

## Thinking Again in Educational Services at Private Universities in Gorontalo Province

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### Abstract

This study aims to analyze the Thinking Again capability within the Dynamic Governance framework at Private Higher Education Institutions (PTS) in Gorontalo Province. Observations indicate that PTS face various obstacles in realizing higher education governance that is adaptive and responsive to change. The main problems identified include strategic decision-making that is still based on routines without the support of accurate and real-time data, a hierarchical organizational structure that hinders innovation, and limited human resource capacity due to high workloads. Furthermore, the integration of academic technology is not optimal, resulting in data and learning innovation not being systematically connected. The Thinking Again capability, which should be a mechanism for critical reflection in governance, has not been strongly internalized. The indicators analyzed cover three main aspects: (a) the decision-making process, (b) data use, and (c) openness to innovation. In practice, these three aspects have not optimally supported the transformation of educational services based on Dynamic Governance. Decision-making tends to be conventional, data use is limited, while openness to innovation is hampered by a stagnant mindset and a lack of clear operational standards. The results of the study conclude that there is a misalignment between the need for the implementation of Thinking Again and the institutional practices of PTS in Gorontalo. Achieving dynamic higher education governance requires strengthening data literacy, integrating technology, enhancing human resource competencies, and providing more intensive support from LLDIKTI and APTISI. Thus, Thinking Again can become a crucial foundation for sustainable higher education transformation.

**Keywords:** Thinking Again, Dynamic Governance, Private Universities, Decision Making, Innovation

### Introduction

According to Sufi (2023), dynamic Governance is a governance system implemented by the Singaporean government, leading to excellent governance and public service delivery. Besides Singapore, other countries implementing Dynamic Governance include Hong Kong and Malaysia, all three highly developed countries in the Asian region.

As the public service objective pursued by Indonesia's bureaucratic reform, the concept of Dynamic Governance serves as a benchmark for realizing excellent public service delivery in

accordance with the needs and expectations of the public (Brinkerhoff & Wetterberg, 2013).

Public demands for good governance continue to grow, as public knowledge and awareness of governance increases (Haque, 2000). Align with research from Ighodalo (2017), the public continually seeks reforms or changes to public services and good governance, given that their implementation has been perceived as inadequate. Dynamic Governance in developed and democratic countries is an integral part of the country's governance system.

In developing countries, however, Dynamic Governance does not emerge spontaneously but is the result of leadership efforts that possess the capabilities to build a developed nation capable of surviving a rapidly changing environment. Capabilities are patterns of thinking and working methods formed over a long period of time through a learning process (DiBella et al., 1996). Furthermore, Boon Siong Neo and Geraldine Chen (Castiaux, 2012) stated that Dynamic Governance capabilities are the right solution for the rapidly changing government climate and societal needs.

Change is the fundamental essence of Dynamic Governance because adapting the government's approach to environmental change requires various changes, both in planning and implementation. Planning and implementation must adapt to the uncertainties of the global environment. Change is generally the result of a combination of capabilities (government organizations). Regarding change as the fundamental essence of dynamic governance capabilities, Boon and Geraldine Chen (Wahyuningsih et al., 2021) define Dynamic Governance capabilities as dynamic capabilities that include: Thinking Ahead, Thinking Again, and Thinking Across (learning from the experiences of other countries/organizations in adopting new ideas).

The core elements above are supported by Able People and Agile Processes (capable people and well-executed processes), and influenced by Future Uncertainties and External Practices (future uncertainty and the practices/customs of other countries or organizations). Dynamic Governance capabilities are essential for all actors involved in the national development process, especially those who act as leaders of change (Luna-Reyes et al., 2020). Dynamic Governance is not a separate concept from Good Governance. Good Governance presents a challenge amidst the dynamics of globalization and seeks to accommodate the aspirations of the people.

Fixating on the success of Good Governance implementation will only reflect past conditions and be irrelevant to addressing future challenges and changes. Therefore, Wasistiono & Anggraini (2019) formulated a concept called Dynamic Governance as a complementary key to success. Of the many problems in society, educational problems are crucial to study. Indonesian education has several standards as regulated in Law Number 23 of 2003 concerning national education standards.

National education standards consist of standards for content, process, graduate competency, educational staff, facilities and infrastructure, management, financing, and educational assessment that must be improved periodically. In the governance of Private Universities (PTS) there are 2 (two) institutions that play an important role, namely the Foundation as the Organizer of the Higher Education Institution and the Private Higher Education Institution (PTS) as the

Manager of the Higher Education Institution which includes academic and non-academic fields.

The academic field, namely establishing norms and operational policies and the implementation of education, research and community service (Waghid, 2002; Ismawan et al., 2022). The non-academic field, namely establishing norms and operational policies and the implementation of organizations, finance, student affairs, personnel, and facilities and infrastructure, as stated in Article 22 paragraph 3 of PP No. 4 of 2014. These two institutions must synergize in implementing higher education governance in accordance with their respective authorities, duties, and functions.

Within a foundation, there is a board of directors, consisting of at least a Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer, as stated in Article 32 paragraph (3) of Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 28 of 2004 concerning Amendments to Law Number 16 of 2003 concerning Foundations. This board functions to administer the foundation. Meanwhile, within a higher education institution, there is a Higher Education Leadership who serves as the government in managing the higher education institution (Middlehurst & Elton, 1992).

As controllers and responsible for the organization and management of the higher education institution, they should also implement the principles of good governance in their governance. Private higher education institutions (PTS) play a vital role in the higher education system in Indonesia by providing access to education for many students and contributing to human resource development. Nevertheless, private universities (PTS) often face various complex challenges, such as: Limited Resources, where many still operate with limited funds, inadequate infrastructure, and a shortage of qualified teaching staff.

Issues in Education Quality, including maintaining and improving educational standards, are ongoing challenges, especially when competing with state and international universities. External pressures in the form of changing government policies, economic fluctuations, technological developments, and labor market demands add to the pressure on private universities to adapt and remain relevant (Cox, 2021).

Further observations in the Thinking Again Capability also found numerous problems, for example, the lack of full integration of deeply rooted institutional routines, resulting in the often-neglected policy reflection process in private universities in Gorontalo Province. Vudugula et al. (2023) said that, strategic decision-making is often carried out without the support of accurate and real-time data and information, and is hampered by a hierarchical organizational structure.

When innovations in decision-making systems begin to be implemented, the implementation process is not supported by adequate operational standards, and limited human resource capacity due to high workloads hinders the analysis and adjustment of private university policy directions in Gorontalo Province. Furthermore, the challenges faced by private universities in Gorontalo Province also include a lack of alignment in the use of technology. Technological sophistication in private universities (PTS) has not been fully integrated with academic data systems, resulting in less than-optimal flexibility and speed of information access.

Furthermore, innovations in learning are often not systematically linked to available academic

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technology platforms. This is exacerbated by a stagnant institutional mindset, resulting in slow adaptation to innovation and a lack of responsiveness to changing educational trends. In the context of institutional evaluation and reflection, a mismatch is also evident between the implementation of innovation and the evaluation conducted (Bunce et al., 2020). The institutional reflection process on innovation is often not accompanied by policies based on innovative evaluation. As a result, innovation tends to be a short-term project, rather than part of a strategic transformation. This misalignment indicates that reflection and policy adjustment have not become a continuous learning cycle in the institutional management of private universities in Gorontalo Province.

## **Methods**

This research is conducted in Gorontalo Province, focusing on the capabilities of Dynamic Governance in educational services at Private Higher Education Institutions (PTS). The author is interested in examining Dynamic Governance in educational service delivery because education is a crucial issue, encompassing not only basic paradigms but also practical/technical aspects such as high tuition costs, low student interest, limited physical facilities, and low lecturer welfare. Dynamic Governance itself reflects leaders' efforts to consciously shape the future through a combination of culture and capabilities that are expected to drive positive change. This research is planned to last three months, from problem observation to the preparation of the final research report. The research implementation uses a qualitative approach with case studies, specifically descriptive and explanatory types. This approach was chosen because the research does not aim to test theories, but rather to describe, understand, and analyze the capabilities of Dynamic Governance in educational service delivery. Data collected include words, actions, situations, documentation, and events through in-depth interviews, observations, and recording with the support of a recording device. The research procedure follows qualitative stages which include: (1) the description/orientation stage, where the researcher records initial information from the field; (2) the reduction stage, namely filtering information to focus on the core problem; and (3) the selection stage, namely the detailed breakdown of the focus to an in-depth analysis that produces new themes, knowledge, or theories.

## **Data Analysis Techniques**

In accordance with the research problem and objectives, the study used a qualitative research approach, presenting the findings and conclusions of the analysis in descriptive narrative form. After data collection, data simplification was carried out and then qualitative analysis was conducted. The data analysis technique in this study used the Spiral model, popularized. The use of the Spiral Model in conducting data analysis techniques is as shown in the following figure:

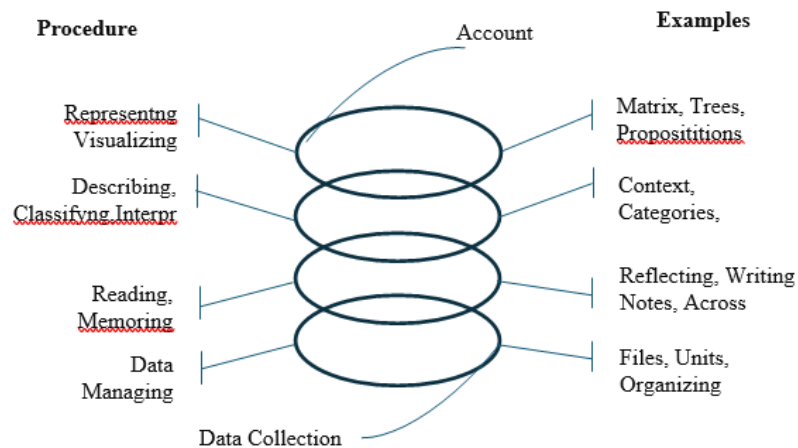


Figure 1. Spiral Model Data Analysis Technique

In the initial stage, data collection was conducted, including primary and secondary data, as well as data in the form of text and images. In the second stage, reading and note-taking were conducted as a reflection of the answers to the research questions. In the third stage, the recorded data were described, classified, and interpreted based on context and categories. The final stage involved representation and visualization by drawing conclusions in the form of matrices and tree diagrams, and then developing propositions based on the research findings. The data analysis in this study used the Data Analysis Spiral with the following steps: (1) Data Collection, which involves collecting data from interviews in the form of text, participant observation, and other data in the form of images, documents, and so on related to the analysis of dynamic governance in the provision of education services in Gorontalo Province; (2) Data Management, which involves processing data obtained from research results related to the analysis of dynamic governance in the provision of education services in Gorontalo Province, including participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, and transforming this data into text units suitable for analysis; (3) Reading, Memorizing, namely understanding and remembering as a reflection of a number of answers to research questions related to the analysis of dynamic governance of the provision of educational services in Gorontalo Province using a scientific approach; (4) Describing, Classifying, and Interpreting, namely describing, grouping according to the context of the category of analysis of dynamic governance of the provision of educational services in Gorontalo Province using a scientific approach; and (5) Representing, Visualizing, namely presenting and making conclusions that can be made in the form of charts, then compiling propositions from the research results.

## Results and Discussion

### Thinking Again in the Transformation of Educational Services at Private Universities in Gorontalo Province

The thinking again indicator refers to the PTS capability in the decision-making process, data usage, and openness in innovation. Through interviews with parties involved in the management

of PTS in Gorontalo Province, supplemented by the results of observations at the research location, this study digs deeper into the extent to which the thinking again capability aspect is applied in the daily PTS governance practices. Research data regarding the Thinking again capability aspect in educational services at PTS Gorontalo was collected by researchers. This dimension is the foundation in understanding the transformation of adaptive educational services and is based on rethinking to achieve strategic goals and meet stakeholder needs.

### ***Decision-Making Process in Thinking Again Capability in Educational Services at Private Universities in Gorontalo Province***

The Decision-Making Process for Thinking Again Capability in Educational Services at Private Universities in Gorontalo Province refers to how private universities implement decision-making mechanisms and procedures, including the effectiveness of coordination, stakeholder involvement, and the level of leadership that supports problem-solving. Based on interviews, information regarding the Decision-Making Process for Thinking Again Capability in Educational Services at Private Universities in Gorontalo Province is as follows.

According to UBM Vice Rector I, Mr. WIM:

*"Decision-making at UBM includes consultations with stakeholders such as students, lecturers, staff, and external parties (e.g., alumni or industry partners) to obtain feedback on proposed recommendations. One of the main challenges in decision-making is the lack of accurate, relevant, and up-to-date data and information. Without adequate data, decisions may not be based on evidence or reflect real-world conditions, resulting in a misalignment between decisions and UBM's strategic needs or objectives." (Source: Interview Transcript with WIM, March 29, 2023).*

Furthermore, regarding the decision-making process implemented at Ichsan University, AGL, the Chancellor of Ichsan University, explained the following:

*"Clearly, here we have a program, a strategic plan, and we create that program. For example, in its implementation, there are policies that we adopt. So, if there are issues like that, there are no problems here. Perhaps at other universities, it's different. Here, the rector and the foundation are in control, so the foundation's policies directly become the rector's policies. The rector's policies also become the foundation's policies. We evaluate this every year, every semester, for example, in the academic field, how is the research field, how are the results in the community service field, what are the obstacles, and so on. The same goes for supporting activities. Regarding policies, it's usually just according to what we program, then policies emerge, usually with just one door. For example, if a student has a problem paying tuition fees, for example, that usually only goes to the Vice Dean II level to find out how to resolve it. There are already tuition fees and instructions for them. If it's not resolved there, the maximum is to go to the WR2. "In wr2, those are the policies we adopt in situations like this. I realize the weakness is that the decision-making process often prioritizes routine and habit over in-depth reflection on data and the dynamics of change." (Source: AGL Interview Transcript, May 8, 2023).*

Conclusion: The interview results indicate that aspects of the decision-making process related to the capability of "thinking again" in several Private Universities (PTS) in Gorontalo Province face several major obstacles. These include a lack of accurate data and information, and a misalignment between decisions made and actual needs due to a lack of valid and relevant data and information. This results in decision-making not being based on facts or in-depth analysis. Another finding is the Dominance of Routines and Habits in the Decision-Making Process, which explains that the decision-making process prioritizes routines and old habit patterns over in-depth reflection on changes and dynamics occurring in the internal and external environment. This hinders innovation and flexibility in responding to new challenges.

Furthermore, based on the interview results, problems were also found regarding decision-making that tends to be hierarchical, meaning that a strong hierarchical structure makes it difficult to accept new ideas or innovations from parties outside the core decision-making circle. Fresh ideas that can improve the process are often overlooked. Furthermore, another problem in the interview results is the inconsistent decision-making process where there is inconsistency in the decision-making approach, both in terms of method, time, and implementation. This creates uncertainty and a lack of trust among staff and lecturers. The last problem revealed in the interview results is the lack of lecturers who have strategic and reflective abilities.

It can be explained that the limited number of lecturers who are able to think strategically and conduct critical reflection is a major obstacle. The process of rethinking that requires time and special skills often does not receive adequate attention. These challenges demonstrate that optimizing "thinking again" capabilities requires improvements to various fundamental aspects of the decision-making system, such as strengthening a culture of reflection, providing better data, reducing hierarchies, and increasing the capacity of human resources involved to align the objectives of private higher education institutions (PTS) with the quality of services provided by PTS in Gorontalo Province.

Based on direct observations at several private universities (PTS) in Gorontalo, such as Bina Mandiri University (UBM), Ichsan University (UNISAN), Muhammadiyah University of Gorontalo (UMGO), University of Gorontalo (UG), Gorontalo State University (UNG), Bina Taruna University (Unbita), and the role of LLDikti and Aptisi, several phenomena related to the decision-making process were identified, illustrating the challenges identified in the interviews. These include a lack of accurate data and information. According to information from the research locations, some universities frequently make decisions regarding curriculum development or the opening of new study programs without adequate feasibility studies or market data. Consequently, these study programs are less attractive to prospective students. Another phenomenon concerning the decision-making process is that lecturer performance evaluations are largely based on leadership perceptions rather than survey-based data or student evaluations.

Another finding from observations regarding the routines and habits that dominate almost all of the private universities (PTS) targeted by the research was that the annual budget allocation process tends to refer to the previous year's allocation pattern without considering the need for changes due to external dynamics, such as increased competition between private universities



in Gorontalo Province. Furthermore, several private universities also found a hierarchical decision-making process, for example, suggestions from junior staff or young lecturers were often ignored in decision-making meetings, especially if they were not supported by structural leadership. Consequently, many lecturers felt less heard when providing input regarding facility development or learning innovations.

Another thing that is a common phenomenon is the inconsistent decision-making process, there are still some who do not have a clear schedule or procedure in routine evaluations, such as curriculum reviews or determining lecturers' workloads. In addition, the problem of changing leadership at the faculty level often causes changing policies without a well-planned transition. Furthermore, the results of observations prove that problems related to decision-making are classic problems and repeatedly occur in most PTS in Gorontalo Province, for example, the lack of lecturer staff who have strategic and reflective abilities, data from LLDikti Gorontalo noted that several PTS face difficulties in involving lecturers with strategic competencies in decision-making forums, mainly because the lecturer's workload is already too heavy. Meanwhile, in the APTISI Gorontalo region, only a handful of lecturers have training in strategic management, making it difficult for them to provide in-depth input in long-term planning. The following are some PTS activities related to the Decision-Making process.



Figure 2. Decision Making Process

The researcher's conclusions and analysis from the results of interviews and observations regarding the aspects of the decision-making process in the thinking again capability to ensure dynamic governance in the transformation of educational services in PTS Gorontalo Province have not fully supported the realization of dynamic governance required in the transformation of educational services due to several things, namely the Thinking Again Capability is Still Weak, Decision-making in PTS Gorontalo tends to be based on routines and old habits, thus providing less space for critical reflection on dynamic changes in the external environment. The capability to review previous decisions (thinking again) has not become an integrated culture in the organization. Another thing is the Lack of Utilization of Data and Information where strategic decisions are often taken without being supported by accurate and up-to-date data and



information.

This results in the resulting decisions not always relevant to the actual needs or challenges faced by the institution. Other obstacles hierarchical structures hinder innovation hierarchical decision-making systems make new ideas difficult to accept, especially from individuals outside the circle of core decision-makers. The lack of collective involvement in this process limits the potential for innovation and creativity. The next problem in this aspect of research is Inconsistency in the decision-making process where inconsistency in the approach and implementation of the decision-making process becomes an obstacle to effective policy implementation.

This is often triggered by the lack of clear and sustainable operational standards. Furthermore, the problem of PTS is the limited human resource capacity of almost all PTS in Gorontalo Province. The lack of teaching staff with strategic and reflective thinking skills is a significant obstacle in building a culture of rethinking and adaptation. The high workload also limits the opportunities for lecturers to participate in the strategic decision-making process. Finally, researchers observed that PTS in Gorontalo Province still do not receive full support, where Dynamic Support from LLDikti and Aptisi is not yet optimal, the role of LLDIKTI and Aptisi in encouraging the implementation of Dynamic Governance is still limited to administrative regulations and sporadic mentoring programs. PTS requires more intensive and strategic support to encourage increased decision-making capabilities.

#### ***The Use of Data in Decision Making in the Thinking Again Capability in Educational Services at PTS in Gorontalo Province***

This aspect refers to how Private Higher Education Institutions (PTS) in Gorontalo Province utilize data to make strategic and operational decisions. The data in question can include internal data, such as student and faculty attendance statistics, learning evaluation results and study program accreditation, student graduation rates and study duration, and student satisfaction with academic and non-academic services. External data is also examined, including benchmarking with other PTS in Indonesia, education policies from the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud), and workforce needs data for curriculum adjustments. Based on the interview results, the following information was obtained regarding data collection for the "Thinking Again" capability in educational services at private universities in Gorontalo Province:

According to UBM Vice Rector I, Mr. WIM, as follows:

*"Yes, of course. Data and analysis play a very important role in the decision-making process at the education policy level in private universities. We at UBM use both academic and operational data. One of the main problems is the lack of quality and accuracy of the data available for decision-making. If the data used is incomplete, inaccurate, or outdated, decisions made may be inappropriate or irrelevant, causing a misalignment between decisions and the needs or strategic objectives of the private university." Source: Interview Transcript WIM, March 29, 2023).*

Another issue regarding the role of data collection in influencing decisions was outlined by AGL, the Rector of Ichsan University, as follows:

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*“At Ichsan, we use statistical methods to analyze collected data. This includes trend analysis, correlation, and regression to understand the relationships between variables. However, the problem is that each faculty often has data scattered across different systems, resulting in fragmented and unintegrated data. If data is not managed holistically and accessed centrally, this can make it difficult to obtain a comprehensive picture, resulting in a mismatch between available information and comprehensive decision-making needs.” (Source: AGL Interview Transcript, May 8, 2023).*

The issue of data collection was further clarified by Mr. A, Vice Rector I of Ichsan, as follows:

*“We process data more quantitatively when making policies. However, the Rector is correct. However, the problem often occurs: each work unit may have data in various different systems, resulting in data asynchronous and unintegrated.” (Source: Interview Transcript A, May 16, 2023)*

A subsequent interview regarding data collection was clarified by Mr. SP, Vice Rector II of UMGO, as follows:

*“Our data analysis at UMGO uses qualitative data from interviews, focus groups, and written feedback to gain in-depth insights into stakeholders' experiences and perceptions. However, I believe that in this data collection, informants may provide answers they consider 'good' or 'desirable' rather than what they actually feel.” (Source: SP Interview Transcript, March 27, 2023).*

The conclusion of the interview results shows that the aspect of data use in decision making related to the capability of "thinking again" or rethinking, in several Private Universities (PTS) in Gorontalo Province faces a number of major obstacles, namely: Low data quality and accuracy where the available data is not always valid or updated regularly, making it difficult to be used as a basis for accurate decisions, in addition to the problem of fragmented data in various systems which means that information is spread across various platforms that are not integrated, making it difficult for a comprehensive analysis. Another problem in the interview results is the misalignment between the data collected and the reality in the field, for example, there are still data obtained from informants that sometimes do not reflect the actual conditions, causing bias in decision making., also found the dominance of experience in decision making, namely Decisions are based more on intuition or subjective experience than the results of objective data analysis.

The next problem is the lack of follow-up on the results of data analysis even though data analysis is carried out, often the recommendations or findings produced are not implemented in real policies. Another issue revealed was the limited human resources in data analysis, with each private university in Gorontalo Province experiencing a shortage of experts capable of effectively managing, analyzing, and interpreting data, a major challenge. Furthermore, private universities in Gorontalo Province generally do not reflect on existing policies. Furthermore, data-driven policy evaluation and adjustments are still minimal, resulting in ineffective policies remaining in place. Furthermore, a key institutional issue is the lack of uniformity in data across private

universities, with frequent differences in data formats and recording methods, making comparisons and analysis for broader policy implications difficult.

Furthermore, field observations revealed that most private universities in Gorontalo Province have, in principle, used data as a measuring tool for decision-making. However, several issues were identified in this aspect. For example, UBM and Ichsan have begun adopting digital-based systems, but not all units within the university are optimally utilizing or accessing these systems. Furthermore, academic, financial, and student data are scattered across various disconnected platforms, leading to inconsistencies in data analysis. Another observational finding at UMGO is that the data used for decision-making is often inaccurate or not updated regularly, leading to errors in analysis. Data input errors remain a major problem, primarily due to the lack of standardization in data recording and reporting across units and faculties at each university. There is a misalignment between data obtained from informants and actual conditions, leading to bias in policy formulation. Another phenomenon at UG and Unbita is that decision-making still relies more heavily on leadership experience than on data-driven analysis. Data is often used only to support or complement decisions already made based on intuition or previous habits, rather than as the primary basis.



Figure 3. Decision Making Process

Observations at UBM, Ichsan University, UMGO, UG, and Unbita show that data use in decision-making still faces various challenges. Key challenges include a lack of data system integration, a predominance of intuition in decision-making, a lack of data accuracy, limited human resources in data analysis, and a lack of reflection on data-driven policies, leading to misalignment between achieving PTS goals.

Ultimately, the researchers' conclusions and analysis, based on interviews and observations, regarding the process of data utilization within the "Thinking Again" capability to ensure dynamic governance in the transformation of educational services at PTS in Gorontalo Province do not

fully support the realization of Dynamic Governance due to several key factors, such as a lack of optimal data integration, low utilization of technology in information management, and limited human resource capacity in implementing the "Thinking Again" principle. Furthermore, the lack of a policy specifically regulating the use of data in strategic decision-making also poses a barrier to ensuring Dynamic Governance.

In the context of transforming educational services at Gorontalo Province's Private Higher Education Institutions (PTS), the "Thinking Again" capability should be a key factor in creating adaptive and responsive governance to change. However, the main challenges faced are misalignment due to a conventional organizational culture, a lack of synergy between stakeholders, and limited access to accurate and real-time data. Therefore, to ensure the optimal implementation of Dynamic Governance, improvements are needed in several aspects, such as increasing data literacy among policymakers and strengthening information technology infrastructure.

### ***Openness to Innovation in Thinking Again Capabilities in Educational Services at Private Universities in Gorontalo Province***

Openness to innovation is one aspect of Dynamic Governance capability within the Thinking Again dimension. This aspect refers to how Private Higher Education Institutions (PTS) in Gorontalo Province are able to accept, adapt, and implement innovations in their governance to ensure the sustainability and improvement of academic and administrative services. In the context of Thinking Again, openness to innovation means that PTS in Gorontalo Province are not only able to reevaluate existing policies but also willing to adopt new approaches based on the latest data and developments in higher education. Based on interviews, the following information was obtained regarding Openness to Innovation within the Thinking Again Capability in Educational Services at PTS in Gorontalo Province:

According to Mr. WIM, Vice Rector I of UBM;

*"Yes, of course, we are open. We are ready to adopt anything for the advancement of the campus. For example, UBM visits other institutions to observe successful practices and innovations. This often involves meetings with institutional leaders, faculty, and staff to discuss the approaches and strategies used. However, when the university has not fully socialized and communicated the benefits of these innovations to faculty and staff, they are not optimally accepted and utilized." (Source: WIM Interview Transcript, March 29, 2023).*

Furthermore, regarding the readiness and openness of private universities to further innovate, Rector Ichsan AGL commented:

*"Now, this is crucial for campus development. You have taken several steps, such as forming partnerships with other universities to share resources, programs, and knowledge. However, one of the main problems is resistance to change from various stakeholders, including faculty, staff, and students. If there is a conservative culture or fear of change, private universities may struggle to adopt new innovations. Dissonance occurs*

*when efforts to introduce innovation conflict with long-standing practices or deeply ingrained habits within the institution. For example, when everyone is accustomed to the K13 curriculum and suddenly has to change to the independent learning curriculum, everyone is concerned about adjusting all aspects of their learning." (Source: AGL Interview Transcript, May 8, 2023).*

This was further explained by Mr. A, Ichsan's Vice Rector I, who stated:

*"Yes, regarding this matter, Ichsan is very open to adopting best practices and innovations by partnering with advanced universities in the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, although some decisions are still implemented conventionally, with a mindset that tends to maintain old practices without a thorough evaluation of their effectiveness." (Source: Interview Transcript A, May 16, 2023).*

Furthermore, regarding openness to innovation, Mr. SP, Vice Rector II at UMGO, elaborated:

*"Adopting higher education services from more advanced universities is part of their efforts to continuously improve the quality of education and operations. UMGO has done this extensively, for example through study program imitations and internships at the study program level. Yes, digital infrastructure, such as unstable internet connections and inadequate devices, will still hinder innovation in the teaching and learning process." (Source: Interview Transcript SP, March 27, 2023)*

Conclusion The interview results show that the aspect of openness to innovation related to the capability of "thinking again" or rethinking, in several Private Universities (PTS) in Gorontalo Province faces a number of main obstacles, namely: Lack of Socialization and Communication about the Benefits of Innovation where the campus has not fully socialized and communicated the importance of innovation to lecturers, students, and education staff and The lack of understanding of the benefits of innovation causes resistance to changes in the learning system and campus governance, another obstacle is Difficulty in Facing and Adapting New Innovations the results of the interview stated that PTS still experiences difficulties in implementing innovation due to a lack of readiness in changing policies and learning methods as well as Lecturers and education staff often do not receive adequate training to face innovations that continue to develop, it was also revealed that obstacles in implementing innovation are Lack of Infrastructure and Supporting Technology, which means digital infrastructure, such as academic information systems, stable internet networks, and sophisticated technological devices are still limited in several PTS besides there is also information that there are still many innovations implemented in PTS only for a moment without any evaluation or reflection on their effectiveness, and the absence of a feedback mechanism that clearly causes innovation to be difficult to develop further or adapt to existing needs, another most common obstacle is the Lack of Skills in Digital Technology where many lecturers and educators still do not have the skills in using digital technology that can support learning innovation, and students are also not fully equipped with digital skills that are relevant to industry needs, finally the information obtained in this aspect, namely Limited Financial Resources and Human Resources, it is known that many

PTS still experience budget limitations in supporting innovation programs, both in terms of technology development, research, and increasing HR capacity.

Furthermore, the results of field observations by researchers directly saw that most of the PTS in Gorontalo province had openly adapted to changes and participated in innovating for the progress of the campus, for example, the Unbita campus had displayed Educational Innovation and Support for MSMEs at the 2025 Education and Techno Expo. This activity became a strategic event for universities to introduce innovation and strengthen synergies in the development of technology-based education and strengthening the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector, another example of innovation carried out by the UBM campus with the theme of Learning Innovation Training at the FEB UNY Auditorium where this training was designed to provide new insights to participants regarding innovative learning methods that can be applied in the context of higher education. In addition, innovation by the UG campus through the International Public Lecture and Virtual Signing Ceremony activities, with the theme of Building Educational Innovation in the Digital Era, this activity reflects a commitment to creating an educational environment that is not only responsive to the needs of the times, but also proactive in shaping the future, not much different from the previous PTS UNISAN campus which has included Two students of the electrical engineering study program at Ichsan University Gorontalo in the prestigious National Robot Contest of the Electrical Engineering Higher Education Forum (FORTEI) IV the purpose of this activity is to enrich insight, knowledge and innovation in the field of robotics for students, another example of innovation carried out by the UMGO campus is the commitment to Present Innovation, UMGO held the ToT RPL Assessor Program Type A this activity as an effort to face positive changes in the world of education In order to enrich higher education in an era that continues to develop.

However, from the results of direct observations at PTS Gorontalo province there are still obstacles to this innovation aspect, among others. Limited Resources and Funding can be explained by the fact that many private universities in Gorontalo still have limited funds for investment in technological infrastructure and innovative research. Minimal government funding and reliance on student operational costs make innovation development difficult. Another obstacle observed is the low utilization of technology in learning. For example, some private universities still use conventional learning methods and have not fully transitioned to digital technologies such as Learning Management Systems (LMS) or AI in education. This is also due to inadequate IT infrastructure, such as limited internet access and a lack of digital devices, which are major obstacles. Another finding from the observations is the lack of a culture of innovation in institutional management. Bureaucratic organizational structures often hinder the adoption of innovation in institutional management. Clearly, some leaders and educators still tend to maintain old methods without evaluating their effectiveness in facing new challenges. Another obstacle is the lack of human resource capacity in adopting innovation. Many lecturers and educational staff lack skills in digital technology and innovation-based learning methods.



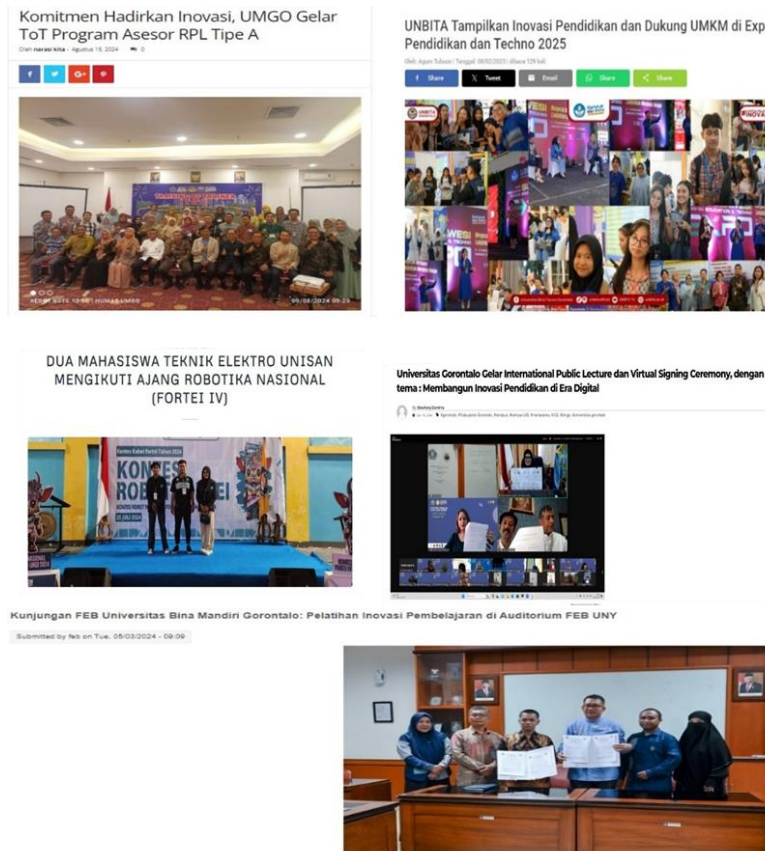


Figure 4. Innovation Enhancement Activities

The conclusion of observations on the aspect of openness to innovation within the "Thinking Again" dimension at private universities (PTS) in Gorontalo Province revealed that despite efforts to adopt innovation in academic governance and learning, several challenges remain that hinder its optimal implementation. In general, openness to innovation in private universities in Gorontalo does not fully support the "Thinking Again" principle, which emphasizes the importance of evaluation, reflection, and flexibility in the face of change. This is due to several key factors, including a lack of socialization and communication about innovation, limited digital infrastructure and technology, a lack of evaluation and continuous improvement of innovation, limited human resources and financial resources, and a conventional organizational culture.

The researcher's conclusion and analysis, based on interviews and observations regarding the aspect of openness to innovation within the "Thinking Again" capability to ensure dynamic governance in the transformation of educational services at private universities in Gorontalo Province, found that openness to innovation within the "Thinking Again" capability at private universities in Gorontalo Province does not fully support the realization of dynamic governance in the transformation of educational services. This is due to several factors that hinder institutional flexibility and adaptation to change, both in policy, governance, and technology implementation. Furthermore, a conventional organizational culture and a lack of reflection in

the implementation of innovation are key factors that must be addressed immediately.

To accelerate the transformation of educational services, strategic efforts are needed to raise awareness of the importance of innovation, strengthen infrastructure and technology support, and build an organizational culture that is more adaptive and reflective of change. With these steps, private universities (PTS) in Gorontalo Province can be better prepared to face the challenges of higher education in the digital era and increase their competitiveness nationally and globally. In this study, "Dynamic Governance in Private Higher Education Services" (PTS) in Gorontalo Province, the concept of "Thinking Again" refers to an institution's ability to critically evaluate existing policies, strategies, and practices, then make adjustments or improvements based on the dynamics of change. Overall, "Thinking Again" in Dynamic Governance emphasizes the importance of institutional flexibility and readiness to change strategies if inefficiencies or new opportunities are identified. By conducting regular evaluation and reflection, private universities in Gorontalo Province can continuously improve the quality of higher education services.

### ***Decision Making Process***

The decision-making process referred to in this study is a systematic, future-oriented approach to developing innovative and adaptive policies. This process is not only oriented toward solving short-term problems but also considers emerging trends, challenges, and opportunities in the future of educational services at private universities in Gorontalo Province. The decision-making process within "Thinking Ahead" in Dynamic Governance in educational services at private universities in Gorontalo Province must be conducted with future considerations, be data-driven, flexible, and adaptable to change. By implementing this approach, private universities can ensure that their policies not only address current challenges but also anticipate changes in education, technology, and industry. This will help private universities in Gorontalo increase their competitiveness, improve the quality of academic services, and ensure institutional sustainability in facing future challenges in higher education.

The researcher's conclusions and analysis from the results of interviews and observations regarding the aspects of the decision-making process in the capability of thinking again to ensure dynamic governance in the transformation of educational services in PTS Gorontalo Province have not fully supported the realization of dynamic governance required in the transformation of educational services due to several things, namely the capability of thinking again is still weak, Decision-making in PTS Gorontalo tends to be based on routines and old habits, thus providing less space for critical reflection on dynamic changes in the external environment. The capability to review previous decisions (thinking again) has not become an integrated culture within the organization. Another thing is the lack of utilization of data and information where strategic decisions are often taken without being supported by accurate and up-to-date data and information. This results in the resulting decisions not always relevant to the actual needs or challenges faced by the institution.

Other obstacles that hinder innovation hierarchical decision-making systems make new ideas

difficult to accept, especially from individuals outside the circle of core decision-makers. The lack of collective involvement in this process limits the potential for innovation and creativity. The next problem in this aspect of research is the misalignment in the decision-making process where the misalignment in the approach and implementation of the decision-making process becomes an obstacle to effective policy implementation. This is often triggered by the lack of clear and sustainable operational standards. Furthermore, the problem of PTS is the limited capacity of Human Resources in almost all PTS in Gorontalo Province. The lack of teaching staff with strategic and reflective thinking skills is a significant obstacle in building a culture of rethinking and adaptation. The high workload also limits the opportunities for lecturers to participate in the strategic decision-making process. Finally, the researcher observed that PTS in Gorontalo Province still does not receive full support, where Dynamic Support from LLDikti and Aptisi is not yet optimal, the role of LLDIKTI and Aptisi in encouraging the implementation of Dynamic Governance is still limited to administrative regulations and sporadic mentoring programs. PTS requires more intensive and strategic support to encourage increased decision-making capabilities.

### ***Use of Data in Decision Making***

The use of data in decision-making, as discussed in this study, is a crucial aspect in ensuring that policies implemented at Gorontalo Province's Private Higher Education Institutions (PTS) are future-oriented, evidence-based, and adaptable to the dynamics of change in the education sector. Decision-making based solely on intuition or old habits is often ineffective and can lead to misalignment with national regulations, industry needs, and global trends in higher education. The use of data in decision-making at Gorontalo Province's private higher education institutions (PTS) within the Thinking Ahead framework is crucial to ensuring responsive, innovative, and future-oriented Dynamic Governance. By implementing a data-driven decision-making approach, PTS can increase policy effectiveness, adapt to global education trends, and optimize existing resources to improve the quality of academic services. Therefore, strengthening data infrastructure, evidence-based policy analysis, and developing accurate information systems must be priorities in PTS governance in Gorontalo Province.

The researcher's conclusions and analysis from interviews and observations regarding the process of data utilization in the "Thinking Again" capability to ensure dynamic governance in the transformation of educational services in private universities (PTS) in Gorontalo Province have not fully supported the realization of Dynamic Governance due to several main factors, such as the lack of optimal data integration, low utilization of technology in information management, and limited human resource capacity in implementing the Thinking Again principle. In addition, the absence of a policy that specifically regulates the use of data in strategic decision-making also becomes an obstacle in ensuring Dynamic Governance. In the context of the transformation of educational services in Private Universities (PTS) in Gorontalo Province, the "Thinking Again" capability should be a key factor in creating adaptive and responsive governance to change. However, the main challenges faced are misalignment of the organizational culture that is still conventional, lack of synergy between stakeholders, and limited access to accurate and real-time

data. Therefore, to ensure that Dynamic Governance can be realized optimally, improvements are needed in several aspects, such as increasing data literacy for policymakers, strengthening information technology infrastructure, and improving the quality of education.

### ***Openness to Innovation***

Openness to innovation, as defined in this study, refers to the ability of educational institutions to accept, adopt, and develop new ideas and technologies to improve the quality of academic services and governance of private universities (PTS). This concept is crucial for private universities in Gorontalo Province to remain competitive and relevant in the face of changes in the higher education environment, both nationally and globally. Openness to innovation in Thinking Ahead extends beyond the use of technology to encompass updates to learning systems, management strategies, institutional governance, and partnerships with various stakeholders. This is crucial to ensure that private universities not only adapt to change but also proactively create better solutions to the challenges they face. Openness to innovation in Thinking Ahead at private universities in Gorontalo Province is a crucial element of Dynamic Governance, ensuring institutions can develop and adapt to changing times. By implementing innovative approaches to learning, digitizing governance, strategic partnerships, and policy flexibility, private universities can improve the quality of their educational services and the competitiveness of their graduates in the global job market. Therefore, private universities need to build an ecosystem that supports the sustainable development of innovation, both in terms of policy, technology, and organizational culture.

The results of interviews and observations in this study indicate that openness to innovation within the "Thinking Again" capability at private universities (PTS) in Gorontalo Province does not fully support Dynamic Governance in the transformation of educational services. Although innovation is recognized as a crucial element in improving the quality of academic services and governance, various factors hinder institutional flexibility and adaptation to change. The main factors identified are limitations in policies and governance that are not yet responsive to innovation, the lack of technology integration within the academic system, and the lack of institutional reflection in evaluating the effectiveness of implemented innovations. Furthermore, a conventional organizational culture poses a significant challenge in encouraging openness to innovation. Most PTS still maintain a stagnant mindset and are less adaptable to change, resulting in innovation often remaining merely discourse without sustained implementation. This resistance to change is exacerbated by the lack of reflection in the implementation of innovation, where institutions do not regularly evaluate the effectiveness of implemented innovative policies. This makes it difficult to identify and correct weaknesses in the educational service system, resulting in misalignment with the PTS's true objectives.

To address this misalignment and accelerate the transformation of educational services, strategic efforts are needed to raise awareness of the importance of innovation at the institutional level. This includes strengthening more flexible and pro-innovation policies, enhancing infrastructure and technology support, and improving governance based on reflection and continuous evaluation. Furthermore, building a more adaptive and reflective organizational culture to

change is key to ensuring that private universities in Gorontalo Province not only respond to innovation but also actively create sustainable breakthroughs in higher education services. This way, private universities can be better prepared to face global challenges and enhance their institutional competitiveness within a dynamic education ecosystem. With these steps, private universities in Gorontalo Province can be better prepared to face the challenges of higher education in the digital era and enhance their competitiveness nationally and globally.

## Discussion

"Thinking again," in the context of dynamic governance and change management, refers to the ability to continually review, evaluate, and reconsider existing policies, strategies, and processes, especially when the environment changes. This means being prepared to modify, update, or even replace existing ones to achieve better results. The importance of "thinking again" in education lies in the ability to continuously evaluate and improve ways of thinking, learning methods, and educational policies. This allows for adaptation to change, more effective problem-solving, and an overall improvement in the quality of education. In this study, "Dynamic Governance" in Private Higher Education Institutions (PTS) services in Gorontalo Province, the concept of "Thinking Again" refers to an institution's ability to critically evaluate existing policies, strategies, and practices, then make adjustments or improvements based on the dynamics of change. Overall, "Thinking Again" in Dynamic Governance emphasizes the importance of institutional flexibility and readiness to change strategies if inefficiencies or new opportunities are identified. By conducting regular evaluations and reflections, private universities in Gorontalo Province can continuously improve the quality of higher education services. The "thinking again" indicator refers to the capability of private universities in decision-making processes, data utilization, and openness to innovation. Through interviews with parties involved in the management of private universities in Gorontalo Province, coupled with observations at the research sites, this study explored the extent to which the "thinking again" capability aspect is applied in daily private university governance practices. Research data regarding the "thinking again" capability aspect in educational services at Gorontalo private universities was collected by the researcher. This dimension serves as the foundation for understanding the adaptive transformation of educational services based on rethinking to achieve strategic goals and meet stakeholder needs.

## Conclusion

The Thinking Again capability sub-focus is considered suboptimal. This is evident from the decision-making process indicator in Gorontalo PTS, which tends to be based on routines and old habits, thus providing little space for critical reflection on dynamic changes in the external environment. The capability to review previous decisions (thinking again) has not become an integrated culture within the organization. The indicator for data use in decision-making has also not been running well, this is evident from the lack of data and information utilization where strategic decisions are often made without the support of accurate and up-to-date data and information. This results in the resulting decisions not always relevant to the actual needs or challenges faced by the institution. Similarly, the indicator for openness to innovation does not fully support the concept of Dynamic Governance. The hierarchical structure in the average PTS

hinders innovation. The hierarchical decision-making system makes it difficult for new ideas to be accepted, especially from individuals outside the circle of core decision-makers. The lack of collective involvement in this process limits the potential for innovation and creativity.

### Suggestion

Private Higher Education Institutions in Gorontalo Province are expected to be able to: (1) Review the results of thoughts and actions that have been taken; (2) Evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of programs or policies related to educational services; (3) Be willing to change approaches or strategies if necessary; and (4) Continuously improve ways of thinking about educational services that are in line with current needs.

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