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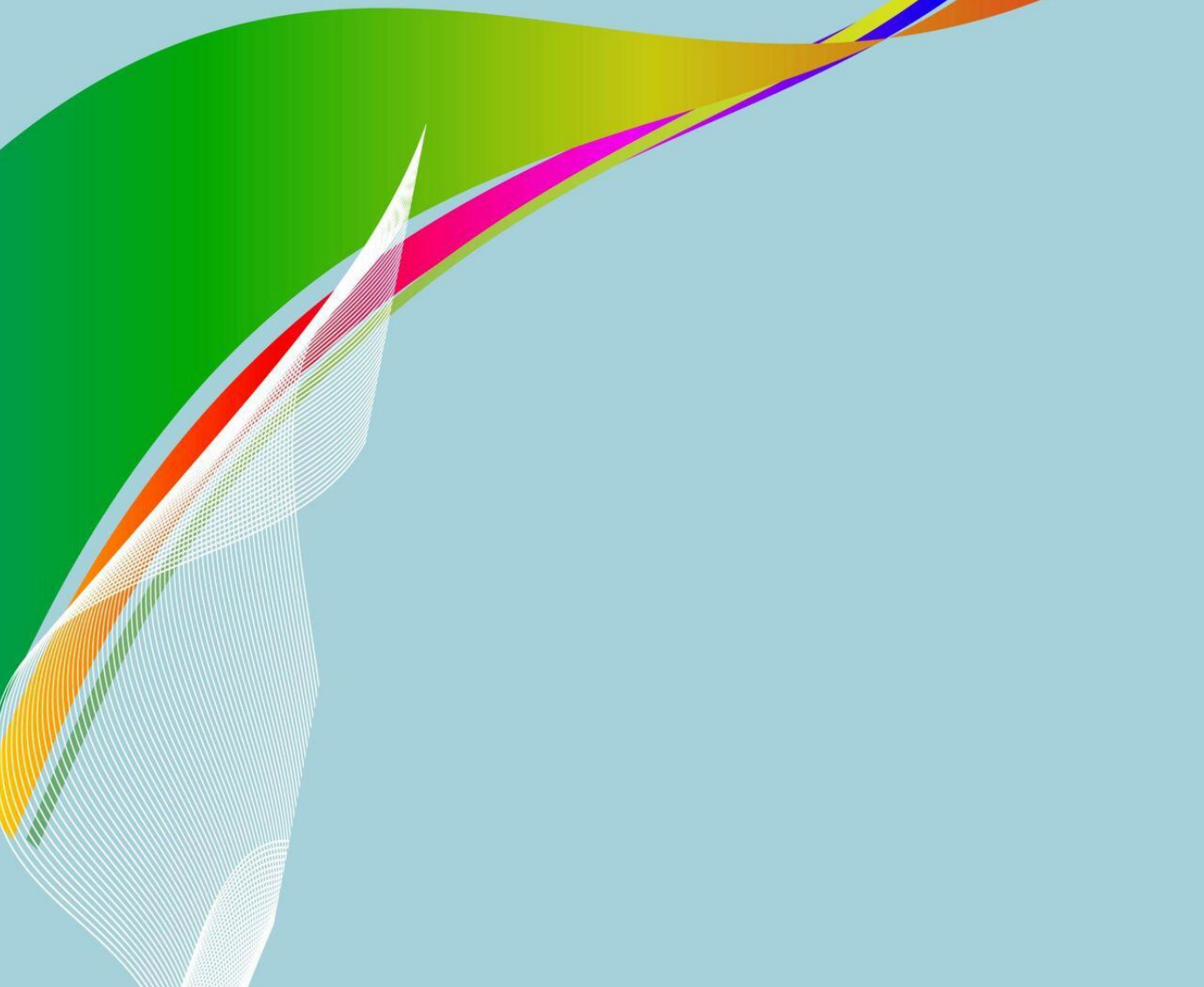
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**Improving Lecturer Competence to Encourage
Innovation and Creativity In Learning**

**Syahrul Riza¹; Muhammad Syarif²; Fuadi Mardatillah³;
Abdul Jalil Salam⁴; Wahyu Khafidah⁵; M. Yusuf⁶**

^{1,3,4,6}Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, Indonesia

^{2,5}Universitas Serambi Mekkah, Banda Aceh, Indonesia

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IMPROVING LECTURER COMPETENCE TO ENCOURAGE INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY IN LEARNING

Syahrul Riza¹; Muhammad Syarif²; Fuadi Mardatillah³;
Abdul Jalil Salam ⁴; Wahyu Khafidah⁵; M. Yusuf⁶

^{1,3,4,6}Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, Indonesia

^{2,5}Universitas Serambi Mekkah, Banda Aceh, Indonesia

¹Contributor Email: syahrul.riza@ar-raniry.ac.id

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Abstract

This research aimed at identifying the challenges faced by higher education institutions, particularly in terms of the quality of educational staff such as lecturers and exploring efforts that can be undertaken to enhance lecturer competence in supporting the quality of higher education. This study employed a qualitative research method with a descriptive approach. The subject of this research was the Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara. Data collection techniques involved observation and interviews with the university's leadership, faculty deans, program directors, and lecturers. Meanwhile, data analysis in this study was carried out cyclically, consisting of three simultaneous activities: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verifying the data. The findings revealed several challenges in enhancing lecturer competence, such as rapid technological changes, student diversity, and balancing teaching, research, and administrative duties. However, various efforts have been made to address these challenges. The higher education institution has launched competency development programs encompassing training, academic mentoring, relevant curriculum development, and industry collaboration. Improving lecturer competence will benefit students and the institution, help accelerate the overall development of higher education institutions, and help achieve national development goals.

Keywords: Challenges; Lecturer Competence; Higher Education; Learning.



A. Introduction

Education is the most crucial element in shaping Indonesian society to achieve success and compete in a healthy and positive manner in everyday life (Aspi & Syahrani, 2022). In the concept of community development, education is dynamic in human development. Education does not only play a role in transferring knowledge but also functions to develop abilities, shape character, and foster a dignified national civilization in order to enlighten the life of the nation, aiming for the development of students potential to become individuals who are faithful and devoted to the One Almighty God, noble in character, healthy, knowledgeable, skilled, creative, independent, democratic, and responsible citizens (Rabiah, 2019).

Higher education, as part of the national education system, plays a strategic role in enlightening the nation's life (Syahrani et al., 2022) and advancing knowledge and technology while considering and applying human values, culture, and national empowerment (Novita and Yulianti, 2020). Higher education is a platform for gaining more profound knowledge and where individuals can develop the skills, attitudes, and values needed to confront global challenges (Winarsih, 2017). Through higher education, Indonesian society can access intellectual resources and research infrastructure that enable them to contribute to developing science and technology locally and globally (Rabiah, 2019).

Furthermore, higher education also plays a role in shaping individual character and personality. According to Gast et al. (2017), students can develop their social skills, critical thinking abilities, and professional ethics through interactions with lecturers and peers. Humanitarian values instilled in higher education help build empathy, tolerance, and concern for social issues society faces (Sofii & Salik, 2022; Gast et al., 2017). Therefore, higher education creates academically intelligent graduates and those with integrity and commitment to the common good.

In line with this, it is undeniable that higher education also has significant economic impacts. Competent and quality graduates from



higher education institutions have the potential to drive the economy, either as entrepreneurs or skilled workers (Herodotou et al., 2019). They can apply the knowledge and skills acquired in the real world, drive the industrial sector, and enhance national economic competitiveness (Poerwanto & Shambodo, 2020).

Therefore, to ensure that higher education institutions can fulfil their strategic role in bringing positive change to society and the nation, it is essential to continuously improve the quality of the higher education system. This includes enhancing teaching quality, developing relevant curricula aligned with the times, investing in research infrastructure and laboratories, and supporting lecturers and students to maximize their potential (Faisal et al., 2021). This way, higher education institutions will remain the backbone of sustainable development and the well-being of the Indonesian nation.

Higher education, as an institution of higher education, plays a significant role in the national development framework, including Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI). In this context, Effendi (2003) stated that higher education institutions play a significant role in national development by carrying out two main tasks. First, the task of education is to produce individuals capable of mastering knowledge and technology. Second, the role of education as a locomotive in driving national development and preparing prospective national leaders' efforts to prepare quality human resources requires continuous improvement in education quality (Faisal et al., 2021).

However, several challenges need to be addressed to optimize the role of higher education institutions. One central aspect is the quality of educational personnel, including lecturers and academic staff (Hamalik, 2003). Investment in developing lecturers' professionalism and competence is essential, given their role in shaping students' educational experiences and the quality of human resources produced (Shibuya et al., 2022; Sinambela, 2017). An overall improvement in education quality should go hand in hand with efforts to improve the calibre of lecturers.



This includes the development of relevant curricula in line with the times, investment in research facilities and laboratories, and student support in developing their potential (Faisal et al., 2021).

Recognizing the importance of educational personnel in improving quality, higher education institutions need to pay special attention to developing professionalism and competence among lecturers and academic staff (Hidayatullah & Hidayanto, 2023). Training programs, curriculum development, research, and collaboration with educational and industrial institutions can help improve the quality of educational personnel (Habiburrahim, 2017). Thus, higher education institutions can fulfil their role as drivers of national development by providing quality and globally competitive human resources.

Lecturers are essential components of the higher education system. The performance of lecturers impacts not only the quality of human resources produced but also the overall quality of students' educational experiences (Rafida, 2017). Therefore, lecturers need to have competence and proficiency to optimize their role in the teaching process.

However, lecturers' competence only sometimes aligns with professionalism in their work. It is noted that many lecturers still face challenges in building adequate competence and professional skills (Núñez-Canal et al., 2022; Yanti, 2018). Tang (2018) noted that lecturers' level of professionalism and competence generally has not reached its maximum potential. Observations made by Semiawan (2008) indicate that lecturers play a primary role in the classroom, but a passive attitude still dominates among students. The fact that the quality of lecturers is not yet optimal is also evident in data from the Directorate General of Higher Education (2002).

To overcome these challenges, efforts are needed to improve the quality of lecturers' competence. Programs for developing lecturer competence, education training, and increased academic mentoring can help support the development of lecturers into more effective educators, becoming superior human resources (Laili et al., 2022; Asih, 2022; Gusdwisari, 2020; Ramdhan &

Siregar, 2019). The fulfilment of competence and the enhancement of the quality of human resources can be achieved through formal and informal education and training (Gusdwisari, 2020; Asih, 2022).

Competence is also seen as someone considered an expert in their field (Ekowati & Arianto, 2022; Mustaan & Hamdi, 2022). In addition, a broad and deep mastery of the subject matter allows one to be deemed a professional lecturer. It enables them to guide students to fulfil their obligations to meet the competency standards applied in national education standards (Atmawati et al., 2017; Baharun & Adhimah, 2019). With competence, an individual can perform their job and deliver good performance.

Several previous studies have indicated that competence significantly and positively affects lecturer performance (Shaputra & Hendriani, 2015; Deswarta, 2017; Darwis et al., 2018; Novita & Yulianti, 2020), although a study by Zulpriyadi et al. (2022) found that lecturer competence does not influence lecturer performance.

In achieving higher education goals, lecturers' performance as educators with excellent performance is crucial (Gusdwisari, 2020). Performance is central to any organization's efforts to achieve desired results. Therefore, it becomes the focus and rationale for every good human resource manager to conduct an evaluation that will optimize each lecturer's performance (Sinollah et al., 2020).

This study aims to identify challenges faced by higher education, particularly in terms of the quality of educational personnel such as lecturers, and to explore efforts that can be undertaken to enhance lecturer competence in supporting the quality of higher education. This research reveals the potential impact of competence improvement on lecturer performance as educators in improving the quality of education in higher education and achieving national development goals.

B. Method

This research employs a qualitative research method with a descriptive approach. This approach allows researchers to identify



challenges in improving lecturer competence and explore efforts that can be made to enhance the quality of higher education (Walidin et al., 2015). The subject of this study is the Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara. Data collection techniques involve observation and interviews related to improving lecturer competence, the quality of higher education, and the role of higher education in national development.

The researcher aims to conduct interviews with parties that can provide the necessary information for this study. These parties include university leaders, faculty leaders, study program leaders, and lecturers. Additionally, data collection is conducted by searching literature in scholarly journal databases, digital libraries, and reliable online sources.

Data analysis is performed by organizing data, breaking it down into units, synthesizing it, identifying patterns, selecting what is essential and to be studied, and drawing conclusions that can be communicated to others (Walidin et al., 2015).

Data analysis in this study is conducted cyclically to address the formulated research questions. The data analysis consists of three concurrent activities: data reduction, presentation, and verification. Relevant findings related to challenges in improving lecturer competence and efforts to enhance the quality of higher education will be identified and analyzed.

C. Result and Discussion

This section will discuss the findings and analysis we have conducted regarding the research issue. Faced with various complexities within the education process, higher education institutions play a pivotal role in facilitating the development of lecturer competencies to achieve higher educational standards. Our analysis results outline various aspects, including the challenges encountered, potential efforts that can be undertaken, and the anticipated positive impacts of improving lecturer competencies. Through thorough exploration, we have identified tangible steps that can be taken to create a more effective and productive educational environment. The following provides further elaboration on the findings and discussion of this analysis.

1. Challenges in Enhancing Lecturer Competence

Enhancing lecturer competence is crucial to ensure that lecturers possess the qualifications, skills, and knowledge necessary to provide quality education to students. Challenges in this context are diverse and complex, involving technological advancements, shifts in educational paradigms, and institutional and individual challenges. To confront these challenges, educational institutions and lecturers must collaborate to develop effective strategies and solutions. Enhancing lecturer competence is a long-term investment that will positively impact the quality of education and student development. Based on the results of an interview with one of the informants, it is explained that:

“The challenges of enhancing lecturer competence are issues currently being faced. Rapid technological changes have become one of our main obstacles. Lecturers need to constantly update their knowledge about educational technology in order to effectively integrate it into the learning process. Furthermore, the shift towards a more interactive and collaborative educational paradigm presents a significant challenge as well. Lecturers need to develop new skills to facilitate more active and student-centered learning” (NA1).

In the context of technological advancements, lecturers must keep up with the latest trends and update their knowledge of educational technology to utilize it in teaching effectively. The idea of TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge) directs the integration of educational technology into learning and states that lecturers must combine an understanding of the subject matter, teaching strategies, and appropriate technology (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). By understanding how technology can support learning, lecturers can create more interactive and dynamic learning experiences.

The shift in educational paradigms towards a more interactive and collaborative approach reflects the principles of social constructivism developed by Vygotsky. Vygotsky emphasized the importance of social interaction and collaboration in learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Lecturers can



implement this principle by designing learning activities that involve group discussions, collaborative projects, and the sharing of ideas among students.

In order to navigate this paradigm shift, lecturers need to develop strong facilitation skills. Shulman explained that lecturers should know how to design meaningful learning experiences, provide constructive feedback, and facilitate in-depth discussions (Shulman, 1986). These skills support student-centred learning, where students are more actively engaged in their learning processes.

Furthermore, the diversity of students also becomes an essential factor that requires serious attention from lecturers. The results of an interview with a source highlight the importance of acknowledging student diversity in the teaching context. The source explained that:

“The diversity of students is a factor that cannot be ignored by lecturers. In an increasingly diverse higher education environment, each student brings different backgrounds, experiences, and learning styles. This poses real challenges in delivering instructional material effectively. Lecturers need to have a profound understanding of these various differences and how to address them in teaching. An inclusive approach becomes the primary key”. (NA2).

In increasingly diverse higher education, each student comes with a unique background, experience, and learning style, adding complexity to delivering effective and inclusive teaching. In this regard, differentiated pedagogy becomes relevant. This concept emphasizes recognizing individual differences in the classroom and adapting teaching methods to meet these diverse needs (Tomlinson, 2017; Tabrani ZA et al., 2023). For instance, flipped classrooms or cooperative learning can help lecturers address these challenges.

Student diversity itself encompasses various dimensions such as cultural differences, language, socio-economic backgrounds, and diverse learning abilities. David Kolb associates learning style differences with the learning experiences individuals accumulate over time, known as divergent learning preferences (Kolb, 1984). This illustrates that students have different learning preferences, from concrete problem-solving to

abstract reflection. Lecturers can apply this concept by accommodating variations in learning styles within instructional design, such as by combining project-based activities with group discussions.

To tackle these complex tasks, lecturers must also understand the principles of inclusive learning. Rose & Meyer proposes an approach where instructional materials are designed to be accessible and beneficial for various types of learners, including those with special needs, namely the UDL (Universal Design for Learning) approach (Rose & Meyer, 2002). Integrating diverse content options, teaching strategies, and flexible assessments can help create an inclusive learning environment.

Consequently, achieving relevant and positively impactful education for diverse students requires a deep understanding of student needs and the implementing of suitable strategies in the teaching process. Lecturers must adopt pedagogical approaches that allow for adaptation to this diversity, leveraging concepts such as differentiated pedagogy, divergent learning acceptance theory, and UDL principles.

Another acknowledged challenge is balancing teaching, research, and administrative tasks, often consuming a significant portion of their time. Through a series of interviews with several sources, the challenges recognized by lecturers in their efforts to enhance their competencies include the difficulty of balancing various tasks, including teaching, research, and administrative duties.

"This issue is quite complex and can be a serious constraint in fulfilling the roles of educators and researchers. Teaching duties are a time- and energy-intensive aspect. Preparing instructional materials, delivering lectures, and providing student support requires significant dedication and attention. However, on the other hand, there is also a demand for conducting quality research as part of academic responsibilities. The research process involves data collection, analysis, and writing, which also consume time and commitment" (NA1, NA2, NA3).

The sources also highlight that administrative aspects become an additional factor influencing the balance of a lecturer's time.

"Administrative tasks such as attending meetings, managing academic administration, and participating in institutional decision-making can



divert focus from the core tasks of teaching and research. Lecturers often find themselves caught between dividing their time among these three tasks without sacrificing quality or productivity” (NA3, NA4).

Results from other interviews explain that:

“The solution to this challenge involves an active role from educational institutions. Institutions need to provide adequate support and facilities so that lecturers can carry out their tasks efficiently. This could include allocating sufficient research time, reducing unnecessary administrative tasks, and developing mechanisms to address excessive teaching loads” (NA5).

Lecturers widely acknowledge the complex challenges of juggling teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities in higher education. In addressing these challenges, the concept of work-life balance becomes relevant. Greenhaus & Allen, in their concept of work-life balance, highlight the importance of maintaining a balance between work and personal life to enhance individual productivity and satisfaction (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). Thus, creating a supportive work environment for lecturers to manage these tasks is critical to improving their work quality.

Collaboration between lecturers and educational institutions is crucial in overcoming these challenges. In this context, Katzenbach and Smith emphasize the importance of collaboration among individuals in achieving shared goals (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993). Collaboration between lecturers and educational institutions can lead to better solutions for addressing complex issues, such as wisely allocating time and resources between teaching, research, and administrative tasks (Walidin, 2016).

The interview findings above also underscore the significant role of higher education institutions in providing appropriate support. Eisenberger et al. (1986) show that the support individuals receive from the organization they work for can positively impact their motivation, well-being, and performance. Therefore, universities need to recognize and respond to the challenges faced by lecturers by providing resources, training, and policies that offer support.

2. Efforts to Enhance Lecturer Competence

The importance of efforts to enhance lecturer competence must be addressed in the context of modern higher education. Alongside rapid changes in technology, knowledge, and societal demands, lecturers must continuously develop themselves to maintain the relevance and quality of their teaching. Universities have also taken on several initiatives through innovative teaching strategies, professional development programs that improve conceptual understanding, or contemporary educational technology.

Based on an interview with one of the sources, it is explained that:

“In the effort to address the challenges faced in enhancing lecturer competence, several strategies and programs have been implemented by universities. One approach that can be taken is through competency development programs that encompass several essential aspects. Firstly, universities organize training and development programs for lecturers' competencies. These programs are comprehensively designed to assist lecturers in improving their mastery of the taught material and effective teaching methods. Secondly, training that includes the latest pedagogical approaches, educational technology, and enhanced interpersonal skills for more effective interaction with students has also been conducted. Thirdly, the development of curricula relevant to industry demands and advancements in the field of knowledge is consistently attended to so that lecturers can teach material that aligns better with actual needs. Fourthly, academic mentoring becomes a crucial component of lecturer competency enhancement. Lecturers receive support and guidance from colleagues who possess more experience in teaching and research. Fifthly, collaboration with industries and related institutions has also been undertaken to enhance lecturer competence. Through engagement in joint projects, workshops, or industry seminars, lecturers gain practical insights and the latest information on developments in their field. This enables lecturers to integrate practical knowledge into their teaching methods, thus better preparing students to face the working world” (NA6).

Based on the interview findings above, it is evident that to enhance lecturer competence, universities have undertaken several strategic steps to strengthen teaching quality and overall academic contributions. The challenges of improving lecturer competence have prompted universities to implement several innovative strategies and programs. One approach that has been



adopted is the organization of comprehensive competency development programs for lecturers. Firstly, universities have launched comprehensive training and development programs for lecturer competencies. These programs aim to provide lecturers with a deeper understanding of the material and effective teaching methods (Clark et al., 2018; Apriliyanti, 2020). This training also encompasses the latest pedagogical approaches and educational technology to foster more dynamic interaction in learning (Paskevicius & Irvine, 2019; Herodotou et al., 2019).

The lecturer competency development programs emphasized by universities reflect the principles of competency development theory. According to this theory, competency development involves providing training and experiences to enhance individuals' knowledge, skills, and attitudes in carrying out tasks (Noe, 2017). In this context, comprehensive training for lecturers helps improve mastery of subject matter and effective teaching methods, aligning with the principles of competency development (Noe & Wilk, 2020; Watkins & Marsick, 2017).

Furthermore, the importance of academic mentoring is also emphasized to enhance lecturer competence. New lecturers receive guidance and support from colleagues with more experience in teaching and research. This mentoring helps lecturers overcome challenges that may arise in teaching and provides valuable input for the development of more innovative teaching methods (Lunsford et al., 2017; Huston & Weaver, 2008). The integrated academic mentoring in lecturer competency enhancement efforts reflects social learning theory.

This concept reflects social learning principles, where experiences and knowledge are shared among individuals to expand insights and skills (Aderibigbe et al., 2023; Seery et al., 2021; Anderson & Stillman, 2013). According to Bandura, individuals learn through social interaction with others with broader experiences and knowledge (Bandura, 1977). In this context, more experienced lecturers serve as mentors who help young lecturers overcome challenges and develop better teaching strategies aligning with the concept of social learning (Brown & Campione, 2013; Vygotsky, 1978).



Additionally, enhancing lecturer competence involves active collaboration with industries and relevant institutions. By engaging in joint projects, workshops, and industry seminars, lecturers can access the latest information about their field developments and understand actual job market needs (Chen et al., 2020; Jauhari & Thomas, 2013). Such collaborations provide lecturers with valuable practical insights that can be integrated into their teaching methods to produce graduates better prepared to face the challenges of the working world (Farsawang & Songkram, 2023; Jauhari, 2013). In contextual learning, collaboration between universities and industries emphasizes connecting learning with real-world situations and contexts beyond the classroom (Brown et al., 1989). In this context, through collaboration with industries, lecturers gain practical insights that enrich their understanding of the challenges of the working world (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Billett, 2001).

3. Impact of Lecturer Competence on Performance

The impact of lecturer competence on performance is an enhancement in teaching quality and student interaction. Competent lecturers can provide a better educational experience, facilitate in-depth understanding, and encourage active participation and productive discussions in the learning environment. The impact of lecturer competence on performance encompasses two main aspects: teaching quality and interaction with students.

The outcomes of interviews with various sources reveal the significant impact of lecturer competence on performance in several vital aspects. Teaching quality is one of the highlighted aspects.

“Lecturers with strong competence are capable of providing a higher-quality educational experience for students. Lecturers who possess a deep understanding of the subject matter, effective teaching methods, and the ability to facilitate interactive learning processes can create an environment where students can gain a deeper understanding of the topics taught. This has a positive impact on the development of student's skills and provides a strong foundation for applying concepts in real-life situations” (NA6, NA7, & FGD).



Furthermore, student interaction is also recognized as an impact of better lecturer competence.

“Lecturers with high competence have the ability to enhance interaction with students effectively. This positive and profound interaction encourages students to actively participate in discussions, ask questions, and collaborate in problem-solving” (NA7).

“Lecturers who can guide and provide guidance effectively can also create an open and friendly environment, motivating students to confidently express their viewpoints” (NA8).

Overall, the outcomes of interviews with several sources emphasize that lecturer competence plays a central role in shaping the quality of education in the higher education environment. Improved teaching quality and more productive interactions with students are two positive impacts of enhanced lecturer competence. Recognizing the significance of lecturer competence development, educational institutions can contribute to creating an optimal learning environment that positively impacts students' academic and personal development.

Lecturers with strong competence in their field of study can provide students with a deeper and more meaningful educational experience. Research has found that effective teaching, involving lecturers' abilities to present material clearly and engagingly, positively affects students' understanding of the taught content. Furthermore, lecturers' deep understanding of the subject matter tends to lead them to employ various suitable teaching methods, which can assist students in developing skills and insights more effectively (Mathers et al., 2018). This also enables students to be more engaged in learning (Mariyono et al., 2021). Therefore, the vital role of higher education institutions in providing training, infrastructure, and incentives for lecturers must be addressed.

Moreover, competent lecturers tend to build positive and productive relationships with students. This can enhance students' active participation in class, encourage productive discussions, and stimulate students' problem-solving and information analysis abilities (Chen et al.,



2021). Lecturers with good communication skills and a deep understanding of the subject matter are likelier to motivate students to be more actively engaged in learning (Mohd Yusoff et al., 2022). Effective interaction between lecturers and students is also critical in creating a supportive learning environment.

From the perspective of national development, the enhancement of lecturer competence affects the quality of higher education institutions and has broader impacts on the formation of quality human resources. This supports advancing science and technology and enhances national economic competitiveness (Gast et al., 2017). Therefore, the active participation of higher education institutions in addressing challenges and enhancing lecturer competence will yield significant positive impacts in the pursuit of sustainable nation-building efforts.

In this context, enhancing lecturer competence goes beyond improving teaching quality and influences a more holistic learning process. According to Fajriyah et al. (2021), lecturer competence encompasses teaching, research, community service, and management aspects. Thus, improvements in all these dimensions will have broader positive impacts on advancing science and technology in Indonesia.

Lecturers with high competence in their fields can encourage students to develop deeper understanding (Idris et al., 2018). Lecturers can stimulate students' interest in their field through innovative and up-to-date teaching approaches. According to Martha et al. (2021), lecturers who can integrate information and communication technology into their teaching positively impact the quality of learning and student motivation (Martha et al., 2021). Therefore, support for lecturer competence development in integrating technology becomes crucial in optimizing the student learning experience.

Additionally, enhancing lecturer competence also impacts improving research quality in higher education. Lecturers with strong research competence can produce high-quality and relevant scientific works that address societal needs. According to Cahyono et al. (2018), lecturers



with good research competence contribute to an increase in the number of scholarly publications produced by higher education institutions. These publications not only enhance the reputation of the institutions in the academic world but also have the potential to address real-world issues through applicable research outcomes (Tabrani ZA, 2014).

In the context of national development, the enhancement of lecturer competence affects the realm of education and knowledge and has the potential to boost the country's economic competitiveness. Higher education institutions with competent lecturers will produce graduates ready to compete in the global job market. The World Economic Forum (2021) explains that graduates possessing skills relevant to current job market demands contribute to sustainable economic growth. Thus, enhancing lecturer competence is a long-term investment supporting sustainable economic development in Indonesia.

Finally, the enhancement of lecturer competence significantly impacts various aspects of national development. From quality higher education institutions to advancing knowledge and economic competitiveness, lecturer competence plays a crucial role. Therefore, support for the training and continuous development of lecturers and the integration of technology in teaching and research processes will make substantial positive contributions to nation-building. Collaborative efforts between the government, higher education institutions, and the industrial sector must be intensified to ensure that lecturer competence continues evolving and aligning with the times' demands.

D. Conclusion

Higher education institutions have an undeniable role in shaping an intelligent, competent, and competitive society. On a national scale, these institutions hold a strategic role in shaping high-quality human resources and driving the advancement of knowledge and technology. However, in pursuit of this role, lecturers, vital components of the higher education system, face various challenges requiring effective and sustainable solutions.

Through this research, we have identified several challenges in enhancing lecturer competence, such as rapid technological changes, student diversity, and balancing teaching, research, and administrative tasks. Nevertheless, we also observe that various efforts have been undertaken to address these challenges. Higher education institutions have launched competence development programs encompassing training, academic mentoring, the development of relevant curricula, and collaboration with industries. The positive impacts of enhanced lecturer competence include improved teaching quality and more productive interactions with students.

Overall, enhancing lecturer competence is a pivotal step in advancing higher education and contributing to national development. Educational institutions must continuously support and facilitate lecturers' self-development and overcome challenges. This involves developing innovative programs, administrative support, and cross-sector collaborations to create an enabling environment that empowers lecturers to make optimal contributions to the educational process.

In fulfilling their roles, lecturers must remain committed to professional development, mastery of subject matter, and improved teaching skills. Enhancing lecturer competence will benefit students and educational institutions, accelerate the overall development of higher education, and achieve national development goals.

Ultimately, we acknowledge the significance of sustained efforts to strengthen lecturer competence in elevating the quality of education in higher institutions. In the face of diverse challenges, the role of lecturers as educators and mentors will continue to be vital in shaping a competitive and exceptional future generation.

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