IMPLEMENTATION OF IMPROVED QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Abdul Rozak

Business and Management, Widyatama University, Bandung, Indonesia 40125,
Phone: +6282127001912
Email : abdul.rozak@widyatama.ac.id

ABSTRACT

The impact of globalization can not be avoided, that it would influence the international orientation of higher education. That's why we need a comprehensive mechanism regarding quality assurance. It can be seen as a strong motivating factor for the importance of an effective and transparant system for ensuring the quality of higher education. This paper aims to analyze the implementation of improved quality assurance in the higher educational institutions. The research used literature study, and analyzed using a descriptive research of explanatory survey.The population consisted of internal and external elements in higher educational institutions and the sample was purposively selected.The findings show that the improvement of quality assurance can be implemented through:(1) improving quality of academic staff continuosly; (2) developing flexible and modern curriculum; (3) improving quality research, community service and cooperation between universities;(4) Improving adequate infrastructure facilities; and (5) benchmarking

Keywords: Quality Assurance, Higher Education, Benchmarking

I. INTRODUCTION

Quality assurance of higher education in Indonesia formally started in 2003 at the time of university publication about quality assurance guidelines issued by the Ministry of National Education.The factor that most led to a trigger movement quality assurance is imperative university to organize quality assurance, besides of the demands for accountability and qualified graduates, "Ref. [1]".

The role of higher education in running application process, assess and apply knowledge for benefit ofthe whole society should be supported by all elements, both internal and external university. Together with the existence of characterat higher education and the demands of society on strategic role, them ain process of higher education can be shownin Figure1, "Ref. [2]"

On figure 1, clearly it can be seen that the university's commitment in improving quality of output (*Resources*) can be implemented through the internal and external elements that exist in higher education. Improvement of quality assurance process is actually one of the government's commitment at education sector which included in many government documents such as: *GBHN,*

*PROPENAS, and Strategic Plan.*Factorsthat are used to support the implementation ofquality assurance system in accordance with the expected increasing demands for accountability of higher education, especially before the era of autonomy. In this situation, the public have an authorization to determine how universities maintain and monitor the quality of all activities and find out about the internal and external factors that have been achieved by current university?
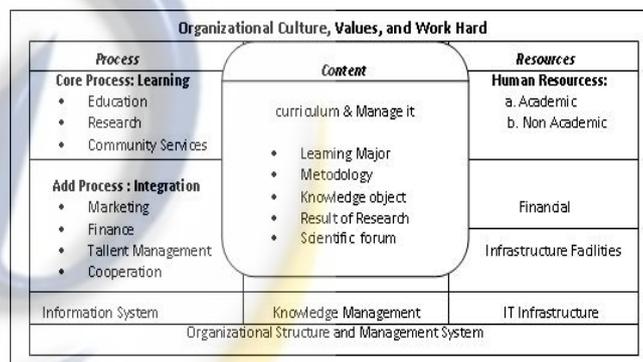

Figure 1 : Aspects of Higher Educational Management

That conditionis one ofmain factorsin order to providethe public awareness mechanism about the importance of implementation improvement of quality assurance.The existence of these mechanisms are expected to accommodate a self-evaluation of implementing each university effectively.Therefore, in the complex of quality management system must attention not only to improve the quality but also can seek appropriate mechanisms, both internal and external of university to ensure the achievement of high quality. This paper aims to analyze the implementation of improved quality assurance in the higher educational institutions. The population consisted of internal and external elements which arethe focus ofthe research.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Quality, as interpretedby ISO9001:2008, is atotality of features and characteristics of a product or service that is specifiedin its ability to provide satisfaction to fulfill a requisite requirements.According to Institute of Quality Assurance: "In its broadest sense, quality is a degree of excellence: the extent to which something is fit for its purpose. In the narrow sense, product or service quality is defined as conformance with requirement,

freedom from defect or contamination, or simply degree of customer satisfaction". In total quality management, quality is defined as totally of characteristic a product or service that bears on its ability to satisfy stated and implied need. Quality is also rapidly embracing the nature or degree of impact an organization has on its stakeholders, environment and society". Hence by American Society for Quality (ASQ): "Quality is a subjective term for which each person has his/her own definition. In technical usage, quality has two meanings: 1) the characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy tated or implied need and 2) a product or service free of deficiencies", "Ref. [3]"

In the context of international education, Global Alliance for Transnational Education (GATE) defines quality as meeting or fulfilling requirements, often referred to as fitness for purpose. While the approachof relation tothe fulfillment of minimum standard, the standardis defined asa level or grade of goodness something, and ateducational context may be defined as an explicit level of academic attainment. Clearly, that standard functions are as a means of measurements the criteria by which quality may be judged, "Ref. [4]".It can be concludedthat quality ofhigher educationis defined as the achievement of goals university that generally include University's Tridarma.

In relation toward quality assurance, that quality at higher education is seen as a metaphysical approach. The main reason, if quality associated with descriptive approach to avoid-value judgment-which is subjective character in naturally and individually, is very absurd. Despite, the qualityis very closely related tovalue itself. Burge and Tannock definesthe quality of educationas the success with institution provides educational environments which enable students to achieve worthwhile learning goals including appropriate academic standards effectively, "Ref. [5]"

2.1. System View of Quality

Every educational institution is a dynamic system and must be seen in its own uniqueness and totality for quality management, "Ref. [6]". In order to look into the different aspects of quality at higher education institutions, it is essential to understand approach of education system. The notion of system is a theoretical abstraction and can be defined as an organized unitary whole composed of a set interdependent, interrelated and interacting synergetic elements or sub-systems.

The sub-systems in integrated/holistic manner form the systemaccordingly. We can consider that higher education institutes have an input sub-system, a transformation sub-system and output sub-system. Figure 2 depicts the schematic diagram of systems view that can be applied to any educational institution. The inputs of system are human resources (*students and lecturers*), physical resources in terms of infrastructure and financial resources. Then educational processes and activities related to the curriculum, management and support mechanisms form the transformation sub-system. As outputs in the system are employable graduates, growth in knowledge through research publications, economic development, etc.
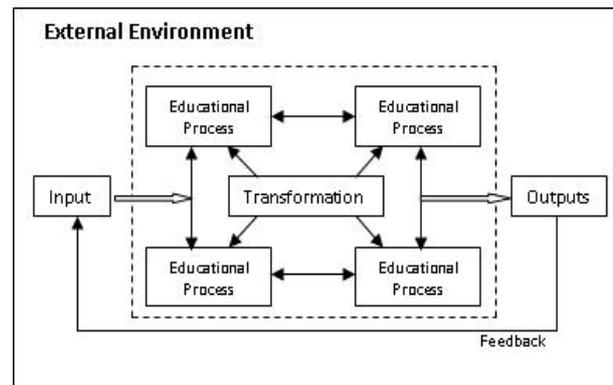

Figure 2: System Approach

Quality assurance is all the actions planned, systematic and applied to assure customers that the requirements set"will be guaranteed" is reached. One element of quality assurance is quality control. Other elements are: planning, organization for quality, established procedure, supplier selection, corrective action, document control, training, audit and management review. Quality assurance is very active role as analyst to improve product quality, and data can be obtained from the quality control sampling data or feedback from the company's internal quality or absence of complaint from outside the company, namely the customer. And quality control usually also acts as a certification of the product. Based on ISO 9000:2000 (*QMS-Fundamentals and Vocabulary*) quality assurance is "Part of quality management focused on providing confidence that quality requirements will be fulfilled". If translated,quality assurance focused on providing assurance/confidence that quality requirementswill be met, "Ref. [7]".

In the context of quality education, quality assuranceis defined as a general term used for all policies, systems and processes in order to ensure maintenance and improvement of quality education services. For example: course design, staff development, collect and use of feedback from students, staff and employes, "Ref. [5]"

In general context which is quality viewed as a quality of university or college, quality assurance definesastotal of those mechanisms and procedures adopted to assure a given quality or continued improvement of quality, which embodies the planning, defining, encouraging, assessing and control of quality. It's clearthatthe goals are to develop sustainable practices in order to improve the work system, both individually and institutionally in all areas, "Ref. [8]"

2.2. Best Practices Benchmarking

Benchmarking in education is a relatively new concept and can bring huge benefits in terms of continous quality improvement. As it's based on identification of the best practices, it inculcates competition and constant comparison. At the same time, it is also criticized for being a system of imitation. Moreover, something that has produced satisfactory results in one organization, if replicated, may not produce the same results. Nevertheless, as we compare with the best university and follow it,

becomes a tool for motivation to change. By following the best model, other institution can improve their own quality. In higher education, we are concerned with functional benchmarking, where comparisons are made between higher education instituions as they use similar processes and practices. For example: the best practice in higher education is to have maximum number of teaching days in a semester (105 days). Another example of the best practice could be that X institute has 100% placement record of its graduates, it could be a benchmark for others instituion to follow, "Ref. [9]"

The research has been done by John, Daniel concluded that generally increasing in quality assurance efforts of organization as a result of desire to eliminate the gap between generated at university (*studies and graduates*) with the requirements demanded by industry, "Ref. [10]".

This condition can eventually encourage the presence of university quality assurance models in various areas. Quality assurance were held in atmosphere of commercialization of higher education, the presence of quality standards that are reliable and independent executive agency is essential. The presence of quality assurance agencies e.g: INQAAHE (*International Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education*) which provides a standard to establish quality of graduates that can be accepted in professional circles are expected to maintain the commercialization of higher education so as not to harm the public, "Ref. [11]"

III.   RESEARCH METHODS

This paper aims to analyze the implementation of quality assurance improvement in higher educational institutions. This research takes the case on some private higher education institutions in Bandung, there are: widyatama university, pasundan university and indonesian computer university. This research does not provide treatment, but the goal is to uncover existing data so that the explanation used a descriptive research design. The main variables of this research is the implementation quality assurance improvement on the higher educational institutions. The word Implementation refers to an effort to improve the quality assurance process into an educational activity which is consist of: Input - Content (*Process*) - Output.

The population consists of a number internal and external elements are included in unit private university at Bandung. It's concerned of existing samples (*busyness, time and accuracy of resources*), and finally samples are taken in accordance with certain criteria (*purposive*) based on each indicator research.

Table 1. Variables, Sub-Variables, and Indicators of Research

Variable	Sub-Variable	Indicator
Improvement of Quality Assurance in Higher Educational Institutions (HEI)	Successful of quality assuranceimplementation in HEI	1. Principles of QualityAssuranceinHigher EducationTridarmaapplication(*Education,*
		ResearchandCommunity Service) 2. Curriculum of Learning 3. Infrastructure 4. Benchmarking
	Supporting of quality assuranceimplementation in HEI	Academic Staff (*lecturer,staff&student*) Leadership, Teamwork & Participatory management (UTAMA, UNIKOM & UNPAS)
	Strategy UTAMA, UNIKOM and UNPAS in improving quality assurance	Information & Communication, Cooperation & Participation, Negotiation Skill
	The results of quality assurance implementation (Product dimension of quality)	Performance, Conformance, Reliability, Durability,& Serviceability

Sampling was based on the willingness of respondent, the accuracy of data and the representation toward each unit consisting of academic and non-academic section. The data was collected by surveying techniques that location through a system of interviews and documentary studies(*literature reviews*). Qualitative descriptive analysis techniques used to explain the results of concepts implementation of improved quality assurance in higher educational institutions. Steps of analysis includes: data collection, data reduction, analysis of trends to generate categories and conclusion.

IV.   RESULTS

The results of paper can be described by a sequence achieving the goals of research.There are four aspects of Sub-Variables: **First**, the success rate of quality assurance implementation in higher education al institutions were reviewed by four indicators, there are: (1) Application of principles quality assurance in programme of Tridarma university improvement, (2) Application of learning curriculum, (3) adequate infrastructure facilities (4) the standard reference for university established(*benchmark*).

Based on analysis data through the various kinds of information, other research resources and library study of each research object, namely: UTAMA, UNIKOM and UNPAS obtained results are as follows:
1.   In practice, the applications ofquality assurance that are focus of research begin by identifying the scope of management includes: management of study programme, research, and community service. Inthese fields, the procedure to be realized fo rachieving the specified quality as well as evaluate all activities. In this moment, the implementation of qualitya ssurance improvement activities focused on the process by taking into account the evaluation of achievement Tridarma six principles are used, includes:
   a. The purpose of quality assurance application.
   b. Standard reference.

c. The use of mapping management which is include from university goals.

d. The effectiveness of procedures are used for quality assurance.

e. The usefulness from quality evaluation.

f. The overall efficiency ofquality assurance system to improve the quality.

2. The related of educational objectives are: curriculum design and development process that includes: major learning, methodology, knowledge objects, scientific forums have been implemented in accordance with the procedure. Continuosly, quality improvement activities have related to the learning process and already seems to increase. It is known through the process monitoring and evaluation of discipline faculty and lecturer's commitment in implementing the learning process.

3. Higher educational institutionsmust identify the needs of adequate facilities and infrastructure to support the learning process. In this case, the three institutions namely:UTAMA,UNIKOM and UNPAS have succeeded in improving their infrastructure through the following steps:

   a. Authority and responsibility on the procurement, installation and maintenance have been run according to the procedure.

   b. Planning, provision and maintenance of infrastructure, includes:integrated laboratory, clinics, workshops and seminar rooms. Until now, learning auditoriums has been available on development process.

4. Benchmarking in education is a relatively new concept and can bring huge benefits in terms of continous improvement of quality. As it's based on identification of the best practices, it inculcates competition and constant comparison. At the same time, it is also criticized for being a system of imitation. Thethree institutions, namely: UTAMA, UNIKOM and UNPAS have standard reference(*benchmark*) on the university established by following the best pattern learning. For example: doing a benchmark to the public universities such as Institute of Technology Bandung (ITB).

   Second, supporting the implementation of quality assurance component at higher educational institutions includes two indicators, there are: (1)Academic Staff (*lecturer, staff and student*), (2)Leadership, Teamwork & Participatory Management. Components of leadership in each department and faculty as support the implementation of quality assurance in higher education institutions is considered quite good.

   Established communication between leaders and subordinates are also quite good, especially seen in standard dissemination and implementation quality assurance goals, particularly with related to the implementation of academic activities. Support the academic staff, executive employees and special teams in the implementation of improvement quality assurance at higher educational institutions are necessary to achieve the successful of expected quality. Based on data analysis, was obtained, that the support unit leader assessed both by its

members in improving quality assurance. The cohesiveness of team was implementing sufficient to support quality assurance activities.

   Third, strategy of UTAMA, UNIKOM and UNPAS in increasing quality assurance process have been change through management perspective, includes: Information and Communication, Cooperation, Participation and Negotiation Skills. All components haveto do it with full awareness of these provisions by each section synergistically. The main focus of quality assurance activities is to create a culture that supports staff in the unit, followed by each component. Culture of quality that is built to support the institution's success in achievingcommon purpose.

   Fourth, based on data which are collected & analysed on the third object, namely: UTAMA, UNIKOM and UNPAS, the results of increasing quality assurance has been implemented and applied with suitable quality dimensions, there are:

a. Performance = "Primary knowledge/skills required for graduates".

b. Conformance= "The degree to which an institutional programme meets established standards, plans and promises"

c. Reliability = "The extent to which knowledge/skills learned is correct, accurate and up-to-date"

d. Durability = "depth of learning"

e. Serviceability = "Handling of complaint from all Stakeholders (*students, staff and industry*)"

V. CONCLUSIONS

Quality in higher educational institutions level can not be ensured unless regular monitoring information based systems are put in place, so that decision is taken basedon documented and recent information that takes into account the transformations in the requirements and expectations of the multiple educational stakeholders. Based on the results of explanation research focus, it can be concluded that the internal and external factors must be achieved to improve the implementation of quality assurance at higher education obtained by:

1) Improving the quality of Tridarma higher education comprehensively; through research, community service and establish effective communication in order to builda solid partnership.

2) To develop a curriculum design applied in accordance with the demands of job market

3) Provide special training to staff in accordance with academic fields and their respective duties continuosly.

4) Procurement of adequate infrastructure to support teaching and learning process.

5) Perform a benchmark to other higher education institutions that have been relatively well established.

First, Point 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 above are compliant with the explanation of research methods in the sub-variables and indicators related to the successful of quality assurance implementation in higher educational institutions. Second, Support the academic staff, executive employees and special teams in the implementation of improvement quality assurance at higher educational institutions are necessary to achieve the successful of expected quality. Third, The main focus of quality assurance activitiesis to create a culture that supports staff in the unit, followed by each component. Fourth, The third object have been implemented and applied with suitable quality dimensions.

The existence of specific policy for continual improvement of comprehensive quality assurance to ensure the achievement of quality higher education, is regarded as a very important result from literature that describes commitment of quality assurance at all civitas academy of university. A commitment needs to be explained on the vision and mission of university - so that the results of implementation in improving quality assurance is really oriented to target quality graduates who have independent, creative and innovative.

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