



The Quality Assurance System Model of The Government: A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT :

Improving the quality of sustainable education is a national strategic priority that implemented through an integrated quality assurance system by the government that combines the Internal and External Quality Assurance Systems. This article aims to review the models and the synergy of internal and external QAS. This study used a qualitative approach with a systematic literature review. This study discussed the design of the dynamic quality cycle of the quality assurance model regarding the aspects of formulation, implementation, and effectiveness. The results of this study showed that: (1) The structure and operational mechanisms of IQAS go through a continuous cycle consisting of standard setting, standard implementation, evaluation of standard implementation, control of standard implementation, and standard improvement. (2) The structure and operational mechanisms of EQAS have a primary manifestation in national accreditation through a workflow consisting of data/document submission and evaluation, adequacy assessment, field assessment, validation and determination of results. (3) The relationship between IQAS and EQAS synergistically integrates a framework that encourages continuous improvement of education quality by placing the main responsibility for quality assurance through IQAS by providing validation, control, and accountability mechanisms; and through EQAS with National Education Standards as a common reference.

Key words: *Quality Assurance, IQAS, EQAS, Education Policy*

Introduction

Education quality is widely acknowledged as essential for building civilizations, developing skilled human capital, and strengthening a nation's competitive position internationally. Indonesia has formally embedded its dedication to educational excellence within its constitutional framework and supporting legislation, making quality assurance a central priority of national development strategy. The Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology holds the principal authority for creating, executing, and assessing the country's educational quality assurance framework. This mandate aligns with Indonesia's National Education System and related regulations, which emphasize the government's responsibility to guarantee accessible, high-quality education for all citizens by establishing nationwide standards and implementing robust quality assurance mechanisms throughout the entire educational spectrum—encompassing elementary through tertiary levels and covering general, vocational, religious, and specialized educational pathways.

However, efforts to achieve equitable quality education face complex and multidimensional challenges. Indonesia, as a vast archipelagic nation with significant geographical, socio-cultural, and economic diversity, as well as variations in the institutional capacity of educational institutions, requires a quality assurance system that is not only nationally standardized

but also flexible enough to be adapted to diverse local contexts.¹ Quality disparities between regions, between schools/universities, and even between study programs within a single institution remain persistent issues that demand systemic solutions. The history of quality assurance policy in Indonesia has evolved through various phases, from a more centralized approach to the development of models that attempt to balance national standardization and institutional autonomy.

In this context, the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology has developed and continues to refine a dualistic yet integrated quality assurance system model, which rests on two main pillars: the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) and the External Quality Assurance System (EQAS).² IQAS is defined as the entire systemic activity of planning, implementing, controlling, and developing educational quality standards carried out autonomously by each educational unit to consistently improve its quality. IQAS operates from within, fostering collective awareness and responsibility for quality at the institutional level. In contrast, EQAS is a quality assurance system implemented by independent and credible external entities, primarily the National Accreditation Board for Schools/Madrasahs for primary and secondary education and the National Accreditation Board for Higher Education.³

The primary function of EQAS is to assess *the* suitability of study programs and/or educational units based on nationally established quality criteria, namely the National Education Standards, and often additional standards developed by the accreditation body itself. The results of EQAS, the most well-known of which are accreditation status and ranking, serve as a form of public accountability and a mapping of the macro-level condition of educational quality. Conceptually, this integrative IQAS-EQAS model is designed to work synergistically, creating a cycle of kaizen or continuous quality improvement.⁴ IQAS is expected to be an internal 'engine' that continuously drives improvement based on self-evaluation and data, while EQAS functions as an external 'mirror' that provides objective validation, constructive feedback, and mapping of the relative position of educational units within the national quality landscape.

The success of this synergy is believed to accelerate the achievement of the National Education Standards and even exceed it.⁵ However, fundamental questions remain: How effective is this model in practice? What are the details of its operational structure and mechanisms? What are the supporting and inhibiting factors for its implementation in the field? And, most importantly, is this model truly capable of driving substantive quality improvement, beyond mere administrative rituals? This article seeks to answer these questions through an in-depth analysis of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology's quality assurance system model, encompassing conceptual aspects, organizational structure and processes, implementation

¹Yosef Patandung, and Selvi Panggua. "Analysis of Educational Problems and Challenges of National Education." *Jurnal Sinestesia* 12.2 (2022): 794-805.

² Ministry of Education and Culture. *Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 28 of 2016 concerning the Quality Assurance System for Primary and Secondary Education*. Jakarta: Ministry of Education and Culture; 2016.

³ Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. *Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Number 53 of 2023 concerning Quality Assurance in Higher Education*. Jakarta: Kemendikbudristek; 2023.

⁴ Muhammad Fadhli, "Internal and External Quality Assurance Systems in Higher Education Institutions." *Al-Tanzim: Journal of Islamic Education Management* 4.2 (2020): 171-183.

⁵ Government of the Republic of Indonesia. *Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System*. *State Gazette of the Republic of Indonesia* 2003

dynamics, and a critical evaluation of its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats within the context of collective efforts to improve the quality of national education. This study is expected to provide comprehensive insights and constructive recommendations for policymakers, education practitioners, researchers, and other stakeholders.

Methods

The approach used in this research is qualitative, with the main focus on a systematic literature review.⁶ This approach was chosen because it is relevant to find out the systemic model outlined in various policy documents and has been the subject of discussion and research in academic literature. The analysis focuses on the quality assurance system model applicable to primary, secondary, and higher education levels, as developed, implemented, and evaluated within the regulatory framework of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology. The choice of this method is based on the research objective of understanding policy design, implementation processes, and related issues based on available documentary and academic sources.

The primary data sources that are the main analysis materials include a series of official central government policy documents and regulations relevant to education quality assurance, including but not limited to Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, as the main legal basis, Ministerial Regulations governing the External Quality Assurance System (EQAS) or National Accreditation by BAN-S/M and BAN-PT (for example, Permendikbudristek No. 53 of 2023 concerning Higher Education Quality Assurance), Guidelines, technical guidelines, instruments, and standard operating procedures (SOPs) related to the implementation of IQAS and EQAS/Accreditation issued by work units in the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology (such as the relevant Directorate General), Education Quality Assurance, and the National Accreditation Agency.

Secondary data sources are used to complement, confirm, and deepen the analysis, including annual reports or periodic reports on accreditation results published by BAN-S/M and BAN-PT, reports on the results of educational quality mapping or evaluation of IQAS implementation conducted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, or independent research institutions, articles published in reputable scientific journals (national and international) that specifically discuss the topic of IQAS implementation, EQAS, accreditation, educational quality management, and other relevant issues in the Indonesian context, textbooks, monographs, and other relevant publications that review the theory and practice of educational quality assurance.

These findings are used to build a more comprehensive understanding of how the model is implemented in the field, stakeholder perceptions, reported effectiveness, and to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges. The analytical framework consistently focuses on how the two subsystems (IQAS and EQAS) are designed to interact and reinforce each other to form a coherent and effective quality assurance cycle. It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this methodology, namely the potential gap between written policy (*policy on paper*) and practice in the field (*policy in practice*) that may not be fully captured through document and literature analysis alone. However, this approach is considered adequate to achieve the research objective of analyzing the system model itself.

⁶ JW Creswell, Clark VLP. *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications; 2017.

Result

The results of the analysis of the regulatory framework, guidance documents, and academic literature indicate that the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology's quality assurance system model is consciously designed as an architecture that integrates internal and external processes, with the National Education Standards functioning as an anchor or minimum quality reference that must be met and exceeded by all educational units in Indonesia, as in the following findings.

Table 1. Systematic Literature Review

No.	Title, Author, Year, Journal Name	Research Findings
1.	<p>"Implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) in Improving the Quality of Educational Services"</p> <p>Waska Warta, Kursih Sulastriningsih, Dewi Umronih (2024)</p> <p><i>Technomedia Journal</i></p>	<p>This article does not specifically discuss the Ministry's Quality Assurance System model through the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) and External Quality Assurance System (SMPE). However, it emphasizes the implementation of IQAS at SMP Lab School FIP UMJ, demonstrating its role in improving the quality of educational services by mapping quality indicators, meeting National Education Standards, and fostering a culture of continuous quality improvement. For a detailed model, further research may be needed beyond this study.</p>
2.	<p>"Study of the Implementation of IQAS (Internal Quality Assurance System) in Schools and Universities in Indonesia"</p> <p>Muhammad Syahril Harahap, Syawal Gultom, Darwin (2023)</p> <p><i>Journal of Education and Development</i></p>	<p>The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture implements a Quality Assurance System through the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) and the External Quality Assurance System (SMPE). IQAS was established under Regulation No. 28 of 2016, which focuses on fostering a culture of quality within educational institutions. In contrast, SMPE is intended for accreditation purposes. However, IQAS is often applied haphazardly, particularly for accreditation, leading to discrepancies between reported quality and actual performance, indicating the need for a more consistent quality culture.</p>
3.	<p>"Management of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) for Higher Education"</p> <p>Tutik Suggestion (2023)</p> <p><i>Holistic Science</i></p>	<p>This article discusses the internal quality assurance system (IQAS) as a management effort to improve the quality of higher education in Indonesia. While it does not specifically detail the Ministry's model through IQAS and SMPE, it emphasizes that IQAS is managed independently by universities and is part of an ongoing quality management process. The government's introduction of IQAS aims to address the low quality of higher education, which remains a significant challenge for Indonesian institutions.</p>
4.	<p>"Online Internal Quality Assurance System Case Study of the Quality Assurance Agency of Muhammadiyah University of Sidoarjo"</p>	<p>This article focuses on the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) implemented by the Quality Assurance Agency (BPM) at Muhammadiyah University of Sidoarjo. It demonstrates the BPM's role in managing the IQAS cycle, which includes designing, compiling, and establishing quality standards for education. While</p>

	Febrian Endi Pranyoto, Rohman Dijaya (2022) <i>Procedia of Engineering and Life Science</i>	this article does not specifically discuss the Ministry's Quality Assurance System model through IQAS and SMPE, it emphasizes the importance of a structured approach to quality assurance in higher education.
5.	"Internal Quality Assurance System in Junior High Schools/Islamic Junior High Schools: A Literature Review of Concepts and Implementation" Friska Ayu Nur Rabani, et al (2024) <i>Indonesian Journal of Education and Citizenship</i>	This article focuses on Internal Quality Assurance Systems in junior high schools, showing their positive impact on learning quality, challenges such as limited understanding and resources, and the need for stakeholder collaboration, but does not include specific models or comparisons.
6.	"Implementation of an Internal Quality Assurance System to Improve the Quality of Basic Education" Ani Mabruroh (2024) <i>Bisma</i>	This article focuses on the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) in primary and secondary education, detailing the stages of the cycle, its effectiveness in improving the quality of education, and the challenges faced, but does not compare it with international quality assurance systems.
7.	"Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) for Improving Educational Quality Management and Competitiveness of Al Mashduqi Boarding School Garut" Nispi Gustia Nurani, et al (2024) <i>Journal of Entrepreneurship and Strategic Management</i>	This article focuses on the implementation of IQAS at Al Mashduqi Garut Boarding School, analyzing its effectiveness, challenges, and strategies for improvement, but does not cover SMPE, international comparisons, or broader levels of education such as primary, secondary, or vocational schools.
8.	"Assistance in the Implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System" Yuyun Nuriah (2024) <i>Indonesian Journal of Social Technology</i>	This article focuses on the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) at Cikal Harapan Islamic Junior High School, showing its effectiveness and challenges in quality mapping and planning, but does not include a broader comparison with international quality assurance systems.
9.	"Implementation of the Education Quality Assurance System to Improve the Quality of Education" Risal Sammara, Hasbi (2023) <i>Kelola: Journal of Islamic Education Management</i>	This article focuses on the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) at SDN 2 Pinceppute, detailing its implementation, internal and external factors affecting educational quality, and the quality assurance cycle, but does not include a broader comparison or evaluation of national policies.
10.	"Implementation of the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 28 of 2016 concerning the Quality Assurance System for Primary and Secondary	This article focuses on the implementation of the quality assurance system (IQAS) at SMP Negeri 3 Mengwi, pointing out the challenges from the internal and external environment, but does not provide a comparative analysis with international

<p>Education at SMP Negeri 3 Mengwi"</p> <p>I Rai Wahyudi Putra, et al (2020)</p> <p><i>Locus Scientific Magazine of FISIP</i></p>	<p>quality assurance systems or a detailed implementation strategy.</p>
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A. IQAS Operational Structure and Mechanism

The responsibility to design, implement, and develop Quality Assurance Standards (IQAS) rests with every educational institution, from elementary to higher education. This reflects a paradigm shift that quality is the inherent responsibility of the institution itself. The core of IQAS is the implementation of a systematic and sustainable quality assurance cycle: determination, implementation, evaluation, control, and improvement.

1. **Standard Determination:** The initial phase in which educational units establish or adopt internal quality standards. These standards should refer to the National Standards of Higher Education as a minimum, but are encouraged to go beyond the higher education standards for institutions, or the specific standards of educational units in accordance with their respective visions, missions, and contexts. This determination involves the participation of internal stakeholders.
2. **Standards Implementation:** The implementation phase in which all resources (human, curriculum, infrastructure, budget) are mobilized to meet the standards that have been set in all aspects of education implementation (learning, research, community service, management, etc.).
3. **Standards Evaluation:** A crucial phase in which educational units conduct periodic and systematic self-evaluations. At the school level, this is known as the School/Madrasah Self-Evaluation Report, while at the university level, it is called the Higher Education Self-Evaluation Report. The goal is to measure the gap between actual performance and established standards, using valid data and evidence.
4. **Standards Implementation Control:** A phase of in-depth analysis of self-evaluation results. Educational units identify strengths (to be maintained and enhanced) and weaknesses (to be corrected), and analyze the root causes of any problems or nonconformities found.
5. **Standard Improvement:** The follow-up phase involves formulating strategies and corrective actions and development actions to address weaknesses and continuously improve quality towards achieving higher standards.⁷

The entire IQAS process is ideally coordinated by a special unit or team within the educational unit (for example, the School/Madrasah Education Quality Assurance Section or the Quality Assurance Unit/Institution at a University) and neatly documented in the form of a Quality Manual, Quality Standards, Standard Operating Procedures, Work Instructions, forms, and a comprehensive Self-Evaluation Report.

B. EQAS Operational Structure and Mechanism

EQAS which primary manifestation is national accreditation, serves as an external quality control mechanism. This process is implemented by BAN-S/M for primary and secondary education units, and BAN-PT for higher education institutions. Although there have been

⁷ Risal Sammara, and Hasbi Hasbi. "Implementation of an educational quality assurance system to improve the quality of education." *Kelola: Journal of Islamic Education Management* 8.1 (2023): 45-58.

adjustments to the instruments and procedures over time (for example, the introduction of the Educational Unit Accreditation Instrument for schools/madrasahs or the Study Program Accreditation Instrument 4.0 and the Higher Education Accreditation Instrument 3.0 for higher education institutions), the general workflow includes the following stages.

1. Submission and Evaluation of Data/Documents

Educational units/study programs submit accreditation applications accompanied by relevant supporting data, including Self-Evaluation Reports (IQAS results) and performance data recorded in the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology data systems (Dapodik, PDDIKTI, SISTER, etc.). National Accreditation Board evaluates the adequacy and suitability of this initial data.

2. Field Assessment (Visitation) or Adequacy Assessment

A team of external assessors assigned by the National Accreditation Board conducts visits to educational units/study programs to conduct verification, validation, observation, interviews, and in-depth data analysis. In recent developments, particularly for accreditation extensions or under certain circumstances, assessments can be conducted online or even based solely on data evaluation (sufficiency assessment) if the available data is deemed sufficient and demonstrates consistent performance.⁸

3. Validation and Determination of Results

The results of the field/adequacy assessment are validated by the National Accreditation Board through its internal mechanisms, and National Accreditation Board then assigns an accreditation status and rating (e.g., Excellent, Very Good, Good, Minimally Accredited, or Not Accredited). This determination is based on the cumulative score of the assessment against various quality criteria/indicators covering input, process, output, and outcome aspects, all of which are rooted in the National Standards and relevant additional standards. The results of this accreditation are public and are often a prerequisite for various things (operational permits, graduation, access to funding, etc.).

C. The Synergistic Relation between IQAS and EQAS

The ideal design of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology model positions IQAS and EQAS in a mutually reinforcing and cyclical relationship. IQAS is the 'soul' of quality assurance that runs continuously within the institution, generating authentic data and evidence regarding internal quality conditions through a self-evaluation process. The Self-Evaluation Report resulting from the IQAS cycle should be the most important basic document for educational units in preparing accreditation forms or data entry for EQAS. In other words, EQAS (accreditation) ideally serves as external validation of the quality claims generated through the credible IQAS process. Conversely, the results of EQAS, especially the findings and recommendations provided by assessors, should provide valuable feedback *for* educational units to be used in the next IQAS cycle, particularly at the 'Control' (root cause analysis) and 'Improvement' (corrective action planning) stages. ⁹This synergy is expected to create a continuous spiral of quality improvement.

⁸ Ana Anisa, and Mulyawan Safwandy Nugraha. "Strategic Management in Community Engagement to Improve Education Quality Based on the 2020 Educational Unit Accreditation Instrument (IASP) at MIN 1 Bandung." *Al Hadi Journal of Educational Management* 5.1 (2025): 21-28.

⁹ Muhammad Fadhli, "Internal and External Quality Assurance Systems in Higher Education Institutions." *Al-Tanzim: Journal of Islamic Education Management* 4.2 (2020): 171-183.

Although the conceptual design appears ideal, empirical studies and evaluation reports¹⁰ consistently demonstrate significant challenges and variations in the implementation of this model. Educational units with visionary leadership, strong commitment, adequate resources (human resources, finance, infrastructure), and a supportive organizational culture tend to be more successful in implementing the IQAS determination, implementation, evaluation, control, improvement cycle substantively and systematically. They are able to utilize IQAS as a strategic management tool for internal improvement. In contrast, many other educational units, particularly those in areas with limited access and resources, still face fundamental difficulties in understanding the basic concepts of IQAS, let alone implementing them meaningfully. For this group, IQAS is often viewed as merely fulfilling administrative requirements prior to accreditation, with documentation that is merely a formality (just for the sake of it) rather than a reflection of real practice. The implementation of EQAS (accreditation) by the National Accreditation Board does appear to be more structured and nationally standardized.

However, criticism still frequently arises regarding the potential subjectivity of assessors, the perceived burden of completing forms, instruments that are sometimes perceived as less relevant to the specific context of educational units, and fundamental questions about whether the accreditation status obtained is truly positively correlated with the actual quality of learning and graduates. The issue of 'accreditation as a goal' (accreditation for the sake of accreditation) versus 'accreditation as a tool' (accreditation as a tool for improvement) remains a hotly debated issue.

Discussion

An analysis of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology's quality assurance system model (IQAS-EQAS) reveals that conceptually, this model has a strong foundation and is aligned with internationally recognized education quality assurance principles, such as Deming's PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle or QA (Quality Assurance) models in other countries.¹¹ The strong emphasis on IQAS as the primary responsibility of educational units is a strategic step with great potential to foster a sense of ownership, internal accountability, and a sustainable quality culture from the grassroots level. The Determination, Implementation, Evaluation, Control, and Improvement cycle adopted in IQAS provides a logical, systematic, and data-driven framework for educational units to conduct introspection (self-evaluation), identify priority areas for improvement, and plan structured improvement actions. This encourages a shift from reactive to proactive management.

On the other hand, the existence of EQAS through the accreditation mechanism provides an essential external control function. Accreditation not only serves to provide assurance to the public and stakeholders regarding the suitability and quality of an educational unit/study program, but also to map the condition of education quality nationally, which can serve as a basis for the government in formulating targeted intervention policies. The reciprocal relationship designed between IQAS and EQAS, where IQAS data serves as vital input for EQAS, and EQAS recommendations serve as valuable feedback for the next IQAS cycle, theoretically creates a dynamic, synergistic, and continuous improvement-oriented quality assurance ecosystem. This

¹⁰ Danial Kusumah, and Sinta Maria Dewi. "Information System Governance in Private Universities (Assessing the Effectiveness of Work From Home)." *Buana Ilmu* 5.2 (2021): 32-58.

¹¹ Muhammad. "Quality Assurance System 171-183.

model, if run optimally, can encourage institutions to continuously move forward beyond minimum standards.

However, a more critical analysis of the implementation realities on the ground, as reflected in research findings and evaluation reports, reveals a number of significant challenges and critical areas that require serious attention for future improvement:

1. Disparity in Policy Implementation

Gaps in understanding, skills, leadership commitment, resource availability (especially competent human resources in quality management and data analysis), and organizational culture across educational units are major barriers to the effective and equitable implementation of IQAS.¹² Many schools/universities, especially those small or located in underdeveloped regions, still struggle to understand basic concepts, let alone implement the Determination, Implementation, Evaluation, Control, and Improvement cycle consistently and meaningfully. As a result, IQAS often becomes little more than a paper tiger, a formality with no real impact on daily practice. Capacity-building efforts through training and mentoring need to be redesigned to be more effective, contextual, sustainable, and address the root of the problem, beyond mere ceremonial workshops. The role of local governments and supporting institutions (such as the BPMP) is crucial.

2. Administrative Burden

Complaints about the administrative burden posed by IQAS (documentation) and especially EQAS (complex accreditation form completion and massive supporting data requirements) are a classic but persistent issue.¹³ This burden is feared to drain the time and energy of educators (teachers/lecturers) and educational staff, diverting their focus from the primary duties of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education or the learning process in schools. Despite ongoing efforts to simplify instruments and utilize digital platforms, this perception of burden remains strong. Further breakthroughs are needed in designing a more efficient, user-friendly system that focuses on quality substance, not just administrative completeness. Data integration between platforms also needs to be improved to avoid duplicate data input.

3. Optimizing IQAS-EQAS Synergy

Although designed to be synergistic, the relationship between IQAS and EQAS in practice is often suboptimal. The accreditation process (EQAS) sometimes still operates as if separate from the dynamics of internal quality improvement (IQAS). Assessors may not fully understand or utilize the Self-Evaluation Report (IQAS results), and conversely, accreditation recommendations are often too generic or not systematically followed up on subsequent IQAS cycles by educational units. Strengthening mechanisms to ensure this linkage is effective is needed. For example, by increasing assessors' capacity to evaluate the IQAS process, developing more specific and measurable recommendation formats, and monitoring mechanisms for follow-up recommendations.

4. *Compliance vs Improvement Orientation* .

There are strong indications that both IQAS and EQAS in their implementation

¹² Danial Kusumah, and Sinta Maria Dewi. "Information System Governance in Private Universities (Assessing the Effectiveness of Work From Home)." *Buana Ilmu* 5.2 (2021): 32-58.

¹³ Ayu Miranda Limbong, and Masduki Asbari. "Transformation of National Standards and Accreditation of Higher Education." *Journal of Information Systems and Management (JISMA)* 3.1 (2024): 101-105.

still tend to be trapped in a compliance *-based paradigm* , namely focusing on fulfilling minimum standards and completeness of documents to 'pass' accreditation or comply with regulations.¹⁴ This risks hindering more substantive and transformative innovation and quality improvement. A strong paradigm shift toward an improvement *-based orientation is needed* , where quality assurance systems are viewed as strategic tools to encourage critical reflection, organizational learning, innovation, and the achievement of excellence *beyond* minimal standards. The focus of assessment needs to be expanded from input and process to *outcomes* and *impact* , particularly the quality of learning and student learning outcomes.

5. Challenges of Standard Contextualization

The National Education Standards serves as a crucial national minimum reference for maintaining equality in basic quality. However, applying standards that are too rigid and uniform across Indonesia can overlook the diversity of local contexts, specific regional needs, and the potential for innovation and unique strengths of each educational unit. Adequate space is needed for educational units to develop higher or different (contextual) internal standards in accordance with their unique vision, mission, characteristics, and potential, including for educational institutions with specific characteristics, such as religious-based educational institutions (e.g., Islamic boarding schools or integrated Islamic schools/madrasas) that need to integrate their specific values within the national quality assurance framework. Flexibility within the standardization framework is key.

Addressing this complex set of challenges requires collaborative efforts and long-term commitment from all stakeholders: the central government (Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology), local governments, foundations/education-managing bodies, heads of educational units, educators, education personnel, and the community. Strengthening quality leadership *at every level*, developing a supportive quality culture, investing in an integrated and reliable management information system, and periodically evaluating and refining the quality assurance model based on empirical data and evidence are absolute prerequisites for success. Based on this analysis, several key recommendations can be formulated as follows.

1. **Strengthening IQAS Capacity:** Invest significantly in long-term, contextual, and differentiated IQAS mentoring, training, and capacity development programs tailored to the needs of educational units. This should involve strengthening the role of the BPMP, engaging best practitioners, and developing learning communities across educational units.
2. **Technology Simplification and Optimization:** Continuing efforts to simplify IQAS/EQAS instruments and procedures, as well as maximizing the use of integrated information technology platforms (single sign-on, data interoperability) to reduce duplication of work and administrative burdens.
3. **Strengthening EQAS Feedback to IQAS:** Redesigning the accreditation results reporting mechanism (EQAS) to focus more on specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) improvement recommendations, and developing an effective follow-up monitoring mechanism to ensure these recommendations are integrated into the IQAS cycle.
4. **Focus on Learning Process and Outcomes:** Directing the main focus of the quality assurance system (both IQAS and EQAS) on evaluating and improving the quality of the learning process (pedagogy, curriculum, assessment) and student learning outcomes

¹⁴ Kusumah and Dewi. "System Governance...: 32-58.

(academic competencies, character, 21st century skills), not only on administrative or input aspects alone.

5. Continuous Model Evaluation and Adaptation: Conducting periodic evaluations of the overall effectiveness of the IQAS-EQAS model, using empirical data and input from various stakeholders, to make adaptive adjustments and refinements to the policy.

Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, the researcher can conclude that the structure and operational mechanisms of IQAS include the activities of designing, implementing, and developing IQAS which are charged to each educational unit from elementary to higher level through a systematic and continuous quality assurance cycle consisting of standard setting, standard implementation, evaluation of standard implementation, control of standard implementation, and standard improvement. Meanwhile, the structure and operational mechanisms of EQAS have a primary manifestation in national accreditation, which functions as an external quality control mechanism. This process is implemented by BAN-S/M for elementary and secondary education units, and BAN-PT for higher education through a workflow consisting of data/document submission and evaluation, adequacy assessment, field assessment, validation, and determination of results. The relationship between IQAS and EQAS synergistically integrates a framework that is conceptually strong, logical, and has great potential to encourage continuous improvement of education quality in Indonesia. This model places the primary responsibility for quality assurance on the educational unit itself through IQAS by providing validation, control, and accountability mechanisms, and through EQAS with National Education Standards as a common reference.

For further research, studies to further understand the impact of IQAS and EQAS implementation are needed to improve the quality of educational units in the long term. Furthermore, comparative studies across different types of educational units (public and private schools, general, vocational, and religious schools, and schools in urban and rural areas) are also needed to provide further understanding of the factors influencing the success of quality assurance. Analyzing the role of leadership and organizational culture in the effectiveness of IQAS is also an interesting topic for further study.

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