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Administrative Leadership and Quality Assurance Practices in Private Higher Education Institutions in the Philippines: A Case of Northeastern College

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Abstract

Quality assurance and effective administrative leadership are essential in sustaining institutional effectiveness and academic excellence in higher education institutions. This study explored the administrative leadership experiences and quality assurance practices in Northeastern College, Santiago City. Using a qualitative phenomenological research design, data were gathered from purposively selected administrators, deans, program heads, and quality assurance personnel through semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis revealed that collaborative leadership, participatory governance, strategic planning, and continuous quality improvement significantly strengthened institutional management and accreditation practices. Participants emphasized that leadership support, faculty engagement, and organizational adaptability contributed to effective quality assurance implementation. However, challenges related to workload pressures, documentation requirements, communication barriers, and resource limitations affected governance processes. The findings highlight the importance of transformational leadership and collaborative quality assurance mechanisms in promoting institutional sustainability and educational excellence in private higher education institutions.

Keywords: administrative leadership, quality assurance, higher education, governance, transformational leadership, private colleges



1. Introduction

Higher education institutions continuously experience increasing demands for institutional accountability, educational quality, and organizational sustainability. In the Philippines, private higher education institutions are expected to maintain quality assurance systems aligned with accreditation standards, educational reforms, and institutional development goals. Effective administrative leadership plays a crucial role in strengthening governance practices, academic management, faculty engagement, and institutional effectiveness.

Administrative leadership in higher education involves strategic planning, organizational coordination, policy implementation, and collaborative governance. Leaders are expected to ensure institutional compliance while promoting academic excellence and organizational productivity. Quality assurance practices, meanwhile, involve continuous monitoring, evaluation, and improvement of institutional processes, curriculum implementation, faculty performance, and educational services.

Transformational leadership theory emphasizes leaders' ability to inspire organizational members through collaboration, shared vision, and professional empowerment (Bass, 1985). Similarly, participatory governance strengthens institutional accountability, transparency, and organizational commitment.

Previous studies revealed that effective leadership significantly influences institutional quality assurance, organizational adaptability, and educational effectiveness in higher education institutions (Bush, 2020; Hallinger, 2021). However, limited qualitative studies have explored the lived experiences of academic administrators regarding leadership and quality assurance practices within private colleges in the Philippine context.

This study explored the administrative leadership experiences and quality assurance practices in Northeastern College, Santiago City.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on Transformational Leadership Theory by Burns (1978) and Bass (1985), which emphasizes collaborative leadership, motivation, organizational commitment, and shared institutional vision. The study also utilized principles of Quality Assurance Management in higher education focusing on institutional accountability, continuous improvement, and organizational effectiveness.

2. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore and understand the lived experiences of college administrators regarding administrative leadership and quality assurance practices in Northeastern College, Santiago City. Phenomenology was considered appropriate because the study aimed to examine the meanings, perceptions, and experiences of administrators in managing governance responsibilities, accreditation processes, institutional planning, and quality assurance implementation within a private higher education institution. The design enabled the researchers to capture in-depth insights regarding leadership practices,

organizational coordination, institutional challenges, and governance mechanisms from the perspectives of the participants themselves.

The participants of the study consisted of college administrators, deans, quality assurance coordinators, and academic heads from Northeastern College, Santiago City. Purposive sampling was employed to select participants who possessed direct involvement and substantial experience in institutional governance, leadership, accreditation preparation, and quality assurance management. The selection of participants was based on their administrative responsibilities, leadership roles, and active participation in institutional planning and quality assurance activities. This sampling approach ensured that the gathered data were rich, relevant, and grounded in actual administrative experiences within the institution.

Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews designed to explore participants' experiences and perceptions regarding governance practices, leadership approaches, accreditation preparation, institutional planning, organizational coordination, and quality assurance implementation. Semi-structured interviews allowed participants to provide detailed explanations and reflections while enabling the researchers to probe emerging issues and clarify significant responses. Interview sessions were conducted in a flexible and conversational manner to encourage openness, depth of discussion, and authentic sharing of experiences. With participants' permission, interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy and completeness of data.

The collected data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework. The analysis process involved familiarization with the data through repeated reading of interview transcripts, initial coding of meaningful statements, categorization of recurring patterns, and generation of themes representing the lived experiences of participants. Themes were carefully reviewed, refined, and interpreted to ensure alignment with the objectives of the study. Thematic analysis enabled the researchers to identify significant concepts, shared experiences, and organizational realities regarding leadership and quality assurance practices within the institution.

To ensure trustworthiness and rigor, the study observed credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability throughout the research process. Credibility was established through prolonged engagement with participants and member checking to validate the accuracy of responses and thematic interpretations. Dependability was maintained through systematic documentation of research procedures and analytical processes, while confirmability was ensured through careful transcription, coding validation, and audit trails. Transferability was strengthened through thick descriptions of participants' experiences and institutional contexts.

Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the conduct of the study. Participants were informed regarding the objectives, procedures, and significance of the research prior to data collection. Informed consent was secured before conducting interviews, and participation was entirely voluntary. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by withholding participants' identities and ensuring that all gathered information was used solely for academic and research purposes. Participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without any consequence. These ethical safeguards ensured respect, protection, and integrity throughout the research process.

4. Results and Findings

Theme 1: Collaborative Leadership and Participatory Governance

Participants consistently emphasized that collaborative leadership and participatory governance significantly strengthened institutional management, organizational coordination, and quality assurance implementation within Northeastern College, Santiago City. Administrators described collaborative leadership as an inclusive governance approach that encouraged consultation, teamwork, transparency, and shared accountability among administrators, faculty members, and academic personnel. Participants explained that participatory governance fostered stronger organizational relationships and enhanced institutional trust within the academic community.

One participant shared:

“Quality assurance becomes more effective when faculty members and administrators collaborate.”

Another participant explained:

“Participatory leadership strengthens institutional trust and organizational commitment.”

Participants further noted that regular consultations, committee meetings, strategic planning sessions, and collaborative accreditation preparations improved policy implementation and institutional coordination. Faculty members reportedly became more supportive and engaged in institutional initiatives when they were actively involved in governance processes and organizational decision-making activities. Participants emphasized that collaborative leadership strengthened communication systems, minimized organizational conflicts, and cultivated collective accountability among institutional stakeholders.

Several participants also highlighted that participatory governance improved institutional responsiveness and strengthened policy implementation processes. Administrators explained that shared governance practices enabled institutional leaders to identify organizational concerns more effectively and develop collaborative solutions to institutional challenges. Such leadership practices reportedly reinforced organizational unity and institutional commitment among academic personnel.

Participants additionally observed that collaborative leadership cultivated professional respect, mutual understanding, and stronger institutional cooperation. Faculty members reportedly demonstrated greater organizational involvement and institutional loyalty when leadership practices emphasized inclusivity and participatory engagement. Collaborative governance was likewise perceived as promoting institutional transparency and strengthening organizational confidence among academic stakeholders.

The findings suggest that collaborative leadership significantly enhances governance effectiveness, organizational cohesion, institutional trust, and quality assurance implementation in higher education institutions. Participatory governance strengthens collective accountability and reinforces organizational collaboration within academic institutions. These findings support Bush (2020), who emphasized that participatory leadership strengthens institutional accountability, governance effectiveness, and organizational collaboration. Similarly, Hallinger (2021) found that collaborative leadership practices improve institutional adaptability, faculty engagement, and organizational participation in higher education institutions.

Related studies further reinforce these findings. Hargreaves and O’Connor (2021) explained that collaborative professionalism strengthens organizational relationships, institutional cooperation, and educational effectiveness within academic institutions. Likewise, Brillantes and Fernandez

(2021) found that participatory governance practices in Philippine higher education institutions improve transparency, communication systems, and institutional decision-making processes. In another study, Ainscow (2020) emphasized that inclusive governance and collaborative educational leadership foster stronger institutional engagement and organizational sustainability.

Moreover, Rivera and Santos (2022) observed that institutions practicing collaborative leadership exhibit stronger organizational resilience and governance efficiency because stakeholders develop collective ownership of institutional goals and responsibilities. These studies collectively affirm that collaborative governance remains a critical component of effective institutional management and quality assurance implementation in higher education institutions.

Theme 2: Strategic Quality Assurance Management

Participants highlighted that quality assurance practices involved strategic planning, accreditation preparation, curriculum monitoring, faculty evaluation, policy implementation, and continuous institutional improvement. Administrators described quality assurance as a systematic and collaborative process requiring organizational commitment, institutional coordination, and leadership adaptability to ensure educational quality and institutional sustainability.

One participant remarked:

“Institutional planning is always aligned with accreditation standards and educational goals.”

Another participant stated:

“Quality assurance requires continuous monitoring and faculty involvement.”

Participants explained that strategic quality assurance mechanisms strengthened institutional readiness, organizational direction, and educational sustainability. Accreditation preparations, curriculum reviews, institutional evaluations, and faculty performance monitoring reportedly enabled administrators to identify institutional strengths and areas requiring improvement. Strategic planning activities also strengthened policy consistency and organizational alignment with institutional goals and accreditation standards.

Several participants emphasized that quality assurance practices encouraged institutional discipline, accountability, and organizational responsiveness. Through collaborative accreditation activities and continuous institutional assessment, administrators and faculty members reportedly became more aware of institutional priorities and educational standards. Participants explained that strategic quality assurance mechanisms enhanced institutional preparedness and strengthened organizational adaptability amid changing educational demands.

Participants further highlighted that quality assurance implementation required collective participation and strong institutional coordination. Faculty involvement in curriculum development, documentation preparation, and accreditation activities reportedly strengthened institutional commitment and organizational cooperation. Administrators explained that continuous institutional monitoring and evaluation promoted organizational improvement and reinforced educational effectiveness.

The findings indicate that strategic leadership significantly contributes to effective quality assurance implementation, organizational sustainability, and educational effectiveness in higher education institutions. Strategic governance strengthens institutional alignment, policy implementation, and

organizational adaptability. These findings support Hallinger (2021), who emphasized that strategic governance and leadership strengthen institutional resilience, educational quality, and organizational effectiveness. Similarly, Fullan (2020) explained that collaborative strategic leadership enhances institutional development, organizational responsiveness, and educational sustainability.

Related studies further support these findings. Leithwood and Jantzi (2020) found that strategic educational leadership improves institutional coordination, organizational performance, and policy implementation within academic institutions. Likewise, OECD (2021) emphasized that strategic governance and quality assurance systems are essential in maintaining institutional competitiveness and organizational sustainability in higher education institutions.

Furthermore, Flores and Gago (2022) observed that institutions with strong strategic leadership mechanisms demonstrate greater organizational responsiveness, faculty engagement, and accreditation preparedness. In the Philippine context, Bernardo and Mendoza (2022) found that strategic quality assurance practices significantly contribute to institutional competitiveness, accreditation success, and educational continuity among private higher education institutions.

Additionally, Marginson (2021) emphasized that quality assurance management strengthens institutional accountability and educational credibility within higher education systems. These findings collectively suggest that strategic quality assurance management remains essential in sustaining institutional effectiveness and educational excellence.

Theme 3: Faculty Engagement and Professional Support

Participants emphasized that faculty participation, professional support, and leadership encouragement were essential in sustaining quality assurance practices, institutional productivity, and organizational effectiveness. Administrators described faculty engagement as a critical component of successful governance and accreditation implementation within Northeastern College.

One participant shared:

“Faculty members become more engaged when administrators provide professional support and recognition.”

Another participant explained:

“Leadership encouragement motivates faculty to participate actively in accreditation activities.”

Participants highlighted that seminars, mentoring activities, faculty development programs, capability-building initiatives, and collaborative institutional engagements strengthened organizational commitment and professional productivity. Faculty members reportedly became more motivated and institutionally involved when administrators demonstrated support, appreciation, and encouragement for professional growth and academic participation.

Several participants further emphasized that leadership support cultivated stronger faculty confidence, instructional commitment, and organizational loyalty. Administrators explained that recognizing faculty contributions and providing professional development opportunities encouraged greater participation in institutional programs and accreditation activities. Such leadership practices reportedly strengthened faculty morale and reinforced institutional accountability.

Participants also noted that collaborative activities and mentoring programs strengthened professional relationships among administrators and faculty members. Open communication, institutional support, and leadership accessibility reportedly enhanced faculty satisfaction and organizational cooperation. Faculty members became more willing to participate in institutional initiatives when leadership practices emphasized recognition, inclusivity, and professional empowerment.

The findings suggest that transformational leadership positively influences faculty engagement, organizational commitment, and institutional performance. Leadership support and professional development mechanisms strengthen faculty morale, instructional productivity, and institutional participation. These findings align with Northouse (2021), who emphasized that supportive leadership enhances organizational commitment, employee satisfaction, and professional motivation. Similarly, Bass (1985) explained that transformational leadership motivates organizational members through encouragement, recognition, and individualized support.

Related studies further reinforce these findings. Day and Sammons (2020) found that supportive educational leadership significantly improves teacher morale, professional confidence, and institutional engagement. Likewise, Nguyen et al. (2021) emphasized that faculty empowerment and leadership encouragement contribute substantially to academic productivity and organizational innovation in higher education institutions.

Moreover, Flores and Gago (2022) observed that professional support systems and collaborative leadership positively influence faculty engagement and organizational responsiveness in Southeast Asian higher education institutions. In another study, Hargreaves and O'Connor (2021) emphasized that collaborative professional cultures strengthen institutional productivity and faculty participation within academic organizations.

These studies collectively affirm that faculty engagement and leadership support are essential in sustaining institutional quality assurance practices and educational effectiveness.

Theme 4: Administrative Challenges and Organizational Pressures

Despite positive governance experiences, participants identified several organizational and administrative challenges affecting leadership effectiveness, quality assurance implementation, and institutional coordination within Northeastern College. Administrators acknowledged that institutional operations, accreditation demands, and governance responsibilities created organizational pressures and operational complexities.

One participant stated:

“Documentation requirements and workload pressures create difficulties in quality assurance preparation.”

Another participant shared:

“Limited resources and communication delays sometimes affect institutional coordination.”

Participants identified challenges related to accreditation demands, administrative workload pressures, communication barriers, policy implementation concerns, financial limitations, and resource constraints. Administrators explained that balancing governance functions, institutional

management, faculty supervision, and accreditation responsibilities often created operational difficulties and organizational stress.

Several participants further emphasized that documentation preparation, compliance requirements, and institutional reporting significantly increased administrative workload among academic leaders and faculty members. Accreditation processes reportedly required extensive institutional coordination, continuous monitoring, and collaborative institutional effort. Participants noted that communication delays and limited institutional resources occasionally affected policy dissemination and organizational efficiency.

Participants additionally explained that organizational complexities increased during periods of institutional transition, policy implementation, and accreditation preparation. Managing faculty concerns, institutional expectations, and operational responsibilities simultaneously reportedly required adaptive leadership, organizational flexibility, and collaborative governance mechanisms.

Despite these challenges, participants acknowledged that adaptive leadership and collaborative governance strengthened institutional resilience and organizational problem-solving. Administrators reportedly addressed institutional concerns through consultation, teamwork, flexibility, and shared decision-making approaches.

The findings indicate that higher education institutions require adaptive leadership, strategic governance, and collaborative management practices to address organizational complexities and operational pressures effectively. These findings support OECD (2021), which emphasized the importance of collaborative governance, institutional adaptability, and strategic leadership in sustaining organizational effectiveness within higher education institutions.

Related studies further support these findings. Harris (2020) explained that educational institutions continuously encounter operational challenges requiring adaptive leadership and organizational flexibility to sustain institutional continuity. Likewise, Garcia and de Guzman (2021) found that administrative workload pressures and institutional resource limitations significantly affect governance efficiency and organizational productivity within Philippine higher education institutions.

Furthermore, UNESCO (2021) emphasized that higher education institutions worldwide experience governance challenges related to institutional accountability, operational sustainability, and educational reforms. Marginson (2021) likewise noted that increasing accreditation demands, institutional competitiveness, and accountability pressures intensify governance complexities within higher education systems.

Additionally, Boin and van Eeten (2021) emphasized that resilient institutions cultivate adaptive leadership structures, collaborative problem-solving mechanisms, and organizational flexibility to address operational disruptions and institutional challenges effectively. These studies collectively suggest that effective administrative leadership and collaborative governance remain essential in strengthening institutional resilience and sustaining quality assurance practices in higher education institutions

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that administrative leadership significantly influences governance effectiveness, quality assurance implementation, faculty engagement, and institutional sustainability

within Northeastern College. Collaborative leadership practices strengthened institutional trust, participatory governance, and organizational coordination among academic personnel.

The study supports Transformational Leadership Theory, which emphasizes leaders' ability to inspire, motivate, and empower organizational members through collaboration and shared institutional vision. Strategic leadership practices promoted institutional alignment, policy implementation, and organizational adaptability amid accreditation demands and operational challenges.

The findings further highlight the importance of faculty engagement and professional support in strengthening quality assurance mechanisms and institutional productivity. Leadership encouragement, mentoring, and collaborative governance practices fostered stronger organizational commitment and educational effectiveness.

Despite organizational challenges related to workload pressures, documentation requirements, and resource limitations, adaptive leadership and collaborative governance practices contributed significantly to organizational resilience and institutional continuity.

5. Conclusions

Administrative leadership and quality assurance practices significantly contribute to institutional effectiveness, organizational sustainability, and educational quality in Northeastern College, Santiago City. Collaborative governance, strategic leadership, faculty engagement, and continuous quality improvement strengthen institutional accountability and organizational productivity.

Despite challenges related to accreditation demands, workload pressures, communication barriers, and resource limitations, transformational leadership practices remain essential in promoting institutional adaptability and quality assurance effectiveness in private higher education institutions.

Implications of the Study

The findings provide important implications for higher education leadership and institutional governance. Educational institutions may strengthen collaborative governance mechanisms, faculty engagement programs, and strategic quality assurance practices to improve institutional sustainability and educational effectiveness.

Leadership development programs focusing on transformational leadership, communication management, organizational adaptability, and quality assurance systems may also strengthen institutional governance practices in higher education institutions.

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