

REGULATORY REVIEW ON LAM INDEPENDENCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION ACCREDITATION IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

The higher education accreditation system in Indonesia has undergone changes with the introduction of the Independent Accreditation Institute (LAM) as an independent body responsible for assessing the quality of study programs. However, the independence and accountability of LAM is still a debate, especially related to government intervention in setting accreditation standards and reporting mechanisms for accreditation results to the Ministry of Education and Culture. This research aims to analyze the extent to which LAM has autonomy in ensuring the quality of higher education and how its accountability mechanism to the government is. The research method used is literature review by analyzing regulations, academic journals, and relevant policy reports. Data is collected from national and international sources that discuss the independence and accountability of accreditation bodies. The results of the study show that LAM is not yet fully independent, because the accreditation standards made still need to get approval from the government. In addition, the automatic accreditation extension policy reduces the role of LAM in assessing the quality of study programs. In terms of accountability, LAM is required to report accreditation results to the government, but the reporting mechanism is still not uniform and is not supervised by external audits. Thus, although LAM is designed as an independent institution, in practice there is still control from the government that limits the authority of LAM, as well as an accountability system that still needs to be improved to be more transparent and accountable.

Keywords: Independent Accreditation Institutions (LAM), Education Regulation, Higher Education

1. Introduction

Accreditation of higher education is one of the main mechanisms in ensuring the quality of institutions and study programs in Indonesia (Pramana et al. 2021). In recent years, the accreditation system has undergone significant changes with the introduction of the Independent Accreditation Institute (LAM) as an alternative for universities in obtaining accreditation, replacing the single role of the National Accreditation Board for Higher Education (BAN-PT) (National Accreditation Board for Higher Education 2020). This policy aims to increase the flexibility and effectiveness of accreditation, especially by giving authority to LAMs based on certain sciences and professions to conduct more specific education quality assessments. However, while this idea brings many opportunities, various issues have arisen regarding the independence and accountability of LAM, which raises concerns among academics, stakeholders, and higher education institutions.

One of the main challenges faced is the independence of the Independent Accreditation Institute (LAM) in the accreditation process. Although LAM regulations are given flexibility in carrying out their duties, there are still loopholes that allow intervention from various parties, including the government, professional associations, and industry (Muktiyanto 2016; Sari 2021). Some LAMs have close ties to certain professional associations, which raises concerns that the

accreditation process is not entirely objective, but can be influenced by the interests of certain groups (Dirwan 2020; Lubis 2013).

On the other hand, the accountability of LAM accreditation results to the government is also still an issue that has not been fully resolved. One of the main problems is the lack of a uniform standard mechanism in reporting and evaluating accreditation results to the government, causing differences in policy implementation in various institutions (Wijiharjono 2021). In addition, the lack of transparency in the delivery of accreditation results to policy makers leads to lack of clarity in strategic decision-making in the higher education sector. The government often encounters obstacles in objectively monitoring whether the accreditation standards applied by LAM truly reflect the expected quality of education or are actually influenced by external factors (Khalilah 2022b).

The impact of accreditation policies on universities also needs to be a concern. With the enactment of the LAM-based accreditation system, universities are faced with new challenges in adapting to evolving policies. These challenges show that strengthening regulations related to LAM's independence and accountability is very important to ensure that the accreditation system really functions to improve the quality of higher education, not just as an administrative process. This study aims to examine how the current regulations regulate the independence and accountability of LAM, as well as whether the mechanism implemented is sufficiently transparent and accountable. In addition, this study will also explore the impact of LAM-based accreditation policies on universities in Indonesia, by looking at how educational institutions adapt to regulatory changes that occur.

2. Methods

This study uses *the literature review method* to analyze regulations related to the independence and accountability of Independent Accreditation Institutions (LAM) in the higher education accreditation system in Indonesia (Hadi and Afandi, 2021). This study was conducted by collecting and analyzing various laws and regulations, government policies, and relevant academic literature. The main sources studied include Law Number 12 of 2012 concerning Higher Education, Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 5 of 2020, and other regulations governing the LAM accreditation system. In addition, this research also examines scientific journals, research reports, and academic articles that discuss the concept of independence and accountability in higher education accreditation. The analysis was carried out in a descriptive manner, by examining the content of regulations and literature to understand how existing rules govern LAM and identify potential challenges in its implementation. From the results of this study, the research will compile key findings and policy recommendations to strengthen the higher education accreditation system in Indonesia.

3. Results and Discussion

Independensi LAM dalam Akreditasi Pendidikan Tinggi

Independent Accreditation Institute (LAM) as an accreditation system institution in Indonesia. LAM has full independence in determining the results of study program accreditation. In terms of regulations, Permendikbud No. 5 of 2020 has mandated that LAM is responsible for the assessment of the quality of study programs based on the standards compiled by each LAM in accordance with its scientific field. This regulation explicitly gives LAM the authority to conduct accreditation independently, different from the previous centralistic model which was under the National Accreditation Board for Higher Education (BAN-PT). However, a literature

review shows that in practice, LAM is still not completely independent from government intervention in determining accreditation standards and results (Septiawan G 2021).

One form of government intervention found is the involvement of the Ministry of Education and Culture in setting accreditation standards applied by LAM (Khalilah 2022a). Every standard developed by LAM must obtain approval from the government before it can be used in the accreditation process (BAN-PT 2023a). This means that even though LAM has the flexibility to compile quality criteria based on certain scientific fields, these standards must still be evaluated and approved by the Ministry of Education and Culture. This mechanism opens up space for government intervention in determining how a study program is assessed in the accreditation system, so that LAM's independence in ensuring the quality of higher education is not fully guaranteed.

The approval mechanism of this accreditation standard is not only administrative, but can also affect the substance of the accreditation assessment. The standards proposed by LAM need to be approved by the government to strengthen certain sectors in higher education. This indicates that even though LAM has autonomy in carrying out accreditation, the government still has control over the criteria and aspects assessed in the accreditation of study programs (Fadhli 2020).

In addition to interventions in accreditation standards, another form of government involvement found in this study is the automatic accreditation renewal mechanism set by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Based on (BAN-PT 2023b), universities with a good academic track record can obtain an automatic extension of accreditation status without going through a direct evaluation process by LAM. This regulation is implemented with the aim of simplifying the accreditation process and reducing the administrative burden for universities that already have stable performance. This shows that this policy reduces the role of LAM in determining the accreditation status of higher education, because the decision to extend accreditation is made based on administrative evaluations under the Ministry of Education and Culture, not by LAM as the institution responsible for the accreditation of study programs.

In comparison with the previous accreditation system under BAN-PT, the LAM model does provide greater flexibility in assessing the quality of study programs based on their respective disciplines. However, if LAM still has to rely on standard approval from the government, as well as face regulations such as automatic accreditation that can reduce its role, then LAM's independence in determining the quality of study programs independently is still not fully realized. Although autonomy is given by regulation, in practice the government still has a role in approving accreditation standards made by LAM, as well as in determining accreditation status through an automatic renewal policy. This indicates that the LAM-based accreditation system still needs to strengthen clearer regulations to ensure that this institution truly has autonomy in carrying out its duties.

LAM's Accountability to the Government and its Reporting Mechanism

Accountability is one of the main principles in the higher education accreditation system. The Independent Accreditation Institute (LAM) as an independent body responsible for the accreditation of study programs in Indonesia has the obligation to report the results of accreditation that have been carried out to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology.

In terms of regulations, Permendikbud No. 5 of 2020 states that LAM is obliged to submit an accreditation report to the Directorate General of Higher Education (Kemendikbud 2020).

This report includes data on accredited study programs, the results of accreditation assessments (accreditation rankings), and recommendations for study programs based on the results of the evaluation. With this obligation, the Ministry of Education and Culture still has a role as a supervisory body for LAM activities, even though LAM has the status of an independent institution (Ministry of Education and Culture 2023).

In addition, a study by Nasution (2023) shows that LAMs are not required to submit their reports to the public, but only to the government. This causes limitations in the aspect of transparency, because universities and the general public do not have access to the results of accreditation that have been carried out by LAM. In fact, in the principle of good accreditation governance, the results of accreditation should be accessible to all interested parties, so that there is clearer accountability regarding how accreditation decisions are made and how LAM evaluates accredited study programs.

Based on (BAN-PT 2022), there is monitoring and evaluation of the performance of the Independent Accreditation Institute (LAM). The report submitted by LAM to the Ministry of Education and Culture is only an administrative report, without a supervisory mechanism that ensures that the accreditation results provided by LAM are truly objective and in accordance with the standards that have been set.

LAM does not yet have a clear performance evaluation mechanism. Although in theory LAM has an obligation to report the results of accreditation carried out, there is no system that allows the government to assess the effectiveness of LAM in carrying out its duties. This has the potential to lead to inconsistencies in inter-LAM accreditation standards, as there is no mechanism to measure whether LAMs are truly implementing transparent and accountable accreditation principles. In practice, the reporting process carried out by LAM to the Ministry of Education and Culture can be categorized in several stages.

However, from the results of this study, it was found that the evaluation conducted by the Ministry of Education and Culture on the LAM report was more administrative than substantive. There is no mechanism that allows the government to assess the quality of accreditation that has been carried out by LAM, and there is no audit system that can ensure that the results of the accreditation provided are in accordance with the principle of accountability. This is a gap in the accreditation system, because LAM can carry out accreditation with different standards, without a strong evaluation mechanism from the government.

5. Conclusion

Based on the results of the research, it was found that LAM in Indonesia still faces challenges in terms of independence and accountability. Although it is given the status of an independent institution, in practice LAM is not completely free from government intervention, especially in the approval of accreditation standards, automatic accreditation renewal policies, and dependence on funding from the Ministry of Education and Culture. This shows that the accreditation system implemented still does not fully provide flexibility for LAM in determining the quality assurance of study programs independently.

In terms of accountability, LAM is required to report accreditation results to the Ministry of Education and Culture, but the reporting mechanism is still not uniform, transparency is still limited, and there is no external audit to ensure that the accreditation results are truly objective and accountable. Universities and the academic community also do not have full access to the accreditation reports that have been carried out, thus reducing the level of trust in the applicable accreditation system.

In order for the LAM-based accreditation system to be more effective, more stringent regulatory improvements are needed to ensure that LAM is truly independent in determining accreditation standards without having to go through government approval. In addition, the reporting system must be more transparent and supervised by independent institutions, and the funding mechanism must be more flexible so that LAM does not depend on the government budget. With these steps, it is hoped that the accreditation system in Indonesia can be more credible, transparent, and oriented towards improving the quality of higher education.

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