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Synergistic Predictors of Institutional Performance: Integrating Quality Assurance and Standards Compliance in Teacher Education

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Abstract
The quality of teacher education is a fundamental component of national development; however, tertiary institutions frequently navigate complex challenges in maintaining rigorous academic and infrastructural standards. This study investigates the synergistic predictive influence of quality assurance mechanisms (QAM) and compliance with educational standards (ESC) on institutional performance (IP) in teacher education. The study examines internal quality assurance processes and external regulatory compliance as concurrent, complementary predictors of institutional success. A quantitative descriptive-correlational survey design was employed. Data were gathered from a proportionately stratified sample of academic staff (N = 385) across six Federal, State, and Private Colleges of Education in South-West Nigeria using a validated instrument (QAISESCQ). Multiple Linear Regression (MLR) analysis revealed that QAM and ESC jointly account for a substantial 55.8% of the variance in institutional performance ($R^2 = 0.558$, $F(2, 382) = 241.65$). The standardised beta weights confirmed near-equivalence in their predictive capacity (ESC $\beta = 0.386$; QAM $\beta = 0.380$), indicating a highly synergistic relationship. Achieving optimal institutional performance requires the simultaneous operationalisation of external regulatory mandates and rigorous internal quality processing, suggesting that policy interventions must address both dimensions concurrently rather than in isolation.

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INTRODUCTION

The provision of high-quality teacher education remains a critical determinant of a nation's human capital trajectory and sustainable socio-economic development. Globally, educational systems are continually evolving to meet twenty-first-century pedagogical demands, requiring the preparation of educators who are demonstrably competent, professionally agile, and digitally literate (Darling-Hammond et al., 2024; Fomba et al., 2023; Olaifa et al., 2022). Tertiary institutions responsible for teacher preparation are consequently subjected to increasingly rigorous scrutiny by stakeholders and regulatory bodies, prompting the parallel deployment of internal quality frameworks and adherence to external statutory benchmarks. However, precisely how these internal and external quality architectures interact to predict measurable institutional success jointly remains an area requiring deeper empirical exploration within educational management scholarship.

Within the Nigerian higher education landscape, this dual mandate is particularly evident in Colleges of Education (COEs), which are entrusted with awarding the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) the statutory minimum qualification for teaching in the basic education sector under the regulatory oversight of the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE). The NCCE enforces Minimum Academic Standards covering physical infrastructure, curriculum implementation, and staff qualifications (Magaji & Nayaya, 2022), while institutions are simultaneously expected to sustain internal Quality Assurance Mechanisms (QAM) that monitor instructional delivery and staff professional development. Despite statutory funding interventions such as those from the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), institutional effectiveness ultimately depends on how these inputs are administratively managed rather than on their mere availability (Omosidi et al., 2023; Ezekwe & Ani, 2024; Olaifa et al., 2024). The outcome of interest in this ecosystem, Institutional Performance (IP), is a multidimensional construct that extends beyond unidimensional metrics such as student pass rates to encompass lecturers' productivity, graduation rates, student satisfaction, and community engagement, and is typically evaluated through integrated rather than isolated lenses (Oyeniran et al., 2024; Tijani et al., 2023; Olaifa et al., 2022). When a College of Education is unable to synthesise its internal quality assurance practices with external statutory standards, its overall performance may stagnate, with direct consequences for the pedagogical competence of graduating teacher cohorts.

A close reading of this body of work, however, exposes a persistent empirical gap: quality assurance and regulatory compliance are almost invariably examined as separate, single-construct phenomena, with studies typically modelling either QAM or ESC as the predictor of institutional outcomes, rarely both together. Prior organisational research cautions that this omission is consequential, since institutions operating in highly regulated environments may adopt formal compliance structures largely to satisfy external evaluators, while day-to-day operational practice remains only loosely connected to those regulations (Heese et al., 2016). Consequently, high standards compliance (ESC) may not translate into institutional performance if the institution lacks the internal administrative capacity (QAM) needed to enforce and monitor those standards. To date, no known study within the Nigerian teacher education literature has empirically quantified the joint and relative predictive contributions of QAM and ESC to institutional performance using a single validated instrument and a unified regression model. It is this specific gap the absence of a joint, dual-construct empirical test that the present study is designed to fill. To address this gap, this study examines quality assurance mechanisms and educational standards compliance as distinct but potentially complementary predictors of institutional performance, evaluating both constructs concurrently rather than sequentially or in isolation, in order to offer a more holistic diagnostic picture for tertiary administration (Atanda & Olaifa, 2022; Yusuf et al., 2025).

The South-West geopolitical zone of Nigeria provides an ideal context for investigating this dual-predictor relationship. Hosting a high density of teacher-training institutions, the

region features a diverse ownership landscape comprising Federal, State, and Private Colleges of Education structural diversity that is empirically relevant, as ownership type often shapes an institution's financial capacity, exposure to regulatory pressure, and ability to invest in human capital. Situating the investigation within this stratified regional context ensures that the resulting predictive model accounts for diverse administrative realities. Consequently, this study empirically examines the independent and joint predictive influence of quality assurance mechanisms and educational standards compliance on institutional performance in Colleges of Education in South-West Nigeria, guided by the following hypotheses:

H_1: There is a significant positive relationship between quality assurance mechanism dimensions (monitoring and evaluation, lecturers' performance supervision, staff professional development, and student teaching practice supervision) and institutional performance in Colleges of Education in South-West Nigeria.

H_2: There is a significant positive relationship between educational standards compliance dimensions (programme accreditation status, curriculum implementation, teaching staff qualifications, and resource needs projection) and institutional performance in Colleges of Education in South-West Nigeria.

H_3: There is a significant joint predictive influence of quality assurance mechanisms and educational standards compliance on institutional performance in Colleges of Education in South-West Nigeria.

Literature Review

Quality assurance and regulatory compliance in higher education have each attracted considerable empirical attention, though largely as separate strands of inquiry. This section reviews the existing literature on quality assurance mechanisms, compliance with educational standards, and their combined association with institutional performance, situating the present study within that body of work and clarifying the specific gap it addresses.

Quality Assurance Mechanisms and Institutional Performance

Quality assurance in tertiary education generally refers to the internal structures and processes institutions use to monitor, evaluate, and continuously improve academic and administrative functioning. Osuji et al. (2020) examined quality assurance practices in Nigerian tertiary institutions and highlighted persistent weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation systems as a recurring constraint on institutional management. Similarly, Atanda and Olaifa (2022), in a comparative study of quality assurance practices across unity and private secondary schools in Kwara and Oyo States, found that the consistency of internal supervisory practice varied markedly by institutional ownership and available administrative capacity. Abdullahi et al. (2026) reported that quality assurance mechanisms are closely tied to the sustainability of globalised higher education systems, with institutions that maintain active monitoring processes better positioned to adapt to shifting regulatory and market pressures. Mensah and Graham (2019) similarly documented that quality management practices in higher education institutions in developing countries are frequently constrained by fragmented administrative processes rather than by an absence of formal quality policies.

Within the Nigerian context specifically, Olaifa et al. (2022) found that quality assurance practices were positively associated with teachers' effectiveness in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State, while Olaifa et al. (2024) demonstrated that provosts' quality assurance strategies were linked to lecturers' job performance in Colleges of Education in the same state. Omosidi et al. (2020) similarly reported that quality assurance mechanisms were associated with the achievement of universal basic education goals in public secondary schools. Tijani et al. (2023) further examined total quality management practices in private Colleges of Education in Kwara State. They concluded that institutional effectiveness depended on the

coordinated operation of multiple quality assurance functions rather than on any single practice in isolation, a pattern consistent with Oyeniran et al. (2024), who found that performance management systems elevate lecturer effectiveness only when implemented as an integrated administrative process.

Educational Standards Compliance and Institutional Performance

Educational standards compliance concerns the extent to which institutions meet externally imposed regulatory benchmarks. In Nigeria, the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) sets and monitors Minimum Academic Standards covering infrastructure, curriculum, and staffing (Inemesit, 2025), operating within the broader regulatory architecture established by the National Policy on Education (Ezewuzie et al., 2025). Usman and Chinyere (2021) reviewed the prospects and challenges of quality assurance within Nigeria's education system. They observed that regulatory compliance is often pursued as an end in itself, with limited institutional follow-through on implementation. Wafudu and Kamin (2024) examined quality assurance standards for teaching and learning in vocational and technical education programmes. Similarly, they found considerable variability in the consistency with which accredited standards were translated into classroom practice.

Compliance outcomes are also closely tied to institutional funding and resourcing. Ezekwe and Ani (2024) found that Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) interventions supported academic staff training and development in South-East Nigerian public universities, while Eneasator et al. (2019) reported that TETFund-driven workforce development efforts were associated with improved productivity and performance among academic staff in Colleges of Education. Omosidi et al. (2023) extended this line of research by showing that access to TETFund interventions was associated with lecturers' productivity in Kogi State Colleges of Education, and further noted that Federal institutions, by virtue of more consistent access to such funding, were typically better positioned to absorb regulatory and compliance pressures than their State or Private counterparts.

Joint and Complementary Predictors of Institutional Performance

A smaller body of literature has begun to consider quality assurance and standards compliance together, rather than as competing explanations of institutional performance. Yusuf et al. (2025) examined quality assurance strategies as predictors of the effectiveness of Colleges of Education in North-Central Nigeria. They found that institutions combining active internal monitoring with sustained regulatory compliance reported stronger overall outcomes than those relying on either dimension alone. This pattern is consistent with organisational research suggesting that regulatory compliance can, in some circumstances, remain largely formal or symbolic, with institutions adopting the outward structures required by regulators. At the same time, day-to-day practice develops along a separate track (Heese et al., 2016). Such findings imply that regulatory inputs alone are an incomplete predictor of performance unless paired with genuine internal administrative follow-through.

International and comparative literature reinforces this picture. Darling-Hammond et al. (2024) argued that preparing teachers to meet contemporary pedagogical demands requires coordinated attention to both programme standards and ongoing professional support, while Fomba et al. (2023) frame the achievement of quality education as dependent on the joint fulfilment of access, standards, and institutional capacity. The OECD's comparative education indicators (Stewart, 2012) likewise show that education systems with both strong regulatory frameworks and robust internal quality processes tend to outperform those relying predominantly on one or the other. Nwachukwu (2024) similarly observed that investment in staff capability, layered on top of baseline regulatory qualifications, is a stronger driver of educational improvement in the Nigerian context than credential compliance alone.

Institutional Ownership and the Nigerian Colleges of Education Context

Ownership type Federal, State, or Private has repeatedly emerged in the Nigerian literature as a factor shaping both quality assurance capacity and compliance with standards. As noted above, Omosidi et al. (2023) linked differential access to TETFund resources to disparities in institutional capacity across ownership categories, a finding echoed by Tijani et al. (2023), who observed that private Colleges of Education often face distinct resourcing constraints relative to public institutions. Taken together, this literature suggests that any empirical assessment of quality assurance and standards compliance in Nigerian Colleges of Education should account for ownership-based variation in institutional capacity.

In summary, the reviewed literature demonstrates that quality assurance mechanisms and compliance with educational standards are each independently associated with institutional performance, and that a small but growing body of work points to complementary effects when both are considered together. However, no identified study has empirically quantified the joint and relative predictive contributions of these two constructs within a single regression model using a validated instrument in the South-West Nigerian Colleges of Education context. The present study addresses this gap directly.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopted a quantitative descriptive-correlational survey design, appropriate for capturing naturally occurring institutional practices without artificial manipulation and for permitting inferential testing of predictive relationships (Teo, 2014). The target population comprised academic staff in the 34 accredited Federal, State, and Private Colleges of Education in South-West Nigeria ($N \approx 3{,}500$). A multi-stage stratified random sampling technique was used: six institutions were selected by ownership type (two Federal, two State, two Private), and departments were stratified by disciplinary domain. Applying the Taro Yamane formula ($n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$, $e = 0.05$) yielded a sample of 385 academic staff, proportionately allocated across the six institutions. Data were collected using a researcher-designed instrument, the Quality Assurance Implementation Strategies and Educational Standards Compliance Questionnaire (QAISESCQ), comprising 56 items on a forced-choice 4-point Likert scale across four sections: demographics; QAM (21 items, four subscales); ESC (18 items, four subscales); and IP (19 items, four subscales). Face and content validity were established through expert review, and a pilot test with 30 respondents yielded strong internal consistency (QAM $\alpha = 0.912$; ESC $\alpha = 0.893$; IP $\alpha = 0.881$). Following ethical clearance and institutional permission, the instrument was administered with on-the-spot retrieval, achieving an 85.6% response rate (385 usable instruments). Data were analysed in SPSS using Multiple Linear Regression ($IP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 QAM + \beta_2 ESC + \varepsilon$) at $p < 0.05$, preceded by diagnostic checks for normality, multicollinearity, and autocorrelation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

This section details the empirical findings from inferential testing of research hypotheses, specifically evaluating the predictive capacity of the independent variables for Institutional Performance using Multiple Linear Regression (MLR) analyses at the 0.05 alpha level. Before executing the regression models, diagnostic tests were conducted to ensure the dataset met the statistical assumptions necessary for MLR. Firstly, the normality of the residuals was assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk test on a random subsample ($n = 100$), which indicated normality ($W = 0.991$, $p = 0.770$). Secondly, the independence of errors was assessed using the Durbin-Watson statistic, which yielded 1.945, indicating no significant autocorrelation. Lastly, multicollinearity was assessed using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), which returned a value of 1.863 for the primary predictors, well below the critical threshold of 5.0, confirming the

absence of significant multicollinearity. These validations allowed for the continuation of hypothesis testing.

Internal Quality Processing: Predictive Weight of Quality Assurance Mechanisms

The first hypothesis (H_1) examined the predictive relationship between the four dimensions of internal quality assurance mechanisms and institutional performance.

Table 1
Multiple Linear Regression Analysis of Quality Assurance Mechanism Dimensions Predicting Institutional Performance

Predictor Variable	B	SE	β	T	p
(Constant)	1.064	0.102	-	10.430	< .001
Monitoring and Evaluation	0.128	0.082	0.156	1.550	.121
Lecturers' Performance Supervision	0.046	0.085	0.055	0.540	.588
Staff Professional Development	0.161	0.090	0.192	1.790	.074
Student Teaching Practice Supervision	0.135	0.086	0.167	1.580	.116

Table 1 revealed that the regression model is statistically significant, with $F(4, 380) = 39.75$ and $p < 0.001$. The multiple correlation coefficient ($R = 0.543$) indicates a moderate positive relationship, while the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.295$) shows that the quality assurance dimensions account for 29.5% of the variance in institutional performance. Individual standardised beta coefficients (β) reveal that, despite the collective significance, no single variable reached $p < 0.05$, with Staff Professional Development being the closest marginal predictor ($\beta = 0.192$, $p = 0.074$). This suggests a high shared variance among sub-dimensions and indicates that they operate as an integrated administrative system. Institutions implementing monitoring also tend to have robust supervision and staff development, linking institutional performance to the holistic execution of the quality assurance framework rather than to individual mechanisms.

External Regulatory Processing: Predictive Weight of Educational Standards Compliance

The second hypothesis (H_2) tested the predictive influence of the dimensions of compliance with external educational standards on institutional performance.

Table 2
Multiple Linear Regression Analysis of Educational Standards Compliance Dimensions Predicting Institutional Performance

Predictor Variable	B	SE	β	T	p
(Constant)	1.011	0.094	-	10.710	< .001
Programme Accreditation Status	0.024	0.069	0.029	0.350	.725
Curriculum Implementation	0.167	0.072	0.202	2.320	.021
Teaching Staff Qualifications	0.078	0.077	0.091	1.000	.317
Resource Needs Projection	0.266	0.076	0.304	3.480	.001

Note. $N = 385$. $R = 0.591$, $R^2 = 0.349$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.342$. $F(4, 380) = 50.89$, $p < .001$. Dependent variable = Institutional Performance.

Table 2 indicates that compliance dimensions account for 34.9% of the variance in institutional performance ($R^2 = 0.349$), supported by a highly significant regression model ($F(4, 380) = 50.89$, $p < 0.001$). Unlike the integrated internal quality assurance model, the individual

standardised coefficients (β) for regulatory compliance show distinct predictors for institutional success. Active administrative throughputs are the strongest predictors, with Resource Needs Projection having the most significant predictive influence on performance (β = 0.304, t = 3.480, p = 0.001), followed by Curriculum Implementation (β = 0.202, t = 2.320, p = 0.021). In contrast, static structural inputs like Programme Accreditation Status (p = 0.725) and Teaching Staff Qualifications (p = 0.317) do not significantly predict performance. This analysis suggests that simply meeting external regulatory criteria is insufficient for pedagogical success without effective operationalisation of resources.

Joint Predictive Impact of Quality Assurance and Standards Compliance

The third and central hypothesis (H_3) tested the joint predictive capacity of the overarching variables Quality Assurance Mechanisms (QAM) and Educational Standards Compliance (ESC) on institutional performance.

Table 3
Multiple Linear Regression Analysis of Quality Assurance and Standards Compliance Jointly Predicting Institutional Performance

Predictor Variable	B	SE	β	t	p
(Constant)	0.667	0.099	-	6.707	< .001
Quality Assurance Mechanisms (QAM)	0.380	0.043	0.380	8.894	< .001
Educational Standards Compliance (ESC)	0.386	0.045	0.386	8.673	< .001

Note. N = 385. R = 0.747, R^2 = 0.558, Adjusted R^2 = 0.556. F(2, 382) = 241.647, p < .001. Dependent variable = Institutional Performance.

Table 3 outlines the joint composite regression model, indicating a strong positive relationship with a multiple correlation coefficient (R = 0.747). The coefficient of determination (R^2 = 0.558) indicates that 55.8% of the variance in institutional performance is explained by adherence to the internal quality assurance framework and external educational standards. ANOVA parameters show the model's statistical significance, with F(2, 382) = 241.647 and p < 0.001. Further analysis reveals that both primary predictors are significant, with Educational Standards Compliance being a marginally stronger independent predictor (β = 0.386, t = 8.673, p < 0.001) compared to Quality Assurance Mechanisms (β = 0.380, t = 8.894, p < 0.001). The statistical similarity of these coefficients shows that external regulatory compliance and internal quality mechanisms function jointly to enhance institutional performance in Colleges of Education.

Discussion

This study set out to empirically test the independent and joint predictive influence of quality assurance mechanisms (QAM) and compliance with educational standards (ESC) on institutional performance (IP) in Colleges of Education in South-West Nigeria. The central finding that QAM and ESC jointly account for the variance with near-equivalent standardised weights provides direct empirical support for the third hypothesis. It departs from the dominant pattern in prior Nigerian teacher-education research, which has tended to model quality assurance and regulatory compliance as separate, single-construct predictors (Omosidi et al., 2020; Olaifa et al., 2022; Yusuf et al., 2025; Abdullahi et al., 2026). Whereas these earlier studies each demonstrate that one construct or the other independently predicts institutional outcomes, the present findings extend that literature by showing that the two operate as coequal, complementary predictors rather than substitutes. For the first hypothesis, internal quality

assurance mechanisms collectively explained the variance in IP, yet none of the four constituent dimensions was statistically significant on its own. This pattern aligns with the integrated-management perspective advanced by Tijani et al. (2023) and Oyeniran et al. (2024), who similarly argue that quality assurance functions as an indivisible administrative ecosystem rather than as discrete, independently effective tools. It diverges, however, from studies that report differentiated effects for specific QAM sub-practices in isolation, suggesting that the high shared variance observed here reflects the particular institutional context of South-West Nigeria rather than a universal property of the construct.

For the second hypothesis, educational standards compliance explained a larger share of variance, but with a markedly different internal architecture: active throughputs Resource Needs Projection and Curriculum Implementation predicted performance significantly, while static inputs Programme Accreditation Status and Teaching Staff Qualifications did not. This finding aligns with prior research showing that active resourcing and implementation, rather than credentialing alone, drive institutional effectiveness (Nwachukwu, 2024; Ezekwe & Ani, 2024), and corroborates evidence that regulatory compliance can remain largely formal when institutions lack the internal capacity to translate paper credentials into day-to-day practice (Heese et al., 2016). However, with the regulatory assumption embedded in NCCE accreditation frameworks (Obilor & Ikpa, 2022) that paper accreditation and staff qualification are themselves sufficient markers of institutional quality, an assumption that the present data do not support and therefore reject. Echoing Omosidi et al.'s (2023) finding that access to TETFund gives Federal institutions greater capacity to absorb regulatory pressure, this study extends that conclusion by linking ownership-based resource disparity directly to the compliance-implementation gap identified above: State and Private institutions appear more likely to adopt the superficial structures of better-resourced peers without possessing the financial capacity to sustain genuine, day-to-day implementation.

CONCLUSION

This study provides empirical confirmation that quality assurance mechanisms and educational standards compliance are not competing but complementary predictors of institutional performance in Colleges of Education, jointly accounting for their variance, confirming that both dimensions operate as complementary rather than competing drivers of institutional success. The evidence indicates that external regulatory inputs acquire pedagogical value only when activated by internal quality assurance processes, and that static compliance indicators such as accreditation status and paper qualifications are, on their own, insufficient predictors of performance. It is therefore concluded that sustainable improvement in Nigerian teacher education requires the concurrent strengthening of internal quality assurance systems and the enforcement of external standards, rather than pursuing either dimension in isolation.

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