Research Paper

Enhancing Institutional Quality: An Assessment of Accreditation Readiness and Stakeholder Experiences

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Abstract

Accreditation serves as a critical mechanism for ensuring quality assurance, institutional credibility, and continuous improvement in higher education. This study examined accreditation readiness, stakeholder satisfaction, and the challenges experienced by a higher education institution in the Philippines using a convergent parallel mixed-methods design. Quantitative data were collected from 525 administrators, faculty, staff, and students through a validated questionnaire, while qualitative insights were derived from open-ended responses and analyzed thematically. Findings indicated a high level of accreditation readiness (M = 4.23) and stakeholder satisfaction (M = 4.30), with administrators reporting the most favorable perceptions. Challenges were rated moderately high (M = 3.64), particularly concerning administrative support, resource limitations, and time constraints. ANOVA results showed no significant differences in perceptions among stakeholder groups, suggesting shared institutional experiences. A strong positive correlation was found between readiness and satisfaction (r = .894), while readiness and challenges showed a negligible correlation (r = .133). Thematic analysis revealed four key themes: institutional proactivity, operational barriers, integrated support systems, and empowered teamwork. These highlight the need for early preparation, collaborative engagement, consistent documentation, and psychological readiness among stakeholders. This study addresses a research gap by offering a stakeholder-centered perspective on accreditation in the Philippine context. It underscores the need for strategic improvements in documentation, communication, digital infrastructure, and capacity-building initiatives. An action plan is proposed to guide institutions in strengthening their accreditation efforts through inclusive, coordinated, and sustainable practices.

Keywords: *accreditation readiness, stakeholder satisfaction, mixed-methods, quality assurance*

INTRODUCTION

Accreditation in higher education ensures academic quality, institutional credibility, and continuous improvement. It reflects an institution's adherence to standards in governance, instruction, faculty qualifications, and student services. However, the process's success depends heavily on stakeholder preparedness, coordination, and engagement-areas that often face challenges.

In the Philippines, agencies such as CHED, PACUCOA, ALCUCOA, and AACCUP uphold national standards through rigorous accreditation processes. While accreditation enhances institutional reputation and unlocks academic and funding opportunities, it is resource-intensive. The process demands comprehensive documentation, self-assessment, and active participation from all stakeholders. Barriers such as unclear standards, limited training, and resistance to change often affect satisfaction and performance.

Most local studies have focused on policy compliance and institutional outcomes (CHED, 2021; AACCUP, 2019), with limited exploration of stakeholder-centered perspectives. This research addresses that gap by assessing institutional readiness, satisfaction, and challenges based on stakeholder insights-an approach underrepresented in the Philippine context. The study specifically aims to answer:

1. How do stakeholders assess accreditation readiness?
2. How satisfied are they with the process?
3. What challenges are commonly encountered?
4. Are there significant differences in stakeholder assessments?
5. Is there a relationship between readiness, satisfaction, and challenges?
6. What themes emerge from stakeholder experiences?
7. What action plan can enhance accreditation readiness?

By examining these questions, the study contributes to the development of more inclusive, responsive accreditation strategies and proposes a stakeholder-informed enhancement plan to improve institutional preparedness and engagement in accreditation efforts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Quality in higher education reflects the diverse priorities of stakeholders: students seek personal development and employability, faculty focus on research, and policymakers prioritize societal impact and returns on investment (Giller, 2023). Accreditation plays a critical role in aligning these interests by ensuring standards, especially amid disruptions like COVID-19 and the rise of online education.

More than a compliance tool, accreditation fosters institutional transformation by promoting transparency, innovation, and global credibility (Patra & Singh, 2024; Kumar et al., 2020). It drives stakeholder engagement and continuous improvement through innovations such as AI-based assessments and outcomes-based education (Topchyan & Gyulazyan, 2024; Priya et al., 2024). International examples, including Armenia and Zimbabwe, show how accreditation builds resilience, autonomy, and sustained quality (Garwe et al., 2024).

Accreditation readiness requires strategic planning, collaborative self-assessment, and innovation to meet evolving academic benchmarks (Accreditation Preparation in Higher Education, 2024; Stakeholders in Higher Education Accreditation: A Bibliometric Analysis, 2024). Despite resource limitations, proactive initiatives like Bridge to Success: The College Readiness Experience (2025) illustrate how structured efforts can enhance institutional performance. Active participation from stakeholders—students, faculty, and employers—is essential, as accrediting bodies provide frameworks but institutional commitment ensures successful implementation and curriculum alignment (Stakeholders in Higher Education Accreditation: A Bibliometric Analysis, 2024).

Current trends emphasize student-centered, data-driven accreditation models. However, challenges persist, including regulatory complexity, limited resources, and the need for greater transparency—particularly in sectors like nursing education (Hashish et al., 2025). A participatory culture, institutional support, and effective feedback mechanisms are vital to aligning education with workforce demands.

Integrated accreditation strategies can strengthen stakeholder engagement and drive institutional growth, but must be supported by faculty development, regular policy reviews, and robust evaluation tools (Requa, 2021). In the digital era, inclusive governance, open communication, and the use of tools like satisfaction surveys and learning analytics foster data-informed improvements (OECD, 2023). Striking a balance between accountability and flexibility is key, as shown by JCI accreditation in healthcare, which improved outcomes but introduced

procedural complexity (Poremski et al., 2020).

Innovative approaches, such as Macau University of Science and Technology's virtual accreditation—featuring mental health initiatives and administrative streamlining—highlight how policy adaptation enhances engagement and addresses institutional gaps (QAA, 2022). Moving forward, sustainable accreditation practices require clear criteria, stakeholder incentives, and adaptive frameworks to ensure relevance and impact.

RESEARCH METHOD
Research Methodology
This study utilized a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, enabling the simultaneous collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive assessment of accreditation readiness. This approach allowed for triangulation, enhancing both the validity and depth of findings (Dovetail Editorial Team, 2023).

Instrument and Data Analysis
Data were gathered using a self-developed, validated questionnaire, reviewed by experts to ensure face, content, and construct validity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A pilot test yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.96, indicating excellent internal consistency.

The instrument comprised closed-ended items using a 5-point Likert scale to evaluate accreditation readiness, stakeholder satisfaction, and perceived challenges. It also included open-ended questions to gather qualitative insights. The Likert scale interpretation is as follows:

5-point Likert Scale

Weight	Range	Qualitative Description		
5	4.21-5.00	Excellent preparation	Excellent Experience	Major challenges
4	3.41-4.20	Very Satisfactory preparation	Very Satisfactory Experience	Considerable challenges
3	2.61-3.40	Satisfactory preparation	Satisfactory Experience	Moderate challenges
2	1.81-2.60	Needs improvement	Challenging Experience	Minimal challenges
1	1.00-1.80	Poor preparation	Poor Experience	Not significant

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (weighted mean), ANOVA for group differences, and Pearson's r to assess correlations among variables. Qualitative responses were analyzed thematically through structured coding to identify recurring patterns and enrich the quantitative findings.

Respondents
The sample size was determined using G*Power analysis, requiring at least 134 participants for correlation tests (α = 0.05, medium effect size, power = 0.80). To ensure the reliability and generalizability of findings, 525 respondents were selected from a population of 3,588 through stratified random sampling, ensuring proportional representation of key stakeholder groups. The sample included 13 administrators (2.5%), 41 faculty members (7.8%), 15 non-teaching personnel (2.9%), and 456 students (86.9%). All participants answered both the quantitative and qualitative components of the survey questionnaire, providing comprehensive data for evaluating

accreditation readiness, satisfaction, and the challenges encountered.

Table 1. Respondents

Type	Population Size	Sample Size	%
Administrators	25	13	2.5%
Faculty	81	41	7.8%
Non-teaching Personnel	71	15	2.9%
Students	3345	456	86.9%
Total	**3588**	**525**	**100%**

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Accreditation Readiness

Table 2 summarizes stakeholder evaluations of accreditation readiness across, with an overall composite mean of 4.23 (Excellent), reflecting strong preparedness. "Institutional impact" (M = 4.37) was the highest-rated, while "Resource sufficiency" (M = 4.11) received the lowest rating, highlighting concerns over resource allocation.

Administrators rated highest (M = 4.48), followed by students (M = 4.24), while faculty (M = 4.15) and staff (M = 4.14) were more cautious, likely due to their involvement in compliance. These results emphasize the importance of collaboration and align with Accreditation Preparation in Higher Education (2024) on stakeholder engagement and Team Creatrix (2024) on resource limitations. The strong rating on institutional improvement supports Stakeholders in Higher Education Accreditation: A Bibliometric Analysis' (2024) view of accreditation as a driver of quality development.

Table 2. Accreditation Readiness

Item Statement	Administrators		Faculty		Staff		Students		Composite	
	Mean	VD	Mean	VD	Mean	VD	Mean	VD	Mean	VD
1. Clear guidelines	4.38	E	4.24	E	4.47	E	4.32	E	4.32	E
2. Proper Onboarding	4.46	E	4.05	VS	4.40	E	4.20	E	4.20	E
3. Requirements Clarity	4.54	E	4.10	VS	4.20	E	4.24	E	4.23	E
4. Preparation phase coordination	4.46	E	4.27	E	4.07	VS	4.32	E	4.31	E
5. Resource Sufficiency	4.23	E	3.95	VS	3.53	VS	4.18	VS	4.11	VS
6. Mock exercises implementation	4.54	E	4.02	VS	3.87	VS	4.13	VS	4.12	VS
7. Administrative support consistency	4.54	E	4.22	E	4.00	VS	4.28	E	4.27	E
8. Documents/Materials Accessibility	4.62	E	4.32	E	4.47	E	4.23	E	4.26	E
9. Timeline soundness	4.38	E	3.90	VS	4.00	VS	4.12	VS	4.14	VS

Item Statement	Administrators		Faculty		Staff		Students		Composite	
	Mean	VD	Mean	VD	Mean	VD	Mean	VD	Mean	VD
10. Institutional Impact	4.62	E	4.44	E	4.40	E	4.35	E	4.37	E
Overall Mean and Verbal Description	4.48	E	4.15	VS	4.14	VS	4.24	E	4.23	E

2. Accreditation Procedures Satisfaction

Table 3 presents stakeholder satisfaction ratings, with an overall mean of 4.30 (Very Satisfied), indicating positive perceptions of the accreditation process. The highest-rated item was "Collaborative evidence" (M = 4.41), while the lowest, "Process alignment with expectations" (M = 4.17), suggests unmet individual expectations.

Administrators had the highest satisfaction (M = 4.48), with faculty (4.29), students (4.30), and staff (4.25) showing slightly lower but still favorable responses, likely due to differing roles and resource access. The findings emphasize the value of inclusive, transparent processes and align with OECD (2023), Requa (2021), and Poremski et al. (2020) on communication and professional development in accreditation.

Table 3. Accreditation Procedures Satisfaction

Item Statement	Administrators		Faculty		Staff		Students		Composite	
	Mean	VD	Mean	VD	Mean	VD	Mean	VD	Mean	VD
1. Process Organization	4.62	VS	4.24	VS	4.13	MS	4.25	VS	4.25	VS
2. Stakeholder preparedness	4.62	VS	4.00	MS	3.93	MS	4.25	VS	4.23	VS
3. Panel feedback's constructiveness	4.62	VS	4.34	VS	4.40	VS	4.36	VS	4.37	VS
4. Collaborative Evidence	4.62	VS	4.49	VS	4.00	MS	4.41	VS	4.41	VS
5. Institutional Impact	4.69	VS	4.51	VS	4.40	VS	4.39	VS	4.40	VS
6. Process alignment with expectations	4.46	VS	4.05	MS	3.93	MS	4.18	MS	4.17	MS
7. Guidelines and expectations' clarity	4.62	VS	4.17	MS	4.27	VS	4.27	VS	4.27	VS
8. Accreditor feedback's constructiveness	4.62	VS	4.41	VS	4.53	VS	4.27	VS	4.30	VS
9. Professional Impact	4.62	VS	4.41	VS	4.47	VS	4.26	VS	4.28	VS
10. Confidence in future accreditation readiness	4.61	VS	4.26	VS	4.40	VS	4.36	VS	4.36	VS
Overall Mean and Verbal Description	4.48	VS	4.29	VS	4.25	VS	4.30	VS	4.30	VS

3. Challenges

Table 4 highlights accreditation challenges, with a composite mean of 3.64 (Considerable Challenges). The main issue was insufficient administrative support (M = 3.81), while the least was workload imbalance (M = 3.47). Administrators reported the most challenges (M = 3.92), followed by faculty, staff, and students.

The findings emphasize resource strain, communication gaps, and support deficiencies, aligning with Stakeholders in Higher Education Accreditation: A Bibliometric Analysis (2024) and Hashish et al. (2025), who stress the need for strong support systems and stakeholder readiness for effective accreditation.

Table 4. Challenges

Item Statement	Administrators		Faculty		Staff		Students		Composite	
	Mean	VD	Mean	VD	Mean	VD	Mean	VD	Mean	VD
1. Document preparation difficulty	3.54	CC	3.98	CC	3.80	CC	3.65	CC	3.68	CC
2. Time constraints	3.92	CC	4.07	CC	3.46	CC	3.54	CC	3.89	CC
3. Challenging panel concerns	3.77	CC	3.46	CC	3.27	MCE	3.50	CC	3.49	CC
4. Stakeholder coordination	3.92	CC	3.54	CC	3.40	CC	3.53	CC	3.54	CC
5. Upskilling Need	4.08	CC	4.00	CC	4.07	CC	3.87	CC	3.89	CC
6. Criteria Ambiguity	3.85	CC	3.61	CC	3.20	MCE	3.47	CC	3.50	CC
7. Imbalance workload distribution	3.69	CC	3.66	CC	3.47	CC	3.44	CC	3.47	CC
8. Technical/logistical issues	4.15	CC	3.85	CC	3.53	CC	3.51	CC	3.55	CC
9. Insufficient Administrative support	4.23	CC	4.07	CC	3.93	CC	3.77	CC	3.81	CC
10. Stressful process	4.00	CC	3.71	CC	4.27	MJ	3.54	CC	3.58	CC
Overall Mean and Verbal Description	3.92	CC	3.80	CC	3.71	CC	3.62	CC	3.64	CC

4. Stakeholder Assessment Differences

Table 5 shows no significant differences in stakeholder perceptions of preparedness (F = 1.083, p = .371), satisfaction (F = 1.896, p = .151), or challenges (F = 0.751, p = .531), indicating broad consensus. While administrators rated readiness and satisfaction slightly higher, these differences were not statistically significant. This supports the value of collective engagement in accreditation (Stakeholders in Higher Education Accreditation: A Bibliometric Analysis, 2024; Hashish et al., 2025) and suggests future efforts should focus on addressing resource and support gaps.

Table 5. Stakeholder Assessment Differences

Levels	Mean Administrators	Mean Faculty	Mean Staff	Mean Students	F-value	p- value
Preparedness	4.48	4.15	4.14	4.24	1.083	0.371
Satisfaction	4.61	4.29	4.25	4.30	1.896	0.151
Challenges	3.92	3.80	3.71	3.62	0.751	0.531

*The test is significant ($p \leq .05$),

5. Relationship Between Readiness, Satisfaction, and Challenges

Table 6 shows a strong positive correlation between accreditation readiness and stakeholder satisfaction ($r = .894$, $p < .001$), but a weak correlation with challenges ($r = .133$, $p < .001$). This indicates that while preparedness boosts satisfaction, it does little to reduce perceived challenges. These findings align with Hashish et al. (2025) and OECD (2023), highlighting the need for systemic improvements, including better digital tools and administrative support, to address persistent operational issues (Stakeholders in Higher Education Accreditation: A Bibliometric Analysis, 2024; Requa, 2021).

Table 6. Relationship Between Readiness, Satisfaction, and Challenges

Levels		r-value	Degree of Correlation	p-value
Preparedness	Satisfaction	.894*	High	<.001
	Challenges	.133*	Negligible	<.001

*The test is significant ($p \leq .05$),

Legend: .90-1.00 Very High Correlation, .70-.90 High Correlation, .50-.70 Moderate Correlation, .30-.50 Low Correlation, .00-.30 Negligible

6. Emerging Themes from Stakeholders' Experiences

Participants' experiences during accreditation highlighted a dynamic blend of preparation, participation, and institutional learning, showing a growing commitment to quality assurance, efficiency, and collaboration across stakeholders.

Institutional Proactivity

Table 7 highlights the institution's proactive approach to accreditation, with structured planning, clear timelines, and stakeholder involvement. Participants noted improved time management, with faculty avoiding last-minute work and students meeting behavioral expectations. These findings support Chasokela and Manokore (2024), emphasizing planning, participation, and task delegation to enhance readiness and reduce stress.

Table 7. Experiences

Formulated Meanings	Codes
- Multiple orientations, seminars, trainings	Capacity Building
- Clear objectives, procedures, timeline communication	Information Dissemination
- Early planning, task delegation, deadline tracking	Strategic Planning
- Inter-office coordination, unified stakeholder engagement	Collaboration
- Defined roles, balanced workload	Team Structure

Formulated Meanings	Codes
- Student orientation on behavior, uniform policies	Student Readiness
- Centralized, updated, organized documentation	Document Management
- Facility improvements, logistical preparation	Facility Readiness
- Active leadership support, involvement	Leadership Support
- Observance of ceremonies, interviews, protocols	Event Protocols
- Self-assessment, audits, quality improvement efforts	Self-Assessment and Continuous Improvement

Operational and Systemic Barriers

Table 8 highlights institutional challenges across organizational, technical, emotional, and logistical areas. Students feared making mistakes, while faculty cited unclear roles and inadequate onboarding, resulting in inconsistent performance. These issues align with Hossain's (2024) findings in Bangladesh, emphasizing the need for clearer systems, better support, and improved psychosocial readiness for accreditation resilience.

Table 8. Challenges

Formulated Meanings	Codes
- Time constraints, task overlap, heavy workload	Time and Workload Management
- Disorganized files, tracking issues, outdated documents	Documentation Mismanagement
- Supply shortages, poor internet, outdated tools	Resource Limitations
- Unclear or late communication	Communication Gaps
- Low awareness, anxiety, limited orientation	Readiness Barriers
- Poor participation, unclear roles,	Stakeholder Accountability
- Lack of training, templates, clarity on expectations	Onboarding Deficiencies
- Inadequate rooms, limited physical space	Facilities Constraints
- Data inaccessibility, unclear compliance monitoring	Policy and Compliance Issues
- Insufficient funding, lack of incentives	Budgetary Constraints
- Stress, pressure, fear of failure	Psychosocial Challenges

Integrated Support/Inclusive Systems

Table 9 presents recommendations to strengthen the accreditation process, emphasizing proactive strategies like integrating accreditation into routine operations and involving students in planning. These suggestions align with Al-Marzouq et al. (2023), advocating for accreditation as an ongoing practice and stressing collective responsibility and long-term planning for sustainable quality assurance.

Table 9. Recommendations

Formulated Meanings	Codes
- Year-round planning and early preparation	Advance Planning
- Digitized, centralized, and standardized filing	Document System Enhancement
- Clear roles and inter-office collaboration	Interdepartmental Coordination
- Area-specific teams or focal persons	Designated Accreditation Teams
- Regular orientations and mock drills	Training and Awareness

Formulated Meanings	Codes
- Timely updates via multiple platforms	Communication Systems
- Fast internet and cloud-based tools	Technology Infrastructure
- Sufficient printing and logistics	Equipment and Supplies
- More rooms and climate-controlled spaces	Facility Improvements
- Active participation and awareness campaigns	Student Engagement
- Increased budget and manpower	Financial Support
- Clear manuals, templates, and policies	Accreditation Guidelines
- Engage consultants and peer-sharing	External Collaboration
- Continuous, integrated documentation practice	Accreditation Culture
- Incentives and wellness programs	Staff Motivation

Empowered Teams and Sustainable Systems

The study identified strategies to improve stakeholder collaboration, focusing on trust-building, clear communication, and structured teamwork (Table 10). Participants emphasized the importance of clear roles and motivation through recognition. These findings align with Team Asana (2025), highlighting the need for trust, communication norms, and emotional investment to foster high-performing, accountable teams.

Table 10. Strategies

Formulated Meanings	Codes
- Regular, multi-channel updates	Clear Communication
- Defined roles and delegated tasks	Role Clarity
- Early preparation and planning	Strategic Planning
- Cross-functional collaboration	Team-Based Planning
- Trainings and mock drills	Capacity Building
- Student inclusion in planning and execution	Student Empowerment
- Daily discipline and consistent practices	Embedded Accreditation Culture
- Shared drives and digital tools	Tech-Enabled Coordination
- Respectful, open, and purposeful teamwork	Positive Team Culture
- Recognition of contributions	Staff Motivation

8. Proposed Action Plan

Table 11 outlines the Accreditation Strengthening Plan with ten Key Result Areas (KRAs) targeting readiness, capacity building, resource upgrades, communication, digital integration, and stakeholder engagement. Each KRA includes specific objectives, activities, and success indicators, aiming to institutionalize quality practices, ensure policy alignment, and foster a culture of continuous improvement and excellence.

Table 11. Accreditation Strengthening Plan

Key Result Areas (KRA)	Objectives	Activities	Success Indicators
1. Year-round Readiness	Continuous documentation and preparation	Quarterly mock audits, routine file updates	100% mock audit compliance; files updated year-round
2. Capacity Building	Enhance faculty/staff competency	Quarterly seminars, onboarding orientation, tutorials	80% trained annually; 90% satisfaction rate
3. Resource Enhancement	Improve equipment and facility access	Upgrade internet, labs, restrooms; purchase devices	Full resource functionality; facility upgrades completed
4. Stakeholder Communication	Raise awareness and coordination	Info drives, updates, town halls	95% awareness; 3+ town halls annually
5. Task Forces	Distribute workload and ensure accountability	Assign task leads; form rotating committees	100% area coverage; timely output submission
6. Tech Integration	Digitize workflows and documentation	Shared drive, submission tracking system	System operational; 90% submissions on time
7. Student Engagement	Promote student participation	Simulations, briefings, volunteer logistics	80% attendance; positive accreditor feedback
8. Feedback & CQI	Use feedback for continuous improvement	Debriefings, area action plans, monitoring	All comments addressed; CQI reports submitted
9. Policy Alignment	Align policies with standards	Annual policy reviews, SOP/manual updates	100% compliance; updated policies distributed
10. Culture of Excellence	Institutionalize quality mindset	Daily documentation, recognition programs, showcase best practices	Increased timely outputs; annual awards given

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that the institution has a solid foundation in accreditation readiness, with strong stakeholder awareness and responsibility. However, challenges like poor planning, unclear task delegation, limited resources, and communication gaps hinder efficiency. The consistency across stakeholder groups highlights the importance of inclusive participation and coordinated messaging. The study emphasizes that accreditation should be integrated into daily operations to ensure sustained quality and reduce reactive efforts. Ultimately, transformation requires aligned leadership, communication, documentation, and resources, underpinned by a culture of continuous improvement and shared accountability.

LIMITATIONS & FURTHER RESEARCH

The study's limitations include its focus on a single institution, limiting the generalizability of findings to other institutions with different structures and resources. Variations in stakeholder familiarity with accreditation processes and reliance on self-reported data introduce potential biases. These limitations highlight the need for broader, multi-institutional, and longitudinal research to better understand accreditation practices in diverse educational settings.

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