

# The Quality of Higher Education Assessed from the Academic Staff Performance:

## Literature review

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**Abstract**—The quality of academic staff is the main element in the consideration of higher education accreditation framework. This article is an empirical study that discusses the significance of academic staff quality, how the quality is measured, and how various aspects in staff quality relate to one another. This study presents several literature reviews related to the assessment of quality performance of academic staff in universities. This method is aimed at helping to understand the basic concept of the research. The concepts are the quality of academic staff and their performance including how students perceive their performance during the research.

**Keywords**—higher education; performance; academic staff

### I. INTRODUCTION

Education is the most important function in learning. Learning is an interaction process among students, lecturers, and learning sources within academic circle. Education and learning show that there are attempts to create study process and atmosphere that enable students to actively develop their potentials so that they can obtain religious and spiritual skills, self-control, personality, positive character intelligence, and skills that are beneficial for them as individuals, members of a community, a nation and a state. Meanwhile, research is an activity which is systematically carried out according to the rules and the scientific method to get information and data that are connected to the understanding and/or results of science and technology experiments. Lastly, community service is an activity to make use of science and technology to promote the welfare of society and educate people. That activity must be done in lectures in Indonesia as a means to measure and assess lecturers' performance annually.

In general, this research is intended to raise understanding on the quality of academic staff and its implications to the quality of higher education, especially universities. Taking up the challenge posed by Stensaker et al., the existing standards should not be taken for granted and instead need to be analyzed empirically in order to understand their roles and functions more [1]. This research in particular aims to contribute some empirical evidence to use in discussions related to academic staff's quality that focuses on the paradigmatic case analysis: the administration of higher education in Malang, Indonesia.

The fact that it is getting easier to obtain public administration degree, which has increased significantly in the last few decades, generates concern about the quality of the academic staff.

Many of the previous studies centered on the quality of education and the quality of education services in the elementary, middle, and higher educations. Those studies were conducted worldwide, including in Indonesia. However, there are not yet enough studies that focus on the quality of education services in higher education in Indonesia. Studies on the quality of education services in higher education is important in a way that they reveal the quality of teaching staff and supervision in universities. In Indonesia, the quality of the academic staff can be observed through the implementation of activities commonly known as Tri Dharma Perguruan Tinggi, which means teaching, research, and community service processes that are carried out based on research findings; where research writings and publications are products of research findings assessed through national and international indexation. As a result, lecturers who function as teaching staff are required to do all of the Tri Dharma activities. The activity is actually in line with some indicators used to support quality performance [2-4]. Research [3,5] and teaching [3,6] activities need to be done to evaluate the output of performance.

In this article, research is done by reviewing some literature to understand how academic characteristics are in accordance with national standard, how the characteristics can be applied, and how quality dimensions for academic staff can be achieved. To get the overall picture of the academic staff performance, there are reviews on accreditations, which mean quality for higher education in general and for public administrations in particular. This study also describes a number of problems that can arise in the context of the rapid growth of education quality, as what happens in Indonesia.

Since 1999, the world sees Indonesia as a dynamic country inasmuch as its government faced serious challenges from various community groups for its attempts to reform higher education [7]. Based on the evaluation results done by Indonesia Higher Education Commission, in 2017, around 4.925 universities are listed in Indonesia. The government has advocated some strategies, autonomies, accountabilities,

accreditation, self-evaluation, and sustainable quality improvement in order to improve the quality of higher education [8]. Some problems raised related to education reform are justice and equality in the distribution of education, commercialization of education, and the lack of education outcomes [9]. When it comes to the quality of higher education, the following things need as well to be considered, such as learning process, human resources, student affairs, curriculum, facilities and infrastructures, academic atmosphere, finance, research and publication, academic performance.

## II. THEORETICAL REVIEW

### A. Accreditation and Quality

Accreditation has been widely known as a means to guarantee the quality of higher education [10,11]. The existing trend points out that accreditation is a part of administration mechanisms needed for 'consumer protection' [12]. Accreditation is an external warrantee of the academic quality needed to protect public needs [13]. In Indonesia, the standards of accreditation quality are composed by the Ministry of Higher Education, Technology, and Research. The standards are set in order to reach quality higher education that provides education services for the state.

In the last few years, there is a lot of literature that mentions higher education, especially its quality [2, 11-17]. Those previous studies contain deep understanding on quality [18,19], purpose [20], development of quality assurance [12], the perceptions of academic staff [17] and students [21], and the impacts of quality on higher education [16,22].

Meanwhile, higher education is considered as graduates' maker since they have the input and the output. Based on that report, the quality of higher education depends on its "performance" just as stated in the indicators of performance and the effectiveness and efficiency values. Some of the problems that were discussed in the previous studies are problems that focused on the quality of higher education outlined as follows: indicators of performance, suitability of objectives, added value, peer review. Total quality management and auditing are carried out every year [14].

## III. RESEARCH METHOD

This Research used Literature review. In this method it means more in-depth and critical evaluation of previous research on a topic. Step of this research is summarize, make analysis and synthesize critically and deeply from the papers reviewed.

## IV. DISCUSSION

### A. Management of Academic Staff Performance

Performance management is defined as management instrument that consists of (1) performance evaluation and (2) remuneration which is linked to evaluation's results. The purpose of performance management is to improve performance and synchronize methods to evaluate performance with the organization's strategies [23,24]. According to Hunton et al., the involvement of extra organization such as

stakeholders in the system (in this case are parties engaged in higher education services especially universities) enables the creation of a very effective performance strategy cycle [25]. PM (Public Management) is also an integral part of managerial control system which is intended to monitor the quality of activities and staff's work. There are three integral components in PM – input, process, and output. Some researchers [26,27] have stressed that inputs (resources used) and processes (how to attain results) need to be observed as well as the outputs in order to see how far they develop during work cycle.

Performance management in public sector is included in public sector organization management in the form of New Public Management (NPM). NPM was first introduced in 1980s and was intended to modernize management practice employed by public sector. To date, NPM still holds its actuality because it uses a more specific approach to performance management by focusing primarily on evaluation and payment components.

Performance assessment has also been a discussion in academic staff management. Performance evaluations performed are mostly established on further development of the NPM. Results obtained from higher education performance studies show that increased competition between universities can be a driving force for universities to improve performance management systems and increase their focus on evaluating the performance of faculties and their staff. Therefore, indirectly, evaluation results will certainly be linked to salary and staff career progress. Consequently, with the competition, the level of professionalism in managing faculties and universities will increase. Measures on how performance is analyzed are also increasingly diverse and interesting.

Performance management of academic staff is based on two pillars, they are: (1) annual performance evaluation and (2) corresponding remuneration decision. PM is regarded as an important and practical management instrument. The assessment of academic staff performance can be based on: a) position and/or annual; b) general and/or specified; c) long term or short term; d) quantitative and/or qualitative; e) objective and/or subjective; f) combinations of the previously mentioned alternatives. As part of the performance management for academic staff, performance assessment is associated with remuneration as the end result.

Some dimensions of academic staff quality such as quality of the staff, intensity of the study, discipline orientation, diversity, international orientation, and professional orientation are continuously assessed altogether. Morris and Maloney claimed that staff with good performance tends to look for an organization that gives appreciation for their performance [28]. Hence, a good reward system must be applied by distinguishing good performers from bad performers. A good approach to treating employees fairly is by keeping the balance between the employee's input and output [29]. Employee input can be in the forms of education, experience, working term, and special skill, while output is connected to salary, allowance, recognition, achievement, and other compensations. Those indicators are analyzed to support academic staff performance.

However, there are still problems in terms of performance management measurement, assessment, and remuneration. Some of the problems can be attributed to the inaccuracies that exist within the academic environment. Nevertheless, there are also problems that originate from the academic staff themselves. Several studies have shown that there are a number of dilemmas in the application of performance management due to lack of clarity on "activity - results", verification of performance measures, transparency in the provision of information by the public, and actions taken to fulfill these objectives [30]. This potential problem can expand if performance assessment is a one-sided assessment and is based on a hierarchy which actually cultivates fears. In this respect, the assessment will rather distort than motivate. Worse still, that kind of assessment can also induce demonization and loss of working satisfaction [31]. The second set of problems can be associated with numerous goals set by the university. That is why there is a need to balance things up, such as resources and efforts between high-level international researches, the development of scientific system and national higher education, educating specialists for the labor market, working with local companies and communities, and so forth. Performance management has prompted an increase in the number of publications, especially in journals that are ranked "high" by universities that conduct the assessment.

### *B. Supervisor's Performance*

There is a great interest to do research on postgraduate students researching under the guidance or supervision of lecturers, the characteristics of effective student-supervisor relationships, and the opinions of students and supervisors related to research supervision. Those activities can create the best academic performance, or even the worst, depending on the implementation, especially in the guidance and supervision of the research for Master and Doctoral level students.

For students who conduct a research, the most important thing to do is how to maintain a good relationship with the supervisor and vice versa. Therefore, there is a lot of literature that focuses on this.

The quality of research supervision / guidance is one of the most significant matters that affect the successful completion of a Doctoral (PhD) or research programs at an international college [32-34]. The relationship of research supervision between students and supervisors who guide the research is one of the activities that need attention. This relationship is a major determinant for the quality of guidance and supervision. Several studies have been conducted to investigate the level of students' satisfaction to their experience of supervision, the quality of guidance [35,36], and the students' and supervisors' understanding on research guidance / supervision [37]. Some other studies have also scrutinized the quality of effective research supervision which also meets the students' expectations conducting a research under supervision. The study investigated the style of guidance and supervision, the relationship in guidance and supervision, the contact or friction that occurred, and the shortcomings of research students [32, 35,38]. Meanwhile, there are also factors that can specifically cause students to fail to complete their Master or Doctoral programs, including irregular meetings and the lack of

guidance or supervision, the inability of supervisors and students to set the purpose of a research, and the lack of general direction for students from lecturers.

## V. CONCLUSION

This paper concludes that there are several basic concepts in the literature that need to be tested to get results related to how the quality of academic staff can be achieved. The existing literature is a literature that discusses how the quality system can be tested and understood in terms of academic performance at the university level. The purpose of this study is only limited to building an academic staff quality framework viewed from the relationship between management quality and academic performance and the quality of management.

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