Quality Assurance of the Assessment Process in Brunei Darussalam Vocational and Technical Education: Stakeholders’ Perceptions and Future Challenges

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This dissertation is presented for the degree of Doctor of Education of Murdoch University
I declare that this dissertation is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution

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(Haji Ashri bin Haji Ahmad)
ABSTRACT

‘Quality’ and ‘quality assurance’ in education have become global issues in the last decade. Educational institutions around the world are focusing on designing and implementing quality assurance systems to ensure students a high quality of education. In many countries, including Brunei Darussalam, the development of a national system of quality assurance in education has sometimes brought confusion and controversy. The main reason for this stems from the conflicting perspectives of different interest groups: mainly governments, administrators and academic staff, but students, employers and the general public also have significant voices. All, of course, are committed to quality but each regards quality in a slightly different way.

This study set out to explore the perceptions of two groups of stakeholders, administrators and teachers, about the quality assurance system and in particular, the quality assurance of the assessment process in vocational and technical education (VTE) in Brunei Darussalam. The study examined the stakeholders’ understanding of the term quality and the significance of quality assurance measures. It assessed the extent to which these measures have been utilised by the Department of Technical Education (DTE) and its Vocational and Technical Education Institutions (VTEIs) and it also examined the challenges facing DTE and its VTEIs in ensuring quality VTE.

A mixed-method research approach was used in this investigation, including document analysis, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. The results provide insights into stakeholders’ perceptions of quality and a range of purposes for quality assurance system implementation. The effectiveness of the current system
based on an external moderation system generated mixed views. The study identified the lack of a structured comprehensive quality assurance system for the assessment process in the DTE and VTEIs and highlighted ways in which quality assurance of the assessment process measures are currently formulated. Both groups of stakeholders agreed that there are challenges confronting the DTE and its VTEIs. Several recommendations were made to improve the current quality assurance measures. The study was timely in light of the increased interest in shaping quality assurance mechanisms in VTE in Brunei Darussalam.

Overall this study carries implications for a better understanding of quality in VTE and issues related to the implementation of a quality assurance system.
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