THREE OBSTACLES OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM OF PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The implementation of internal quality assurance in higher education faces many obstacles. This research is focused on the obstacles of implementing the internal quality assurance system in Private higher education. Internal quality assurance system is a system carried out by universities independently.

Method: The approach used in this research is qualitative with case study method. The case studied is the obstacle to the implementation of internal quality assurance system. Data collection uses combining an internal document review with semi-structured interviews. The qualitative interview data were subject to thematic analysis, a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning across a dataset.

Result: In terms of administrative obstacles, it was found that the internal quality assurance agency at Puangrimaggalatung University only had 62.5% of standard documents. The organizational constraints found include 1) Limited understanding of internal quality assurance system only for structural officials, not for all but not for all stake holders in tertiary institutions. 2) Difficulties in determining measurable indicators of successful implementation of the internal quality assurance system, and 3) Unclear responsibilities among various structural positions resulting in overlapping of authority, which complicates internal quality assurance system implementation. In terms of psychological constraints, data is obtained in the form of neglect, disdain or cynical attitude towards quality assurance systems and processes.

Conclusion: Based on an in-depth study of the data that has been collected, it is concluded that the implementation of the internal quality assurance system at private universities is going well however, there are obstacles in 3 areas, namely 1) Administrative obstacles 2) organizational obstacles and 3) psychological obstacles.

Keyword: internal quality assurance, higher education, organizational obstacles.

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TRÊS OBSTÁCULOS DO SISTEMA INTERNO DE GARANTIA DE QUALIDADE DO ENSINO SUPERIOR PRIVADO NA INDONÉSIA

RESUMO

Objetivo: A implementação da garantia interna de qualidade no ensino superior enfrenta muitos obstáculos. Esta pesquisa está focada nos obstáculos da implementação do sistema interno de garantia de qualidade no ensino superior privado. O sistema interno de garantia de qualidade é um sistema realizado pelas universidades de forma independente.

Método: A abordagem utilizada nesta pesquisa é qualitativa com método de estudo de caso. O caso estudado é o obstáculo para a implementação de um sistema interno de garantia de qualidade. A coleta de dados usa a combinação de uma revisão interna de documentos com entrevistas semiestruturadas. Os dados qualitativos da entrevista foram sujeitos a análise temática, um método para identificar sistematicamente, organizar e oferecer uma visão sobre os padrões de significado em um conjunto de dados.

Resultado: Em termos de obstáculos administrativos, verificou-se que a agência interna de garantia de qualidade da Universidade Puangrimaggalatung possuía apenas 62,5% dos documentos padrão. As restrições organizacionais encontradas incluem 1) Compreensão limitada do sistema interno de garantia de qualidade apenas para funcionários estruturais, não para todos, mas não para todos os interessados em instituições terciárias. 2) Dificuldades na determinação de indicadores mensuráveis de uma aplicação bem sucedida do sistema interno de garantia da qualidade e 3) Responsabilidades pouco claras entre várias posições estruturais, que resultam numa sobreposição de autoridade, o que complica a aplicação interna do sistema de garantia da qualidade. Em termos de constrangimentos psicológicos, os dados são obtidos sob a forma de negligência, desprezo ou atitude cínica em relação aos sistemas e processos de garantia da qualidade.

Conclusão: Com base em um estudo aprofundado dos dados coletados, conclui-se que a implementação do sistema interno de garantia de qualidade em universidades privadas está indo bem no entanto, há obstáculos em 3 áreas, ou seja, 1) obstáculos administrativos 2) obstáculos organizacionais e 3) obstáculos psicológicos.

Palavra-chave: garantia de qualidade interna, ensino superior, obstáculos organizacionais.
limitada del sistema interno de garantía de la calidad solo para los funcionarios estructurales, no para todos, pero no para todos los interesados en las instituciones terciarias. 2) Dificultades para determinar indicadores mensurables de la aplicación satisfactoria del sistema interno de garantía de la calidad, y 3) Responsabilidades poco claras entre diversos puestos estructurales que dan lugar a la superposición de atribuciones, lo que complica la aplicación interna del sistema de garantía de la calidad. En términos de restricciones psicológicas, los datos se obtienen en forma de negligencia, desdén o actitud cinica hacia los sistemas y procesos de garantía de calidad.

**Conclusión:** A partir de un estudio en profundidad de los datos que se han recogido, se concluye que la implementación del sistema interno de aseguramiento de la calidad en las universidades privadas va bien, sin embargo, hay obstáculos en 3 áreas, a saber: 1) obstáculos administrativos 2) obstáculos organizacionales y 3) obstáculos psicológicos.

**Palabra clave:** aseguramiento interno de la calidad, educación superior, obstáculos organizacionales.

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Education in the 21st century directly demands to produce quality outputs, namely superior human beings (Bunyamin & Alamsyah, 2016; Fadhli, 2020). Therefore, educational management institutions must be able to ensure that the needs of these demands can be met. In order to achieve these goals, quality education management is needed (Arifudin, 2019; Jesry et al., 2022). The efforts of educational institutions to meet these demands are to carry out a quality assurance. Quality assurance is part of the quality management concept. (Barnawi & Arifin, 2017; Jesry et al., 2022).

Quality assurance is a system to improve the quality of education. Quality assurance is a guarantee of quality to achieve the desired goals. (Westerheijden et al., 2007; (Elbadiansyah & Masyni, 2022)). Universities in Indonesia, both public and private universities, must carry out a quality assurance process. Quality management carried out must lead to a process aimed at improving the quality of performance which is carried out continuously. (Lim, 2020; Barnawi & Arifin, 2017, Sadeli & Nasiwan, 2023). An education quality assurance system is implemented so that universities have program guidelines and directions that are applied from the planning phase to the evaluation phase (Sunarto, 2017; Mariana et al., 2013).

Higher Education Quality Assurance in Indonesia is called Higher Education System Quality Assurance. Higher Education System Quality Assurance is a systemic activity to improve the quality of higher education in a planned and sustainable manner (Prabowo et al., 2017, Mursidi et al., 2020). The legal basis for the implementation of
the Higher Education System Quality Assurance is the Law on Higher Education and Regulation of the Minister Of Education, Research and Technology number 62 of 2016 concerning the Higher Education Quality Assurance System. Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia number 3 of 2020 concerning National Higher Education Standards consists of three elements, namely learning standards, research standards, and community service standards. Higher Education System Quality Assurance explains that the quality of higher education is the level of conformity between the implementation of higher education and higher education standards which consist of Higher education national standards and higher education standards set by universities.

Based on Minister Of Education, Research and Technology Number 62 of 2016 concerning the higher education quality assurance system, which states that the three quality assurance systems consist of 1) Internal Quality Assurance System, which includes planning, implementation, evaluation, control and improvement. 2) External Quality Assurance System, 3) Higher Education Database (PD DIKTI). The quality assurance system can be carried out from within or outside the higher education institution. This research is focused on the internal quality assurance system, which is a system implemented by universities independently. This system allows institutions to carry out quality assurance independently (Arifudin, 2019; Alawiyah, 2011; (Fadhli, 2020)). In practice, Internal Quality Assurance System must be able to create programs for schools so that the desired school quality can be achieved (Fadhli, 2020; Hariawan et al., 2020).

The implementation of an internal quality assurance system in higher education faces many Obstacles. (Mursidi et al., 2020; Prabowo et al., 2017; Sunarto, 2017). Obstacles such as weak commitment from educational institution authorities, legal basis to guarantee legality, suboptimal leadership, limited number and competence of human resources in tertiary institutions (Shin, 2018; Lim, 2020; Aburizaizah, 2022), Furthermore, a strong culture of resistance to any change, including changes towards quality improvement from structural officials, lecturers (Ubudiyah Siregar, 2017); (Alawiyah, 2011). Furthermore, the attitude and opinion that the responsibility for guaranteeing, improving, and cultivating quality lies only with the leadership or structural officials and not on every individual involved in the administration of higher education (Suntana & Priatna, 2023). Weaknesses in formulating the contents of internal quality
assurance system policies, standards and manuals including weaknesses in formulating measurable success target indicators (Boateng, 2014); (Fadhli, 2020) (Zavale et al., 2016) and unprepared facilities and infrastructure in the field of information technology.

A quality university is a university that is able to define and realize its vision through the implementation of its mission (Arifudin, 2019). Therefore, universities must be able to plan, manage and control processes to achieve quality standards. To achieve all goals, it is necessary to fulfill the following requirements. The Commitment (Shin, 2018; Lim, 2020; (Aburizaizah, 2022). Good responsibility and supervision (Ubudiyah Siregar, 2017); (Meke et al., 2021), Compliance with planning (Jesry et al., 2022); (Suntana & Priatna, 2023), Evaluasi, Perbaikan Evaluation, Continuous quality improvement (Zavale et al., 2016).

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDONESIA

Currently the higher education system in Indonesia is very large and complex with low quality. At the end of 2019, there were 122 State Universities with 2.9 million students and 3,129 Private Universities with 4.4 million students (Nizam, n.d.; Suban, 2014). Thousands of these universities, 48% have not been accredited while 32% are accredited C, and only 2% are accredited A. Only 3 of Indonesia's best universities have been able to penetrate the QS version of the 500 world universities (Nulhaqim, at al 2015; Suban, 2014). Nevertheless, the development of the productivity of Indonesian higher education institutions in contributing to the world's body of knowledge is quite encouraging. The exponential growth of international publications over the last 4 years has taken Indonesia past Thailand and Malaysia and far beyond Vietnam (Fadhli, 2020; Prabowo et al., 2017; Sunarto, 2017).

The main mission of higher education is to prepare human capital and produce science and technology for sustainable national development. The central issue of higher education in Indonesia so far has been expanding access, as well as increasing quality and relevance (Afriliandhi & Hasanah, 2022; Kemenristekdikti, 2014). Community aspirations to obtain higher education are still very high. If higher education is not of good quality, the resulting human capital is not competitive because it is not competent.
Meanwhile, if higher education is not relevant to the needs of society, the world of work, and development, then the gap between supply and demand will widen. Research and community service carried out by tertiary institutions must be in the framework of building national independence and strengthening future development which is increasingly dependent on knowledge & innovation

Even though there are many challenges ahead that must be faced, much progress has been achieved in the development of higher education in Indonesia so far. Access to higher education has experienced a significant increase, the gross enrollment rate has increased from 21% in early 2000 to 34% today (Suban, 2014). The ranking of Indonesian tertiary institutions continues to increase from time to time, three tertiary institutions have entered the world's top 500 ranking in the QS version: University of Indonesia (277), Bandung Institute of Technology (331), and Gadja Mada University (401-410) (Alawiyah, 2011; Nizam, n.d.; Suban, 2014)

2.2 HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE IN INDONESIA

Based on Law no. 12 of 2012 concerning Higher Education, the Higher Education Quality Assurance System includes the Internal Quality Assurance System (SPMI) and the External Quality Assurance System (SPME) or better known as Accreditation. Most tertiary institutions are more concerned with accreditation or SPME than concerned with SPMI, indeed accreditation is always the goal of improving the quality of study programs or universities. As soon as accreditation is released, the institution will no longer carry out quality evaluations internally. In this law, the SPMI process must be carried out by universities at least once a year. If Study Programs or Higher Education only improve quality solely in order to achieve good accreditation scores, there is a tendency that internal quality will not improve.

The phenomenon that is happening now is that many Indonesian people are looking for quality higher education abroad, for example to neighboring Malaysia. Responding to this, the Indonesian government in 2003 through the Academic Directorate began to initiate Quality Assurance activities in tertiary institutions. Referring to Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, Higher Education Long Term Strategy (HELTS) 2003-1010, and Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005 Quality Assurance System and Supervision of Higher Education 81 concerning National
Education Standards for implementing quality assurance in tertiary education is an activity that must be carried out. The higher education quality assurance system (PT) is carried out on the basis of Internal Quality Assurance (PMI), External Quality Assurance (PME), and Study Program Evaluation Based on Self-Evaluation (EPSBED) which is associated with the licensing of the study program implementation.

However, the problems faced by quality assurance are not only the problem of study program accreditation, but also the problem of accreditation of public accountability institutions, internal quality assurance (self-evaluation) that does not work according to proper procedures, the absence of higher education internal quality standards, the absence of internal quality assurance organizations and etc. This problem is not only a matter of organizational performance, but also concerns macro policy issues, and their implementation in the field. This, of course, not only weakens quality assurance, but also weakens the overall quality improvement of higher education institutions.

Based on the evaluation results of the Directorate General of Higher Education, Ministry of National Education (2008) regarding the implementation of internal quality assurance in tertiary institutions, it is stated that: 1) Most tertiary institutions do not fully understand the function and role of quality assurance for their development and sustainability. 2) Most tertiary institutions do not understand the Higher Education Quality Assurance System (SPM-PT) initiated by the Directorate General of Higher Education. 3) Most universities still focus on internal quality assurance in the academic field (only focusing on learning aspects). 4) Most tertiary institutions are still at the stage of procuring documents, both policy documents, manuals for implementing quality standard policies. 5) A small number of tertiary institutions have fully implemented internal quality assurance (have complete policy documents, manuals for implementing quality standard policies, and implementing them).

2.3 INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

The definition of a Higher Education Quality Assurance System is a systemic activity to improve the quality of higher education in a planned and sustainable manner. Meanwhile, the quality of higher education is the degree of conformity between the administration of higher education and the Higher Education Standards, which consist of
the Higher Education Standards and Higher Education Standards Set by Higher Education Institutions. The quality assurance system is a consistent and sustainable process of planning, fulfilling, controlling and developing higher education standards, so that the internal and external stakeholders of tertiary institutions, namely students, lecturers, employees, the community, the business world, professional associations, the government obtain satisfaction with the performance and outcomes of tertiary institutions (Directorate General of Higher Education, 2008).

The quality of tertiary institutions is the conformity between the implementation of tertiary institutions and the National Education Standards (SNP), as well as the standards set by the tertiary institutions themselves based on the vision and needs of interested parties (Directorate General of Higher Education, 2008). Thus, there is a higher education quality standard set by the Government (government); mutually agreed upon in the college (vision); desired by various interested parties (stakeholders), as mandated in Article 50 paragraph (6) of the National Education System Law in conjunction with Article 91 PP No. 19 of 2005 concerning SNP.

3 METHOD

The method used in this study is a qualitative case study. According to Yin (2013) a case study is a research strategy in which the researcher carefully investigates a program, event, activity, process or group of individuals. In this study, the case studied was the constraints on the implementation of the internal quality assurance system at Puangrimaggalatung University. The subjects of this case study are leadership elements consisting of the chancellor, vice-rector, faculty leaders and heads of internal quality assurance institutions and members involved in quality assurance activities. The object of this research is the policy of the internal quality assurance system implementation and organization, evaluation of implementation, and results and development benefits in the future. The study adopted qualitativ approach, combining an internal document review with semi-structured interviews. Researcher is a key instrument with other supporting instruments such as documentation, interviews. The qualitative interview data were subject to thematic analysis, a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a dataset.
4 RESULT

4.1 ADMINISTRATIVE OBSTACLES

Based on Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of 2020 concerning National Higher Education Standards, it consists of 3 elements, namely learning standards, research standards, and community service standards (1st Table). The results of a review of internal quality assurance system documents at Puangrimaggalatung University found data that there were still many standard documents that were not available. The documents are standards for management of learning, standards of content research, standard of facilities and infrastructure research standard content of community service, standard process of community service, dan standard of facilities and infrastructure for community service.

This data shows that there are still standard documents that are not yet owned by the quality assurance agency at Puangrimaggalatung University. The number of documents that must be owned is 16 documents. These documents must be owned by a tertiary institution, whereas at the time of data collection, only 10 documents could be reviewed as a quality assurance document. Of this amount it was concluded that the Puangrimaggalatung University quality assurance agency only had 62.5% of the documents. The research results are in line with the data obtained by (Prabowo et al., 2017) who conducted a survey of 105 private tertiary institutions in Indonesia and found that only 54% had standard documents and only about 10% of private tertiary institutions had standards. documents in accordance with the National Higher Education Standards.
Tabel 1

**Higher Education Quality Standards in Indonesia**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Standard</th>
<th>Research Standard</th>
<th>Community Service Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduate standard Competency</td>
<td>Standard of Research Result</td>
<td>Standard of Community Service Result</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Content Standard Standards of Content Research</td>
<td>Standard Content of Community Service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Standard Assessment Standard Assessment of Research</td>
<td>Standard of Community Service Assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturers and Education Personnel standard Standard Researcher</td>
<td>Implementing Standards for Community Service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard of Learning Facilities and Infrastructure Standard of Facilities and Infrastructure Research</td>
<td>Standard of Facilities and Infrastructure for Community Service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards for Management of Learning Standards for Management of Research</td>
<td>Standard of Community Service Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Financing Standard Standard of Funding and Financing Research</td>
<td>Funding and Financing Standards of Community Service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the availability of standard documents, several other obstacles faced by the internal quality assurance system institutions at Puangrimaggalatung University are the lack of legal basis for implementing internal quality assurance from the high leadership of the institution that oversees the University. At present the structure of the quality assurance institution only consists of a chairman without being equipped with a complete organizational organ. Likewise at the faculty level there is only 1 person who handles internal quality assurance. Another problem conveyed by informants is the habit of working not based on documented standards that must always be evaluated and developed. Limited competent human resources regarding internal quality assurance system, including for example internal auditors. This condition is reinforced by the results of research by (Boateng, 2014; Sunarto, 2017)(Afriliandhi & Hasanah, 2022) saying that internal quality assurance in several universities in Indonesia experiences difficulties in terms of administration and completeness of quality standard documents.

4.2 ORGANIZATIONAL OBSTACLES

The quality assurance system at Puangrimaggalatung University is organized by the internal Quality Assurance System institution. At present the internal quality assurance system Institute for Limited Human Resources has commitment and a comprehensive and correct understanding of internal quality assurance system. Based on the results of the
interviews, it was found that there were several obstacles encountered including 1) Limited understanding of internal quality assurance. There is an understanding that quality assurance is only carried out by the leadership. 2) Difficulties in determining indicators of measurable internal quality assurance system implementation success. 3) Unclear responsibilities among various structural positions resulting in overlapping of authorities, which complicates the implementation of internal quality assurance.

Organizational constraints are one of the factors that make the quality assurance process not optimal at Puangrimagga Galatung University. The understanding related to institutions and the process of achieving quality is not holistically understood by some of the stakeholders at the University. A similar opinion was conveyed by (Afriliandhi & Hasanah, 2022; Boateng, 2014) who found that the implementation of quality assurance did not run optimally because the institution did not have a special quality assurance unit. Furthermore, studies conducted by Candido, (2020); Malik & Ameen, (2020); Sayuti et al., (2020) revealed that the non-optimal implementation of the quality assurance system was caused by the officers' low understanding of the meaning of quality assurance itself.

Another organizational obstacle is making the quality assurance process even more hampered, namely the difficulty in determining measurable indicators of successful internal quality assurance system implementation. In this regard, in quality management theory, everyone in an organization must be involved in any activity and must receive training for those who have not been able to achieve their best performance. (Holm et al., 2015; Huet et al., 2011; Rifa’i et al., 2019). Furthermore, not all officials have the responsibility in terms of quality assurance. This condition is evidenced by the presence of officials who do not understand the quality assurance process related to their responsibilities (Daromes & Ng, 2015; Rifa’i et al., 2019).

The implementation of the stages of the quality assurance system will be achieved if it is supported by top management in higher education institutions and cooperates with other educational institutions. These two things will make the achievement of the effectiveness of quality assurance can be realized (Seyfried & Pohlenz, 2018). Next to maintain the guarantee quality requires a concept that can truly be accepted by all groups. Various research results show that a quality culture is an important solution in improving the quality of higher education institutions (Hildesheim & Sonntag, 2020; Yingqiang & Yongjian, 2016, Khairiah et al., 2023). Quality culture emphasizes the importance of
continuous quality improvement and a shared attitude, and commitment to quality. (Dlouhá et al., 2019; Fuertes-Camacho et al., 2019; Giangrande et al., 2019)

4.3 PSYCHOLOGICAL OBSTACLE

The results of interviews and review of documents on activities carried out by the Puangrimagalatung University internal quality assurance agency (internal quality assurance system) revealed that psychological barriers were found such as ignoring, underestimating or cynical attitudes towards quality assurance systems and processes. According to jesry et al., (2022); lozano et al., (2019); meke et al., (2021); Ubudiyah Siregar, (2017) low commitment from stakeholders to implement internal quality assurance system continuously and sustainably is also a psychological obstacle that cannot be resolved quickly, efforts need to be made to build awareness from all parties so that this problem can be resolved. Furthermore, other psychological factors are weaknesses in internal quality assurance system communication & outreach to university stakeholders and difficulties in building a culture of quality among leaders, lecturers, teachers, education staff, and students (Arifudin, 2019; Tadjudin, 2001, El-zeiny et al., 2023; Issn et al., 2023). Lack of patience, discipline, firmness and consistency from structural officials, including those assigned specifically to implement and develop internal quality assurance system (Agus & Asiah, 2021; Sunarto, 2017).

5 CONCLUSION

Based on an in-depth study of the data that has been collected the implementation of the internal quality assurance system in private tertiary institutions still encounters several obstacles including 1) administrative obstacles 2) organizational obstacles and 3) psychological obstacles. In terms of administrative obstacles, it was found that the internal quality assurance agency at Puangrimagalatung University only had 62.5% of standard documents. Furthermore, on administrative barriers, work habits are not based on documented standards that must always be evaluated and developed. In addition, there are limited human resources who are competent in internal quality assurance system, including the absence of internal auditors. The organizational constraints found include 1) Limited understanding of internal quality assurance system only for structural officials,
not for all but not for all stakeholders in tertiary institutions. 2) Difficulties in determining measurable indicators of successful implementation of the internal quality assurance system, and 3) Unclear responsibilities among various structural positions resulting in overlapping of authority, which complicates internal quality assurance system implementation. In terms of psychological constraints, data is obtained in the form of neglect, disdain or cynical attitude towards quality assurance systems and processes, besides that Weaknesses in internal quality assurance system communication and outreach to various parties, along with the difficulties in building a quality culture among leaders, lecturers, teachers, education staff, and students, become psychological obstacles.
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