

# INFLUENCE OF ACCREDITATION ON ACADEMIC QUALITY: AN INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH

**Aysen Bakioglu**

Marmara University, Turkey

**Nilufer Ulker**

Istanbul Technical University (ITU), Turkey

## Abstract

Due to increasing demand for higher education around the world, quality of higher education programs started to draw more attention from different stakeholders. Accreditation, which is one of the mostly preferred quality assurance methods, and its influence on academic quality started to be questioned as a result of this increasing demand for higher education. Purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of accreditation self-study process coordinators and program administrators on the influence of accreditation on academic quality. So as to achieve this, perceptions of accreditation self-study coordinators and administrators with accreditation experience of programs which were accredited by a U.S. accrediting agency were focused on. The research data was collected through a questionnaire which consisted of 70 questions. While developing the questionnaire, a comprehensive literature review was conducted, expert advice was obtained and a pilot study was administered. The sample of the research consisted of 96 accreditation self-study process coordinators and program administrators who were actively involved in the accreditation process of their own programs in higher education. Those administrators and accreditation self-study process coordinators were mainly from the USA and the remaining from other countries including Qatar, Kuwait, Egypt, Peru, Colombia, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. The findings revealed that accreditation contributes more to the improvement of processes and practices within the scope of academic quality in programs which have been operating for 1-20 years compared to ones that have been functioning for more than 41 years. Similarly, the programs benefit more from the accreditation process during initial accreditation when compared to re-accreditation. Findings also indicated that accreditation contributes most to the improvement of importance attached to learning outcomes and least to the number of students who graduate from a program.

**Keywords:** Higher education, accreditation, international research on quality, academic quality