Impact of the Islamic Higher Education Quality Improvement Project

Rahman El Junusi[1], Musahadi[2]
Faculty of Islamic Economics and Business, Department of Management at
Walisongo State Islamic University Semarang[1,2]

{rahman_eljunusi@walisongo.ac.id[1], @walisongo.ac.id[2]}

Abstract. The study on the impact of the project supported by foreign grants / loans in Indonesian Islamic higher education (IHE) is very limited, especially which is connected to the quality of education using the perspective of curriculum development and expert training programs. The aim of the study is to explore "The Islamic higher education quality improvement project" in an effort to improve the quality of IHE. Policy Research method is used to answer the research problems. Data collection through documents and records also interview. The study is located in four IHE: UIN North Sumatra, UIN Raden Fatah, UIN Walisongo and UIN Mataram. The analysis technique used is an exploratory descriptive. The results show that "The Islamic higher education quality improvement project" implemented by UIN North Sumatra, UIN Raden Fatah, UIN Walisongo and UIN Mataram through the development of curriculum programs and expert training programs are impact in improving the quality of IHE as showed by the improving of their ranking in the global university ranking agency and also showed the increase in the performance of IHE as assessed by local agency through Strategic Management System (SMS).

Keywords: Islamic Higher Education; Quality; Development; Project

1 Intruduction

The Political & Economic Risk Consultancy (PERC) survey shows the low quality of education in Indonesia which is ranked 12th out of 12 countries in Asia. Based on the results of the Education Index report, in 2017 Indonesia was still ranked seventh in ASEAN countries. This indicates that the quality of education in Indonesia is still very poor. In reality, quality education requires huge amount of funds.

Loans and Foreign Grants (PHLN) is an alternative source of financing.The Ministry of Religious Affairs received a loan of USD 123.75 million from the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) based on the Istina'a principle to be allocated for "the Support to Development of the Islamic Higher Education project" carried out by 4 IHE, namely UIN Walisongo, UIN North Sumatra, UIN Raden Fatah and UIN Mataram. The scope of the project includes: (1) Increasing access to education (2) improving the quality of education. Therefore the objectives of this study are; to determine the impact of "the Support to Development of the Islamic Higher Education project" on improving the quality of IHE.

2` Literature Review

Success has become a major theme in the project management universe, receiving remarkable attention from both researchers and practitioners [1] [2] [3]. Studies on project success emphasized two main lines of investigation: success criteria [4] and critical success factors [5]. Munns and Bjeirmi use the concept project management success, the traditional view with a focus on the successful accomplishment of cost, time, and quality objectives and the quality of the project processes or work [6]. Project success as the broader concept, which deals with the wider and longer term impact of the project [2].

The quality of Higher Education is a multi-dimensional concept due to different needs and demands of stakeholders. The ranking of universities around the world is based on a combination of data and empirical opinions from surveys of stakeholders. Thus, society perceives world university rankings as indicating Higher Education quality [7]. The quality of a university is characterized by, among others, academic reputation, the availability of qualified teaching staffs (lecturers, researchers), and is supported by a strong research tradition and a good tradition of scientific writing (books and journals). There are at least five factors that determine the quality of a university, (1) supporting facilities and infrastructure (buildings, office spaces, lecture halls); (2) adequate facilities (library, laboratory); (3) quality of lecturers with sufficient time commitment to teach; (4) research skills; and (5) the commitment of lecturers and researchers to their profession to continuously improve their competence and expertise [8].

A Higher Education institution will be considered qualified when it is able to meet the community needs; produce a person who is able to make a positive contribution to the betterment of life, (social needs), produce people who are needed by the work field; moreover, produce a figure who is productive in opening job opportunities, and produce professional people in improving and developing knowledge. Therefore, improving the quality of higher education is not an easy job, it requires careful planning, commitment and a strong desire which is then translated into the vision, mission, and objectives of the educational process that takes place at the university. Higher education can be deemed to have good quality if it is able to produce graduates that are in accordance with the needs of the era, sell well in the work field, and can create job opportunities. Quality in Higher Education can be seen from the formulation of the vision and mission, which is then manifested in the educational process that will be carried out.

Over the last few decades, many higher education institutions around the world have developed internal quality management systems that are intended to establish more formal organizational rules and routines related to the governance of educational services. This system may have a different focus in each institution but tends to agree that leadership and management are very important for coordination, developing good quality indicators, making things happen and that the main objective of this quality management system is to improve students' learning experience [9]. Thus, one could argue that the introduction of quality management in Higher Education has contributed to the strengthening of management regulated by universities [10].

Globalization creates a very competitive environment for universities. Internal and external stakeholders are increasingly demanding better outcomes in terms of research, teaching, knowledge transfer, internationalization, competitiveness and increased mandate for transparency and accountability [11]. In this new landscape, intangible assets such as reputation are a key factor in gaining a sustainable competitive advantage. The behavior of

Higher Education institutions is triggered by competition for the reputation of the institution [12].

3 Methodology

Policy Research method is used to answer the research problems. Research focus on training program and expert. Data collection through documents and records also interview. The study is located in four IHE: UIN North Sumatra, UIN Raden Fatah, UIN Walisongo and UIN Mataram. The analysis technique used is an exploratory descriptive. Meanwhile, to determine the impact of "The Islamic higher education quality improvement project" on improving the quality of IHE, the global or local university ranking version of Webometrics and SMS (Strategy Management System) was used.

4 Results

Because of the increasing competition among higher education institutions at the domestic and global levels, the number of institutions for university ranking at the national and international levels is also increasing. University rankings are seen as a representative of academic excellence and the institution's reputation. To achieve these goals, most of the Higher Education Institutions make a joint effort to participate in institutional ranking activities. The basic purpose of global university rankings is not only to provide information for students in finding universities but also the impact and use of global rankings have changed. Global university rankings also serve as a tool for evaluating university performance.

Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) or Time Higher Education (THE), the QS World University Rankings, the Scimago Institutions Ranking, and the Webometric (Ranking Web of World Universities) are recognized as the top global ranking institutions [13][14][15]. The WCU ranking has a relationship with the reputation and academic performance of a university, while academic performance shows the quality of a university[16]. Therefore, to measure the quality of IHE, a global university ranking (GUR) is used based on a Webometric indicator. It is because IHE is only registered in the Webometrics version of world-class universities.

The SMS policy has a vision for the internationalization of IHE to be a world-class university. To achieve that vision, there are two missions i.e. improving IHE governance to gain high performance and competitive advantage and to change the identity of IHE from teaching-based university to becoming a research university. The SMS policy has a good prospect to become an international rank body for Islamic higher education in the world because such a body is not available currently. The SMS policy provides a new perspective to the study program of Islamic education management that research is not only based on scriptures but also actual phenomena in Islamic educational institutions.

Based on this logical connection, for university rankings the researchers should refer to Webometric and SMS from the Ministry of Religious Affairs to see the quality of IHE. The IHE rankings are displayed in table 1 as follows:

Table 1. Webometric Version of IHE Rankings

No	IHE	2017	2018	2019	2020	Explanation
1	UIN Walisongo	5501	4384	4749	4621	Rise

No	IHE	2017	2018	2019	2020	Explanation
2	UIN Raden Fatah	4575	5620	7344	8765	Down
3	UIN Mataram	23761	11801	8667	8277	Rise
4	UIN North Sumatra	13040	10124	8733	8134	Rise

Source: http://www.webometrics.info, accessed in 2020

Table 1 above reveals that most IHE rankings are increasing in global university rankings, except for UIN Raden Fatah that falls with an average decrease of 1396 percent. "The Islamic higher education quality improvement project" which is implemented by UIN North Sumatra, UIN Raden Fatah, UIN Walisongo, and UIN Mataram on average has an impact on increasing the ranking of the universities. It shows that "The Islamic higher education quality improvement project" has an impact on improving the quality of IHE. The IHE rankings based on the SMS are shown in table 2.

Table 2. IHE Ranking Based on Strategy Management System (SMS) 2016-2018

NO	IHE	RANKINGS				Explanation
		2016	2018	2016	2018	
1	UIN Walisongo	65,12	2.478,00	5	4	Rise
2	UIN Raden Fatah	61,98	1.637,58	10	10	Constant
3	UIN North Sumatra	61,90	1.980,24	11	8	Rise

Table 2 shows that most of the IHE rankings are increasing based on the SMS version, except for UIN Raden Fatah. "The Islamic higher education quality improvement project" which is implemented by UIN North Sumatra, UIN Raden Fatah, UIN Walisongo, and UIN Mataram on average has an impact on increasing the ranking of local universities according to the SMS version. It shows that "The Islamic higher education quality improvement project" has an impact on improving the quality of IHE.

5   Conclusion

To improve the quality of IHE which consists of curriculum development and expert training programs, "The Islamic higher education quality improvement project" has undertaken curriculum development programs such as curriculum development, management development, student development, and IT development although the budget from the APBN is limited. All IHE have carried out all curriculum development components set in the MoM with various activities that are adjusted to the priority scale, needs, and competencies of the field of each IHE.

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that "The Islamic higher education quality improvement project" has a positive impact on improving the quality of IHE. It is evidenced by the increase in the global university rankings according to the Webometric version, except for UIN Raden Fatah. Likewise, the ranking of local universities based on SMS from the Ministry of Religious Affairs shows that IHE have increased in rank, except for UIN Raden Fatah which has a constant ranking. So it can be concluded that "The Islamic higher education quality improvement project" as a whole has an impact on improving the quality of IHE. University rankings show an increase in reputation and an increase in the performance of IHE.

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