

## Implementation of Education Quality Assurance Policy: Between Expectations and Reality

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### ABSTRACT

The main objective of the research is to analyze the extent to which the education quality assurance policy is implemented at the daily implementation level and the extent to which the expectations stated in the policy can be realized. This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. The research results show that the implementation of education quality assurance policies in Indonesia, especially in the aspects of accreditation, student learning evaluation and teacher certification, is still faced with serious challenges. Fraudulent practices in student learning evaluations, such as leakage of exam questions, and discrepancies between formal certification and teachers' actual competence, are major concerns. Lack of commitment from policy actors and education managers is the main obstacle in achieving the desired increase in the quality of education. Therefore, concrete action is needed which is supported by a joint commitment from all parties involved to ensure continuous improvement in the quality of education in Indonesia.

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### INTRODUCTION

Quality education is not just a hope and dream, but the main foundation for individual development and the progress of a nation. In line with society's values, both those manifested in educational institutions and within the family, the hope for quality education is the main foundation in shaping the character and potential of the next generation (Fadhli, 2017). Parents and guardians of students not only want to provide knowledge, but also the formation of strong character and high adaptability (Hambali & Yulianti, 2018).

Society as the main stakeholder in education has a shared responsibility to create an optimal learning environment. Educational institutions are expected to be able to become places that not only transfer knowledge, but also form attitudes, values and skills needed in everyday life (Kuanine & Afi, 2023). Therefore, quality education not only produces individuals who are academically intelligent, but also individuals who have social sensitivity, ethics and critical thinking skills (Dewi, 2019).

Quality education is the key to preparing the younger generation to face the challenges and opportunities in the era of globalization. The ability to compete not only in a national context, but also in a global scope, is the main goal (Setyawati et al, 2021). Therefore, every step in educational development needs to pay attention to quality aspects, ensuring that every child receives adequate education regardless of social or economic background. Quality education is not just a dream, but a shared commitment to create a superior generation capable of bringing positive change to society and the country (Syahroni, 2017).

National Education Standards (SNP) in Indonesia, as regulated in Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the national education system, emphasizes the importance of developing abilities and improving the quality of life and human dignity in Indonesia through a national education system (Indonesia, 2003). To realize this, this law stipulates the need for

national education quality standards. Government Regulation Number 19 of 2005 concerning National Education Standards is a concrete step in determining national standards for various types and levels of educational units. This standard is expected to be a guide for education providers in ensuring that the education process carried out reaches the desired level of quality (Kusainun, 2020).

On September 25 2009, the government through the Ministry of National Education issued Minister of National Education Regulation Number 63 of 2009 concerning the Education Quality Assurance System (SPMP). SPMP is described as a subsystem of the National Education System which has the main function of improving the quality of education (Suprastowo, 2014). This involves educational units or programs, educational unit or program organizers, regional government, central government, and the community in an integrated manner. In the context of SPMP, education quality assurance is defined as a systemic activity aimed at increasing the level of intelligence in the nation's life through education. Thus, SPMP is not only the responsibility of education providers but also involves the involvement of regional governments, central government and the community as an integral part of efforts to improve the quality of national education (Pasaribu, 2017).

The new National Education System Law reflects the spirit of democratization and decentralization of education in Indonesia. By providing a fairly large portion for community participation, this law creates a strong legal foundation to encourage active community participation in education management (Rosyid & Ali, 2022). In the context of decentralization, the government delegates most of its implementation responsibilities to provinces, districts and schools. This creates space for the local level to customize educational approaches to suit the specific needs and context of their region (Kusnandi, 2018). In addition, to ensure the effectiveness of policies and management at the local level, education quality assurance and improvement systems need to provide adequate flexibility. This flexibility allows districts and schools to carry out contextual evaluation and quality improvement, identifying and addressing unique challenges in their priority areas (Qurtubi, 2019)

In this context, empowering districts and schools to assess and improve the quality of education in their priority areas is essential. In this way, the implementation of education policies can be more responsive to local needs and provide a more real impact (Rahmat & Husain, 2020). Providing autonomy to the local level is not only a form of decentralization, but also an effective instrument for improving overall accountability and quality of education in various regions in Indonesia (Ali, 2017).

This research aims to explore the implementation of the Education Quality Assurance Policy by focusing on the gap between expectations and reality in the field. Through policy analysis and field research, this research will identify factors that influence policy implementation, evaluate the extent to which education quality assurance policies are implemented at the daily implementation level, and detail the obstacles and potential solutions that can be implemented. It is hoped that the benefits of this research will provide in-depth insight for policy makers, educational institutions and the relevant community regarding the effectiveness of education quality assurance policies, so that they can make a positive contribution to efforts to improve the quality of national education.

## METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. According to Yulianah (2022), qualitative research is: Qualitative researchers develop theories during the data collection process. This more inductive method means that the theory is built from data

or based on data. Many researchers use grounded theory. This makes qualitative research flexible and allows data and theory to interact. Qualitative researchers remain open to the unexpected, are willing to change the direction or focus of a research project, and may address their initial research question midway through the project. Meanwhile, according to Sugiyono (2011), the descriptive method is a search for facts with correct interpretation. Descriptive research studies problems in society, as well as procedures that apply in society and certain situations, including relationships, activities, attitudes, views, and ongoing processes that influence a phenomenon. Data collection techniques consisting of semi-structured interviews were selected based on purposive sampling techniques; observation, where the author is directly involved in field activities, and documentation, where the author takes data in the form of documents related to the research topic. In analyzing the data that has been obtained, the author will analyze the data using the data analysis proposed by Miles and Huberman in Sugiyono (2011), namely data reduction, data presentation, and concluding.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Government Regulation no. 19 of 2005 concerning National Education Standards, Chapter II Article 2 paragraph (2), it is emphasized that to guarantee and control the quality of education, three important things should be carried out, namely accreditation, evaluation of learning outcomes and teacher certification. The following is the explanation.

### a. Accreditation

Accreditation in Indonesia has constitutional legitimacy as a mandate necessary to guarantee the delivery of quality educational services. This concept is contained in Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System. In this legal framework, accreditation is defined as the process of assessing the suitability of educational programs and units, both in formal and non-formal channels, at all levels and types of education. The main aim of implementing accreditation is to ensure that the provision of education complies with the standards set by the government. This standard covers various aspects, starting from the curriculum, infrastructure, to the qualifications of teaching staff. Accreditation is a means of establishing certainty about the quality of educational units, so that the community, students and related parties can have confidence in the quality of the educational services provided.

The importance of accreditation in the context of the National Education System reflects the government's commitment to improving the overall quality of education. Through the accreditation process, the government can monitor and evaluate the performance of educational units, ensure that quality standards are met, and provide incentives to continue to innovate and improve quality. Thus, accreditation is not only a tool to ensure compliance with regulations, but also a strategic instrument in raising the quality of education in Indonesia, directing the education system towards achieving higher standards in order to produce competent and quality human resources.

Accreditation is a critical instrument for assessing the suitability of educational programs and units in various educational pathways, both formal and non-formal, at all levels and types of education in Indonesia. The accreditation process has the main objective of determining the extent to which educational units meet the standards set by the government. Assessment of the performance and suitability of educational units is the main focus in accreditation, where evaluation involves various aspects, including curriculum, infrastructure, school management and qualifications of teaching staff. Therefore, accreditation plays an important role in ensuring that the education provided meets

established quality standards, so that the public, students and other stakeholders can have confidence in the quality of educational services.

The focus of assessment in accreditation refers to the National Education Standards (SNP), which serve as guidelines for assessing the quality and performance of educational units. SNP covers various dimensions such as achievement of learning outcomes, school leadership, and management and utilization of educational resources. With this reference, it is hoped that each school can carry out quality assurance on an ongoing basis. This quality assurance process involves continuous efforts to improve and improve school performance in accordance with established standards. Accreditation, as an integral part of the National Education System, not only functions as an existing assessment, but also encourages schools to continue to innovate and improve the quality of education, so as to create a better learning environment that is in line with the demands of society and the times.

In a historical context, school/madrasah accreditation efforts in Indonesia have gained significant momentum since 2006, especially after the formation of the National School/Madrasah Accreditation Board (BAN-S/M). This initiative was initiated through Minister of National Education Regulation (Permendiknas) Number 29 of 2005, which marks the government's commitment to regulating and improving the quality of education in the country. Through this regulation, the government established BAN-S/M with a clear mandate, including formulating operational policies, socializing these policies, and implementing the accreditation process for schools/madrasahs throughout Indonesia in accordance with established standards.

The role of BAN-S/M is crucial in providing direction, guaranteeing quality, and ensuring compliance with national education standards. With the existence of this institution, the accreditation process is not only an assessment of the quality of schools/madrasahs, but also a tool to direct continuous improvement efforts. Policy socialization carried out by BAN-S/M provides a broader understanding to educational institutions, so that they can understand the importance of accreditation as a step to improve the quality of education. As an institution that focuses on improving quality, BAN-S/M is the main pillar in monitoring and maintaining the quality of education in Indonesia through an accreditation process based on national education standards.

. Since the enactment of Minister of National Education Regulation (Permendiknas) Number 29 of 2005, the school/madrasah accreditation program in Indonesia has been running for almost two decades. In that time span, the government has allocated a budget of trillions of rupiah to support the implementation of the accreditation program, indicating a serious commitment to improving the quality of education throughout the country. However, major challenges arise because this program has not fully achieved its initial goals. For more than the last 15 years, the implementation of accreditation has tended to focus on seeking labels or rankings for schools/madrasahs, without having a significant impact on improving the overall quality of education.

The importance of equal access and improving the quality of education does not appear to have been fully fulfilled through the accreditation program. On the other hand, accreditation is still considered a routine obligation that must be fulfilled without bringing about substantial changes in the quality of education. Moreover, the implementation of accreditation has not yet become a belief system or institutionalized institution to support continuous improvement in the quality of education. As a result, the existence of accreditation tends to be limited to the level of formality, where this process is only carried out as a habit without bringing about substantial changes that can be felt by students and the community.



In a critical view, the implementation of the accreditation program seems to be trapped in a routine without substantive meaning, giving the impression that this is only a matter for the central government. The failure to achieve the ideal goal of accreditation as a locomotive for developing quality education in Indonesia is reflected in its inability to absorb significant changes and increase effectiveness in achieving the expected quality of education. To realize its strategic role, in-depth evaluation and innovation is needed in implementing the accreditation program to have a real positive impact on the quality of education in Indonesia.

#### **b. Evaluation of Learning Outcomes**

Educational evaluation is an essential step in ensuring the quality of education, involving the assessment of educational performance from various parties, including educational units, government and society. The education unit has a central role in carrying out performance evaluations as a form of accountability for the implementation of education. This evaluation is routinely carried out at the end of each semester as a mechanism to measure the achievement of educational goals, the effectiveness of the learning process, as well as student involvement and development. Through this evaluation, educational units can identify successes, challenges and opportunities that may be faced, forming the basis for continuous improvement.

Evaluation of educational performance carried out by educational units also has a dimension of accountability to the government and society. The results of the evaluation are reported to various interested parties, including relevant government agencies and the general public. Thus, transparency in reporting evaluation results is key, enabling stakeholders to understand the extent of the quality of education provided. Through this mechanism, educational units not only provide accountability for their performance, but also open up opportunities for constructive feedback from the government and community to continue to improve the quality of education.

Community participation in education evaluation is an important aspect in ensuring accountability and quality of education. Through active community involvement, education evaluation can cover a broader perspective, taking into account the community's needs and expectations for the education system. Thus, holistic and participatory-based education evaluation can provide a more comprehensive picture of the quality of education, creating a solid basis for continuous improvement involving all stakeholders.

Evaluation by the government is a comprehensive approach that examines crucial aspects in the implementation of education. By involving the general level of relevance of education to the vision, mission, goals and paradigm of national education, the government ensures that the direction and context of education is in line with national goals. This evaluation also details the level of relevance of educational units to community needs, emphasizing the importance of education as a response to real needs and social dynamics. In this way, the government can direct education towards more effective and competitive efforts.

Aspects of efficiency and productivity are the main focus in government evaluations, which measure the extent to which educational resources are utilized well and have a positive impact on achieving educational goals. This evaluation also focuses on the level of educational competitiveness, both at regional, national, regional and global levels. The government has a crucial role in ensuring that the Indonesian education system is able to compete globally and produce graduates who can contribute on an international scale.

Furthermore, evaluation by the government is not only limited to these aspects, but also includes the level of achievement of National Education Standards (SNP). SNP is the

basis for assessing the quality of national education as a whole. By ensuring that education reaches predetermined standards, the government acts as a guarantee and controller of the quality of national education. Therefore, evaluation by the government is an important instrument in ensuring that education in Indonesia continues to develop in accordance with established standards, meets community needs, and competes globally.

### c. Teacher Certification

Republic of Indonesia Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System and Republic of Indonesia Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, require teachers to have academic qualifications, competencies and educational certificates. Academic qualifications for teachers at all types and levels of education are obtained through higher education with a bachelor's or fourth diploma program (S1/D-IV). Teacher competence as referred to in Article 8 of the GD Law includes pedagogical, personal, social and professional competence. Educator certificates are given to teachers who have met the requirements for both academic qualifications and competencies.

Evaluation by the government, which covers a number of important aspects, is a very strategic instrument in shaping and monitoring the direction of national education. Through assessing the level of relevance of education to the vision, mission, goals and paradigm of national education, the government is able to measure the extent to which the education system supports the national development agenda. By directing attention to the level of relevance of educational units to the needs of society, this evaluation ensures that education is not only a means of transferring knowledge, but also responding to evolving social dynamics. Aspects of efficiency, productivity and competitiveness evaluated by the government are vital indicators in determining the effectiveness and durability of the Indonesian education system at local and global levels.

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Furthermore, the government's evaluation also leads to another critical dimension, namely the achievement of National Education Standards (SNP). SNP is not just a quality parameter, but is the basis for ensuring that education reaches the quality level expected by the government and society. Thus, evaluation by the government is not only a tool for checking educational performance, but also a basic quality control. As a result, the government can take strategic steps and appropriate policies to improve and direct the education system towards achieving higher standards, making this evaluation an integral part of efforts to improve the quality of national education as a whole.

Teacher Certification is the process of granting educational certificates to in-service teachers through education. With this program, it is hoped that teachers can increase their competence in carrying out their duties well and professionally. The teacher competencies referred to are pedagogical, personality, social and professional competencies. Therefore, in teacher certification it is necessary to assess their performance as proof of mastery of a set of required competencies.

Teacher Certification is a process that provides formal recognition in the form of an educator certificate to in-service teachers through established educational programs. The main aim of this certification program is to encourage increased teacher competency so that they can carry out their duties optimally and professionally. Recognized teacher competencies involve pedagogical, personality, social and professional aspects. Through this certification program, it is hoped that teachers can develop themselves and improve their skills in educating the younger generation.

The importance of the teacher certification program lies in its focus on measuring and assessing teacher performance as concrete evidence of mastery of the required competencies. This assessment does not only pay attention to the technical quality of teaching (pedagogical competence), but also includes aspects of the teacher's personality, social skills and professionalism. In this way, certification programs do not simply pursue theoretical mastery, but also prioritize practical application in real classroom situations. By encouraging teachers to continue to improve themselves through certification, it is hoped that there will be an increase in the overall quality of education.

Even though the government has established three main policy pillars, namely accreditation, student learning evaluation, and teacher certification, as the basis for guaranteeing and controlling the quality of education in Indonesia, in reality there are still gaps and challenges that need to be addressed. One example of this gap occurs in the context of school accreditation. Even though certain schools should not have achieved certain qualifications in accordance with accreditation standards, in practice, BAN-S/M often provides sufficient scores, despite various considerations. Such practices create a mismatch between supposed qualifications and actual assessments, raising questions about the extent to which accreditation can be relied upon as an indicator of educational quality.

The existence of schools that are given accreditation scores even though they do not fully meet the standards may indicate that there are challenges in implementing accreditation policies. The possibility of certain considerations influencing these assessments highlights the need for in-depth evaluation of consistency and objectivity in the accreditation process. To achieve the goal of ensuring educational quality effectively, there needs to be transparency, accountability and involvement of all stakeholders in the accreditation process. In this way, the implementation of accreditation policies can become a stronger tool in ensuring the quality of education meets the standards set by the government.

In the context of learning evaluation, a worrying phenomenon occurs, namely the practice of leaking questions, assistance from exam supervisors, or even collaboration between exam participants to ensure passing. These kinds of methods are increasingly widespread and are detrimental to the integrity of the education system. The practice of cheating in exams not only tarnishes the moral and ethical values of education, but also damages public trust in learning evaluation results which should reflect students' true achievements.

Inequalities in evaluation also emerge in the context of teacher certification. Even though many teachers have successfully passed certification, cases of incompetence are still encountered in the field. This situation creates an imbalance between the formality of passing certification and the actual quality of teaching. Increasing teacher welfare through certification must be accompanied by a real increase in the quality of education. Therefore, further steps are needed to ensure that the certification process is not just an administrative formality, but also truly reflects the teacher's ability and competency to provide quality learning. Learning evaluation and teacher certification must be closely monitored and

carried out with high integrity so that the quality of education can be maintained and improved on an ongoing basis.

Quality assurance in education is an effort that does not only rely on formal policies, but also requires active commitment from all parties involved. The government, from the central to regional levels, has a central role in creating a policy basis that supports improving the quality of education. Likewise, managers at the education unit level, such as school principals and teachers, must ensure that policy implementation is in accordance with established standards. Involving the community is also a crucial aspect in ensuring the quality of education, because their participation creates synergy and shared understanding regarding the importance of quality education for the nation's progress.

Even though education legislation in Indonesia and its implementation instructions have been well designed, the implementation obstacles faced cannot be ignored. Lack of commitment from policy actors and education managers is the main obstacle. Therefore, it needs to continue to be emphasized that the success of improving the quality of education does not only rely on regulations, but also requires high commitment from all educational components. Only with a shared awareness that the quality of education is a shared responsibility, can we see significant developments in the Indonesian education system. Without a strong commitment, the risk of stagnation or even a decline in the quality of education will continue to lurk. Therefore, efforts to improve the quality of education need to be strengthened by collective determination and commitment so that the goal of quality education can be realized in a sustainable manner.

## CONCLUSION

The research results above show that although there are adequate regulations and guidelines to improve the quality of education, in reality there are still gaps and obstacles in their implementation. Cheating practices, such as leaks of exam questions, involvement of supervisors in helping exam takers, and other methods, create serious challenges in student learning evaluation. In addition, in the context of teacher certification, there is a mismatch between the formality of passing certification and the actual quality of teaching. Guaranteeing the quality of education does not only depend on formal policies, but requires high commitment from all stakeholders, including the government, education unit managers and the community. Lack of commitment, especially from policy actors and education managers, is the main obstacle in achieving sustainable improvements in the quality of education. Therefore, to realize the vision of quality education, concrete action is needed which is supported by mutual understanding and commitment. Only by actively and responsibly involving all parties can Indonesia achieve significant improvements in the education system and ensure the quality of education meets established standards.

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