

Building A Higher Education Quality Culture Through Regular Internal Quality Evaluations

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ABSTRACT

When a quality assurance institution is formed in a university, a quality culture is also formed. According to DIKTI, quality culture starts with quality documents. In the latest research, it was revealed that quality culture was built from the routine activities of internal quality evaluation so that it was the key to improving the quality of higher education. The purpose of this study is to 1) explain the condition of quality culture that has formed at the university; 2) prove the effectiveness of the implementation of internal quality evaluation in building a quality culture in higher education. The method used in this research is descriptive method with a case study approach. The data collection method is an interview. The results showed that universities that already have been accredited A apparently did not guarantee that the quality culture was going well. The level of achievement of the formation of quality culture in higher education is determined by the effectiveness of the implementation of internal quality evaluation at the faculty and study program level. Conducting consistent and followed up internal quality evaluations will change the organization in the form of documents, processes and quality achievements. Other results show that university leaders do not pay greater attention to quality culture than attention to the activities and achievements of university and study programs accreditation.

Keywords: quality culture, higher education, and evaluation

INTRODUCTION

Quality culture has the highest value for the advancement of higher education organizations. The quality culture that is built will be the basis for creating an ideal organizational climate. Quality culture is interesting to study because it is rarely a concern of universities. The flurry of most universities for the achievement of external accreditation, especially in faculties and study programs, makes the quality activist's orientation trapped in the pseudo achievement of quality assurance. The ultimate achievement in the form of building a quality culture is no longer a major concern because it is less attractive from the point of view of short-term achievements, and requires patience, a long time and hard work in implementing it. The essence of quality assurance activities is the process of building a quality culture in faculties and study programs so that the university structure follows the quality trend in its management. In addition, it can also happen upside down, quality culture is built from the university level so that it forces faculty and study programs to carry out quality activities in line with the aims of the university.

If we look at the definition of organizational culture according to Kreitner and Kinichi (2003: 79) is a form of assumption that is owned, implicitly accepted by the group and determine

how the group feels, thinks, and reacts to their diverse environments. So quality culture has two main requirements to be implemented in a group or organization. First, it is implicitly accepted and secondly, it is carried out in daily life. Quality culture can be realized if a university receives SPMI (Internal Quality Assurance System) in every movement and activity. This will be proven by the existence of Quality Standards and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) which are carried out wholeheartedly starting from the highest leader element to the lowest element in the university.

At present, universities that have been accredited A in Medan already have both quality culture requirements in their management organizations, but these have not been implemented optimally and not yet become their work habits. This can be detected and proven through their commitment in the implementation of internal quality evaluation and internal quality audit. In particular, the implementation of internal quality evaluation can be a measure of the implementation of quality culture and plays a major role in fostering a culture of quality if its implementation can be monitored up to the follow-up efforts to carry out internal quality evaluation at the lowest level.

In the end, quality culture in a higher education organization will lead to organizational behavior. The behavior of the academic community will be the experience, atmosphere, events, facts in the life of an organization in higher education. This is because the perception, mindset, and action patterns of the members of the organization (the academic community) are influenced by the quality culture built by its leaders. Basically an individual will follow the pattern of behavior of an organization that he follows if he believes that through the organization the goal can be achieved.

The problems in this study are 1) what is the condition of quality culture that has been formed in A accredited universities in Medan; 2) how is the effectiveness of internal quality evaluation in building a quality culture in A-accredited universities? The purpose of this study is to 1) determine the condition of quality culture that has been formed in A accredited universities in Medan; 2) to prove the effectiveness of the implementation of Internal Quality Evaluation in building a quality culture in A-accredited universities

METHOD

This study applies a descriptive research method with a case study approach to prove that the implementation of internal quality evaluation at the faculty and study program levels and institutions proves the weakness of quality culture in universities. The data were obtained by using participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document studies on the implementation of quality assurance, especially quality monitoring and evaluation. The validity of the data obtained from observations, interviews, and documents is done through the credibility test of research data with triangulation techniques (checking data from various types and sources in various ways and and at various times) and confirmability (research is declared objective when research results are agreed by many people)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Quality culture is the main goal of an organization especially in higher education. Quality culture is a work culture that is expected to be realized in a higher education organization. Robbins (1996: 289) argues that organizational culture is a perception shared by members of the organization and it is a system that is shared. This means that quality assurance must be understood by every member of the organization and properly implemented. To carry out quality assurance well for the realization of a true quality culture, it is necessary to understand the conditions of the existing quality culture so steps can be taken to make it happen. Furthermore, it is also necessary to understand the initial steps in acting and moving to ensure that the quality culture is well maintained, such as routine and good implementation of every internal quality evaluation activity. internal quality evaluation is a measure of the realization of a quality culture at the most basic level

of quality. Before the behavior is formed, it must be tested with the ability and seriousness in the implementation of the internal quality evaluation at the faculty and study program level.

In fact, the implementation of internal quality evaluation in a university still needs a lot of improvement as Amrizal (2017) stated that the application of internal quality management in university in the learning sector and academic administration requires an evaluation and audit of internal quality that is able to measure the achievements that have been obtained. So far the implementation still leaves problems that must be solved at the faculty and study program level, starting from the implementation of document preparation, seriousness and commitment to pay attention to quality, and weaknesses in the evaluation of learning activities and academic administration. Based on the statement above, the following will be discussed in more depth related to quality culture.

Higher Education Quality Culture Conditions

This research reveals that the quality culture in state and private universities that have been accredited A in Medan has not yet been realized and the actual function of quality culture has not been clearly illustrated. Correspondingly, Soesilo (2000: 97) explains that the function of organizational culture is: (1) to show the differences between an organization and other organizations; (2) as identity for members of the organization; (3) to facilitate the rise of commitment to something greater than personal interests; (4) to increase the stability of the social system as a social predicate that sustains the unity of the organization so as to preserve positive values; and (5) as a guide in forming employee attitudes and behavior in carrying out daily tasks.

The last function of organizational culture is very difficult to realize. This is because the quality assurance that has been written in the quality documents must be actualized and practiced the same by lecturers, education staff and students. This function cannot be carried out playfully because it is designed from quality documents that are measured and updated continuously. This quality behavior is a measure of success in realizing quality culture. Quality culture in state and private universities only focuses on fulfilling documents and showing skills in explaining the implementation of quality culture properly when there is an external accreditation. However, the commitment and spirit of quality will be reduced after obtaining the results of the ranking issued by the Higher Education. If the commitment and spirit of quality is accompanied by an evaluation of internal quality that is well maintained, then the change will occur in an effort to follow up the internal quality evaluation activities.

In some universities, quality assurance is only understood by the institutions who are responsible for the quality assurance process. But the level of understanding will be increasingly reduced at the faculty level and to the lowest the study program level. Even if there are those who already understand it and realize the importance of quality assurance, they are still not wholeheartedly implementing it in their daily work. This happened at the level of leaders to subordinates. The expected behavior of the document agreed upon and understood has not yet been implemented well. It takes time and a continuous process that is accompanied by good intentions to reach a certain stage which is the goal of a higher education.

The Effectiveness of Internal Quality Evaluation in Building Quality Culture

Internal quality evaluation is needed to help establish a development program to meet National Higher Education Standards and to avoid gaps between internal and external evaluation results. This objective can only be realized through the internal quality evaluation activities and their follow-up efforts. When the internal quality evaluation is carried out well and followed by appropriate follow-up, this will be the first step in the development of a quality culture in higher education

Building a quality culture starts from the seriousness of an organization in carrying out internal quality evaluations. In carrying out internal quality evaluations, it is necessary to know several indicators of quality culture that must be considered. Embodiment of quality culture can be described through indicators that can be developed by universities. Gibson (2009: 174) revealed that indicators of measuring organizational culture can be seen from its unique characteristics that emerge when the quality culture is implemented in an organization. The characteristics of organizational culture are (1) innovation and risk taking, to the extent that employees are encouraged to innovate and take risks; (2) giving attention to details, to the extent that employees are expected to show precision (accuracy), analysis, and pay attention to details; (3) results orientation, the extent to which management focuses on results rather than the techniques and processes used to achieve those results; (4) people oriented, the extent to which management decisions take into account the effects of results on people within the organization; (5) team oriented, the extent to which work activities are organized around teams rather than individuals; (6) aggressiveness, to the extent that these people are aggressive and competitive rather than relaxing; (7) stability, to what extent the organization's activities emphasize maintaining the status quo as a contrast to growth.

All of these indicators if we investigate in daily activities at universities with accreditation A, only institutions or units that develop quality will understand it and try to implement it. Other elements such as lecturers, education staff and students still need a lot of training and guidance related to the implementation of quality towards the realization of quality culture. Based on respondents' answers, the obstacle faced in implementing quality culture is that not all of them understand the demands of quality management and all of this requires a long process and time to realize it in the form of behavior.

The routine and well-scheduled internal quality evaluation has not been able to encourage follow-up efforts to become a need to make improvements and changes related to weaknesses encountered during the internal quality evaluation. At the faculty and study program level, the implementation of the internal quality evaluation is not yet intact and becomes their life behavior. Besides that, the follow up efforts of the internal quality evaluation itself have also not been going well because of the incomplete understanding of quality.

The routine and continuous implementation of internal quality evaluation is the beginning of the realization of a quality culture that is displayed from different behaviors compared to other universities. This is the aim of the realization of quality culture in higher education, where the excellence of higher education will be seen when they apply everything that has been written in the vision and mission. The purpose of implementing organizational culture according to Mangkunegara (2012) is that all individuals in the company or organization adhere to and are guided by systems of values and norms that apply in the company or organization and shape how people behave and do things that distinguish one organization with other organizations. This organization becomes a place where individuals work together rationally and systematically to achieve the goals of the organization.

The visible culture of quality behavior, availability of documents, and performance evaluation reports are evidence of internal quality evaluation. This is what proves that the internal quality evaluation activities carried out correctly are the beginning of the actual quality culture. If the internal quality evaluation runs effectively, it can be concluded that the quality culture has been realized in higher education.

CONCLUSION

The condition of quality culture in A-accredited tertiary institutions in Medan still does not reflect the behavior as written in their quality documents. This can be seen when the implementation of the internal quality evaluation and follow-up efforts have not been a major concern in the faculty and study programs. The effectiveness of the internal quality evaluation in building the quality culture that exists in these tertiary institutions is undoubtedly the implementation. However, it appears that the implementation of the internal quality evaluation is not going well and only looks serious when it is only during the implementation of accreditation. This makes the effectiveness of internal quality evaluation is low because it is not carried out properly, seriously and continuously. However, if this is well maintained, quality behavior will be formed and a culture of cover will automatically be formed.

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