

Strategy for Strengthening Quality Control Units (UPM) in Improving Performance

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Strengthening Strategy, Quality Assurance Unit, Performance

Received : 5 Maret

Revised : 23 April

Accepted : 23 Mei

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify and formulate strengthening strategies for the Quality Assurance Unit in efforts to improve the quality performance of study programs in higher education institutions. UPM plays a strategic role in implementing the Internal Quality Assurance System through the PPEPP cycle (Determination, Implementation, Evaluation, Control, and Improvement). However, in practice, many UPMs have not functioned optimally due to various challenges, such as a lack of understanding of the PPEPP cycle, weaknesses in quality documentation, limited coordination with the Quality Assurance Agency and insufficient training and guidance for UPM managers. This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach using a case study method on several study programs in higher education institutions. Data collection techniques include observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The results indicate that UPM strengthening strategies can be implemented through human resource capacity building, the development of an integrated quality management information system, and enhanced collaboration between UPM and LPM, lecturers, educational staff, and students. In addition, clear institutional policy support and leadership commitment are also key factors in empowering UPM to effectively fulfill its role. By implementing these strengthening strategies, UPM is expected to contribute significantly to improving the quality of study programs and achieving excellent accreditation. This research contributes to the development of policies and practices in quality assurance within higher education and serves as a reference for institutions in optimizing the role of UPM in the internal quality assurance system.

INTRODUCTION

Higher education in the era of globalization faces the demands to produce competent and internationally competitive graduates. To achieve this, universities must ensure high and sustainable quality of education. The Internal Quality Assurance System is an important instrument in maintaining and improving the quality of higher education in Indonesia.

The Quality Control Unit at the study program level has a strategic role in the implementation of SPMI. UPM is tasked with ensuring that the education process runs according to the established standards, through the Determination, Implementation, Evaluation, Control, and Improvement cycle. However, in practice, many UPMs have not functioned optimally.

Some common problems faced by UPMs include a lack of understanding of the PPEPP cycle, weaknesses in quality documentation, minimal coordination with the Quality Assurance Institute, and a lack of coaching and training for UPM managers. In addition, the unclear duties and roles of UPMs at the study program level, as well as the lack of strategic authority, also hamper the effectiveness of UPMs.

The impact of the suboptimal function of UPMs is very significant on the quality of education and study program accreditation. Low quality performance can hinder the achievement of superior accreditation and international recognition. Therefore, strengthening the role and function of UPM is an urgent need in efforts to improve the quality of higher education.

The main challenge faced by UPM is the low understanding of the PPEPP cycle. Many UPM managers do not yet understand in depth the Determination, Implementation, Evaluation, Control, and Improvement cycle in SPMI. This results in the implementation of quality assurance not running systematically and sustainably.

In addition, weaknesses in terms of incomplete or unsystematic quality documentation are also a problem. Many UPMs do not yet have complete quality documents, such as quality policies, quality manuals, and quality standards, which are used as references in the implementation of quality assurance. The lack of coordination between UPM and LPM also causes the implementation of SPMI to be ineffective.

Based on the phenomena and background above, the author wishes to conduct research. The title of the research is "Strategy for Strengthening Quality Control Units in Improving the Quality Performance of Study Programs in Higher Education". This study aims to identify strategies for strengthening UPM in improving the quality performance of study programs in higher education. With a descriptive qualitative approach, this study will explore the problems faced by UPM and formulate applicable solutions. The results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of quality assurance policies and practices in higher education environments.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Higher Education Quality Assurance System

The Higher Education Quality Assurance System is an internal framework designed by higher education institutions to guarantee and improve the quality of education in a sustainable manner. SPMI refers to the PPEPP cycle (Determination, Implementation, Evaluation, Control, and Improvement), as regulated in Permendikbud No. 3 of 2020 and updated through Permendikbudristek No. 53 of 2023. This cycle emphasizes the importance of a systematic and integrated process in achieving higher education quality standards.

In this context, the Quality Control Unit at the study program level has a strategic role in implementing SPMI. UPM is responsible for ensuring that each stage in the PPEPP cycle is implemented properly, from setting standards to improving quality. UPM's active involvement in this process is the key to the success of quality assurance at the study program level.

However, the implementation of SPMI in various higher education institutions still faces challenges, such as a lack of understanding of the PPEPP cycle and minimal coordination between UPM and the Quality Assurance Institute. Therefore, strengthening the capacity and role of UPM is important to ensure the effectiveness of SPMI in improving the quality of higher education.

Concept of Total Quality Management (TQM)

Total Quality Management (TQM) is a management approach that focuses on continuous quality improvement by involving all elements of the organization. In the context of higher education, TQM emphasizes the importance of participation of all parties, including lecturers, staff, and students, in efforts to improve quality. This approach aims to create a comprehensive and sustainable quality culture.

The implementation of TQM in higher education includes various aspects, such as focusing on customer satisfaction (students and other stakeholders), total involvement of all members of the organization, continuous improvement, and a systematic approach to quality management. By implementing TQM principles, higher education can improve the effectiveness and efficiency in organizing education.

In the context of UPM, the implementation of TQM can strengthen the role of this unit in managing and improving the quality of study programs. Through the TQM approach, UPM can develop a more responsive, participatory, and results-oriented quality assurance system, thus supporting the achievement of the set quality standards.

Theory of Academic Decentralization and Good Governance

Academic decentralization refers to the delegation of authority from the central level to lower units, such as study programs, to improve efficiency and responsiveness in education management. Within the framework of good governance, this decentralization must be accompanied by the principles of transparency, accountability, participation, and effectiveness. The application of these principles aims to create good governance in the higher education environment.

In the context of UPM, academic decentralization provides an opportunity for this unit to make strategic decisions in a participatory and accountable manner. With adequate authority, UPM can be more effective in designing and implementing quality assurance policies at the study program level. This also allows UPM to be more responsive to the needs and dynamics that exist in the study program environment.

However, to ensure the success of academic decentralization and the implementation of good governance, strong institutional capacity is needed at the UPM level. Training, coaching, and support from the leadership of the institution are important factors in empowering UPM to be able to carry out its role optimally in the higher education quality assurance system.

CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) Evaluation Model

The CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) evaluation model is an evaluative approach used to comprehensively assess the effectiveness of a program or system. This model includes four main components: context, input, process, and product. In the context of higher education, the CIPP model can be used to evaluate various aspects of study programs and quality assurance systems.

Context evaluation aims to understand the needs, problems, and opportunities underlying the program or system being evaluated. Input evaluation assesses the resources, strategies, and plans used in program implementation. Process evaluation focuses on the implementation of activities and processes that occur, while product evaluation assesses the results and impacts of the program or system being evaluated.

In the context of UPM, the application of the CIPP evaluation model can assist this unit in assessing the effectiveness of the quality assurance system implemented in the study program. By using the CIPP approach, UPM can identify strengths and weaknesses in the existing system, as well as formulate appropriate improvement strategies to improve the quality of education in the study program.

Quality Culture in Higher Education

Quality culture in higher education refers to a system of values, beliefs, and practices that support continuous quality improvement in the higher education environment. This culture includes a commitment to academic standards, professional ethics, and continuous improvement in all aspects of education delivery. The implementation of a strong quality culture is an important foundation in achieving excellence in higher education institutions.

The development of a quality culture requires the active involvement of all academicians, including lecturers, staff, and students. Through the participation of all parties, quality values can be internalized and realized in daily practices in the higher education environment. In addition, support from the leadership of the institution is also important in creating an environment that is conducive to the development of a quality culture.

In the context of UPM, the role of this unit is very important in transforming a quality culture at the study program level. UPM can facilitate various activities that support the development of a quality culture, such as training, workshops, and internal evaluations. Thus, UPM contributes to creating

an academic environment that is oriented towards quality and continuous improvement.

Previous Research

The first study by Supriyanto (2020) at Universitas Negeri Surabaya evaluated the internal quality assurance process at the faculty level. This study highlights the importance of continuous evaluation of the implementation of SPMI to ensure improvements in the quality of education. This study uses an evaluative approach with a focus on the effectiveness of SPMI implementation in the faculty environment.

The second study by Rosdiana and Soedarmo (2019) discusses strategies for improving the quality of education through setting new standards and formulating strategies based on monitoring and evaluation results. This study emphasizes the importance of the PPEPP cycle (Determination, Implementation, Evaluation, Control, and Improvement) in SPMI to achieve sustainable quality of education. The approach used is qualitative with an analysis of quality assurance documents and practices in higher education.

The third study by Rosdiana and Soedarmo (2019) also highlights the importance of controlling and improving the quality of education in higher education. This study emphasizes the strategic role of UPM in implementing SPMI effectively. This study uses a case study approach with a focus on quality assurance practices in the higher education environment.

The three studies have similarities in emphasizing the importance of SPMI implementation and the role of UPM in improving the quality of higher education. However, the difference lies in the approach and focus of each research. Supriyanto's research emphasizes more on evaluating the quality assurance process, while Rosdiana and Soedarmo's research focuses on quality improvement strategies and the role of UPM in implementing SPMI. The three studies provide important contributions to the development of quality assurance systems in higher education and can be a reference for further research in this field.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach to deeply understand the phenomena that occur in the field, especially related to the role and strategy of UPM in improving the quality of study programs. This approach allows researchers to explore comprehensive information about the dynamics, challenges, and best practices implemented by UPM in various universities.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews with UPM managers, lecturers, and administrative staff to obtain information about the roles, functions, and challenges faced by UPM in carrying out its duties. In addition, participatory observation was carried out by being directly involved in UPM activities to observe the SPMI implementation process, including the PPEPP cycle (Determination, Implementation, Evaluation, Control, and Improvement). Documentation studies were also conducted by analyzing related documents, such as quality manuals, self-evaluation reports, and internal audit results, to

understand the extent to which UPM has carried out its quality assurance function.

The data obtained were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, which involve data reduction to select and simplify data relevant to the focus of the research, presenting data in narrative form to facilitate understanding, and drawing conclusions by interpreting data to find patterns, relationships, and deep meanings related to UPM's strengthening strategy. Through this method, it is hoped that the research can provide a significant contribution to efforts to improve the quality of higher education in Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that strengthening the Quality Control Unit at the study program level is very important in improving the performance of higher education quality. UPM has a strategic role in implementing the Internal Quality Assurance System through the PPEPP cycle. However, in practice, many UPMs face challenges such as a lack of understanding of the PPEPP cycle, weaknesses in quality documentation, minimal coordination with the Quality Assurance Institution, and a lack of coaching and training for UPM managers. This is in line with the findings showing that the effective implementation of SPMI not only helps universities in the accreditation process, but also encourages continuous improvement in various aspects of higher education.

UPM strengthening strategies can be carried out through several approaches. First, increasing human resource capacity through training and workshops on quality standards, innovative learning methods, and effective evaluation systems. Second, developing an integrated quality management information system to facilitate data-based monitoring and evaluation. Third, increasing collaboration between UPM and LPM, lecturers, education staff, and students to create a strong quality culture in the university environment. This collaboration aims to align quality assurance policies with the institution's vision, mission, and strategic plan, and ensure that quality standards are applied consistently at all levels.

In addition, strengthening UPM institutions also needs to be supported by clear institutional policies and commitment from university leaders. Documents such as SPMI policies, SPMI manuals, SPMI standards, and SPMI forms must be available and understood by the entire academic community. The implementation of an effective Internal Quality Assurance System requires a systematic and holistic approach, including the consistent implementation of the PPEPP cycle. Thus, UPM can contribute significantly to improving the quality of study programs and achieving superior accreditation.

Overall, strengthening UPM requires a comprehensive and sustainable approach, involving increasing human resource capacity, developing information systems, collaboration between units, and supporting institutional policies. With the right strategy, UPM can play a key role in improving the quality performance of study programs in universities.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that strengthening the Quality Control Unit at the study program level is a strategic step in improving the quality performance of higher education. UPM has a central role in implementing the Internal Quality Assurance System through the PPEPP cycle. However, the effectiveness of UPM is often hampered by various challenges, such as a lack of understanding of the PPEPP cycle, weaknesses in quality documentation, minimal coordination with the Quality Assurance Institution, and a lack of coaching and training for UPM managers. This is in line with findings that show that effective implementation of SPMI not only helps universities in the accreditation process, but also encourages continuous improvement in various aspects of higher education.

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FURTHER STUDY

Every research is subject to limitations; thus, you can explain them here and briefly provide suggestions to further investigations.

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