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# Quality Management Practices and Their Influence on Academics' Innovative Work Behavior and Performance in Nepalese Higher Education Institutions

*Hrizu Adhikari[1], Kamaljeet Kaur[2]*
*[1]PhD Scholar, Department of Management, Kuala Lumpur University of Science & Infrastructure (KLUST), Malaysia*
*[2]Assoc. Prof/Senior Lecturer, Department of Management, Kuala Lumpur University of Science & Infrastructure (KLUST), Malaysia*
*Corresponding Author: Hrizu Adhikari | 081803900006@s.iukl.edu.my*
*https://orcid.org/0009-0000-3329-7582*
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## ABSTRACT

The paper examines the association of Quality Management Practices (QMP), Innovative Work Behavior (IWB) and Academic Performance (AP) among scholars in Nepalese Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The growing needs of most HEIs in Nepal pertaining to accreditation, competition, and academic excellence has made it important to comprehend the effects of institutional quality practices on faculty behavior and performance. The study follows a quantitative research design with qualitative information as it is guided by the perspectives of quality management and organizational behavior. The structured questionnaires and stratified random sampling were used to collect primary data out of 200 full-time and part-time academics. QMP, IWB and AP were measured using validated perceptual scales. Analysis of data has been done by means of SPSS and Jamovi, with inclusion of descriptive statistics, reliability and validity analysis, correlation test and mediation analysis using regression. The results show that Quality Management Practices relate positively and significantly with the Innovative Work Behavior ($\beta = 0.59$, $p < .001$) and Academic Performance ($\beta = 0.53$, $p < .001$). Academic Performance (0.44, $p < .001$) is also positively correlated with the Innovative Work Behavior (meaning that it mediates the relationship between QMP and performance outcomes), which proves to be their relationship. The qualitative interview data also emphasizes the leadership commitment as one of the main drivers of innovation and the engagement of stakeholders and the practice of continuous improvement as the factor that helps to achieve better teaching effectiveness and engagement with the institution. The research provides the empirical findings to justify the role of quality management as a strategic tool to facilitate innovation and academic performance in Nepalese HEIs.

## KEYWORDS

*Academic Performance, Higher Education Institutions, Innovative Work Behavior, Nepal, Quality Management Practices*

## INTRODUCTION

Quality Management Practices (QMP) are a growing concern in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) around the world since it is considered as a significant tool in increasing the efficiency of institutions, the quality of teaching and academic excellence. The higher education sector in Nepal is going through a new stage of crisis of change brought about by stiff competition, increasing students and stakeholders demands, and the need to live up to international accreditation and ranking. The increase in the number of institutions in the private sector, the rise in international collaboration, and the general rise in focus towards the research productivity have forced Nepalese HEIs to enhance their internal quality assurance processes (Anatan &

Kristine, 2024). The adoption of full QMP has been a strategic consideration as institutions have struggled to enhance service delivery, relevance of the curriculum and institutional governance.

Although there is an increasing demand of innovation, the interconnection between QMP and the level of innovation and performance of academics is not fully comprehended regarding Nepal HEIs. Even though the objective of QMP framework is to facilitate improvement of organizations, the research question of how these systems influence the behavior, creativity and job performance of academics, in the specific socio cultural and resource constrained setting of Nepal has not been established yet. The literature mostly focuses on the quality of the administration, satisfaction of the students, or institutional accreditation, which is a gap in the literature that provides an insight into the fact that the quality practices are converted into better faculty performance and behavior (Aithal & Maiya, 2023). The sunshine occurs when properly applied QMP creates an atmosphere of support and encouragement whereby academic staffs will feel proud, motivated and empowered to participate in generating ideas, testing them and knowledge creation. There is no multidimensional relationship that has undergone exhaustive research in the past and the avenues by which QMP may mediate innovative behavior and performance have not been studied (Cheah et al., 2022). These are very critical gaps considering that faculty innovation is one of the primary fuel of curriculum renewal, pedagogical refreshment, and organizational excellence (Poudel, 2023). The following study will focus on the effects of Quality Management Practices on the Innovative Work Behavior of academics and evaluate the effect of quality management practices on the academic performance of academics in the Nepalese Higher Education Institutions. It will answer two important research questions: how QMP modulate the innovative behaviour of academic personnel and how they influence the performance outcomes (Sciarelli et al., 2020). The study is specifically important to policy makers, university presidents, accrediting organizations, and faculty members in that it can give them evidence-based information on how to enhance internal quality assurance systems (Al Matalka & Al Zoubi, 2023). The research contributes to improvement of the institutional excellence and competitiveness in the higher educational learning sector of Nepal by elucidating how QMP bring about innovativeness and effectiveness.

The proposed research is based on quality management views in higher education as well as organizational behavior theory that addresses how the institutional quality practices affect the academic behavior and performance. Regarding Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), the idea of Quality Management Practices, including leadership commitment, continuous improvement systems, stakeholder involvement, is perceived to provide favorable academic environments that improve the faculty engagement and performance (Aithal and Maiya, 2023). According to the existing research in the field of higher education, in cases when the process of quality assurance is integrated into the institutional governance and leadership, the likelihood of academics to feel empowered, motivated, and encouraged to take part in the innovative teaching and research activities increases (Paudel, 2021; Bista, 2025). Regarding an organizational behavior lens, these quality-driven types of environments promote psychological safety and discretionary effort as critical antecedents of Innovative Work Behavior in the case of academic staff (Aithal and Maiya, 2023). Based on these theoretical backgrounds, the current paper theorizes Innovative Work Behavior as one of the driving factors by which Quality Management Practices are converted into increased Academic Performance, in the form of teaching effectiveness, research engagement, and institutional contribution (Odunlami et al., 2024). Therefore, the following hypotheses are formulated in the study: Quality Management Practices positively correlate with the Innovative Work Behavior (H1), and the Innovative Work Behavior correlates positively with the Academic Performance (H2). This is a theoretical and conceptual framework that directs the empirical exploration of the relationship among the study variables within the context of Nepal Higher Education Institutions.

## METHODOLOGY

Quantitative research design is used in this study to investigate the impact of Quality Management Practices on the innovative work behavior and the performance of the academics as possible and the selected Higher Education Institutions in Nepal. A structured questionnaire that structured questionnaires administered by researcher to the full-time and part-time faculty at different universities and affiliated colleges with various disciplines and institutional characteristics was used to collect primary data. To be statistically adequate, Cochran formula was used to determine the sample size, and stratified random sampling method was employed to incorporate respondents of different faculties, academic positions and types of institutions. The authors targeted three most important variables of Quality Management Practices, whose indicators included; leadership commitment, continuous improvement systems, stakeholder involvement and evaluation mechanisms; Innovative Work Behavior, whose scale consisted of the generation, promotion, and implementation of ideas; and Academic Performance, which measured sense of teaching quality, research output, and institutional engagement. Adaptation of validated scales was done to guarantee reliability and conceptual precision. To examine direct and the mediation level, data were analyzed using SPSS and Jamovi with descriptive analysis, test of reliability and validity, Pearson correlation, and regression or structural equation modelling. The values of Cronbach alpha were used to check the reliability whereas the factor analysis was used to check the construct validity.

Innovative Work Behavior and Academic Performance were measured with the application of standardized perceptual scales which are commonly used in higher education and organizational studies. The use of well-established instruments, the anonymity of respondents, and the consideration of reliability and construct validity were among the measures to reduce the possibility of method-related bias. Although the measures reflect the perceived teaching effectiveness, research engagement, and contribution of institutions, the results can be viewed with the understanding that the performance indicator was measured using perceptual indicators as opposed to administrative records. The study included a small qualitative aspect in order to add to contextual knowledge. The semi-structured interviews were carried out with five academic staff members who were chosen purposely among the various institutions of higher learning thus this represented the diversity in terms of institution type and scholarly level. The interviews centered on the experience of the participants on certain Quality Management Practices, more specifically the leadership commitment, stakeholder involvement, and continuous improvement mechanisms and the impact of these practices on innovative behavior and academic performance. The quantitative findings were supported and interpreted using thematic analysis.

## RESULTS

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables (N = 200)**

| Variables | Mean (M) | Std. Deviation (SD) | Minimum | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Quality Management Practices (QMP) | 3.71 | 0.64 | 2.10 | 4.89 |
| Innovative Work Behavior (IWB) | 3.65 | 0.59 | 2.00 | 4.75 |
| Academic Performance (AP) | 3.78 | 0.67 | 2.15 | 4.90 |

(Source: Fieldwork, 2025)

The Table 1 illustrates a summary of the descriptive statistics of the three core variables under study, which include; Quality Management Practices (QMP), Innovative Work Behavior (IWB), and Academic Performance (AP). The average statistics show that respondents in general view QMP as moderately well implemented with an average characterized by a mean of 3.71, with the structured processes of quality, in the Nepalese HEIs. The innovative Work Behavior mean is 3.65 which implies that academic staff generates and implements ideas in moderate-high frequency. Academic Performance has the greatest level of teaching effectiveness, research productivity and institutional engagement as shown by the mean score of 3.78. The standard deviations observed show moderate variability, which means a variety of personal experiences and perception in different institutional settings.

**Table 2: Reliability Statistics of Measurement Scales**

| Constructs | Items (n) | Cronbach's Alpha (α) | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Quality Management Practices (QMP) | 12 | 0.89 | Excellent reliability |
| Innovative Work Behavior (IWB) | 9 | 0.87 | Excellent reliability |
| Academic Performance (AP) | 7 | 0.84 | Good reliability |

(Source: Fieldwork, 2025)

The reliability of the measurement scales to measure the three constructs namely, QMP, IWB, and Academic Performance is shown in Table 2. All the values of Cronbach alpha exceed the desired level of 0.70 since it indicates a high level of internal consistency and reliability of the survey items. More specifically, the QMP scale (0.89 alpha) showed a high level of reliability, and it is a statement of consistency in the assessments by the respondents of the quality practice in the HEIs. The IWB construct had an alpha value of 0.87 indicating that the items that were part of innovation were organized well and were measured reliably. There was good reliability because the alpha value (0.84) was found to be good. These findings confirm the statistical soundness and appropriateness of the measurement instruments applied in the research to be used in the further analysis.

**Table 3: Correlation Matrix of Key Variables**

| Variables | QMP | IWB | AP |
|---|---|---|---|
| Quality Management Practices (QMP) | 1 | .62** | .58** |
| Innovative Work Behavior (IWB) | .62** | 1 | .66** |
| Academic Performance (AP) | .58** | .66** | 1 |

**Note: Correlation is significant at p < 0.01 (two-tailed)**
(Source: Fieldwork, 2025)

The correlation matrix (Table 3) is a summary of the correlation with the strengths and direction of the relationship between QMP, IWB, and Academic performance. The positive correlation between all of them is statistically significant at the 0.01 level, which means that the constructs

have significant relationships. The relationship that is found to be the strongest is between IWB and Academic Performance (r =.66) and implies that the more academics take part in the generation and implementation of ideas, the higher they are likely to achieve success in teaching and research. The dependency between QMP and IWB (r =.62) indicates the importance of quality practices in developing innovative conduct among university members of staff. On the same note, the correlation between QMP and Academic Performance (r =.58) is positive to underscore the role of quality systems in increasing the effectiveness of the faculty. These associations hold believability to the conceptual insurance of the study.

**Table 4: Regression Analysis: Effect of QMP on IWB and Academic Performance**

| Dependent Variable | Predictor | β-Coefficient | t-value | p-value | Result |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Innovative Work Behavior (IWB) | QMP | 0.59 | 9.82 | < .001 | Significant |
| Academic Performance (AP) | QMP | 0.53 | 8.41 | < .001 | Significant |
| Academic Performance (AP) | IWB (Mediator) | 0.44 | 7.89 | < .001 | Significant |

(Source: Fieldwork, 2025)

Table 4 presents the results of the regression analysis that explores the predictive effect of QMP on IWB and Academic Performance, and the mediation factor of IWB. The results also show that the detail of QMP is a significant predictor of the Innovative Work Behavior and the association has a beta of 0.59 which can be taken as evidence that well-established quality practices positively impact faculty innovation. There is also the close relationship between QMP and Academic Performance (= 0.53), meaning that higher quality mechanisms in institutions are likely to lead to capacity to produce a more effective and productive academic staff. Furthermore, Academic Performance (2 = 0.44) under IWB is also one of the foreman decisions, indicating its mediating levels. All these findings reveal that QMP does not only have a direct positive impact on performance, but an indirect one in promoting performance through creating innovation among scholars.

The interviews performed as a qualitative source helped to understand further how particular Quality Management Practices have any impact on innovative work behavior and academic performance. Academics interviewed repeatedly emphasized leadership commitment as a core driver to innovation and how institutional leaders apparently support research efforts, provide encouragement, and are open to new teaching methods enhances their readiness to create and apply new ideas. Mechanisms of stakeholder involvement like student feedback systems and external evaluation were seen as having an effect on teaching effectiveness and institutional engagement more than direct innovation. The respondents also highlighted that effective practices associated with continuous improvement such as regular performance reviews and professional growth opportunities have assisted in aligning individual academic aspirations with quality objectives in the institution. These observations indicate that various QMP elements have different impacts on innovation and performance outputs, which supports and contributes to the quantitative results.

The findings support the hypotheses in an empirical manner. In line with H1, Quality Management Practices were determined to have positive and significant relationship with Innovative Work Behavior (-0.59, $p < .001$), which means that higher quality management practices are related to an increased level of innovation among academics. In support of H2, the Innovative Work Behavior was positively and significantly correlated with Academic

Performance (0.44, $p < .001$), indicating that the more academics participate in innovative behaviors, the more they are able to exhibit high teaching effectiveness, research interest, and institutional contribution. In general, the results support the specified relationships and correspond to the theoretical and conceptual framework of the research. These quantitative outcomes are also supported by the qualitative interview results pointing to the leadership commitment, stakeholder involvement, and continuous improvement practices as the important quality management mechanisms that stimulate innovative work behavior and the academic performance, respectively.

## DISCUSSION

The results of this paper demonstrate the great effect of Quality Management Practices on Innovative Work Behavior and the performance of academics in general in the context of Nepalese Higher Educational Institutions providing both practical and theoretical evidence (Poudel, 2022). The heat of positive correlation between QMP and IWB and academic performance is a good reinforcement of the assertion that well-organized quality systems which take into account leadership commitment, continuous improvement, and stakeholder-oriented processes can impose an ambiance that induces creativity, experimentation and productive academic performance among the faculty members (Aithal & Maiya, 2023). These findings can be compared to the existing literature, the basis of which is the Total Quality Management theory and the theory of organizational behavior stating that quality-oriented cultures can promote employee motivation, psychological safety, and readiness to innovate. Based on the hypotheses put forward, the empirical results give a solid explanation to the theoretical framework of the study. The positive relationship between Quality Management Practices and Innovative Work Behavior dominated by the H1 is supported by the previous studies in the field of higher education that show that leadership commitment, systems of continuous improvement, and participatory quality mechanisms can establish enabling conditions to academic innovation (Cheah et al., 2023; Aithal and Maiya, 2023; Bista, 2025). Equally, the evidence supporting H2-positive relationship between Innovative Work Behavior and Academic Performance, is consistent with evidence that the academic success of institutions in higher education is mostly promoted by innovative teaching methods, research projects, and higher student involvement in the institution (Paudel, 2021). These quantitative data are also supported by the qualitative research of the interviews that point out leadership support as a primary driver of innovation, whereas the stakeholder involvement and continuous improvements were viewed as a driving force in improving the quality of teaching and engagement of the institutions. The combination of the quantitative and qualitative evidence enhances the explanatory potential of the study and supports the context-specific applicability of the Quality Management Practices in promoting a sense of innovation and performance in Nepalese Higher Education Institutions.

## CONCLUSION

The paper draws the conclusion that QMPs are critical in promoting the Innovative Work Behavior and the overall performance of academics in Nepalese Higher Education Institutions. The findings are clear in their evidence that a robust quality regime based on leadership support, ongoing improvement, and open evaluation processes establish an institutional climate to facilitate the creativity of the faculty, involvement in research, and performance in teaching. The findings of the hypothesis testing also prove that Quality Management Practices are positively correlated with Innovative Work Behavior and that Innovative Work Behavior is positively correlated with Academic Performance among academics. These numerical results are supported by the qualitative interpretation of the interviews, which supports the central role of leadership dedication in stimulating innovation, whereas stakeholder engagement and persistent

advancement processes play the main role of improving teaching quality and institutional participation. Having shown direct and indirect impacts of QMP on academic performance, the study can bring useful information to the management of higher education and strategic significance of enhancing quality frameworks to promote innovation, high-performing faculty, and competitiveness of the institution in the currently changing academic environment in Nepal. Although it has made contributions, the study does recognize some of its limitations as having moderate sample size, limited geographic coverage and use of self-reporting data which could affect the generalizability. Besides this, the research design used was a cross-sectional research design where data was collected at one time. Although the regression and mediation analyses indicate the statistically significant predictive relationships between Quality Management Practices, Innovative Work Behavior and Academic Performance, this design type does not permit any causal inferences. Accordingly, the results can be regarded as pointing out associations, but not cause-and-effect relationships. It is recommended that future research use longitudinal or time-lagged research designs to enhance the determination of causal relationships.

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