Impact of Institutional Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) Framework on Higher Education Institutions in Bangladesh

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Abstract

In under a decade, Bangladesh has developed a Quality Assurance Framework for higher education, establishing standards for universities to comply with. The framework implements national qualification protocols, which include internal self-assessment and external quality assurance measures. This study examines the impact of the Institutional Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) framework on English departments in Bangladeshi public and private universities. Through a case study approach and qualitative data collection techniques, 15 faculty members from four private and two public universities were interviewed to determine how the IQAC framework has influenced the quality of teaching and learning. The findings suggest that both public and private universities have modified or plan to modify their curricula, syllabi, and course descriptions to ensure high-quality education and bridge the gap between the classroom and the workplace.

Keywords: Higher-education, English Department, Public and Private Universities, IQAC

Introduction

Many international organizations have recognized the importance of higher education in a nation's socioeconomic development. Higher education is about acquiring academic degrees, expanding horizons, and developing skills essential for the workforce (Alam et al., 2006; Mishra, 2006). Bangladesh has provided higher education through a few public universities since the mid-1990s. However, with the introduction of the Private University Act in 1992, private universities have also started offering higher education. The Ministry of Education (MoE) and the University Grants Commission (UGC) control both public and private universities in Bangladesh.

Quality, accountability, and performance are critical factors in determining the quality of higher education. According to Lalancette et al. (2012), performance, quality, and accountability determine the quality of higher education. It is possible to establish graduate or institution standards and quality when it can operate internationally (Hou, 2012). According to Habibulah (2015), management, teaching quality, faculty resources, intake quality, teaching methods, technology support, curriculum updates, infrastructure, and other factors are used to evaluate the quality of education. Higher education institutions (HEIs) must have quality assurance mechanisms to deliver high-quality education. Quality assurance mechanisms ensure that HEIs operate according to the national protocol of a qualification framework. In Bangladesh, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2010 aims to provide affordable, globally-oriented higher education and to create a capable workforce. The quality of education has become a pressing issue in Bangladesh due to the lack of connections between higher education, market demand, and subpar education.

The World Bank-funded Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project (HEQEP) was launched in Bangladesh in the middle of 2009 to address the concerns raised by the UGC's Strategic Plan for Higher Education 2006-2026 about the quality assurance mechanisms of both public and private universities. The project aims to ensure that HEIs have quality assurance mechanisms to provide high-quality education to meet the needs of graduates and the global job market. Creating

Institutional Quality Assurance Cells (IQACs) in HEIs across Bangladesh is one of the project's priorities.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh has implemented the Quality Assurance Cell (QAC) as part of its 2009 project to improve the standard of higher education in the country. To enhance the caliber of tertiary education, the Quality Assurance Cell (QAC) sought to establish a framework for outcome-based education (OBE) to endow graduates with competencies relevant to the demands of the labor market. The IQAC project has implemented curriculum upgrades in public and private universities nationwide. The developers of academic curricula in private and public universities have realized that their curricula should encompass more than just the demands of the overall job market. They additionally perceived that integrating the needs of the current labor market into the educational program would be beneficial. The present research is centered on examining the effects of the Institutional Quality Assurance (IQAC) framework on institutions of higher education in Bangladesh. The study focuses on the impact of the IQAC framework on the English departments of both public and private universities.

The Objective of the Study
This study examines the effectiveness of the quality assurance mechanism in the English departments of public and private universities in Bangladesh. Specifically, the study seeks to investigate the extent to which SAC members of IQAC and faculty members in the English department are implementing the criteria and demands of IQAC. The study has two specific objectives:
- The first objective is to explore the perceptions of English department faculty members regarding the effectiveness of the Institutional Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC).
- The second objective is to assess how the English departments of private universities have implemented the criteria for improving the quality of education in the department and the challenges they face in meeting the requirements set by IQAC.

Theoretical Framework
Higher education institution quality has gained significant importance globally, particularly in developing nations. The Institutional Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) is a structured mechanism designed to elevate higher education institutions' standards through ongoing monitoring and improvement. The present study aims to examine the effects of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) on the institutions of higher education in Bangladesh, with a particular emphasis on the viewpoints of faculty members in the English department and the execution of IQAC standards in privately owned universities. The present investigation is underpinned by two theoretical frameworks: institutional theory and total quality management (TQM).

According to institutional theory, organizations adhere to institutional norms and expectations to acquire legitimacy and support from their stakeholders. Within the scope of this investigation, it is anticipated that academic institutions of higher learning in Bangladesh will integrate IQAC as a customary practice to satisfy the quality benchmarks established by the government and interested parties. The Total Quality Management (TQM) framework places significant emphasis on the continuous enhancement of organizational processes and the fulfillment of customer needs and expectations as crucial factors in accomplishing the objectives of an organization. Within the scope of this investigation, the Total Quality Management (TQM) framework has the potential to facilitate the identification of the pertinent criteria for enhancing the quality of education in private university

English departments, as well as to determine the most efficacious means of implementing these criteria.

Literature Review

The administration of higher education in Bangladesh is under the purview of the University Grants Commission (UGC), which was instituted in 1972 after the nation attained independence. Monitoring all higher educational institutions in Bangladesh, comprising 111 private, 53 public, and three international universities, is the responsibility of the University Grants Commission (UGC) (UGC, n.d.). The University Grants Commission (UGC) has implemented several initiatives to guarantee high-quality education. The Strategic Plan for Higher Education 2006-2026, initiated by the UGC, put forth the proposition of establishing an autonomous Accreditation Council for both public and private universities in Bangladesh in 2006. The government's National Education Policy (NEP) 2010 endorsed the suggestion. As a result, in the middle of 2009, the Ministry of Education launched the World Bank-funded Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project (HEQEP). HEQEP facilitated the establishment of two distinct projects, namely the Bangladesh Research and Education Network (BdREN) and the Institutional Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC).

Institutional Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC)

As previously stated, the Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project (HEQEP) initiated the establishment of the Quality Assurance Cell (QAC), intending to institute an Institutional Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) in all public and private universities in Bangladesh. The ultimate aim of the Quality Assurance Cell (QAC) is to establish and uphold proper quality assurance protocols in institutions of higher education in Bangladesh, mainly focusing on curricula centered on outcome-based education (OBE). The Asian Development Bank (ADB) published a report in 2015 that highlighted the challenges faced by the higher education sector in Bangladesh. These challenges include deficiencies in quality instruction, outcome-based learning, inadequate leadership, and outdated physical and digital infrastructure. In addition, the educational system in Bangladesh has been a subject of concern among stakeholders due to the perceived need for more skills possessed by recent graduates to compete effectively in the global economy.

The significance of maintaining high-quality education in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is emphasized by the National Education Policy 2010 of the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the Strategic Plan for Higher Education 2006-2026 of the Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project (HEQEP), Ministry of Education (MoE), Quality Assurance Unit (QAU), and UGC. According to the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, in 2016, the Ministry of Education (MoE) of Bangladesh launched the Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project (HEQEP) with financial assistance from the World Bank. The primary objectives of HEQEP are to enhance the technical and institutional proficiency of the higher education domain, elevate the significance and caliber of pedagogy and research, and promote originality and responsibility (Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, 2016).

According to HEQEP, MOE, QAU, and UGC (2014), both public and private universities in Bangladesh are mandated to establish an Institutional Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) as per the directives of HEQEP and UGC. The primary aim of IQAC is to teach a culture of quality assurance in academic institutions. According to Islam (2014, p.12), the initial stage in implementing quality assurance and the Institutional Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) involves the utilization of Self-

assessment (SA) exercises. Then, within student affairs, departments evaluate their programs and services to determine their alignment with students' current needs and expectations (Islam, 2014). The following are the functions of IQAC according to HEQEP, MOE, QAU, and UGC (2014, pp. 13-14):

- Improve the quality of education to meet global standards
- Enhance the delivery procedures of higher education
- Prepare quality assurance documents for IQAC
- Develop an Institutional QA Strategic Plan every five years and ensure its implementation and achievement monitoring (HEQEP, MOE, QAU, and UGC, 2014, p. 14)
- Conduct workshops, seminars, and audits as needed to improve education quality.
- Facilitate the integration of procedures in redesigning and modernizing curricula to meet job market requirements (HEQEP, MOE, QAU, and UGC, 2014, p. 20)
- Liaise with QAU and other external QA agencies (HEQEP, MOE, QAU, and UGC, 2014, p.14)
- Provide necessary guidelines to enhance the quality of academic programs.

HEQEP and UGC are in charge of the Institutional Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), which has three members appointed by the vice chancellor for three years. These members include a director, two additional directors, and all experienced senior academics (HEQEP, MOE, QAU, and UGC, 2014). Nn-academic staff members are also appointed to assist the directors and additional directors (HEQEP, MOE, QAU, and UGC, 2014). In addition, the chairperson or dean of the department and two other senior faculty members who meet the required qualifications make up each department's Self-Assessment Committee (SAC) (HEQEP, MOE, QAU, and UGC, 2014). HEQUEP provides funding for IQAC (Islam, 2014). The Institutional Quality Assurance Report (IQACR) is created by IQAC and submitted to the UGC once finished (HEQEP, MOE, QAU, and UGC, 2014). In addition, a Quality Assurance specialist who visits the university upon an official invitation from IQAC to assess the institution's quality assurance is part of the three-person External Audit team (HEQEP, MOE, QAU, and UGC, 2014). The university's quality accreditation is determined by the evaluation report from the external audit team (HEQEP, MOE, QAU, and UGC, 2014).

Higher Education in Bangladesh
Higher education is integral to a country's growth and development because it helps people get the skills they need to work in different parts of the economy. But the quality of higher education in Bangladesh has been a big problem for a long time. The Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project (HEQEP) says that the quality of education depends on what students know, think, and act (HEQEP, MOE, QAU, and UGC, 2014). It also says that education should meet the country's needs and stakeholders' expectations. Unfortunately, even though the cost of higher education in Bangladesh is lower than in other developing countries (Rana, Sarkar, and Zitu, 2013), the government has not been able to take advantage of this (Rana, Sarkar, and Zitu, 2013). This paper looks at Bangladesh's public and private universities to see how good their higher education is.

Decline in Quality of Higher Education
According to policymakers, researchers, and intellectuals concerned with education, the quality of higher education in both public and private universities in Bangladesh has experienced a decline over the past two decades (Habibulah et al., 2015). A study conducted at Rajshahi University, focusing on various faculties such as arts, law, science, social science, business studies, agriculture, life sciences,

and earth sciences, revealed several issues. The curricula and textbooks were found to lack a career-oriented focus, and research-based education was not adequately offered or utilized (Islam, 2014). Furthermore, the involvement of university professors in politics has posed challenges in implementing traditional teaching methods in the classroom (Islam, 2014). Additionally, the hiring process for professors in public universities sometimes prioritizes political connections over qualifications, negatively impacting education quality (Ahmed, 2013). Despite public universities' emphasis on higher education, certain institutions must improve to produce skilled professionals (Ahmed, 2013). Rana et al. (2013) argue that despite having a budget, public universities still require more investment in research, curriculum development, teaching strategies, and methods to address these issues.

Quality of Private Universities
The University Grants Commission (UGC) has noticed that many private universities in Bangladesh do not have up-to-date curricula, qualified full-time faculty, appropriate infrastructure, such as classrooms, permanent campuses, laboratories, and libraries, as well as good governance and administration (Habibulah et al., 2015). Only a few of the 110 private universities guarantee quality in their curriculum, teaching, learning, management, infrastructure, admissions, and graduates' marketability (Alam et al., 2007). A study of students at private universities found that professors needed more research experience and more chances to participate in seminars and workshops. Ashraf et al. (2009) said there was room for improvement and growth in academic infrastructures like permanent campuses, libraries, labs, and canteens.

Teaching Methods and Graduates' Marketability
According to Ahmed (2013), both public and private higher education institutions in Bangladesh continue to employ conventional teaching techniques, which restrict the scope for classroom discourse and analytical reasoning. Chowdhury and Kabir (2014) conducted a study that revealed that the English language proficiency levels of students in both public and private universities are similar to those of seventh-grade students. The efficacy of public institutions in Bangladesh in generating competent graduates who can effectively participate in the job market is challenged, despite the allocation of government funding (Alam et al., 2006). Conversely, privately-owned educational institutions operate like commercial enterprises, offering curricula customized to meet the demands of the job market, resulting in a more significant percentage of graduates capable of securing employment (Alam et al., 2006).

Education is a crucial factor in determining the success of individuals and societies. The insufficiency of teaching facilities and infrastructure, in conjunction with limited resources, can impede research and development within academic institutions, ultimately leading to a substandard level of education. Moreover, the restricted availability of resources and services for students may adversely affect their academic achievements (Hossain, 2015). Khanam (2015) posits that corruption within the education sector, specifically in areas such as admissions, examinations, and grade manipulation, may harm the overall caliber of higher education.

In 2008, the Government of Bangladesh initiated the Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project (HEQEP) to tackle the concerns above. The project's objective was to enhance the standard of higher education in Bangladesh through a concentration on outcomes-based education, amplifying the availability of information and communication technology, and fostering research and development

in universities (HEQEP, MOE, QAU, and UGC, 2014). Establishing the Quality Assurance Cell (QAC) was a crucial component of the project, aimed at facilitating the creation of an Institutional Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) in all private and public universities across Bangladesh. Ensuring that the university's academic programs comply with the quality standards established by the QAC (HEQEP, MOE, QAU, and UGC, 2014) falls under the purview of the IQAC. Even with these endeavors, obstacles persist in guaranteeing the provision of high-quality education within the higher education framework of Bangladesh. In light of the increasing demand for higher education, it is imperative to prioritize providing quality education to cultivate competent graduates capable of making meaningful contributions to national progress.

Research Methodology
The impact of the Institutional Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) on English departments at private and public universities in Dhaka was investigated using a qualitative research methodology. The study set out to accomplish two goals: (1) investigate how faculty in the English department feel about the IQAC's effectiveness, and (2) examine how private universities have implemented the criteria for improving the quality of education in the department and the challenges they face in meeting the requirements set by IQAC.

In the metropolitan area of Dhaka, the researcher chose two public universities and four private universities using purposive sampling. The universities were chosen based on their standing and the accessibility of their English department faculty for data collection. Fifteen teachers were interviewed, including a professor, four associate professors, four assistant professors, and six other senior lecturers from the English department. Among the participants, six of them were SAC members.

Semi-structured interviews were the primary method used to collect data. The researcher conducted interviews to learn about the faculty members' opinions of the IQAC's efficacy and how they have applied the standards for raising the quality of instruction in their departments. In addition, face-to-face interviews were conducted and taped with the participants' permission.

To analyze the data, the "Quality Assurance Framework" was employed. After transcribing the audio recordings of the interviews, the researcher manually analyzed the data to find the themes and patterns. Coding the data, grouping the codes into themes, and interpreting the results in light of the research goals comprised the analysis process. The main drawback of this study was how uncooperative public universities were with the research. The researcher could have contacted more private universities to collect data. Nevertheless, despite these restrictions, the researcher could still produce solid results.

Results
By speaking with SAC members and other faculty members from the English department, the researcher was able to gather reliable data. One of the three private university professors who was interviewed agreed that outcome-based education is essential for success in the modern world and had a favorable opinion of IQAC. T1, a SAC participant, emphasized that IQAC aids in bridging the employment gap between academia and the workforce. IQAC structures teaching and learning techniques, methods, evaluations, and assessments, T2 added, allowing instructors to consider market demands when developing course objectives. T3 thought that meeting the IQAC requirements is

essential for private universities since it is the first step toward accreditation. Teachers from private universities also noted that their course descriptions had improved, now including previously missing course learning outcomes (CLOs) and program learning outcomes (PLOs).

T1, a representative from a private university member of the SAC, said they are implementing classroom activities that align with the course's learning objectives. According to T2, a second SAC representative from the same university, practical activities come before content-based ones. According to T3 from the private university 1, graduates' feedback was taken to improve their curricula and syllabi. The participant added that this process is lengthy and ongoing, and no changes can be made overnight. The revised OBE curricula include career-focused courses like business English, gender, media, and film studies. They organize workshops for faculty members on teaching methods and techniques and update their curricula and syllabi to improve the education standard based on outcome-based education principles. As IQAC has standardized the standards of outcome-based education for all departments, T1 from a private university acknowledged that it is challenging to meet the IQAC criteria in the liberal arts, particularly in English literature courses. According to T2 and T3's assertions that IQAC does not offer sufficient guidelines regarding outcome-based education, many faculty members are perplexed while preparing the OBE-based curricula. The study participants recommended that IQAC give each department the proper protocols and more clarification regarding outcome-based education. The participants frequently organize workshops and discussions for faculty and SAC members to address these issues. They also visit universities already implementing IQAC and attend IQAC meetings for further insights. Furthermore, they expressed gratitude for the adequate infrastructure support provided by the university, particularly considering their limited financial resources.

T1, a member of the SAC from a private university 2, acknowledges the importance of IQAC standard curriculum in promoting quality education but highlights its lack of appropriate guidelines for improvement. The English department, in particular, finds it challenging to implement outcome-based education, especially in literature courses. However, two teachers agree that adhering to the IQAC standard curriculum is necessary. Despite initial hesitation, T1 mentions that they are now developing outcome-based syllabuses and updating content to meet market demands while considering the course descriptions, teaching-learning activities, and instructional strategies. T2 says they have submitted a curriculum to the UGC to fulfill IQAC and UGC requirements. T3 explains that their course objectives have shifted from qualitative to quantitative measures.

Additionally, two teachers mention that their classes have become more interactive by adopting a learner-centered approach. T1 emphasizes the difficulty of applying IQAC standards to literature courses, as they involve abstract concepts that are hard to measure. In addition, T2 finds it challenging to maintain a written lesson plan for every class, while the tri-semester system makes it challenging to meet IQAC requirements. On the other hand, T3 states that they face no barriers as teachers collaborate to find solutions. T1 suggests switching to a two-semester schedule and implementing logistical support measures such as smaller classroom sizes and multimedia tools to ensure high-quality instruction. These steps would help meet IQAC standards effectively.

Using the word "outcome" has raised concerns among two teachers from private University 3 that it commercializes education and that IQAC is treating students like the results of education. IQAC needs to be more circumspect when generalizing its ideas, according to another teacher who believes

outcome-based education is essential in the competitive world. The curriculum, course outlines, and syllabuses will all be revised, according to three teachers (SAC members) who claimed they had not already done so. Considering the UGC's requirements for course outlines, T1 from private University 3 explained that they intend to redesign the curriculum to meet market demands.

Two teachers from Private University 3 believe that the word "outcome" is commercializing education. They think that IQAC supports the notion of treating students as educational products. On the other hand, a different faculty member feels that in this competitive world, outcome-based education is essential, but IQAC needs to be more cautious when generalizing this notion. Three SAC members who teach have admitted that while they haven't changed anything due to IQAC's demands, they have plans to alter the syllabuses, course outlines, and curricula. T1 from Private University 3 spoke about how challenging it is to create course outlines that satisfy the UGC's requirements. Implementing the IQAC criteria is simple for the language department but difficult for the literature department.

T2, representing Private University 3, expressed the difficulties of managing IQAC's extensive paperwork requirements. She also mentioned the confusion arising from teachers' need to understand IQAC's specific needs. T3 emphasized the challenge of comprehending the demands of the international market and highlighted that IQAC does not offer sufficient guidance in this aspect. They pointed out that conducting seminars and speaking with graduates alone cannot accurately determine market demands. To tackle these challenges, Private University 3 takes proactive measures by organizing discussions with the SAC and other faculty members. These discussions revolve around course outlines, syllabi, and teaching-learning strategies. These initiatives aim to address the gaps and ensure the university is better aligned with IQAC requirements and international market demands. A participant from Private University 3 stated that "to ensure high-quality instruction, the university should offer more financial and logistical support, including resources like multimedia tools, internet access, and smaller class sizes."

"Outcome-based education is crucial in today's classrooms," acknowledges the participants of Private University 4. T1, representing the university, states, "We are currently reviewing our curriculum to align it with outcome-based education principles and making necessary modifications to enhance the interactivity of our teaching methodology." T2 from Private University 4 intends to revamp the curriculum by introducing market-focused courses. They believe that addressing market demands is an essential aspect of education. Two professors from Private University 4 highlight the importance of teamwork in meeting IQAC requirements. They acknowledge their challenges due to limited resources and emphasize the need for more than logistic support. One of the professors remarks, "The tri-semester system in the English department hampers in-depth education. We require additional logistics, such as air conditioning and multimedia facilities." T2, also a member of the SAC, suggests conducting workshops to help teachers understand the significance of complying with IQAC's requirements, pointing out that ego may sometimes hinder their compliance.

The positive feedback from students regarding the revised course descriptions and syllabi bring satisfaction to the teachers. However, they express the need for more infrastructure support from the university, particularly in funding, to further enhance the learning experience.

Teacher 1 from public university 1 mentioned that while attempting to implement some of IQAC's demands in their department under pressure from UGC, they are not overly concerned about it. Before IQAC, course outlines were frequently used, according to T1, a SAC member from Public University 1. However, they are now attempting to make them available to students. They have also been working since 2015 to change their curricula, which were previously content-based and did not adhere to Bloom's taxonomy, to outcomes-based curricula. T1 of Public University 1 acknowledged that senior and experienced teachers lack motivation and are unwilling to alter their curricula in response to IQAC demands. Teachers are not attending IQAC workshops or paying attention to giving students course outlines. A notable barrier exists in public universities where students do not have the freedom to choose their higher education programs as the government assigns them. So, students place less value on high-quality education. Another issue is that their university's infrastructure is inadequate for implementing IQAC's requirements, and they don't get enough funding from HEQUEP to improve it. As a result, they continue to teach using lectures. T1 added that public university professors are free to disregard the demands of the IQAC because they know that the government will protect their employment. Public universities remain highly attractive to students, leading to increased enrollment regardless of their compliance with IQAC directives. T1 stated, "Due to the lack of attention from teachers towards IQAC and outcome-based education, students don't prioritize it as much." According to T1, students at public universities are primarily focused on securing government jobs and often consider admission to a public university as an adequate achievement.

The instructor from Public University 2 expressed skepticism toward IQAC and said she thought it was impossible to raise educational standards as IQAC demands. However, public University 2's T1 reported that they intend to create outcome-based courses despite not making any changes. T1 acknowledged that it takes time to implement IQAC's requirements and requires more logistical and infrastructure support from the university, particularly in budget and multimedia. However, T1 added that since their department recently introduced IQAC, they haven't yet had to deal with any of the difficulties that come with it.

Discussion
Several important points emerged from the gathered data and discussions with SAC and faculty members. One of the private university professors we talked to agreed that outcome-based education was essential and had a reasonable opinion of IQAC. T1, a member of the SAC, spoke about how IQAC helps bridge the gap between the classroom and the workplace by giving structure to teaching and learning methods, techniques, evaluations, and assessments. T2 also said IQAC lets teachers make course goals based on the market's needs.

Public University 2 disagreed with IQAC yet acknowledged the need to create outcome-based courses. T1 highlighted the importance of logistical and infrastructure support, particularly in budget and multimedia, to effectively implement IQAC requirements. The people from Private University 4 agreed that outcome-based education is essential today. T1 talked about their ongoing efforts to align the curriculum with the principles of outcome-based education and make teaching more interactive. T2 wanted to change the curriculum by adding classes more focused on the market. The participants stressed the importance of working as a team to meet IQAC requirements and how much more help is needed than logistics. They also discussed the importance of workshops and discussions in filling gaps and ensuring that requirements from IQAC and the international market are met.

In Public University 1, people have reacted differently to how IQAC's requests are being met. T1 knew the pressure to meet IQAC requirements, but top teachers didn't want to change their lessons. Also, experienced teachers who aren't motivated and don't have the right facilities make it hard to meet IQAC standards. Also, students in public universities, who can't choose their classes, don't put much value on getting a good education, which makes the situation even worse. Gordon and Partington contend that educational institutions can deliver high-quality instruction requiring consistent academic performance (Ashraf et al., 2009). Most higher education institutions have developed or plan to establish an outcome-based curriculum and syllabi that meets the primary UGC and HEQEP criteria for high-quality instruction (Haque and Hasan, 2023). According to Haque and Hasan (2023), IQAC and UGC help promote and implement outcome-based education curricula.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that private universities are more inclined towards IQAC than public universities, plausibly owing to the latter's concerns regarding job security and political affiliations. The reluctance towards quality assurance indicates inadequate administrative or governance frameworks in public universities, which necessitate disseminating information regarding the significance of a quality assurance mechanism to their faculty. The study demonstrates significant disparities in IQAC and quality assurance protocols among public and private universities.

Private and public universities have expressed concerns about insufficient support, although two private universities report adequate concrete and infrastructure support. According to UGC and other researchers (Ashraf et al., 2009; Haque and Hasan, 2023), Bangladeshi HEIs require sufficient infrastructure, including well-stocked libraries, multimedia classrooms, and funding for research. These supports are essential to raise educational standards and fulfill the quality assurance mechanism requirements. Therefore, IQAC should closely monitor this situation and give the departments the resources to improve education quality.

Overall, the results show how important it is to bridge the gap between the classroom and the workplace, including market needs in course goals, have enough infrastructure support, and deal with the problems when implementing outcome-based education principles. From the participants' points of view, it's clear that work is still being done and that clear rules, workshops, and teamwork are needed to improve the level of education and make it more in line with IQAC standards.

Conclusion

According to the study's findings, higher education institutions in Bangladesh have benefited from the IQAC framework, especially in raising the standard of instruction. In addition, the implementation of IQAC has also prompted the creation of more detailed course outlines and the integration of program learning outcomes (PLOs) and market demands into course objectives.

The study discovered that IQAC has structured teaching and learning techniques, methods, evaluations, and assessments to help close the gap between academia and the job market. However, the study identified several obstacles to implementing IQAC, particularly in the literature department, where it is challenging to implement outcome-based education due to the abstract nature of the subject. Some educators also voiced concern over the commercialization of education and how the word "outcome" views students as products of education.

The study discovered that private university faculty members are actively attempting to overcome these difficulties they face. For instance, they attend IQAC meetings, look into universities that have already implemented IQAC, and organize workshops and discussions for faculty and SAC members to address these challenges. Additionally, the study discovered that the university offers them sufficient infrastructural support, particularly on a tight budget.

The study's contribution sheds light on IQAC implementation in Bangladesh's higher education institutions, emphasizing both benefits and difficulties of doing so. The study's conclusions can also direct future research on the subject and inform policy choices regarding the implementation of IQAC. The study's overall message emphasizes the significance of IQAC's contribution to higher education institutions' efforts to provide high-quality instruction.

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Appendix-1

We are researching the Prospects and Challenges of IQAC in the English Department: A Critical Insight. Since you have taught for many years, your responses will help us get reliable findings. Please do not be obliged to answer a question if you do not wish to, though we are assured that any information you provide will be treated with strict confidentiality.

Name: Age:
Institution: Designation:
Degree:
Training:
Teaching Experience:
Mobile:
Phone office:
Email:

1. What changes are you making/ have you made in light of IQAC?
2. What are the challenges/ obstacles/ problems you are encountering in implementing the requirements of IQAC?
3. How did you or your department overcome such challenges?
4. What is your opinion regarding IQAC in terms of outcome-based education?
5. What kind(s) of changes have you made regarding curriculum, course outlines, teaching approach/methodology, or anything else?
6. How are the students responding to these changes?
7. How are the institutional infrastructures supporting you to provide outcome-based education as a requirement of IQAC?

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