

# Implementation of Learning Quality Management in Higher Education In Indonesia During The Covid-19 Pandemic

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## ABSTRACT

*This study examines the implementation of learning quality management in higher education in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since March 2020, Indonesia has faced the Covid-19 pandemic, so that learning in higher education has faced changes, such as the implementation of online lectures, thus demanding crisis management so that the quality of education can be achieved and overcome the existing challenges. This type of research is a qualitative research with a literature study design. Data were collected through documentation techniques. The research approach is a management approach. The theory used in analyzing the data is the theory of integrated quality management implementation. The findings of this study; First, higher education makes the crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic one of the many challenges in education, so that the obstacles to conducting offline learning are only technical and can be overcome by technical means, such as online learning. Second, all academics (lecturers and students) obey government instructions in carrying out health protocols without reducing the burden of lecture assignments. Third, the productivity and achievements of all academics did not experience a drastic decline in quality, even though the state's research facilities were slightly reduced. The results of this study contribute to the discipline of quality management studies*

**Keywords:** Implementation, Learning Quality Management, Higher Education, the Covid-19 Pandemic

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## Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought about many changes in higher education. Since this pandemic era hit, higher education has implemented online learning practices, by carrying out the principle of independent learning. However, online learning is believed to face many challenges, including: the lack of lecturers' skills to carry out learning based on the use of the latest technology (Sarnoto et al., 2021). The factors that cause it can be various, one of which is the age factor, where these elderly lecturers are no longer the millennial generation who are familiar with digital technology. In addition, the lecture syllabus is prepared for face-to-face lectures, especially majoring in science and technology with a high quantity of practicum courses. In addition to the skills of lecturers and curriculum, the unpreparedness of the telecommunications infrastructure also has an effect. Because, Internet facilities are not completely evenly distributed. In fact, e-learning is still experiencing problems, even for the Open University (UT), which has long been accustomed to providing distance education (Hendayana et al., 2020).

By implementing e-learning, higher education encourages the entire academic community, both lecturers and students, to be more independent, maximize the development of information technology, and turn these challenges into opportunities for implementing the Independent Learning policy. However, e-learning with such a free spirit of learning has received criticism from many observers. Budi Kadaryanto, a researcher from the University of Lampung, said that the government had not

yet issued a standard that could be used as a reference to ensure the quality of distance learning. So far, according to Budi Kadaryanto, the government is still monitoring the implementation of online learning, providing online learning platforms, carrying out capacity building, providing incentives to accelerate and expand the implementation of online learning (Kemendikbud, 2020).

Regarding the learning assessment method for higher education during this pandemic, Wulida Wahidatul Masruria said that there are two kinds of assessments that can be taken; online-based assessment and self-assessment. These two models refer to the policies of the Indonesian government. First, test online. The implementation of this online test uses media tools such as gadgets, computers, laptops and the internet. Second, self-assessment. This is based on the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia No. 66 of 2013 concerning Education Assessor Standards. This technique encourages educators to give responsibility to students to assess their own learning progress, related to processes, competencies and achievements based on predetermined benchmarks (Masruria, 2021). In fact, related to the learning assessment of the Covid-19 era, the lecturer of psychology at the University of Padjadjaran, Miryam Wedyaswari, emphasized the importance of authentic assessment with the realities of life that are really needed by students in everyday life (Imaduddin, 2020).

This study, by raising the topic of implementing learning quality management in higher education, private and public, during the COVID-19 pandemic, seeks to look at the challenges and prospects. Because, even though there are

many challenges that must be solved, ranging from internet network infrastructure to increasing human resources in contact with the latest learning technology, there are also great prospects where online or distance learning needs to be maintained, such as providing broad opportunities for students to have careers outside the country. campus, in order to maximize their potential and independence. Thus, online learning, the implementation of e-learning systems, the use of digital application platforms and others, will remain useful to maintain even though the pandemic period will pass one day. as the e-learning project or the Online Learning System (SPADA) to implement Distance Learning (PJJ) has been initiated by the government for a long time (since 2014), before the pandemic era. By weighing objectively between these prospects and challenges, the long-term vision in implementing integrated quality management can be defined more clearly and straightforwardly

### Methodology

This research is library research, to study and understand data that has a close relationship with the research topic. This data comes from books, records, documents, and even the results of previous research (George, 2008). One of the important data from this research is the Policy Minutes Number 17 September 2021 published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Kemenristekdikbud). From this, it can be seen that several information technology-based learning projects such as SPADA and PJJ, which have been developed since 2013 and 2014 have been developed. Only when the country was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, was there an implementation process that adapted to developing situations and conditions without losing the substance of the government's big idea of online learning. Another important data is the Book of Higher Education in the Covid-19 Pandemic Period: Higher Education Learning and Implementation of Free Learning in the Covid-19 Pandemic Period, which was also published by the Ministry of Research, Technology and Education and Culture on July 9, 2020. From this it can be seen that the ideal learning principle is to follow the concept of Merdeka Learning. The rest is secondary data that can be taken from various previous research results, books, articles, news, and others.

This research approach is a management approach, which is an awareness to understand that schools or educational institutions are social systems, which are analyzed based on organizational theory, where constituent members (eg students, teachers, business personnel, curriculum specialists, and others) interact in harmony with norms. -the norms and attitudes of behavior that are considered ideal (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2021). In this way, government policies (as the norm as well as an ideal reference for the implementation of learning during the COVID-19 pandemic) in relation to the attitudes and actions of the academic community, become the main concern of this research. The academic community has certainly acted in response to this pandemic by adapting to the policies set by the government. For this reason, the theory that is

considered appropriate for research needs is the theory of integrated quality management implementation. According to Paul Trowler, the implementation of education policy is related to the relationship between formula and implementation. The implementation of this policy adopts a "top-down" approach, understands the implementation of the policy and uses a phenomenological approach that adopts a bottom-up approach to assess the implementation (Trowler, 2003).

The experiences of various higher education institutions, both private and public, are important materials to be studied, and to understand them as a form of implementation of policies issued by the government. This experience is also used to see the relationship between the ideal formula formulated by the government and the reality of the implementation of the formula. Up to here it will look two different directions; on the one hand, government policies become the standard reference for how the next action is realized, and on the other hand, actions in the field may precede government policies because there are situational considerations that may be urgent. Paul A. Sabatier calls his theory a synthesis between "top-down" and "bottom-up" approaches (Sabatier, 1996). This synthetic approach from Paul A. Sabatier is important to use in this research considering that several policies issued by the government seem late and were preceded by 'spontaneous' attitudes from higher education to immediately respond to the pandemic situation by 'innovating' their learning

### Results

The practice of implementing integrated quality management (MMT) in higher education is a follow-up to government policies. Various activities held by higher education are the result of interpretation of and adapted to policies issued by the government, both at the ministry and provincial/regional levels. It can be seen from the following table:

**Table**  
**Government Policy and Higher Education**  
**(Covid-19 Prevention and MMT)**

No.	Central/Regional Policy	Higher Education Policy
1	Circular of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 3 of 2020 concerning Prevention of Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) in Education Units, 9 March 2020.	University of Indonesia (UI) Circular Letter Number: SE-703/UN2.R/OTL.09/2020 concerning Precautions and Prevention of the Spread of Covid-19 Infection at the University of Indonesia, March 13, 2020.
2	West Java Governor Regulation Number 36 of 2020 concerning Guidelines for Large-Scale Social Restrictions in Combating Coronavirus Disease	Circular of the Chancellor of the Bandung Institute of Technology Number 146/II.T.1.A/LL/2020 concerning Prevention of Corona Virus Disease, March 17, 2020.

	2019 (Covid-19) in the Province of West Java, dated May 4, 2020.	
3	Central Java Governor Circular Letter Number: 420/0005956 concerning Prevention of the Spread of Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19) in Education Units in Central Java, March 15, 2020.	Chancellor's Circular Letter Number: B/1413/UN37/2020 concerning Precautions and Prevention of the Spread of Covid-19 Infection in Academic and Public Services at Semarang State University, 15 March 2020.
4	DKI Jakarta Provincial Education Office (Disdik) Circular Number 32 of 2020 concerning Home Learning during the COVID-19 Emergency Period, March 24, 2020.	Circular Letter of the Chancellor of UPN Veterans Jakarta Number: 23/UN61.0/SE/2020 concerning Measures to Prevent the Spread of the Corona Virus (Covid-19) in UPN Veterans Jakarta, March 14, 2020.  Circular Letter of the Chancellor of UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Number: B-951/R/HM.01.5/03/2020 Concerning the Policy of Working From Home in the Context of Preventing COVID-19, dated March 31, 2020.
5	Instruction of the Governor (Ingub) of Banten Province Number 2 of 2020 concerning Extension of Vacation Time for Teaching and Learning in Schools, 27 March 2020.	Circular Letter of the Chancellor of UNTIRTA Number: B/5/UN43/TU.00.00/2020 concerning Policy in the Academic Sector in the Context of Emergency Response to Covid-19 in UNTIRTA, 27 March 2020.
6	Circular Letter of the Governor of the Special Region of Yogyakarta Number: 421/5598 concerning Extension of Distance/Online Learning Periods for Students in an Emergency Period for the Spread of Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19) in Educational Environments in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, 30 March 2020.	Instructions of the Chancellor of the Yogyakarta State University Number 1 of 2020 regarding the Implementation of Learning Activities, Academic Services, and Public Services for the Prevention of the Spread of Corona Virus Disease-19 at Yogyakarta State University, dated March 14, 2020.  Circular Letter of the Chancellor of Gadjah Mada University Number 3711/UN1.P/SET-R/KR/2020 concerning KBM Guidelines during the COVID-19 Pandemic, dated 22 May 2020.
7	East Java Governor Circular Letter Number: 420/11.350/101.1/2020 concerning Limited Face-to-Face Learning Trials at SMA/SMK/SLB Levels in East Java.	Rector's Circular Number 948 of 2020 concerning Anticipation of the Spread and Prevention of the Corona Virus at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, March 2, 2020.  Circular of the Chancellor of UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Number 1171 of 2020 concerning Preparedness and Anticipatory Measures to Prevent Corona Virus Infection (Covid-19) at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang,

	March 16, 2020.
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By looking at the content of every good policy issued by the central government, regional government, and higher education itself, in general it seeks to regulate human behavior and social systems in order to avoid the bad effects of the pandemic, especially those that can hinder higher education from realizing its educational vision and mission. Chancellors from various higher education institutions issued their respective circulars, adjusted to the policies of the central/regional government, on how to anticipate and prevent viral infections, implementation of learning activities, academic services, work patterns that are safe from transmission, and increase awareness and self-awareness. In other words, higher education policy is a rigid form of government policy that has been adapted to the system and work pattern in higher education

### Discussions

There are three important aspects carried out by higher education in order to implement integrated quality management in the campus environment, namely: solving technical problems, building solidarity between components, and improving research quality in situations of low research funding from the government.

#### a) Technicalization of Problem Solving

Problem solving ability in an organization is the most important methodology in improving quality. Problem solving is ideally approached in a structured way by a team. Kairong Liang and Qi Zhang say that these structured problem solving skills can be integrated into the way integrated quality management works (Liang & Zhang, 2010). In order to implement integrated quality management, higher education structurally solves problems faced by the Covid-19 pandemic, by issuing various rector policies that are adapted to and to translate more rigidly government policies, especially regarding the prevention of the transmission of the corona virus. Based on government policies, both central and regional, as well as the rector's policy at each campus, the problems faced by the world of education during this pandemic are structurally resolved.

The Government of the Republic of Indonesia (RI) announced for the first time that the country was facing the Corona virus, which exploded in Wuhan China, on March 2, 2020 (Sarnoto, Mansur, Rahmawati, & Hikmah, 2022). President Joko Widodo announced that one Indonesian citizen was confirmed positive for Covid-19. There were two patients; a 31-year-old woman named Sita Tyasutami (patient 1) and her 64-year-old mother named Maria Darmaningsih (patient 2). Both are residents of Depok, West Java. The announcement of this first case was delivered by the president at the Presidential Palace, Jakarta (Velarosdela, 2021). In the same month, on March 31, 2020, there has been an increase in the number of positive COVID-19 patients, reaching 1,528 people. From this figure, 81 patients were declared cured and 136 patients were declared dead (Nugroho, 2020).

Since COVID-19 has become a frightening 'ghost' in Indonesian public spaces (Sarnoto & Hayatina, 2021), various research and higher education institutions have



taken their own stand. The attitude here is still in the form of a flurry of academic thought that is contrary to the way the Indonesian government thinks. There is also a more pro-government attitude. For example, on February 31, 2020, Professor Amin Soebandrio, Head of the Molecular Biology Section of the Eijkman Institute Jakarta, said that it is possible that the corona virus from Wuhan has spread to Indonesia but has not been detected. Meanwhile, from the government side, Anung Sugihantono (Director General of the Disease Prevention and Control Unit of the Indonesian Ministry of Health) said that his party had just supervised and monitored 16 people (Massola, 2020).

In contrast to scientists and academics who are not affiliated with the government. For example, Professor from Harvard University, Marc Lipsitch (virologist), said that the Covid-19 virus had entered Indonesia early in January 2020. Reports of Prof. Marc Lipsitch also explained that countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand have reported their cases of COVID-19 since January, as well as Chinese tourists who have just returned to their country after vacationing in Bali. According to Muhammad Beni Kurniawan, the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia is a political game of government law, which is considered to have not maximally protected the health rights of the Indonesian people as stipulated in the constitution Article 28H paragraph (1) and Article 34 paragraph (2) and (3) of the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. 1945 (Kurniawan, 2021). In Tangguh Chairil's terminology, the Indonesian government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic is desecuritization in the early stages and late securitization (Chairil, 2020). The responses of other academics, such as the views of Eka Budiyaniti, a researcher from the Research Center and Expertise Board of the DPR RI, who also has the status of a general practitioner in Kotamobagu, North Sulawesi. Eka Budiyaniti has published an article since February, highlighting the negative impact of the corona virus on the trade and tourism sector in Indonesia. He gave an example of reducing the number of imports and foreign tourists from China to Indonesia (Budiyaniti, 2020).

#### **b) Solidity of All Components**

Solidarity is a spiritual-ideal value but at the same time is practically useful for efforts to improve organizational quality. Timothy L. Ford said that total quality management in American corporate environments reflects managerial recognition of and is preserved by the inculcation of work theology, especially the principle of solidarity (Fort, 1995). This spiritual value and work solidarity is happening in the higher education environment in Indonesia, especially when it is in the form of maintaining and improving education quality services in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. Higher education is not only an extension of the government, but will also show a much more progressive and productive work. All of that because of the basis of mutual solidarity to solve common problems; Covid-19 pandemic.

The practice of implementing higher education quality management during the COVID-19 pandemic, in turn, is an extension of the will of power. So it is not easy to find attitudes and independent actions of higher education that are more creative and innovative than what has become

government policy. When the President announced the spread of COVID-19 on March 2, followed by the issuance of circulars from the Ministry of Education and Culture on March 9, one by one higher education, both private and public, issued their respective circulars, which has the same vision and mission as the government, namely preventing the spread and transmission of the 2019 corona virus. Successively the following campuses issued their respective regulations; University of Indonesia (13 March), Yogyakarta State University (14 March), Bandung Institute of Technology (17 March), and Gadjah Mada University (22 May). The implementation of quality management of all higher education is top-down, so that the solidity of all components (read: higher education) is formed naturally.

One example that can be taken is the instruction number 3 in Circular Letter Number 3 of 2020 concerning Prevention of Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19) at the Education Unit which states: "Ensuring the availability of advice for washing hands with soap (CTPS) and single-use cleaning tools. use (tissue) in various strategic locations in the education unit." For this reason, in the case of a policy issued by the University of Indonesia (UI), dated January 21, 2021, Document Number IK-UPTK3L-ER-43, it is stated that several lists of equipment, supplies, and Covid-19 prevention facilities must be provided within the UI. including: hand washing facilities equipped with soap, running water, and drying paper placed in strategic places, hand sanitizers, thermo scanners, disinfectant products, air cleaning equipment, distance marking tape (K3L-UI, 2021).

However, even though the implementation of higher education quality management appears as an extension of government policy, the characteristics of higher education as a producer of science and technology are not necessarily dimmed. Since the Covid-19 pandemic lasted for a long time, many families and patients with COVID-19 had difficulty getting convalescent plasma donors, as one of the therapies for healing COVID-19. This difficulty was successfully solved by Airlangga University students who are members of the Entrepreneurship Student Creativity Program (PKM-K). They created an application or platform that houses information on the search for convalescent plasma donors from all over the country. This platform is named NORMAL.IN. The NORMAL.IN application is expected to be able to reduce the number of covid-19 from upstream to downstream, starting from preventive (Kemendikbud, 2021). The achievement of this kind of academic community can be said to be one step more progressive than the policies issued by the government. Higher education not only acts to prevent the transmission of the virus in the educational environment, but also participates in solving solutions to social problems.

The inventive characteristics of higher education such as Airlangga University were also achieved by other universities. A number of students from the Faculty of Medicine, University of Indonesia (FK-UI) and the Faculty of Computer Science (Fasilkom-UI) collaborated to create a COVID-19 Risk Assessment Provider platform, which was named EndCorona. This application can be accessed by the public through the following websites: endcorona.fk.ui.ac.id or endcorona.id via computers and mobile phones. With this EndCorona feature, the public can independently classify

their vulnerabilities in contracting COVID-19 according to the categories of low risk, cautious, vulnerable, very vulnerable. This application is not only about self-assessment, but is also equipped with complete hotline features for hospitals in Indonesia, Health Offices throughout Indonesia, FKUI Helpline, Daily Statistics, and Data Tracking for research. The Dean of FKUI, Prof. Dr. dr. Ari Fahrial Syam, SpPD-KGEH, MMB, hopes that the EndCorona application will be a solution and an effort for the community to break the chain of Covid-19 spread. This app was launched on April 1, 2020 (Ayu, 2020).

As a result, the implementation of higher education quality management throughout Indonesia is top-down, but leaves room for inventions, discoveries and research, which contribute to problem solving efforts. At the invention level, higher education is one step more progressive than the policy standards set by the government. In fact, through a strong tradition of research and innovation in the higher education environment, government policies have always been exceeded, both pre and post-policy determination. If before the government officially stipulates the spread of COVID-19 in Indonesia, higher education has published scientific works for anticipatory and preventive actions, then even after the government has set policies, higher education is still one step ahead. namely by producing certain health products or platforms that are useful for the benefit of public health. And at the same time, all higher education, both private and public, show solidity and togetherness in the struggle to implement government policies and to realize public health which is a human right to obtain it, as guaranteed by the 1945 Constitution.

### c) Research and Funding Problems

Ichiro Noutomi and Makoto Nakanishi said that budgeting performance, integrated quality management practices, and achievement targets according to budget are all interrelated. However, that only applies to larger organizations. In reality, Integrated Quality Management is sometimes ineffective. Some examples of local governments are successful in introducing and implementing new management models, because they link power and organizational leadership, but in other cases they fail (Noutomi & Nakanish, 2007). In the case of higher education in Indonesia, the views of Ichiro Noutomi and Makoto Nakanishi find evidence of justification. Even though some higher education institutions receive research financial support from the state in order to continue to provide the best quality education during the pandemic, at the same time the research budget is not the only success factor. There is a 'personal-individual' commitment from each leader in every higher education to contribute more to the nation and state, by producing science-technology works that are larger than the budget. In the end, the product is not based on budget alone but based on high leadership commitment.

The government was late in issuing policies that were considered to be in favor of the safety of people's lives, while the results of scientific research from the academic community had already given an early warning. In addition, the government also only issues simple policy points, while academics in the higher education environment go further, creating health products and platforms that are useful in

preventing the spread of COVID-19 from upstream to downstream. Not only these two basic problems, higher education also faces funding constraints for research purposes/research in order to implement government policies, which support education quality assurance. The lack of research funding from the government is one of the most crucial obstacles in implementing quality management for higher education, especially during this pandemic.

On February 16, 2021, the Indonesian government through the Ministry of Research and Technology allocated a research grant for State Higher Education with Legal Entities (PTNBH) 2021 amounting to Rp. 399.3 billion. The grant funds were used to finance 3,122 research titles, which included 1,694 basic research, 664 applied research, and 764 research titles to increase research capacity. There were 12 higher education institutions that received the grant funds, namely: University of Indonesia, Gadjah Mada University, Bogor Agricultural University, Padjadjaran University, North Sumatra University, Hasanuddin University, Ten November Institute of Technology, Indonesian Education University, and Sebelas Maret University. In general, the 2021 flagship research funded through the PTNBH scheme aims to deal with Covid-19, disaster management (Herlinawati, 2021).

Before the stipulation of the 2021 PTNBH scheme with a figure of Rp. 399.3 billion, on April 20 2020 there was criticism from the Deputy Chair of Commission X DPR, Abdul Fikri Faqih, who asked for the 2020 APBN to be reallocated for handling the pandemic as well as for higher education research. This Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) politician is worried that many Indonesian researchers from various higher education have succeeded in finding drugs and corona vaccines, but have not been exposed due to the lack of budgetary support and government attention. In addition, Abdul Fikri Faqih gave an example of government policies that were deemed not pro-products of the nation's children. For example, the collaboration of researchers from the Surabaya Institute of Technology and the Airlangga University Hospital succeeded in making the RAISA (Robot Medical Assistant ITS-Airlangga) robot. This robot is able to replace the role of medical personnel in treating corona positive patients. However, Abdul Fikri Faqih questioned the government's policy of refusing to use robots made by local children, rather than having to sacrifice the lives of the medics on the front lines of the epidemic (Victoria, 2020).

Veronica Taylor, a professor of Law and Regulation from the Australian National University (ANU), views that the Indonesian government does not see research as a state investment. On the other hand, the Indonesian government views research and development as the procurement of goods and services rather than investment in creating knowledge (Vania, 2020). The same criticism was conveyed by Yohanes Cakrapradipta Wibowo, a doctor who is also a researcher at Heidelberg University, Germany, that scientific publications of corona research from Indonesia are very minimal. In addition, there are scientific claims that have not been met according to research methods. For example, preclinical data is not clear, clinical trials suddenly appear (Ekawati, 2020).

All problems in the world of research in Indonesia are social-academic phenomena that cannot be denied. In the

midst of the low quality of research results in Indonesia, the government also adds to the burden through the low number of research funds. This condition is actually also confirmed by the government. Plt. The Head of the IPH Research Organization of the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Iman Hidayat, revealed that the research innovation index in Indonesia is decreasing every year. This has been going on since 2016 so that Indonesia is in position 50 in the world which was originally in position 36 in the world. According to Iman Hidayat, the indicators that make up the research innovation index are declining, including: institutions, human capital and research, infrastructure, market sophistication and business sophistication (Lesmana, 2021).

### Conclusion

The implementation of higher education quality management in Indonesia during this pandemic is more of a dedication to academics than a top-down one. Long before the government determined the spread of the corona virus, academics had conducted research and publications in order to anticipate the negative impacts that would be caused. In fact, when several government policies have been published,

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