


Chapter 23

Strategic Use of Data in Higher Education Institutions for Quality Enhancement

Eric C. K. Cheng

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1801-7321>

Yew Chung College of Early Childhood Education, Hong Kong

ABSTRACT

This study examines the strategic integration of data-driven practices in higher education institutions (HEIs) to optimize quality assurance (QA) mechanisms. It highlights the role of data in enhancing QA and institutional improvement, focusing on initiatives by the University Grants Committee (UGC) in Hong Kong. Key practices include developing performance indicators, establishing data management systems, and using external benchmarks to assess effectiveness in teaching, research, and governance. The study outlines principles such as evidence-based decision-making, performance monitoring, resource allocation, and strategic planning. These approaches help universities optimize resources, enhance educational quality, and support continuous improvement. Additionally, the Student Satisfaction and Need Assessment Survey gathers insights into student experiences, informing quality enhancement and promoting accountability. The survey data assist universities in tailoring services, benchmarking against peers, and improving strategic planning.

1. INTRODUCTION

This section delves into the strategic use of data in higher education institutions (HEIs), focusing on initiatives by the University Grants Committee (UGC) in Hong Kong. It emphasises data-driven decision-making to improve accountability, transparency, and quality assurance. The chapter discusses the creation of performance indicators and benchmarks to evaluate HEI effectiveness and efficiency. It highlights the importance of establishing robust data management systems and using external data sources for benchmarking. Overall, the chapter underscores the commitment to enhancing excellence in higher education through strategic data use.

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1.1 Use of Data in University

The University Grants Committee (UGC) in Hong Kong recognises the importance of data-driven decision-making in higher education institutions (HEIs) to enhance accountability, transparency, and quality assurance. UGC's initiatives emphasise the strategic use of data to support evidence-based planning, policy formulation, and resource allocation across Hong Kong universities.

One significant aspect of UGC's focus on data utilisation is the development of performance indicators and benchmarks to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of HEIs. These indicators cover various dimensions, including teaching quality, research output, knowledge transfer, and institutional governance. By collecting and analysing relevant data, HEIs can benchmark their performance against peers and identify areas for improvement.

Moreover, UGC encourages HEIs to establish robust data management systems to facilitate data collection, storage, analysis, and reporting. These systems enable universities to track key performance metrics, monitor progress towards strategic goals, and generate actionable insights to inform decision-making at all levels.

In addition to internal data, UGC also promotes the utilisation of external data sources and benchmarks to enrich institutional analyses and assessments. Collaborative efforts with international accreditation bodies, rankings organisations, and peer institutions enable HEIs to benchmark themselves against global standards and best practices.

Overall, UGC's emphasis on data-driven approaches underscores the commitment to promoting excellence, innovation, and continuous improvement in higher education across Hong Kong. By harnessing the power of data, HEIs can drive positive change, enhance institutional effectiveness, and ultimately elevate the quality of education and research in the region.

1.2 Key Principles and Practices for the Use Of Data

Among these is Evidence-Based Decision Making, whereby universities leverage data to inform their decision-making processes. This involves a comprehensive analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data to discern emerging trends, identify recurring patterns, and make well-informed choices regarding various facets of academic programs, resource allocation, strategic planning, and institutional priorities.

Additionally, Performance Monitoring and Evaluation constitute integral components of data utilisation strategies within universities. Through systematic collection and analysis of data, institutions can continually monitor their performance vis-a-vis predefined goals, objectives, and key performance indicators (KPIs). This entails tracking metrics related to teaching quality, research productivity, student outcomes, and overall institutional effectiveness, thereby facilitating a comprehensive assessment of progress and the identification of areas warranting improvement.

Moreover, data-driven approaches play a pivotal role in supporting Quality Assurance and Enhancement endeavours within university settings. By employing systematic data collection and analysis methodologies, institutions can ensure the ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and enhancement of academic programs, student support services, and administrative processes. This facilitates compliance with regulatory standards, accreditation requirements, and best practices in higher education, thereby upholding and enhancing overall institutional quality.

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