

Neoliberalism and Inequality in Higher Education

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Abstract: Neoliberalism has substantial impact on creating a market-oriented higher education system and as consequence it requires greater accountability, quality, and efficiency. Neo-liberalism in higher education has been implemented in some principles such as commodification, internationalization, and quality assurance. The university shifts into providing services, research, and labour to the industrial sector of the economy. Drawing from the existing literature, this paper discusses the consequences of neo-liberalism, especially to maintain inequality within higher education systems observed in some countries, including in Indonesia. There are two neoliberalism elements (commodification and quality assurance) that have been regarded as rather commonplace within the Indonesian higher education system. Contrarily, internationalisation, despite its mounting presence, is still scarcely discussed. The issue of inequality in Indonesian higher education may be traced back to the reality in which there is a dual system of religious vs secular public higher education and the status of private vs public higher education institution. The three neoliberalism principles above will create immense inequality between higher education institutions, subsequently, students attending the top public secular higher education institution and private secular ones will enjoy better quality of higher education facility than students attending public religious and private secular or religious universities with lower accreditation rank.

1 INTRODUCTION

Liberalism, both classical and neo-liberal, assumes that the economic character of being profit oriented is the main character of human being. The difference between classical liberalism and neoliberalism is a shift from the concept of exchange to the concept of competition requires market intervention (Read, 2009). In other words, neoliberalism applies capitalism principles and it is characterised by the use of state power to intervene in the market (Brewis, 2018). This has significant impact on the academic environment, especially because universities must conform to the notion of rational economy, accordingly, the work environment in universities would be subject to external competition.

This paper will discuss those three principles as they have been practiced in a number of liberal countries and how they have been adapted in Indonesia's higher education policy. Additionally, this article discusses the issue of inequality in higher education under the neo liberal policy, and it is structured as follows. The first section focuses on

the introduction of the study and overview of neoliberalism in higher education and social justice. The next and final section discuss neo liberalism and social justice in Indonesia and conclusion.

2 HIGHER EDUCATION AND COMMODIFICATION

The first influence of neo-liberalism in universities discussed in this paper is the commodification of higher education. This term has been used to describe the fact that higher education has become an economic commodity. As a consequence of higher education commodification, universities must emphasize to implement the principles of efficiency, accountability, income generation, and intensify job training, in which students are seen as customers with the goal of improving social capital and human capital (Saunders, 2014). The principle of efficiency in universities in western countries is manifested by prioritizing the recruitment of non-permanent academic staff, university decisions are made in a hierarchical manner by reducing the influence of

faculty and students, and giving more priority to science compared to the field of humanities and the arts. Faculties must also possess an economic function, wherein research can generate income, education process and services can generate profit. Academics are also positioned similarly as company workers that must contribute productively to the organisation.

Another consequence of higher education commodification is that the role of the university shifts into providing services, research, and labour to the industrial sector of the economy (Washburn, 2006). The success of higher education is measured quantitatively from the number of students that the higher education system can recruit, the number of graduates who obtain high-paying job, and income earned from research and consultancy as deciding factors that can increase the competitiveness of higher education institutions. As of current, funding of universities are mostly obtained from private sources, ranging from domestic and international student fees to donations because public funds have been restricted. If the students are considered as customers, the lecturers are assumed to be workers who the management needs to monitor and control (Ryan, 2012).

3 GLOBALIZATION AND INTERNATIONALIZATION

Meek (2002) states that internationalisation has long been a part of higher education practice, particularly in Europe. Nevertheless, internationalisation has only recently emerged to be under more formal coordination. In the period between 1980s and 1990s, market-entrepreneurial principles replaced traditional structures and transformed public sector institutions, including higher education in Anglo-Saxon countries. According to Amaral (2008), the transformation of higher education in developed countries observed to have taken place in the last decades is a part of Western society's restructuring process. Pertaining to this matter, concepts from the private sectors such as efficiency, utility, public accountability, and enterprise have replaced traditional values. New public management (NPM) has been introduced, in which higher education institutions are adopting private-sector techniques (Amaral, 2008).

The introduction of NPM in universities was subsequently followed by the introduction of research funding systems that are based on performances. Hicks (2012) observed that 14 countries have introduced this system under varying

names. The purpose of the funding, in general, is to maintain research excellence by responding to international competition, which demands high scientific quality. Unit analysis, methods of measurement, frequency, and census periods of evaluation for performance based research funding are not the same in every country. Hicks (8) argues that, generally speaking, research is not implemented individually or within department levels, it is conducted by a group/cluster instead, yet a small number of countries, such as New Zealand and Spain, individually evaluate the research.

4 QUALITY ASSURANCE

Quality assurance emerged as a special focus of regulation in the higher education sector at the end of the 19th century when the first accreditation organization appeared in the United States (US). Moreover, quality assurance had begun to develop in Western Europe, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Beginning in the late 1960s to the 1980s, these issues were internalized within the government and they were managed through traditional bureaucratic arrangements, although it was accompanied with increasing pressure for greater accountability, efficiency, and transparency of the university sector, and this was driven by conservative government elections in various Anglo-Saxon countries in the late 1970s. Key changes to traditional oversight mechanisms occurred in the UK with the publication of a White Paper by the government in 1991, Higher Education: A New Framework, which suggested not only the removal of binary divisions between universities and polytechnics (allowing the later to assume a university degree) but the establishment of a new Higher Educational Quality Council (HEQC).

Based on a survey about quality assurance frameworks in France, Belgium and the Netherlands, Neave (2004) concludes that the purpose of quality assurance has not been agreed upon. However, quality assurance has become a basic principle of neoliberalism in higher education, and under neoliberal management, the universities are subjected to mechanism under performance based evaluation. Evaluation and assessment relating to the performance of a university and its academic staff are considered as strategies to ensure the quality of higher education. Academic life is shaped and framed by performance evaluation and assessment on research and the outputs of academic activities such as awards, grant, consultation and the impact of research, and the quality of teaching. These aspects of academic performance are highly crucial to

determine the recruitment process, academic career advancement, and promotion.

Normatively, universities are regarded as institutions that provide academic freedom, freedom of thought and expression, heterodoxy and exploration to create new knowledge. However, practically speaking, colleges must adapt to a series of regulatory regimes that seek to manage, direct, and control the sector in ways that serve the interests of the state and economy by applying principles of efficiency, value, and performance

5 NEOLIBERALISM IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND INEQUALITY

It is suggested in the theoretical literature that one of the vital means in which competition and the resultant inequality have been produced in the academy under neoliberalism is through the ranking and audit processes (Berg, 2016). Our well-being in higher education is significantly impacted by these ranking and audit systems, and their resultant production of inequality and precarity. According to a number of studies in the west, neo-liberalism has impacted on Western countries' strengthening inequality, which has been existent even prior to the period of neoliberalism. Bagilhole (2001) believes that higher education has always been the arena for middle-and white-skinned males bearing unequal cooperation mechanisms. The academic world has developed into an extremely competitive domain with constant conditions in which academics may be categorized into two differing groups: academic groups that can exist in the academic world and those who do not exist. Under the neoliberalism system, the determining measures of success in academic care are becoming more obvious. Those who are considered as being unproductive will subsequently be eliminated of their own accord. In the western neo-liberalism system, the academic community is no longer a class category as it has turned into a profession that underscores personal competence (Read 2009).

By the end of the 1990s, protests against neo-liberalism, commodification, and commercialisation of higher education had become exceedingly expansive so that the development of market capitalism was not as determined as it was expected to be. Several numbers of leading higher education institutions around the world responded to The World Trade Organisation's (WTO) GATT treaty by signing a declaration. The basic principles of the declaration are: *First*, higher education is a public

interest, not a commodity; *Second*, higher education must be organised by a competent body designed by any country; *Third*, higher education is aimed at exporting high quality education, not undermining developing countries; *Fourth*, higher education internationalisation should be based on high quality academic service; *Five*, quality must be the key objective for both domestic and international education regardless of the way of delivering higher education; *Sixth*, a rules-based regime must guide international co-operation; *Seventh*, higher education is not similar to other commercial parts of the service sector; *Eighth*, the interdependency of public and private higher education; and finally, *ninth and tenth* are cautiousness and transparency (Meek, 2002).

Nevertheless, a number of significant changes had occurred in the academic environment in liberal countries during the period of neo-liberal policy and global markets. As an example, trend showed decreasing public funding despite the fact that universities were being publicly funded. As a result, universities were urged to increase the funding they acquire from the private sector. Many universities had subsequently choose to employ more part-time or contractual staff to address the issue of progressively increasing operational costs. Such strategy was selected as it was considered to be more cost effective and less expensive because the pay for a part-time staff member covers only one academic course for one activity, and they were only paid for their teaching time. Another change that took place during that period is that corporate-style managers and professional administrators had consequently taken control of the decision making process in universities, while formerly, in the past decades, it was the academicians who led in the decision making process. Universities are currently expected to adopt business like or corporate practices. There are now non-academic professions involved in universities, which include activities such as marketing, finance, student services, human resources, and quality assurance. This may actually provide a chance for administrators working in universities to build a career path, although it may simultaneously reduce freedom and cause hyper-bureaucracy for academics. Such managerial practice is considered as justifiable by the crises or budget shortfalls which undoubtedly require professionals, such as accountants (Baker, 2012). In addition to that, the use of new electronic procedures in recruiting academicians enables candidates from around the world to apply for those roles. Aside from the expectation that new academic recruits have completed their doctoral degree, their entry qualification put emphasis on teaching and research experiences, as well as peer review publication.

Productivity, profile, and the national and international reputation of the university have become regarded by both the government and public universities as indicators pertaining to the quality of higher education (Baker, 2012).

6 HIGHER EDUCATION, NEOLIBERALISM AND INEQUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDONESIA

Academic systems applied in numerous developing countries, such as Indonesia, are different to that found in liberal and industrialised countries, where more complex systems are developed. Even so, we can trace back some aspects of these academic systems in Asian countries to the Western academic system, such as the patterns of institutional governance, the rhythm of academic life, the ethos of the academic profession, ideas about science, examination and assessment (Altbach 1989: 3-4). There are at least two significant elements that set the stage for the emergence of universities in Asian countries: *first*, the influence of foreign systems; *second*, the spirit of indigenisation. In general, the impact of Western academic systems has been of utmost importance, due the influence of colonialism throughout history. For instance, Dutch colonialism has influenced Indonesia; whereas British colonialism influences India, Malaysia, and Singapore; while American and Spanish colonialism has influenced the Philippines; and French colonialism influences Vietnam. However, long before the advent of Western colonisation, Asian countries maintained a significant intellectual tradition, such as the impact of Buddhism from India, Islam from the Middle East, and Confucianism from China (ibid).

However, in comparison to higher education systems and academic career advancement of liberal countries, Indonesia has developed quite a different system of universities, academic life, and academic careers. The current secular higher education system is managed and governed under the Ministry of Research & Technology and Higher Education (MoRTHE) and the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA). In addition to this arrangement, the education system is further separated into public and private institutions (Wicaksono&Friawan, 2011). Enrolments grew from less than 1 million pre-1990 to 2.68 million in 1995, and by a further million again to 3.87 million in 2005 (14). Currently, enrolments stand at 5.38 million (*Pangkalan Data*

Dikti [Indonesian Higher Education Database] 2016a) (Brewis, 2018).

Two aspects of neoliberalism (commodification and quality assurance) have been considered quite common within the higher education system in Indonesia. On the other hand, internationalisation remains to be rarely discussed. Commodification is very close to the issue of inequality, while accreditation and quality assurance are close to the problem of job dissatisfaction among academic staff. In 1999 and 2009 the Indonesian government issued the following policies: BHMN/*Badan Hukum Milik Negara* (State Owned Legal Entity) and BHP/*Badan Hukum Pendidikan* (Education Legal Entity) respectively. The government had reduced subsidies and made four prominent public universities into BHMNs (14). Commodification of higher education is very clear because the policy allows university to introduce a controversial strategy called a ‘special track’ admission system (*jalur khusus*¹²). A minority of students who pay dramatically higher fees were guaranteed to be accepted at those four prominent public universities. Cross-subsidy strategy was applied by higher education institution managers, therefore, the majority of students who were selected on merit can pay less tuition (Brewis, 2018). However, this strategy had put students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds at a disadvantage because they were only given a small proportion of being accepted in those prominent public universities. Later, in 2010, the Constitutional Court declared the BHMN and BPH as unconstitutional, yet Law 12/2012 on higher education reinstated the policy and renamed the BHMN and BPH into PTNBH/*Perguruan Tinggi Negeri Berbadan Hukum* (State Higher Education Legal Entity).

The goal relating to accessibility and availability has been addressed explicitly within Law 20/2003, and it emphasizes the goal of improving equal access to education. These discourses are based on the constitutional aim to ‘develop the intellectual life of the nation’ (*mencerdaskan kehidupan bangsa*), and it is aligned to the *Pancasila*. Chapter 5 of Law 20/2003 outlines the rights and obligations of students wherein every student in every school/HEI is eligible for (1) a *scholarship* –or (2) *tuition fee waivers*– if their parents cannot afford to put them through school/HEI and they are outstanding student. The 2003 law mandates 20% of the State/Regional budget to be allocated to education, *excluding* salaries for teaching staff. Article 5 (Read, 2009) states that every citizen has an equal right to access *quality education*. Another aspect to address social justice for reducing inequality is that the policy mentioned about eliminating discrimination in all categories of higher education be it public, private, religious, and secular. (2) However, the law

is considered to have adopted a neoliberalism stance as it underscores efficiency and accountability in the management of schools and universities.

In terms of accreditation, there is auditing practice carried out by the National Accreditation Board for Higher Education (BAN-PT) which develops academic as well as managerial standards and conducts audits for all study programs in Indonesia. This institution has a very strong legitimacy because the Education Act of 2012 HE Law states that accreditation by BAN-PT is mandatory, and without accreditation status, universities are unable to publish diplomas, and the degrees students attain will be considered invalid even though they have completed their degree (Rosser, 2015).

The quality assurance of higher education in Indonesia is measured by quantitatively assessing the success of higher education based on several factors that are regarded as capable of increasing the competitiveness of higher education institutions such as the number of students who completed their study on schedule, the GPA (Grade Point Average), the number of alumni who obtained a job with good salary, and income earned from research and consultancy. Another aspect of accreditation and quality of assurance is the assessment of academic staff. In order to obtain a high accreditation score, higher education institutions must employ and promote their academic staff to reach certain criteria. Assessment and monitoring of academic staff have always been required not only for accreditation of higher education institution but also for academic staff promotion and remuneration. Under the new system, called *Beban Kerja Dosen* or BKD (academic staff obligation), academics are required to fulfil all three activities (*Tri Darma Perguruan Tinggi*) as being eligible for the monthly incentive requires them to follow the rules. Academic staff performance will determine their individual as well as the higher education institution performance.

In this regard, Gaus (2015) argues that academics perceive negative advantages towards the shift in accountability and quality assurance because they are challenged by multiple roles and responsibilities. Academics are increasingly subject to administrative-related tasks because the system of accreditation and quality assurance require them to compile, scan, and upload files and document as evidence for accomplishing their three functions (teaching, research, and community engagement). The lecture monitoring and assessment implemented by the government have ruined the motivation to accomplish their job. Some lecturers are worried about being trapped in data manipulation practices to meet the government's requirement pertaining to assessment and monitoring. The situation, which

may be described as being 'over regulated', has made academic staff lose their critical thinking, and they recently consider themselves as always being the government's object for 'character assassination'.

The inequality issue found in Indonesian higher education may be traced back to the reality in which there is a dual system applied in terms of management by the ministry (religious higher education under MORA and secular higher education under MORTHE) and higher education status (public vs private institution). Although neoliberalism does not directly influence this factor, the three neoliberalism principles (commodification, internationalization, and quality assurance) will create greater inequality not only between higher educations but also in the quality of alumni from those institutions.

Such dual system of secular and religious universities in Indonesia can actually be traced back to the Dutch colonial era in which Islamic education alone was developing alongside the Dutch system. During this era, the Dutch system education was merely accessible to Europeans, leaving Islamic schools as the only option for Indonesian natives. Ki Hajar Dewantara, a leader of the upcoming national movement established at the end of the 19th century called Taman Siswa (McVey 1967), had proposed an alternative education system different to that of the Dutch. The basic concept was to introduce and develop an Indonesian-culture-based education system aimed at facilitating nationalism, advancing principals of humanity, and providing freedom of development for children.

Aside from the Dutch colonial system, the Islamic education system had already existed in Indonesia since the 17th century. Education has always played a vital role in popularising and maintaining the currently existing religions in Indonesia, particularly for Muslims and Christians. Nevertheless, the Christians find it easier adapting to the modern education system the Dutch had introduced. Jones (1976: 38) opined that it is less difficult for Christianity to accept westernisation and modernisation since both are interrelated, and education is an inseparable piece of both elements. It can, thus, be assumed that Christians are able to easily adapt to public and secular schools. Even so, the Christians have aggressively been establishing private schools.

Meanwhile, the Muslim community had to endure a rather lengthy process to accept the modern education system. A crucial consideration should be taken into account here, wherein the most vital aspect of Islamic education is to attain total submission to *Alloh* (God). The education system is merely a tool for achieving that main objective. According to Islamic teachings, knowledge can be

specified into two categories: revealed knowledge through the Prophet Muhammad and scientific knowledge acquired via scientific methods such as observation and research (Zakaria 2007).

Concerning religious higher education, one of the reasons for establishing Islamic higher education institutions was the need for functional personnel at the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA). In accordance with the dual system discourse applied to primary and secondary education, the government also implemented a dual system for universities. In this case, the MoNE manages the following post-secondary level organisations: Universities, Academies, and Institutes; whereas, the MoRA manages the following tertiary level institutions: *Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam*/STAIN (State of Islamic Studies College), *Institute Agama Islam Negeri*/IAIN (State Institute of Islamic Studies), and *Universitas Islam Negeri*/UIN (State Islamic University). This was initially named *Akademi Dinas Ilmu Agama* (ADIA), but it is subsequently referred to as PTAIN (*Perguruan Tinggi Agama Islam*) (Zakaria, 2007).

In addition to the dual religious and secular systems, Indonesian education is generally maintained by the government for public schools, while private schools are also available. Indonesian higher education institutions are, thus, categorized into public and private institutions, legally approved since the 1950s and reinforced by Law 30, 1990 (Welch, 2007). The history of public universities can be traced back to the founding of Gajah mada University and the University of Indonesia in the immediate post war period (1945 to 1950s). The government initiated to establish the universities. Upon Indonesia's proclamation of independence, *Balai Perguruan Tinggi Indonesia* (Home of Higher Education of the Republic Indonesia) was established in Jakarta. However, political instability and intensifying conflict between the Dutch and Indonesians forced the institution to relocate to Yogyakarta, which was made into a temporary capital during Jakarta's reoccupation by the Dutch, and subsequently to Klaten (a small town in central Java). Given the reestablishment of Indonesia's sovereignty after the end of the seven-months conflict, a regulation was issued by the government concerning the higher education facilities in Yogyakarta and Klaten to become *Universitas Negeri Gadjah Mada* (Gadjah Mada State University/UGM) (Cumming & Kasenda, 1989).

According to Hill and Wie (2013), private universities are a recent phenomenon, although two private universities, the Indonesian Islamic University (UII) in Yogyakarta and National University in Jakarta, were set up in 1949 as soon as the Dutch colonials withdrew from Indonesia

(Welch 2007: 670). A number of prominent private universities such as Tarumanagara University and Trisakti University were subsequently founded in the 1960s (Hill and Wie, 2012, 166). The establishment of private higher education was provisioned in the 1950 Basic Education Law, which was eventually ratified into Law 12/1954. Similarly, the permit to establish a private university was provisioned in Law 15/1961. Nevertheless, the government had not given much attention to private universities until 1990 (ibid).

Generally speaking, the development of private higher education can be perceived based on the situation in 1970-1980 where higher education enrolment was at its peak point. In thirty-five years' time, the enrolment rate had reached 3.4 million, which is an increase by nearly twenty folds (Buchori Malik, 2004, 260). Private universities rapidly developed due not only to increasing demand but also the government's inability to supply that demand. Hill and Wie (2013, 161) distinguished several element spopelling the growth of higher education in Indonesia, and private higher education did rapidly develop. The state's education for all principle had indeed impacted the demand for higher education among students. Given that Indonesia is a lower middle-income country, Professional qualifications are a vital requisite in today's labour market, skilled workforce is required to obtain professional jobs. Likewise, teachers and professional civil servants are required to possess at least a Bachelor's degree, thereby increasing the demand for higher education, and leading to a substantial increase in the development of private universities.

Moreover, the fact that Islamic educational institutions had been established even prior to the Dutch colonial period may be regarded as another supporting factor that contributed to the proliferation of private institutions. Islamic organisations, such as Muhammadiyah, have played a substantial role in developing private universities in numerous places throughout Indonesia. The organisation established the first Muhammadiyah University in Jakarta in 1955, and many other Muhammadiyah Universities were eventually founded in several cities both in and out of Java. *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU), another Islamic organisation, is highly devoted to the *Pesantren* tradition, or the traditional Islamic system (Welch, 2012). A number of *pesantren* managed by Nahdlatul Ulama have institutionally or culturally contributed to the establishment of Islamic higher education, such as the University of Hasyim Asy'ary which was established in 1967.

Other than religious organisations or leaders, businessmen or ethnic communities also establish private universities, which are stand-alone

institutions. They are not limited to Islamic organisations as Christian organisations have established private universities as well such as Pelita Harapan University, Res Publica University, Profesor Mustopo University (Hill and Wie, 2013, Welch, 2007). Students of Chinese descent usually dominate these elite private universities (Hill & Wie, 2012).

A crucial point to consider is that private education institutions in Indonesia are different from private schools in developed countries. Public universities are favoured since they are regarded as having better quality and lower tuition fees. Applicants wanting to study at public universities must face immense competition because only one in six candidates is accepted. In general, students who gain entry to public universities are from high-income families. One of the reasons is that students from average income or poor families find it difficult to compete with those who are better prepared for the enrolment test by being able to afford preparatory courses allowing them to become familiar with the examination questions. Students who fail the public university enrolment test will most likely pursue their education at a private university.

While there is exceedingly high demand for private universities brought about by the government's inability to provide sufficient amount of higher education facilities for all students, these education institutions are confronted with the enduring challenge of low academic quality and weak financial capacity. Most of these private institutions are unable to provide quality learning process akin to that experienced at public universities. Hill and Wie (2013: 161) observe that some elite-private universities may be able to provide proper learning and teaching quality, yet the majority of them could not be expected to do so.

The fact that the majority of private education institutions are predominantly established for lower-income households (except for elite-private institutions) should be taken into consideration. The decision to attend a private school is primarily due to failure of gaining entry into public university during the academic selection period. This consequently leads to an under-representation of students coming from rural/remote areas and from economically deprived families in the public system. The education quality in rural areas is not on par with its urban counterparts. Bangay (2005: 170-171) concluded that private schools provide their services to disadvantaged students. The financial system implemented in private higher education is not unlike private schools in general, where their income is obtained from tuition fees and donations as they receive very limited public funding. They, as a

consequence, would depend on part-time academic personnel who are paid by the hour and teach in more than one institution (Welch, 2007).

7 CONCLUSION

Neo-liberalism principles such as commodification, internationalization, and quality assurance have been reproduced in several countries, including Indonesia, and they have altered the orientation of education in higher institution of learning. It has been responded negatively, yet the process has persisted and is sustained in various patterns. In the era of capitalism, the university underwent a transformation from university as a place of learning into a corporation that is primarily concerned with market share, serving the needs of commerce, maximizing returns and economic investment, and gaining competitive advantage. The transformation occurs as a result of 'economic rationalism', which is characterized by the reduction of government funding for universities, the shift of university orientation from fulfilling the needs of the elite to fulfilling the massive educational needs for all classes. Audit, performance indicators, benchmarking, targeted management, periodic teaching quality reviews are technologies that have been used to disseminate university management methods under the capitalist system. Those measures have been considered to maintain inequality among students and job dissatisfaction among academic staff.

The academic system in Indonesia has developed differently to that of the international system. The policies and practices of academic life in Indonesia are undoubtedly shaped by the prevalent dual system of religious and secular universities, public and private universities. Indonesia's colonial history has consequently led to independent higher education system having very limited relation to the international system. Aside from public and private institutions, higher education in Indonesia is specified based on whether it is a religious or secular institution. Unlike private institutions in developed countries, private higher education institutions in Indonesia are allowed to proliferate due to the government's inability to accommodate the high demand for higher education enrolment. These private institutions in Indonesia only have access to extremely limited public funding.

Students with the highest achievement level coming from the highest-economic households commonly attend public secular universities. Some private secular universities are considered on par

with public secular universities in terms of quality, their number, however, is very limited. Most of private universities with low quality are the only option for students coming from middle or lowest economic households.

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