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Examining the Impact of Accreditation on Teacher Education Quality in Pakistan: Institutional Performance and Pre-service Teacher Outcomes

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Abstract

Addressing this gap, the present study examined how accreditation influences the quality of teacher-education programs in Pakistan through institutional performance, stakeholder perceptions, and pre-service teacher outcomes. Using a convergent mixed-methods design within a pragmatist framework, data were collected from 214 participants representing 12 purposively selected, nationally accredited institutions across four provinces. The sample comprised 109 teacher-educators, 75 pre-service teachers, and 30 program heads. A 36-item survey, aligned with national accreditation standards, measured perceived institutional performance and pre-service teaching outcomes. Semi-structured interviews with 18 institutional leaders provided contextual insights into accreditation practices. Quantitative results indicated significant improvements in institutional performance ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 0.63$) and pre-service outcomes ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 0.64$), with a strong positive correlation between accreditation scores and practicum performance ($r = .62$, $p < .01$). Qualitative findings revealed enhanced documentation culture, leadership accountability, and quality-assurance awareness. The integrated analysis confirmed that accreditation promotes transparency and professional readiness, though gaps remain in digital pedagogy and post-accreditation monitoring. The study recommends continuous quality evaluation, digital-competence training, and targeted resource support to sustain improvement. Its design offers a replicable framework for assessing the impact of accreditation on teacher-education systems across the Global South.

Keywords: Teacher Education Accreditation, Quality Assurance, Preservice Teachers, Institutional Performance, Professional Standards, Pakistan.



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Introduction

Teacher education forms the cornerstone of educational quality worldwide, as teachers' knowledge, skills, and attitudes profoundly shape both student learning outcomes and national development priorities (Darling-Hammond, 2005). To achieve meaningful and sustainable educational transformation, teacher preparation programs must therefore align with rigorous professional and academic standards. Within this context, accreditation plays a pivotal role as a structured quality assurance mechanism that evaluates whether teacher education institutions meet nationally and internationally recognized benchmarks (World Bank, 2009). By promoting accountability and validating institutional performance, accreditation not only ensures compliance but also drives ongoing improvement in curriculum design, faculty development, and organizational effectiveness (Kayyali, 2024).

In Pakistan, ongoing disparities in the quality of teacher education, governance frameworks, and resource distribution impede the attainment of equitable learning outcomes (Arif et al., 2019). In response to these challenges, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) established the National Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (NACTE) in 2006 as the primary entity responsible for assessing teacher education programs in accordance with the National Professional Standards for Teachers in Pakistan (NPSTP) (Higher Education Commission, 2021). These standards specify the pedagogical, ethical, and subject specializations competencies required of standards. Still, concerning the influence of accreditation on institutional performance and the results of pre-service teachers, there are gaps, despite the considerable policy efforts put in place. Most of the research has focused on mapping out policy pathways or the state of preparation of the institutions, rather than evidence on the outcomes of the adoption of the accreditation policy (Perveen et al., 2021; Khushi, 2023).

Moreover, studies in the area indicate that institutional capability, documentation practices, and resource allocation differ significantly between public and private TEIs, impacting the consistency of accrediting results. Despite the existence of accrediting frameworks, it remains unclear how much they contribute to quantitatively enhancing the quality of teaching. (Al-Mufeez et al., 2020). This absence of empirical validation raises a significant question: has certification truly improved institutional efficacy and teacher proficiency, or has it devolved into a mere procedural formality motivated by compliance rather than genuine transformation? The need to address this question is particularly urgent, given Pakistan's evolving education reforms and the global emphasis on quality assurance in teacher preparation (UNESCO, 2023).

Existing research rarely combines many data sources, including educator views, institutional records, and pre-service teacher performance, to thoroughly evaluate accrediting outcomes. This study addresses that gap by employing a mixed-methods approach that integrates quantitative and qualitative data to assess the impact of accreditation on the quality of teacher education. Its novelty lies in empirically linking accreditation processes with measurable indicators of institutional performance, curriculum alignment, and pre-service teacher outcomes. Specifically, this study aims to investigate the relationship between accreditation and the quality of teacher education in Pakistan, addressing three research questions.

RQ1: How does accreditation influence institutional performance in teacher-education programs, particularly in governance, curriculum alignment, and faculty development?

RQ2: How do teacher-educators and program managers perceive the effectiveness and challenges of accreditation practices in Pakistan?

RQ3: To what extent has accreditation contributed to improving pre-service teachers' practicum performance in accordance with the National Professional Standards for Teachers in Pakistan?

Addressing these questions provides both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, the study positions accreditation as a transformative mechanism within quality assurance theory, moving beyond a compliance model to an improvement-driven framework that supports institutional learning. Practically, the findings will inform national policymakers, accreditation councils, and higher education leaders on strategies to strengthen the quality of teacher education, enhance equity in resource distribution, and align training programs with evolving professional standards. By connecting institutional governance, stakeholder perceptions, and student outcomes, this work contributes empirical clarity to one of Pakistan's most pressing educational policy concerns: ensuring that accreditation processes meaningfully elevate the quality of teacher preparation in alignment with international best practices and the developmental aspirations of the Global South.

Theoretical Framework

This research is based on the extensive discourse around quality assurance and enhancement in higher education. It emphasizes certification as an essential mechanism for ensuring institutional accountability and fostering their growth and development. Accreditation is defined as a systematic process that evaluates an institution's adherence to established national and professional standards in curriculum, education, administration, and resource management. It functions as both a procedural requirement and a transformative tool for institutional growth and professional development in teacher education.

This research is founded on four interconnected dimensions. Accreditation functions as a means to validate that teacher-education programs meet requirements that guarantee its graduates are sufficiently equipped for the classroom and possess the requisite abilities. Secondly, accreditation fosters accountability by instituting professional norms. This ensures adherence to the National Professional Standards for Teachers in Pakistan (NPSTP) and establishes consistency in teacher preparation programs across all educational institutions. Third, it pertains to equity and the distribution of resources. It recognizes that real and long-lasting quality improvement depends on making sure that institutional resources, infrastructure, and support systems are shared fairly. The framework stresses the need to make educational programs more relevant to their local areas. It says that effective certification should take into account regional, cultural, and institutional settings instead of just relying on standards set by outside bodies.

This methodology aligns with modern educational quality assurance frameworks, highlighting thorough institutional assessment, stakeholder involvement, and iterative management methods for ongoing improvement. This study examines the impact of accreditation on institutional performance and the outcomes of pre-service teachers in Pakistan, utilizing both quantitative and

qualitative data. The framework regards accreditation as a regulatory and developmental tool, enabling a thorough understanding of how structured evaluation systems can improve accountability, promote a culture of quality, and guarantee sustainable advancement in teacher education institutions. Figure 1 illustrates the theoretical framework for quality assurance in higher education. It illustrates the interconnection among accrediting systems, institutional performance, and the consequences of pre-service teacher development.

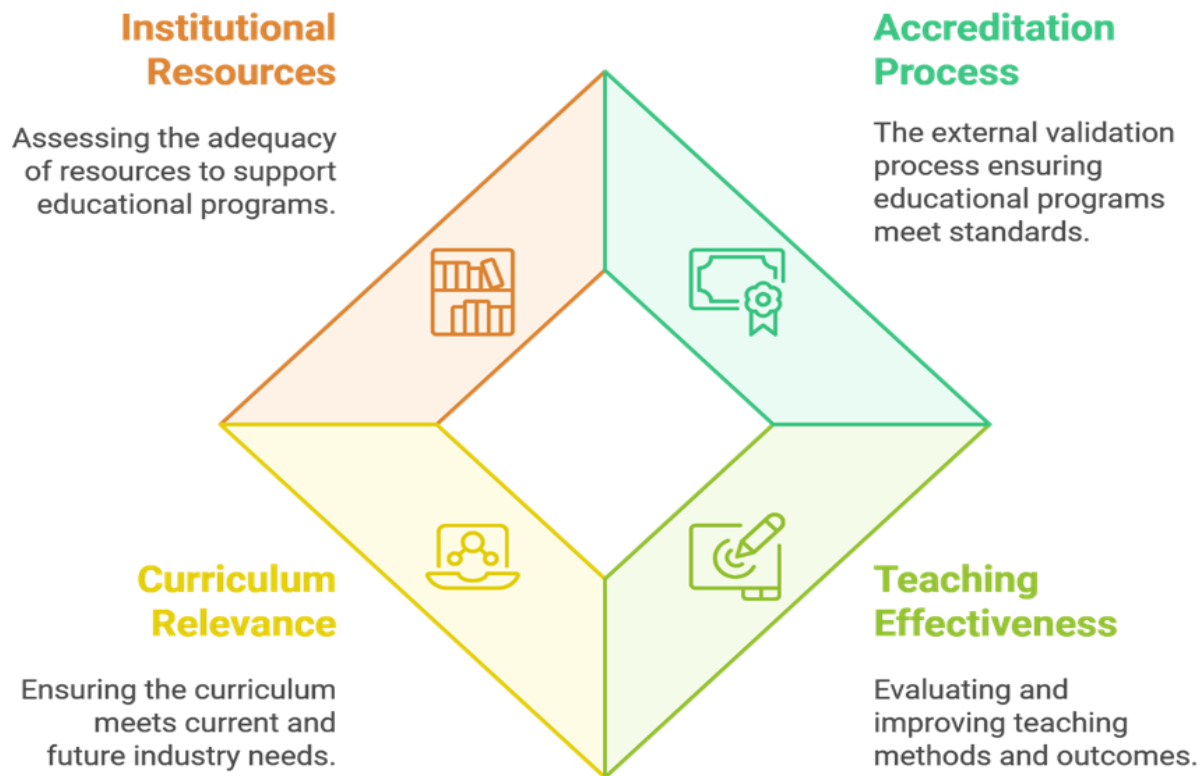


Figure 1: *Theoretical Framework of Quality Assurance in Higher Education*

Literature Review

This theme study examines the impact of accrediting systems on the quality of teacher education programs in Pakistan, focusing on institutional performance, resource equity, stakeholder perceptions, and outcomes for pre-service teachers. The review consolidates many perspectives from global and domestic literature to understand accreditation as both a quality assurance mechanism and a developmental framework. The synthesis delineates challenges, policy ramifications, and pertinent concepts from global models relevant to Pakistan's teacher education framework.

Overview of Accreditation in Teacher Education

Accreditation is a key approach to ensure quality since it makes sure that teacher education programs follow certain rules for curriculum creation, instructional methods, governance, and running the school. It has frequent tests that push people to keep growing and taking

responsibilities. Wood, Auhl, and McCarthy (2019) assert that certification enhances education by establishing performance standards and motivating institutions to engage in self-assessment. Romanowski et al. (2023) assert that certification enables educational institutions to adapt their curricula and pedagogical methods in response to societal changes. These studies underscore the global significance of accreditation as both an evaluative and transformative process, which remains pertinent in teacher preparation.

The Role of NACTE in Teacher Education Accreditation

The National Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (NACTE) in Pakistan, established in 2006 under the Higher Education Commission (HEC), plays a crucial role in standardizing teacher education across the country. NACTE aligns its framework with the National Professional Standards for Teachers in Pakistan (NPSTP), ensuring that accredited programs provide educators with critical pedagogical competencies and ethical principles. The council's assessment criteria encompass curricular relevancy, faculty qualifications, institutional resources, and compliance with professional norms.

NACTE has progressed in improving program accountability and fostering self-assessment; yet, it still encounters problems like as unequal resource allocation, inconsistent implementation, and institutions that are not prepared (Oguntiemehun, 2008). To solve these challenges and improve teacher education in Pakistan, the country should strengthen engagement with provincial governments and seek advice from overseas accrediting bodies. Figure 2 depicts the NACTE certification process, emphasizing its essential components and how they relate to institutional reform activities.

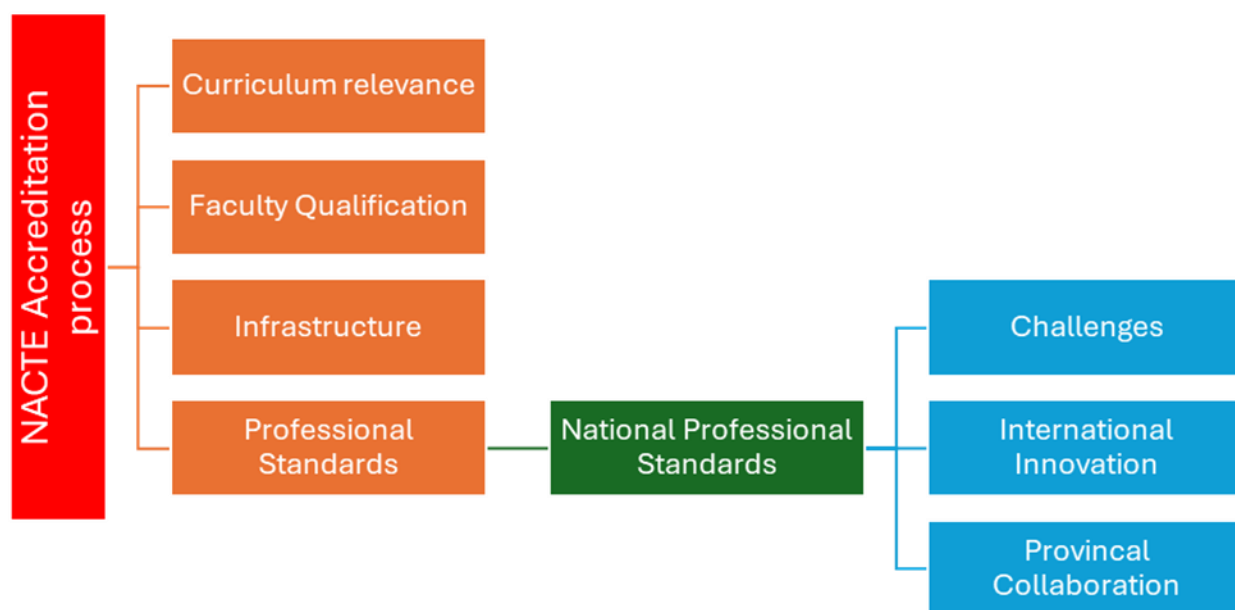


Figure 2: Flowchart for Teacher Education Accreditation by NACTE (source: Author's work)

Contributions of Provincial Accreditation Bodies

Provincial certification schemes enhance NACTE's national mandate by tailoring quality requirements to regional circumstances. These organizations consider linguistic, cultural, and institutional diversity to ensure that teacher education remains relevant to the local community and responds to its needs (Wijayanti, 2024). Their work, along with NACTE, enhances quality assurance by being flexible and inclusive of everyone. However, there are still gaps between national rules and their implementation in different places.

Resource constraints and erratic administrative coordination persist as significant impediments to efficient provincial operations. HEC (2021) states that aligning the national and provincial frameworks can help close gaps and ensure all institutions maintain the same level of quality. Better coordination and fair funding are both necessary to create a balanced accrediting system that meets both national goals and local educational requirements.

Impact of Accreditation on Institutional Performance

Accreditation has a direct impact on institutional governance, teaching practices, and research culture. Empirical studies confirm that accreditation enhances institutional accountability and evidence-based decision-making. Makhoul (2019) and Perveen et al. (2021) report that accreditation enhances teaching quality, promotes a culture of documentation, and improves institutional reputation. International models, such as AACSB accreditation, demonstrate that structured quality frameworks improve productivity and enhance stakeholder confidence in higher education.

According to Suskie (2023), accreditation is not a singular event, but rather a continuous process of evaluation and enhancement. Institutions that are actively involved in this process tend to have more robust internal quality cultures and stakeholder engagement initiatives. The data overall shows that certification leads to long-term institutional excellence rather than just being a requirement for compliance. Figure 3 indicates how accreditation influences governance, curriculum, and long-term institutional performance in a layered method.



Figure 3: *Pyramid Diagram of the Influence of Accreditation on Higher Education Institutions*
(source: Author's work)

Accreditation and Pre-service Teacher Outcomes

Accreditation influences the performance of pre-service teachers by ensuring that training programs meet professional, pedagogical, and ethical standards. Cavanagh et al. (2019) demonstrate that accredited programs emphasize reflective teaching, classroom management, and assessment practices more effectively than non-accredited programs. Similarly, Bihasa (2022) notes that accreditation ensures pre-service teachers are equipped to address modern classroom challenges, aligning with global expectations of teacher competency.

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) framework highlights that accreditation enhances graduate outcomes by connecting teacher preparation to measurable teaching performance standards. These findings affirm that accreditation strengthens pre-service teacher readiness and contributes to national educational improvement.

Challenges in Accreditation Implementation

Despite its benefits, the accreditation process faces implementation barriers that limit its efficiency. Institutions frequently struggle with documentation burdens and data management requirements (QAHE, 2022). The rise of online and blended learning further complicates accreditation, as maintaining academic integrity becomes increasingly tricky. The Online Learning Consortium (2022) reports that 44 percent of educator's view maintaining academic credibility as the most significant challenge in online program accreditation.

Moreover, time-intensive accreditation cycles can hinder innovation and delay program development. Simplifying accreditation procedures and providing digital infrastructure can mitigate these barriers. Striking a strategic balance between compliance and innovation would

enable institutions to maintain high-quality standards without compromising creativity or responsiveness. (Duarte, N.; Vardasca, R., 2023)

Equity and Resource Distribution in Accreditation

Equity in resource allocation is a central pillar of effective accreditation. The U.S. Department of Education (2023) emphasizes equitable funding as a prerequisite for consistent quality across educational institutions. Similarly, the Higher Learning Commission's EVOLVE 2025 Plan emphasizes the importance of fairness in resource distribution as essential to institutional governance (Higher Learning Commission, 2023).

McArthur and Warren (2014) find that inequitable resource allocation widens achievement gaps and undermines institutional capacity for quality improvement. Addressing these disparities through accreditation can promote both social justice and educational excellence. QAHE (2023) supports that fairness-driven accreditation policies enhance inclusion and institutional stability. Ensuring that accreditation frameworks integrate equity benchmarks makes quality assurance both practical and ethical.

Global Perspectives on Accreditation in Teacher Education

Accreditation methods vary worldwide, influenced by factors such as governing structures, available resources, and educational objectives. In developed environments, accreditation underscores teacher professionalism, the integration of research, and technical expertise. Finland's highly selective teacher education system and the U.S. Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) both demonstrate how robust accrediting systems can lead to improved teaching outcomes (Sahlberg, 2022).

On the other hand, developing countries like South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa have problems like not having enough resources, teachers, and fair execution of laws. Regional cooperation and adaptable frameworks have demonstrated potential in alleviating these issues by reconciling local conditions with global quality standards. This comparison shows that context-sensitive methods to accreditation lead to stronger and longer-lasting improvements than uniform systems.

Accreditation's Influence on Curriculum Design

Accreditation influences curriculum design, assuring alignment between program content, labor market demands, and institutional educational objectives. According to Ahmed and Aziz (2012), accreditation ensures that programs are relevant by requiring them to address the continuously changing needs of society and industry. Wood, Auhl, and McCarthy (2019) caution that excessively rigorous accrediting standards may hinder creativity and innovation in curriculum creation.

Teacher education programs can maintain academic rigor while promoting pedagogical experimentation by striking a balance between conformance and freedom. A responsive accrediting mechanism that encourages both responsibility and creativity can enhance the effectiveness of the curriculum.

Stakeholder Perceptions of Accreditation

Stakeholder perspectives significantly influence the success of accreditation. Faculty, students, administrators, and policymakers each contribute to shaping institutional engagement with quality assurance. Pineda (2023) notes that most stakeholders view accreditation as a mechanism for enhancing educational credibility and promoting a culture of continuous improvement. However, some view it as bureaucratic and burdensome, limiting institutional autonomy and innovation.

Effective stakeholder communication and participation are therefore essential for cultivating positive perceptions and meaningful engagement. When stakeholders understand the developmental purpose of accreditation, institutional cooperation and compliance improve, leading to stronger overall outcomes.

Synthesis of the Literature

Across global and national studies, accreditation emerges as a vital instrument for improving the quality and accountability of teacher-education institutions. It promotes standardization, equity, and professional integrity while simultaneously driving institutional reform. However, challenges related to documentation, funding disparities, and stakeholder resistance continue to constrain its full potential.

Future directions for research and policy should focus on developing accreditation systems that are adaptive, inclusive, and technologically supported. Encouraging participatory governance and continuous monitoring will ensure that accreditation serves as a transformative rather than a procedural mechanism. In the context of Pakistan, embedding equity, transparency, and innovation within the accreditation process remains crucial for achieving sustainable quality in teacher education.

Research Methodology

This study's technique was created to make sure that it was fair, complete, and correct in looking at how accreditation influences the quality of teacher education programs in Pakistan. The paper discusses the objectives of the study, the individuals it examined, the methods it employed to select its sample, the sources of its data, and the methods it employed to achieve its objectives. The framework adheres to a predetermined sequence that facilitates the process, enhances reproducibility, and enhances methodological integrity.

Research Design

This research employed a convergent mixed-methods design grounded in a pragmatic philosophical framework. Pragmatism was selected for its ability to integrate both quantitative and qualitative information in addressing complex social and educational issues. Quantitative data provided quantifiable indicators of institutional and educator success, whereas qualitative data provided contextually nuanced perspectives on accreditation methodologies. The validity and depth of the results were improved by the simultaneous collection, independent examination, and subsequent integration for comprehensive analysis of both segments.

Population and Sampling

In Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and the Islamabad Capital Territory, the study's demographic consisted of 480 individuals who were affiliated with approved teacher education institutions (TEIs). This included teacher-educators, pre-service teachers, and program directors or administrators. This group gave a total of 214 valid responses, which is in line with Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) recommendation for a sample size of 480 at a 95% confidence level. A stratified random sample method was used to make sure that both public and private TEIs were represented fairly in each province. The final sample comprised 109 teacher-educators, 75 pre-service teachers, and 30 program administrators or managers. Participants must be affiliated with NACTE-accredited institutions for a minimum of one academic year.

Research Setting

The research was carried out in twelve teacher-education institutions that were fully accredited by the National Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (NACTE). These schools were a good example of Pakistan's diversified education system, which includes both public and private schools. This setting was selected since it exemplifies institutions that have undergone the accreditation process and established quality-assurance procedures aligned with the National Professional Standards for Teachers in Pakistan (NPSTP).

Instruments and Tools

Quantitative data were collected through a structured survey developed in accordance with NACTE's eight accreditation standards and aligned with the NPSTP framework—the 36-item instrument covered three domains: institutional performance, instructional quality, and pre-service teacher outcomes. Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The survey was piloted with 25 teacher-educators from non-sampled institutions to evaluate clarity and item relevance. A Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.87 confirmed internal consistency, and content validity was established through reviews by three accreditation assessors and two senior educationists.

Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted with 18 purposively selected participants, including institutional heads, accreditation coordinators, and senior teacher educators. The interview protocol focused on experiences with accreditation, perceived institutional changes, and the challenges encountered during the implementation process. Each interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes and was recorded with consent.

Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected between February and May 2024. Surveys were distributed electronically via institutional coordinators to ensure access and consistency. Reminders were sent after two weeks to improve response rates. Interviews were conducted either face-to-face or virtually via Microsoft Teams, depending on the participant's availability and preference. All transcripts were verified by participants and stored in encrypted digital folders. No translation was required, as all participants were proficient in English; however, clarifications were permitted in Urdu upon request.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 29. Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions, were used to summarize data. Inferential analyses were conducted using independent-samples t-tests, one-way ANOVA, and Pearson correlations to identify relationships and group differences. Effect sizes were calculated using Cohen's d to determine the magnitude of observed relationships. Qualitative data were analyzed using NVivo 14 through inductive thematic coding, producing themes such as institutional accountability, documentation culture, and faculty development initiatives. Integration of both strands occurred through a joint-display matrix that combined statistical trends with qualitative themes, allowing for triangulated interpretation.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was granted by the Institutional Review Committee of the lead author's university (Approval No. EDU/IRB/2025-17). Participants were informed about the voluntary nature of their participation and the confidentiality of their responses. Written informed consent was obtained before data collection. Data were anonymized, and all records were securely stored to prevent unauthorized access.

Trustworthiness and Rigor

Quantitative rigor was ensured through instrument reliability, expert validation, and statistical testing. Qualitative rigor was established through credibility (member checking), dependability (audit trail), confirmability (peer debriefing), and transferability (detailed contextual description). Triangulation across quantitative and qualitative data further strengthened the validity and reliability of the findings, ensuring that results reflected multiple forms of evidence.

Limitations

The study was limited to accredited teacher-education institutions; therefore, the findings may not apply to non-accredited or newly accredited programs. Although mixed methods enhanced comprehensiveness, resource and time constraints restricted the number of interviews. To minimize this limitation, participants were selected from multiple provinces and institutional categories to ensure diversity and representativeness of the sample.

To ensure consistency between the study objectives, research questions, and analytical strategies, a methodological alignment framework was developed. This framework illustrates how each research question was systematically addressed through the use of appropriate data sources, instruments, and analytical techniques. It also demonstrates the integration of quantitative and qualitative evidence to achieve triangulation and strengthen the validity of the findings. The alignment of these components is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Alignment of Research Questions, Data Sources, and Analysis Techniques

Research Question	Data Source	Instrument	Analysis Technique	Expected Output
RQ1 Accreditation and institutional performance	Teacher-educators, program heads	Survey (36 items)	Descriptive and inferential tests (t-test, ANOVA)	Institutional quality indicators
RQ2 Stakeholder perceptions of accreditation	Program managers, faculty	Semi-structured interviews	Inductive thematic analysis (NVivo)	Perceived strengths and challenges
RQ3 Accreditation and preservice-teacher outcomes	Pre-service teachers, institutional data	Survey and practicum records	Correlation and integrated comparison	Relationship between accreditation and performance

Results

Institutional Performance under Accreditation

Survey responses from 214 participants revealed overall positive perceptions of accreditation's impact on institutional performance. The mean composite score for institutional performance across all teacher-education institutions (TEIs) was 4.12 (SD = 0.63), indicating general agreement that accreditation improved management systems, documentation, and program alignment. When compared by institutional type, public TEIs (n = 142) recorded a higher mean score (M = 4.23, SD = 0.58) than private TEIs (n = 72; M = 3.89, SD = 0.67). An independent-samples t-test showed that this difference was statistically significant ($t(212) = 3.72, p < .01$). Accreditation appeared to strengthen accountability mechanisms and faculty appraisal systems more substantially in the public sector. Regional comparisons using one-way ANOVA revealed no significant difference in mean institutional scores among provinces ($F(3, 210) = 1.84, p > .05$), indicating that the effects of accreditation were broadly consistent nationwide. Table 2 presents the distribution of institutional performance indicators. Table 2 and Figure 4 illustrate institutional performance ratings, showing a visible concentration of higher scores among public TEIs.

Table 2: Institutional Performance Indicators by Institutional Type (n = 214)

Indicator	Public TEIs M (SD)	Private TEIs M (SD)	Total M (SD)
Governance and Leadership	4.26 (0.61)	3.87 (0.65)	4.12 (0.63)
Curriculum Alignment	4.18 (0.59)	3.91 (0.70)	4.09 (0.64)
Faculty Development	4.20 (0.55)	3.86 (0.68)	4.08 (0.61)
Resource Management	4.24 (0.57)	3.92 (0.66)	4.13 (0.62)
Overall Mean	4.23 (0.58)	3.89 (0.67)	4.12 (0.63)

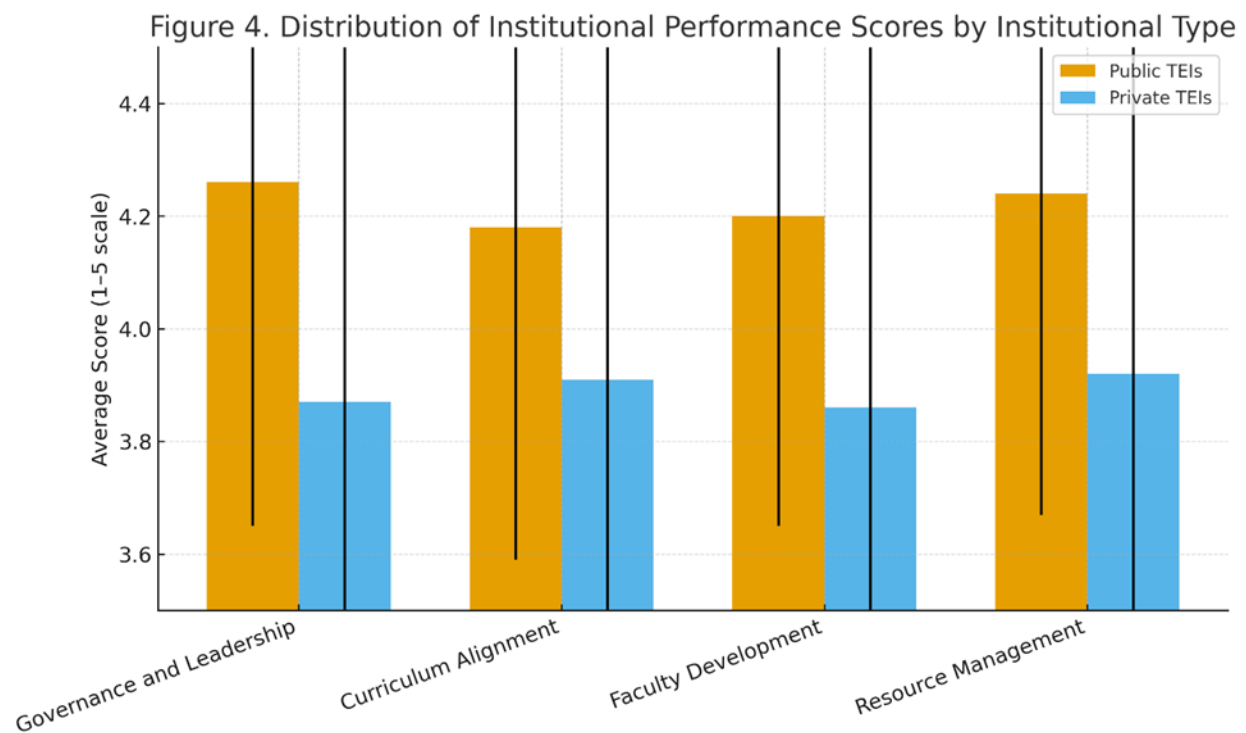


Figure 4: *Distribution of Institutional Performance Scores by Institutional Type (A bar chart showing higher mean scores for public TEIs across all four indicators.)*

Stakeholder Perceptions of Accreditation Practices

Qualitative analysis of interviews with 18 participants produced three major themes: quality culture development, administrative transparency, and sustained compliance challenges. Participants consistently viewed accreditation as a catalyst for organizational reform and improved program documentation. Twelve respondents (67%) mentioned that accreditation had “formalized accountability,” while nine (50%) identified “enhanced internal monitoring” as a direct outcome.

Quantitative results supported these views. The overall mean perception score for accreditation effectiveness was 4.07 (SD = 0.66). Items relating to curriculum improvement and quality assurance scored the highest ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 0.61$), while those on financial sustainability and follow-up monitoring scored slightly lower ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 0.69$). Table 3 and Figure 5 summarize stakeholder perceptions across major accreditation dimensions.

Table 3: Stakeholder Perceptions of Accreditation Effectiveness (n = 214)

Dimension	Mean	SD	Agreement (%)
Institutional Accountability	4.18	0.60	83.2
Curriculum Relevance	4.19	0.61	84.1
Leadership Commitment	4.12	0.63	81.3
Resource Adequacy	3.93	0.67	77.6
Continuous Improvement Mechanisms	3.93	0.70	78.0
Overall Mean	4.07	0.66	80.8

Figure 5. Stakeholder Perceptions of Accreditation Effectiveness

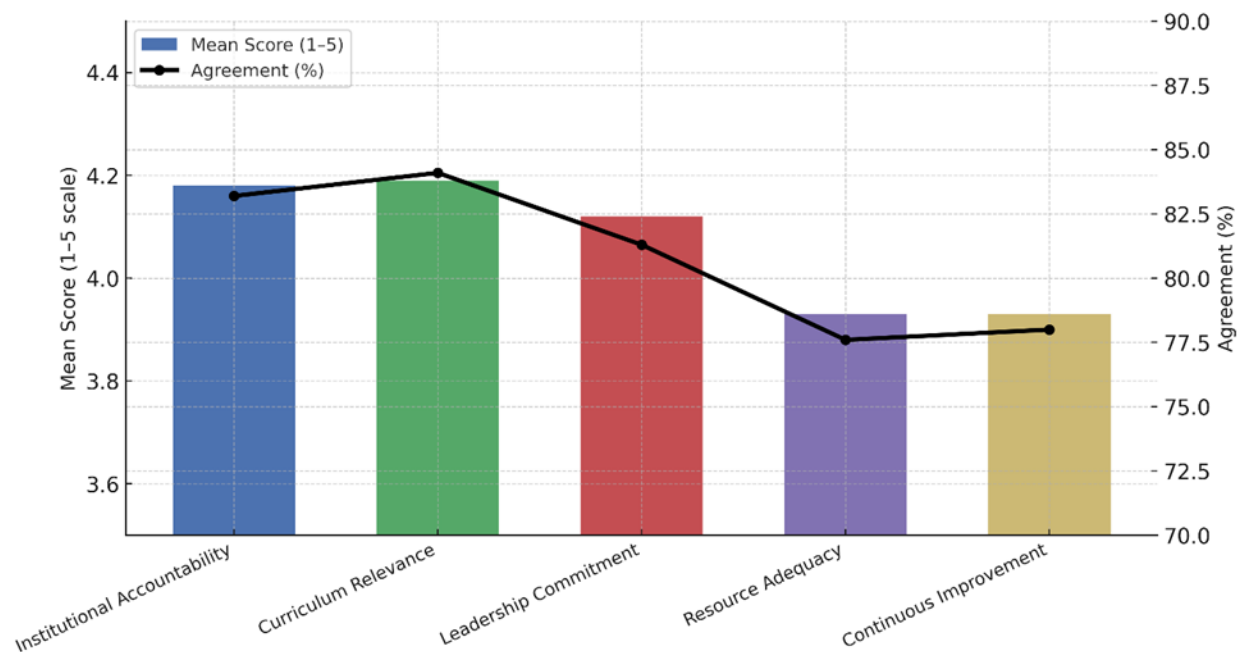


Figure 5: Stakeholder Perception of Accreditation Effectiveness

Thematic coding frequencies are visualized in Figure 6, which displays the proportion of recurring qualitative themes identified through NVivo analysis. (A clustered bar chart showing percentages for “Quality Culture” 72%, “Transparency” 61%, “Compliance Challenges” 44%.)

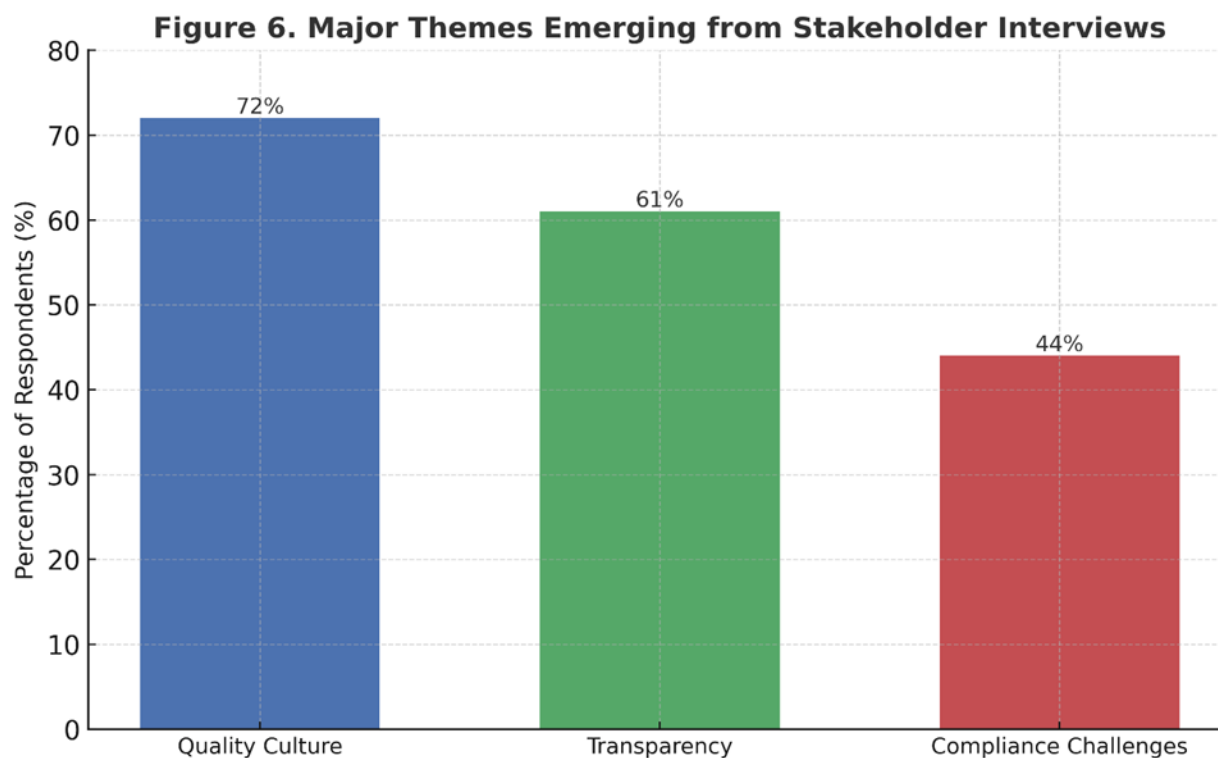


Figure 6: *Major Themes Emerging from Stakeholder Interviews*

Accreditation and Pre-service Teacher Outcomes

Survey responses from 75 pre-service teachers indicated moderate to high agreement that accreditation has a positive impact on learning outcomes and readiness for practicum. The overall mean rating for pre-service outcomes was 4.01 (SD = 0.64). The highest scoring items were teaching practice supervision (M = 4.15, SD = 0.58) and assessment feedback quality (M = 4.10, SD = 0.62). Lower ratings were observed in items related to the integration of technology (M = 3.78, SD = 0.71).

Pearson correlation analysis revealed a positive relationship between institutional accreditation scores and pre-service outcome ratings ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that higher institutional performance is associated with better student preparedness for practicum. Table 4 displays mean scores for pre-service outcomes.

Table 4: *Pre-service Teacher Outcomes related to Accredited Programs (n = 75)*

Learning Outcome Indicator	Mean	SD	Agreement (%)
Teaching Practice Supervision	4.15	0.58	82.7
Assessment Feedback Quality	4.10	0.62	81.3
Curriculum Application Skills	3.98	0.64	79.6
Use of Technology in Instruction	3.78	0.71	75.6
Reflective Learning Competence	4.05	0.60	80.1
Overall Mean	4.01	0.64	79.9

Figure 7 summarizes overall accreditation impact trends across the three domains measured in the study. (A horizontal bar chart comparing Institutional Performance = 4.12, Stakeholder Perceptions = 4.07, Pre-service Outcomes = 4.01.)

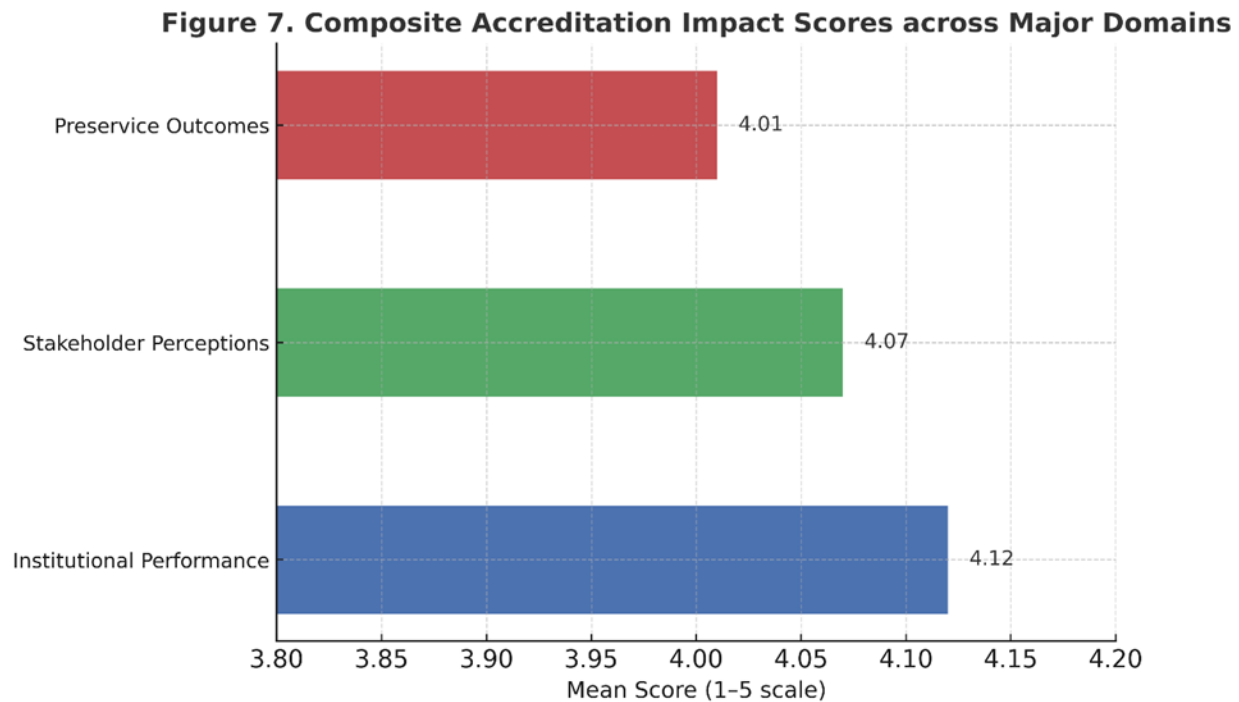


Figure 7: *Composite Accreditation Impact Scores across Major Domains*

Summary of Results

Across all data sources, accreditation was consistently associated with improved institutional governance, strengthened teaching practices, and better practicum support for pre-service teachers. Differences between public and private institutions were statistically significant, whereas regional disparities were minimal. Qualitative findings reinforced these quantitative patterns, indicating

that accreditation processes fostered a culture of documentation and accountability, while also revealing ongoing challenges related to sustainability and resource allocation.

Discussion

The results of this study provide empirical evidence that certification has a significant impact on the quality and sustainability of teacher education programs in Pakistan. There was agreement between the numbers and the words that showed that accreditation makes schools stronger, raises professional standards, and leads to better results before students start working. The pragmatic view that this study is based on is backed up by these findings. They stress how important it is to use both real-world evidence and understanding of the situation to fix issues with the quality of education.

Institutional Performance and Quality Enhancement

The findings indicated that accreditation positively influenced the institution's performance, particularly in governance, curricular alignment, and faculty development. Public institutions exhibited somewhat superior mean ratings compared to private universities, indicating that resource stability and governmental monitoring may improve adherence to accreditation requirements. This discovery corroborates previous studies by Aziz and Ahmed (2007) and Malik and Bari (2023), which demonstrated that accrediting systems promote transparency and structured decision-making in higher education institutions. Because there are no regional differences, the national certification system is applied consistently across all provinces. This demonstrates that NACTE has successfully achieved uniformity in the quality of teacher education nationally. Qualitative research has shown that compliance with institutional regulations does not necessarily lead to an improvement in quality. This corresponds with the results of study by Abass et al. (2021), which suggest that documentation requirements alone may not cultivate a culture of continuous improvement without the support of internal incentives and faculty engagement.

Stakeholder Perceptions and Quality Culture

Stakeholder perspectives emphasized the importance of accreditation in promoting a culture of quality, accountability, and administrative transparency. Participants viewed accreditation as a process that enhances documentation practices, defines roles, and promotes reflection on institutional objectives. The findings align with Ali and Ahmed's (2022) assertion that accreditation in developing contexts functions as a regulatory mechanism and a catalyst for pedagogical renewal. The rise of "quality culture" as a prevailing theme suggests that teacher-education institutions are beginning to adopt external standards, a trend also noted by Siddiqui and Khushi (2023) in South Asian higher education settings.

Nevertheless, participants reported challenges in sustaining momentum after accreditation. Insufficient financial resources, faculty workload, and inconsistent administrative support impede ongoing quality assurance. These findings align with Iqbal's (2023) observations, which indicate that in the absence of regular monitoring and incentives, the benefits of accreditation may be limited to procedural aspects rather than fostering developmental progress. This highlights the necessity for continuous professional support, capacity-building efforts, and resource distribution to guarantee that accreditation results lead to sustainable institutional reform.

Accreditation and Pre-service Teacher Outcomes

The elevated average scores in reflective learning, evaluation feedback, and teaching practice supervision indicate that accreditation influences the performance of pre-service teachers. The relationship between pre-service results and institutional accreditation scores indicates that superior institutions foster more organized and advantageous learning environments for prospective educators. This finding is in line with international research showing that graduates of accredited teacher-preparation programs exhibit enhanced professional self-efficacy and instructional readiness (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; UNESCO, 2023).

However, as previously noted by Khan and Ahmad (2022) and Cedeño-Rivadeneira and Mendoza-Loor (2024), the somewhat lower evaluations for technology integration suggest a persistent disparity in pre-service teachers' digital preparation. This indicates that while accreditation enhances the overall quality of instruction, prioritizing the development of digital pedagogical skills for teacher candidates is essential, particularly in post-pandemic contexts where blended learning is a critical aspect of educational delivery.

Implications for Practice and Policy

The convergence of quantitative and qualitative evidence underscores the need for a balanced accreditation approach that emphasizes both compliance and innovation. Institutional leaders should consider accreditation not just as an obligation, but as an opportunity to integrate continuous improvement processes into teaching and administrative operations. Policymakers should consider implementing regular peer review cycles and mentorship assistance for newly authorized TEIs to ensure that quality standards continue to improve beyond initial certification.

The favorable correlation between institutional accreditation and pre-service outcomes suggests that quality assurance frameworks should explicitly include student learning metrics as a key component. This corresponds with international trends in accreditation reform, where outcome-based assessment is being emphasized (OECD, 2022; UNESCO, 2023). Fortifying these connections would enhance accountability and ensure that institutional accreditation directly promotes classroom excellence.

Synthesis of Findings

In general, the results show that accreditation serves both as a means to ensure that Pakistan's teacher-education sector adheres to regulations and as a means to support its growth. It fosters organized governance, professional responsibility, and improved learning outcomes. However, sustainability challenges persist regarding the preservation of post-accreditation momentum and the effective use of technology-enhanced pedagogy. The study contributes to the discourse on educational quality assurance by demonstrating how institutions in low-income countries can utilize accrediting frameworks to address systemic deficiencies in teacher training and instructional effectiveness.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study aimed to investigate the impact of accreditation on institutional performance, stakeholder perceptions, and pre-service teacher outcomes in accredited teacher-education

institutions (TEIs) in Pakistan. Utilizing a convergent mixed-methods approach, the findings revealed that accreditation is a crucial factor in enhancing educational quality and promoting accountability in teacher education systems. Quantitative results demonstrated substantial enhancements in governance, curricular alignment, and practicum supervision, but qualitative data indicated that accreditation fosters a culture of excellence, transparency, and reflective practice.

The study concludes that the efficient implementation of accreditation fosters systemic enhancement within Pakistan's teacher education framework. It enhances institutional performance through organized governance and documentation, fosters faculty accountability for quality practices, and enhances the professional readiness of pre-service teachers. Accreditation has effectively established uniform national standards via the National Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (NACTE), addressing regional and institutional inequalities that previously obstructed program equivalency. Nonetheless, ongoing challenges, such as constrained financial resources, administrative turnover, and the durability of quality practices, persist in limiting the long-term impact.

From a theoretical standpoint, the results validate the pragmatist framework underpinning the study, demonstrating that accreditation operates most effectively when empirical standards are integrated with contextual realities. The synergy between quantitative performance metrics and qualitative insights reflects how external accountability mechanisms can translate into an internalized professional culture. The study extends current scholarship on educational quality assurance in the Global South by offering empirical evidence from a developing context, where policy frameworks are evolving toward internationally recognized standards.

Recommendations for Practice and Policy

Institutionalization of Continuous Quality Assurance

TEIs should embed internal review mechanisms that operate independently of external accreditation cycles. Regular self-evaluation, peer observation, and evidence-based reporting can sustain improvements beyond accreditation milestones.

Capacity Building for Faculty and Administrators:

NACTE and the Higher Education Commission (HEC) should expand professional development programs to strengthen institutional leadership and assessment literacy among teacher-educators. This would enhance both compliance and pedagogical innovation.

Resource and Infrastructure Support:

Accreditation outcomes can only be sustained through adequate funding. Dedicated grants and performance-linked incentives should be introduced for TEIs that demonstrate continuous quality enhancement.

Integration of Digital Pedagogical Competence:

As the results indicated gaps in technology integration, accreditation standards should explicitly incorporate digital literacy indicators for faculty and pre-service teachers to align with global educational trends.

Periodic Post-Accreditation Monitoring:

Establishing a structured follow-up mechanism—such as annual quality audits—would ensure accountability and help institutions maintain adherence to accreditation standards over time.

Future Research

Future research should focus on identifying discipline-specific and context-sensitive indicators of accreditation effectiveness in teacher education. Scholars could investigate how accreditation influences faculty pedagogical innovation, student learning trajectories, and institutional sustainability under varying governance and resource conditions. Cross-regional comparative studies across South Asian and Gulf contexts are also needed to examine how policy frameworks, funding models, and professional standards affect the translation of accreditation outcomes into teaching quality. In addition, future studies should employ multi-institutional mixed-method designs that integrate classroom observation, document analysis, and student achievement metrics to trace how accreditation policies shape real instructional practices. Exploring digital accreditation frameworks, including the use of e-portfolios, AI-supported evaluation, and data-driven quality audits, could further advance understanding of modernized quality assurance systems. Such targeted research would clarify how accreditation serves both as a policy mechanism and as a pedagogical catalyst for improving educational equity and excellence in Pakistan and comparable developing regions.

Summary Statement

Accreditation in Pakistan has evolved from a compliance tool into a catalyst for professional and institutional transformation. The study provides evidence that structured quality assurance frameworks, when adapted to the local context, can enhance educational equity and instructional excellence. By embedding continuous improvement, resource support, and professional collaboration into accreditation systems, Pakistan's teacher-education institutions can serve as regional models for sustainable quality culture in the Global South.

Conflict of Interest

The authors showed no conflict of interest.

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