



## IMPLEMENTING QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR QUALITY CULTURE DEVELOPMENT (Widyatama University Case Study)

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the implementation of quality assurance for establishing quality culture at higher education institution. This paper looks at the effectiveness of quality assurance as a tool of quality culture establishment at Widyatama University Bandung – Indonesia. Data are collected through evaluate through quality management documents, observation, inquiries, self-administered questionnaires.

The respondents of the survey were managers of the university in academic affairs as well as administrative affairs. The study reveals that all managers at Widyatama University aware that quality assurance is important in higher education and building quality culture will sustains the institution. Widyatama University has implemented quality assurance in accordance with both of international standards through ISO 9001:2008 and the Government

Regulation through the accreditation process. The study suggests that the commitment to Quality Assurance principles and the pursuit of excellence by the staff have to be entrenched in the culture of the organization, and are not dependent solely on loyalty to the institutional leadership.

**Key words:** quality assurance, quality culture, higher education

### I. INTRODUCTION

In today's environment, adaptation to national and global environment is compulsory for higher education in order to survive, and maintain its relevancy and stay competitive. Without adaptation ability the higher education will lose its existence. Widyatama University as one of higher education institutions should have awareness of this condition.

Quality Assurance at higher education is an issue that is very important today. The importance of Quality Assurance is influenced by external and internal factors. External factors that drive the importance of Quality Assurance are stakeholder awareness demands on the quality of higher education, competitive conditions and the demands of the government as regulator educational process at all levels of education.

Internal factors that drive the need for quality assurance systems is the need for effective management system in conducting mission and achieving vision of the organization. With an effective quality assurance system, higher education institutions can organize its business processes with a structured, effective and efficient ways. In

addition, higher education institutions can meet the expectations and satisfy stakeholders according to the laws and regulations and do the workings clearly, compactly, neatly and harmoniously.

In higher education long term strategy, Indonesian government established three pillars as the foundation of education transformation. The first pillar is increasing educational relevancy and competitiveness, the second is strengthening educational accessibility, and the third, improving good government and public image of education management. Recently, enhancement of education relevancy becomes the most important issue among others. Education relevancy is a vital variable that determines the education quality.

A crucial program in developing education quality is enhancing Quality Assurance Systems. Through this program education institution can get quality assurance on education program that is implemented by the institution.

In Indonesia, the Quality Assurance System regulated by Government Regulation 19 of 2005 which confirms that each unit of education in formal and non-formal education required to perform quality assurance . Quality assurance of education aims to meet or transcends the National Educational Standards. Implementation of Quality Assurance is gradual, systematic, and planned in a quality assurance program that has a target and a clear time frame . Supervision of the implementation of Quality Assurance is performed by the Minister of Education and Culture.

Quality Assurance implementation rules was reaffirmed in Law 12 of 2012, which states that the Government conducts a quality assurance system of Higher Education to get quality education. Quality assurance in higher education is a systemic activity to improve the quality of higher education in a planned and sustainable. The process is done through the establishment of quality assurance, implementation, evaluation, control, and improved standards of Higher Education. Determination of the quality assurance system of Higher Education and the National Standards for Higher Education conducted by the Ministry of Education and Culture

Higher education quality assurance system consists of internal quality assurance systems, external quality assurance system. Internal Quality Assurance System developed by the College whiles the external quality assurance system through accreditation. Through the



implementation of quality assurance system both internally and externally are expected to be built quality culture in higher education. This article focuses on the experience of Widyatama University with the quality assurance and how to build quality culture at Widyatama University.

## II. LITERATUR REVIEW

Quality Assurance Issues at Higher Education has been widely investigated in the last 10 years. Research on Quality Assurance in some colleges has done. Some previous researchers are Teay Shawyun (2004), Hariri (2004), Supriyanto Ilyas (2008), Nadjadji Anwar (2008), Narinee (2009), Supriyanto Ilyas (2009), Teay Shawyun (2012), and Staporn Tavornativat (2013). Generally, these studies show the importance of Quality Assurance and respect and seriousness world universities in ASEAN, especially regarding the development of quality education in their respective institutions.

Implementation of Quality Assurance research in Indonesia has been done by Nadjadji at all (2008). Research conducted on private higher education VI region (East of Java Indonesia). The results showed that the majority of private higher Educations has implemented a Quality Assurance System. In more detail, the results showed that from 96 private Higher Education Institutions, 44 of them (45.58%) do not have Quality Assurance division and 49 of them (51%) have Quality Assurance division. There is a good progress in developing Quality Assurance system in private Higher Education Institutions in East of Java Indonesia. It's indicated by increasing of private Higher Education Institution that has Quality Assurance division. Most of the institutions meet the good standard in: student and their activity standard, curriculum of study program, human resources, learning teaching process, infrastructure and facilities, academic atmosphere, management of organization, and information system.

### 2.1 Quality

Defining quality in higher education has proved to be challenging task. The quality of higher education is a complex concept depending upon the variety factors. Quality can be defined from several dimensional (Murtanto at all, 2009:164) Quality can mean excellence (quality is excellence), quality is value, quality is conformance to specification, and quality is meeting and/or Exceeding customer expectation. Meeting and / or exceeding customer expectation will lead to customer's satisfactions.

Goetsch, at all (2003:4) state that although there is no universally accepted definition of quality, similarity does exist among the definition, such as :

- Quality involves meeting or exceeding customer expectation,
- Quality applies to product, services, people, processes, and environment,
- Quality is an ever-changing state (i.e., what is considered quality today may not be good enough to be considered quality tomorrow)

Furthermore, with these common elements extracted, quality can be defined as a dynamic state

associated with products, services, people, processes, and environment that meet or exceeds expectations. Nardjadj at all (2008:100) suggested three models of quality, which is popular in the HLE in Indonesia. One of them is the goal and specification model. This model says that internal activities such as leadership, communication, participation, coordination, adaptability planning, decision making and also teaching methods are often used as an indicator of HLE Quality

### 2.2. Quality Assurance

Evans (2002) stated that Quality assurance was informal; every effort was made to ensure that quality was built into the final product by the people who produced it. These themes, which were lost with the advent of the Industrial Revolution, are important foundations of modern quality assurance efforts. Bazargan (2002) suggests that quality assurance is the whole process whereby a particular organization is managed to achieve and hence be able to assure quality.

For the quality assurance purpose, an organization or institution should implement quality management systems. The quality management system required when an organization (a) needs to demonstrate its ability to consistently provide product that meets customer and applicable regulatory requirements, and (b) aims to enhance customer satisfaction through the effective application of the system, including processes for continual improvement of the system and the assurance of conformity to customer and applicable regulatory requirements (ISO 9001:2000).

The development of quality ethos seems to be the main objective of higher education institutions. New approach and strategies are designed to reoriented and transform the way in which university are managed as well as delivery of education services (Soetoko, 2008). Quality assurance involves the structure, system, approaches related to teaching, research and administrative as to enable the established objectives to be achieved (Sallis, 2002).

In Indonesia, quality assurance in higher education has now been placed on the main agenda of higher education institution. This is the consequences of the demand for greater stakeholders engagement and calls for greater transparency, accountability and responsibility in the in which higher education institutions are managed (Brojonegoro, 2005).

Quality assurance refers to the means by which an institution satisfies itself that the standards and the quality of its educational provision can be maintained and enhanced. An important aspect is the cultural context in the organization with its capacity to either facilitate or suppress local quality initiatives.

Quality assurance can be organized by implementation of Quality Management System ISO 9001: 2008. The standards define the eight principles: focus on the customer, leadership, involvement of every person, process approach, system approach to management, continuous improvement, decision-making approach to the facts, and good relationship with suppliers. The principles are focused on the importance of customer because the organization depends on its customers.



Therefore, organizations need to understand the customer's needs now and in the future, the need to meet customer requirement communicate, manage communications with customers, sort monitor information about met / not customer requirement

Leadership is needed to achieve organizational goals that have been set. Leadership that is needed is leadership that can ensure that the organization's goals and objectives can be achieved and can create an atmosphere where everyone is willing to get involved in reaching the target.

Organizational success depends on the people involved. Therefore, organizations need the involvement of all people to achieve organizational goals.

Better results can be obtained if the activities and resources needed in the activities organized as a process. In order to function effectively, organizations need to identify and manage the processes that interact as a system.

In quality assurance implementation, continual improvement should be a permanent target organization. The organization requires a Quality Management Systems that is always improving, Determination of the quality policy and quality objectives, competent support staff as well as measurement, monitoring to achieve compliance with the organization objectives.

Managerial decisions should be taken based on reliable facts. Organizations should always maintain processing and data analysis to support decision making.

Another principle that must be carried out in the implementation of quality assurance is the need of good cooperation with suppliers. Organizations must be able to establish a good relationship with the supplier to be able to provide added value to both parties.

Subsequently, ISO 9001:2008 requires organizations to establish processes and ways in order to achieve the organization objectives. To assess the success of the organization in achieving its objectives, an organization should always do the monitoring, measurement, and analysis of the effectiveness of the processes and implement continuous improvement of the quality management system.

There are six documented procedures shall be established within the organization seeking the effectiveness of the quality management system procedure, document control, quality record control procedure, Internal Quality Audit, Control of product non-conformity, corrective and preventive action.

### 2.3. Quality Culture

Cultures refers to the set of common belief, attitudes, and norms that explicitly or implicitly guide managerial actions (Anthony, 2003 p: 9). Culture is the shared knowledge and schemes created by a set of people for perceiving, interpreting, expressing, and responding to the social realities around them (Robbins, 2011), and is an active living phenomenon through which people jointly creates and recreates the worlds in which they live (Morgan, 1997).

Quality culture refers to an organizational culture that intends to enhance quality permanently and is characterized by two distinct elements: on the one hand, a

cultural/psychological element of shared values, beliefs, expectations and commitment towards quality and, on the other hand, a structural/managerial element with defined processes that enhance quality and aim at coordinating individual efforts (EUA 2006).

Quality culture is understood as an organizational culture that is characterized by two distinct elements (Quality Culture in European Universities: A Bottom-Up Approach 2006):

1. A cultural/psychological element of shared values, beliefs, expectations and commitment towards quality.
2. A structural/managerial element with defined processes that enhance quality and aim at coordinating individual efforts. These two aspects, however, are not to be considered separately: both elements must be linked through good communication, discussion and participatory processes at institutional level.

In the quality culture perspective, quality is beheld as values and practices that are shared by the organization and that have to be nurtured on many levels and by various means at the same time (Vettori et al. 2007). The ingredients of a quality culture are awareness of and commitment to the quality of higher education, in conjunction with a solid culture of evidence and with the efficient management of this quality (through quality assurance procedures. Thus, the term "quality management" as a generic term, covers all activities that ensure fulfillment of the quality policy and the quality objectives and responsibilities and implements them through quality planning, quality control, quality assurance, and quality improvement mechanisms. Quality management is an aggregate of measures taken regularly at system or institutional level in order to assure the quality of higher education with an emphasis on improving quality as a whole (Quality assurance and accreditation )

The term quality culture referred to an organizational culture which contributed to the development of effective and efficient care for quality. It consisted of a value associated with the TQM paradigm on the one hand and a value associated with the traditional academic world on the other hand. Another study by Kull & Wacker (2010) argued that successful quality management is primarily based on continuous improvement, cooperative teamwork, and a customer focus. On the other hand, there are common elements to every quality assurance system of any institution which attempts to support quality culture embedment by developing quality management system. First of all, institutions should commit themselves explicitly to the development of a culture which recognizes the importance of quality and quality assurance in their work. To achieve this, institutions should develop and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality. The strategy, policy and procedure should have a formal status and be publicly available.

Higher education institutions should have formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and observation of their programs and awards. Every institution of higher education should gather, analyze and use for the management of study programs such information as:



students' opinions about study programs, teachers' work efficiency, students' progress and results, graduates' opinions and placement information, employers' opinion, etc.

### III. RESEARCH METHODS

The research utilizes descriptive research. The purpose of this study is to clarify the awareness of quality assurance among managers at University. A self-administered questionnaire survey of quality assurance principles implementation was conducted to collect empirical data for this study. The questionnaire was designed based upon a review of the related literature. Apart from respondents' demographic, which were measured by categorical scales, the items of quality assurance constructs are measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree (1)' to 'strongly agree (5)'.

Although this research was conducted through descriptive analysis, the instrument used was a questionnaire to explain the perception of managers on the implementation of Quality Assurance in Widyatama. Validity and reliability analyzes conducted to test the quality of the questionnaire used.

#### 3.1. Respondent

The empirical study was carried out in Bandung, during 2013. The respondents are all manager in Widyatama university which consist of Top managers, middle managers and lower managers in academic and administrative affairs.

#### 3.2. Validity

In this study, the validity of the construct was measured by checking the square root of the average variance for each construct (Nazir, 2009). The value of all constructs are above 0.3, those values indicated that the constructs are valid as suggested by Nazir (2009).

#### 3.3. Reliability

Cronbach coefficient alpha is the most common accepted formula for assessing the reliability of measurement scale with multi point item (Nazir, 2009). The reliability of the construct is considered acceptable, as Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability coefficients offer values which, in all cases are appreciably higher than the recommended value of 0.7. The reliability of the construct is above of 0.7. Therefore, construct is valid.

## IV. RESULT

#### 4.1. Quality Assurance Implementation

Widyatama University has demonstrated its commitment to the internal quality assurance before the Government of the Republic of Indonesia establishes the obligation of the quality assurance system for higher education. Since its inception, quality assurance was driven by purposes accreditation status from the government.

The initial plan to implement the internal quality assurance at Widyatama University was first formulated in 2002. A series of meeting, workshops, and seminars were organized from management to faculty level to plan, prepare, and produce the document required for the program. The university established Widyatama Quality Assurance Center. Since 2003, Widyatama has been accredited ISO 9001:2000, certified by TUV German. This certification has proven the university's concern to satisfy not only the wishes and the needs of the customers but also continuously quality improvement.

Widyatama Quality Assurance Center (WQAC) is entrusted with the responsibility of carrying out a periodic review of the various programs, where the process assessment and quality assessment is set out. WQAC director tasks are:

1. Ensure that the institutional quality system is established, implemented and maintained accordingly to ISO 9001:2000 standard.
2. Report the quality system performance to the management to be reviewed.
3. Provide a mechanism for the identification and transmission of good quality management practice across the university.
4. Promote institutional awareness for stakeholders' needs.

Until 2013, Widyatama already six times in an audit by the Certification Body (TUV Rheinland German). During the 10 years of the implementation of ISO 9001, the University Widyatama been able to meet all the requirements specified in ISO 9001. Based on the investigation and observation documents held managerial processes , Widyatama has fulfilled a variety of things needed for the implementation of ISO 9001 that is committed to quality starts from the individual , unit , up to the level of the organization , implement the main principles of ISO 9000, Documented, competent resources, review management, Internal Quality Audit. Perceptions about the implementation of the main principles of ISO 9000 are presented in the following table.

The average mean of this item is 3.69. The highest managers perceived quality assurance principles is decision making based on fact (4.19).Followed by obstacle principles (4.03), audit internal (3.98), leadership (3.88), supplier relationship (3.84), Continuous improvement (3.78), System approach and Top management support (3.70), customer focus (3.68), quality commitment (3.65), quality culture (3.58) and HRD (3.53).

Table 1  
Managers Perception about  
Quality Assurance Implementation

Item	Mean	SD
Customer Focus	3.69	0.44
Leadership	3.88	0.37
System App	3.7	0.61
Continuous Improvement	3.78	0.55
Fact base decision making	4.19	0.39



Supplier Relationship	3.84	0.40
Audit Internal	3.98	0.62
Quality Commitment	3.65	0.63
HRD	3.53	0.85
Quality Culture	3.58	0.81
Top Management Support	3.70	0.61
Obstacle	4.03	0.77

Strong leadership and their commitment towards the best practices are of vital importance for any organizations in implementing quality assurance. Thus, there is a need to practice the quality assurance process in every level of the organizational functionality. As customer focused approach, quality assurance can make important contributions to the increase of quality of education and the improvement of educational organizations.

Managers perceive communicating customer needs among organization personals are crucial in developing educational experience (Statement 6) but the mangers' evaluation on customers' satisfaction and utilize the evaluation result for improvement not optimal yet.

As, both the inputs and outputs of the educational organizations are human beings, and human beings are the main actors at all levels and in all processes of the organizations, without the satisfaction of human beings (both as customers and providers), it is very hard to ensure the effectiveness of educational organizations . Therefore, quality issue at this basic level should matter, if management wants to attain a high quality education system. Therefore, top management should be committed towards their employees with an aim to improve the overall performance.

From the survey result, it is found that most of university managers are aware of the importance of quality assurance in higher education. Therefore, this implementation can be used as a foundation to develop quality culture at Widyatama University. In developing quality culture in higher education, university should involve all the stakeholders especially the students and university. The new role for universities is that higher education institutions have their own responsibility to design internal quality processes at their best. It means a strategic ability to implement regular monitoring and use of information in designing and developing a quality strategy for continuous quality improvement.

Based on the table, the intensity of the awareness of main principles of ISO scores was high as 3.85 on a scale of 5. Although already quite high, the scores indicate that the implementation of quality assurance system in Widyatama still require improvements.

Based on discussions and interviews with managers at various levels, the researchers found things that still need attention:

1. Perceptions of quality commitment among managers still need to be improved for continuous improvement of quality assurance systems.
2. Control of documents still need to be improved in order not encountered documents is up to date
3. The commitment of quality Widyatama still need the support from the middle management and lower

management in the form of embodiment quality assurance that can support the success of university government.

4. Leadership style in Widyatama should be designed to support human capital development and enhance effectiveness, productivity, performance, and high reliability of organization member.
5. Implementation of Internal Quality Evaluation through Internal Quality Audit which is an important pillar in improving the implementation of Quality Assurance still need some improvements , especially in the determination of audit agenda and audit results follow-up of a more systematic and sustainable
6. Integration implementations based on ISO 9001:2008 Quality Assurance and National Accreditation requirements that have been initiated needs to be resolved for effective and integrated institution management systems developments.
7. Much systematic, continuous and long term effort are still needed for developing Quality Assurance into the organizational culture at the University Widyatama

## V. CONCLUSION

University has implemented quality assurance Widyatama in accordance with both of international standards through ISO 9001:2008 and in accordance with the Government through the accreditation process. Implementation of quality assurance that has been implemented need to be developed to establish a culture of quality as expected.

Although quality assurance has been applied for a quite long period, many obstacles still felt in some ways. One of the most important barriers is the differences of quality standards and quality commitment perception among managers at various levels of the organization

The present study has several limitations. First limitation of this study revolves around sampling issues as the study has relied primarily on sample drawn specifically from a limited geographical area in one university, in Bandung. Hence, the findings may not represent the entire university in Indonesia. Second, this study only focused on the implementation of quality assurance without any analysis of the development of relationships with other variables that relate to quality assurance in particular variable quality culture. Finally, this study employed a cross-sectional design whereby the constructs included in the study were assessed at a single point of time. It is generally recognized that longitudinal studies provide stronger inferences for causality.

Despite the issues raised and challenges faced, quality assurance involving external reviews in the University of Widyatama is here to stay. The high leadership commitment towards a quality management system cannot be questioned. Thus, It is important that university staff be involved with them in a positive way. It is recommended that a study be done to explore the impact of quality assurance practices on teaching and learning. Hence, this study should become a precedent as well as a precursor to both longitudinal studies and case studies in the future.



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