Quality Assurance of Islamic Religion Based-Universities in Universalism of Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah Values

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Abstract. Higher education is one of the areas that need certain standards to assure quality. *Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah* of *Nahdlatul Ulama* has universalism values to be actualized in quality assurance. This study aims to describe the existence, standards, manual, institutions, implementation and evaluation, external and internal Quality Assurance System as the universalism values. This is qualitative descriptive research with field research. The research was conducted at four *Nahdlatul Ulama*-based Islamic universities at Central Java and Jogjakarta which have been accredited by the National Accreditation Board of Higher Education. Data were collected by questionnaire and interview. The results show that Islamic- Based Universities need to make several breakthroughs and strategic steps to deal with change and competition in such a fast and tight manner such as looking back the historical context of identity of Moslem, having distinction, in educational process (learning), developing basic knowledge.

Keywords: quality, assurance, universalism, **Aswaja**

I. INTRODUCTION

Quality assurance in Higher Education has produced plenty of debate among stakeholders of higher education over the past decade and would be a more topical issue in the decade ahead. This is partly as a result of the fact that graduates from higher education institutions (HEIs) are expected by the stakeholders of higher education to be of the finest quality to be able to fit into any environment both in graduates' home countries and internationally. The higher education sector is regarded in some circles as the final processing stage of the graduate for the market. This presupposes that adequate quality assurance mechanisms need to be designed and implemented by higher education institutions to assure students, government, parents, employers and regulators of higher education that graduates are adequately trained to meet manpower requirements [1].

Higher education is one of the areas that need certain standards to assure quality. In order to adapt to the developments of the global world, higher education institutions should be prepared to meet the contemporary challenges. Quality assurance system is aimed to assist universities to adapt to change as societies demanded by using their own measures of quality assurance [2].

Related to *Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah* of *Nahdlatul Ulama*, there are important values to be actualized in the life of the state and Muslim. In general, these values include four (4) things: *tawassuth, tawazun, i'tidal,* and *tasamuh* Munawir [3] mentioned that *Aswaja* stands for "*Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah*". This means that people who adhere to or follow the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad, and *Wal Jama'ah* means the majority of the people or the majority of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad. It is defined as people who follow the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad and the majority of friends (*maa 'ana alaihi wa' ashabii*), both in the *Shari'a* (Islamic law) and *aqeedah* and *tasawuf* [4].

Some previous studies have investigated Quality Assurance in Higher Education. Kauko & Berndtson investigated ENQA's Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area: An Evaluation. It revealed that universities have trapped themselves into a labyrinth of power mechanisms. Academics are more and more controlling themselves through the disciplinary power of quality assurance mechanisms [5]. Silman [2] conducted a study on Quality Assurance Activities in Higher Education in North Cyprus. It also revealed that teaching, learning processes and sources are not given enough attention and therefore should be improved for the accreditation of the universities. Amaral presented a paper in research seminar of Oxford Learning Institute about recent trends of Oxford University

Quality Assurance and Assessment in Higher Education [6] and [7].

Other studies on Quality Assurance were also conducted by some researchers. Oyetola, et.al investigated Quality Assurance and Effectiveness of Lagos State Junior Secondary Schools [8]. Kis reported a research result on Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education: Current Practices in OECD Countries and Literature Review on Potential Effects [9]. Hsu presented a thesis investigation on the development and impact of the Quality Assurance System on Higher Education in Taiwan [10]. At last, Bollaert et.al [11] compiled a selection of papers from the 3rd European Quality Assurance Forum about trends in Quality Assurance.

This study aims to describe the existence, standards, manual, institutions, implementation and evaluation, external and internal Quality Assurance System, as well as the universalism Values of *Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah* of *Nahdlatul Ulama*-based Islamic universities in Central Java Indonesia.

II. METHOD

This study was designed as a qualitative descriptive research with field research model. The term qualitative method is often also called fieldwork, naturalistic and ethnographic, inner perspective, interpretive, ecological, case study, descriptive [12]. The research was conducted at the *Nahdlatul Ulama*-based Islamic universities in Central Java and Jogjakarta. The research samples were four *Nahdlatul Ulama* universities namely UNISNU Jepara, UNWAHAS Semarang, UNU Surakarta, and UNU Yogyakarta on the grounds that the university had unique characteristics including geographical, sociological, cultural and religious locations based on *Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah* and including universities which has been accredited by the National Accreditation Board of Higher Education. Data collection is done by questionnaire and interview. The questionnaire respondents were the heads of university quality assurance institutions while interviewing informants were the policy makers and managers of Higher Education.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to describe the quality assurance of Islamic religion based-Universities and the universalism values of *Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah.* Some findings during collecting data through questionnaire are:

Existence of the Internal Quality Assurance System

The findings from questionnaires reveal that all *Nahdlatul 'Ulama* universities had official policies regarding the Internal Quality Assurance System. The policy is formulated in the form of books or written documents. The University's Internal Quality Assurance System policy covers academic and non-academic fields as stated in government regulations concerning National Education Standards.

Standards in the Internal Quality Assurance System

Internal Quality Assurance System refers to Indonesian Government regulation concerning with National Standards for Higher Education. The points in the Internal Quality Assurance System include National Education Standards, National Research Standards, and National Standards for Community Service. The National Education Standards consist of graduate competency standards, learning content standards, learning process standards, learning assessment standards, lecturer and education staff standards, facilities and infrastructure standards, learning, learning management standards, and learning finance, standards the research national standards consist of standard results research, research content standards, research process standards, research assessment standards, research standards, research facilities and infrastructure standards, research management standards, and research funding and funding standards. National Standards for Community Service consist of standards of community service, Community service standards, Community service standards, Community service standards for community service, Standards for community service facilities and infrastructure, Community service standards funding and financing of community service.

Based on the research findings, the universities have other standards which are detailed accompanied by sufficient explanation, for example standards are included in the curriculum group, the learning process, students. The material contains about identity standards, cooperation standards, and information system standards.

Manual of the Internal Quality Assurance System

Manual is a written guideline on the preparation / preparation of standards and implementation of standards, standard controls in the Internal Quality Assurance System and standard

development / evaluation. The results of the questionnaire recapitulation show the facts. *First*, *Nahdlatul 'Ulama* universities have own a manual on the preparation of various standards in the form of books or other forms, which were officially established by the universities. *Second*, the universities have manual on the preparation of various standards in the form of books or other forms, based on the values of *Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah. Third*, books or other forms containing the university's internal quality assurance system manual are easily accessible to all units at *Nahdlatul 'Ulama* universities.

Institutions of Quality Assurance

Nahdlatul 'Ulama Universities have a special institution that implements the officially established quality assurance mechanism by filling in a data table containing the name of the quality assurance unit, website, chairman, email, and number of members. The questionnaire results show that all respondents have specialized institutions that carry out quality assurance work mechanisms. Furthermore, the universities have developed organizational structures from specialized institutions.

Implementation and Evaluation

Nahdlatul 'Ulama Universities has a strategy to internalize the quality culture to implement the quality assurance contained in an official document. Based on the survey, the universities conducted socialization, conducted audits, and conducted roadshows for work units. Regarding socialization, the universities socializes the implementation of quality assurance to Internal Stakeholders, Educators / Lecturers, Education Personnel, and Students. Socialization with External Stakeholders is carried out on Alumni, Parents of students, and other professional organizations. As a system at the university, the internal quality assurance system must be developed continuously through the evaluation process itself periodically and continuously.

Nahdlatul 'Ulama universities have evaluation mechanism for quality assurance carried out by internal parties (audit team formed by Quality Assurance Board) and external parties. Related to quality assurance evaluation procedures, the board forms an audit team, processes the certificate, conducts audit scheduling, conducts audits, reports audits, makes meeting agendas, conducts management reviews, and year-end meetings. The results of the evaluation were also used as one of the

bases for developing a quality assurance system at universities. The evaluation period of the internal quality assurance system is conducted annually at the end of the fiscal year.

External Quality Assurance System

Based on the results of observations, most *Nahdlatul 'Ulama* universities get institutional accreditation. The universities also compiled a Self Evaluation Form. However, if the university has not received institutional accreditation, the situation is caused by factors: the university does not know how to prepare accreditation forms, has sent accreditation forms, but was asked to revise, and has not been completed until now, does not understand the procedures for organizing accreditation, and does not yet have sufficient resources (such as: Human Resources / funds / facilities) to arrange adequate accreditation forms.

Universalism Values of Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah

Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah (*Aswaja*) values of *tawassuth, tawazun, i'tidal,* and *tasamuh* are urgently implemented. The actualization efforts must be supported by core spirit in spreading Islam (*dakwah*), namely equalizing peace and planting the honor character. Building honor character in institutional point of view need definite acknowledgement for unity of people and nation. The values are related to the tolerance towards traditions that have developed in the community, without involving themselves in the substance, even trying to direct it. The teaching of *Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah* is not only a source of ethical and human values that can be integrated in the development of society, but it is also multi-dimensionally laden with norms of harmony and balance, as demanded by development. From the social dimension, *Aswaja* has a complex connection with social problems.

The basic characteristics of *Aswaja* are 1) *tawassuth* (moderate); 2) *I'tidal* (justice); 3) *tasamuh* (tolerant); 4) *Tawazun* (harmony); 5) *Amar Ma'ruf Nahi Munkar* (carries out His commands and keeps away from His prohibitions); 6) the nature of *ta'aruf* (good relations); 7) *ta'awun* (cooperation); and 8) *tawashul*, communicative. Strategies and methods are needed to implement *ASWAJA* values in everyday life. The right way in the character formation process is through strategies: *learning to know, learning to do, learning to be,* and *learning to live together*. Methods for character building can also be done through ways, namely: giving a little teaching or theory; multiply give examples and

examples; strengthen habituation or practice; much motivated; and consistent supervision and enforcement of rules.

IV. CONCLUSION

Quality assurance at *Nahdlatul 'Ulama* Islamic-based universities had own the existence of the Internal Quality Assurance System, standards in the Internal Quality Assurance System, manual of the Internal Quality Assurance System, Institutions of Quality Assurance, implementation and Evaluation, and external Quality Assurance System.

Quality assurance at *Nahdlatul 'Ulama* Islamic-based universities follow the values of *Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah* or Nahdliyyin, namely: the value of *tawassuth, tawazun, tasamuh,* and *i'tidal* which are used as guidelines in acting in all aspects of life. The universalism values of *Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah* includes: *tawassuth* (moderate), *tawazun* (balanced), *tasamuh* (tolerant), and *i'tidal* (fair), which can be used as guidelines in acting in all aspects of life. These values can be implemented in daily life, including formal and informal educational institutions.

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