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METHODS OF ASSESSING QUALITY AND EFFECTIVENESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR APPLYING THE INDONESIAN EXPERIENCE

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Abstract:
This article analyzes contemporary methodological approaches to assessing quality and effectiveness in the higher education system, international experience, and the accreditation and evaluation system of the Republic of Indonesia. The paper examines Indonesia’s BAN-PT (Badan Akreditasi Nasional Perguruan Tinggi) model, outcome-based education (OBE), and indicators of institutional effectiveness. It also presents opportunities for application and policy recommendations relevant to the higher education system of Uzbekistan.

Keywords: Higher education quality, accreditation, BAN-PT, outcome-based education, institutional assessment, PDDikti system, Indonesian experience, Uzbek experience.

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INTRODUCTION

Today, in the era of globalization, assessing the quality of the higher education system and measuring its effectiveness has become one of the most pressing scientific and practical issues. Around the world, universities have evolved not only into providers of knowledge, but also into centers of innovation and drivers of economic growth. Therefore, the issue of quality assurance in higher education is increasingly treated as a priority area of state policy.

According to World Bank and UNESCO data, in 2023 the global higher education market amounted to USD 2.4 trillion, and more than 220 million students were enrolled in higher education institutions at different levels. However, along with the growth in student numbers, demands regarding the quality of education have also risen sharply. Under these conditions, effective assessment systems help clarify not only internal institutional management, but also the formation of national policy.

The Republic of Uzbekistan is also implementing serious reforms in the development of higher education. Within the framework of the "New Uzbekistan" Strategy for 2022-2030, the number of universities and the coverage of higher education have expanded significantly. In particular, from 2017 to 2024 the number of universities increased from 77 to 210, while the enrollment rate rose from 9% to 38%. Under such rapid growth, strengthening quality control mechanisms has become a vital necessity.

From this perspective, the experience of Indonesia, which has an advanced higher education system in Southeast Asia, can serve as a valuable source for Uzbekistan. Indonesia has demonstrated the effectiveness of a comprehensive accreditation and evaluation system used in governing more than 4,000 higher education institutions.

The concept of "quality" in higher education is multidimensional, and its definition varies across schools of thought and approaches. According to the classic classification of Harvey and Green (1993), quality in higher education can

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be viewed from five perspectives: exceptionality, that is, compliance with the highest standards; consistency, that is, constant adherence to established requirements; fitness for purpose, that is, achievement of educational objectives; value for money, that is, efficient use of the resources spent; and transformation, that is, qualitative change in students.

In modern higher education policy, there are three main paradigms for assessing quality. The first is the input paradigm, in which the qualifications of academic staff, material and technical infrastructure, library resources, and financial means are accepted as quality indicators. The second is the process paradigm, which pays particular attention to teaching methods, the structure of curricula, and management effectiveness. The third and most modern paradigm is the outcome paradigm, in which graduates' knowledge and skills, employment, research outcomes, and social impact are regarded as the main criteria.

At present, international practice is dominated by an integrated approach combining all three paradigms. The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG, 2015), developed by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), also recommend precisely this comprehensive approach. A number of methodological approaches are applied to measuring the effectiveness of higher education institutions. Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) is a mathematical programming method that determines the relative efficiency of an institution while taking several input and output variables into account. This methodology, developed by Charnes, Cooper, and Rhodes (1978), is now widely used in evaluating hundreds of universities.

Institutional Research (IR) is the process of systematically collecting and analyzing information about higher education institutions and using it for decision-making. According to the definition of the Association for Institutional Research (AIRR), institutional research creates the information base necessary to support strategic planning, accreditation, budgeting, and policy development.

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Table 1. Comparison of the main models of quality assessment in higher education

Model	Country/Origin	Main Criterion	Scope of Application
EFQM Excellence Model	Europe	Processes + Results	Universities, inspection bodies
Malcolm Baldrige (MBNQA)	USA	Leadership, strategy, results	Broad-range institutions
ISO 21001:2018	International	Educational management system	All educational institutions
BAN-PT model	Indonesia	9 standards, 24 elements	Indonesian universities
QS Stars Rating	United Kingdom	8 categories, star-based system	Global universities
NAAC model	India	7 criteria, indicators	Indian universities

In Indonesia, the system for assessing the quality of higher education is implemented by the Badan Akreditasi Nasional Perguruan Tinggi (BAN-PT). This organization was established in 1994 and accredits public and private higher education institutions as well as their programs. Its activities are regulated by the 2012 Law on Education and the 2014 government regulation. The BAN-PT system includes two levels of accreditation: institutional accreditation (AIPT) and study program accreditation (APS). The former evaluates the university's overall governance and development potential, while the latter determines the quality of individual academic programs. Since 2019, the evaluation system has been based on 9 standards and 24 criteria. Based on the results, institutions are classified as A, B, C, or non-accredited. As of 2023, 71% of higher education institutions had undergone accreditation, which is significantly higher than in 2013.

In addition, since 2014 specialized accreditation agencies, known as LAMs, have been introduced. They provide more specific and professional evaluation within particular fields. Indonesia's quality assurance system consists of internal (SPMI) and external (SPME) assessment. The internal system is based on the PPEPP

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cycle (determination, implementation, evaluation, control, and improvement), which serves the continuous enhancement of educational quality.

Table 2. Dynamics of BAN-PT accreditation results in Indonesia (2013-2023)

Indicator	2013	2017	2020	2023
Total number of HEIs	3,151	4,504	4,498	4,523
Accredited (%)	48%	58%	65%	71%
Institutions rated "A"	87	201	278	312
Institutions rated "B"	962	1,498	1,671	1,842
Institutions rated "C"	461	911	1,052	1,063
With international accreditation	12	47	98	167

In 2020, the "Merdeka Belajar - Kampus Merdeka" (Freedom to Learn - Independent Campus) program announced by Indonesia's Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology became one of the largest reforms in the history of higher education. This program is aimed at increasing students' freedom to choose their own educational pathways, strengthening practice-oriented learning, and developing integration with industry.

The core element of the program is the opportunity for students to spend 3 semesters (40 credits) outside the institution, namely at industrial enterprises, in social projects, research centers, or international cooperation programs. Formats such as "Magang Bersertifikat" (certified internship), "Proyek Kemanusiaan" (humanitarian project), "KKN Tematik" (thematic community service), and "Pertukaran Mahasiswa" (student exchange) are practical mechanisms for its implementation.

The results of the first three years of the Merdeka Belajar program are noteworthy. According to 2023 data, more than 600,000 students became

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participants in the program, over 18,000 enterprises and organizations signed cooperation agreements, and 500 universities actively participated. In the student satisfaction survey, 87% of participants rated the program as "very useful" or "useful."

The most important tool for digital monitoring of higher education quality in Indonesia is the PDDikti portal (Pangkalan Data Pendidikan Tinggi - Higher Education Database). Through this centralized platform, real-time information is collected on all accredited institutions: student numbers, academic programs, academic staff qualifications, graduate employment, and research publications.

The technical infrastructure of the PDDikti system is reflected in the following figures: the system stores information on more than 8 million active students, over 300,000 teachers, and more than 27,000 educational programs. The system is integrated via API with additional analytical services, enabling universities to monitor their ranking indicators in real time. This transparency system significantly simplified the accreditation process and reduced the average evaluation period from 18 months to 6 months.

The broad implementation of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) in Indonesia began in 2012 with the adoption of the National Qualifications Framework (Kerangka Kualifikasi Nasional Indonesia, KKNI). The KKNI is a 9-level qualifications framework harmonized with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). Each level is characterized by a specific set of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities.

The implementation of OBE fundamentally changed the methodology of curriculum design and assessment. Curricula are now based not on the principle of "what is taught," but rather on "what students should be able to do." Clear learning outcomes are defined for each course and aligned with the national qualifications standard and industry requirements. As a result, graduate employment in the industrially developed provinces of Java increased from 63% in 2018 to 78% in 2023.

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Table 3. Details of BAN-PT evaluation standards

Standard	Main Indicators	Weight Share (%)
1. Planning and governance	Mission, strategic plan, quality policy	10
2. Management system	Organizational structure, transparency, financial management	12
3. Students	Admission system, indicators, support	11
4. Staff	Academic degree, certificates, development	13
5. Curricula	KKNI alignment, updating, OBE integration	15
6. Teaching and learning	Methodology, technology, practice	13
7. Research	Publications, grants, patents	12
8. Community service	Cooperation, transfer, impact	8
9. Results	Graduates, employment, international indicators	16

There are a number of structural similarities between the higher education systems of Uzbekistan and Indonesia. In both countries, higher education is at a stage of rapid expansion, and within a short period the number of institutions and student coverage have increased significantly. In both countries, the role of the state is decisive in the modernization of education. In addition, in both countries the training of highly qualified personnel and international integration have been identified as priorities of higher education policy.

However, there are also important differences. Indonesia, with more than 4,500 institutions, has one of the largest higher education systems in the world (ranking fourth after the United States, India, and China). In Uzbekistan, by contrast, the number of institutions is 210, which makes it a relatively small system. Yet this difference also creates a specific advantage: in a smaller system, reforms can be implemented more quickly and more coherently. Differences in the quality assurance system are also significant: whereas Indonesia has 30 years of BAN-

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PT experience, in Uzbekistan the modern accreditation system is relatively new and has been actively developing only since 2020.

Comparison based on international rankings presents an interesting picture. In the QS World University Rankings 2024, 13 universities from Indonesia were included, among them Universitas Indonesia in 206th place and Institut Teknologi Bandung in 235th place. In Uzbekistan, by contrast, not a single higher education institution has yet entered this ranking. According to the Webometrics Ranking 2024, Indonesia's Universitas Gadjah Mada is positioned between 400 and 500, while Uzbekistan's Tashkent State Technical University is placed between 2,000 and 2,500.

There is also a substantial gap in scientific productivity indicators. In the Scopus database, more than 45,000 articles by Indonesian scholars were indexed in 2023, placing Indonesia 22nd in the world. In Uzbekistan, this figure is around 2,800 and is gradually increasing. However, it should be emphasized that the Indonesian government's financial incentives for professors and teachers for Scopus and Web of Science articles have played a decisive role in this growth.

Table 4. Higher education indicators of Uzbekistan and Indonesia (2023)

Indicator	Uzbekistan	Indonesia	Difference
Number of HEIs	210	4,523	Indonesia has 21.5x more
Number of students	~1.1 million	~9.0 million	Indonesia has 8.2x more
Gross enrollment ratio (GER)	38%	31%	Uzbekistan is 7% higher
Universities in QS rankings	0	13	Indonesia has the advantage
Scopus articles (annual)	~2,800	~45,000	Indonesia has 16x more
Accredited (%)	~62%	71%	Indonesia is 9% higher
Share of international students	~2.1%	~0.8%	Uzbekistan has the advantage
Share of private HEIs	~40%	~74%	Indonesia is more privatized

The first and most important recommendation is to introduce an analogue of the SPMI (Internal Quality Assurance System) in higher education institutions of Uzbekistan. At present, many universities in Uzbekistan have quality

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management units, but their powers and methodology are often not sufficiently clear. Based on the Indonesian experience, it is necessary to implement a systematic approach based on the PPEPP cycle in each university in order to form its own quality culture. Each stage of this cycle should be supported by clearly defined responsible persons, deadlines, and indicators.

The second recommendation is to strengthen institutional research (IR) units and integrate them into the management decision-making process. At present, many Uzbek universities have statistics and reporting departments, but they are often limited to preparing data only in response to government requirements. In the Indonesian experience, however, IR units play a central role in strategic planning, resource distribution, and program development.

The third recommendation is the broader implementation of outcome-based education (OBE) methodology. Although Uzbekistan also has a qualifications framework (the system of national qualification standards), it often remains at the document level. Drawing on Indonesia's KKNI experience, it is necessary to define clear and measurable learning outcomes for each course, align them with national standards and industry requirements, and harmonize assessment methods with those outcomes.

At the national policy level, the most important recommendation is to develop a unified digital data platform in Uzbekistan analogous to PDDikti. At present, Uzbekistan has the HEMIS (Higher Education Management Information System), which collects data on students and teachers. However, this system needs to be transformed into a strong platform that integrates graduate employment, scientific productivity, and accreditation results into a single analytical environment and enables decision-making in real time.

The establishment of specialized accreditation bodies is also an urgent issue. In Uzbekistan, accreditation is mainly carried out by the center under the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovations. Drawing on Indonesia's LAM experience, the creation of separate specialized accreditation bodies for such

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fields as medicine, engineering, law, and economics would allow educational quality to be aligned more precisely with sectoral requirements.

The system for encouraging scientific productivity also requires reform. Indonesia's experience with the "Insentif Riset Sistem Inovasi Nasional" and direct payments to individual professors and teachers for Scopus publications deserves attention. In Uzbekistan as well, strengthening the mechanisms that directly link scientific activity with promotion, salary, and grants could sharply increase participation in internationally indexed publications.

The policy of supporting international accreditation requires particular attention. Indonesian universities are actively encouraged by the state to obtain international accreditation standards such as ABET (engineering), AACSB (business education), and ACPE (pharmacy). It would be appropriate for Uzbekistan to develop financial incentive programs for obtaining international accreditation in several selected priority fields, for example medicine and engineering.

Within the framework of ASEAN cooperation, Indonesia's experience in the ASEAN University Network system may also be useful for Uzbekistan. By actively participating in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) university network and taking the initiative in developing regional quality assurance standards, Uzbekistan can take important steps toward integrating its education system into the international academic community.

CONCLUSION

Assessing quality and effectiveness in higher education is not a one-time inspection, but rather a continuous, systematic, and multidimensional process. Indonesia's 30-year BAN-PT experience demonstrates that the successful construction of an accreditation system requires three mandatory conditions: (1) independent and competent accreditation bodies; (2) the formation of a quality

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culture within institutions; and (3) the implementation of a continuous improvement cycle based on results.

The higher education system of Uzbekistan is in a phase of rapid development, and important steps are being taken in the right direction. However, growth in the number of institutions and student coverage inevitably requires a simultaneous increase in quality demands. Indonesia's two-tier SPMI-SPME model, the digital PDDikti platform, OBE methodology, and specialized LAM bodies together represent a set of ready methodological and organizational solutions that can be adapted to the conditions of Uzbekistan.

At the same time, any foreign experience should be adapted not mechanically, but with due consideration of local context, cultural characteristics, and institutional capacity. Indonesia itself once learned from foreign models, especially the experiences of the Netherlands and the United States, and adapted them to its national conditions. Uzbekistan can follow the same path of creative adaptation by harmonizing the world's best quality assurance practices with local realities and, in the future, become a regional educational hub.

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