



## Triple Impact of Internal Quality Assurance Mechanism: A Comparative Assessment of Learner Evaluation, Research Performance, and Institutional Efficiency in Ghanaian Universities

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**ABSTRACT:** This study investigates the influence of Internal Quality Assurance Mechanisms (IQAM) on learners' evaluation, research performance, and institutional efficiency in Ghanaian universities. Adopting a quantitative research approach, purposive and systematic random sampling techniques were used to select lecturers from four public and two private universities. Data were collected through structured questionnaires rated on a five-point Likert scale. Descriptive statistics revealed that IQAM, learners' evaluation, research performance, and institutional efficiency were functioning effectively, with mean scores ranging between 3.468 and 4.129. Further analysis indicated that IQAM significantly predicted learners' evaluation ( $F=90.68$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), research performance ( $F=141$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), and institutional efficiency ( $F=80.451$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), explaining 39.1%, 50.1%, and 36.3% of the variance, respectively. These findings demonstrate the central role of IQAM in promoting quality assessment practices, improved research output, and enhanced institutional operations. The study offers practical implications for policymakers and university administrators to strengthen IQA systems for sustainable academic and operational excellence in higher education.

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### INTRODUCTION

Education plays a pivotal role in national development, with its quality serving as a crucial determinant for realizing its full benefits (Jahantab, 2021; Madani, 2019). According to Zang et al. (2024), the quality of education within a nation is widely acknowledged as a fundamental determinant of its development and prosperity. In achieving these positive outcomes, all educational systems, including universities, need to implement effective quality assurance (QA) mechanisms (Hidayah & Syahrani, 2022; Madani, 2019). Over the past two decades, QA has become widely adopted within universities, viewed as a strategic pathway for improving the quality of education and meeting the expectations of external stakeholders (Karakhanyan & Stensaker, 2020; Lucander & Christersson, 2020). Across many countries, universities have established Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) mechanisms to promote quality control, accountability, and audit to peer review are increasingly leveraged as institutions strive to maintain relevance and gain a competitive edge in today's fast-changing and dynamic environment (Qamar et al., 2024).

IQA in universities, much like the broader concept of quality, lacks a universally accepted definition and varies in implementation across different contexts. Scholars have offered diverse perspectives to conceptualize it. Kwarteng (2022) describes IQA as the establishment of mechanisms, procedures, and processes designed to ensure that the desired quality is achieved. Ferdousi et al. (2022) emphasized that IQA represents an institutional commitment to maintaining and enhancing the standards of its educational provision

with confidence and certainty. Similarly, Alam (2020) viewed IQA as a collection of systems, procedures, processes, and actions aimed at sustaining, monitoring, and achieving quality. IQA plays a significant role in the functioning and development of universities (Ferdousi et al., 2022; Narayanan & Nair, 2018). As indicated by Narayanan and Nair (2018), IQA is essential for ensuring learners' evaluation, improving research performance, and promoting institutional efficiency. IQA serves as a structured framework through which universities can systematically monitor, assess, and enhance the quality of academic and administrative processes.

According to Kwao and Toolo (2025), Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) is a crucial aspect of higher education institutions (HEIs), as it ensures that their academic programs and services meet the required quality standards. In Ghana, higher education institutions (HEIs), including universities, have implemented mechanisms for IQA to complement the initiatives of external QA regulators. At the national level, the National Accreditation Board (NAB), now Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC) (Government of Ghana, 1994), the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) (Government of Ghana, 2007), and the National Board for Professional and Technical Examinations (NABPTEX) (Government of Ghana, 2016; Government of Ghana, 2007) have been established to oversee and verify that higher education institutions meet the requisite standard both internally and in line with international benchmarks. These indicate that Ghana has placed significant emphasis on quality in HEI and increasingly acknowledges the importance of robust quality assurance mechanisms. However, there remains a notable knowledge gap. For instance, Mensah (2022) examined IQA within HEI broadly, while Arthur and Kuranchie (2022) focused specifically on QA practices in private HEI. Similarly, Tetteh et al. (2021) developed a QA identity within a university using a grounded theory approach, and Anyidoho (2021) explored IQA management practices at the University of Ghana. Despite these contributions, existing studies in Ghana have not examined the underlying relationship between IQA mechanisms and their impact on learners' evaluation, research performance and institutional efficiency. This study seeks to bridge the gap by exploring the impact of IQA mechanisms on the assessment of the three critical areas in Ghanaian universities.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### *Concept of QA in Universities*

QA has been a key concern in universities for many decades. Universities maintain a high level of academic standards by integrating a QA system. According to Manatos et al. (2017), QA in universities can be traced back to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century when the first universities were established in Europe. These institutions recognized the need for QA to ensure that the graduates were competent and could contribute effectively to society. In the United States, QA in university education gained momentum in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century with the establishment of accreditation agencies such as the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) (Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), 2022). These agencies were responsible for evaluating the quality of higher education institutions and ensuring that they met certain standards. The 1960s and 1970s saw a significant shift in the focus of QA in higher education, from inputs to outputs (UNESCO, 2022). This shift was a response to the growing demand for accountability and evidence-based practice in higher education. Institutions began to focus more on outcomes, such as student learning and achievement, rather than inputs, such as faculty qualifications and resources. QA has been a longstanding concern in higher education, with a rich history and ongoing evolution.

QA in university is a systematic and continuous process of monitoring and evaluating academic programs, teaching, research, and support services to ensure that they meet or exceed set standards and expectations (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2021). According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), QA is "a set of policies, procedures, and practices that are used to ensure the quality and standards of higher education institutions and programs" (UNESCO, 2022). One of the key components of QA in university is the establishment of clear and measurable learning outcomes. These outcomes should be aligned with the goals of the institution and should be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that they remain relevant and effective in preparing students for their future careers (Asim et al., 2017).

### *QA Practices at Universities in Ghana*

Ghana experienced a period of rapid expansion in higher education, resulting in a proliferation of institutions without corresponding measures to ensure quality standards. This led to concerns about the quality of education offered in Ghanaian universities and prompted the need for effective quality assurance systems (Tsevi, 2014). By engaging community resources, the quality and effectiveness of the education system can be significantly improved (Ahasu et al. 2024).

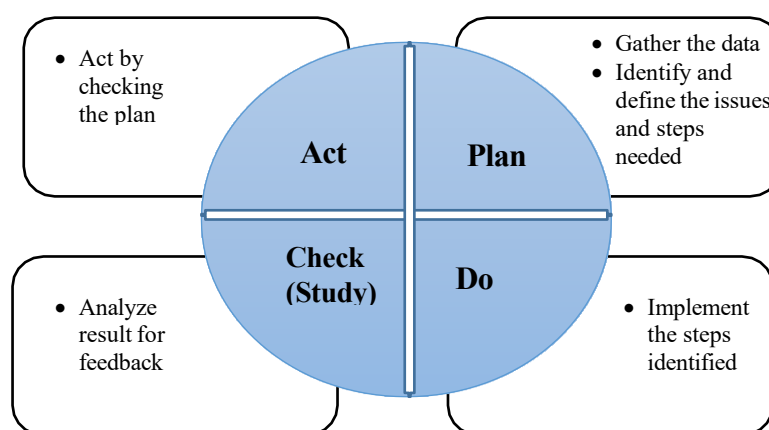
In Ghana, the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) was established in 1993 as the body responsible for overseeing the development and coordination of tertiary education in Ghana. The NCTE developed the Ghana Tertiary Education Quality Assurance System (GTEQAS), which was launched in 2007 (Tsevi, 2014) in setting of standards and guidelines for the development and delivery of academic programs, as well as a system for monitoring and evaluating the quality of education provided.

The number of external quality assurance bodies, such as the National Accreditation Board (NAB) and the Ghana Quality Authority (GQA), is responsible for ensuring that higher education institutions in Ghana meet national and international quality standards. NAB is responsible for accrediting higher education institutions and programs (Acquah, 2021). The NAB was established in 1993 and ensures that institutions and programs meet the required standards before they are accredited. This process involves a rigorous

evaluation of the institutions' infrastructure, academic programs, faculty, and staff, among others. The establishment of QA units within universities in Ghana is a key component. According to Seniwoliba and Yakubu (2015), QA units are responsible for ensuring that institutions comply with the standards set by the NAB. These units are also responsible for monitoring the quality of education and for identifying areas where improvements are needed.

### ***IQA implementation***

IQA forms a central component of the broader QA frameworks in universities (Karakhanyan & Stensaker, 2020). As indicated by Elbadiansyah and Masyni (2021), IQA encompasses the policies, procedures, systems, and mechanisms designed and implemented by institutions to evaluate and enhance quality. Ta and Pham (2024) extended the definition by framing IQA as the motivation of an institutional culture that sensitises stakeholders to the roles of improving quality. Ferdousi et al. (2022) describe IQA as a continuous, cyclical process aimed at maintaining and enhancing institutional quality over time. In practice, IQA can be implemented through various models introduced within the higher education sector (Elbadiansyah & Masyni, 2021). Rehman et al. (2024) noted that the existence of multiple models is beneficial, as it offers institutions diverse approaches to understanding and improving quality. Njui (2018) identifies an IQA model comprising four essential elements: institutional goals, monitoring instruments, evaluation instruments, and mechanisms for quality improvement. Martin (2018) proposes a similar framework, emphasizing that IQA systems should be built upon an institution's vision and goals, incorporating monitoring and evaluation tools alongside targeted quality assurance processes for specific activities. Alzafari and Ursin (2019) further observed that many IQA models focus on assessing both the quality of results and the quality of governance, with institutional goals serving as the central reference point. A notable contribution to the field comes from Deming, whose framework groups IQA activities into four iterative steps known as the Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) cycle (Dudin et al., 2017) [see Figure 1]. The model underscores the continuous and systematic nature of quality improvement processes within universities.



**Figure 1: Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) cycle Model**

Source: Dudin et al. (2017)

### ***IQA and Assessment of Learner Evaluation***

Assessment plays a significant role in shaping students' learning experience in HEI. The study by Ta and Pham (2024) mentioned that assessment of learners not only determines what students learn but also reveals how and why they learn. Institutional policies and practice guidelines on evaluation significantly influence the quality of students' learning (Boud, 2020). Flores et al. (2020) emphasized that when students understand, engage with, and appreciate the value of their learning, they can use assessments as a tool to enhance their achievement, development, and overall learning outcomes. IQA mechanisms serve as a guiding frameworks and standards in assessing learners' learning outcomes. The study by Lemaire et al. (2022) highlighted that well-structured QA systems contribute to the standardization, transparency, and fairness of student assessment processes. According to Agir et al. (2023), effective IQA enhances assessment literacy among faculty and supports the development of outcome-based assessment models that are more transparent and equitable. Mensah (2022) asserted that integrating IQA mechanisms fosters a culture of accountability and reflective practice within HEIs. This ensures that assessment practices not only measure student performance accurately but also promote continuous improvement and lifelong learning.

### ***IQA and Research Performance***

HEIs fulfill three core academic roles; teaching, research and service (Smolentseva, 2023; Benadives et al., 2020). Within this framework, research performance is understood broadly as the quality, productivity, and overall effectiveness of research activities, often evaluated through a range of metrics and indicators (Aydin, 2017). It encompasses the entire research cycle from conceptualization and design to execution, dissemination, and application of findings, and can be assessed at individual, institutional, or national levels (Javed et al., 2020). As indicated by Nyamwesa et al. (2020), IQA mechanisms are essential in

ensuring that research processes and outputs meet established standards of rigor, relevance, and impact. Mensah (2022) further notes that institutions with robust and well-integrated quality assurance frameworks tend to achieve higher levels of research productivity and academic output. Such frameworks provide a structured approach to setting expectations, monitoring progress, and fostering excellence in scholarly work. Arthur (2022) emphasized that periodic evaluation and systematic monitoring within IQA structures serve as strong motivators for faculty, encouraging sustained engagement in research and maintaining scholarly relevance. Aweso (2023) highlighted that IQA practices by incorporating research performance assessments, structured mentoring systems, and strategic resource allocation play a critical role in strengthening the research culture of tertiary institutions.

### ***IQA and Institutional Efficiency***

Globally, universities are under growing pressure to enhance institutional efficiency while ensuring the delivery of high-quality service (Alvarez-Sánchez et al., 2023; Duan, 2019). Governments, in particular, face the challenge of sustaining the quality of educational services while simultaneously reducing the public resources allocated to them (Segovia-Gonzalez et al., 2020). This reality compels institutions to optimize their use of resources and adapt the delivery of services to remain competitive and relevant (Alvarez-Sánchez et al., 2023). As a result, research on efficiency management in higher education has gained increasing attention at the global level (Alvarez-Sánchez et al., 2023; Wolszczak-Derlacz, 2017). Lemaitre and Karakhanyan (2020) stressed that IQA mechanisms serve as key drivers in enhancing institutional efficiency by providing systematic processes for monitoring, evaluating, and improving academic and administrative functions. Similarly, De-Graft (2019) emphasizes that effective IQA frameworks are fundamental to strengthening governance structures and overall institutional performance in tertiary education. Eshun et al. (2020) pointed out that well- designed quality assurance interventions positively influence administrative competence, operational effectiveness, and institutional responsiveness to emerging challenges. Likewise, Anyidoho (2021) finds that institutions with deeply embedded IQA mechanisms are more likely to exhibit strong leadership practices, transparent decision-making, and heightened stakeholder trust.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study is grounded in the Goal and Specification Model (GSM), a structured framework designed to establish clear objectives and define specific criteria necessary for their achievement (Losada-Vazquez, 2022). Serving as a guiding force, the GSM shapes organizational processes and significantly contributes to overall effectiveness. At its core, the model emphasizes the careful formulation of clear, measurable goals and specifications that align closely with the mission and vision of an organization. These articulated goals form the foundation for decision-making, resource allocation, and strategic planning, ensuring that every initiative directly supports the broader institutional mission (Konstantara & Galanakis, 2022). The GSM offers a comprehensive and adaptable structure that promotes purposeful and well- organized processes. Within the educational context, it becomes a vital tool for academic planning, curriculum development, and quality assurance. Educational goals are deliberately crafted to reflect the institution's mission, respond to students' needs, and address wider societal expectations. Specifications then outline the criteria and standards by which progress and achievement are measured.

A notable strength of the GSM lies in its focus on continuous improvement and institutional learning (Georgiou & Galanakis, 2022). The model encourages educational institutions to regularly review and adjust their goals and specifications in light of feedback, evolving circumstances, and emerging trends. This iterative approach fosters adaptability and responsiveness, embedding a culture of ongoing development and refinement within the organization. The integration of GSM with the IQA mechanism in universities represents a strategic alignment aimed at enhancing both effectiveness and efficiency within the institution. GSM integration ensures that clearly defined goals and measurable specifications are not only established but are also systematically monitored, evaluated, and refined through the IQA framework. By aligning GSM's structured goal-setting approach with IQA's continuous assessment and feedback process, universities can create a cohesive system that drives institutional improvement.

### **METHOD**

Quantitative research approach was adopted for the study. The quantitative research method adopts a deductive and objective view, which is characterized by tangible data such as counts, weight, mass, and other physical measures (Mohajan, 2020:53-54). According to Hamed (2022:54), the quantitative approach uses numerical results from observations to explain and characterize the processes that the observations can reflect on. The study was underpinned by positivism as research philosophy. Quantitative observations and subsequent statistical analysis form the basis of the positivist worldview. Positivism aims to enhance objectivity by relying on data gathered through direct observation, logical reasoning, and quantitative techniques such as surveys, experiments, and statistical analysis (Jelena Maksimović and Jelena Evtimov, 2023: 210).

Purposive and random sampling procedures were used in selecting the lecturers from the various universities in Ghana. The purposive sampling technique was used in selecting 4 public and 2 private universities in Ghana. These universities were purposively selected based on their national rankings, institutional reputation, and the presence of established IQA systems. The selection of lecturers from the sampled universities was carried out using a systematic random sampling technique. A total of 200 lecturers were selected for the study, with 40 lecturers drawn from each of the participating public universities and 20 from each of the participating

private universities. The systematic random sampling was implemented by first obtaining a comprehensive list of lecturers from the respective faculties or departments, followed by selecting every *n*th individual from the list based on a predetermined sampling interval. The use of this approach was intended to provide all eligible lecturers with an equal chance of participating in the research, thereby enhancing the representativeness and reliability of the study findings.

The data was collected from lecturers using a structured questionnaire, with items rated on a 5- point Likert scale (1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Uncertain; 4=Agree; and 5=Strongly agree). This scale was designed to measure the strength or intensity of respondents' opinions. The collected data was processed and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. In testing the validity and reliability of the constructs, factor loading (FL), Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability (CR), and Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) were calculated and assessed. Both descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (partial correlation and linear regression) were employed to interpret the findings.

## RESULTS

**Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

Variable	Category	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	95	66.4
	Female	48	33.6
	Total	143	100.0
Age group (years)	30-39years	54	37.8
	40-49years	71	49.7
	50-59years	16	11.2
	60years and above	2	1.4
	Total	143	100.0
Academic qualification/title	MPhil/MA/MSc holder	16	11.2
	Associate professor/assistant professor	63	44.1
	Doctoral degree (PhD)	60	42.0
	Professor	4	2.8
	Total	143	100.0
Position hold in the university	Departmental head/program leader	18	12.6
	Lecturer	85	59.4
	Senior lecturer	23	16.1
	Other (Specify)	17	11.9
	Total	143	100.0
Years of teaching in the current institution	Less than 1year	19	13.3
	1-5years	64	44.8
	6-10years	29	20.3
	11-15years	15	10.5
	16years and above	16	11.2
Total	143	100.0	

The data presented in Table 1 revealed that 66.4% of the respondents were male, while 33.6% were female. This indicates that male lecturers were the majority within the universities included in the study. In addition, 37.8% of the respondents were aged 30-39 years, and a significant 49.7% were in the 40-49year range. In contrast, 11.2% of participants were between 50-59 years old, and only 1.4% of the respondents were aged 60 years or older. As illustrated in the study results, 11.2% of the lecturers hold a Master's degree (MPhil/MA/MSc). The majority, at 44.1%, have titles such as Associate Professor or Assistant Professor. Additionally, 42.0% of the respondents hold doctoral degrees (PhD). This distribution underscores a strong presence of highly qualified and experienced academic staff, with a significant number holding advanced degrees and professional titles. According to the data, 12.6% of the respondents serve as Departmental Heads. The majority, 59.4%, hold the role of Lecturer. Additionally, 16.1% of the participants are Senior Lecturers, and the remaining 11.9% occupy various other positions within the university, which may include roles such as administrative positions or specialized academic functions. According to the results, 13.3% of the participants have been teaching at their institution for less than one year. In contrast, 44.8% of the respondents have accumulated 1-5 years of teaching experience at their current institution. Additionally, 20.3% of the participants have been at the institution for 6 to 10 years. A smaller segment, 10.5%, has been teaching there for 11 to 15 years, and 11.2% of the participants have over 16 years of experience at their current institution. This distribution of experience implies that the lecturers included in the study have considerable tenure at their

institutions.

**Table 2. Descriptive statistics, reliability and validity and partial correlation matrix for the study constructs**

	AVE	CR	Cronb ( $\alpha$ )	IQAM	ALE	RP	IE
IQAM	0.526	0.750	.721	1			
ALE	0.572	0.855	.862	.626*	1		
RP	0.562	0.824	.748	.708**	.697**	1	
LE	0.595	0.889	.882	.603**	.734**	.863**	1
Mean				3.468	4.088	4.046	4.129
SD				1.021	0.727	0.851	0.772
Variance				1.042	.528	.724	.597
Skewness				0.188	-0.709	-0.846	-0.879
Kurtosis				-1.309	-0.179	-0.280	0.244

IQAM=Internal Quality Assurance Mechanism; ALE= Assessment of Learner Evaluation; RP=Research Performance; IE=Institutional Efficiency;  $\alpha$  = Cronbach’s alpha; AVE = average variance explained

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*\*\* $p < .0001$

The results of the measurement model indicated a good overall fit, confirming the appropriateness of the model structure following necessary item-level modifications during the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.50, indicating satisfactory convergent validity. Reliability was also confirmed, with composite reliability (CR) values ranging from 0.750 to 0.889 and Cronbach’s Alpha coefficients between 0.721 and 0.882. These results surpassed the minimum benchmark of 0.70 recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981). Discriminant validity was established, as the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations fell within the acceptable cut-off range of 0.85 to 0.90, as suggested by Henseler et al. (2015). Collectively, these findings validate the reliability and construct validity of the measurement model adopted in the study.

The descriptive statistics revealed mean scores ranging from 3.468 (SD = 1.021) to 4.129 (SD = 0.772), indicating the effective functioning of the Internal Quality Assurance Mechanism (IQAM), Assessment of Learner Evaluation (ALE), Research Performance (RP), and Institutional Efficiency (IE). Specifically, IQAM recorded a mean of 3.468, ALE had a mean of 4.088, RP attained a mean of 4.046, and IE reflected a mean of 4.129. The skewness values were all negative and less than 1, indicating a slight leftward skew but remaining within acceptable statistical limits. Similarly, kurtosis values were all below 1, suggesting a relatively normal peak distribution.

**Table 3. Linear regression analyses of IQAM influence on ALE, RP, and LE**

	Assessment of Learner Evaluation			Research Performance			Institutional Efficiency		
	ALE ( $\beta$ )	<i>t</i>	Std. Error	RP ( $\beta$ )	<i>t</i>	Std. Error	IE ( $\beta$ )	<i>t</i>	Std. Error
IQAM	.446	9.523	.121	.590	11.892	.050	.251	8.969	.161
R	.626 <sup>a</sup>			.708 <sup>a</sup>			.603 <sup>a</sup>		
R <sup>2</sup>	.391			.501			.363		
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.387			.497			.359		
F	90.68**			141.4**			80.451**		

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*\*\* $p < .0001$

The study found that the IQAM had a positive and significant influence on the ALE ( $\beta=0.446$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and a stronger positive and significant effect on RP ( $\beta = 0.590$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Additionally, IQAM demonstrated a significant impact on Institutional Efficiency (IE) ( $\beta=0.251$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). The model results further showed that IQAM significantly predicted ALE ( $F=90.68$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), RP ( $F=141$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), and IE ( $F=80.451$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). The coefficient of determination revealed that IQAM accounted for 39.1% of the variance in ALE, 50.1% of the variance in RP, and 36.3% of the variance in IE. These results underscore that while the effect of IQAM is measurable and meaningful, its impact remains moderate across the three key institutional outcomes.

## DISCUSSION

The study revealed that IQAM has a positive and significant influence on learners' assessment practices ( $p=.000<0.01$ ). The results indicate that 39.1% of the variance in learners' assessment practices can be attributed to the effectiveness of IQA mechanisms. This suggests that enhancements in IQAM directly contribute to improvements in how assessments are designed, implemented, and evaluated within universities in Ghana. The finding is consistent with the work of Lemaire et al. (2022), who emphasized that well-structured IQA systems contribute to the standardization and fairness of student assessment processes. The study further discovered that effective IQAM has a positive and significant relationship with research and publication activities ( $p=.000<0.01$ ). The findings revealed that IQAM explain 50.1% of the variation in research and publication output, highlighting that IQAM is a major contributing factor to the advancement of research productivity in universities. The result concurs with Mensah (2022), who argued that institutions with well-developed quality assurance frameworks tend to exhibit higher levels of research productivity and academic output. In addition, Arthur (2022) highlights the role of periodic evaluation and monitoring in motivating faculty to engage in research and maintain scholarly relevance. The study revealed that IQAM has a statistically significant and positive influence on the overall effectiveness of institutional management and administration in HEIs ( $p=.000 < 0.01$ ). The analysis indicates that a unit increase in the effectiveness of IQA practices results in an average improvement of 36.3% in institutional management and administrative efficiency. This suggests that robust IQA systems not only uphold academic standards but also reinforce institutional governance, decision-making processes, and operational accountability. The findings align with De-Graft (2019), who emphasized that effective IQA frameworks are essential for improving governance structures and institutional performance in tertiary education. Similarly, Eshun et al. (2020) highlighted that QA interventions positively influence administrative competence and institutional responsiveness.

## CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The study established that IQAM exerts a positive and statistically significant influence on ALE, RP and IE. The study suggested that enhancements in IQAM directly contribute to improvements in how assessments are designed, implemented, and evaluated within HEIs. According to the study, a strong IQA structures not only enhances teaching and learning outcomes but also creates a supportive and accountable environment that fosters academic research, innovation, and scholarly dissemination. Also, the study reaffirmed that IQA system reinforces institutional governance, decision-making processes, and operational accountability. Specifically, IQAM accounted for 39.1% of the variance in ALE, 50.1% in RP, and 36.3% in IE, demonstrating its measurable, though moderate, impact across critical performance areas. These findings underscore the importance of robust quality assurance systems as a catalyst for both academic and institutional excellence. The result of the study highlighted the need for universities in Ghana to strengthen and institutionalize IQAM processes as a means of enhancing students' assessment practices, research output, and overall operational efficiency. Administrators and policymakers can leverage these findings to allocate resources, design training programs, and implement monitoring tools that directly support QA objectives. By strategically aligning IQAM with governance structure and performance indicators, Universities can ensure continuous improvement and sustainable quality outcomes.

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## Ethical Statement

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Ethical Committee of the Family Health University, Ghana (Ref. No. FHU-EPRC-005-2026). All participants were fully informed about the purpose and procedures of the study and provided written informed consent prior to participation. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained throughout the research process to safeguard participants' privacy. Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without any penalty or adverse consequences.

The authors affirm that this manuscript provides an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study. No essential aspects of the research have been omitted, and any deviations from the original study plan have been clearly explained. All ethical standards and best practices were adhered to during the conduct of the research and the preparation of this manuscript.

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