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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Assessment of the Effectiveness of Education Management Practices in Enhancing Quality Assurance Outcomes in Selected Higher Education Institutions in Tanzania: A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

The rapid expansion of higher education institutions in Tanzania has intensified the need for effective education management practices to ensure quality assurance outcomes. Despite existing regulatory frameworks, there remains a persistent mismatch between management structures and quality demands. This systematic literature review examines the effectiveness of four key education management practices institutional governance, curriculum management, human resource management, and financial resource management in enhancing quality assurance outcomes in higher education institutions, with specific attention to the Tanzanian context. A systematic review was conducted following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. Electronic databases including Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, Google Scholar, and African Journals Online were searched for peer-reviewed articles published between 2020 and 2025. A total of 1,247 records were identified, with 58 studies meeting the inclusion criteria for synthesis. The Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool was employed for quality assessment. The review reveals that effective institutional governance characterized by transparency, stakeholder participation, and accountability significantly enhances quality assurance outcomes. Curriculum management practices, including regular program reviews and alignment with labor market demands, demonstrate strong positive correlations with academic program quality. Human resource management faces persistent challenges including inadequate professional development, high workload, and limited career advancement opportunities. Financial resource management effectiveness depends not merely on funding availability but on strategic allocation, transparent budgeting, and robust monitoring systems. The Total Quality Management theory provides a relevant yet underutilized framework for understanding these relationships in Tanzanian higher education. This review identifies significant knowledge, geographical, theoretical, and methodological gaps in existing literature. While international studies demonstrate clear linkages between management practices and quality outcomes, Tanzanian-specific research remains fragmented and methodologically limited. The review establishes a strong rationale for a mixed-methods explanatory sequential study that applies Total Quality Management theory to comprehensively assess education management practices in Tanzanian higher education institutions.

Keywords: Education management practices; quality assurance; institutional governance; curriculum management; human resource management; financial resource management; total quality management

INTRODUCTION

Higher educational institutions around the world are experiencing rapid growth and change, putting immense pressure on management systems to ensure and enhance quality control measures. There has been tremendous growth in universities and colleges, making it essential to have efficient education management

practices that could assist in teaching, research, and administration. In places like Tanzania, the growth of higher educational institutions has put more pressure on having efficient management systems that could help produce competent students who could assist in the development of the nation (Mgaiwa, 2021; Mwila, 2025). Education management practices, such as

governance, curricular planning and implementation, human resource management, and financial resource management, have an essential part to play in enhancing planning, organizing, supervising, and evaluating institutional functions (Mekolle, 2024).

Quality assurance continues to be an essential aspect of higher education, which is concerned with the processes in place that guarantee the maintenance of standards, accountability, and the improvement of academic performance. Quality assurance systems are characterized by improved programs offered in terms of teaching and learning, more competent graduates, among other aspects of quality in institutions (Robert et al., 2021; Gavu, 2025). Various policies and frameworks guiding education management and quality assurance have been developed in the case of Tanzania, including the Higher Education Policy, which was introduced in 1999, Education and Training Policy, which came into force in 2014, Tanzania Commission for Universities Quality Assurance Guidelines of 2014/2019, and the National Higher Education Development Program, which was introduced in 2010 (Likoko & Wu, 2025; Ndimbo & Nkwabi, 2025). However, despite such efforts, many institutions still experience numerous difficulties with regard to implementation, governance, evaluation of curricula, lack of staff motivation and training, among others (Mmari et al., 2022; Komungemwe, 2024).

Considering these problems in higher education in Tanzania, educational management practices have been instrumental in enhancing the quality assurance process outcomes. Nonetheless, from the available literature, there is inadequate synthesis of the relationship between the essential dimensions of educational management and quality assurance process outcomes. The majority of past studies have emphasized the role of these variables in developed nations and specific management areas without presenting an integrated framework of analysis. Additionally, theoretical models like the Total Quality Management model have not been utilized to investigate the effect of these variables in developing countries. This study intends to examine the influence of educational management practices on quality assurance process outcomes in higher education institutions in Tanzania (2015-2025).

LITERATURE REVIEW

This review is based on Total Quality Management (TQM) Theory and Systems Theory, two concepts that

will provide an explanation for the effects that institutional processes and interrelated components have on quality assurance outcomes in higher education institutions. Total Quality Management places its focus on the need to continuously improve the quality of services offered, ensuring customers' (students') satisfaction and involvement in the process as stakeholders and making the organization more accountable for its decisions. Quality is seen as something to be achieved through coordinated management processes involving all the different processes that take place within an organization (Deming, 1986; Oakland, 2014). In turn, Systems Theory views higher education institutions as interrelated systems where governance, the curriculum, human resources, and financial management act as interdependent components affecting institution performance (Bertalanffy, 1968).

Institutional governance procedures and processes are essential to the empirical evidence of quality assurance practices and their results within higher education systems. Transparent and accountable governance structures that include all the stakeholders have been shown to lead to better results and quality levels for institutions (Staring et al., 2022). The literature demonstrates the inclusion of digital transformation, internationalization and accreditation, and continuous improvement in good governance practices (Akhtar et al., 2025).

In the developing world, governance problems arise due to lack of capacity, lack of infrastructure, and lack of competent manpower (Geben & Chyrva, 2025). In the case of Africa, the issue of governance revolves around the themes of leadership, quality management, and government regulation of institutions (Nabaho et al., 2020).

In Tanzania, according to Mgaiwa (2021), the lack of proper governance structures and lack of competent personnel have been found to weaken quality management. However, many studies about governance depend on secondary sources of information such as documents, thereby failing to provide evidence regarding quality of governance practices. There is, therefore, a lacuna in conducting research on quality of governance practices through an appropriate methodology.

Curriculum management is equally important in influencing quality assurance results in higher education. According to Guseva et al. (2022), effective curriculum systems that engage in frequent

evaluations, involvement of all stakeholders, and relevance to the labor market demands can significantly improve the quality of teaching and learning. Research conducted in Latin America, Europe, and Africa has shown that curriculum planning, monitoring, and lecturer involvement have a positive impact on institutional quality (Bechoux et al., 2021).

For instance, in East Africa, Manyasa (2022) concluded that curriculum coordination and review positively influence learning experiences, while Mwila (2025) discovered that external quality measures alone are not sufficient without proper internal curriculum management procedures. Nevertheless, most existing literature has only focused on quantified data, leaving little room for understanding how curriculum management practices function in teaching and learning contexts. In Tanzania, little has been known about the impact of curriculum management practices since there is an absence of empirical information regarding this subject. More precisely, institutions rarely focus on aligning their curricula to labor market requirements and involve stakeholders in the process of improving their curriculum management practices.

Additionally, evidence from empirical studies shows that human resource management processes play an important role in ensuring quality assurance outcomes since they affect the performance, motivation, and effectiveness of employees. Human resource management processes such as recruitment, training, performance management, and rewards have shown to increase employee retention, commitment, and performance (Halid et al., 2024; Tumwesigye et al., 2020). However, in developing countries, issues such as work overload, inadequate professional development opportunities, and poor performance management processes have continued to hinder employee effectiveness and quality assurance initiatives (Komungemwe, 2024). While there is evidence that incorporating the concept of sustainability and quality assurance processes in human resource management processes leads to improved institutional effectiveness (Rodríguez et al., 2025), the focus of studies in the field has mainly concentrated on employee outcomes. Existing studies in Tanzania have failed to cover many higher learning institutions while addressing the relationship between human resource management processes and quality assurance outcomes.

Furthermore, financial resource management practices are critical determinants of quality assurance outcomes,

influencing the availability, allocation, and utilization of resources required for teaching, learning, and institutional development. Empirical evidence from various contexts demonstrates that effective financial planning, transparent budgeting, timely fund allocation, and strong accountability mechanisms significantly enhance institutional quality (Hu & Tang, 2021; Robert et al., 2021; Ragazou et al., 2025). In African contexts, weak financial management systems, delayed funding, and poor monitoring have been linked to reduced effectiveness of quality assurance processes (Kadikilo et al., 2025). Studies also highlight that the effectiveness of financial management depends not only on the amount of funding but on how efficiently resources are utilized and monitored. However, most studies examine financial management in isolation, without considering its interaction with governance, curriculum, and human resource practices. In Tanzania, research remains limited, with existing studies focusing mainly on public institutions and relying on quantitative approaches that do not capture the complexity of financial decision-making processes.

The findings obtained empirically from this review indicate that there is an interplay between education management activities, which are governance, curriculum management, human resource management, and financial resource management, that together contribute towards quality assurance outcomes. Although global and regional research contributes significantly in filling the gap of knowledge, there still are several areas to be addressed especially within Tanzania where mixed methods of research have not been used effectively, no comprehensive approach in terms of different institution types and theoretical frameworks such as Total Quality Management. Hence, this literature review combines current empirical findings on quality assurance outcome (2015-2025) within Tanzanian institutions of higher learning.

METHODOLOGY

This review adhered to the PRISMA guidelines for conducting systematic reviews (Page et al., 2021). An extensive literature search was performed across multiple databases including Scopus, Web of Science, Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), Google Scholar, and African Journals Online for studies within the years 2020 to 2025. Key terms used in the literature search included education management practice, institution governance, curriculum

management, human resources management, financial resource management, quality assurance, higher education, universities, Tanzania, and sub-Saharan Africa. Other sources were located using citation chasing methods as well as on institutional websites like the Tanzania Commission for Universities, Inter-University Council for East Africa, and UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning.

Only empirical studies, systematic reviews, and conference proceedings in English from 2020 to 2025 were considered for inclusion. The inclusion criteria entailed studies that were: (1) conducted in education management strategies and quality assurance effects; (2) concentrated on universities; (3) empirical or systematic research; and (4) carried out in Tanzania, sub-Saharan Africa, or equivalent settings. The exclusion criteria encompassed studies not based on empirical research, like editorials and opinion pieces, studies concentrating on primary and secondary schools, non-English literature, and studies with no proper research methods or related to quality assurance outcomes. There was a total of 1,247 publications initially screened. After eliminating duplicate studies and assessing the abstracts, 193 publications fulfilled the eligibility criteria for full-text analysis. Ultimately, 24 studies were selected for inclusion in the systematic review process.

Quantitative data synthesis was done using methods of description and comparison, whereas qualitative data synthesis involved thematic analysis aimed at establishing themes within and across the various studies. Due to heterogeneity of the methodology used and different outcomes, it would not have been appropriate to conduct a meta-analysis; thus, a narrative synthesis method of data synthesis was employed. It covered areas such as governance, curriculum, human resource, and financial management. Ethical considerations were ensured by providing accurate citations for all references.

Moreover, the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT, 2018) was employed to gauge the methodological quality of the selected studies. The tool considers qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods of research on the basis of five quality criteria applicable to each method of research. Each paper was assessed according to its research question clarity, data gathering

suitability, methodology appropriateness, and results consistency. Papers that fulfilled four out of the five criteria were classified as having high quality, whereas papers that fulfilled three out of the five criteria were categorized as moderate quality papers. Papers scoring below 50% were eliminated at the eligibility phase. In summary, moderate-to-high-quality papers were included.

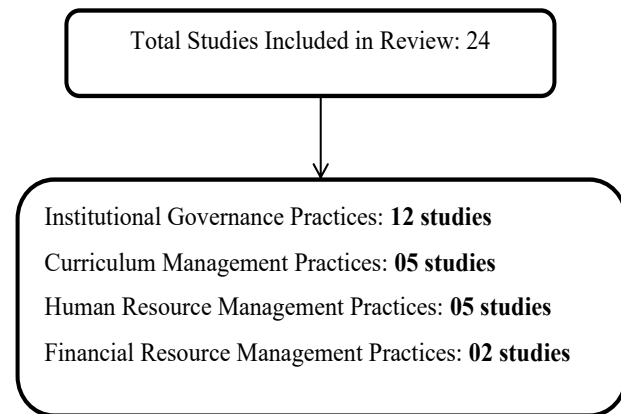


Figure 1. Categorization of included studies (n = 24) based on empirical literature review themes

Critical Appraisal Summary (MMAT, 2018)

The assessment of methodological quality reveals that most of the selected articles show high levels of methodological quality, whereby many quantitative and mixed-methods studies fulfilled four or more out of five MMAT criteria. However, most qualitative articles, especially ones using document and secondary data analyses were considered to have moderate quality because of lack of verification and triangulation. As for governance, curriculum, human resource and financial management, the following problems are typical of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods articles. First, they use self-reporting. Second, the lack of multi-source confirmation. Third, the deficiency of triangulation between qualitative and quantitative data is characteristic.

Therefore, we may conclude that although the selected evidence base has sufficient quality to make synthesis possible, its methodological aspects should be taken into account.

Table 1. Mixed methods appraisal tool (MMAT, 2018) assessment of included studies

Author(s) & Year	Title	Study Design	Criterion n 1	Criterion n 2	Criterion n 3	Criterion n 4	Criterion n 5	Overall Quality
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								Judgment
Akhtar et al. (2025)	Quality management and accreditation trends in US higher education	Qualitative (document/secondary data)	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Can't tell	Yes	Moderate
Alarcón & Brunner (2024)	Multi-governance in Chilean higher education	Qualitative (conceptual)	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Moderate
Staring et al. (2022)	Digital quality assurance standards in OECD/EHEA	Qualitative (policy analysis)	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Can't tell	Yes	Moderate
Greben & Chyrva (2025)	Governance challenges in Ukraine	Qualitative (document analysis)	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Can't tell	Yes	Moderate
Fadzil et al. (2022)	Management practices in Malaysia's higher education	Qualitative (strategic analysis)	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Can't tell	Yes	Moderate
Alhajri et al. (2025)	Role of OAAAQA in governance improvement	Qualitative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	High
Nabaho et al. (2020)	QA governance in African higher education	Qualitative (content analysis)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	High
Atanaw et al. (2025)	Governance and service quality in Ethiopia	Quantitative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
Mgaiwa (2021)	QA challenges in Tanzanian	Qualitative case study	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	High

	private universities							
Inga et al. (2021)	Curriculum planning in Latin America	Qualitative (bibliometric)	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Moderate
Bechoux et al. (2021)	Curriculum oversight in Belgian universities	Mixed methods	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
Guseva et al. (2022)	Curriculum coordination in Russian universities	Mixed methods	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	High
Manyasa (2022)	Curriculum coordination in Kenyan universities	Qualitative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
Mwila (2025)	IUCEA framework and QA in Tanzania	Quantitative	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Yes	Moderate
Rodríguez et al. (2025)	HR sustainability in Argentina	Systematic review	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Moderate
Halid et al. (2024)	HR practices and retention in Malaysia	Quantitative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	High
Tumwesigye et al. (2020)	HR practices and turnover in Uganda	Quantitative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	High
Komungemwe (2024)	Performance management in Tanzania	Mixed methods	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
Marium (2025)	Financial management in Ontario universities	Qualitative	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	Moderate
Ragazou et al. (2025)	Funding and QA in France	Mixed methods	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High

Hu & Tang (2021)	Financial investment and QA in China	Mixed methods	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
Umoudo & Mkpa (2025)	Financial stewardship in Nigeria	Mixed methods	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	High
Robert et al. (2021)	Financial management in Uganda	Mixed methods	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	High
Kadikilo et al. (2025)	Financial efficiency in Tanzania	Quantitative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Can't tell	Yes	High

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Institutional Governance Practices and Quality Assurance Outcomes

The results obtained from the discussed studies prove that institutional governance processes have a significant impact on the quality assurance process within the higher education environment. The process of effective institutional governance through transparency, accountability, and stakeholders' involvement contributes to improving the efficiency and quality of institutions. The literature proves that through the use of various governance processes such as accreditation, regulation processes, and decision-making, institutions become credible and efficient (Alhajri et al., 2025; Nabaho et al., 2020). These findings align with the principles of Total Quality Management, which emphasize continuous improvement and inclusive leadership in achieving quality outcomes.

On the other hand, the research findings also show that the effectiveness of governance is greatly reliant on the implementation process. In certain situations, measures for accountability have resulted in unforeseen adverse effects because they were used as instruments of compliance rather than as means of development (Atanaw et al., 2025). Besides, issues like centralized decision-making, low institutional independence, and poor digital readiness impede the efficiency of the governance system, especially in developing nations (Alarcón & Brunner, 2024; Greben & Chyrva, 2025). For instance, in Tanzania, research demonstrates that poor leadership and ineffective governance frameworks affect quality assurance achievements (Mgaiwa, 2021).

Curriculum Management Practices and Quality

Assurance Outcomes

It is evident that the practice of curriculum management has a considerable effect on quality assurance results. Effective management processes that include periodic program reviews, curricula alignment with the labor market requirements, stakeholders' involvement, and constant monitoring increase the quality of teaching and learning experiences. The studies conducted in different geographical areas confirm that systematic curriculum planning and lecturer involvement improve the relevancy and academic standards (Bechoux et al., 2021; Guseva et al., 2022).

Nevertheless, even with the above contributions of the practices, there are difficulties faced when trying to implement the management process effectively. It becomes harder to manage curriculum reform processes only through external frameworks without the help of any internal structures. According to a study conducted in Tanzania, the frameworks have little effect on the quality of programs unless the curriculum practices are in place at the institutional level (Mwila, 2025). Furthermore, the existing literature emphasizes different aspects of curriculum management while ignoring the entire process.

Human Resource Management and Quality Assurance Outcomes

From the analysis of the above-discussed literature review, one can see that human resource management practices play a crucial role in ensuring QA results since they affect staff performance, motivation, and overall organizational productivity. Such HRM practices as recruitment, training, professional development, and reward systems have been shown to be linked to staff retention and commitment, thus contributing to teaching quality and effectiveness of institutions (Halid et al.,

2024; Tumwesigye et al., 2020).

At the same time, the discussed studies identify significant problems in human resource management which prevent successful QA activities. For instance, issues like heavy workload, lack of career development, and insufficient performance management decrease staff effectiveness and undermine QA process (Komungemwe, 2024). In Tanzania, despite having performance management systems, their implementation is hindered by insufficient knowledge among staff members about them and how to use them. Moreover, there was little attention paid to QA aspects other than staff ones in the considered articles; namely, none of them examined human resource management in terms of QA indicators such as teaching quality, research results, and graduate skills.

Financial Resource Management and Quality Assurance Outcomes

Conclusions drawn from the reviewed literature show that financial resource management plays an important role in the success of quality assurance. Effective financial management practices such as budgeting, allocation, and monitoring improve teaching quality, infrastructure construction, and student services (Hu & Tang, 2021; Ragazou et al., 2025). This finding supports the argument that efficient use of resources is crucial for realizing quality goals in institutions.

However, the findings also highlight the problems associated with financial management practices. For example, some approaches to financial management like performance-based financing reduce institutional quality through increased pressure on institutions and inequality (Marium, 2025). In Africa, particularly in Tanzania, problems like delayed funds transfer, poor financial control, and monitoring make quality assurance ineffective (Kadikilo et al., 2025; Umoudo & Mkpa, 2025). Additionally, most of the studies conducted on financial management practices consider financial management as an independent practice without investigating the relationship between financial management and other management practices.

Accordingly, the study results indicate that management practices including institutional governance, curriculum management, human resource management, and financial resource management have a significant effect on the results of quality assurance in higher education institutions. These management practices are interlinked; poor performance in one of the practices may negatively affect the performance of other practices. Even though

there is substantial evidence from all over the world regarding the importance of these management practices, little work has been done in Tanzania to explore this topic and provide theoretical background. In addition, the discussion points out that it is not enough just to have certain management practices within institutions; their proper implementation and adjustment to institutional context are essential for achieving good results. What is more, it appears that the theoretical base of this topic is rather weak as most of the existing literature provides descriptive analysis of single aspects of management and uses mostly one research methodology. Hence, future research is necessary in this field.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In summary, the literature review highlights the importance of management practices in the determination of the quality assurance results within higher education institutions. Governance, curriculum, human resources, and financial resources management are interrelated issues that affect the performance of institutions, teaching quality, and the quality of academic work both at a global level and within Africa. Although there are numerous positive impacts resulting from efficient implementation of these management practices, various problems such as poor governance, ineffective implementation of curriculum, ineffective human resources management, and ineffective financial management continue to exist in many developing countries such as Tanzania. As such, it can be stated that apart from the existence of these management practices, their efficient implementation and incorporation into institutions is very important. In fact, several knowledge gaps have been identified in relation to the management practices within higher education in Tanzania. These include the absence of theory-based information, few mixed-method studies, and lack of information regarding how these management practices are synergistic.

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