



## Transformation of the Single Tuition Fee (UKT) Policy : Effects of Campus Autonomy

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**Abstract.** Campus autonomy in Indonesia provides good hope, but there are also many basic problems that disturb the hearts of the people, Especially those related to financial allocation. This study aims to examine the impact of campus autonomy on the implementation of the Single Tuition Fee (UKT) at the State Islamic University of Jakarta, community absorption of UKT, and its adaptation process. The research methodology will involve an in-depth analysis of campus autonomy policies and UKT implementation using naturalistic qualitative methods focused on a case study approach. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with key informants, namely university leaders, lecturers, students, and related stakeholders (n = 19). The data obtained are analyzed thematically. The results of the study are expected to provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between campus autonomy and UKT policies, community absorption, and its adaptation process to higher education accessibility and student experience. Data analysis will include stakeholder perceptions, changes in administrative policies and practices, and the social and economic impacts of UKT implementation. This study will summarize the main findings and their implications for the implementation of higher education management at UIN Jakarta. This research explains important implications for improving the effectiveness of campus autonomy implementation and UKT policies and provides guidance for decision-making at the institutional and government levels.

**Keywords:** Accessibility, Campus-Autonomy, UKT

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Education is an integral component of the national education system, with a crucial function in enlightening societies and promoting advancements in science and technology. Higher education is crucial in order to cultivate clever, innovative, and distinctive human capital, hence enhancing competitiveness in the contemporary global landscape (Sujana, 2019). In order to enhance the standard of education, it is crucial to address the key factor of operating costs, namely those related to injuries (Maruhawa, 2023; Szekeres (Váncza) & Căldăraru, 2022). The expense of education directly influences the quality of education. Research findings highlight the significant impact of education expenses on enhancing educational quality, as higher costs are associated with increased quality (Chairyani et al., 2022; Fauzi, 2020; Maruhawa, 2023). Investing in quality education is sometimes seen as an expensive endeavor, and it is important for the public to be aware of and willing to shoulder these costs in order to ensure responsible education (Warisno, 2018). The cost of education is influenced by various factors such as price inflation, fluctuations in teacher wages, demographic changes, and the implementation of higher educational benchmarks, all of which impact the quality of education provided (Sittisom, 2020). Moreover, studies indicate that

variables such as inflation and an unfavorable teacher-student ratio can detrimentally affect the caliber of education, hence emphasizing the intricate correlation between cost and educational excellence.

The operational cost of education has a crucial role in fostering the advancement of educational quality (Szekeres (Váncza) & Căldăraru, 2022). PTN is now working on generating new innovations through the implementation of the Single Education Cost Classification System (UKT), with the aim of assisting underprivileged individuals in pursuing higher education (Efendi, 2017; Rokhman et al., 2017). The Unique Tuition (UKT) is a financing method implemented for students attending State colleges under the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education (Kemenristekdikti) (Aviani & Hidayat, 2020).

Single Tuition Fee or abbreviated as UKT according to the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 55 of 2013, "Single tuition fee is part of the single tuition fee that is borne by each student based on their economic capabilities". The single tuition fee as intended consists of several groups which are determined based on the community's economic ability group. This single tuition fee is determined based on the single tuition fee minus the costs borne by the government. Single tuition fees are the total operational costs of students per semester in study programs at state universities. Where, this single tuition fee is used to determine the fees charged to students from the community and the government. With the implementation of UKT, state universities are not allowed to collect registration fees or other fees from new students who have been accepted to the university (Karim et al., 2017).

Minister of Education and Culture Regulation 25 of 2020 concerning SSBOPT at PTNs within the Ministry of Education and Culture has an implementation in determining BKT or single tuition fees, Single Tuition Fees (UKT) which are charged to students to be used in the learning process at state or private universities. In this instance, the method of funding tuition differs from previous occasions where student tuition fees consist of various distinct elements, such as SPP, Internship Fund, Student Parent Allowance (IOM), Thesis Examination Fund, Graduate Fund, Education Quality Improvement Contribution (SPKP), and others (Rokhman et al., 2017). Nevertheless, the execution of this application is not consistently seamless and has a substantial influence, particularly regarding the financial obstacles encountered by students.

The issue with the UKT payment system is not solely an administrative matter, but also signifies a fundamental change in higher education. Historically, the responsibility for funding education has primarily rested with the government or educational institutions. UKT, in order to address limitations in resources, introduces a novel approach where students are required to contribute financially towards their own education (Husna et al., 2023). While aimed at enhancing financial autonomy, this can provide considerable obstacles, particularly for students hailing from disadvantaged economic circumstances. This aligns with the findings of a study conducted by (Anwar & Sabrina, 2020), which revealed several deficiencies in the implementation process. One notable issue is the mismatch between the actual economic circumstances and conditions of students and the UKT (Unified Tuition Fee) they are required to pay (Abidin et al., 2020).

The introduction of the UKT system in colleges has both beneficial and detrimental effects. Implementing a unified tuition system, such as the one used at Budi Darma University, has the advantage of reducing the financial load on students. This is achieved by providing financial assistance that is determined by the student's economic situation (Aldisa et al., 2022). Furthermore, employing grouping techniques such as the Mini Batch K-Mean algorithm to establish the cost structure can lead to more equitable grouping and maximize revenue for institutions (Wardi et al., 2018; Winda Aprianti et al., 2022; Yustanti et al., 2022). Nevertheless, there are certain detrimental factors to consider. A study conducted at Padang State University reveals that the implementation of a unified tuition fee structure can influence students' inclination to transfer to a different university, with the level of services provided playing a significant impact in shaping this choice (Sumarno et al., 2017). Furthermore, students who are enrolled in a tuition fee system that is not subject to change may encounter a decrease in the standard of educational services in comparison to students who are enrolled in tuition fee systems that are not temporary. This suggests a possible flaw in the effectiveness of this cost structure.

The financial difficulties that students are encountering must not be disregarded. Pursuing higher education necessitates a significant financial commitment, and the UKT (University Tuition Fee) may impose an additional financial strain on students who are already grappling with living expenses, textbooks, and other essential needs (Yuesti et al., 2021). Jakarta State Islamic University, despite being under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Religion, nonetheless implements the UKT system. The utilization of UKT can benefit pupils. The allocation of UKT (Single Tuition Fees) at UIN Jakarta is determined by the Decree of the

Chancellor of UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta Number 991/IN.01/KP/PP.00.9/02/2024. This decree specifically pertains to the determination of UKT for undergraduate programmers' (S1) for the academic year 2024/2025. The allocation of UKT at UIN Jakarta is determined by various factors, such as the income of the parent/guardian, the number of dependents, the value of the report card, and the location of residence. The UKT (University Tuition Fee) at UIN Jakarta is categorized into 7 classes, with UKT 1 amounting to IDR 400,000 and UKT 7 costing Rp. 4,400,000. Therefore, a crucial inquiry arises: to what degree is the UKT payment system capable of accommodating the variety of economic circumstances of students and can its effects be handled equitably and durably? Within this perspective, the influence of the UKT system on academic achievement is likewise a significant point of interest. Can this payment system contribute to enhancing the quality of education or does it instead impose additional stress that impedes student academic performance? Gaining a comprehensive comprehension of the psychological, social, and academic consequences of the UKT system would establish a strong basis for formulating enhanced and all-encompassing education strategies.

Hence, the objective of this study is to delve into the financial difficulties encountered by students inside the UKT system and analyze how these difficulties affect their academic performance. The expectation is that a thorough examination of these matters will offer the necessary understanding for the creation of higher education policies that are more adaptable and fairer.

## **2. RESEARCH METHOD(S)**

The research methodology employed qualitative research techniques, specifically interviews and observations, to enhance the data collected from the chosen participants. The participants consisted of five students from UIN Jakarta who enrolled in the academic year 2021-2022. The data were analyzed using triangulation techniques, which involved triangulating both the sources of data and the techniques used for data collection. Subsequently, the data is classified according to the issue at hand, while extraneous data is preserved for future analysis.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DUSCUSSION

#### **The Impact of Campus Autonomy on the Implementation of Single Tuition Fees (UKT) at the Jakarta State Islamic University.**

Tuition fees serve as a criterion for selecting a university (Dietrich & Gerner, 2012; Harahap et al., 2022; Puspita & Sitio, 2020; Samosir & Fikri, 2021). Studies indicate that the expense of education plays a significant role in influencing students' decisions, and having competitive tuition rates is crucial for attracting potential students. Studies indicate that the implementation of tuition fees can have an effect on the number of students enrolling in universities, potentially leading to a preference for vocational training alternatives in some situations. Moreover, the effect of tuition fees differs between public and private universities, since students attending public universities are more responsive to fluctuations in fees compared to students enrolled in private institutions.

Prospective students primarily consider the popularity of a university, but they also consider the range of study options offered by the university. Many individuals select their choices based on the economic capacity of the prospective student's parents. Below are numerous quotes from respondents expressing their perspectives on the implementation of UKT at UIN Jakarta as a result of campus autonomy.

*“The adoption of higher education autonomy has both positive and negative effects, particularly for students. An advantage of the learning system is that it may be promptly corrected in the event of any malfunction. The standard of tuition fees is unsatisfactory due to the high level at which they are set”*

This condition arises from discrepancies in the evaluation of a wide range of potential students. The most attainable minimum requirement can be met by following the UMPTKIN pathway, which costs 400,000 per semester. Meanwhile, on other routes, the minimum requirements established are substantially elevated.

Many students want UIN Jakarta, a grassroots-oriented higher education school, to streamline the procedure for getting a reasonable UKT (tuition fee) for prospective students. Students have expressed worries that the implementation of UKT is biased towards the government and higher education institutions, potentially depriving them of a quality education. Students have voiced optimism in this regard.

*“As a result of issues with registration schedules, students who pursue the independent route are not always affluent. However, the criteria employed on this path are already exceedingly stringent.”*

Autonomy empowers universities to pursue financial sources for learning activities on their own, particularly from students' parents or the community. Students express concerns about ensuring that pursuing an autonomous path does not hinder their ability to secure funds for the institution and achieve success. This phenomenon occurs due to the government's reduction of multiple financing positions, while inflation and demand remain unchanged or even exhibit a tendency to rise.

The purpose of single tuition costs is to facilitate students in determining the parental income bracket for their children's tuition fees (Iskandar, 2019). Indeed, it is a fact that not everything can align perfectly with expectations, including the arrangement of tuition costs, which has been clearly indicated by the respondents.;

*"Indeed, there exist classifications or groupings that do not accurately align with reality." Ultimately, a surge of protests directed itself against the organizers."*

This issue can be effectively addressed by optimizing services and redefining each category of participants according to the organizers' criteria to better align with the economic circumstances of the students' parents.

### **Evaluating the Ability of The Community to Accept and Integrate the UKT System, and Examining the Process of Adapting to it.**

It is imperative that the general people be informed in a straightforward and organized manner about the Single Tuition Fee (UKT) scheme, which pertains to the education expenses of their children pursuing higher education. Utilizing your existing knowledge, you will be capable of strategizing and arranging financial resources in accordance with the UKT grouping sizes established by the Higher Education administration. This circumstance is not entirely favorable due to multiple factors, resulting in prospective students and their parents feeling disadvantaged as they are unable to enter higher education through UKT.

*"I had to discontinue my studies because I was unable to afford the tuition fees (UKT) in the UK. Unfortunately, neither the campus nor the government has offered a solution for our future."*

The data on students who drop out (DO) is still rather high with the installation of the UKT system in universities. Students and parents are averse to their children encountering this deleterious phenomenon. They fervently need a resolution that will enable their lectures to persist in accomplishing their objectives. The government's provision of UKT facilities is to enable individuals from diverse economic backgrounds to access higher education in a cost-effective, equitable, and high-quality manner. The community's adaption process, which requires information about UKT, has various obstacles. It is crucial for them to comprehend the procedures involved in administering UKT, the sequential stages of the service, and the necessary requirements that need to be prepared.

*"Our comprehension of the protocols for administering UKT and the necessary actions to be taken is incomplete." For individuals with restricted social media access in the region, it would be beneficial to have more details regarding university locations and the functioning of UKT support units on campus."*

From an administrative standpoint, it is crucial to effectively communicate the fundamental process of UKT to the general public. Providing comprehensive and unambiguous information will facilitate prospective students and parents in planning their financial means. One contributing factor to the persistently high DO rate is a dearth of information. Additionally, it is imperative to devise a student financial system that is not onerous, and it would be highly beneficial if social support were offered.

*"In my opinion, the UKT is a beneficial college financial program. However, it lacks a solution for students from disadvantaged backgrounds who are unable to repay their debts." In my view, the UKT system is now inadequate in effectively nurturing the intellectual potential of the nation's youngsters."*

While a subset of students perceives the UKT as beneficial, students hailing from economically disadvantaged backgrounds continue to encounter challenges with the system. Therefore, in order for the government to have confidence that this UKT will operate at its peak, it must ensure that its implementation is finalized in its entirety, so as to aid and facilitate students from disadvantaged backgrounds without introducing additional complications.

## **Discussion**

### **The Impact of Campus Autonomy on the Implementation of Single Tuition Fees (UKT) at the Jakarta State Islamic University.**

#### **a. Higher Education Autonomy**

The campus autonomy policy grants state universities (PTN) the power to freely run and oversee their institutions, free from government interference. The implementation of this strategy in Indonesia commenced in 2012, with the passing of Law Number 12 of 2012 about Higher Education. The effects of campus autonomy regulations on students can be categorized into two distinct categories: positive effects and negative effects.

Here are several beneficial effects of campus autonomy rules on students:

- 1) Enhancing the caliber of education. Universities have the capacity to innovate, enhance quality, and effectively address stakeholder needs, leading to improved educational results and higher research productivity (Aithal & Aithal, 2019).
- 2) Autonomy support plays a crucial role in higher education by facilitating optimal student learning, growth, and functioning. It is a strong predictor of autonomous motivation and is linked to favorable student outcomes, including engagement and learning (Simpson & Marinov, 2016).

Detrimental effects of campus autonomy policies on students:

- 1) The presence of limited academic freedom at foreign branch campuses may lead to potential conflicts, which can hinder the sense of collegiality between different campuses (Edwards et al., 2014).
- 2) Furthermore, the move towards autonomy may necessitate universities to broaden their revenue streams, thereby decreasing direct government support and intensifying the necessity for institutions to explore alternate sources of income (Johansen et al., 2023). One method for discovering other sources of income involves raising the expenses associated with education. This could potentially affect the process of making education into a commercial enterprise, leading to unequal opportunities for accessing education.



## **b. UKT Lower Standards for Independent Track**

UIN Jakarta has designed the diversity of UKT standards for different routes. The minimum threshold for independent tuition costs at UIN Jakarta remains excessively elevated. This is evident when comparing it to the standard tuition fees. Based on the information I acquired, the standard tuition costs for UIN Jakarta for the 2023/2024 academic year vary from IDR 4,250,000 to IDR 13,000,000 every semester. UIN Jakarta's independent path for the 2023/2024 academic year offers a lower standard tuition charge of IDR 10,000,000 per semester.

The substantial disparity in tuition rates can provide a hindrance for aspiring students from disadvantaged backgrounds to pursue their studies at UIN Jakarta through self-directed routes. This is due to the exorbitant expense of private education, which can pose a significant financial strain on families with low money. In addition, significant disparities in tuition fees might contribute to inequitable access to education. The reason for this is that potential students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds will have greater challenges in competing with potential students from affluent backgrounds. Hence, it is necessary to decrease the current minimum threshold for independent tuition expenses at UIN Jakarta. There are other methods to decrease tuition fees, including offering government subsidies or granting scholarships to students from underprivileged backgrounds.

There are several options that can be considered to decrease the standard for independent tuition expenses at UIN Jakarta:

- 1) Allocating financial assistance from the government. The government can allocate subsidies to UIN Jakarta in order to mitigate the burden of independent tuition expenses. This subsidy might be granted in the form of either grants or loan monies.
- 2) Granting scholarships to potential students from disadvantaged households. UIN Jakarta offers scholarships to potential students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The scholarship might be granted either as a full scholarship or as a partial scholarship.
- 3) Establishing collaborative initiatives with other institutions. UIN Jakarta has the ability to form partnerships with various organizations, including local governments and private companies, in order to establish scholarship programs

that cater to potential students from underprivileged backgrounds. As the top-ranked Islamic university in Indonesia, I urge UIN Jakarta to promptly implement measures to reduce the criteria for independent tuition fees. This action is crucial in order to provide equal and unbiased access to education at UIN Jakarta.

**c. The UKT grouping is not accurate.**

In UKT, ineffective grouping can arise from various circumstances, such as:

1. The data utilized is erroneous or insufficient. In order to appropriately depict students' economic conditions, it is imperative that the data utilized to identify UKT categories is both accurate and comprehensive. Nevertheless, in reality, the data utilized frequently lacks precision or comprehensiveness, such as when economic information provided by parents of students is not recorded truthfully.
2. The chosen methodology is unsuitable. The method employed to ascertain UKT groups must be suitable in order to generate groups that exhibit homogeneity with regards to students' economic circumstances. However, in reality, the methods employed are frequently unsuitable, such as relying solely on the financial status of students' parents.
3. Lack of uniformity in the implementation of policies. It is important to implement UKT policies uniformly in order to avoid creating inequalities among universities. Nevertheless, the execution of UKT rules tends to be irregular in reality, mostly due to the delegation of power to universities to establish their own UKT groups.

Non-targeted grouping in UKT can result in many adverse effects, such as:

- 1) Students hailing from disadvantaged backgrounds are unable to attain higher education. Disadvantaged students who are placed in the high UKT category will face financial barriers that prevent them from paying the UKT fees, so hindering their access to higher education.
- 2) Students from affluent families receive hefty subsidies. If students from affluent backgrounds are placed in the low UKT category, they will get excessive subsidies, which hinders the optimal utilization of UKT money to support students from disadvantaged families.

- 3) The higher education system is experiencing a disruption in justice. If the UKT grouping deviates from its aim, the higher education system will lack fairness as it fails to offer equal opportunity for all students to pursue higher education.

In order to address the issue of inaccurate grouping in UKT, various enhancements are required, such as:

- 1) The data utilized must be precise and comprehensive. It is imperative to accurately report the income of student parents, as well as consider other pertinent information, such as assets.
- 2) The chosen procedure must be suitable. The approach employed should consider significant variables, such as the student's parents' income, assets, and the local cost of living.
- 3) Consistent implementation of UKT policies is crucial. The government should establish explicit criteria for institutions to use in classifying UKT groups. In addition, it is necessary to promote broader dissemination of information regarding UKT, in order to ensure that students and their parents possess a comprehensive understanding of the UKT system and their entitlements

### **Evaluating the ability of the community to absorb and adapt to the UKT, and the process of adaptation.**

The level of public acceptance of Single Tuition Fees (UKT) in Indonesia might be considered to be relatively low. This is evident from the quantity of students who are incapable of affording UKT and thus must withdraw from college. According to figures from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Kemendikbudristek), a total of 1.1 million students will be unable to afford the UKT (Unified Tuition Fee) in 2022, resulting in their withdrawal from education.

Several factors contribute to the low public acceptance of UKT, including:

- a. Insufficient level of social welfare. The exorbitant expenses associated with pursuing a college or university education.
- b. Insufficient dissemination of knowledge and limited opportunities for social interaction regarding UKT.
- c. The process of community acclimatization to UKT is still advancing at a sluggish pace.

This is evident from the multitude of students and parents who continue to express dissatisfaction with the exorbitant UKT expenses. In order to enhance the public's assimilation of UKT, the government should undertake diverse measures, such as

- a) enhancing community welfare, for instance, through the implementation of social assistance programs.
- b) Implement a more equitable and cost-effective UKT policy, such as offering subsidies to disadvantaged students.
- c) Enhance the dissemination and promotion of UKT, such as through mass media and social media platforms.

The government can use many measures to enhance the community's uptake of UKT:

- a. Enhancing the well-being of the community,
- b. The government can enhance the well-being of individuals through social assistance initiatives, such as the Family Hope Program (PKH), Non-Cash Food Assistance (BPNT), and Smart Indonesia Card (KIP).

These programmers' can assist individuals in fulfilling their basic living requirements, such as covering the expenses associated with education. The government has the ability to design UKT policies that are more equitable and cost-effective, such as offering financial assistance to disadvantaged students. UKT subsidies are awarded depending on criteria such as family income level, academic success, or student living area. The government can enhance the dissemination and promotion of UKT by utilizing mass media and social media platforms. It is crucial to provide information about UKT in a straightforward and transparent manner to ensure that the audience comprehends it well. The government must undertake multiple initiatives to enhance the community's assimilation of UKT. In order to achieve optimal outcomes, it is imperative to implement these endeavors in a thorough and ongoing manner.

#### **4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

The government of the Republic of Indonesia is implementing various programmers' to enhance the quality of higher education in the country's State Universities (PTN). PTN serves as a gauge for private institutions in higher education, however its application is not always

strictly linear. Nevertheless, the adoption of a Unified Tuition Fee (UKT) in recent years has become an obligatory policy for anyone pursuing education at PTN, regardless of their personal preferences. The Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, responsible for overseeing PTAIN (State Islamic Higher Education Institution), has implemented a uniform UKT system throughout all UINs in Indonesia. The implementation of the UKT pattern at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta has had both beneficial and bad effects on students and their parents. There is a possibility to revise several UKT routes at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta to ensure that prospective students have access to education and to prevent dropouts among underprivileged students who are unable to meet the financial obligations set by the organizers.

### **Suggestions and Acknowledgments**

To maximize the positive impact of campus autonomy on the implementation of the Single Tuition Fee (UKT) at UIN Jakarta, it is recommended that the university adopt a more transparent and inclusive approach. Active involvement of students in the decision-making process regarding UKT determination is very important to ensure policies that are fair and acceptable to all parties. In addition, regular evaluation of UKT implementation needs to be carried out to assess its effectiveness and efficiency. Financial management training for campus administrative staff can also help in optimizing budgets and resources, so that UKT can be adjusted to students' economic capabilities without sacrificing the quality of education.

Thank you to the supervisors, administrative staff and students of UIN Jakarta who have provided support and valuable contributions to this research.

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