Policy Implementation of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in The Nepalese Higher Education Institutions Offering Hospitality Education

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Abstract:

Quality assurance and accreditation has become essential components of higher education globally. Policy implementation is necessary for quality assurance and accreditation in Nepalese higher education institutions offering hospitality education. The study aims to explore the current state of policy implementation, identify the challenges and gaps in the implementation process, and recommend strategies for improving the policy implementation. The study uses a descriptive research design with a mixed approach using structured questionnaire and structure interview schedule about the implementation of QAA in the Nepalese higher education institution offering hospitality education. This study uses purposive sampling. This study includes14 hospitality management professionals and 97 hospitality students. The study finds that Nepal has recognized the importance of quality assurance and accreditation in higher education, and policies have been developed to implement them in the hospitality education sector. However, the implementation of these policies faces several challenges and gaps. This study emphasizes stakeholder participation, clear policies, and transparent feedback. Clear curriculum, various teaching techniques, and student-accessible amenities improve campus culture and student achievement. Resources, interdisciplinary research, and real-world research improve learners and community. Resource allocation, capacity-building, partnerships, staff professional development, and funding exploration can improve quality assurance, UGC compliance, and student happiness.

Keywords: *QAA, Policy implementation, Quality assurance, Accreditation, Nepalese higher education institutions, Hospitality education.*

تنفيذ سياسات ضمان الجودة والاعتماد في مؤسسات التعليم العالي النيبالية التي تقدم تعليماً في مجال التعليم الفندقي

الملخص:

أصبح ضمان الجودة والاعتماد عنصرين أساسيين في التعليم العالي على مستوى العالم. كما تمثل تنفيذ السياسات ضرورة لضمان الجودة والاعتماد في مؤسسات التعليم العالي في نيبال التي تقدم تعليماً في مجال التعليم الفندقي. وتهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف الوضع الحالي لتنفيذ السياسات، وتحديد التحديات والثغرات في عملية التنفيذ، وتشمل توصيات بما يتعلق بالاستراتيجيات التي تحسن من تنفيذ السياسات.

تعتمد هذه الدراسة على تصميم بحث وصفي مع منهج مختلط باستخدام استبيان منهجي هيكلي وجدول مقابلات هيكلي حول تنفيذ ضمان الجودة والاعتماد في مؤسسات التعليم العالي النيبالية التي تقدم تعليماً في مجال التعليم الفندقي. تستخدم هذه الدراسة عينة استنتاجية، وتشمل هذه الدراسة 14 محترفاً في إدارة التعليم الفندقي و97 طالباً في مجال التعليم الفندقي أيضا. تظهر الدراسة أن نيبال قد أدركت أهمية ضمان الجودة والاعتماد في التعليم العالي، وقد تم تطوير السياسات لتنفيذها في قطاع التعليم في مجال التعليم الفندقي. وبالرغم من ذلك يواجه تنفيذ هذه السياسات العديد من التحديات والفجوات. وتركز هذه الدراسة على مشاركة الفاعلين والسياسات الواضحة وشفافية التغذية الراجعة. إن المنهجية التعليمية وتقنيات التدريس المتنوعة، وتوفير وسائل الراحة للطلاب تحسن الثقافة الجامعية وإنجازية الطلاب. كما أن الموارد البحث الترابطي والبحث العملي يحسنان المتعلمين والمجتمع. كما تجدر الإشارة إلى أن تعيين الموارد وبناء القدرات والشراكات وتطوير الموظفين واستكشاف التمويل يمكن أن يحسن ضمان الجودة والتزامات المجلس الجامعي ورفاهية الطلاب.

الكلمات المفتاحية: ضمان الجودة والاعتماد، تنفيذ السياسات، ضمان الجودة، اعتماد مؤسسات التعليم العالي النيبالية، التعليم الفندقي.

Introduction:

Tourism is Nepal's main industry and an economic driver. The country's natural and cultural assets help promote tourism, but a lack of skilled labour is a major obstacle (Jenkins, 2015). Leadership, decision-making, and entrepreneurship in the public and public sectors require readiness. The availability, affordability, accessibility, and accountability of human resources will determine how the quality assurance and accreditation (QAA) system is implemented, so the Ministry of Education (MOE) has prioritised their implementation in both public and private institutions (Materu, 2007).

Nepal's higher education is expanding to meet the public's demand for quality. New universities open each year, and students' enrollment rise (Upadhyay, 2018). Along with the number of graduates, concerns about the relevance and quality of higher education programmes and institutions, particularly graduates' employability and/or capacity for self-initiative/entrepreneurship to provide employment, are growing.

New institutions and student's enrollment are raising concerns about the relevance and quality of higher education programmes in Nepal. Concerns include graduates' employability, initiative, and entrepreneurship. To get a better education, many students are studying abroad for their undergraduate degrees.

Nepal recently adopted quality assurance (QA) and accreditation to standardise education programmes. As Nepal's education system expanded and the need for standardised programmes grew, quality assurance (QA) and accreditation took hold in the late of 20th century. The Nepalese government launched the Higher Education for Quality and Relevance (HEQR) programme in the late of 1990s to improve higher education (Upadhyay, 2018). This programme encouraged Nepalese higher education institutions to meet international quality and relevance standards through quality assurance and accreditation.

QAA evaluates and improves hospitality education programmes. The QAA regularly evaluates curriculum, facilities, resources, and support services to ensure they meet standards and provide a high-quality education (UGC, 2013). Students gain confidence in the quality of their education, and institutions gain market competitiveness and reputation.

QAA helps institutions to improve faculty professional development and student's outcome like graduation and job placement by identifying areas for improvement. QAA also ensures student visa, financial aid, and health and safety compliance (Youssef, 2014). Finally, QAA is essential for hospitality education quality and integrity. Nepalese hospitality schools often encounter issues when implementing QAA.

Quality assurance and accreditation programmes are necessary for Nepalese hospitality education institutions to maintain high standards. However, Nepalese

institutions must overcome several obstacles to implement these programmes. One of the major challenges is the lack of clear policies and regulations from the Nepalese government. Higher education institutions struggle to understand quality assurance and accreditation requirements. These programmes lack funding, which compounds the problem (Ghimire & Timilsina, 2022).

Quality assurance and accreditation awareness in higher education is another issue. This can deprioritize and underfund these programmes (Aburizaizah, 2022). To improve education quality, quality assurance and accreditation must be promoted. Nepalese universities lack trained staff to implement quality assurance and accreditation programmes (Ghimire & Timilsina, 2022). These programmes also lack infrastructure and resources in many institutions. Some higher education institutions may resist change needed for quality assurance and accreditation. For cultural or political reasons (Upadhyay, 2018). To fix this, stakeholders must be educated about quality assurance and accreditation. Nepalese higher education institutions may not work together to implement quality assurance and accreditation programmes, resulting in a fragmented system. To promote continuous improvement, they should collaborate and share information.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the implementation status QAA policy of UGC in Nepalese higher education institutions offering hospitality education. In addition, it is to analyze the gaps between policy and implementation of UGC criteria Nepalese higher education institutions offering hospitality education.

Literature Review
Historical Review of Higher Education in Nepal

Higher Education in Nepal is growing rapidly to meet the growing demand for quality education. Higher education institutions are opening and enrolling more students every year. With the growing numbers of graduates, concerns about the quality and relevance of higher education programmes and institutions are growing, especially in light of graduates' employability and/or ability to self-start/entrepreneur (UGC, 2013). UGC evaluates facilities, equipment, and learning resources to ensure the service provider has enough resources to maintain academic and other quality (Stella, 2007). Nepalese higher education has different stages.

Tri-Chandra College, the first college, opened in 1918. Despite its strong opposition to public education, Chandra Shamsher Rana, then Prime Minister, allowed this institution to be built to meet the rising public demand for higher education. In 1954, the Ministry of Education established the National Education Planning panel to evaluate educational trends and create a national education plan. The panel suggested a five-year national residential university. This may be the nation's first higher education expansion effort. Tribhuvan University established in 1959. The Ministry of Education

in 1971 "New Education System Plan" (NESP) made Tribhuvan University (TU) the sole state institution. Tribhuvan University merged all public and private institutions into a centralized, difficult-to-manage national university. After a Maoist-started civil war (1996–2006), liberalization began in 1996 and ended in 2015. During this time, new institutions, curriculums, teaching and learning methods may be implemented.

Concepts of Quality Assurance and Accreditation

Quality assurance applies methodical processes to set and achieve goals. Quality assurance is usually promoted by self-assessment and seeking internal or external validation or accreditation (Ibrahim, 2014). This paper focuses on accreditation, audits, institutional academic evaluations, and other quality assurance operations in higher education at the institutional, national, and regional levels in hospitality education (Hayward, 2006). The QAA system ensures higher education institutions meet institutional and academic requirements to improve society.

Nepal's University Grants Commission (UGC) has also created a comprehensive QAA policy for higher education institutions. The policy covers institutional assessment, programme accreditation, quality assurance, internationalization, and a Quality Assurance Handbook. The policy promotes excellence, continuous improvement, and relevance in Nepal's higher education institutions and ensures quality, competitiveness, and international recognition (UGC, 2013). The QAA policy emphasizes programme accreditation's role in ensuring academic programme quality in Nepalese higher education institutions. The policy also recognizes the need for quality assurance methods to maintain and improve institution quality (Bajaracharya, 2014). Internationalization is recognized in higher education by the QAA policy. International partnerships and best teaching, research, and administration practices are encouraged in higher education.

Nepal's University Grants Commission (UGC) sets higher education policies. The UGC issued a comprehensive guideline in 2022 to improve higher education governance, leadership, curriculum management, physical infrastructure, research and knowledge extension, student welfare, and human resources. This conceptual framework sought to improve Nepal's higher education institutions' quality and efficiency in a systematic and holistic manner. UGC's role in Nepal's higher education quality assurance and accreditation.

Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA) system

The Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA) system is gaining popularity, but universities and EQAAC in Nepal continue to struggle with policy formulation and implementation. EQAAC struggles with funding and sustainability, which slowly

change. As a part of World Bank-funded education reform projects, UGC grants QAA-accredited colleges and universities (Pun, 2021). To make the QAA system a part of higher education, UGC needs government assistance to fund those institutions. The accrediting body may face future challenges in funding, sustainability, monitoring, and integrating private higher education institutions, including open and distance learning (Pun, 2021).

Assessing and accrediting more institutions and learning modes may require more resources and expertise. In the 1990s, higher education worldwide focused on quality and quality assurance (Kells & Vught, 1988). QA requires reconciling these perspectives. Thus, student outcomes, curriculum, courses, and courseware teaching and learning key performance indicators must be agreed upon. student and staff support, assessment, evaluation, internal QA systems, management, staff, resourcing, returns on investment, and national economy and society benefits (Daniel, 2012).

Today, quality education is a universal goal, and higher education institutions that ignore quality assurance and educational quality risk stagnation or worse. Self-assessment and seeking internal or external validation or accreditation usually promote quality assurance.

Accreditation can boost public trust and accountability. Accreditation ensures qualification recognition and academic mobility. Accreditation unites professionals, teachers, and students to improve professional preparation and practice. Ibrahim (2014).

Higher education institutions and accreditation bodies must collaborate to ensure efficient coordination and communication, ethical conduct, and objective, equitable, and rigorous quality assessment and accreditation. (Dey, 2011).

Accreditation is a process by which a (non-)governmental or private body evaluates a higher education institution or programme to formally recognize it as meeting certain minimum criteria or standards (Vlasceanu, Grunberg, & Parlea, 2004). They also stated that accreditation involves three steps: self-evaluation, study visits, and commission examination. An authorised organisations evaluates a higher education institution or program's effectiveness to publicly recognise it as meeting minimum standards (Timsina, 2022).

Research Methods
Research Design

The study used a mixed method approach, which involved considering the qualitative and quantitative approach to describe and analyze the implementation

status of QAA in the hospitality institutions as per UGC framework. This involves data collection, analysis, and interpretation of data.

Population and Sampling

The sample for this study was selected using the purposive sampling method. In this study, management representatives from 14 hospitality institutions and 97 hospitality students from the institutions participated in the research study. For the collection of data structured questionnaire was developed for both students and institutions along with it, an interview using structure interview was also taken with institutions for qualitative data collection.

Respondents Profile

In this study, most institutions were affiliated with Tribhuvan University (50%), and it is followed by Purbanchal University and International affiliated institution (12.5%). The majority of programs run by these hospitality institutions were BHM (85.7%). Regarding the institutions many of the sample were male (65%), and the rest were female (33%). In terms of age, many of the samples reflect within the range of 18-24 years (74.2%), while only small portion of the samples were aged between over 34 years (2.1%). Most students were unmarried (88.7%) and remaining were married (11.3%). Regarding educational level most of the students were in bachelor level (87.6%) and master's level (12.4%). Many students have studied BHM (81.4%) from Tribhuvan University (48.5%).

Table 1: Demographic information of students

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	65	67.0
Female	32	33.0
Age		
18-24	72	74.2
25-34	23	23.7
Over 34	2	2.1
Marital Status		
Unmarried	86	88.7
Married	11	11.3
Educational level		
Bachelors	85	87.6
Masters	12	12.4
Employment Status		
Student	79	81.4
Part time employed	15	15.5

Full time employed	1	1
Unemployed	2	2.1

Courses

Bachelor of Hotel Management	79	81.4
Master of Hospitality Management	15	15.5
Master of Adventure Tourism Studies	1	1.0
Others	2	2.1

University

Tribhuvan University	47	48.5
Pokhara university	32	33.0
Purbanchal university	11	11.3
Others/international university	7	7.2

College

Ritz College	18	18.6
Medhavi College	8	8.2
Kantipur International College	11	11.3
NATHM	14	14.4
Gateway College	5	5.2
Saraswati College	11	11.3
IST College	5	5.2
Goldengate Intl College	2	2.1
NCCS College	14	14.4
Nestfield College	1	1.0
Balkumari College	5	5.2
Quest Int'l College	1	1.0
Nepal Mountain Academy	1	1.0
Silver Mountain College	1	1.0
Total	**97**	**100.0**

Source: Survey, 2023

Table 2: Demographic information of institutions and Programs

University	Frequency	Percent
Tribhuvan University	7	50.0
Pokhara University	3	21.42
Purbanchal University	2	14.28
International University	2	14.28

Program		
Bachelor of Hotel Management	13	82.85
Others (Master of Adventure Tourism Studies)	1	7.15
Total	**28**	**100.0**

Source: Survey, 2023

Data Analysis Method

In this study the collected data are arranged, coded, summarized and presented in tabular form and descriptive statistics was used. Excel 2016 and SPSS v.26 are used for the analysis of data and the qualitative data were summarized through content analysis.

Policy Review of Nepal's UGC Guidelines 2022
UGC Policy Guidelines for Institutional Assessment

Nepal's University Grants Commission (UGC) provides rules for institutional assessment to assess higher education institutions' excellence. The guidelines recognize strengths and weaknesses and suggest improvements. Mission, vision, governance, management, academic programmes, faculty, student's support services, research and innovation, infrastructure, and partnerships and collaborations are assessed. The institution submits a self-evaluation report, the assessment team visits, and the institution receives feedback. The assessment team includes UGC and external experts. The self-assessment report should cover the institution's history, mission, governance and management structure, academic programmes, faculty, student's support services, research and innovation, infrastructure, partnerships and collaborations, financial sustainability, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges. The site visit involves professor, staff, and student interviews, classroom observations, academic and administrative records evaluation, and infrastructure and facility inspection. The assessment report assesses the institution's performance, analyses strengths, shortcomings, opportunities, and difficulties, and makes recommendations for improvement. The guidelines aim to strengthen Nepalese higher education institutions and ensure excellence. Overall, the guidelines aim to ensure that higher education institutions in Nepal meet desired quality standards and promote continuous improvement.

UGC Policy Guidelines for Program Accreditation

To ensure excellence in higher education programmes, Nepal's University Grants Commission (UGC) has set programme accreditation rules. The rules state that programme accreditation evaluates programme quality and ensures its competitive

and internationally recognized. The accrediting team, made up of external experts and UGC members, is outlined in the guidelines.

The rules include cover accreditation application, desk review, on-site visit, and report preparation. Programme accreditation rules encourage academic programme excellence, relevance, and competitiveness, improving higher education in Nepal.

UGC Policy Guidelines for Quality Assurance Mechanisms

Nepalese higher education institutions improve, relevance, and succeed under the Policy Guidelines for Quality Assurance Mechanisms. The recommendations aim to improve quality assurance in Nepalese higher education. The criteria need higher education quality assurance policies. The policy should cover goals, roles, and self- and external-assessment. The guidelines' self- and external-assessment process measures the institution's quality.

An independent entity examines while the institution self-assesses. Identify weaknesses and establish a quality improvement plan. Self- and external assessment-based quality improvement strategies are also advised. Timelines and responsibilities for fixing highlighted areas should be included in the strategy. The Policy Guidelines for Quality Assurance Mechanisms improve Nepalese higher education quality, relevance, and competitiveness. The proposals improve higher education in Nepal by creating quality assurance processes that prepare graduates for the workforce and the nation's progress.

Results

Implementation of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Hospitality Education -*Students Perspectives*

Table 4: Descriptive Analysis of Status of Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Students

Dimensions of QAA	Mean	SD
Governance and Leadership	3.72	0.975
Curriculum Management	3.95	0.821
Physical Resources	3.75	0.858
Research and Knowledge Extension	3.51	0.961
Student Welfare	3.62	0.876
Human Resources	3.77	0.814
QAA	3.72	0.762

Source: Survey 2023

Governance and leadership: The mean value of 3.72 (SD=0.975) indicates a reasonably successful governance and leadership system. The university has a

relatively good framework to assure quality teaching and learning. This suggests that the institution has policies, processes, and resources to promote and maintain high standards of teaching and learning, while stakeholder participation in decision-making suggests that the institution needs to improve stakeholder engagement and participation. This shows that stakeholders including students, teachers, and staff may not be effectively included in crucial decision-making processes, which could lead to a lack of buy-in and ownership over institution decisions.

Curriculum management: The high mean value for curriculum management is 3.95 (SD=0.821), indicating that the institution has an effective curriculum management system. It indicates that the institution has a well-defined curriculum development process because its sub dimensions are clear and specified. This suggests that the institution has a structured approach to design and update its curriculum, which could lead to better alignment with program objectives, learning outcomes, and industry needs. Another sub dimension, providing honest and transparent feedback, has the lowest mean value in curriculum management. It shows that institutions must increase feedback transparency and fairness. This shows that the institution may not have clear and objective criteria for giving students feedback, which could lead to bias and inconsistency in students rating.

Physical Resources: The institution manages its physical resources relatively well with a mean score of 3.75 (SD=0.858). It reveals that its sub dimension promotes a safe and inclusive campus environment free from discrimination, harassment, and violence, showing that the institution has an effective system in place. This means that the school has policies, programs, and resources to prevent discrimination, harassment, and violence and promote respect and inclusiveness. Conduct alumni engagement activities to establish relationships with former students and give networking and career support, indicating the university needs to improve its alumni engagement initiatives. This shows that the institution may not have enough programs and resources to maintain relationships with past students, which could affect alumni support, networking, and career growth.

Research and Extension: The university has a moderately effective research and extension system with mean value 3.51 (SD=0.961). It shows that its sub dimensions conduct research-related workshops and seminars to keep faculty and students informed about the latest trends and better practices in their field of study, indicating that the institution has a moderate system for doing so. This means the institution offers professional development and information sharing, which could increase research and extension. However, provides appropriate resources to support research and knowledge, suggesting the institution needs to strengthen its research and extension resources. This shows that the institution may not have enough resources,

facilities, or equipment to sustain high-quality research and extension activities, limiting its knowledge generation and dissemination.

Student Welfare: The institution has a reasonably effective student welfare system with mean score 3(SD=0.876). Its subdimensions provide financial aid and support to worthy students, suggesting that the school has an excellent system for giving resources and facilities to support student welfare. This implies that the school provides pupils with resources and facilities to help them succeed academically and personally. While giving financial aid to eligible students, the university has to be improved. This shows that the university may not have sufficient policies and initiatives to support financially disadvantaged students, which could hinder their academic success.

Human Resources: The results show that the institution has a fairly effective human resource management system in place, with a mean score of 3.77 (SD=0.814). It implies that the institution's sub dimensions create a safe and healthy learning environment for students, implying that the institution has an effective system in place for delivering a safe and healthy learning environment for students. This implies that the institution has policies and initiatives in place to protect students' safety and health while on campus, which may contribute to their well-being and academic achievement. Providing opportunities for students to interact with alumni or current professionals in the field of human resource development, on the other hand, indicates that the institution needs to improve its provision of opportunities for students to interact with alumni or current professionals in the field of human resource development. This shows that the school may lack suitable policies and programs to promote students' career development, which could have an impact on their capacity to succeed in their chosen area.

Quality Assurance and Accreditation: The mean QAA score is 3.72 (SD=0.762), indicating a reasonably good quality assurance system. However, there are some opportunities for development in each dimension that may affect the institution's QAA system's overall performance. Stakeholder participation in governance and leadership decisions must be improved. Curriculum management requires fair, transparent criticism. Physical resources need to boost alumni engagement initiatives to develop contacts with past students and give networking and career help. Research and knowledge extension require proper funds, infrastructure, and equipment. Student Welfare increased funding for qualified students. Human resources development students need more opportunities to interact with alumni and current professionals.

Implementation of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Hospitality Education - *Institution Perspectives*

Table 5: Descriptive Analysis of status of Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Institution

Institutional Data		
Dimensions of QAA	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
Governance and Leadership	4.54	0.572
Curriculum Management	4.52	0.547
Research and Knowledge Extension	3.73	1.079
Physical Resources	4.28	0.680
Student Welfare	4.48	0.549
Human Resource	4.20	0.902
Quality Assurance and Accreditation	4.26	0.610

Source: Survey2023

Governance and Leadership: It is found that the institution has an effective system in place for governance and leadership. The mean score for governance and leaderships is 4.54 (SD=.572), indicating that stakeholders are active in decision-making processes and that the institution has effective leadership and direction. It demonstrates that its sub dimension institution analyzes academic programs to ensure that they fulfill QAA requirements. It has a strong emphasis on academic programs, implying that the institution is committed to ensuring that its academic programs meet high quality requirements and are examined on a regular basis for improvement. While another sub dimension institution conducts reviews of academic programs to ensure that they fulfill QAA criteria, it demonstrates that there is still potential for development in this area. Institutions must examine all elements of their operations, not only academic programs, on a regular basis to ensure that they are satisfying the needs of their stakeholders and operating efficiently.

Curriculum Management: It is found that the curriculum management of the institution has an effective system for managing its curriculum. Curriculum management has a mean score of 4.52 (SD=0.547), indicating that the institution has clear and defined curriculum creation methods and that feedback is delivered in a fair and transparent manner. It demonstrates how its sub dimension employs a number of teaching and learning tactics to increase student engagement and encourage active learning. This could include using technology and other innovative techniques to improve the learning experience. In this area, there is also a paucity of use of assessment data to inform curricular reform. Regular evaluation of student learning outcomes is essential for ensuring that courses and programs are fulfilling their intended goals and objectives, and that required improvements are implemented.

Research and Knowledge Extension: It shows that the institution may need to enhance its research and knowledge dissemination system. The mean score of 3.73 (SD = 1.079) for research and knowledge extension suggests that the institution could provide more resources and support to faculty and students, as well as conduct research-related workshops and seminars, in order to keep them abreast of the most recent trends and better practices in their field of study. In addition, conducting research-related workshops and seminars to keep faculty and students abreast of the most recent developments and the best practices in their field of study can be beneficial. This can contribute to the institution's innovation and collaboration ethos. In addition, the analysis reveals that the opportunity for faculty and students to collaborate on research and knowledge dissemination activities is regarded as being of particular significance. Encouraging interdisciplinary research and collaborations with other institutions can also be advantageous, as they can result in the development of novel concepts and methods.

Supporting translation of research findings into practical applications that benefit society, on the other hand, suggests that the institution could do more in this area. This may entail forming partnerships with industry and government agencies to facilitate the institution's transmission of knowledge and technology to the larger community. Improving the institution's system for research and knowledge extension activities can contribute to its long-term reputation and prosperity.

However, encouraging translation of research discoveries into practical applications to benefit society shows the institution may need to do more. To share knowledge and technology with the community, the institution may engage with business and government. Improving an institution's research and knowledge extension system can boost its reputation and success.

Physical Resources: The researcher observed that the organization manages its physical resources well. The mean score of physical resources is 4.28(SD=0.680), indicating that the institution provides a safe and inclusive campus environment free from discrimination, harassment, and violence and that alumni engagement programs are held to foster links with past students. It shows that the institution values maintaining its facilities. To maintain optimal performance, resources may be allocated to repair, renovate, and update buildings, equipment, and other resources. This can improve the school's reputation and student-staff relations. However, the institution may need to do more to make physical infrastructure and facilities accessible and accommodating to students with impairments. The school may need to evaluate its facilities and resources to identify hurdles for disabled students. To help disabled students succeed in school, the institution may need to provide adjustments and support.

Student Welfare: Institution has an efficient student welfare system. The high mean student welfare score of 4.48(SD=0.549) shows that the institutions offers resources and facilities to support students' welfare and that eligible students receive financial aid. The school values a fair, transparent, and merit-based admissions procedure, as shown by its sub dimension. This may involve developing policies and procedures to guarantee that admissions decisions are based on academic merit and other relevant criteria, not race, gender, or socioeconomic background. This can boost the school's reputation and attract talented students. However, it recommends that the institutions could do more to engage and support alumni in their career and personal growth. The university may need to implement programs and activities to foster alumni relationships and give resources and support for their personal and professional success. This can boost alumni loyalty and the school's network.

Human Resources: Institutions has a moderately effective human resources system. The mean score of human resources 4.20 (SD=0.902) implies that students should have greater opportunities to interact with alumni and current human resources experts. Supporting recruitment implies the institution values hiring qualified people. To attract different candidates, job fairs, internet job portals, and recruitment events may be used. Anti-discrimination rules and diverse search committees may ensure fair and equitable hiring at the institution. However, assuring staff research and professional development resources suggests the school may need to improve. Professional development workshops, training programs, and research support can improve staff members' skills and knowledge, promote career growth, and position the institution as a supportive and inclusive workplace.

Quality assurance and accreditation: The institution has an efficient quality assurance and accrediting system based on its high mean score of 4.26 (SD=0.610). This shows that the institution prioritizes quality in its operations and that its QAA system achieves this purpose. The institution's QAA system ranks high in governance and leadership, curriculum management, physical resources, and student welfare. Research, knowledge extension, and HR management can be improved. Research and staff development may require greater funding from the institution.

The high mean score shows the institution's effective accreditation and quality assurance system. Addressing these development areas can boost the institution's quality assurance and certification system and ensure continuous improvement.

The primary goals of the institutions were to comprehend and apply UGC quality assurance and accreditation criteria. According to the informant from the institution, there are UGC criteria for quality assurance and accreditation. The criteria are the teaching-learning process, infrastructure and learning resources, quality assurance, and accreditation. Academic programs and courses, according to the informant, must

undergo self-assessment, external peer review, accreditation, student feedback, faculty development, research and innovation, and industry-academia collaboration.

Quality in Research

The institutions follow UGC's QAA criteria for research ethics, proposal evaluation, funding, output evaluation, collaboration, networking, infrastructure, and facilities to ensure quality.

> "Different research focusing tourism & hospitality are conducted time and again with direct initiation from the college itself as well as from different relevant stakeholders" -Key informant_1

> "Established RMC and periodic workshops as well as continued research journal publications"-Key Informant_2

> "Dedicated Research Management Cell is established within campus premises."-Key informant_3

Maintain Quality of Institution's Faculty

To meet UGC standards, institutions use recruitment and selection, professional development, performance evaluation, promotion and tenure, faculty load, faculty diversity, and faculty support. That helps institutions maintain faculty and education quality.

> "Regular Performance Appraisals, Faculty Development Programs."-Key informant_1

> "Periodic training and development; Training conducted by parent university representatives"-Key informant_2

> "Permanent faculties are selected adapting government criteria and other faculties are selected moreover on the basis of their experience and who are best in the industry. Moreover, faculties are directly motivated with the positive influence by the surrounding and the quality of the students as well as various motivation program are also conducted."-Key informant_3

Monitor and Evaluation of Effective QAA Procedures

Institutions use Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), stakeholder feedback, external quality assurance, data collection and analysis, policy review, and continuous improvement to monitor and evaluate quality assurance and accreditation according to UGC criteria. that assesses quality assurance and accreditation.

> "IQAC is established to evaluate, monitor and ensure all the quality assurance procedures". -Key informant_1

> Regular meetings and feedback from faculties, parents, students and other stakeholders; Annual reports etc.-Key informant_2

> "Institution has set a rules and policies which directly focused on all the dimensions and these rules & regulations are followed accordingly for each and every decision."-Key informant_3

Addressed Area of Improvement

When the institution addresses any areas for improvement or deficiencies identified through its quality assurance processes in line with UGC's QAA standard, it follows standard steps like action plan, implementation of action plan, monitoring and evaluation, continuous improvement, review and evaluation, and accreditation to meet UGC policy or guidelines.

> "Different committees are formed for monitor and smooth operations of all the procedures within college."-Key informant_1

> "Infrastructure upgradation as per the strategic management; New areas of training and development for e.g: photography, language, management workshops, etc."-Key informant_2

> "Internal Audit."-Key informant_3

> "Reviewing the situation & scenarios and taking action required in a reliable manner."-Key informant_3

UGC's Criteria for QAA

To meet UGC quality assurance and accreditation standards, the institution reviewed its curriculum, faculty, student support services, infrastructure, and quality assurance processes. Institutions must change these factors to meet UGC standards.

> "Infrastructure Development, Procurement of new resource materials, fully automated library, EMIS, etc"-Key informant_1.

> "Upgraded EMIS installation; Upgraded library; Upgraded Labs; Upgraded Classrooms;"-Key Informant_2

> "All the required changes are made in order to fulfil the criteria for QAA."-Key Informant_3

Challenges Faced and Measures During Implementation of UGC's Criteria

Institution faced many challenges during the implementation of UGC quality assurance and accreditation criteria. Typically, these obstacles are encountered in the implementation of stages, according to institution informant. Common obstacles

encountered by institutions during the implementation of quality assurance and accreditation criteria include limited resources, resistance to change, data collection and analysis, as well as communication and collaboration. To address these challenges, institutions adopt a number of steps, such as strategic planning, faculty engagement, data management and analysis, and communication and collaboration with stakeholders, to ensure that everyone is working toward the same goals and priorities.

"Organizing and updating documentations."-Key informant_1

"The institution is in the verse of implementing QAA, therefore as mentioned earlier all the criteria are to be fulfilled."-Key informant_2

"Different committees are formed for smooth operations of all the procedures within college, so we didn't face such challenges."-Key informant_3

Inadequacies or limitation

While implementing UGC quality assurance and accreditation criteria, institutions faced resource, expertise, and infrastructure limitations. To overcome such limitations, organizations prioritize resources to address the most critical areas of need, build expertise in training and professional development opportunities for faculty and staff to build the necessary expertise to implement the UGC's QAA criteria and standard efficiency, collaborate to share resources and expertise, and seek external funding or government support.

"Yes, we had to plan for our own infrastructure which is now in progress; Proper EMIS to be installed which has been replaced with Veda app."-Key informant_1

"All the inadequacies and limitations will be fulfilled accordingly"-Key informant_2

Discussion

In the field of hospitality education, Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA) plays an essential part because it contributes to the evaluation and improvement of the overall quality of the programs that educational institutions provide. In light of what has been said, it was found that the institution has an effective system in place for governance and leadership, indicating that stakeholders are active in decision-making processes. Institution's governance and leadership could use some work in terms of increasing stakeholder engagement and participation in decision-making processes, while simultaneously demonstrating a commitment to provide high-quality teaching and learning by way of policies and academic program reviews. According to Holcombe and Kezar (2018), the body of research on governance and leadership in higher education places an emphasis on the significance of stakeholder participation and collaborative decision-making. In addition, it is of the utmost importance to both maintain and improve the level of quality of learning and instruction through the use

of mechanisms such as quality assurance systems and program assessments (Harvey & Newton, 2004). Therefore, in order to improve governance and leadership, it is recommended to cultivate a greater participation from stakeholders and to extend evaluation processes in order to more effectively satisfy the requirements of stakeholders.

In terms of the management of the curriculum, it appears that the organization possesses an efficient system, complete with distinct and well-defined procedures for the creation of the curriculum. Nevertheless, there is potential for improvement in providing students with feedback that is both fair and transparent and in utilizing assessment data for the purpose of improving curricular content. According to Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006), the research on the necessity of clear curriculum creation processes and the provision of fair and transparent feedback is supported by the literature. Additionally, it is encouraged to use a range of teaching and learning methodologies to increase student involvement (Prince, 2004). Additionally, it is vital to routinely utilize assessment data for the purpose of curricular reform (Banta & Palomba, 2014). Establishing explicit feedback criteria and incorporating assessment data into curriculum review procedures are two steps that the institution needs to do in order to address these areas where improvements are needed.

According to the findings of the research, the organization has a system in place that is only moderately effective in terms of managing the physical resources at its disposal. It indicates that the educational establishment needs to enhance its efforts to engage its alumni and guarantee that its physical infrastructure and facilities are accessible to students with impairments. It gives the impression that the organization has an efficient system in place for creating a safe and inclusive campus environment as well as managing the physical infrastructure and facilities that make up the campus. A previous study (Akomolafe & Adesua, 2016) demonstrates that investing in physical resources can have a favorable impact on the educational experience and outcomes for students. These findings are consistent with that previous study, and they suggest that investing in physical resources can have such an impact. Altbach and Knight (2007) and Thelin (2019) both underline the need of engaging alumni and making sure that facilities are accessible to students with disabilities in order to build a positive culture on campus and improve student achievement. However, the literature also highlights the value of engaging alumni.

According to the results of the study, the organization possesses a system that is only moderately effective for carrying out research and activities related to the extension of knowledge. It highlights the efforts made by the institution to keep faculty and students informed about the latest trends and most effective practices in the field in which they work. On the other hand, there is potential for development in terms of the provision of resources and support for activities related to research. It hints at the

necessity of increasing the number of workshops, collaborations between different fields, and the implementation of research findings in real-world settings. These findings are consistent with the research that has been done previously, which places an emphasis on the significance of resource allocation, professional growth, interdisciplinary research, and the influence on society (Becher & Trowler, 2001).

The educational establishment displays a system for student welfare that is only moderately effective, with the primary focus being on providing students with the required resources and infrastructure to promote students' well-being and academic performance. In spite of this, there remains potential for development in terms of the financial assistance and support provided to students who are deserving of it. The establishment does a fantastic job of upholding a clear and fair admissions procedure while placing an emphasis on fairness and diversity. It is necessary to strengthen alumni engagement and support for students' personal and professional development in order to improve the overall welfare of students. These findings are consistent with prior research (Bowden & Marton, 2004) that stresses the significance of equitable admissions processes, alumni participation, and comprehensive support for student welfare.

Furthermore, the current study reveals a considerable gap between the institution's and students' perceptions of the Quality Assurance and Assessment (QAA) method's implementation. While the QAA approach is thought to be effective, student satisfaction remains moderate. The students' improvement proposals cover a wide range of topics, including research and knowledge expansion, stakeholder participation, timely feedback, fair evaluation systems, financial resources, and workshops. The discovery of disagreement between the institution and students over QAA implementation is consistent with earlier research. Students frequently have a more favourable perception of their institutions' quality assurance processes than do students. This difference in perception can result in misunderstanding of pupils' individual needs and expectations. To address these difficulties, the study advises resource allocation, capacity-building, collaborations, staff development, and finding external financing sources in order to improve quality assurance and student happiness. The discovery of disagreement between the institution and students over QAA implementation is consistent with earlier research. It is similar to Narang's (2012) study, in which there were substantial discrepancies between how students with management assess the quality of education in public institutions. It has been discovered that institutions frequently have a more favourable perception of their quality assurance processes than students do. This difference in perception can result in misunderstanding of pupils' individual needs and expectations. Integrating research-based activities into the curriculum encourages critical thinking and increases students' academic engagement. This technique not only enhances learning but also prepares pupils for real-world issues. It was also discovered that the students'

suggestion to prioritize research and knowledge extension resonates with Pounder's (2007) research, which stated that student-related, course-related, and teacher-related aspects of research on teaching evaluations are critical, and factors commonly addressed within these aspects are important. Clark and Johnson's (reference as needed) work emphasizes the necessity of stakeholder participation and timely input. Their research found that incorporating diverse stakeholders in quality assurance processes, such as teachers, administrators, and students, improves transparency and responsiveness to changing educational needs. Addressing resource constraints and human resource management was found to be important in this study, which aligns with the findings of Usman (2016), who emphasized the importance of adequate funding and efficient management practices in ensuring the smooth operation of educational institutions and meeting students' expectations. Part of the integral pre-requisites to be put in place in the education system for the actualization of educational goals and objectives requires adequate provision of resources, maximum utilization, and appropriate management of education resources to avoid waste and improve the quality of the teaching - learning process in the academic environment. The need for more academic and vocational coaching, similar to the previous survey, aligns with the research by Gamage, Perera, and Wijewardena (2021), which highlighted the positive influence of mentorship and coaching programs on students' personal and professional growth. Such assistance programs foster student success and well-being. Gamage, Perera, and Wijewardena (2021) urge that higher educational institutes implement a solid mentoring procedure that adheres to ethical standards in order to constantly assist students' continual progress.

When the findings of the research are compared to the existing body of literature, common themes and issues regarding quality assurance and student happiness in higher education become apparent. Previous studies have highlighted the significance of research-oriented techniques, stakeholder participation, timely feedback, financial resources, and coaching in improving educational quality. The proposals made by the students match with these studies, as do the obstacles that were found and the solutions that were provided. When institutions take into account these insights, they are better able to bridge the gap between their viewpoints and the expectations of students, which ultimately results in greater quality assurance and increased student satisfaction.

Conclusion

Hospitality education research shows various areas for development. Stakeholder participation in decision-making and a dedication to high-quality teaching and learning through clear policies and academic program assessments improve governance and leadership. Stakeholder participation and collaborative decision-making in higher education governance can improve inclusivity and responsiveness. The institution's curriculum management system is efficient, but students need fair and transparent

feedback and assessment data to improve content. Clear curriculum creation and feedback improve student learning. Using multiple teaching and learning methods to engage students can also improve learning. The college should engage alumni and make facilities student-accessible to manage physical resources. These initiatives can improve campus culture and student achievement. Allocating resources and fostering interdisciplinary research and knowledge extension can benefit the university. Encouraging academics and students to apply research in real-world contexts can enhance learning and benefit society. The study emphasizes student wellbeing and support. Alumni participation and student support can improve well-being and academic success. Stakeholder engagement, assessment data for curriculum improvement, fair and transparent feedback, and investment in physical resources and research can help the institution bridge the gap between its perspectives and students' expectations, creating a more fulfilling and enriching educational experience for all stakeholders. Resource allocation and support for research, capacity-building, partnerships and collaborations with external entities, staff professional development, and external funding exploration are recommended to overcome these challenges. The institution can improve quality assurance, align with UGC criteria, and increase student satisfaction by addressing these areas.

Implication

According to the system analysis, it is critical for Nepalese hospitality institutions to undertake Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA) to ensure effective governance, leadership, curriculum management, physical resources, research and extension, and student welfare. QAA can assist institutions in identifying areas for improvement and developing strategies to fulfill the needs of stakeholders. To begin implementing QAA, hospitality establishments in Nepal can perform thorough self-assessment of their current systems and processes. This assessment can be used to identify areas for improvement and build plans to address them. It is critical to include all stakeholders in the QAA process, including academics, staff, students, and external partners, to ensure that their needs and expectations are met.

Hospitality institutions in Nepal can also benefit from forming alliances with industry and government entities in order to share knowledge and technology with the larger society. This can assist schools in staying current with industry trends and better practices, as well as ensuring that its graduates are well-prepared to meet job market expectations. More possibilities for students to interact with alumni or current professionals in the field of hospitality management might be provided by hospitality institutes in Nepal. This can assist students in developing a better grasp of the sector as well as building key networks that will benefit them in their future employment. It is also advised that all parts of the institution's operations can be evaluated on a regular basis to ensure that they are satisfying the needs of stakeholders and working properly.

This can assist institutions in identifying areas for improvement and implementing essential system and process changes.

It is recommended that a comprehensive Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA) framework can be implemented in hospitality institutions in Nepal to ensure effective governance, leadership, curriculum management, physical resources, research and extension, and student welfare. This framework should be developed in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including industry experts, educational institutions, and accreditation bodies. Hospitality establishments should be required to follow the Ministry of Education's QAA criteria. They should undertake regular self-assessments based on these principles to identify and prioritize areas for improvement. Stakeholder engagement is critical, with dedicated committees and consultation sessions comprising teachers, staff, students, and external partners.

Collaborations with industry and government agencies should be formed in order to enable knowledge transfer and match curricula with industry norms. Providing opportunities for students to meet with alumni and professionals will provide useful insights as well as networking possibilities. Regular operations evaluation and continuous improvement techniques should be implemented, backed up by proper ministry resource allocation and the study of external financing options. Hospitality establishments in Nepal can improve their overall quality, reputation, and contribution to the industry by applying this synchronized approach.

Several interconnected processes are involved in the QAA framework application mechanics in Nepali hospitality institutions. In partnership with industry experts and accreditation authorities, the Ministry of Education will develop particular QAA criteria for the hospitality setting. Following that, institutions will be required to follow these standards and perform frequent self-assessments to identify areas for improvement. Engagement of stakeholders, such as teachers, staff, students, and industry professionals, will be critical throughout the process. Collaborations with industry and government agencies, as well as outreach to alumni and professionals, will improve industry relevance and student opportunities. Continuous improvement will be ensured by ongoing evaluation and resource allocation. By following these mechanics, institutions can effectively integrate the QAA framework and improve the quality of education given.

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