essential components of its educational strategy. Following accreditation, OCI implemented a comprehensive faculty development plan that included scholarships for further studies and opportunities for participation in seminars and workshops. This shift not only improved the qualifications of the teaching staff but also fostered a culture of research and innovation similar to that found at Nigeria University, where faculty engagement in scholarly activities was already well-established. The emphasis on faculty empowerment and research collaboration has positioned OCI to enhance its academic offerings significantly.

The impact of accreditation on student services at OCI also parallels improvements seen at Nigeria University. Before accreditation, OCI's student services operated in silos with minimal oversight or coordination. In contrast, Nigeria University had a centralized approach that ensured comprehensive support for student needs. After accreditation, OCI appointed a director for student affairs to streamline operations and enhance service delivery. This restructuring led to the introduction of modern facilities and resources that improved student engagement and satisfaction. Both institutions recognized the importance of creating an inclusive environment that supports student development beyond academics, ultimately leading to enriched educational experiences and better outcomes for students.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study highlights the significant transformative effects of accreditation on the educational institution, particularly through its engagement with PACUCOA. The accreditation process has led to substantial improvements across various areas, including the alignment of the institution's philosophy, vision, mission, goals, and objectives (VMGO) with its academic programs, enhanced faculty qualifications, and upgraded facilities, such as the construction of a new six-story building. Furthermore, the institution has fostered a culture of continuous improvement and professional development, empowering faculty and students alike, which ultimately positions the institution as a more competitive and respected educational provider in the region.

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