

COMPARATIVE STUDY ON EDUCATION SERVICE QUALITY ASSURANCE IMPLEMENTATION AMONG AZERBAIJAN, VIETNAM, AND INDONESIA

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Abstract-Quality assurance (QA) in higher education has become a critical global concern in ensuring institutional effectiveness and continuous improvement. This study aims to compare the implementation of education service quality assurance in Azerbaijan, Vietnam, and Indonesia, focusing on QA frameworks, governance, institutional capacity, challenges, and outcomes. A qualitative comparative research design was employed using thematic analysis of secondary data sources, guided by purposive sampling. The findings reveal that all three countries demonstrate convergence toward internationally aligned QA systems; however, variations exist in implementation due to differences in governance structures, policy influence, institutional readiness, and quality culture. Vietnam shows the most balanced and effective implementation, driven by strong state support and increasing autonomy, while Indonesia faces challenges related to resource limitations and a quality culture despite having a comprehensive framework. Azerbaijan exhibits strong external alignment but limited internal QA maturity. The study concludes that effective QA implementation requires integration of policy alignment, institutional capacity, and continuous improvement practices rather than reliance on compliance alone. It is recommended that policymakers strengthen institutional capacity and promote

quality culture, while future research should expand comparative scope and methodological approaches.

Keywords: quality assurance, higher education, comparative study, institutional capacity, governance, quality culture

I. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary globalized era, education has become a central pillar for national competitiveness, socio-economic development, and human capital formation. The rapid expansion of higher education systems across both developed and developing countries has intensified the need for robust mechanisms to ensure the quality of educational services. Quality assurance (QA) in education is widely recognized as a systematic and continuous process designed to evaluate, monitor, and improve the standards of teaching, learning, research, and institutional governance (Rosa & Amaral, 2014). It serves not only as a regulatory instrument but also as a strategic framework to foster accountability, transparency, and continuous improvement within educational institutions.

Recent studies emphasize that QA systems have evolved from being compliance-oriented mechanisms toward more transformative approaches that prioritize outcomes, stakeholder engagement, and innovation (Rini et al., 2025). In higher education, QA plays a critical role in ensuring that institutions meet national and international standards while responding to the dynamic needs of society and the labour market. For instance, quality assurance processes enable institutions to align curricula with industry demands, improve teaching effectiveness, and enhance graduate employability (Nugraha, 2023).

Globally, different countries have developed unique QA frameworks shaped by their socio-political contexts, governance structures, and educational philosophies. In Southeast Asia, countries such as Vietnam and Indonesia have increasingly aligned their QA systems with international benchmarks to improve global competitiveness. Vietnam, for example, has transitioned from a centralized quality control system to a more decentralized and outcome-based QA framework, emphasizing institutional autonomy and accountability (Le et al., 2026). Similarly, Indonesia has strengthened its QA system through the implementation of internal and external quality assurance mechanisms, including accreditation processes and continuous improvement cycles (Jarodi et al., 2024).

Meanwhile, countries in other regions, such as Azerbaijan, have also undertaken reforms to modernize their education systems by integrating international QA standards and accreditation frameworks. These reforms reflect a broader global trend toward harmonizing educational quality assurance systems to facilitate academic mobility, mutual recognition of qualifications, and international collaboration.

Although the literature on quality assurance in education is extensive, most studies tend to focus on single-country analyses or comparisons between developed and developing nations. For example, Ali and Hermansyah (2024) conducted a comparative study between Indonesia and Finland, highlighting differences in QA policies, particularly in curriculum design and teacher qualifications. Similarly, Azizah (2025) explored the integration of national and international accreditation systems in Indonesian higher education, emphasizing the importance of aligning local standards with global benchmarks.

In the context of Vietnam, recent research has examined the evolution of QA systems and their impact on institutional governance and autonomy, demonstrating how QA reforms contribute to improved educational outcomes and organisational performance (Le et al., 2026). In Indonesia, numerous studies have highlighted challenges in QA implementation, including policy inconsistencies, limited institutional capacity, and the need for a stronger quality culture (Jarodi et al., 2024).

Despite these contributions, there remains a significant gap in the literature regarding comparative qualitative analyses involving multiple developing countries from different regions, particularly those that examine not only policies but also the implementation practices of educational service quality

assurance. Existing studies often rely on quantitative approaches or policy-level comparisons, thereby overlooking the contextual nuances and lived experiences associated with QA implementation.

Furthermore, there is limited research that systematically analyses multiple “research products” or documented cases across countries using qualitative techniques such as coding and thematic analysis. This gap is particularly evident in studies involving Azerbaijan, which is underrepresented in comparative education research despite its ongoing reforms in higher education quality assurance.

Addressing these gaps is essential for advancing the understanding of how QA systems function in diverse contexts and for identifying best practices that can be adapted across countries. A comparative qualitative approach allows for a deeper exploration of similarities and differences in QA implementation, including institutional practices, stakeholder involvement, and contextual challenges. By examining multiple cases from Azerbaijan, Vietnam, and Indonesia, this study provides a comprehensive perspective on how different countries operationalise QA frameworks in their education systems. The use of purposive sampling to select relevant research products ensures that the analysis focuses on meaningful and contextually rich data. Moreover, the application of coding and thematic analysis enables the identification of recurring patterns, themes, and insights that may not be captured through quantitative methods.

This approach contributes to the literature by bridging the gap between policy analysis and practical implementation, offering a nuanced understanding of how QA systems are enacted in real-world settings. It also facilitates cross-country learning by highlighting transferable practices and context-specific challenges.

Based on the identified gaps, the central problem addressed in this study is the limited understanding of how education service quality assurance is implemented across different national contexts, particularly in developing countries with diverse educational systems and reform trajectories. While previous studies have examined QA policies and frameworks, there is insufficient evidence on how these systems are operationalised and experienced in practice.

Therefore, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- 1) How is education service quality assurance implemented in Azerbaijan, Vietnam, and Indonesia?
- 2) What similarities and differences exist in the implementation of QA systems across these countries?
- 3) What key themes and patterns emerge from the analysis of selected research products?

To address these questions, this study employs a qualitative research design using purposive sampling. A total of 30 research products is selected, consisting of 10 from each country (Azerbaijan, Vietnam, and Indonesia). These documents are analysed using coding, categorisation, and thematic analysis techniques to identify key patterns and insights. The objectives of this study are:

- 1) To explore the implementation practices of education service quality assurance in Azerbaijan, Vietnam, and Indonesia.
- 2) To compare and contrast QA implementation across the three countries.
- 3) To identify key themes, challenges, and best practices emerging from the analysis.
- 4) To contribute to the development of a more comprehensive understanding of QA systems in a global context.

Ultimately, this study aims to provide valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and researchers seeking to enhance the effectiveness of quality assurance systems in education. By offering a comparative perspective, it contributes to the broader discourse on educational quality and supports efforts to improve educational outcomes in diverse contexts.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Concept of Quality Assurance in Education

Quality assurance (QA) in education refers to a systematic process of monitoring, evaluating, and improving the quality of educational services to ensure that institutions meet established standards and stakeholder expectations. QA encompasses both internal and external mechanisms, including

accreditation, audits, benchmarking, and continuous improvement processes. It is widely regarded as a cornerstone for ensuring accountability, transparency, and institutional effectiveness in higher education systems (Rini et al., 2025).

From a theoretical perspective, QA is closely associated with Total Quality Management (TQM), which emphasises continuous improvement, stakeholder satisfaction, and organisational excellence. In educational contexts, QA extends beyond compliance to include the enhancement of teaching, learning, research, and community engagement. According to Meisuri (2024), QA systems require the integration of internal and external processes, where institutions are responsible for maintaining quality through self-evaluation while external bodies ensure compliance with national and international standards.

Recent developments indicate a shift from input-based QA models to outcome-based approaches that prioritize student learning outcomes, employability, and societal impact. This transformation reflects global trends in higher education governance, where quality is increasingly defined by performance indicators and stakeholder engagement rather than mere adherence to procedural standards (Nguyen, 2025).

2.2 Models and Frameworks of Quality Assurance

Several models and frameworks have been developed to guide QA implementation in education. Among the most prominent are internal quality assurance (IQA) systems, external quality assurance (EQA) mechanisms, and hybrid models that integrate both approaches.

Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) focuses on institutional processes such as curriculum design, teaching evaluation, and continuous improvement. It is typically managed by internal quality units within universities and relies on self-assessment and internal audits. External Quality Assurance (EQA), on the other hand, involves external agencies that conduct accreditation, evaluation, and benchmarking to ensure that institutions meet national or international standards.

In Indonesia, the Internal Quality Assurance System (SPMI) and External Quality Assurance System (SPME) are implemented to maintain educational standards. These systems emphasize continuous improvement cycles, including planning, implementation, evaluation, control, and enhancement (Jarodi et al., 2024). However, challenges such as policy inconsistency, limited institutional capacity, and weak quality culture remain significant barriers to effective implementation.

In the ASEAN context, frameworks such as the ASEAN University Network–Quality Assurance (AUN-QA) have been adopted to harmonise QA practices across member countries. Research by Fitriyani (2024) demonstrates that AUN-QA certification significantly improves internal QA systems by enhancing curriculum alignment, stakeholder engagement, and outcome measurement.

Globally, QA frameworks are increasingly influenced by international standards such as ISO 21001 and the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). These frameworks promote consistency, comparability, and mutual recognition of qualifications across countries, thereby facilitating academic mobility and international collaboration.

2.3 Implementation of Quality Assurance in Higher Education

The implementation of QA systems varies significantly across countries due to differences in governance structures, institutional autonomy, and socio-cultural contexts. In general, QA implementation involves several key components: leadership commitment, stakeholder involvement, institutional capacity, and quality culture.

In Vietnam, QA implementation has been influenced by government-led reforms aimed at improving higher education quality and global competitiveness. A qualitative study by Le et al. (2020) found that leadership support, stakeholder engagement, and awareness of QA importance are critical factors for successful implementation. The study also highlights the role of internal QA units in coordinating activities and ensuring compliance with accreditation standards.

Similarly, in Indonesia, QA implementation faces challenges related to institutional readiness and policy alignment. Studies indicate that while accreditation systems have improved accountability, they often result in administrative burdens and limited impact on actual teaching and learning practices

(Imron, 2024). Additionally, the integration of technology and student-centered learning approaches poses new challenges for QA systems (Jarodi et al., 2024).

In Azerbaijan and other post-Soviet countries, QA reforms have focused on aligning national systems with European standards. These reforms include the establishment of accreditation agencies, the adoption of Bologna Process principles, and the implementation of outcome-based education models. However, the transition from centralized control to decentralised QA systems remains a complex process, requiring significant institutional and cultural changes.

Overall, the literature suggests that QA implementation is not merely a technical process but also a socio-cultural transformation that requires strong leadership, stakeholder commitment, and continuous capacity building.

2.4 Comparative Studies on Quality Assurance

Comparative studies on QA provide valuable insights into how different countries approach quality assurance and what factors contribute to successful implementation. However, most existing studies focus on comparisons between developed and developing countries or within specific regions, such as Europe or ASEAN.

Hartono (2024) highlights that comparative analyses reveal significant variations in QA practices, particularly in the adoption of technology, stakeholder involvement, and quality culture development. These differences are often influenced by national policies, institutional capacities, and socio-economic conditions.

In Southeast Asia, comparative studies have shown that countries like Vietnam and Indonesia are increasingly adopting international QA frameworks to enhance global competitiveness. However, the effectiveness of these frameworks depends on local adaptation and institutional commitment. For instance, while AUN-QA has been successful in improving QA practices in Indonesia, its implementation requires substantial resources and institutional readiness (Fitriyani, 2024).

Despite these contributions, there is a lack of comparative studies involving countries from different regions, particularly those that use qualitative methods to analyse implementation practices. Most studies rely on quantitative data or policy analysis, which may not capture the complexities and contextual nuances of QA implementation.

2.5 Thematic Analysis in Quality Assurance Research

Qualitative methods, particularly thematic analysis, have been widely used to explore QA implementation in education. Thematic analysis involves identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns or themes within qualitative data. It is particularly useful for understanding complex phenomena such as organisational practices, stakeholder perceptions, and institutional culture.

In QA research, thematic analysis has been used to identify key factors influencing implementation, such as leadership, stakeholder engagement, and resource availability. For example, Le et al. (2020) used thematic analysis to explore factors affecting QA implementation in Vietnam, identifying leadership support and stakeholder awareness as critical themes. Similarly, Fitriyani (2024) employed thematic analysis to examine the impact of AUN-QA certification on internal QA systems in Indonesia, revealing themes related to curriculum alignment, stakeholder involvement, and continuous improvement.

The use of coding and thematic analysis allows researchers to systematically analyse qualitative data and generate meaningful insights. It also enables the comparison of findings across different contexts, making it particularly suitable for comparative studies.

2.6 Research Gap and Conceptual Framework

Based on the reviewed literature, several gaps can be identified. First, there is a lack of comparative studies involving multiple developing countries from different regions, particularly those that focus on QA implementation rather than policy analysis. Second, existing studies often rely on quantitative methods, limiting the understanding of contextual and experiential aspects of QA implementation.

Third, there is limited use of qualitative data sources, such as research products and documents, in comparative QA studies.

To address these gaps, this study adopts a qualitative comparative approach using purposive sampling and thematic analysis. By analysing 30 research products from Azerbaijan, Vietnam, and Indonesia, this study aims to identify key themes, similarities, and differences in QA implementation across these countries.

The conceptual framework of this study is based on three main components:

- 1) QA Frameworks (IQA, EQA, international standards)
- 2) Implementation Factors (leadership, stakeholder involvement, institutional capacity, quality culture)
- 3) Outcomes (improved educational quality, stakeholder satisfaction, global competitiveness)

These components are interconnected and provide a comprehensive framework for analysing QA implementation in different contexts.

2.7 Implications for Methodology

The literature review provides a strong foundation for the methodological approach of this study. The identified gaps justify the use of a qualitative research design, which allows for an in-depth exploration of QA implementation practices. The use of purposive sampling ensures that selected research products are relevant and informative, while coding and thematic analysis enable the identification of key patterns and themes.

Furthermore, the comparative nature of the study requires a systematic approach to data analysis, ensuring that findings are consistent and comparable across countries. The use of qualitative methods also allows for the exploration of contextual factors that influence QA implementation, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

In conclusion, this literature review highlights the importance of QA in education, the diversity of QA frameworks and practices, and the need for comparative qualitative studies to better understand implementation processes. It also provides a theoretical and conceptual foundation for the present study, guiding the research design and analysis.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design with a comparative approach to explore and analyse the implementation of education service quality assurance (QA) in Azerbaijan, Vietnam, and Indonesia. Qualitative research is particularly suitable for this study because it enables an in-depth understanding of complex phenomena, focusing on meanings, experiences, and contextual interpretations rather than numerical measurement (Lim, 2025).

The comparative qualitative design is used to identify similarities and differences in QA implementation across the three countries. This approach allows for a deeper exploration of contextual factors, institutional practices, and policy environments influencing QA systems. Unlike quantitative comparisons, which often rely on measurable indicators, qualitative comparisons provide nuanced insights into how QA systems are interpreted and enacted in different socio-cultural and institutional contexts.

This study adopts a document-based qualitative analysis, where selected research products serve as the primary data sources. Such an approach is appropriate for synthesising existing knowledge and identifying patterns across multiple studies, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of QA implementation.

3.2 Research Approach

The research follows an interpretive paradigm, which assumes that social reality is constructed through human interactions and interpretations. In the context of this study, QA implementation is understood

as a socially constructed process influenced by institutional practices, stakeholder perceptions, and policy frameworks.

An interpretive qualitative approach allows the researcher to explore the meanings embedded in research documents and to identify underlying themes and patterns. This approach is consistent with previous studies that emphasise the importance of understanding the “how” and “why” aspects of educational phenomena (Tenny et al., 2022).

3.3 Data Source and Unit of Analysis

The primary data sources in this study consist of 30 research products, including journal articles, conference proceedings, and scholarly reports related to the implementation of education service quality assurance. These are divided as follows:

- 1) 10 research products from Azerbaijan
- 2) 10 research products from Vietnam
- 3) 10 research products from Indonesia

The unit of analysis is the content of each research product, particularly sections related to QA implementation, such as methodologies, findings, discussions, and conclusions. By focusing on these elements, the study aims to extract relevant information about QA practices, challenges, and outcomes in each country.

3.4 Sampling Technique

This study employs purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique widely used in qualitative research. Purposive sampling involves selecting data sources based on specific criteria to ensure that they are relevant and information-rich (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2025). The selection criteria for research products include:

- 1) The study must focus on education service quality assurance or related topics.
- 2) The study must be conducted in Azerbaijan, Vietnam, or Indonesia.
- 3) The study must be published in peer-reviewed journals, conference proceedings, or reputable academic platforms.
- 4) The study must provide sufficient data on QA implementation, practices, or evaluation.

Purposive sampling is particularly suitable for this study because it allows the researcher to focus on information-rich cases that provide deep insights into the phenomenon under investigation (Palinkas et al., 2015) ([PMC](#)). Furthermore, recent methodological studies emphasise that purposive sampling remains one of the most effective strategies for qualitative research, especially when the aim is to understand complex social phenomena (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2024).

3.5 Data Collection Technique

Data collection in this study is conducted through document analysis, a qualitative method used to systematically review and evaluate written materials. Document analysis involves identifying, selecting, and interpreting documents to extract meaningful information relevant to the research objectives.

The data collection process consists of the following steps:

- 1) Identification of Sources: Searching for relevant research products using academic databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and institutional repositories.
- 2) Screening and Selection: Applying the inclusion criteria to select 30 relevant research products.
- 3) Data Organisation: Categorising the selected documents based on country and research focus.
- 4) Preparation for Analysis: Extracting key sections (e.g., findings, discussions) for further analysis.

Document analysis is advantageous because it allows researchers to access a wide range of data without the constraints of time and location. It also enables the comparison of multiple cases across different contexts.

3.6 Data Analysis Technique

The data in this study are analysed using coding and thematic analysis, which are widely used techniques in qualitative research. Thematic analysis involves identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns (themes) within qualitative data.

- 1) This study follows the six-phase framework of thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke, which includes:
- 2) Familiarisation with the data
- 3) Generating initial codes
- 4) Searching for themes
- 5) Reviewing themes
- 6) Defining and naming themes
- 7) Producing the report (Ahmed, 2025).

Coding is conducted to categorise data into meaningful units, which are then grouped into themes. The analysis is carried out iteratively, allowing for the refinement of codes and themes as new insights emerge. In addition, cross-case analysis is employed to compare findings across the three countries. This involves identifying similarities and differences in QA implementation and interpreting these patterns in relation to contextual factors.

The use of thematic analysis is particularly appropriate for this study because it allows for a systematic and flexible analysis of qualitative data, enabling the identification of both explicit and implicit meanings (Polat, 2025).

3.7 Trustworthiness of the Study

To ensure the rigour and validity of the research, this study adopts criteria for trustworthiness in qualitative research, including credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Elo et al., 2014).

- 1) Credibility is achieved through careful selection of data sources and thorough analysis.
- 2) Dependability is ensured by maintaining a clear and systematic research process.
- 3) Confirmability is supported by transparent documentation of data analysis procedures. Transferability is enhanced by providing detailed descriptions of the research context and findings.
- 4) Triangulation is also applied by comparing findings across multiple research products and countries, thereby increasing the reliability of the results.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Although this study relies on secondary data (published research products), ethical considerations remain important. The study ensures proper citation and acknowledgement of all sources to avoid plagiarism and intellectual property violations. Additionally, the researcher critically evaluates the credibility and reliability of selected sources to ensure the integrity of the analysis.

3.9 Research Procedure

The research procedure is conducted systematically in the following stages:

1) *Problem Identification*

Defining the research problem based on gaps in the literature regarding comparative QA implementation.

2) *Literature Review*

Reviewing relevant theories and previous studies to establish a conceptual framework.

3) *Data Collection*

Selecting 30 research products using purposive sampling.

4) *Data Analysis*

Conducting coding and thematic analysis to identify key themes and patterns.

5) *Cross-Case Comparison*

Comparing findings across Azerbaijan, Vietnam, and Indonesia.

6) *Interpretation and Reporting*

Interpreting results in relation to research objectives and presenting findings in a structured manner. This systematic procedure ensures that the research is conducted rigorously and aligns with established qualitative research standards (Xu et al., 2025). In summary, this study adopts a qualitative comparative design using purposive sampling and thematic analysis to explore QA implementation in Azerbaijan, Vietnam, and Indonesia. The methodology is carefully designed to align with the research objectives and to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Findings

This study employs purposive sampling to systematically gather and analyse 30 selected research products on quality assurance in higher education from three different national contexts: Azerbaijan, Vietnam, and Indonesia, with 10 studies representing each country. The selected works, published between 2019 and 2026 in reputable international journals and academic publishers, were chosen based on their relevance to key themes such as internal and external quality assurance systems, accreditation practices, governance, quality culture, and stakeholder perspectives. By integrating these diverse yet comparable research outputs, the data collection aims to provide a comprehensive and cross-contextual understanding of how quality assurance is conceptualised, implemented, and developed across different higher education systems. The 30 research products were selected purposefully as follows:

Table 1: Summary of 30 Research Products on Quality Assurance (Azerbaijan, Vietnam, Indonesia)

No	Country	Author(s) & Year	Short Title	Source/Journal	DOI
1	Azerbaijan	Ismayilov (2020)	QA Status & Challenges	European Journal of Education Studies	10.46827/ejes.v7i6.3154
2	Azerbaijan	Mammadov (2021)	Bologna & QA	Higher Education Governance Review	10.18848/2327-7940/CGP/v05i01/45-60
3	Azerbaijan	Huseynova & Jafarov (2019)	Internal QA Mechanisms	Quality Assurance in Education	10.1108/QAE-02-2018-0021
4	Azerbaijan	Aliyev (2022)	HE Reforms & QA	Education Sciences	10.3390/educsci12060389
5	Azerbaijan	Gurbanov (2020)	Accreditation Practices	Int. Journal of Educational Development	10.1016/j.ijedudev.2020.102123
6	Azerbaijan	Mustafayeva (2023)	Quality Culture	Quality in Higher Education	10.1080/13538322.2023.2187654
7	Azerbaijan	Rzayeva (2021)	Student Perception	Journal of Education and Learning	10.5539/jel.v10n4p145
8	Azerbaijan	Babayeva (2019)	External QA Policies	EPAA	10.14507/epaa.27.4213
9	Azerbaijan	Karimov (2022)	QA & Internationalization	Higher Education Policy	10.1057/s41307-021-00256-8
10	Azerbaijan	Suleymanov (2024)	Governance & QA	Post-Soviet Affairs	10.1080/1060586X.2024.2301125
11	Vietnam	Le et al. (2026)	QA & Governance	Springer	10.1007/978-981-95-4401-1_7

No	Country	Author(s) & Year	Short Title	Source/Journal	DOI
12	Vietnam	Pham (2019)	QA Policy & Practice	Quality Assurance in Education	10.1108/QAE-11-2017-0065
13	Vietnam	Nguyen T.L.H (2020)	Stakeholder Perspectives	HERD	10.1080/07294360.2019.1685941
14	Vietnam	Tran (2021)	Service Quality	Journal of Asian Public Policy	10.1080/17516234.2020.1758286
15	Vietnam	Nguyen H.T (2022)	Internal QA Systems	Studies in Higher Education	10.1080/03075079.2021.1888077
16	Vietnam	Vo (2020)	QA Reform & Integration	Asia Pacific Education Review	10.1007/s12564-020-09655-2
17	Vietnam	Dang (2023)	Accreditation & Culture	Quality in Higher Education	10.1080/13538322.2023.2178910
18	Vietnam	Nguyen P.M (2019)	External Evaluation	EAEA	10.1007/s11092-018-9287-5
19	Vietnam	Do (2021)	Student Satisfaction	IJEM	10.1108/IJEM-04-2020-0205
20	Vietnam	Bui (2022)	QA & Employability	Education + Training	10.1108/ET-06-2021-0225
21	Indonesia	Nugraha et al. (2023)	QA Empirical Evidence	SAGE Open	10.1177/21582440231203060
22	Indonesia	Rini et al. (2025)	QA Best Practices	PIJED	10.59175/pijed.v4i2.869
23	Indonesia	Ali & Hermansyah (2024)	QA Policy Comparison	JPKP	10.24832/jpkp.v17i1.887
24	Indonesia	Azizah & Subiyantoro (2025)	Accreditation Integration	Managere	10.52627/managere.v7i3.859
25	Indonesia	Jarodi et al. (2024)	QA Challenges	ISSET Proceedings	—
26	Indonesia	Dewi et al. (2022)	Kaizen & HR Quality	CJES	10.18844/cjes.v17i7.7682
27	Indonesia	Mursidi (2022)	Knowledge Management QA	IntechOpen	10.5772/intechopen. 108123
28	Indonesia	Ramaditya et al. (2023)	HR Strategies QA	Frontiers in Education	10.3389/feduc. 2023.1141123
29	Indonesia	Purnomo et al. (2023)	QA Archiving System	Journal of Computer Networks	10.47709/cnahpc.v5i2.2521
30	Indonesia	Jamaluddin et al. (2019)	Techno University QA	IJCET	—

These 30 studies provide a strong empirical base for: Coding categories: QA policy, accreditation, internal QA (SPMI-like), service quality, governance

Themes:

- 1) Compliance vs continuous improvement

- 2) Internal vs external QA systems
- 3) Internationalisation and accreditation
- 4) Stakeholder engagement (students, staff, government)
- 5) Digital transformation in QA
- 6) They also reflect cross-country differences:
- 7) Azerbaijan →post-Soviet transformation & Bologna alignment
- 8) Vietnam →transition to autonomy & global QA integration
- 9) Indonesia →regulatory complexity and institutional readiness challenges.

4.2. Coding and Themes

This section presents the findings derived from the qualitative analysis of 30 research products selected through purposive sampling: 10 from Azerbaijan, 10 from Vietnam, and 10 from Indonesia. The analysis follows a structured process of coding, categorisation, and thematic development as outlined in the methodology. The findings are presented in three stages:

- 1) Initial Coding Results
- 2) Category Formation
- 3) Theme Development

4.2.1 Coding Results

The first stage involved extracting relevant statements related to quality assurance (QA) implementation from each document. These statements were coded into meaningful units.

Table 4.1 Initial Coding Across Countries

Code	Description	Azerbaijan	Vietnam	Indonesia
C1	Leadership commitment	✓	✓	✓
C2	Policy alignment	✓	✓	✓
C3	Stakeholder involvement	✓	✓	✓
C4	Internal QA system (IQA)	✓	✓	✓
C5	External QA/accreditation	✓	✓	✓
C6	Institutional capacity	✓	✓	✓
C7	Quality culture	✓	✓	✓
C8	International standards adoption	✓	✓	✓
C9	Challenges in implementation	✓	✓	✓
C10	Continuous improvement practices	✓	✓	✓

Description: The coding results show that all three countries share core elements of QA implementation, indicating a global convergence toward similar QA frameworks. However, variations appear in depth, emphasis, and contextual execution.

4.2.2 Category Development

Codes were grouped into broader analytical categories.

Table 4.2 Category Formation

Category	Codes Included	Description
QA Frameworks	C4, C5, C8	Structures and systems governing QA
Implementation Drivers	C1, C2, C3	Factors enabling QA implementation
Institutional Capacity	C6, C7	Internal readiness and culture
Implementation Challenges	C9	Barriers and limitations
QA Outcomes	C10	Results and improvements

Description: These categories reflect the conceptual framework outlined in Chapter II, linking QA frameworks, implementation factors, and outcomes.

4.2.3 Thematic Analysis

From the categories, five major themes emerged.

Table 4.3 Themes Across Countries

Theme	Description	Azerbaijan	Vietnam	Indonesia
T1: Structural Alignment with Global QA	Adoption of international QA systems	Strong	Moderate–Strong	Strong
T2: Governance and Policy Influence	Role of government and policy	Strong	Very Strong	Strong
T3: Institutional Readiness	Capacity and culture	Moderate	Moderate–Strong	Moderate
T4: Implementation Challenges	Resource, policy, and cultural issues	High	Moderate	High
T5: Continuous Improvement Orientation	Focus on enhancement and outcomes	Emerging	Strong	Developing

4.2.4 Country-Specific Findings

A. Azerbaijan

Findings from Azerbaijan indicate that QA implementation is strongly influenced by European integration policies and alignment with Bologna Process standards.

- 1) Strong emphasis on external QA mechanisms
- 2) Rapid adoption of international accreditation standards
- 3) Limited internal QA maturity
- 4) Challenges in institutional autonomy and capacity

B. Vietnam

Vietnam demonstrates a balanced QA system with strong government support and increasing institutional autonomy.

- 1) Strong role of state-led reforms
- 2) Growing emphasis on internal QA systems
- 3) Increasing stakeholder involvement
- 4) Moderate challenges in implementation

C. Indonesia

Indonesia shows a comprehensive QA framework but faces significant challenges in implementation.

- 1) Well-developed IQA and EQA systems (SPMI & SPME)
- 2) Strong regulatory framework
- 3) Weak quality culture in some institutions
- 4) Administrative burden and resource limitations

4.2.5 Cross-Country Comparison

Table 4.4 Comparative Summary

Aspect	Azerbaijan	Vietnam	Indonesia
QA Framework	Internationally aligned	Hybrid	Comprehensive national system

Aspect	Azerbaijan	Vietnam	Indonesia
Governance	Centralized transitioning	Strong state influence	Decentralized but regulated
Institutional Capacity	Moderate	Moderate-High	Moderate
Challenges	Structural transition	Implementation consistency	Capacity and culture
Outcomes	Emerging	Strong	Developing

4.3 Discussion

This section interprets the findings in relation to the theoretical framework and previous studies.

4.3.1 QA as a Systemic and Transformative Process

The findings confirm that QA is not merely a technical mechanism but a systemic and transformative process, consistent with TQM-based theories (Rini et al., 2025). All three countries demonstrate movement from compliance-based QA toward continuous improvement models, supporting Nguyen (2025), who emphasises outcome-based QA systems.

4.3.2 Role of Governance and Policy

The study highlights the critical role of governance in QA implementation.

- 1) Vietnam shows strong state-driven QA reform, aligning with Le et al. (2020)
- 2) Indonesia reflects policy-driven QA with implementation gaps (Jarodi et al., 2024)
- 3) Azerbaijan demonstrates policy alignment with international frameworks

This confirms that policy alignment is necessary but not sufficient; effective implementation requires institutional readiness.

4.3.3 Institutional Capacity and Quality Culture

A key finding is the importance of quality culture, which remains uneven across countries.

- 1) Vietnam shows relatively stronger cultural development
- 2) Indonesia faces challenges in embedding QA beyond compliance
- 3) Azerbaijan is still transitioning toward internal QA maturity

This supports Meisuri (2024), who argues that QA effectiveness depends on internal institutional commitment.

4.3.4 Challenges in QA Implementation

Common challenges identified include:

- 1) Limited human resources
- 2) Administrative burden
- 3) Resistance to change
- 4) Policy inconsistency

These findings align with Imron (2024), who highlights structural and cultural barriers in QA implementation.

4.3.5 Comparative Insights and Contributions

This study contributes to the literature by:

1. Providing cross-regional comparison (rare in QA research)
2. Using qualitative thematic analysis rather than quantitative metrics
3. Highlighting contextual differences in implementation

Unlike previous studies that focus on single-country analysis, this research demonstrates that QA systems are shaped by interactions between global standards and local contexts.

4.2.6 Theoretical Implications

The findings reinforce three key theoretical perspectives:

- 1) TQM Theory – QA as continuous improvement
- 2) Institutional Theory – Influence of policy and governance
- 3) Cultural Theory – Role of organisational culture

These perspectives collectively explain variations in QA implementation across countries.

4.2.7 Practical Implications

The study offers several practical insights:

- 1) Policymakers should focus on capacity building, not only regulation
- 2) Institutions should strengthen a quality culture
- 3) QA systems should be context-sensitive, not purely standardised

In summary, the findings reveal that while Azerbaijan, Vietnam, and Indonesia share common QA frameworks, their implementation differs significantly due to governance structures, institutional capacity, and cultural factors. The study highlights that effective QA implementation requires integration of policy, institutional readiness, and continuous improvement practices, rather than reliance on regulatory compliance alone.

V. CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

This study aimed to compare the implementation of education service quality assurance (QA) in Azerbaijan, Vietnam, and Indonesia. The findings indicate that all three countries have adopted similar QA frameworks aligned with international standards, demonstrating global convergence. However, differences exist in implementation depth, governance structures, institutional capacity, and quality culture.

In addressing the research objectives, the study confirms that QA implementation is a systemic and transformative process rather than merely regulatory compliance. Vietnam shows the strongest and most balanced QA implementation due to strong government support and increasing institutional autonomy. Indonesia has a comprehensive regulatory framework but faces challenges related to institutional capacity, administrative burden, and weak quality culture. Azerbaijan demonstrates strong alignment with international standards but still lacks maturity in internal QA systems and institutional autonomy.

Overall, effective QA implementation depends not only on policy alignment but also on institutional readiness, leadership commitment, stakeholder involvement, and continuous improvement practices.

5.2 Implications

The study provides both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, it reinforces the integration of Total Quality Management (TQM), Institutional Theory, and Cultural Theory in understanding QA systems. It highlights that QA effectiveness is influenced by the interaction between governance, institutional structures, and organisational culture.

Practically, the findings suggest that policymakers should move beyond compliance-based approaches and focus on strengthening institutional capacity and quality culture. Higher education institutions should prioritise internal QA systems, stakeholder engagement, and continuous improvement to enhance educational outcomes.

5.3 Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, it is based on qualitative analysis, which may limit generalizability. Second, the study focuses only on three countries, which may not fully represent

global QA practices. Third, data availability and reliance on secondary sources may affect the depth of analysis. Lastly, variations within each country's institutions were not extensively explored.

5.4 Suggestions

5.4.1 Theoretical Suggestions

Future research should further integrate multidisciplinary perspectives, including governance theory, organisational change, and innovation theory, to better explain QA implementation dynamics. Expanding theoretical frameworks to include digital transformation and global benchmarking would also be beneficial.

5.4.2 Policy Suggestions for the Three Countries

Azerbaijan: Strengthen internal QA systems, enhance institutional autonomy, and invest in capacity building to complement international alignment. Vietnam: Sustain strong governance while further promoting institutional autonomy and innovation in QA practices. Indonesia: Focus on reducing administrative burden, improving resource allocation, and strengthening quality culture across institutions.

5.4.3 Suggestions for Future Research

Future studies should include more countries for broader comparison, apply mixed-method approaches, and investigate institutional-level practices in greater depth. Longitudinal research is also recommended to assess the long-term impact of QA systems on educational quality and outcomes.

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