

An Empirical Study About the Impact of Quality Assurance on Faculty Behaviors: A Case Study in Omani and Lebanese Universities

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Abstract: - Many national quality assurance agencies initially expected that the higher educational institutions (HEIs) would inevitably develop internal quality systems and a quality culture as a result of the external quality impact at the beginning of the so-called "An era of quality." This study suggests that internal and external quality assurance, as well as quality improvement, need to be better balanced. Having conducted external academic quality assurance for over 29 years, what we have explored is that each nation must develop its own quality assurance system, taking into account the culture of society and the nature of students, that can be used to develop more effective settings for assuring academic standards of excellence. In spite of this, articles indicate that academia is susceptible to complacency and disinterest. This paper reflects the behavior and performance of faculty involved in external and internal quality assurance requirements at their institutions. Overall, this review concludes that quality assurance systems have not yet improved higher education, even after 29 years. Although those findings are a result of Omani and Lebanese public and private higher educational institutions, they possibly also have a few relevance for different nations dealing with comparable challenges.

Key-Words: - Quality assurance; teaching effectiveness; professional development; faculty stress; evaluation of students; creating database; research publications

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1 Introduction

Accreditation criteria have become increasingly important for higher education institutions. Accreditation involves examining educational institutions and programmes to ensure they meet criteria and regulations established by accrediting authorities [1]. Accordingly, higher education institutions use Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to demonstrate compliance with standards and improve education quality [2]. However, media reports show grade 'inflation' in the higher education sector, raising the question of how a well-functioning QA system can be reconciled with this. QA maintained standards despite chronic underfunding of the sector, including decreasing funds and worsening staff-student ratios. This coincided with a decline in staff wellbeing, increased academic workloads and service support,

and a loss of research activity due to increased teaching and administration [3].

As part of reforming higher education, many decision-makers strive to increase participation rates. However, only a few are aware of how this process works. As a basis for differentiation, external quality assurance can be a valuable tool, but it can also be subject to doubt and suspicion. The study of [4] identified key components of quality assurance systems in higher education—namely internal quality assurance, external evaluations, accreditation processes, strategic planning, and continuous improvement—as crucial for enhancing institutional efficiency, student success, and global competitiveness in new-generation universities in Turkey. It also revealed that these universities face specific challenges, including aligning

interdisciplinary programs with conventional quality standards, integrating advanced technologies, and developing effective industry collaborations. In fact, external quality assurance involves a variety of stakeholder interests, and over the last thirty years, external quality assurance has been a growing business that has been doing well. A policymaker's and funding agency's responsibility in education is to invest wisely; therefore, many governments create, sponsor, and support quality assurance agencies [5]. From the beginning, a lot of national quality agencies wanted to strike a balance between external quality assurance responsibility and improvement. The study of [6] analyzed U.S. accreditation documents to show how internal evaluation and assessment processes play a key role in ensuring and improving quality in higher education. It found that accreditors consistently emphasize periodic review and continuous improvement, supported by strategic resource allocation and systematic planning. These practices help maintain educational standards and boost institutional effectiveness. Consequently, an external quality assessment that adheres to the well-known methodology and includes a self-assessment, peer review, report, and follow-up provides the institution under review with a great deal of useful information; however, the impact of that information will largely depend on how well developed the institution's internal quality system or quality culture is [7]. In other words, external quality review began with the anticipation from the nation-wide level where higher education institutions develop for themselves internal procedures achieving to quality improvement. It is essential to acknowledge that some of the quality techniques utilized were more supportive and developed than others. Therefore, between internal and external quality assurance and improvement, there is an unwritten "agreement." The less need for external monitoring there will be as a result of increased responsiveness to external demands for accountability, transparency, learning outcomes, and pertinent information for all major stakeholders.

The behavior of faculty toward internal and external quality assurance is highlighted in this research, along with how it affects their performance. The main standards for quality assurance in a university are the teaching and learning process; the case study is conducted by faculty who have worked at Omani and Lebanese universities in Lebanon. Assessing factors that affect quality assurance at the faculty level, as well as the type of self-evaluation and how results are used, were the main topics of discussion. That is, the author examines the impact of quality assurance on faculty behavior in teaching

effectiveness, professional development, stress, evaluation of students, documentation, and research publications.

2 Literature Review

In order to prove accountability, it is credible to use external and internal quality assurance, which provides externality and internality. The institution could incur financial costs, but the better run the institution is, the more likely it is that the benefits will outweigh the costs [5]. When an academic institution is invited to participate in an exercise of self-evaluation, where faculty are the primary factor, a detailed report is frequently requested as the first step in external quality assurance processes. According to study of [8], HEIs must adopt high-quality services to separate themselves from competition and secure long-term existence. In fact, Higher education has implemented several quality tools, methodologies, and models to improve services and procedures. Examples of these approaches include Total Quality Management (TQM), Quality Function Deployment (QFD), and, more recently, Lean Six Sigma [9]. These strategies, originally created for the private sector, have been successfully implemented in public and non-profit organizations to improve efficiency, cut costs, and enhance service quality [10].

The two functions that quality assurance organizations are intended to play are helping the institution improve its operations and reporting to the government or society on how those operations are currently faring [11]; However, the study of [12] stated that quality assurance procedures provide little thought to student learning, educational philosophy, or instructional practices. In addition, there is a broad consensus that the quality authoritative in higher education was driven by business and governmental pressure to accommodate outside political goals [13] [14], [15], [16]. In regard to this, the study of [16] noted the paradox that academic standards had fallen while external quality assurance had grown "more intrusive and prescriptive." He provided three instances when it looked like colleges had done something to lower their own standards. Alderman ascribed them to a number of elements, such as the league table culture that is already pervading the industry, the "consumerization" of pupils, and inadequate levels of student preparedness (especially international students). This was also highlighted by [17] who focused in his presentation that certain institutional managers cared more about their institution's reputation outside of the institution than its track record of enforcing standards scrupulously. On the other hand, internationally, there is consensus

that audit methods have promoted accountability, openness and communication while also raising awareness of quality and systems [13] [18] [19]. Supporting this view, the study of [20] stated that the unstoppable forces of globalization have had a profound and ongoing impact on the character of teaching and student learning in the university sector, and this should now be obvious to all academic staff and faculty. We believed that these forces could not be avoided because they included increased access to higher education, the rapid expansion of academic knowledge, the movement of students and academic staff across national and international borders, and the impact of information technology innovations on teaching and student learning. This is obvious as the procedures of academic quality assurance that were historically used within universities to ensure academic standards, such as disciplinary norms, external examination, and current academic governance institutions, have become less efficient or outdated as a result of these new influences.

There is a disconnect between how academic staff, students, and quality assurance specialists perceive quality assurance, which is very multifaceted and contextual [21]. A common foundation for a quality assurance model is required; it may be said after analyzing the idea of quality assurance itself [22]. Excellence, value, consistency, and matching requirements and expectations are a few important characteristics of quality in higher education. However, no single quality assurance framework can handle all aspects of quality, decisions are made regarding what types of quality are examined [23].

The quality assurance processes had a real positive impact on the University's upgrading efforts. Quality assurance, she continued, is viewed as an effective method for assisting in the development of the teaching staff's professional career since it offers a variety of channels and possibilities that promote continual learning and growth [24]. The author emphasized that QA significantly contributes to improving the university's research productivity process through the implementation of an incentive financial system and to the university's ranking. Teaching Quality Assurance (TQA) and Continuous Academic Development (CAD) are two crucial programs. The former acts as a tool for evaluating teaching activity, while the latter supports the development of faculty's subject-matter knowledge and skill. According to [25], TQA's goal is to foster societal support for the teaching, learning, and research activities carried out by the higher education system in the Kurdistan Region. Making the educational process clear and its assessment rather

accessible to the appropriate persons is essential to achieving this. Implementing both internal and external quality assurance techniques allows for the accomplishment of academic criteria [26]. Internal quality assurance refers to the procedures and guidelines that higher education institutions employ to track and enhance the caliber of their programs. Comparatively, external quality assurance relates to guidelines established by outside parties to guarantee the caliber of higher education institutions and curricula [27]. However, there are numerous methods for creating quality assurance policies and ways to put them into practice [28]. In this regard, many governments have determined that more explicit guarantees concerning the quality are required since traditional academic regulations are insufficient to address today's concerns, notwithstanding disparities in the size and stage of development of their higher education sectors [29]. The internal quality assurance has been raised to an international standard, leading to many noteworthy accomplishments, but UK Petra, which has "A" accreditation, still has areas for improvement as one of the top universities in the region and the world [30]. The paths taken by quality assurance organizations in Europe continue to be very varied. There is another tendency in which more traditional and narrow QA organizations have been amalgamated with other public agencies that have adjacent or similar jobs, despite the fact that certain agencies have either obtained or launched new tasks or fields [31]. They allude to a potential escalating conflict between domestic and European quality assurance organizations' obligations and roles. On the other hand, improving teaching and research in higher education institutions is one of the main goals of QA [32]. In addition, teaching and research are the main businesses of all HEIs, including universities, and only through QA will the caliber of research and instructional output rise [33].

Concerns about the caliber of teaching and learning have persisted over time, not the least of which is the connection between pedagogy evaluation and quality assurance. According to [34], peer evaluation of teaching was viewed as a tool to improve quality rather than as a means of quality assurance when it was first used in an English institution before 1992. However, institutions confront a significant barrier in transforming organizational culture when peer assessment of teaching is seen as an external imposition [35]. In order to assess the effectiveness of teaching and learning and to provide a way for ongoing improvement, the study of [36] contrasted student feedback surveys, peer review, and the potential use of mystery students. Their research, which was

conducted in the UK, revealed that staff members participate in the school's peer review program (sometimes reluctantly), have little faith in student feedback surveys, whether they are institutional or module-based, and have differing opinions about the use of mystery students. For instance, the transition from outdated, ineffective techniques of teaching and learning to more contemporary, effective ones has significantly and menacingly enhanced the operation of higher education in the Region at all Kurdistan Higher Education Institutions [24].

The study of [37] spoke of the academic staff's professionalism in the classroom. He asserted that care and quality assurance are related to the efficiency of institutional procedures. Many higher education systems are staffed by an aging teaching force, according to the study of [38], and the implications for quality in the short- and long-term have not been properly understood. She made the claim that a study conducted at a Canadian university has ramifications for how higher education institutions run, not the least of which is the creation of a supportive climate that is conducive to the external pressures placed on midlife employees. It's important to encourage academics to discover new fields, ways of thinking, and ways to widen their horizons. If such opportunities are disregarded, the university runs the danger of major issues with the calibre of its main group of academic faculty members and misses the chance to fully utilize their collective experience. Improving the quality of instruction, according to the study of [39], necessitates the development of professional development-friendly workplaces and a new way of viewing professional formation. These studies demonstrate that creating a suitable, nurturing, and supportive atmosphere is more important for staff growth than simply offering training. Regarding the faculty, there are policies and procedures that support the philosophy, such as training sessions and workshops on teaching methods and enrichment programs, inviting professors and lecturers to share their experiences with teaching methodologies and incorporating faith into the learning process, and an annual survey of teaching satisfaction that is used as a tool for feedback to improve faculty members' teaching [30]. As a result, it is crucial to have internal quality assurance to ensure that everyone on the faculty is striving to meet the academic standards that the university has established in light of its distinct characteristics.

An allied concern is the stress that faculty in higher education seem gradually to be experiencing. The understudied topic of stressors and strains in UK academics was investigated by [40]. Their study

focused on academics, and the findings revealed that while job demands and stress have greatly grown recently, job satisfaction and levels of support have decreased. According to an earlier study, employees in the higher education sector report relatively high levels of workplace stress, as observed by [41]. The study supported the instrument's validity and demonstrated that, generally speaking, higher education personnel are unsatisfied with their jobs and careers, are typically dissatisfied with working conditions and control at work, and report feeling pressured at work. The faculty must adopt a learner-centric strategy if they want to achieve quality assurance criteria. Faculty in universities have a duty to deliver engaging, demanding, and interactive learning experiences that nurture learners' knowledge and skills from the start of the QA measurements, including the development of autonomy, responsibility, competence, ongoing self-development, and lifelong learning [42].

Several articles focused on student learning assessments, which were argued to be a crucial component of the overall quality of the student experience. There was agreement for a change away from traditional method-led examination-oriented systems to motivating and transparent assessment that specifically examined stated learning outcomes. The development of staff members should receive more attention and aid in order to facilitate and promote effective assessment methods. Through developing and practicing their ability to make qualitative judgments, trainee teachers can better comprehend the demands of formal evaluations with the aid of self- and peer-assessment exercises. They advised staff members who were thinking about implementing self- and peer assessment to do the following: clearly explain the program of study's goals and objectives; provide a justification for the inclusion of such activities; set short, attainable targets; and be open to trying new things. The study of [43] noted that common practice in the US and the UK falls short of these principles and highlighted characteristics of formative and summative assessment setups that encourage high-quality learning. In cases where a program has multiple objectives, they advised using a variety of assessment techniques; ensuring that students receive insightful feedback on their work; making learning programs, objectives, criteria, and outcomes public; and using assessment data to inform program evaluation and resource allocation decisions. These principles are the main objectives in the quality assurance standards. The study of [44] made a similar case for the necessity of introducing alternative assessment methods in Norway, but the ongoing attempt to add

alternatives has failed, given the presumption of examination. Thus, they said, rather than on the methods themselves, the emphasis should be on the criteria for choosing appropriate assessment methods. The study of [45] noted that the QA concentrates on providing graded assessments of quality (away from the dualistic decrees of accreditation). It emphasizes the caliber of outputs. A quantitative evaluation, such as a grade, is the result of an assessment (numeric, descriptive, or literal).

Growing institutional focus on internal quality process documentation, deliberate planning, and setting and evaluating academic goals has undoubtedly increased as a result of quality review familiarity [46]. However, when asked to remark on their quality system during a visit to an English university a decade ago, he recalled thinking, "You certainly have "quality assurance," but it is not so clear that you have "quality management." In many countries today, the same might be said of several institutions. In fact, Faculty members prioritized documentation over research and instruction to satisfy quality assurance requirements, such as developing a course file with more than ten folders that the faculty will compile and have ready for the quality assurance panel to review. There should be a national "remit" for external examiners that specifies, "for example," what records they should have access to, how much they can change grades, and what topics they can remark on [47]. Furthermore, Quality audits assist in striking a balance between expected and actual performance. In addition, the study of [33] noted that an institutional audit is carried out to evaluate the degree to which a Higher Education Institution (HEI) meets its goals in order to maintain the quality of higher education determines the efficiency of the HEI's procedures. The outcome of an audit typically includes a description of how accurate the HEI's statements are. Quality audits assist HEIs in identifying their areas for improvement and weak points.

A significant component of the requirements for quality assurance is research. The study of [24] conducted a survey study through faculty at Ishik University and found that all interviews yielded the same response when asked about the importance and role of QA in enhancing academic performance of teachers, teaching, learning, research, and ranking: QA is crucial to improving the University's teaching process, raising the caliber and quantity of scientific publications, and raising the university's ranking. Few people, however, were convinced how QA procedures would assist learning and enhance learning outcomes. They have a very difficult time coming up with any alternatives to QA when asked.

Some of the responses were: daily monitoring, regular performance evaluations of individuals, financial support, pay raises, and enough time and resources for research. Only through QA will the caliber of research and instructional output rise [33]. However, the QA process acts as a more progressive cycle for ongoing improvement rather than depending on the one-time certificate as proof that the quality criteria have been satisfied [48].

As a result of this literature, the logic and persuasiveness of these critical readings have not significantly redirected or moderated the penetration of quality assurance into higher education systems and institutions. The QA community is heavily focused on queries regarding the effect of external assessments on institutions and programs as a result of the propagation of quality assurance and unknown advantages. Many of the aforementioned criticisms of quality assurance make the assumption that higher education will be negatively affected in a variety of ways, most notably by the marketization of higher education and the bureaucratization of academic procedures, as well as attacks on academic freedom and institutional autonomy by managerial power. On the other hand, a remarkable number of scientists in the world of quality assurance believe the advantages are "largely good and positive," focusing particularly on internal agency procedures. Therefore, one might ask, do statements concerning the effects of quality assurance—both positive and negative—have a strong enough study and evidence base to support them? Or, what methodological approaches and epistemological presumptions are most likely to produce reliable and beneficial insights and understandings into quality assurance and its consequences on higher education while doing impact research? To answer these questions, the author evaluates how quality assurance affects faculty behavior in improving teaching effectiveness, increasing the professional development of faculty, increasing the faculty stress due to workload, improving faculty evaluation of students, directing the faculty to create a database for each taught course, and enhancing faculty research publications. This is done in light of the ambiguity regarding the needs of quality assurance in higher education.

A deeper examination of the reviewed literature reveals that while quality assurance (QA) systems are often portrayed as essential mechanisms for accountability, improvement, and transparency, their impact on higher education institutions remains complex and multifaceted. The evidence suggests that QA contributes positively to institutional reputation, faculty development, and research productivity; however, it also introduces bureaucratic

burdens and increased workload that may diminish intrinsic academic motivation. Scholars such as [49] and [47] emphasize the paradox of expanding QA systems coinciding with declining academic standards and growing managerial control, while others like [24] and [33] highlight QA's constructive role in advancing teaching and research. This tension underscores the importance of contextualizing QA practices to balance compliance with innovation and academic freedom. Consequently, future research should focus on empirically assessing how QA mechanisms influence faculty attitudes, pedagogical effectiveness, and institutional culture, as well as identifying models that enhance quality without undermining creativity or autonomy.

The framework of the research work is explained by the conceptual model in Figure 1.

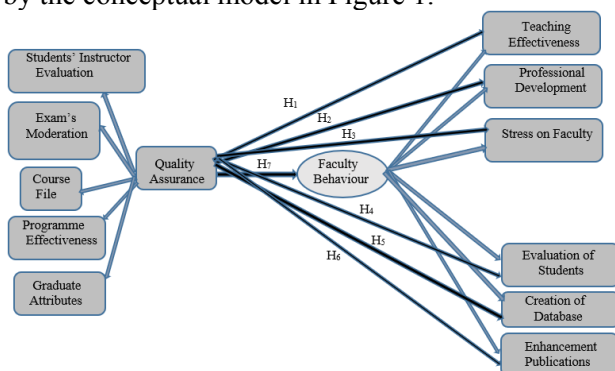


Fig. 1: Conceptual Model: Impact of Quality Assurance on Faculty Behavior
"Source: created by the authors"

Teaching effectiveness (TE), professional development (PD), stress on faculty (SF), evaluation of students (ES), creation of database (CD), and enhancement of publications (EP) are the items that express the dependent variable: faculty behavior (FB). Quality Assurance (QA) is the independent variable that is expressed by the items: Course File (CF), Exam's Moderation (ME), Students' Instructor Evaluation (IE), Programme Effectiveness (PE), and Graduate Attributes (GA). The aim of this model is to test the influence of quality assurance on faculty behavior at Higher Educational Institutions. To achieve this, a regression analysis is conducted to test the following Null hypotheses:

H1: QA requirements do not affect negatively the teaching effectiveness of the faculty.

H2: QA requirements do not affect negatively the professional development of the faculty.

H3: QA workload does not negatively affect the rise in faculty stress.

H4: QA requirements do not affect the faculty evaluations of students negatively.

H5: QA requirements do not affect the faculty database creation negatively.

H6: QA requirements do not affect the faculty enhancement publications negatively.

H7: Overall QA requirements do not affect the faculty behavior negatively.

3 Research Method

The conceptual model developed in this study, as indicated in Figure 1, consisted of seven hypotheses. The items of this model were adopted from [24], and it was adapted to fit with our study. Since the study was to examine the impact of quality assurance requirements on the faculty behavior at higher institutions, then a regression analysis was conducted. Before doing this analysis, a reliability and construct validity test were conducted to make sure that these items explained well the construct of faculty behavior [30% = 81 respondents of the total respondents = 269]. The questionnaire was distributed among most of the teaching staff at some private and public universities in Oman and Lebanon. A total of 48 respondents were collected from Omani universities and 232 from Lebanese Universities. (Eleven of which were excluded due to their invalidity. Then, the total number of respondents used in the data analysis was 269.

A survey questionnaire was conducted in the research study. Six questions/items were included in the anonymous survey form that express faculty behavior, along with which we tested the impact of quality assurance (QA) on each of these items, and one more question to measure the overall impact of quality assurance on faculty behavior. Responses were graded using a five-item Likert scale. (strongly disagree = 1, agree = 2, undecided = 3, agree = 4 and strongly agree = 5). The five items measured the contribution of QA to the development of teaching effectiveness, teachers' professional development, data generation, and faculty behavior on one hand, and to lessen faculty stress, clarify student-instructor evaluations, and improve scientific publications on the other hand. Respondents are prompted to give any additional remarks or comments in the space provided at the end of the questionnaire in order to express their opinions. A remarkable number of opinions that should be taken into consideration in future studies were added by a good number of the

respondents. These comments will be emphasized in the section of Discussions. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to transfer the data and conduct the analysis.

This section displays the survey questionnaire findings that were obtained after being examined in SPSS. It has been demonstrated that SPSS is an excellent tool for managing data and carrying out statistical analyses that can produce and support the findings of the research [47]. The variables and the quantity of questions/items for each variable are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Variables and Number of Items

Variables	Items	Type of Variable (2)
Quality Assurance (QA)	1	X
Teaching Effectiveness (TE)	1	X (Item of FB), Y (Impact of QA on TE)
Professional Development (PD)	1	X (Item of FB), Y (Impact of QA on PD)
Stress on Faculty (SF),	1	X (Item of FB), Y (Impact of QA on SF)
Evaluations of Students (ES),	1	X (Item of FB), Y (Impact of QA on ES)
Creation of Database (CD),	1	X (Item of FB), Y (Impact of QA on CD)
Enhancement of publications (EP)	1	X (Item of FB), Y (Impact of QA on EP)
Faculty Behaviour (FB)	6	Y

"Source: created by the authors"

3.1 Reliability and Construct Validity

The study conducted a pilot study, randomly selecting 81 (30%) out of the 269 respondents and evaluating their responses to ensure that the survey being used is valid and reliable. We measured the internal consistency among the items and constructs, which was a helpful way for measuring reliability, to determine whether the survey is reliable or not. The similarity of findings from various measurements of the same trait or concept has been defined as reliability. Contrarily, validity is concerned with understanding the extent to which the constructs they are supposed to assess are being measured. The study used Cronbach's alpha, a well-known statistical technique for evaluating the reliability of constraints, to ensure considerable reliability of constraints. Thus, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated, and the findings were compared with the 0.7 level suggested as a cut-off point, which demonstrated that scales were trustworthy [50]. The model's predicted correlations and levels of internal consistency reliability were examined using SPSS software, with the following findings:

Table 2 showed that Overall alpha is 0.861, which indicates good internal consistency among the Faculty Behavior items.

Table 2: Reliability and Validity Results

Construct	Overall Cronbach's Alpha (Accepted score > 0.7) (Hajjar, 2016)	Item to Item Correlation (Accepted score > 0.3) (Hajjar, 2016)	Item to Total Correlation (Accepted Score > 0.5) (Hajjar, 2016)	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted (Accepted score less than Overall Cronbach's Alpha (Hajjar, 2016)
FB	0.858	Values range: Between 0.670 and 0.927 Except for: CD<-> TE (-0.176) CD<-> PD (-0.128) CD<-> SF (-0.061) CD<-> ES (-0.032) CD<-> EP (-0.098)	Values range: 0.753 <-> 0.897 Except for CD (-0.106)	Values range: 0.787<-> 0.813 Except for: CD (0.952)

"Source: created by the authors"

However, the correlation between any two items was more than 0.3 except for CD. It had a weak negative correlation with each of the other items. These results indicate how bad the CD score was, internally consistent with the score of each of the other items. Moreover, each item correlates well with the sum of the other items ($r > 0.5$) except for CD ($r = -0.106$). This means that there was a weak negative correlation between the score CD and the combined score of the other five items. This result assessed how bad the CD score was internally consistent with the composite scores from all other items that remain. In addition, if one item was eliminated from the scale, then the value of the overall Cronbach alpha would be decreased, except for the elimination of CD. As a result, there was a statistical reason to drop the item CD, but it was retained for further analysis due to the reason that this construct, "Creation of Database," is an essential criterion of Faculty Behavior, and its result is obtained from a pilot study sample size. Hence, the remaining five items appear to be useful and contribute to the overall reliability of Instructor's Behavior. Thus, the scale was reliable, valid, and ready to be used for more statistical analysis.

Table 3 showed that the overall alpha is 0.861, which indicates good internal consistency among the Quality Assurance items.

Table 3: Reliability and Validity Results

Construct	Overall Cronbach's Alpha (Accepted score > 0.7) (Hajjar, 2016)	Item to Item Correlation (Accepted score > 0.3) (Hajjar, 2016)	Item to Total Correlation (Accepted Score > 0.5) (Hajjar, 2016)	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted (Accepted score less than Overall Cronbach's Alpha (Hajjar, 2016)
QA	0.868	Values range: Between 0.954 and 0.995 Except for: CF<-> IE (-0.099) CF<-> ME (-0.079) CF<-> PE (-0.128) CF<-> GA (-0.110) CD<-> EP (-0.098)	Values range: 0.909 <-> 0.957 Except for CF (-0.104)	Values range: 0.767<-> 0.787 Except for: CF (0.994)

"Source: created by the authors"

However, the correlation between any two items was more than 0.3 except for CF. It had a weak negative correlation with each of the other items. These results indicate how bad the CF score was, internally consistent with the score of each of the other items. Moreover, each item correlates well with the sum of the other items ($r > 0.5$) except for CF ($r = -0.104$). This means that there was a weak negative correlation between the score CF and the combined score of the other four items. This result assessed how bad the CF score was internally consistent with the composite scores from all other items that remain. In addition, if one item was eliminated from the scale, then the value of the overall Cronbach alpha would be decreased except for the elimination of CF. As a result, there was a statistical reason to drop the item CF, but it was retained for further analysis due to the reason that this construct, "Course File," is an essential criterion of Quality Assurance, and its result is obtained from a pilot study sample size. Hence, the remaining four items appear to be useful and contribute to the overall reliability of Quality Assurance. Thus, the scale was reliable, valid, and ready to be used for more statistical analysis.

4 Data Analysis

The sample size used in making data analysis was 269 respondents from the teaching staff in Omani and Lebanese Universities. To proceed with the data analysis, there was a need to study the normality of the data set.

4.1 Normality Test

A normality test was used by using the Skewness and Kurtosis test. Table 4 showed that the items' scores of Skewness lay within -1.643 and 0.897, which were within the acceptable range of Skewness [-2, 2]. The items' scores of Kurtosis lay within 0.706 and 2.874, which were within the acceptable range of Kurtosis [-3, 3] except for the two items SF (Score= 3.145 outside the range) and ES (Score = 3.305 outside the range). Therefore, there was a statistical reason to drop the items SF and ES, but we kept them for further analysis due to the reason that these constructs, "Stress on Faculty" and "Evaluation of Students" are essential criteria of Faculty Behavior, and their results may be negatively affected by the sample size.

Table 4: Normality Test

	N	Mean	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
TE	269	4.40	-1.435	.149	1.822	.296
PD	269	4.33	-1.233	.149	1.286	.296
SF	269	4.29	-1.623	.149	3.145	.296
ES	269	4.33	-1.643	.149	3.305	.296
CD	269	1.82	.897	.149	.706	.296
EP	269	4.23	-1.581	.149	2.874	.296
Valid N (listwise)	269					

"Source: Output through SPSS"

Hence, the data are approximately normal, and we proceeded with further analysis.

4.2 Correlation test

This paper conducted a correlation test to measure the strength of the linear association between each item as a dependent variable and the quality assurance as an independent variable on one side, and between overall faculty behavior explained by the six items as a dependent variable and the quality assurance as an independent variable on the other side. In fact, it was essential to test the relationship between dependent and independent variables before conducting regression analysis [51].

To examine the correlation between the independent variable "Quality Assurance" and the dependent variable "Faculty Behavior", we calculate the Pearson correlation coefficient " r " defined by:

$$r = \frac{n \sum xy - \sum x \sum y}{\sqrt{[n(\sum x^2) - (\sum x)^2][n(\sum y^2) - (\sum y)^2]}}$$

The closer to -1 the value of r is, the stronger the negative linear relationship, the closer to 1, the stronger the positive linear relationship; and the closer to 0, the weaker the linear relationship. Moreover, to test the significance of the population correlation coefficient, we either use a t -test or equivalently we use p-value approach. In this study, we used one way ANOVA to get the value of the correlation coefficient " r " and we used p-value approach to test its significance. As seen in Table 5, the findings demonstrated that there was a significant strong positive linear relationship between QA and the other variables ($r > 0.7$, p-value < 0.05) except with the variable CD ($r = 0.096 < 0.7$, p-value $= 0.116 > 0.5$). This indicated that all independent variables correlated well with the independent variable QA except for the variable CD. There was a statistical reason to drop it from the model. However, we kept it for further analysis as we wanted to study the effect of QA on creation of database.

Table 5: Correlation

	TE	PD	SF	ES	CD	EP	FB
QA Pearson Correlation	.725**	.768**	.796**	.736**	.096**	.724**	.900**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.116	.000	.000
N	269	269	269	269	269	269	269

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

"Source: Output through SPSS"

Hence, these results supported our study to proceed with regression analysis.

4.3 Regression Analysis

The study used the ordinary least square (OLS) test to further analysis and validate our theoretical framework. In order to examine the degree to which the independent factors influence the dependent variable; this research conducted the OLS approach as a linear regression model. In order to determine how the independent variable QA affected positively or not the dependent variables Teaching Effectiveness (TE), Professional Development (PD), Stress on Faculty (SF), Evaluations of Students (ES), Creation of Database (CD), Enhancement of publications (EP), and Faculty Behavior (FB), regression analysis was used. In this study, we used an ANOVA table to determine the coefficients of all factors for the simple linear regression analysis

$\hat{y} = b_0 + b_1 x$ to test the impact of Quality Assurance on each construct of the Faculty Behavior, and the coefficients of all multilinear regression lines

$$\hat{y} = b_0 + b_1 x_1 + b_2 x_2 + \dots$$

to study the overall impact of Quality Assurance on Faculty Behaviors. To test the significance of these coefficients, we used the p -value approach instead of using a t -test. Moreover, to study the variation of the dependent variable "Faculty Behavior" explained in the variation of the independent variable "Quality Assurance", we used the coefficient of determination " R^2 " defined by:

$$R^2 = \frac{SSR}{SST}$$

where SSR is the sum of squared regression, and SST is the total sum of squares. In addition, we used the p -value approach to test its significance instead of using the F -test statistics. All the results are obtained through ANOVA.

The outcomes of the OLS analysis were summarized in Tables 6 and Table 7.

Table 6 indicated that the variations in the dependent variables TE, PD, SF, ES, EP and FB were

explained by a portion of the variation in the independent variable QA included in the regression model (R^2 : 0.526, 0.590, 0.634, 0.541, 0.525, and 0.809 respectively), and these outputs indicated that the regression study of the model was significant as all had p -value = 0.000 < 0.05). This means that 52.6 % of the variation in the dependent variable TE was explained by a portion of the variation in the independent variable QA. That is, 47.4% (100% - 52.6 %) of the variance were not included in the proposed model. Similarly, 59.0 % of the variation in the dependent variable PD was explained by a portion variation in the independent variable QA (41.0% of variance were not included in the proposed model); 63.4 % of the variation in the dependent variable SF was explained by a portion variation in the independent variable QA (36.6% of variance were not included in the proposed model); 54.1 % of the variation in the dependent variable ES was explained by a portion variation in the independent variable QA (45.9% of variance were not included in the proposed model); 52.5 % of the variation in the dependent variable EP was explained by a portion variation in the independent variable QA (47.5% of variance were not included in the proposed model), and 80.9 % of the variation in the dependent variable FB was explained by a portion variation in the independent variable QA (19.1% of variance were not included in the proposed model). However, CD was not explained by a portion of the variation in the independent variable QA included in the regression model ($R^2 = 0.009$). This means that only 0.09 % of the variation in the dependent variable CD was explained by a portion of the variation in the independent variable QA, and this output indicated that the regression study of the model was not significant as it had a p -value = 0.116 > 0.05. That is, 99.91% of the variance was not included in the proposed model.

Table 6: Regression 1- Model Summary – ANOVA

Model	R-Square	Sig. (p-value)
QA → TE	0.526	.000
QA → PD	0.590	.000
QA → SF	0.634	.000
QA → ES	0.541	.000
QA → CD	0.009	.116
QA → EP	0.525	.000
QA → FB	0.809	.000

a. Dependent Variables: TE, PD, SF, ES, CD, EP, FB

b. Predictors: (Constant), QA

"Source: Output through SPSS"

Moreover, the outputs in Table 7 indicated that Quality Assurance did affect negatively teaching effectiveness, professional development, stress on faculty, evaluation of students, enhancement of publication, and faculty behaviors as the coefficients

of slopes had negative values (-0.771, -0.823, -0.930, -0.830, -0.875, and -0.737 respectively), and these values were significant since $p\text{-value} = .000 < 0.05$, then we reject the Null Hypothesis H_0 ; however, Quality Assurance affected positively the creation of database as the coefficient of the slope had positive value (0.101), and since $p\text{-value} = .116 > 0.05$, then we do not reject the Null Hypothesis H_0 .

Table 7 Regression 2: Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Dependent Variable
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	1.711	.160		10.699	.000	TE
QA	-.771	.045	.725	17.198	.000	
(Constant)	1.454	.150		9.711	.000	PD
QA	-.823	.042	.768	19.618	.000	
(Constant)	1.045	.154		6.774	.000	SF
QA	-.930	.043	.796	21.510	.000	
(Constant)	1.438	.167		8.615	.000	ES
QA	-.830	.047	.736	17.747	.000	
(Constant)	1.466	.228		6.430	.000	CD
QA	.101	.064	.096	1.578	.116	
(Constant)	1.176	.182		6.466	.000	EP
QA	-.875	.051	.724	17.172	.000	
(Constant)	1.325	.078		16.962	.000	FB
QA	-.737	.022	.900	33.653	.000	

Finally, the results of hypothesis tests are described in Table 8.

"Source: Output through SPSS"

Table 8: Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Rejected/Supported
H ₁ : QA requirements do not affect negatively the teaching effectiveness of the faculty	Rejected
H ₂ : QA requirements do not affect negatively the professional development of the faculty	Rejected
H ₃ : QA workload does not negatively affect the rise in faculty stress.	Rejected
H ₄ : QA requirements do not affect the faculty evaluations of students negatively	Rejected
H ₅ : QA requirements do not affect the faculty database creation negatively	Supported
H ₆ : QA requirements do not affect the faculty enhancement publications negatively	Rejected
H ₇ : Overall QA requirements do not affect the faculty behaviour negatively	Rejected

"Source: Created by the author"

5 Discussion

This study aimed to estimate the influence of Quality Assurance (QA) requirements on faculty behavior. The normality test confirmed that the data were approximately normally distributed, and correlation analysis revealed strong positive relationships between most faculty behavior variables and QA requirements, except for the variable "Creation of database." These results validated the use of regression analysis, which demonstrated significant effects for all behavioral aspects except database creation. Based on a representative sample of 269 respondents from Omani and Lebanese universities, the following key findings emerged:

5.1 Teaching Effectiveness

The results indicated that QA requirements had a negative effect on faculty teaching effectiveness. Many faculty members perceived QA standards as rigid, mechanistic guidelines that constrained their pedagogical autonomy. This rigidity limited their ability to adapt teaching methods to diverse student needs and learning contexts. Teaching effectiveness is inherently dynamic and context-dependent; thus, standardized QA measures may inadvertently discourage innovation and responsiveness in classroom instruction. This finding aligns with the critical perspectives of [13], [14], and [16], who argued that external QA systems often prioritize procedural compliance over genuine educational improvement.

5.2 Professional Development

Requirements were also found to negatively influence faculty professional development. While professional growth depends on exploration, creativity, and continuous learning, QA frameworks tend to emphasize measurable outcomes and external evaluations. Many faculty reported that professional development was seen as a personal and institutional necessity rather than a QA-driven mandate. This suggests that QA procedures may not adequately foster intrinsic motivation or career advancement, supporting [38] and [39] assertions that sustainable development requires supportive institutional cultures rather than bureaucratic enforcement.

5.3 Faculty Stress and Workload

The findings revealed a significant positive association between QA workload and faculty stress levels, indicating that QA processes increase job-related pressure. The constant need to prepare documentation, respond to external audit recommendations, and maintain compliance often diverted time and energy from teaching and research. Faculty felt overwhelmed by repeated inspections and excessive administrative demands, which corroborates [40] and [41], who observed high stress and declining job satisfaction among academics due to growing bureaucratic expectations.

5.4 Student Evaluation Practices

QA requirements were shown to negatively affect faculty evaluation of students. Standardized and quantitative assessment models imposed by QA systems often fail to reflect the diverse learning abilities and cognitive levels of students. Effective student evaluation requires a balance between formative and summative approaches, yet QA

frameworks tend to focus predominantly on graded assessments. This misalignment between QA procedures and pedagogical flexibility supports the arguments of [44] and [45], who emphasized the need for adaptive and inclusive assessment strategies.

5.5 Database Creation and Documentation

Interestingly, QA requirements had a positive impact on faculty engagement in database creation and documentation. The emphasis on internal quality monitoring led to systematic record-keeping and detailed course documentation. However, this improvement came at a cost: the process was often perceived as excessively time-consuming and bureaucratic, turning faculty into “inspectors” rather than educators. These findings are consistent with [46], [47], and [33], who noted that while QA improves transparency, it can also shift focus away from substantive teaching and research activities.

5.6 Research Productivity

The analysis revealed that QA requirements negatively influenced faculty research output. The excessive administrative workload and stress generated by QA compliance reduced the time available for scholarly inquiry. Faculty reported that their research motivation declined due to the documentation burden, leading to fewer publications. This observation supports [38], [40], and [48], who highlighted that administrative overreach and lack of institutional support can stifle academic research productivity.

5.7 Overall Faculty Behavior

Overall, QA requirements exerted a negative influence on faculty behavior across multiple dimensions. The findings suggest that QA systems, while designed to promote accountability and quality improvement, often emphasize documentation and external evaluation at the expense of creativity, motivation, and authentic learning outcomes. These results align with prior research [28] and [35], indicating that QA’s bureaucratic focus may hinder the academic mission of higher education institutions.

In summary, while QA systems are intended to enhance educational quality, this study’s results reveal that their implementation may inadvertently produce counterproductive effects on faculty behavior, especially when applied rigidly. Therefore, QA frameworks should be re-evaluated to balance accountability with flexibility, promote faculty autonomy, and encourage developmental rather than merely compliance-oriented practices. Future studies

could further explore how adaptive QA models can support teaching innovation, faculty well-being, and institutional excellence without overburdening academic staff.

6 Conclusion

The goal of the current study was to contribute practically to the effect of quality assurance requirements on faculty behavior. In this study, a survey questionnaire was used to assess the impact of QA requirements on teaching effectiveness, professional development, stress on faculty, evaluations of students, creation of a database, enhancement of publications, and faculty behavior. The study has established that QA has been implemented to force academic institutions to become a store of documents prepared by faculty and staff. It proved that QA did not add any positive value to faculty behavior in teaching or research. In contrary, it wasted the time if the faculty put him under stress and reduced his/her ability in research publications. Unfortunately, QA became an auditing agency to spread recommendations, where many of them did not fit with the concerned academic institution.

Additionally, the results showed that it was possible to adopt a proactive mindset that made it possible to implement efficient quality assurance procedures. The QA agency could gain valuable knowledge on internal-external management quality for improving the academic assurance system from this journey. Regarding a QA definition or QA paradigm, there was no consensus. The difficulty in selecting one QA model over another could be observed in the numerous services offered by the agencies and the quality frameworks they employ, which vary from one QA model to another and from one jurisdiction to another.

7 Recommendations

The findings of this study also encourage future research to look into the impact of QA on students’ improvements. Involving students could enhance QA procedures because they are the focus of higher education and spend time and money in the system. It is recommended for QA agencies to make a self-evaluation about the impact of their requirements on faculty on one side and on students on the other side. Empirical analysis about the effectiveness of QA demands, especially from the stakeholders’ point of view (Faculty and students), will be useful. The Higher Education Council (HEC) institutions that are

looking for ways to enhance their QA mechanisms can also benefit from this study. To this purpose, additional study may aid in understanding how and why HEC institutions change their focus from evaluation to achievement in order to maximize QA requirements. At last, it would be better if external and internal quality assurance were better balanced. Internal and external quality assurance can only work together effectively if the agencies and higher education institutions interact on an equal footing.

8 Limitations of the Study

While this study provides valuable insights into the impact of Quality Assurance (QA) requirements on faculty behaviors in Omani and Lebanese universities, several limitations should be acknowledged to contextualize its findings.

First, the study relied primarily on self-reported data, which may be subject to personal bias, social desirability, or individual interpretation of QA practices. Faculty members might have expressed their perceptions based on subjective experiences rather than objective measures of QA influence.

Second, the research employed a cross-sectional design, capturing faculty opinions at a single point in time. Consequently, the results reflect perceptions during a specific period and do not account for possible changes in attitudes or institutional practices over time. A longitudinal approach could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how QA influences evolve across academic cycles.

Third, the sample was limited to two countries—Oman and Lebanon—whose higher education systems, governance structures, and QA policies differ significantly from those of other regions. Therefore, while the findings are relevant within these contexts, they cannot be generalized to all higher education systems, particularly those in Western or Asian settings with distinct regulatory environments.

Fourth, although the study utilized quantitative methods and statistical analysis, it did not include qualitative components such as interviews or focus groups that could provide deeper insights into faculty experiences, institutional culture, and contextual nuances behind the numerical results. Combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches would strengthen the interpretation of the observed relationships.

Fifth, the study focused on six specific behavioral dimensions (teaching effectiveness, professional development, stress, evaluation practices, database creation, and research productivity). Other potentially relevant factors—such as faculty

motivation, institutional leadership, or resource availability—were not examined and may also influence how QA requirements affect behavior.

Finally, potential response bias may have occurred since participation was voluntary, and those with strong opinions about QA (either positive or negative) may have been more inclined to respond, slightly influencing the representativeness of the data.

Despite these limitations, the study contributes to a better understanding of how QA requirements shape faculty behavior in Middle Eastern higher education contexts and provides a foundation for future research incorporating broader samples, mixed methodologies, and longitudinal perspectives.

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Said EL Hajjar, Carried out the structured model and the statistical analysis.

Hanadi Chehade carried out the Literature review and the research methodology.

Rasha Shaker carried out the discussion and finalized the paper structure.

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