VALUATION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN A PRIVATE INSTITUTION IN LAGUNA: BASIS FOR REVISION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE MANUAL

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Quality assurance (QA) is essential for strengthening institutional effectiveness, accountability, and continuous improvement in higher education. However, favorable assessments of institutional quality may conceal operational challenges that hinder effective implementation. This study evaluated the internal environment, QA measures, and QA initiatives of a private higher education institution in Laguna, Philippines, examined the relationships among these variables, and identified areas for revising its Quality Assurance Manual. A convergent parallel mixed-methods research design was employed, involving 126 administrators, faculty members, and non-teaching personnel in the quantitative component and five institutional leaders in the qualitative component. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis, while qualitative responses underwent thematic analysis. Findings from both components were integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of institutional QA practices and challenges. Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objectives (VMGO) obtained the highest internal-environment rating (M = 3.71), whereas laboratory equipment and facilities received the lowest (M = 3.20). Among QA initiatives, human resources (M = 3.55) and documentation (M = 3.53) received the highest ratings, while logistical support obtained the lowest (M = 3.34). Significant positive correlations were found between internal environment and QA measures (r = .841), internal environment and QA initiatives (r = .785), and QA measures and QA initiatives (r = .883), all at the .01 significance level. Qualitative findings revealed seven challenges involving VMGO internalization, human resource constraints, interdepartmental coordination, innovation resources, resistance to change, stakeholder feedback utilization, and continuous monitoring. The integrated findings indicated that favorable institutional assessments coexisted with operational limitations affecting QA implementation. The findings support the proposed revision of the Quality Assurance Manual toward an innovation-driven, participatory, and evidence-based framework emphasizing institutional accountability, stakeholder engagement, resource management, systematic monitoring, and continuous improvement.

Keywords: quality assurance; private higher education institution; internal environment; quality assurance initiatives; mixed-methods research; continuous improvement

Introduction

Quality assurance (QA) in higher education has increasingly shifted from regulatory compliance toward continuous improvement, institutional accountability, and stakeholder engagement. In the Philippines, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) promotes outcomes-based and institutional quality assurance systems to strengthen educational effectiveness and responsiveness (CHED, 2012). Total Quality Management (TQM) likewise emphasizes systematic evaluation, stakeholder participation, and continuous improvement (Deming, 1986).

Despite these developments, higher education institutions continue to encounter challenges in translating QA policies into consistent institutional practices. Limited resources, fragmented coordination, inadequate stakeholder feedback, and compliance-driven documentation may weaken quality improvement efforts (Harvey & Green, 1993). In a private institution in Laguna, examining the internal environment, QA measures, and QA initiatives is essential to identifying organizational strengths and areas requiring improvement.

This study aimed to assess the institution's internal environment, quality assurance measures, and quality assurance initiatives; determine the significant relationships among these variables; identify challenges affecting QA implementation; and develop a basis for revising the institutional Quality Assurance Manual.

Guided by TQM principles and the Context–Input–Process–Product (CIPP) evaluation model (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007), the study integrates quantitative assessments and qualitative perspectives to provide evidence-based recommendations for institutional improvement. Its primary contribution is a proposed revised Quality Assurance Manual designed to strengthen stakeholder engagement, resource management, systematic monitoring, accountability, and continuous quality improvement.

Research Objectives

This study aimed to (1) assess the institution's internal environment in terms of vision, mission, goals, and objectives (VMGO), personnel,

instruction, administration, extension, laboratory facilities, library, student services, and research; (2) evaluate quality assurance (QA) measures concerning accountability, innovation, stakeholder dialogue, networks, and institutional development; (3) examine QA initiatives related to administrative support, logistical support, human resources, and documentation; (4) determine the relationships among the internal environment, QA measures, and QA initiatives; (5) identify challenges affecting QA implementation; and (6) propose revisions to the institutional Quality Assurance Manual.

Method

Research Design and Setting

A convergent parallel mixed-methods design was employed in a private higher education institution in Laguna, Philippines. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected within the same study and integrated during interpretation to provide a comprehensive understanding of institutional QA practices. This approach enabled the comparison of stakeholders' assessments with institutional leaders' perspectives on implementation challenges (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Participants and Sampling

The quantitative component involved 126 administrators, faculty members, and non-teaching personnel selected through complete enumeration of eligible respondents with at least three years of institutional service. The qualitative component included five selected institutional leaders who provided written accounts of QA implementation challenges. The participants represented internal institutional stakeholders.

Research Instruments and Data Collection

Data were gathered using a structured questionnaire measuring the internal environment, QA measures, and QA initiatives on four-point rating scales. The instrument underwent expert review for face and content validity and pilot testing for internal consistency. Following institutional

approval and informed consent, the questionnaire was administered through Google Forms. A written interview guide was used to obtain institutional leaders' perspectives on challenges affecting QA implementation. Confidentiality and respondent anonymity were observed.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS. Means and standard deviations described respondents' assessments, while Pearson product–moment correlation coefficients determined relationships among the three major constructs at the .01 significance level. Qualitative responses were analyzed thematically to identify recurring institutional challenges. Findings from both strands were integrated to identify areas of convergence and explain differences between favorable stakeholder assessments and reported implementation difficulties.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to data collection, formal permission was obtained from the administration of the participating private higher education institution in Laguna, Philippines. Participants were informed of the purpose of the study, and informed consent was obtained before their participation. Quantitative data were collected through an online questionnaire, while qualitative information was obtained through structured written interviews. Confidentiality and anonymity protections were observed in the collection and reporting of responses. Institutional identifiers were withheld from the publication manuscript to preserve the confidentiality of the research setting.

Results

Internal environment

Respondents rated the institutional environment favorably overall. VMGO was the highest-rated dimension (M = 3.71), whereas laboratory equipment and facilities was the lowest (M = 3.20). This contrast suggests that institutional direction is recognized more strongly than the adequacy of some material conditions supporting academic delivery.

Selected internal-environment dimension	Mean	Interpretation in dissertation
VMGO	3.71	Very Good
Laboratory equipment and facilities	3.20	Good

Quality Assurance Measures and Initiatives

Among QA measures, trust and shared accountability (M = 3.56), opportunities for innovation (M = 3.51), and stakeholder dialogue (M = 3.50) received favorable ratings. In the initiatives domain, human resources (M = 3.55) and documentation (M = 3.53) were the strongest assessed areas, followed by administrative support (M = 3.46). Logistical support (M = 3.34) was the lowest among these initiatives, despite remaining in the favorable range.

Construct/dimension	Mean
Trust and shared accountability	3.56
Opportunities for innovation	3.51
Stakeholder dialogue	3.50
Human resources	3.55
Documentation	3.53
Administrative support	3.46
Logistical support	3.34

Relationships among major Constructs

The three major study constructs were strongly and positively correlated. The highest observed association was between QA measures and QA initiatives (r = .883). All three associations were reported as significant at the .01 level (two-tailed). These findings indicate co-variation in stakeholders' assessments; they do not establish that changing one construct will cause changes in another.

Variable pair	***Correlation (r)***	***Reported significance***
Internal environment – QA measures	*.841*	*p < .01*
Internal environment – QA initiatives	*.785*	*p < .01*
QA measures – QA initiatives	*.883*	*p < .01*

Qualitative themes

Thematic analysis of five institutional leaders' written interviews identified seven challenges: (1) fragmented understanding and internalization of VMGO; (2) manpower constraints and staff turnover; (3) siloed operations and weak shared accountability; (4) limited resources for innovation and modernization; (5) resistance to change and cultural barriers; (6) insufficient stakeholder engagement and underutilized feedback; and (7) underdeveloped monitoring and continuous-improvement systems. These themes indicate that favorable ratings can coexist with difficulties in consistent implementation across organizational units.

Integrated findings and proposed output

Integration revealed both agreement and qualification across the strands. High ratings for VMGO and QA documentation suggest an established institutional foundation, while leader narratives point to incomplete translation of policy into everyday practice. Similarly, favorable QA initiative scores contrast with concerns about facilities, coordination, resource availability, and systematic feedback. These findings informed the dissertation's proposed Innovation-Driven Quality Assurance Manual, intended to institutionalize shared accountability, monitoring, corrective

Discussion

Interpretation of Principal Findings

The results portray an institution with a recognized strategic direction and broadly favorable perceptions of QA, but with implementation conditions that merit targeted investment. The difference between the VMGO rating and the laboratory facilities rating is particularly consequential: clear institutional objectives may be insufficient without the infrastructure necessary to deliver and evaluate academic services. In parallel, the relatively lower logistical-support score suggests a practical constraint on QA activity even where personnel and documentation are positively assessed.

The strong association between QA measures and QA initiatives is consistent with the conceptual expectation that stakeholders who perceive well-developed accountability, dialogue, and innovation processes also perceive more robust institutional QA activities. Nevertheless, the common survey source, cross-sectional design, and correlational analysis limit causal inference. The observed coefficients should be read as evidence of association within this institution, not proof of an intervention effect.

Mixed-Methods Contribution

The qualitative accounts deepen interpretation of the survey findings by identifying potential mechanisms behind inconsistent QA implementation: staffing shortages, fragmented communication, limited modernization resources, and incomplete use of stakeholder feedback. This combination is valuable because aggregate ratings alone could obscure implementation bottlenecks. The resulting manual revision is therefore grounded not only in what respondents rated highly or poorly, but also in how leaders described operational obstacles.

Implications for institutional policy and practice

A revised manual should make responsibility for QA explicit at institutional and departmental levels; translate VMGO into observable unit-level practices; establish regular stakeholder feedback and response cycles; specify document control and audit schedules; and link identified deficiencies to corrective and preventive action. A prioritized laboratory

and facilities improvement plan, staff capacity-building, and transparent monitoring indicators would address the lower-rated dimensions. These are recommended institutional actions derived from the findings, not interventions whose effectiveness was tested in this study.

Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument

The research instrument underwent expert review for face and content validity and reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Results demonstrated excellent internal consistency across all measured dimensions, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.951 to 0.991. Specifically, the internal environment dimensions obtained coefficients ranging from 0.970 to 0.991, quality assurance measures from 0.951 to 0.983, and quality assurance initiatives from 0.958 to 0.976. All coefficients exceeded the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70 for internal consistency (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), indicating that the instrument demonstrated excellent reliability for the constructs assessed.

Conclusion

The private institution in Laguna demonstrates substantial perceived strengths in institutional direction, quality assurance measures, personnel, and documentation. However, laboratory facilities, logistical support, coordination, feedback utilization, and continuous monitoring require attention. Strong positive associations among internal environment, QA measures, and QA initiatives reinforce the need for an integrated institutional approach, while qualitative themes identify the operational challenges that such an approach must address. The proposed Innovation-Driven Quality Assurance Manual offers a locally grounded framework for moving from documentation-centered compliance toward participatory, evidence-informed continuous improvement. Future research should assess the manual after implementation using independent performance indicators and repeated measurement.

Recommendation for Implementation

The institution may prioritize laboratory and infrastructure upgrades; designate QA coordinators at unit level; establish structured staff development and stakeholder dialogue; implement an institutional QA dashboard with periodic review; and adopt documented corrective-action

cycles with assigned owners, deadlines, and follow-up verification. Each recommendation should be operationalized with measurable indicators and reviewed after implementation.

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