

Mix Method: Analysis of the Utilization of Recommendations from Accreditation Results in Improving the Quality of Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

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Accreditation is crucial for assessing higher education institution quality and holding institutions accountable to the community. However, accreditation recommendations are underutilized by the institutions. The issue may stem from educational institutions' lack of knowledge regarding the utilization of assessment results or their failure to identify the necessity of employing such results. This research uses a mixed methods approach to analyze the utilization of accreditation recommendations at State Islamic Institute of Kerinci. This research encompasses both quantitative data collection (close-ended) and qualitative data collection (open-ended) for the purposes of integration. The research employs a data analysis technique that determines the percentage of questionnaire responses for quantitative results and analyzes qualitative data through reduction and presentation. Subsequently, both datasets were analyzed utilizing SWOT analysis. The success of accreditation recommendations at State Islamic Institute of Kerinci is evident from the 67% of respondents who support them. The analysis results demonstrate the institution's positive steps in incorporating accreditation recommendations to enhance higher education quality. This involves solid commitment from leadership and the academic community, enhancing academic career progression, and incorporating research results into teaching-learning process. However, challenges such as low trust, funding problems, and negative perceptions of programs and policies remain obstacles. Hence, recommendations were pinpointed to enhance future utilization of accreditation recommendations, focusing on internal communication, incentives, funding, program evaluation, collaboration, and overcoming challenges. These steps aim to assist State Islamic Institute of Kerinci better utilize accreditation recommendations, enhance institutional quality, and achieve higher education objectives.



Keywords: *Accreditation; Challenges; Institutional Improvement; Islamic Higher Education; Quality Assurance; Recommendation Utilization.*

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INTRODUCTION

Proportionally, the Indonesian education system remains significantly flawed. Based on an assessment published by the World Population Review, of the 78 countries included in the world education ranking, Indonesia is ranked 54th (Novia Aisyah, 2021; Worldpopulationreview, 2022). In fact, the government has made various efforts and steps to improve the quality of education in Indonesia, starting from establishing regulations to mapping the quality of education which is used as material for evaluation of national implementation carried out through the accreditation process (Junaidah et al., 2020; Putra, 2022). Government regulations establish national education standards and govern national higher education standards (SN-Dikti) for institutions in providing higher education.

National Standards are essentially an effort to establish minimum educational criteria that must be met by service providers and/or educational units, both in terms of learning materials, learning processes, graduate competency levels, facilities, management, funding and educational assessment (Suryana & Sarah, 2020), so it is necessary to carry out a further assessment process in assessing the achievement of educational units against the minimum standard provisions (Fadhli et al., 2024).

Accreditation in higher education is very crucial for assessing educational quality and serves as a mechanism of accountability for educational institutions to society. Accountability must refer to the institution's ability to meet community expectations (Gillen, 2020), namely quality higher education institutions in accordance with National Education Quality Standards. Accreditation will maintain institutional dynamics and take quality to the next level (Kurt, 2021). The accreditation process is also an effort by universities to carry out quality assurance activities which should be carried out by an organization as an evaluation of the quality of education so that it is hoped that it can have an impact on customer satisfaction or users of educational services (Ghafar et al., 2024).

Apart from providing recognition rankings and mapping the quality of education nationally, one of the significant things in the higher education accreditation process is providing recommendations based on the outcomes of the assessment process conducted during field evaluations. The recommendations provided are feedback on the weaknesses and shortcomings of educational units based on criteria referring to the National Higher Education Standards (SNPT) (Muadin et al., 2022; Zebua & Anwar, 2022). Higher education institutions are expected to leverage the assessment results and recommendations derived from these assessments to enhance quality and increase educational standards (Prasetyo et al., 2023). This utilization is carried out by offering recommendations as a basis in formulating plans and strategies to improve the educational quality.

However, sometimes the recommendations from accreditation results are not utilized optimally (Haryati, 2015). This may be because educational institutions do

not know how to utilize assessment results or are not aware of the need to utilize assessment results (Lapanachokdee, 2022). Therefore, it is necessary to examine the challenges that exist for educational institutions in utilizing recommendations from Accreditation results so that the recommendations that emerge are truly useful and useful for the educational institution.

The State Islamic Institute of Kerinci is a religious University dedicated to enhancing the quality of its Higher Education. Higher education's commitment to improving quality can be seen from the number of study programs accredited with a Good or (C). High institutional commitment can also be seen from the commitment of universities in implementing an internal quality assurance system in the form of the *PPEPP* (Determination, Implementation, Evaluation, Control, and Improvement) cycle (Kellaghan & Stufflebeam, 2012).

Since its founding in 1997 as STAIN (State Islamic College) Kerinci until its status changed to State Islamic Institute, this institution has carried out the accreditation process several times. During the accreditation process, State Islamic Institute of Kerinci should always receive recommendations for the assessments carried out, however, the results of State Islamic Institute of Kerinci accreditation are still ranked Good (C) from the three ranking results that are in accordance with the provisions (Good, Very Good and Excellent).

Therefore, this research focuses on the analysis of the utilization of accreditation results recommendations in improving the quality of State Islamic Institute of Kerinci. The research aims to determine the use of accreditation recommendations at State Islamic Institute of Kerinci across the study programs, Faculty, Institution's Unit and Agency levels. Equally significant, the goal is to identify and assess the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges associated with utilizing recommendations from Accreditation results into the work program of the State Islamic Institute of Kerinci to enhance its quality.

METHOD

This research employs mixed methods which entails the collection of quantitative data (closed-ended) and qualitative data (open-ended) for the purpose of integration or embedding (Creswell, 2017). The data comes from direct observation of the use of Accreditation recommendation results at State Islamic Institute of Kerinci, not only that, other sources of information are needed through surveys and unstructured interviews with informants that the author has determined. The informants in this study are the University stakeholders including of Rector, Vice Rectors, Deans, Head of the study programs, Head of LPM (Quality Assurance), Head of LP2M (Research and Community Service), Head of TIPD (Database & Information

Technology), Head of UPB (Language Development) which are given codes (A1 to A9) to maintain informant confidentiality.

This study employs a data analysis technique that calculates the percentage of quantitative data derived from survey questionnaires distributed via google forms. Meanwhile, qualitative findings were derived through interviews, observations and documentation through data reduction and presenting. Further, those data sets are subsequently analysed using SWOT analysis to derive conclusions regarding the implementation of recommendations from the results of State Islamic Institute of Kerinci accreditation assessment to improve the quality of its higher education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

First, quantitative data was obtained by distributing questionnaires to respondents, namely the unit leaders of the State Islamic Institute of Kerinci. However, 22 people were willing to answer the questionnaire, consisting of heads of study programs, faculties, institutions/units and institutions. The questionnaire contains 33 statement items which are derivatives of sub-indicators and indicators taken from the recommendations by the National Accreditation Board for Higher Education (BAN PT) Assessors when conducting the 2022 field assessment at State Islamic Institute of Kerinci. The questionnaire employs a Likert scale featuring Strongly Agree (SS), Agree (S), Undecided (RR) and Disagree (TS) as response options. The questionnaires were created in 5 scales or just 4 scales, and the questionnaire takers have to choose positive or negative. On the positive side, the values are on the Strongly Agree (SS) and Agree (S) scale, while the negative side is on the Undecided (RR) and Disagree (TS) scale. Furthermore, to enhance the analysis, the scale measurement data is presented as a percentage (%).

Table 1. Positive Sub Indicators

No	Indicator	Sub Indicator	Total
1	assessor's recommendations	1.1.	1
		1.2.	1
2	criteria 1 (vision, mission, objectives and strategy)	2.1.	1
		2.2.	1
		2.3.	1
		2.4.	1
		2.5.	1
3	criteria 2 (governance, governance and cooperation)	2.6.	1
		2.7.	1
		3.1.	1
4	criteria 3 students	4.1.	1
5	criteria 4 human resources	5.1.	1

6	criteria 5 finance, facilities and infrastructure	6.1.	1
		6.5.	1
8	criteria 7 research	8.4.	1
9	criteria 8 devotion to community	9.1.	1
		10.1.	1
10	criteria 9 <i>tridharma</i> outcomes and achievements	10.2.	1
		10.3.	1
TOTAL			21

Source: Respondents' answers (questionnaire survey results)

Table 2. List of Negative Sub Indicators

NO	Indicator	Sub Indicator	Total
3	criteria 2 governance, governance and cooperation	3.2.	1
5	criteria 4 human resources	5.2.	1
		6.2.	1
6	criteria 5 finance, facilities and infrastructure	6.3.	1
		6.4.	1
			1
7	criteria 6 education	7.1.	1
			1
		8.1.	1
8	criteria 7 research	8.2.	1
		8.3.	1
9	criteria 8 devotion to community	9.2.	1
10	criteria 9 <i>tridharma</i> outcomes and achievements	10.3	1
total			12

Source: Respondents' answers (questionnaire survey results)

Table 2 shows total 33 sub-indicators, there are 21 sub-indicators have a positive value (strongly agree and agree) while 12 indicators have a larger percentage value that is negative (doubt and disagree). This negative percentage will be the object of analysis in this research. The reason of the results will be able to provide solutions to the problems that are most prioritized for improvement in the future. The data from these two tables, when presented, can be seen in the following diagram.

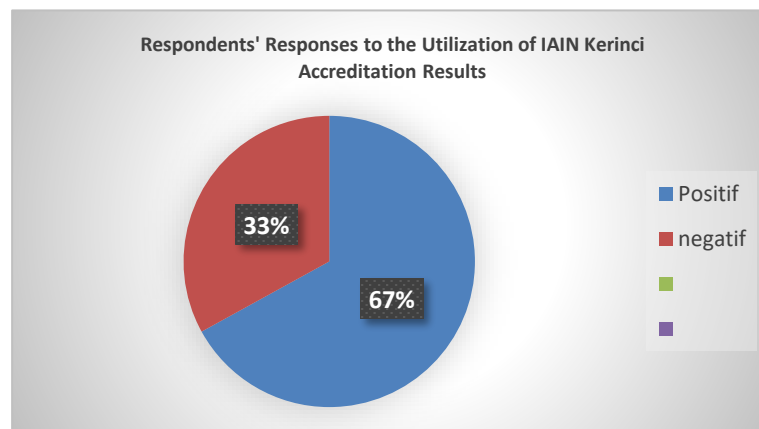


Figure 1: Respondents' Responses to the Utilization of Accreditation Recommendations

From the percentage data above, it can be seen that the response of respondents to the use of assessor recommendations resulting from the State Islamic Institute of Kerinci accreditation assessment was 67% positive, while the negative value was 33%. This shows that there is a temporary answer from respondents that the leadership of the State Islamic Institute of Kerinci (Study Programs, Faculties, Institute/Units) has utilized and followed up on the results of the assessors' recommendations regarding accreditation. Apart from that, this can also be seen from the increase in State Islamic Institute of Kerinci accreditation results from the previous accreditation of "Good" before 2023 to "Very Good" in 2023.

However, the 33% of respondents who were negative indicate that there is a group of respondents or leaders at State Islamic Institute of Kerinci who do not fully understand the importance of the accreditation assessor's recommendations for improving campus quality in the future. This is due to several key factors. Firstly, the socialisation of the assessor's recommendations is still limited and not delivered thoroughly, thus, leaders' understanding of the urgency of these recommendations is not optimal. Secondly, many university's leaders and lecturers are not directly involved in the accreditation process or the preparation of recommendations, so they feel less ownership of the results of these recommendations and do not understand their main purpose.

The implementation of recommendations often requires a lot of time, energy and money, while the institution has not been able to provide adequate support for its implementation. Finally, there are different priorities and perspectives on areas for improvement among leaders. Some leaders have different views on the urgent need for improvement, so they consider the assessor's recommendations less relevant or not in line with their priorities. Given these barriers, special measures are needed to increase the understanding and acceptance of all leaders of the importance of implementing assessors' recommendations for institutional quality in the future.

Discussion

The accreditation carried out by National Accreditation Board for Higher Education (BAN PT) is focused on assessing 9 criteria consisting of; 1) Vision, Mission, Goals and Strategy, 2) Management, Governance and Cooperation, 3) Student Affairs, 4) Human Resources, 5) Financial Facilities and Infrastructure, 6) Education, 7) Research, 8) Community Service, and 9) *Tridharma* Outputs and Achievements. (*Peraturan BAN PT No.2 Tahun 201 Tentang SAN-Dikti*, n.d.). The practical objectives of university accreditation include; 1) monitor the quality of education, 2) demonstrate credibility, 3) help attract large numbers of students, and 4) obtain large amounts of government assistance, these goals are secondary (M. Fadholi, 2022). In carrying out the field assessment, an assessor will be given the responsibility to carry out a SWOT

analysis of accredited higher education institutions according to the 9 criteria that are the focus of the accreditation assessment. The results of the analysis provide recommendations for each criterion. This recommendation comprises two primary components: recommendations for universities and recommendations for BAN-PT. (BAN-PT, 2019)

National Standards are essentially an effort to establish minimum educational criteria that must be met by service stakeholders and/or sub-units, including learning materials, learning processes, graduate competency levels, facilities, management, funding and educational assessment (Suryana & Sarah, 2020), therefore it is necessary to carry out a further assessment process in assessing the achievements of educational units against the minimum standard provisions.

Higher education today is geared towards a market-oriented environment where customer satisfaction plays an important role. Philosophies such as total quality management (TQM), which have been successfully adopted in commercial organizations, are generally seen as the way forward (Efendi, 2022). Quality is an important element in assessing the quality of higher education (Fadhli et al., 2024). There is an accreditation program to improve quality (Azizah & Witri, 2021) (Awaludin, 2017) (Adha et al., 2019).

The quality of higher education in Indonesia can be seen based on university accreditation results. Accreditation is an effort to improve the quality of education in educational units (Afridoni et al., 2022). Accreditation is understood as the determination of quality standards and assessment of a higher education institution by external parties (Pawar & Anscombe, 2022).

In achieving the quality of higher education, there needs to be guarantees through accreditation assessments. Accreditation is a form of assessing the quality and suitability of a higher education or study program carried out by an independent organization or institution outside the university (Sudiarti & Rivai, 2023).

The internal quality assurance system (SPMI) is an effort to improve the quality of higher education. With the quality of Indonesian higher education still lagging behind other countries, this is a very big problem for Indonesian higher education at the moment (Arifudin, 2019). Quality assurance of higher education in Indonesia is carried out using an internal assurance system which is carried out independently by universities, while external quality assurance is carried out by internal campus institutions which are authorized by law to carry out the Accreditation process. Accreditation can be interpreted as a process of self-evaluation, reflection and improvement that is carried out continuously (Junaidah et al., 2020; Putra, 2022).

Keeping everything in the production process error-free is a requirement to guarantee customer satisfaction (Sunaryo et al., 2024). There are several different definitions of quality. In the educational process, quality assurance of educational

service satisfaction is measured by the interests of internal customers and external consumers of education (Faizah et al., 2018). The competitiveness of higher education is described as the provision of community (general) higher education services that are of superior quality, competent, and able to satisfy stakeholders (Arwildayanto et al., 2020) with higher education institutions that have high speaking power which will have strong implications. In order to create quality college graduates who are ready to compete in facing future challenges. To sharpen the quantitative data, researchers also analyse qualitative data related to negative results of respondents using data collection methods using observation, unstructured interviews and document review.

Recommendation indicator: "Existing quality assurance has become a culture and is implemented programmatically according to a continuous cycle that ends with improvements at the end of each cycle."

Based on the survey results, 42.9% (doubtful) and 9.5% (disagree) regarding quality assurance that has been cultivated. However, State Islamic Institute of Kerinci has made serious efforts to ensure strong and sustainable quality assurance, in line with the assessor recommendations mentioned previously. This is supported by the quality assurance system included in the internal quality assurance system (Policy Rector's Decree 274 of 2021, the internal quality assurance system (Manual Decree No. 275 of 2021), the internal quality assurance system (Standard Decree No. 276 of 2021) and the internal quality assurance system (Form SK No. 277 of 2021).

The Institute has been committed to cultivating quality assurance in improving its quality. In an in-depth interview, the Rector of State Islamic Institute of Kerinci, along with the academic community, spoke about their commitment to making quality assurance a culture embedded in all higher education activities. They stated that this is an important step towards fulfilling the institution's vision, mission and goals.

"In an effort to achieve strong quality assurance, transparency and accountability are key principles that we have embraced." (A2)

"..... We are determined to maintain and improve quality in all academic and non-academic aspects." (A1)

"Quality assurance is carried out at the institutional, faculty, and study program levels, where each level has its own roles and responsibilities in ensuring quality improvement. The quality assurance process also includes continuous monitoring and evaluation. The results of internal quality audits form the basis for improvement and decision-making through Management Review Meetings." (A6)

"... Cooperation between institutions, faculties, and study programs is considered very important to ensure alignment and continuity in quality assurance. This includes training, consultation, and collaboration to improve quality." (A4)

"The study programs have experienced an increase in accreditation ratings due to the support of the leaders." (A5)

State Islamic Institute of Kerinci has shown seriousness in integrating quality assurance as a sustainable institutional culture (Millington & Schultz, 2009) and has a well-organized structure to achieve this goal. The positive impact on the study program's accreditation ranking is also clear evidence that these efforts are producing good results.

Recommendation indicator: "IAIN (State Islamic Institute) of Kerinci has made efforts to increase the acceleration of Head Lecturers and Professors."

In an in-depth interview, a higher education official spoke about measures to accelerate competency improvement in higher education:

"We provide incentives and rewards for lecturers who successfully publish research results and obtain intellectual property rights. In addition, we organize training to improve lecturers' soft and hard skills...." (A3)

"We also have special incentive and facility programs for lecturers who meet the requirements to achieve professorship faster." (A2)

"Facilitating access to advanced studies for lecturers is an important step in their academic and professional development." (A4)

"Improving lecturers' ability to master foreign languages such as Arabic and English is a priority." (A9)

Overall, the actions taken by State Islamic Institute of Kerinci reflect serious efforts to fulfil the assessors' recommendations regarding the acceleration of promotion to the rank of Associate Professor and Professor.

Recommendation Indicator: "State Islamic Institute of Kerinci's assets are optimal"

In accordance with the survey results, it shows that those who are doubtful or even disagree about the optimal use of State Islamic Institute of Kerinci assets are 61.9% (doubtful) and 14.3% (disagree). This is reasonable because the management system (HR, Finance, and Assets and Facilities) currently used and developed cannot function optimally.

In an interview describing the situation at State Islamic Institute of Kerinci, college officials expressed concern about the problems faced:

"The increasing availability of assets and facilities at IAIN Kerinci has not been fully supported by a change in mindset among lecturers and administrative staff. The organizational mindset has not grown and internalized in each individual, both lecturers and administrative staff. The impact is felt on the performance of empowering assets and facilities that are actually available." (A3)

"We believe that there is a need for additional facilities and infrastructure to support learning, laboratories, as well as an increase in the number of reference sources in the library as an effort to optimize the assets of IAIN Kerinci." (A2)

The statement reflects an awareness of the challenges faced by universities in changing organizational culture and maximizing the potential of available assets and facilities (Muadin et al., 2022; Zebua & Anwar, 2022).

Recommended Indicator: "State Islamic Institute of Kerinci has the community service Funds which increase every year"

In supporting community service funding, it is stated in the formal document of LP2M ((Research and Community Service) Strategic Plan Number 196.a of 2017. The availability of a research road map with the Chancellor's Decree number 43.a of 2018 concerning the determination of the research and community service road map for 2018-2022, there are the guidelines, namely: The community service guidelines with number 125/SK/STITI.NTB/IV/2018, and the 2018-2042 Development Master Plan 021/SK/STITI.NTB/IV/2018 concerning Determination of the community service master plan, and it is disseminated during internal meetings and through available media.

In an interview reviewing the funding situation for community service activities at State Islamic Institute of Kerinci, a university official provided an insightful view:

"Currently, IAIN Kerinci relies on several sources of funding for community service activities, including DIPA (Budget Implementation List) funds from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, sponsorship sources or grants resulting from cooperation, as well as other funding sources such as government foundations, local governments, Islamic boarding schools, BUMN/BUMD, and other institutions." (A3)

"We see that community service funds vary from year to year, indicating fluctuations in the financing of community service activities. Our assessor's recommendation is to consider a consistent increase in community service funds to ensure the sustainability and development of these activities." (A7)

"IAIN Kerinci has diverse sources of funding for community service, including support from the government, foundations, institutions, and internal institutional funds. While the diversity of funding sources is an asset, we are considering increasing DIPA funding and other funding sources to strengthen the institution's capacity to conduct broader and more meaningful community service." (A4)

"We already have a strategy for achieving standards of funding and financing for community service, including institutional support through internal funding and opportunities for lecturers to use self-funding in the community service activities. However, our assessor's recommendations encourage consideration of strengthening existing funding strategies or seeking additional funding sources." (A6)

The assessors' recommendation to increase the amount of community service funding seems reasonable, considering the variety of funds provided and the importance of community service activities in fulfilling the university's community service mission. Efforts to find more funding sources and increase financial support for community service could assist State Islamic Institute of Kerinci to continue to increase its positive impact in society.

Recommendation Indicator: “State Islamic Institute of Kerinci has complete online learning facilities and infrastructure”

The survey results showed 47.6% (doubtful) and 33.3% (disagree) that State Islamic Institute of Kerinci has complete online learning facilities and infrastructure. This shows concern or dissatisfaction with the existing infrastructure. This is reasonable, even though the Distance Education aspect has been carried out, it is still conventional (blended learning), namely during the Covid-19 pandemic using LMS, Google Classroom, online (Zoom, G-Meet).

Basically, the e-learning aspect of State Islamic Institute of Kerinci has a Learning Management System (LMS), and is supported by other online learning media such as Zoom, Google Class, Edmodo, Google Meet and others to facilitate the learning process.

In a recent interview, a representative from State Islamic Institute of Kerinci discussed the actions it has taken in response to the assessor’s recommendations regarding online learning and online learning infrastructure:

“We’ve been working hard to make sure that everyone can still learn, even though we’re all stuck at home during the pandemic! We’ve been using lots of different platforms, including LMS, Google Classroom and online apps, to make distance learning a reality. We’d love to be able to offer you even more online learning in the future” (A1)

“We’ve been using an LMS since 2019, but we’d love to do a little more evaluation to make sure it’s working well for everyone” (A2)

“We’re really happy to say that we’ve achieved our positive targets with the use of e-learning facilities, with at least 60% of our courses covered per semester. It’s also really important to make sure that lecturers and students get all the support and training they need.” (A8)

“We’re lucky to have a positive cultural environment here. Online communication is a great way to improve collaboration and engagement between campus members, and we’re committed to encouraging this.” (A5)

State Islamic Institute of Kerinci has taken several steps to deal with online learning and build infrastructure that supports it. However, the assessors’ recommendations highlight the importance of improving infrastructure and ensuring student satisfaction with online learning facilities and infrastructure (Fathonah et al., 2023). Further evaluation and improvement in this regard may be necessary to meet the expectations and needs of all stakeholders (Stratton, 2019).

Recommendation Indicator: “State Islamic Institute of Kerinci has funds to conduct research in accordance with the Research ROAD MAP”

The availability of a research roadmap with Chancellor's Decree number 43.a of 2018 concerning the determination of the Research Roadmap and community service for 2018-2022 is the basis for conducting research, but based on survey results it was 38.1% (undecided) and 14.3% (disagree) There are sufficient funds to carry out research in accordance with the Research Roadmap. This shows that there is uncertainty regarding the availability of funds.

In an interview revealing the steps State Islamic Institute of Kerinci has taken to improve research and community service, a college representative explained:

"We try to improve how education, research and community service work together. We do this by making a research plan and publishing articles in good journals. We aim to publish our research in well-known journals and get patents. This shows our commitment to sharing and using our research." (A7)

"We encourage lecturers and students to work together on research and community service. This helps students gain valuable experience." (A2)

"We believe research management governance is important for improving research efficiency and effectiveness. We have integrated Sinta, Garuda, Scopus, WoS, and Online Books into the Sister Application." (A3)

Although some positive steps have been taken, it is important to note that there are varying perceptions regarding the availability of research funding. Apart from that, achievement of targets such as the number of publications and patents needs to be monitored and evaluated regularly to ensure that State Islamic Institute of Kerinci can truly integrate education with research and community service in accordance with assessor recommendations.

Indicator's recommendation: "State Islamic Institute of Kerinci has policies, guidelines, implementation and monitoring that integrate education with research and community service."

Based on the survey results, 47.6% (doubtful) and 9.5% (disagree) stated that State Islamic Institute of Kerinci has policies, guidelines, implementation and monitoring that integrate education with research and community service, even though the integration of research and service to the community in the learning process environment has been stated in the Scientific Integration Guidebook based on Chancellor's Decree Number 85 a of 2019 concerning Determination of the *Tridharma* Integration Guidebook.

In an interview related to the assessor's recommendations and survey results regarding the integration of research and community service at State Islamic Institute of Kerinci, a college representative provided an in-depth analysis:

"We have created a guide for combining research and teaching. It is based on Chancellor's Decree No. 85a of 2019. It says that students should be involved in research and that

teaching should be based on research results. This is a good way of combining research and teaching.” (A2)

Despite the existence of policies and guidelines, the survey results show that some respondents still have doubts or disagree with the availability and implementation of these policies. This indicates a gap between existing policies and daily practices on campus. We should focus more on the understanding and implementation of existing policies.

“Some lecturers are unhappy about the new policy.” (A5)

“We need evidence to show how research and community service are being used and improved.” This includes evidence about students helping lecturers with research, using research in learning, and the results of internal quality audits and monitoring. We need to collect and monitor evidence more effectively. We have also identified that SPMI related to monitoring and evaluating the integration of research and community service. This shows that we are working to improve the monitoring and evaluation system. However, we must ensure that monitoring SPMI is a priority to better measure and improve the integration of research and community service.” (A6)

State Islamic Institute of Kerinci can take steps such as increasing awareness and understanding of existing policies and guidelines among academic staff and students. Ensure policy implementation is in line with guidelines. First, by actively collect evidence related to the implementation of community service research and integration, and use the results of internal quality audits and monitoring and evaluation as a tool to continuously improve the quality of integration. Ensuring the Internal Quality Assurance System (SPMI) regarding monitoring and evaluation of research and community service integration is quickly completed and implemented effectively to ensure good monitoring of this integration.

Recommendation Indicator: "State Islamic Institute of Kerinci has implemented a policy of integrating research products into learning."

Based on survey results regarding the implementation of the policy for integrating research products into learning, it was 47.6% (doubtful) and 9.5% (disagree).

In a recent interview, a representative from State Islamic Institute of Kerinci discussed the steps the university has taken in implementing the policy of integrating research into learning:

“We use lecturers' research and service in learning. Some lecturers have created textbooks or teaching materials based on their research, which can improve learning. This is a good step towards integrating research into education.” (A1)

“We have evaluated the quality of learning, for example through student satisfaction surveys. This helps us see if research is working. Student feedback helps us improve

teaching methods and integrate research into the curriculum. Working with students on research and community service is a good thing. It helps integrate the three main areas of higher education (education, research, and community service) and lets students take part in research relevant to their field of study." (A6)

"We can do more to get lecturers involved in group research with students. This will help students learn more and get more involved in research." (A7)

In this context, State Islamic Institute of Kerinci has taken positive steps by integrating research results into learning. However, there are still challenges related to lecturer participation in group research involving students. Increasing collaboration between lecturers and students in research and ensuring the integration of research into a broader and deeper curriculum are steps that can be taken to increase the integration of research into education.

Recommendation Indicator: "State Islamic Institute of Kerinci has formed a research group and is also working to increase the intensity of human resource involvement in national research networks and international competitiveness."

Based on the results of respondents' answers regarding research groups that seek to increase the intensity of involvement of human resources (lecturers/students) in national and internationally competitive research networks, namely 42.9% (undecided) and 19% (disagree).

In an interview, a representative from State Islamic Institute of Kerinci discussed the university's efforts in dealing with the assessor's recommendations and strengthening the existence of research groups and the intensity of human resource (HR) involvement in national research networks and international competitiveness:

"We have set up research groups and labs, with rules set out in the rector's decree. This helps build the research infrastructure needed for research." (A3)

"State Islamic Institute of Kerinci research groups are involved in local and national research networks. We work with other groups to make our research more wide-ranging and influential." (A1)

"We have published our research in international journals. We want to contribute to science and make our research results accessible to the wider community." (A7)

"We know there are still challenges in creating research results that compete internationally. We are working to improve the quality of our research to achieve international competitiveness. Our efforts to discuss research results in Management Review Meetings (RTM) involving university leaders and other stakeholders is a step in the right direction. We also engage external stakeholders in external benchmarking to gain valuable insights and recommendations." (A4)

Overall, State Islamic Institute of Kerinci has taken positive initial steps in developing research infrastructure, building research networks, and publishing research results. However, there are still challenges that need to be overcome regarding the international competitiveness of research results (Nulhaqim et al., 2016).

It is important to continue to develop strategies that can improve the quality and impact of research produced by the State Islamic Institute of Kerinci research group and utilize recommendations from the RTM for further improvements.

Recommendation Indicator: "State Islamic Institute of Kerinci has and has implemented programs that can support the competitiveness of lecturers in obtaining research grants."

Based on the survey results regarding State Islamic Institute of Kerinci having and implementing programs that can support the competitiveness of lecturers in obtaining research grants, it is 38.1% (doubtful) and 19% (disagree). In an interview, representatives from State Islamic Institute of Kerinci discussed the university's efforts in supporting lecturers' competitiveness in obtaining research grants and overcoming challenges that may exist:

We help lecturers get research and community service grants by working with partners in other countries. This is good because it helps lecturers get more research funding and do more relevant research. We also have grantees from other institutions. This shows that lecturers can get research funding from different places. We look for grants from different sources to support lecturers' research. (A4)

"Lecturer productivity in producing research sourced from IAIN Kerinci's DIPA fluctuates due to dependence on the operational assistance for State Universities. This shows that the availability of research funds depends on central allocation, which affects grant funds for lecturers. We are working to ensure research funds are consistently available. We have seen more lecturers receiving research grants each year. This shows that IAIN Kerinci is supporting lecturer research." (A1)

Although there are several differences of opinion regarding programs that support the competitiveness of lecturers in obtaining research grants, steps such as increasing the number of grant recipients and establishing collaboration with national and international partners are positive steps in efforts to support research at State Islamic Institute of Kerinci. Further evaluation is needed to identify causes of disagreement or doubt about the survey results and ensure that the programs are effective in achieving their goals faculty research (Zebua & Anwar, 2022).

Recommendation Indicator: "IAIN Kerinci has a real program to empower lecturers to obtain external research grants."

Based on a survey regarding State Islamic Institute of Kerinci having a real program to empower lecturers in obtaining research grant funds from external sources, it showed 42.9% (doubtful) and 28.6% (disagree). The survey results show that some respondents still doubt or disagree with the existence of these programs. This may indicate that existing programs have not provided significant results in supporting lecturers in obtaining research grants from external sources. Although there are efforts to empower lecturers to obtain research grant funds from external sources, namely:

- (1) Number of Research Lecturers: Although State Islamic Institute of Kerinci has a significant number of research lecturers during the 2019-2021 period, most of this research is not funded by external parties or foreign funds. This shows that most research funding comes from internal sources, such as Operational Assistance for State Universities (BOPTN), and not much external support is received;
- (2) External Cooperation and Funding Sources: external cooperation is still lacking, and funding sources from foreign institutions are very limited. This can be an obstacle in obtaining research grant funding from external sources. To increase lecturer empowerment in this regard, further efforts are needed by expanding collaboration with external institutions and seeking more diverse funding sources;
- (3) Efforts Made by LP2M (Research and Community Service): It has made several efforts such as holding meetings, workshops and socializing research funding offers which are positive steps in supporting lecturers to obtain external research grants. However, the effectiveness of these efforts needs to be further evaluated to ensure that lecturers are truly benefiting and that more research is funded by external sources.

Overall, the assessors' recommendations highlight the challenges faced by State Islamic Institute of Kerinci in obtaining research grants from external sources and external collaboration. Although several efforts have been made, there is still room to improve the lecturer empowerment program in this regard. Further evaluation and development of more effective strategies can help overcome these challenges and improve lecturers' ability to obtain external research grants.

Recommendation Indicator: "State Islamic Institute of Kerinci has a program to encourage lecturers to obtain research funding from third parties"

Based on the survey results regarding State Islamic Institute of Kerinci having a leading lecturer program to obtain research funding from third parties, the answers were 52.4% (doubtful) and 19% (disagree). The survey results showed that the majority of respondents were still doubtful or did not agree with the existence of this program.

This suggests that despite efforts to direct lecturers to obtain research funding from third parties, there are still doubts or disagreements regarding the effectiveness of the program.

In an interview, a representative from State Islamic Institute of Kerinci discussed the university's efforts in securing third-party research funding and the steps it has taken:

"We have set up a network of cooperation through a campus development proposal. These have been accepted by different groups, including the government and private agencies, both at home and abroad. A big network of cooperation helps get third-party research funding. Working with other groups could help us get research money. Some lecturers

have received research grants from foreign universities, but there are still few of them. We are trying to get more research money from other people and places.” (A4)

“We are working with other universities in the area, country and around the world. This can help lecturers get money for their research, especially if we work together on a project.” (A3)

The assessors' recommendations show that although State Islamic Institute of Kerinci has attempted to direct lecturers to obtain research funding from third parties (Zebua & Anwar, 2022), there are still doubts and challenges in achieving this goal. Further evaluation of existing programs and further efforts are needed to increase collaboration with external parties to support lecturer research.

After obtaining quantitative and qualitative data, the data will be analysed using SWOT analysis to see weaknesses and challenges, opportunities and strengths so that it is hoped that it will produce recommendations for a priority scale for improvements which - from the negative answers - will be carried out by the government. related agencies in fulfilling sub-indicator criteria which are still weak.

Table 3. SWOT Summary of Qualitative Data Analysis

SWOT Analysis	
	Strength
Internal	(1) Low level of respondents' trust in quality assurance. and some respondents' disagreement with various programs and policies.
	(2) Funding and incentive challenges.
	(3) Variability and uncertainty in fund allocation.
	(4) Negative perception
	Weakness
Internal	(1) Low level of respondents' trust in quality assurance
	(2) Funding and incentive challenges.
	(3) Variability and uncertainty in fund allocation.
	(4) Negative perceptions and disagreements of some respondents with various programs and policies
	Opportunity
External	(1) Increased communication, understanding and training regarding quality policies.
	(2) Increasing incentives, funding and lecturer qualifications.
	(3) Evaluation and consolidation of various programs and improvement of resources and facilities.
	(4) Better integration of education and research.
	Threat
External	(1) Potential reduction in quality and quality assurance of research.
	(2) Uncertainty in the availability and competition of funding sources.
	(3) Challenges in achieving international competitiveness and higher accreditation rankings.
	(4) Potential regulatory changes and reductions budget from centre.

Source: SWOT Qualitative Data Analysis

This institution has the strength and opportunity to improve the quality of education and research as well as quality assurance, but is also faced with a number of challenges that must be overcome to achieve these goals. Effective evaluation and monitoring as well as collaborative efforts of all parties will be important in dealing with threats and exploiting opportunities.



Figure 2: Novelty of Findings

Figure 2 describes a critical pathway in the quality development of Islamic higher education through the lens of accreditation recommendations. It highlights that the effective utilization of accreditation recommendations directly contributes to the improvement of higher education quality. Conversely, failure to implement these recommendations results in detrimental consequences, including a decline in program quality and institutional reputation, missed opportunities for enhancement and better accreditation status, as well as damage to student relations and instability in academic policies. This framework underscores the essential role of accreditation as a strategic tool for continuous quality assurance and institutional development in Islamic higher education institutions. By systematically applying accreditation feedback, Islamic universities and colleges can foster sustainable academic excellence, strengthen their institutional image, and ensure stable governance, thereby advancing their educational mission in alignment with both academic and Islamic values.

This study found that State Islamic Institute of Kerinci has utilized accreditation recommendations to improve the quality of higher education through leadership commitment, quality system development, improved lecturer qualifications, and integrated of the three pillars of education. However, challenges such as low trust in quality assurance, funding, and negative perceptions of the program still exist, in addition to threats such as declining research quality and international competition. Opportunities include strengthening communication, training, improving incentives and collaboration networks.

Ignoring the recommendations of accreditation results can lead to a decline in study programs' quality, which impacts the institution's reputation and competitiveness in the education market (Aldhaen & Braendle, 2023). Without utilizing the recommendations, institutions would overlook opportunities to enhance their educational standards, commitment and address deficiencies (Martoyo & Amara, 2024). In addition, ignoring recommendations can damage relationships with students, especially if they feel the quality of their education is not being taken care of, and create tension and instability in academic policies (Leal Filho, 2019; Simangunsong, 2019). The research recommendations themselves include improving internal communication, funding, and program evaluation to optimize accreditation outcomes and create quality higher education.

CONCLUSION

The State Islamic Institute of Kerinci has benefited from the recommendation results and has received the accreditation with good outcome. This can be seen from the respondents who are strongly agree and agree (positive statements) which had a percentage of 67%, while the negative statements of 33% were a form of not taking benefit from the assessor's recommendations. Further, the institution has taken positive steps to implement accreditation recommendations for improving the quality of higher education. These include a strong commitment from leadership and the academic community, the development of a sustainable quality assurance system, efforts to enhance lecturer qualifications, and positive initiatives to integrate the three pillars of education. However, there are some challenges, such as a lack of confidence in quality assurance, funding concerns, variations in allocation, and unfavourable perceptions of programs and policies. Opportunities lie in improving communication, understanding, and training on quality policies, as well as enhancing incentives, funding, and lecturer qualifications. Potential threats include a decline in research quality, funding uncertainty, competition on the international stage, and regulatory changes. Recommendations for improvement include better internal communication and training, increasing incentives and funding, program evaluation, expanding collaborative networks, and addressing challenges. Further research is needed to fully utilize accreditation recommendations for quality improvement in higher education.

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