Unveiling Student Perceptions: Exploring the Advantages of Academic Audits in Selected Universities of Rajasthan

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Abstract

Rajasthan is becoming a great hub for higher education in India. According to the latest AISHE Report (2020-21), Rajasthan has the highest number of universities, i.e., 92, among all the states in the country, and it also ranks fourth in the list of states with the highest number of colleges after Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Karnataka. Although there has been a significant increase in the number of higher education institutions, they are facing many questions relating to quality. Rajasthan higher education institutions also have a long way to go on the path of quality improvement. Critically following the academic audit process for NAAC accreditation will automatically result in qualitative enhancement for the institutions. More and more institutions should be encouraged to take up the self-assessment process of academic audit for accreditation. The objective of this paper is to assess the Advantages resulting from academic audit in the universities of Rajasthan. For this purpose, a data sample of 206 student respondents from 11 selected universities in Rajasthan was analyzed using the multiple regression test. The outcome of the study revealed that five variables, i.e. the evaluation process, are well defined, Research is encouraged, University /College provides its services timely and responsively, Various units for guidance and counselling are established for the welfare of students, and it provides support to students for their all-round development. These are the advantages of academic audit in the universities of Rajasthan.

Keywords: Stakeholders, Universities, Academic Audit, Rajasthan.

Introduction

Higher education is the foundation of any society since it allows students to earn a living and makes them globally competitive. Any higher education institution should prioritize providing quality education to its students in order to improve society. Profit is increasingly becoming the only goal of every institution. Globalization and privatization have resulted in a massive increase in the number of institutions and colleges in the country. Every institution's mission or objective is to provide quality education to its students. Quality education is a must if we want

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to develop our country economically, socially, and culturally. The term academic audit was coined for this purpose. Critically following the academic audit process for NAAC accreditation will automatically result in qualitative enhancement for the institutions. More and more institutions should be encouraged to take up the self-assessment process of academic audit for accreditation

Indian Universities at A Glance

India possesses the third-largest higher education system in the world. To meet worldwide norms and sustain quality standards in such a big and diversified education system, the NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council) was formed. NAAC is an independent UGC (University Grants Commission) organization founded in 1994 with its headquarters in Bengaluru. NAAC is a government organization that assesses and accredits higher education institutions. To achieve excellence in higher education, NAAC expects institutions to undertake regular academic audits.

Table 1: NAAC Accreditation Status of Universities as of June 22, 2023

Cycles	Universities	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
First Cycle	406	56.15	56.15
Second Cycle	205	28.35	84.5
Third Cycle	93	12.87	97.37
Fourth Cycle	19	2.63	100
Number of Accreditations	723		

Source- www.naac.gov.in

The above table shows that a maximum of 56.15% of accreditations are currently in the first cycle or their reaccreditation is pending after the first cycle. Second-cycle accreditation accounts for only 28.35%, while third-cycle accreditation accounts for 12.87% of total accreditations. Data shows that only 19 universities, i.e., 2.63%, are in the fourth cycle of accreditation.

Rajasthan Universities at A Glance

According to the latest published AISHE report (2020–21), among total estimated student enrolment in higher education, Rajasthan ranks in the sixth position after Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, and Karnataka. Jaipur and Sikar in Rajasthan are among the top ten districts with the highest number of colleges. There are a total of 92 registered universities in Rajasthan, comprising 1 central, 26 state public universities, 52 private universities, 5 Institutes of National Importance, and 7 deemed-to-be universities. Out of which currently only 22 universities, i.e., approx. 23.91% of total universities are NAAC accredited according to the data available on the website, the rest may be reaccredited, reaccreditation is pending, or maybe they are accredited with agencies other than NAAC.

As a result of the efforts taken by the state government and other institutions that have been engaged in the process, higher education in Rajasthan has experienced significant change. Many new policies are being developed and implemented regularly in an effort to promote higher education, eliminate gender disparities, increase the number of students enrolled in colleges and universities, and offer additional educational services to the public. Rajasthan is a rapidly developing State in India, particularly as a centre for higher education. The Government of Rajasthan is working hard to establish this state as a centre for the finest educational institutions in the nation.

Review of Literature

Many studies have been done on the subject at the national as well as international levels, some of which are as follows:

Chaudhari and Chaudhari (2022) stressed that regular meetings and feedback with stakeholders are important aspects of building a strong academic audit system Described three levels at which academic audit should be performed: strategic level, functional level, and operational level.

Chauhan (2020). Academic auditing is vital to achieving and maintaining quality standards in higher education institutions, according to the authors. According to the researcher, NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council) is the central body responsible for conducting external academic audits of institutions, and IQAC (Internal Quality Assurance Cell) is the body established by institutions on NAAC's recommendation to perform the role of an internal quality assurance agency. The paper goes on to explain the importance of IQAC in performing academic audits in order to attain qualitative excellence.

Nitonde and Jadhav (2019) stated that academic and administrative auditing was implemented to improve the quality of higher education. According to the researcher, academic and administrative auditing and benchmarking are connected ideas. Benchmarking entails establishing standards, and frequent academic and administrative audits ensure that these requirements are met.

More and Jadhav (2019) said that more schools and institutions were willing to be audited by various bodies. The contribution of NAAC to enhancing university education in India was discussed. The researcher outlined the process used in academic and administrative audits, which begins with the gathering of data and information pertaining to all departments.

Yerande (2019) emphasized the need for reform in India's current higher education system and the quality problem. The study highlighted the relevance of academic and administrative audit (AAA) and accreditation for improving higher education institutions' quality. He described the academic audit as a SWOC (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Challenge) review of universities and colleges.

Agarwal (2018) emphasized the significance of academic and administrative auditing. The researcher raised the issue of the quality of higher education in India, stating that institutions should raise their standards to compete in this era of globalization by encouraging research for new ideas and innovation, as well as introducing skill-oriented and market demand-based courses in the curriculum to benefit students

Yerande (2017). The number of higher education institutions in India has expanded, but the quality of higher education supplied to students to make them internationally competitive is under scrutiny. He went on to say that factors like academic leadership, constant academic auditing for accreditation, and autonomy at the college level may all play a key role in quality development. Academic leaders, such as vice-chancellors or principals, may play a significant role in reforming India's current higher education system by dealing sensibly with academic concerns, administrative issues, and infrastructural obstacles

Kumar (2017) said that academic auditing evaluates the outcomes of quality assurance procedures and that such outcomes are utilized to improve institutions generally. He went on to say that quality assurance rules should include all three areas of academic, administrative, and infrastructural work done at three levels at an institute: strategic, functional, and operational. The researcher related the quality audit findings to the need for change in an institution's policies for improvement, and areas that required urgent attention were also mentioned.

Sonawane (2017) said that the school may flourish by performing academic and administrative audits via self-introspection. It was adopted in the United Kingdom, European nations, and New Zealand in the 1990s, while it was introduced in India in early 2000 with the foundation of NAAC as a national organization for academic and administrative auditing. As long as all material is carefully recorded when delivering a departmental presentation during a peer team visit. In addition, innovative techniques and technology utilized in teaching and research, extension efforts, and steps to lower student dropout rates should be addressed in the report presented to the peer team.

Nitonde (2016) The development of organizations such as NAAC and NBA, which are governed by UGC and AICTE authorities, respectively, to maintain a check on the quality of education given by higher education colleges in India, was mentioned. The academic audit was characterized by the researcher as a process of introspection and development via self-evaluation. The paper went on to discuss the tasks of the IQAC, which is a mandated

committee that institutions must form in accordance with NAAC rules for monitoring and carrying out the academic audit process of the institute in order to improve via self-assessment.

Gholba, Athalye, and Pejaver (2016) did a case study at B. N. Bandodkar College of Science in Thane, Maharashtra to determine if academic and administrative audits done by the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) improved the institution's performance. Several areas such as attendance, results, teaching, curriculum, extracurricular activities, and the operation of numerous departments were inspected during academic and administrative audits. To solve the disadvantages, the SWOC approach was applied. To address such weaknesses, measures such as enhanced teaching methodologies, more coaching and courses for students and staff, better record-keeping tactics, instructive seminars, and so on were implemented.

Suresh and Paramashivaiah (2016) revealed that academic and administrative audit was the subject of the study, which described it as a procedure to evaluate the development and operation of an institution. said that the key to effective, comprehensive quality management is the integration of IQAC and outside quality assessments. It was emphasized that academic and administrative audit is required for a variety of reasons, including improving student learning experiences, promoting research, and upgrading course structures so that students may benefit from them in terms of their careers.

Sharma (2016) suggested that conducting an academic and administrative audit is absolutely required to control the operation of the accounting and administrative units of any educational institution. Aspects to be considered in auditing were listed in the paper, which included the academic

caliber of the faculty, professionalism, competitiveness, ethical behaviour of the administration, supporting staff, and well-equipped, appropriate infrastructure to conduct teaching and research for students.

Research Gap:

After the study of the above literature, it was found that significant research has been done regarding academic audit at international and national levels, but no specific work has been done using the perceptions of stakeholders on academic audit in the universities of Rajasthan. Also, it was found that no study was carried out to measure the variables that contribute to the advantages of academic audit and result in the success of academic audit through the views of stakeholders from various selected universities in Rajasthan.

Objective:

To assess the advantages resulting from academic audit in selected universities of Rajasthan.

Hypothesis:

H1: The advantages of academic audit significantly explain its success in the universities of Rajasthan.

Research Methodology:

A. Research Design: The research has an exploratory and descriptive research design.

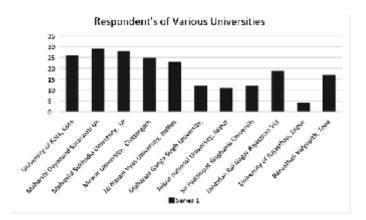
B.Research Sample: In order to satisfy the objectives of this study, a sample of 206 respondents was selected from 11 selected universities in Rajasthan, including public, private, and deemed universities.

Table 2: Sample Profile

S. No.	Name of University	Student	%
1	University of Kota, Kota	26	12.6
2	MaharshiDayanandSaraswati University, Ajmer	29	14.2
3	MohanlalSukhadia University, Udaipur	28	13.6
4	Mewar University, Chittorgarh	25	12.2
5	Jai Narain Vyas University, Jodhpur	23	11.1

S. No.	Name of University	Student	%
6	Maharaja Ganga Singh University, Bikaner	12	5.8
7	Jaipur National University, Jaipur	11	5.3
8	Sir PadampatSinghania University, Udaipur	12	5.8
9	Janardan Rai Nagar Rajasthan Vidhyapeeth, Udaipur	19	9.2
10	University of Rajasthan, Jaipur	4	1.9
11	BanasthaliVidyapith, Tonk	17	8.3
	Total	206	100.0

Figure: 1



The maximum data of 14.2% is gathered from the MaharshiDayanandSaraswati University, Ajmer, followed by MohanlalSukhadiaUniversity, Udaipur, with 13.6%, and the University of Kota, with 1212.6%, while the minimum is gathered from the University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, with 1.9%.

B. Data collection: The study is based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected from 206 student respondents from various selected universities in Rajasthan using a structured questionnaire. Responses of respondents were measured on five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Secondary data was used to clarify concepts relating to the

study, mainly consisting of books, journals, newspapers, NAAC newsletters, NAAC publications, self-study reports of universities, websites, etc.

The hypothesis regarding the advantages of the academic audit was tested by analyzing primary data collected through structured questionnaires and personal interview techniques.

C. Statistical Tools: The data were collected with the help of descriptive statistical tools and research techniques. The primary data collected was tested using multiple regression analysis with the help of SPSS.

Data analysis:

The data gathered from the 206 respondents from the 11 selected universities was analyzed for the purpose of measuring the advantages of the academic audit.

As per the model, the independent variables of the advantages of the academic audit were identified for the dependent variable of the academic audit's success using the multiple regression method.

The variables of advantage are identified, and the hypothesis is presented as follows:

H1: The advantages of academic auditing significantly explain its success in the universities of Rajasthan.

The results of the test are presented as follows:

Table 3: Multiple regression results

Descriptive Statistics				
Variable	SPSS Code	Mean	SD	N
Success of Academic audit	Benef_1	4.2524	.89135	206
The admissions process is well organized and transparent	Advan_1	4.4515	.89174	206
The evaluation process is well defined	Advan_2	4.5097	.83660	206

Descriptive Statistics				
Variable	SPSS Code	Mean	SD	N
Structure is appropriate	Advan_3	4.3058	1.00664	206
The curriculum is well defined and in accordance with national and global trends	Advan_4	4.3883	.84661	206
Research is encouraged	Advan_5	4.3641	.90444	206
University /College has up-to-date equipment's and infrastructure	Advan_6	4.4369	.91779	206
University /College keeps its records accurately	Advan_7	4.3786	.94860	206
Faculties are well qualified	Advan_8	4.3932	.89211	206
University encourages participation from students	Advan_9	4.3155	.90659	206
University /College provides its services timely and responsively	Advan_10	4.3204	.92355	206
ICT resources are used in teaching	Advan_11	4.3350	.90497	206
Various units for guidance and counselling are established for the welfare of students	Advan_12	4.4272	.87348	206
Provides support to students for their all-round development	Advan_13	4.3495	.90212	206
The university focuses on implanting values among students to turn them into responsible citizens	Advan_14	4.3641	.88261	206
The university promotes social, cultural and recreational activities for students	Advan_15	4.4126	.84371	206

Correlations

		BENE	Advan														
		F_1	_AO_														
	1		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	Benef_1	1	0.715	0.742	0.669	0.762	0.793	0.747	0.723	0.727	0.692	0.778	0.693	0.738	0.715	0.707	0.652
	Advan_1	0.715	1	0.893	0.802	0.781	0.775	0.837	0.875	0.732	0.68	0.742	0.779	0.816	0.755	0.72	0.73
	Advan_2	0.742	0.893	1	0.764	0.794	0.785	0.827	0.794	0.763	0.662	0.754	0.727	0.815	0.765	0.745	0.696
	Advan_3	0.669	0.802	0.764	1	0.833	0.809	0.752	0.752	0.729	0.738	0.76	0.813	0.833	0.843	0.742	0.666
	Advan_4	0.762	0.781	0.794	0.833	1	0.859	0.804	0.818	0.843	0.806	0.851	0.829	0.823	0.85	0.802	0.813
	Advan_5	0.793	0.775	0.785	0.809	0.859	1	0.795	0.822	0.801	0.787	0.899	0.792	0.796	0.86	0.817	0.787
	Advan_6	0.747	0.837	0.827	0.752	0.804	0.795	1	0.823	0.754	0.66	0.795	0.804	0.831	0.787	0.736	0.736
Pearson	Advan_7	0.723	0.875	0.794	0.752	0.818	0.822	0.823	1	0.705	0.751	0.791	0.806	0.799	0.74	0.755	0.779
Correlation	Advan_8	0.727	0.732	0.763	0.729	0.843	0.801	0.754	0.705	1	0.745	0.811	0.7	0.779	0.847	0.802	0.723
	Advan_9	0.692	0.68	0.662	0.738	0.806	0.787	0.66	0.751	0.745	1	0.764	0.81	0.747	0.765	0.746	0.722
	Advan_10	0.778	0.742	0.754	0.76	0.851	0.899	0.795	0.791	0.811	0.764	1	0.787	0.761	0.837	0.802	0.794
	Advan_11	0.693	0.779	0.727	0.813	0.829	0.792	0.804	0.806	0.7	0.81	0.787	1	0.849	0.83	0.732	0.776
	Advan_12	0.738	0.816	0.815	0.833	0.823	0.796	0.831	0.799	0.779	0.747	0.761	0.849	1	0.874	0.841	0.753
	Advan_13	0.715	0.755	0.765	0.843	0.85	0.86	0.787	0.74	0.847	0.765	0.837	0.83	0.874	1	0.838	0.809
	Advan_14	0.707	0.72	0.745	0.742	0.802	0.817	0.736	0.755	0.802	0.746	0.802	0.732	0.841	0.838	1	0.845
	Advan_15	0.652	0.73	0.696	0.666	0.813	0.787	0.736	0.779	0.723	0.722	0.794	0.776	0.753	0.809	0.845	1
	Benef_1		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Advan_1	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Advan_2	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Advan_3	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Advan_4	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

		BENE	Advan														
		F_1	_AO_														
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	Advan_5	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Advan_6	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sig.	Advan_7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
(1-tailed)	Advan_8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Advan_9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0
	Advan_10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0
	Advan_11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0
	Advan_12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0
	Advan_13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0
	Advan_14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
	Advan_15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
N	N	857	206	206	206	206	206	206	206	206	206	206	206	206	206	206	206

	Model Summary											
Model	odel R R Square Adjusted R Square Std. Error of the Estimate Change Statistics											
	R Square Change F Change df1 df2 S							Sig. F Change				
5	5 .832° .693 .685 .50040 .006 4.008 1 200 .047											
	e. Predictors: (Constant), Predictors: (Constant), Advan_5, Advan_2, Advan_10, Advan_12, Advan_13											

	ANOVA ^a											
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.						
	Regression	112.793	5	22.559	90.088	.000 ^f						
5	Residual	50.081	200	.250								
	Total	162.874	205									
a	a. Dependent Variable: BENEF_1											
h	. Predictors: (Constant), A	.dvan_5, Advan_2, Advan_10, Ad	lvan_12, Adva	an_13								

	Model	Unst. C	oeff.	St. Coeff.	t	Sig.
		В	SE	Beta		
	(Constant)	.312	.197		1.587	.114
	Advan_5	.334	.102	.339	3.278	.001
_	Advan_2	.207	.079	.195	2.626	.009
3	Advan_10	.288	.091	.299	3.172	.002
	Advan_12	.263	.094	.257	2.808	.005
	Advan_13	198	.099	201	-2.002	.047

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]	Excluded Variables ^a				
	Model	Beta In	t	Sig.	Partial Correlation		istics		
						Tol	VIF	Min Tol	
	Advan_1	009 ^f	099	.921	007	.175	Advan_1	009 ^f	
	Advan_3	114 ^f	-1.395	.165	098	.229	Advan_3	114 ^f	
	Advan_4	.112 ^f	1.212	.227	.086	.178	Advan_4	.112 ^f	
	Advan_6	.108 ^f	1.275	.204	.090	.213	Advan_6	.108 ^f	
5	Advan_7	017 ^f	210	.834	015	.230	Advan_7	017 ^f	
3	Advan_8	.147 ^f	1.818	.071	.128	.232 Advan_		.147 ^f	
	Advan_9	$.088^{f}$	1.291	.198	.091	.328	Advan_9	.088 ^f	
	Advan_11	019 ^f	230	.818	016	.226	Advan_11	019 ^f	
	Advan_14	012 ^f	148	.883	010	.218	Advan_14	012 ^f	
	Advan_15	063 ^f	867	.387	061	.293	Advan_15	063 ^f	
í	a. Dependent Variab	le: BENEF_1							
1	n. Predictors in the I	Model: (Const	ant), Advan	_5, Adva	n_2, Advan_10, Advan_12, Advar	n_13			

The results of the test is revealed that

Adjusted R2 value (The Accuracy of the Model) = .685

ANOVA F value (the Model Fitness Index) = 90.088 Sig. in ANOVA (Model fitness for Future) = .000f

Constant = BENEF 1

Variable Selected= Advan_5, Advan_2, Advan_10, Advan_12, Advan_13

The results with the value of adjusted R square 68.5 reveals that for the dependent variable BENEF_1, 5 independent variables (Advan_5, Advan_2, Advan_10, Advan_12, and, Advan_13) show the advantages of Academic audit. The above stated that the model is found to fit with the Value of AN90.088, which is Significant (p<0.05). Research outcome shows that the variables-Evaluation process is well defined (Advan_2), Research is encouraged (Advan_5), University /College provides its services timely and responsively (Advan_10), Various units for guidance counselling are established for the welfare of students (Advan_12), and Provides support to students for their all-round development (Advan_13) are expressing the advantages of academic Audit in universities in Rajasthan.

Conclusion

The academic audit may be defined as a methodical technique for evaluating the overall quality of the educational process at an institution. It has to do with quality assurance and improving the overall quality of academic activities in higher education institutions. The study's findings showed that the following variables, such as a well-defined evaluation process, Research encouragement, Services provided by the university timely and responsively, the establishment of various units for guidance and counselling for the welfare of students, and providing support to students for their all-round development, result in the success of the academic audit process. One of the key aspects of an academic audit is the provision of feedback to students. Make sure the criticism is constructive, timely, and specific. The advantages of academic auditing enhance student outcomes and general satisfaction. Explain the audit is criteria and standards in detail so that students can easily understand how their performance will be assessed. Academic audits should not be considered a one-time event but rather a step in a continuous process of improvement. Encourage students to set goals, think about their audit results, and work toward achieving those goals. Give students the chance to clarify anything that is unclear to them, ask questions, and have discussions about how to make their learning experiences better. Thanks to continuous improvement, students are actively involved in their education and are given the resources they need to manage their academic progress.

Academic audits can support students' academic growth and success by implementing these recommendations. This will help to foster a positive learning environment and make academic audits more student-centric.

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