International class curriculum development model: a case study in Indonesia and Malaysia universities

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ABSTRACT

Internationalization of the curriculum in holding international classes is an important topic in efforts to internationalize universities. This research aims to investigate the concept of curriculum design, implementation, and review of international class curricula. A qualitative approach with a case study design is applied to examine the best practices of one of the universities in Indonesia and Malaysia included in the Quacquarelli Symonds World University Rankings (QS-WUR) ranking. Data collection is carried out using documentation techniques by searching the university website, observing, and interviewing informants such as: program managers, students, lecturers, and academic support staffs. The research results show that: i) The curriculum design adopts the national curriculum by adding an introduction to local culture and language, as well as developing an international experience program; ii) Curriculum implementation is carried out by opening special classes in Indonesia and regular classes in Malaysia, international experience is mandatory in Indonesia and optional in Malaysia; and iii) Curriculum reviews are carried out periodically by the study program with support from the internal quality assurance unit involving stakeholders, to be further assessed through national and international accreditation. The research results become an initial reference for universities in the context of campus internationalization by opening international classes through curriculum internationalization.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The university internationalization is growing very rapidly and has become a contemporary trend that has influenced educational practices globally [1]. This is a university response to the very rapid development of science and technology and demands changes in educational services. University reputation is the main factor that increases the number of international students, but there is not enough evidence to show that an increase in ranking will be followed by an increase in international student recruitment [2]. However, university rankings are a strategic factor for students and universities in investing in education.

In the last 20 years, international student mobility has increased very rapidly, this is in line with the development of internationally ranked universities and becoming attractive alternative destinations which are strengthened by their cultural, linguistic, and geographical proximity [3]. The university's position in
international rankings and accreditation is an attraction for prospective international students who have high academic achievements [4]. It is in this context that the quality reputation of university in China is the main driving factor for international mobility [5].

It makes no point to discuss the internationalization of university education without discussing the curriculum internationalization and student learning [6]. If universities want to internationalize learning, they must do so in the context of different cultures and practices of knowing, doing, and being within disciplines. In theory and practice, curriculum internationalization is related to the concepts of university internationalization and globalization. Until now, universities in various countries have adopted outcome-based education (OBE) in developing study program curricula. This is a follow-up to the success of OBE, this is related to innovation in curriculum development by considering OBE-oriented curriculum design, the results show great achievements in various things [7], the implementation of the OBE curriculum can increase class participation and students’ ability to think or take initiative, so that learning becomes active and effective [8].

Outcome-based education as an approach to developing a curriculum was put forward by William Spady in the 90s by focusing on the outcomes that students had to demonstrate at the end of learning [9]. OBE as an approach influences the entire educational process which includes curriculum design activities, formulating learning outcomes and learning evaluation activities. Even in universities in Indonesia and Malaysia, the OBE approach curriculum has been adopted and continues to be developed today.

The findings concluded from various previous researchers’ findings that in managing the education and learning of foreign students, adaptation is needed by all parties, for higher education institutions, in this case lecturers and educational staff (academic staff), it is important to improve academic services in the field of education and learning [10]. For this reason, curriculum internationalization also needs to be adapted so that academic practices are more relevant to the educational values of international students. This is to provide better services, because international students also must adapt to culture, they need to develop learning strategies and learning patterns that are different from before, language barriers especially if lecturers teach using everyday language.

In the context of organizing international classes developed by universities, it cannot be separated from efforts to attract foreign students to continue their studies at universities as an effort to make universities into the category of world class universities. Universities are equivalent to universities in various countries in the world. In recent years there has been a growing recognition that our interconnected world requires graduates with an international and intercultural perspective, a global outlook, or to develop as global citizens. One outcome of this is greater recognition of the importance of curriculum internationalization as a key focus in a comprehensive approach to internationalization [11].

Curriculum development activities, student mobility, faculty recruitment, research partnerships, and strategic planning in international rankings are major pressures in university internationalization efforts [12]. In this context, it is very important to reveal how curriculum design is developed and operationalized in educational and learning activities. Because curriculum internationalization provides invaluable guidance for university managers, academic staff, professional development lecturers, and support staff as well as students and scholars interested in advancing theory and practice [6].

Several researches on curriculum internationalization show that curriculum internationalization needs to be supported by human and financial resources to adapt programs, expand campus activities, involve experts in the field, and meet institutional goals [13]. The internationalization of higher education in Malaysia calls for the importance of maintaining international cooperation through sustainable relationships through international networks [14]. Meanwhile, this research reviews the challenges and opportunities of higher education curricula in Western countries [1].

In the Indonesian context, the government has facilitated various programs for the university internationalization, however abilities such as the ability to speak English and the ability to master information and communication technology greatly hinder the process of university internationalization in Indonesia [15]. Even though it has great opportunities, with various attractions such as natural beauty, low cost of living, the country with the largest economy in Southeast Asia, the fourth largest population in the world, one of the most active democratic countries in East Asia Pacific, Indonesia still has difficulty attracting international students compared to various neighboring countries [16]. Even the university's efforts to achieve international standards are still perceived as underprepared and pessimistic by most of its lecturers and academic staff [17].

Examining curriculum development practices in universities ranked in the world is very important to find models. For example, the success of universities in Indonesia and Malaysia can be used as a model, Gadjah Mada University (UGM) in Indonesia and Universiti Malaya (UM) in Malaysia. These two universities are ranked first in their respective countries, and UGM is ranked 254th and World Class University (WCU) is ranked 65th in the world according to the Quacquarelli Symonds World University Rankings (QS-WUR) in 2022 [18]. These two universities belong to the Southeast Asia region which has the same vision of becoming a world-class university.
Moreover, the interest of prospective students has shifted in choosing a destination to study abroad. If previously many prospective students chose to continue their studies in developed countries (western countries), now they have shifted to countries in the same region. This is because that the mobility of international students from 2001 to 2015 to western developed countries as study destinations continued to decline, while study destinations to countries included in regionalization grew rapidly. This proves that the dominance of learning destinations in western developed countries is declining, and several regional country relations are growing rapidly [19].

The shift in interest of prospective students to study at universities in the region is a great opportunity and opportunity for countries in the region to improve the quality of their education to become world-class universities. For this reason, international curriculum development designs need to be prepared carefully. This requires a lot of experience and readiness, so universities that will carry out the process of developing curriculum internationalization also really need to see and study the experiences of various universities that have been successful in implementing international curriculum design. Their successful experiences can be adapted to design and implement curricula in the future. For this reason, the aim of this research is to investigate the concept of curriculum design, implementation and review of international class curricula which have been implemented as an effort to internationalize higher education at world-class universities in Indonesia and Malaysia.

2. METHOD

The research aims to reveal best practices regarding internationalization of curriculum in international classes designed, implemented, and reviewed by world-class universities in Indonesia and Malaysia. UGM in Indonesia and UM in Malaysia are chosen as research sites because these two universities have experience in holding international classes, apart from being included as first ranked universities in their respective countries, and both are ranked among universities world class according to QS-WUR, 254th for UGM Indonesia and 65th for UM Malaysia in 2022.

To achieve the objectives of this research, a qualitative approach with a case study design is applied, because qualitative characteristics are demonstrated by the researchers’ direct presence in the field to interact with the data and research data sources. Case study design, because the researchers seek to uncover contemporary phenomena related to academic programs developed by study programs, faculties, and universities, especially with regard to the curriculum development process, starting from how the curriculum is designed, the curriculum is implemented and the curriculum is reviewed to ensure the sustainability of the international class program organized by undergraduate study programs, especially study programs at the economics faculty. The undergraduate program is chosen because this program has a longer study period and various forms of internationalization activities.

Research data is collected using documentation, observation, and interview techniques. The documentation study is carried out over a long period of time by reviewing university websites, faculties, and study programs as well as other units that are directly related to international class academic activities. Documentation studies on university websites are directly related to curriculum development, such as: vision, mission, goals and strategies of universities, faculties, study programs and other related units; program and activity reports; campus podcasts; activity news; testimonials from the academic community. Meanwhile, observation and interview with informants from faculties and study programs as well as students are used to verify the data that has been studied on the website, in addition to other data that has not been found on the website.

The collected data is then be analyzed using the interactive model pattern which includes data condensation, data display, and conclusions drawing [20]. The technique of checking the validity of the findings is carried out using source triangulation techniques and data collection techniques, namely by comparing data obtained from one document with another document, comparing data obtained from one document with interviews, comparing data from interviews with documents or observations of academic events and so on. This is done to ensure that the data analyzed is truly valid and the research findings are valid.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. International class study program curriculum design

Research finding shows that the campus internationalization program which is realized in the implementation of international class study programs is based on the ideals of universities to become world-class and internationally recognized universities. This is in response to global changes in the importance of
developing human resources in the global era. There is pressure in the internationalization of university to generate income, acquire talent, branding and international reputation or ranking.

The ideal of becoming a world-class university is explicitly written in the university's vision, such as becoming a pioneer of a world-class national university or becoming a global university that has an impact on the world. This vision then becomes a reference for institutions or units in university to align it with the vision, mission, goals, and strategies that must be realized. This is relevant to Kehm and Teichler's statement that vision and mission statements, and national value systems are embedded in internationalization activities as the core of the internationalization of university, and there is a strong political undercurrent, in terms of institutional commitment [21].

The existence of this university vision becomes a convincing statement of purpose for stakeholders regarding the reasons for the higher education's existence. The research conclusions show the most common components included in organizational vision statements are purpose-driven, and this has implications for organizational leaders and professionals on organizational personality, ethos, and communication. The existence of a visionary organizational leader can encourage his subordinates to be more creative [22], [23]. This is relevant to the statement that the creativity of service employees can be increased when they realize that their leaders have a vision for the future, are able to overcome organizational inertia, keep pace with changes that are occurring simultaneously [24].

The educational curriculum applied to international class is the national curriculum of each country with reference to the provisions of the Ministry of Education. The minimum credit requirement that must be taken in undergraduate programs in Indonesia is 144 credits with a minimum study period of 8 semesters and in Malaysia it is a minimum of 120 credits with a minimum study period of 7 semesters. International students receive courses on the national culture and language of the country of study, as a substitute for special courses taken by regular students (students from the local country). This is relevant to opinion that culture is one of the important factors that encourage or hinder the internationalization process of higher education and while this has been studied widely in western contexts, it has not attracted the same interest in Southeast Asia [25]. A study [11] recognizes the importance of interculturality in internationalization efforts, arguing that internationalization of the curriculum will engage students with international information and cultural and linguistic diversity, as well as intentionally develop their international and intercultural perspectives as professionals and global citizens.

These findings support that the steps taken by universities in certain Southeast Asian countries when developing the competencies of students from other countries show that most of them feel that cultural background is not discussed in academic programs [26]. However, certain courses at higher education institutions do address the host country's cultural beliefs and traditions. In fact, various studies show that management of international students also involves a good understanding by the organizers of the cultural background of international students. The recommendation is how faculty develop pedagogical applications that are relevant to culture, and the student's perspective, not from the faculty's own preconceived viewpoint [27]. This recommendation is based on the results of research that examines students' learning experiences in the context of learning, culture, and social interaction, finding that there is a break in misunderstanding between faculty staff and students regarding culture, motivation, teaching and learning concepts and student needs. Likewise, the research finding shows that students who are culturally familiar reported having greater interest and involvement, resulting in higher scores in reading comprehension and vocabulary retention [28].

This recommendation is relevant to the findings of identifying areas of need and providing additional resources and comprehensive services that must be provided by universities in serving international students, namely: i) In the goal domain, is the importance of language proficiency and intercultural competence is developed; ii) In the relationship domain, relationships with colleagues and staff are critical to building useful social networks; and iii) "support services" in international higher education settings, as the dimensions identified largely reflect needs, students' expectations, and experiences regarding services such as academic resources, social, cultural resources, and facilities and services [29]. The implications of these findings indicate the importance of policies and practices in university to include subjects or courses that can create cross-cultural awareness and diversity of foreign students and host faculty. It seems that this needs to be done so that the internationalization of univeristy through holding international classes can take place on an ongoing basis.

This is relevant to the conclusion on an analysis of previous researchers' research findings that in managing the education and learning of foreign students, adaptation is required by all parties, for the organizing universities, in this case lecturers and educational staff (academic staff) to improve service [10]. Because, international students also must adapt to culture, they need to develop learning strategies and learning patterns that are different from before. These findings indicate that the success of higher education internationalization is also determined by good cultural understanding by program organizers (lecturers and academic staff) of the culture of origin of foreign students and good understanding of local culture by foreign
students. Such conditions will be very beneficial for students and institutions in supporting the success of university internationalization.

In terms of student input, they come from local countries and from other countries. For this reason, the entrance exam is carried out independently, meaning it does not join the national/state student admission system. The entrance exam requires test of English as a foreign language (TOEFL) score, written exams and interviews are also in English. The use of English is an absolute prerequisite for being able to take international class because the language used in the education and learning process is English. This shows the emphasis on the importance of English as a language of teaching and research, international publications, recruitment of international students and scholars [30].

The use of English as a medium of instruction further strengthens the position of English as an international language. English has become a need and necessity for access to information during globalization and internationalization for various purposes of social interaction, communication, business transactions, negotiations, and other international mobility [31], [32]. This will greatly support the mobility of international students to obtain higher quality education and welfare services. This is what encourages universities to implement English language proficiency tests as one of the requirements for entering as an international class student. This also applies to universities in Indonesia and Malaysia which require a minimum TOEFL score to enter international classes. English is considered an important selection criterion for prospective international students' decisions to continue their studies [33].

The next thing that university do in their efforts to internationalize university is to carry out international accreditation of study programs. In fact, UGM Indonesia requires study programs to be accredited by international accreditation institutions to be study programs that have received an A or Superior rating from a national accreditation institution. The results of the ranking from this international accreditation agency are a guarantee that the educational practices in the study program have met international standards. The research results show that there is a statistically significant relationship between international professional accreditation and the quality of university [34]. Apart from that, obtaining international accreditation can also increase competitiveness, increase motivation for academics, improve quality culture and measure university performance. In fact, international professional accreditation is a key step to increase the level of student mobility and quality assurance [4].

This finding is relevant to the conclusion that several reasons why universities need to carry out international accreditation are: i) to gain international recognition that higher education is running well; ii) to increase internal motivation to foster a culture of quality; iii) efforts to maintain the existence of institutions or study programs; iv) forms of investment; v) steps towards a WCU; vi) increasing competitiveness; vii) measures of organizational health; and viii) forms of accountability to stakeholders [35]. This supports the findings that accreditation contributes to: i) guaranteeing quality and can be used as an evaluation tool to measure academic indicators; ii) international scale academic recognition; iii) opportunities for permanent quality introspection; and iv) added value and important recommendations resulting from self-assessment and external evaluation. Apart from that, accreditation significantly influences quality [36]. The survey results show that 80% of prospective students choose study programs or educational institutions based on the status of their accreditation ranking scores. The results of data analysis also show that there is a significant correlation in the perception score and the overall score in the ranking [37].

To ensure that international activities occur in the education and learning process, various programs are also developed in curriculum design that provide international experiences. International activity programs include inbound and outbound programs, including mobility attachment program or short academic program, specifically Indonesian university also offers dual degree program. These findings support the results analysis which shows that the growth of key elements of internationality tends to be emphasized, where the absolute number of frequently mobile international students is most frequently indicator referred to, and cross-border activities other than knowledge transfer and international student mobility are emerging or expanded substantially in recent decades. Some of the activities carried out are: i) Increasing more international partnerships between institutions, departments, programs, and so on to encourage "exchange" in many ways; ii) Increasing the provision of study programs and degrees in other countries (“branch campuses”, “transnational education”, and “program mobility”); and iii) The increasing role of virtual cross-border and other forms of “open learning” [38]. Research results show that a strategy of maximizing cooperation with various parties can be used to attract international students [16].

3.2. The process of implementing the international class study program curriculum

The implementation of the learning system in international classes is the same as the learning system in regular classes, only English is used as the language of instruction. Universities in Indonesia organize international classes by opening special classes called international classes with a limited number of students (15 students in each class). This can happen because according to Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number
mobility has received great attention from policy makers, because this has encouraged labor mobility, the want to have a career in this type of company. Even for the European Commission, international student students who take part in internships at multinational companies that there is a big possibility that they will provide services and support to students, while providing benefits to companies to attract and retain degrees at once.

continue their studies at foreign universities that collaborate with a place to study and get two academic language competency, and the cost of education is more affordable and there is a great opportunity to get the benefits of taking international classes at domestic universities, in addition to increasing their English intercultural students.

Apart from that, it also allows placement and provides learning services to local and international students. Collaboration between universities is a consideration in choosing a place of study in addition to affordable study costs. For the various international activities offered as a form of global curriculum development, the status is that one type of activity must be chosen by international class students in Indonesia, while the status is optional for students in Malaysia. Most student mobility activities are carried out at universities in Asia, this cannot be separated from financing problems. This supports the finding that regional higher education harmonization initiatives have also broadened the prospects for a smooth mobility process in Africa. The African Union (AU) university harmonization strategy adopted in 2007, has improving the mobility, quality, transferability, comparability, and relevance of academic studies in Africa as its main objectives [43].

International mobility activities are carried out as a realization of cooperation built by the university. Collaboration between universities is realized through student exchange; international internships; short-term academic program and even double degree activities can be carried out in study programs that have received an accreditation rating from the same international accreditation agency at foreign universities. Collaboration between universities is a consideration in choosing a place of study in addition to affordable study costs [44]. Apart from that, it also allows placement and provides learning services to local and international intercultural students [45]. This is also acknowledged by the double degree program participants, that they get the benefits of taking international classes at domestic universities, in addition to increasing their English language competency, and the cost of education is more affordable and there is a great opportunity to continue their studies at foreign universities that collaborate with a place to study and get two academic degrees at once.

Meanwhile, the realization of university collaboration with non-university parties, for example with the business world, government, and society, is realized through internship activities, cultural activities, entrepreneurial activities, and other activities. Partnerships between universities and the business world help provide services and support to students, while providing benefits to companies to attract and retain international workers while developing the local economy [45]. This is also acknowledged by several students who take part in internships at multinational companies that there is a big possibility that they will want to have a career in this type of company. Even for the European Commission, international student mobility has received great attention from policy makers, because this has encouraged labor mobility, the
creation of a common labor market, and cultural integration [4]. This shows that each country can take advantage of this international student mobility program to support the country's economic progress.

The implementation of education and learning activities during the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in physical mobility barriers, has provided valuable experience for all academics in utilizing information and communication technology, both for lectures and other academic activities, such as experience in running short-term academic program, student exchange, or double degree. Activities carried out online can be followed well, but if activities such as lectures are held by universities abroad, time is the main problem that must be adjusted. This is because lectures held in the morning or afternoon abroad can be attended in the evening or early morning in Indonesia. This shows how important it is for the academic community to adapt to the demands for competence due to rapid technological developments and a changing environment.

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the shift to online platforms for educational and social activities. Many study abroad programs have had to adapt to such circumstances and utilize virtual environments in the face of limited physical mobility. This can expand international students' learning efforts through adaptation to technology and the online communication environment. Survey results note that learning experiences during the pandemic show that students have online communities as a source of social support, and students are more familiar with various online technologies and feel more open to people from various backgrounds and international careers [46].

The experience of education and learning activities during the pandemic is very valuable to maintain by integrating with offline or face-to-face physical learning. This combination of offline and online learning or blended learning will be very profitable because the educational program will be more effective. The results of various studies on the application of blended learning have succeeded in proving its effectiveness [47].

3.3. Overview of the international class study program curriculum

To ensure that the curriculum developed and implemented is always relevant to global developments and demands, the curriculum is reviewed or reviewed continuously. The curriculum review (CR) at one of the universities in Malaysia is coordinated by the Academic Development and Enhancement Center (ADEC) under the portfolio of the vice rector (academic and international) by involving stakeholders. The CR of one of the tertiary institutions in Indonesia is coordinated by each study program and the International Undergraduate Program (IUP) which has an independent organization with assistance from the university's quality assurance and reputation unit involving stakeholders and consortia/associations from several countries such as: Spain, Hungary, Czechia, Slovakia, Thailand to evaluate international exposure programs, curriculum achievements and other coordination. This is relevant to finding that an effective curriculum must consider the needs of all stakeholders to ensure that each party understands their individual and collective tasks to achieve a high level of success [48].

The strategy for reviewing the curriculum is carried out by improving the quality of academic programs through a strict CR process every 3-5 years which involves the following processes: i) Being actively involved in internal quality assurance activities which are carried out periodically every year, even for In the case of higher education institutions in Indonesia, they require a rating of A or Excellent from national accreditation for study programs that will be included in international accreditation; ii) Accreditation, obtaining national accreditation based on the requirements of the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) for university in Malaysia and the Badan Akreditasi Nasional-Perguruan Tinggi (BAN-PT) for university in Indonesia, and international accreditation from professional body standard; iii) Benchmarking, the program is compared with other local universities and top ranked universities abroad; and iv) Carrying out market surveys, each program carries out market survey involving industry, alumni, experts and an international panel of external program assessors.

Internal quality assurance and accreditation systems have an important role in ensuring continuous improvement efforts to achieve high quality standards. Because in the internal quality audit and accreditation process, a comprehensive assessment of the course of the study program curriculum is carried out by ensuring that there is a link between various components such as vision, mission, expected goals and objectives with the profile of graduates, formulated learning outcomes, up to the implementation and evaluation process for produce educational outputs and outcomes. The research results show that the accreditation cycle is associated with a significant increase in student performance. The average student learning outcomes have increased in the years during and after accreditation compared to before accreditation, and there is a tendency for their scores to increase consistently [49]. The strategy of reviewing the curriculum by carrying out national and international accreditation is an effort to improve academic quality.

Accreditation ranking is proven to increase the value and quality of higher education, in this case curricula and degree programs are topic areas that are often studied in relation to accreditation scores [34], [50]. This is relevant to the finding that the accreditation process shows an increase in learning outcomes due
to increased quality standards, increased alignment of the curriculum with needs, and a better learning environment. Because accreditation is a formal evaluation process of an educational program, institution or system against standards set by an external body for the purpose of quality assurance and improvement [51].

For this purpose, that university needs to actively review new and existing academic programs to ensure they are current, comprehensive, challenging, and meet the needs of various national and international stakeholders. Curriculum internationalization is one of the most important aspects emphasized to achieve this goal. Recent CR to explicitly include elements of internationalization in the curriculum. This supports the statement that curriculum management planning as a curriculum cycle has several stages starting from needs analysis, design, development, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up on improvements carried out by the study program [52]. This refers to the results of the university's internal evaluation and external evaluation through accreditation which will produce several recommendations for improvement to be followed up. Visually, the international class curriculum development model is presented in Figure 1.

![Figure 1. International class curriculum development model](image)

This research provides several implications, including: i) providing scientific contributions regarding study program curriculum development models that will open international classes as an effort to internationalize higher education; and ii) practical implications to prepare support for teaching staff and administrative staff that are relevant to internationalization needs universities, and provide services to stakeholders who need international standard quality services. For this reason, the internationalization of higher education needs to be prepared carefully, at least by opening international classes in study programs that receive an A or Excellent accreditation rating, which will have other positive impacts, such as opportunities for students, lecturers, and staff to carry out international mobility, develop research collaborations and other international programs. International mobility activity as a characteristic of holding international class is very useful for improving the quality of learning and the quality of research which in turn can improve the quality of graduates who have global insight and take part in the world of international work, and this is part of the main indicator in ranking international university.

4. CONCLUSION

Internationalization of university can be done by opening international class in selected study programs by internationalizing the curriculum. The concept of curriculum internationalization is carried out by directly adopting the national curriculum by adding local language and culture content, in addition to adding programs that provide students with international experience through student mobility programs, both inbound and outbound, both long term and short term. International class programs in Indonesia are

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held by opening special classes, while in Malaysia international classes are opened on a general/regular basis, so that students from other countries can immediately join regular classes, this is related to the use of English as the language of education. To support students’ international experience, the organizers facilitate student mobility activities both inbound and outbound, these forms of activity include student exchange; international internship; short-term academic program, even double degree program is also offered. To ensure the sustainability of international class programs and improve the quality of education, periodic CR are held involving internal and external stakeholders under the responsibility of the study program and coordination of university quality assurance institutions through quality audit activities, in addition to national accreditation programs and international accreditation programs. This research provides an initial contribution to higher education institutions, especially in Indonesia, which will initiate university internationalization programs, especially efforts to internationalize the curriculum to open international classes.

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