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CONTRIBUTIONS AND CHALLENGES OF ACSCU-ACI ACCREDITORS: BASIS FOR A DIGITAL ACCREDITATION DOCUMENTATION FRAMEWORK

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Abstract: This study examined the profile, accreditation experience, perceived contributions, and challenges encountered by ACSCU-ACI accreditors, as well as the relationship between their profile and contributions to institutional development. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed to provide both a comprehensive description of variables and an analysis of their relationships. The respondents consisted of 50 accreditors selected through purposive sampling to ensure relevant experience in accreditation activities. Data were collected using a researcher-made questionnaire that underwent expert validation and achieved a high reliability rating (Cronbach's alpha = 0.983), indicating excellent internal consistency. The instrument covered demographic profile, accreditation experience, perceived contributions, and challenges, with responses measured using a Likert scale. Data gathering was conducted over one month. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, and weighted mean were used to summarize the data, while inferential statistics, including Pearson's r, Spearman's rho, and point-biserial correlation, were utilized to test relationships among variables. Findings revealed that accreditors are generally middle-aged, female, married, and hold senior academic ranks with advanced educational qualifications. Most have moderate to substantial experience, primarily handling Level 2 and Level 3 accreditation. Accreditors were perceived to contribute significantly to institutional development, particularly in improving instructional quality, promoting continuous quality improvement, and supporting evaluation processes. However, they also face challenges related to documentation inconsistencies, limited institutional preparedness, and time constraints. Moreover, experience-related factors were found to significantly influence their contributions, whereas demographic variables showed no significant relationship. The findings highlight the need to strengthen accreditation documentation, institutional preparedness, and coordination through technology-supported processes. These results may serve as a basis for developing a digital accreditation documentation framework that promotes more efficient records management, information accessibility, and quality assurance practices in faith-based higher education institutions.

Keywords: Accreditation, accreditors, descriptive-correlational research, institutional development, quality assurance

I. INTRODUCTION

Accreditation acts as an essential tool used to ensure quality education in universities and colleges. In the Philippines, the Association of Christian Schools, Colleges and Universities-Accrediting Council, Inc. (ACSCU-ACI) works very hard in ensuring that there is high academic standard and quality. Through their accreditation process, many things have been realized. First, ACSCU-ACI accreditation has made great contribution in ensuring the raising of the academic standards over and above the minimum standards set by the authorized governing bodies. It has also made a significant contribution in ensuring that there are highly qualified lecturers, effective teaching methods, and governance in strategic planning among others. Through the work of ACSCU-ACI, many institutions of learning have transformed according to their value system (Daffon, 2009; Esmaeili, Khalili & Gholipour, 2020).

Even with these contributions, there remain certain challenges that accrediting agencies and their accreditors must contend with when carrying out their functions. This includes lack of institutional support, reluctance to change, resource limitations, and inconsistent implementation of accreditation guidelines, among others. Such issues could impact the efficiency and productivity of the accreditation process, as well as the benefits accrued by educational institutions from it. As per recent research on the subject, the role of accreditors cannot be ignored if there was any intention of improving

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the quality of accreditation systems through better understandings of the accreditors' perspectives (Caldwell & Rutledge, 2025). Therefore, there is a need for empirical research to investigate the challenges faced by accreditors.

Considering this background, the primary purpose of the current study is to determine the role of the ACSCU-ACI accreditors in improving the quality of educational institutions in the Philippines and to uncover the problems that they encounter in conducting accreditation. In particular, it is intended to describe the profile of the accreditors based on the following factors: age, gender, marital status, rank, years of experience, educational attainment, highest level of accreditation involved, and number of educational institutions accredited. Furthermore, it is meant to determine the contributions of accreditors in improving the institutional development of Philippine educational institutions in instruction, faculty, research, extension, and governance; and uncover the problems experienced by accreditors in conducting accreditation. Lastly, it will analyze if there is any significant relationship between the accreditors' profile and their contributions to institutional development.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design (Subia et al, 2019) to examine the profile, perceived contributions, and challenges encountered by ACSCU-ACI accreditors, as well as to determine the relationship between their profile and contributions to institutional development. The descriptive aspect was used to present the demographic characteristics, accreditation experiences, contributions, and challenges, while the correlational aspect was employed to identify significant relationships among selected variables.

The respondents comprised 50 ACSCU-ACI accreditors who were sampled purposely to ensure only those who had been accredited before would be included in the study. Data were gathered using an investigator-made questionnaire which was developed based on the objectives of the study. The content validity of the research instrument was established by accreditation experts and researchers to ensure accuracy and relevance. For reliability, a pilot test was conducted on the questionnaire, which yielded a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.983.

The survey instrument consisted of portions dealing with the demographics of the respondents, their experience in accreditation, perceived contribution to institutional development, and challenges met in accreditation processes. The answers on the perception variables were rated using the Likert scale. Data gathering was done within one month after the administration and retrieval of the survey instrument from the respondents.

Descriptive analysis was performed by computing frequencies, percentages, and weighted mean, while the association between variables was analyzed using inferential tools such as Pearson's r, Spearman's rho, and point-biserial correlation based on the type of data. Such statistical tools were utilized in testing the significant association between the accreditors' profile and their perceived contributions to institutional development.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

IV. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

TABLE I DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE ACSCU-ACI ACCREDITORS

Age	**Frequency**	**Percent**
30 to 39	6	12.0
40 to 49	21	42.0
50 to 59	13	26.0
60 to 70	10	20.0
Total	50	100.0
Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	16	32.0
Female	34	68.0
Total	50	100.0

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Civil Status	Frequency	Percent
Single	8	16.0
Married	40	80.0
Widow	2	4.0
Total	50	100.0
Faculty Rank	Frequency	Percent
Assistant Professor	6	12.0
Associate Professor	18	36.0
Professor	26	52.0
Total	50	100.0
Highest Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percent
Bachelor's	6	12.0
Masteral	30	60.0
Doctoral	14	28.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 1 above depicts the socio-demographic composition of the accreditors considering their age, sex, marital status, faculty position, and educational qualification. Table 1 presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the ACSCU-ACI accreditors, indicating that the biggest percentage of accreditors fall under the age range of 40-49 years old (42%), followed by those in the 50-59 years old bracket (26%), 60-70 years old (20%), and 30-39 years old (12%). Clearly, most of the accreditors fall within their middle-to-late professional ages, thus implying significant experience in their professions. With regard to the respondents' sex, 68% are females, while 32% are males. As to the marital status, most of the accreditors are married (80%), few are single (16%), and some widowed (4%).

With respect to academic status, more than 50 percent of the accreditors are Professors (52 percent), then Associate Professors (36 percent), and finally Assistant Professors (12 percent). In addition, with regard to educational qualifications, the most common qualification is a master’s degree (60 percent), followed by doctorate (28 percent), and baccalaureate degree (12 percent). It is evident that most of the accreditors have attained higher levels of education. The high percentage of professors among the accreditors corroborates this finding.

V. ACCREDITATION EXPERIENCE

TABLE II ACCREDITATION PROFILE OF THE ACSCU-ACI ACCREDITORS

Highest Level of Accreditation Handled	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Level 1	5	10.0
Level 2	20	40.0
Level 3	18	36.0
Level 4	7	14.0
Total	50	100.0
Number of Institutions Accredited	Frequency	Percent
1 to 9	39	78.0
10 to 19	5	10.0
20 to 30	6	12.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 2 shows the accreditation profile of the ACSCU-ACI Accreditors in terms of the highest level of accreditation handled and the number of institutions accredited.

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As shown in the table above, there is information on the level of accreditation experience among the accreditors based on the highest level they can work on. From this, we see that majority have been working at the Level 2 (40%), while 36% of the respondents have been working on Level 3. The remaining respondents who account for 14% and 10% respectively have been working on Level 4 and Level 1. This implies that most of the accreditors have experience in mid-level to higher-level accreditation.

On the other hand, regarding the number of institutions which have been accredited, it has been observed that most accreditors (78%) had experience with 1 to 9 institutions, 10% accreditors had experience of 10 to 19 institutions, while the remaining 12% accreditors had experience of 20 to 30 institutions. From the above-mentioned data, one may infer that though most accreditors did have some experience, there were some accreditors who had extensive experience dealing with a large number of institutions.

VI. PERCEIVED CONTRIBUTIONS OF ACSCU-ACI ACCREDITORS

TABLE III PERCEIVED CONTRIBUTIONS OF ACSCU-ACI ACCREDITORS TO INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Perceived Contributions of ACSCU-ACI Accreditors	Wm	Verbal Description
1. ACSCU-ACI accreditors contribute significantly to the improvement of instructional quality in faith-based institutions.	3.92	Agree
2. Accreditation recommendations help faculty members enhance their teaching competencies and professional qualifications.	3.92	Agree
3. The accreditation process promotes the integration of Christian values into the curriculum and instruction.	3.96	Agree
4. ACSCU-ACI accreditors encourage the development of a strong culture of research and scholarly productivity.	3.94	Agree
5. Accreditation visits contribute to the strengthening of institutional research policies and practices.	3.94	Agree
6. ACSCU-ACI accreditors play an important role in improving extension and community outreach programs.	3.92	Agree
7. Accreditation recommendations help align extension activities with the institution's mission and Christian service.	3.92	Agree
8. ACSCU-ACI accreditation contributes to improved institutional governance, leadership, and decision-making processes.	3.86	Agree
9. The accreditation process enhances strategic planning and long-term institutional development.	3.24	Moderately Agree
10. ACSCU-ACI accreditors promote a culture of continuous quality improvement and self-evaluation.	3.96	Agree
11. Accreditation feedback helps institutions identify strengths and areas for improvement.	3.98	Agree
12. ACSCU-ACI accreditors serve as mentors and guides in institutional transformation and quality assurance.	3.90	Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	3.87	Agree

Table 3 shows the contribution of the ACSCU-ACI Accreditors in terms of institutional development. From the results in Table 3 above, it is evident that respondents perceive that the ACSCU-ACI accreditors provide high contribution to institutional development, based on the total weighted mean of 3.87 (Agree). Top contributions provided by the ACSCU-ACI accreditors include: providing institutions with an understanding of their strengths and weaknesses (WM = 3.98), facilitating the process of continuous improvement (WM = 3.96), and incorporating Christian values in instruction (WM = 3.96). The results above are consistent with previous studies indicating that accreditation enhances institutional quality through the provision of a process of evaluation (Miranda, 2025; Clemons & Jance, 2024). Particularly, accreditation is seen as a means of linking input, process, and output of institutions.

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As far as teaching, research, and extension are concerned, it is clear from the above table that the role played by the accreditors in increasing the effectiveness of teaching, improving faculty competency and conducting research activities is very prominent (WM ≈ 3.92–3.94). In addition, the accreditors are helpful for developing research policies and linking extension activities to the mission and Christian service of the institution. These findings are consistent with the latest studies which reveal that accreditors increase the performance of institutions through their impact on teaching, research, and community involvement activities (Iqbal et al., 2025; Aquino, 2025).

Administratively, accreditors have been seen to assist in governance and leadership decisions (WM = 3.86) and mentoring in transformation (WM = 3.90). The area of strategic planning has received a bit lower rating (WM = 3.24, Moderately Agree), thus indicating that perhaps the influence of accreditors is not felt as much in this area. However, according to recent literature, accreditation can help in improving management, institutional policy and performance through quality management systems (Kayyali, 2024; Miranda, 2025). The results indicate that accreditors play an important role in fostering continuous improvement in institutions of higher learning.

VII. CHALLENGES FACED BY ACSCU-ACI ACCREDITORS

TABLE IV CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY THE ACCREDITORS

Challenges Encountered by ACSCU-ACI Accreditors	Wm	Verbal Description
1. Limited financial and material resources of institutions hinder the implementation of accreditation recommendations.	3.92	Agree
2. Resistance to change from institutional administrators or faculty affects the accreditation process.	3.92	Agree
3. Inadequate preparation of institutions before accreditation visits poses a challenge to accreditors.	3.96	Agree
4. Time constraints during accreditation visits limit the depth of evaluation.	3.94	Agree
5. Heavy workload and multiple accreditation assignments affect accreditors' performance.	3.94	Agree
6. Inconsistencies in institutional compliance with ACSCU-ACI standards create difficulties during evaluation.	3.92	Agree
7. Lack of sustained follow-through by institutions after accreditation visits is a significant challenge.	3.92	Agree
8. Insufficient support from institutional leadership affects the effectiveness of accreditation activities.	3.86	Agree
9. Variations in institutional context (size, mission, resources) make standard evaluation challenging.	3.24	Moderately Agree
10. Logistical and coordination issues during accreditation visits affect the overall accreditation process.	3.96	Agree
11. The documents presented contain information that is inconsistent with the data gathered from the stakeholders.	3.98	Agree
12. The institution's policies are not aligned with its Vision, Mission, and Goals.	3.90	Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	3.87	Agree

As presented in Table 4, the most common issues encountered by ACSCU-ACI accrediting agencies when implementing and following procedures related to accreditation include issues with a generally high weighted mean score of 3.87 (Agree). The most problematic area among all these issues that was highlighted by the respondents includes issues related to discrepancies between data and documents, which has a weighted mean score of 3.98, while issues related to preparation and logistics in the accreditation process have a weighted mean score of 3.96. Moreover, issues related to time limits also lead to a weighted mean score of 3.94 for the issue. Such conclusions are backed up by multiple other studies that were done since (Shah, Mahsood & Nair, Chenicheri Sid, 2023; Hou, Angela Yung-chi, 2022).

The difficulties faced at institutional and organizational levels can be seen in the data presented in the table below. The respondents have indicated that limited resources (WM = 3.92), resistance to changes from faculty and management staff

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(WM = 3.92), and lack of follow-up actions after the accreditation visits (WM = 3.92) can prevent the implementation of any recommendations. In addition, the inconsistency in meeting the accreditation requirements and insufficient support from the organization's leaders (WM = 3.86) can make the process even more difficult. The findings found in the literature support this assumption (Hazelkorn, Ellen, 2023; Harvey, 2024).

The other one is that of varying institutional settings (WM = 3.24, Moderately Agree), whereby it has been indicated that due to differences in the size and missions of different institutions, it may not be easy to develop evaluation criteria for all the institutions. Other problems were mentioned by the accreditors, including issues with policies that are incoherent with the vision, mission, and goals of the institution (WM = 3.90). Similar results are found in other studies carried out recently, which show accreditation to be a contextual issue and therefore needs to be flexible (Eaton, Judith S., 2020; Stensaker, Bjørn, 2024).

5. Significant Relationship between the Profile of the ACSCU-ACI Accreditors and their Contributions to Institutional Development

TABLE V CORRELATION BETWEEN THE PROFILE OF THE ACSCU-ACI ACCREDITORS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Correlation	Contributions of ACSCU-ACI Accreditors to Institutional Development			
Profile	correlation value	p-value	Statistical Tool	Interpretation
Age	-.112	.440	Pearson's r	No Significant Relationship
Sex	.246	.085	Point-Biserial	No Significant Relationship
Faculty Rank	-.193	.179	Spearman's rho	No Significant Relationship
Years of Experience as an Accreditor	.839**	.000	Spearman's rho	Significant Relationship
Highest Educational Attainment	.013	.927	Spearman's rho	No Significant Relationship
Highest Level of Accreditation Handled	.477**	.000	Spearman's rho	Significant Relationship
Number of Institutions Accredited	.319*	.024	Pearson's r	Significant Relationship

From the findings, it is evident that none of the individual characteristics of the ACSCU-ACI accreditors like age ($r = -0.112$, $p = 0.440$), gender ($r = 0.246$, $p = 0.085$), faculty level ($\rho = -0.193$, $p = 0.179$), and highest degree attained ($\rho = 0.013$, $p = 0.927$) are statistically significant as contributing factors to institutional growth. None of the p-values is below 0.05; therefore, they cannot be said to predict how effective the accreditors are in their work. This conclusion is consistent with that from Higher Education Quality Assurance, which states that the effects of accreditation are process-driven and not demographic-related (Stensaker Bjørn, 2011).

On the other hand, factors associated with experience are shown to exhibit a highly significant correlation. The factor of years in being an accreditor is shown to be highly correlated with ρ value of 0.839 at the probability level of 0.000; in other words, the more years an accreditor has of being an accreditor, the more valuable he is towards the development of the institution. Likewise, another variable that correlates well is the maximum level of accreditation managed ($\rho = 0.477$, $p = 0.000$) and the number of institutions accredited ($r = 0.319$, $p = 0.024$). From this data, we can infer that having accreditors with more years of experience and exposure towards complex accreditation activities would produce more effective recommendations from these accreditors.

This research suggests that certification agencies such as ACSCU-ACI should consider developing the expertise and experience of the accreditors through mentoring programs. Rather than concentrating on demographic characteristics, there is a need to train young accreditors by exposing them to more accreditation visits and assigning them increased accreditation responsibilities. This could improve their performance in helping with organizational development, in line with international standards advocated by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (2015).

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VIII. CONCLUSION

The following conclusions were derived based on the findings of this study:

1. The ACSCU-ACI accreditors are predominantly middle-aged, female, married, and highly ranked academics with advanced educational qualifications, reflecting a mature and professionally experienced group.

2. Most accreditors possess moderate to substantial accreditation experience, primarily handling Level 2 and Level 3 evaluations and accrediting a limited number of institutions.

3. The accreditors are widely perceived to make significant contributions to institutional development, particularly in quality improvement, instructional enhancement, and continuous evaluation processes.

4. The accreditors commonly face operational, institutional, and resource-related challenges, especially issues with documentation accuracy, institutional preparedness, and time constraints.

5. Experience-related factors significantly influence accreditors' contributions to institutional development, while demographic characteristics have no significant relationship.

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