Internationalization strategy of Islamic religious universities in improving world class universities in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to explore the cooperation strategy carried out by Islamic Religious Universities in Indonesia*. A new trend that has become a benchmark for university quality standards at the international level is the ranking of World-class Universities. This measurement standard is seen from various aspects and perspectives of the university, including the reputation achieved. This trend brings two effects that are sure to occur, namely competition to be the best, and continuous quality improvement. However, many state universities (PTN), and private and religious universities tend to ignore and find it difficult to develop superior rankings at the national and international levels. The research method used was a qualitative approach. Data collection techniques with interviews and documents. The object of his research was five State Islamic Religious Universities (PTKIN) and State Universities (PTN), including the International Office (IO) of Universitas Islam Indonesia Yogyakarta, UIN Walisongo Semarang, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, and Universitas Negeri Lampung. The results of the study show that the management of internationalization programs within the State Islamic University has obstacles, namely the lack of budgeting to finance student mobility, lecturer exchanges, and international collaborative research. Access to international cooperation has not been carried out at the institutional level and is still dominated by individual start-ups through alumni who study abroad. In the future, adequate budget access is needed and continuously developed between institutions.*

KEYWORDS: *Domination, Internationalization, Strategy Competition, and State Islamic Religious Universities (PTKIN) and State Universities (PTN).*

I.   INTRODUCTION

World Class University (WCU) is one of the hottest issues faced by universities and the biggest challenge in today's era. This challenge relates to the transition of high school children to university, particularly the language skills of a destination country (Aizawa & Rose 2020). Group processes can be built through language skills both individually and in groups in a particular area, so as to encourage social processes democratically (Nassif 2020). The mastery of the language and understanding of the national culture required by a country is a difficulty for students(Yonezawa 2020).

Universities, both private and public, are competing to enter this WCU ranking. One form of motivation used is the publication of lecturers and the involvement of students (Mayta-Tovalino et al. 2022). Lecturer publications and student involvement are considered to be the most important part of both national and international accreditation assessments. The performance of lecturers is reflected in the realms of education and learning, research, and service. The main reference for efforts to maintain the existence, competitiveness, and honor of the nation in the competition of the world of global education, world-ranking universities provide a view of how education is realized and research is carried out(Lim 2018). In the realm of university existence, it is constructed through the identity of the products or services it offers so that it can build a reputation(Garrido 2018), both at the national and international levels. In addition, university competitiveness is also a parameter for measuring university progress and its development is influenced by productivity factors (Sułkowski et al. 2020). At least, the university's ability to meet market demands, independence, and remain competitive (Rosyidah, Matin & Rosyidi 2020). In the context of the university's reputation, the state is an honorary representation of the quality of the country's human resources.

The dominance of internationalization of world ranking universities is shown by developed countries. The attention of developed countries is very strong, to increase funding in the academic and industrial sectors(Jonasson, Lauring & Guttormsen 2018). In addition, efforts are ongoing to collaborate with the academic sector and the business world. These two collaboration concepts cannot be separated from their various challenges and weaknesses. Internationalization in high governance is often portrayed as a value-neutral intervention by dominant economic motives, and not yet at the level of advocacy and humanitarian

interests(Bamberger et al. 2019). Professional management advocacy is often carried out by benchmarking from the experience of various world-class reputable universities, such as the strategy of universities in Poland and also the experience of world universities in general (Sułkowski et al. 2020).

Early childhood ranking is indeed needed by a university to achieve the goal of becoming a university in the world ranking, but what is needed to reach the ranking is quality and relevance to be adaptive to changes in current and future progress. Therefore, the issue of continuous quality improvement and relevance is the spirit of every development of higher education institutions. In terms of quality improvement, many universities in Asia-Pacific send several students to study part-time and their perception of their learning strategies encourages change in independence and fosters their confidence (Dobinson 2020; Song & Kim 2022). In line with the efforts made by several universities in Portugal, the achievement of internationalization is promoted through a superior academic community as a whole, inclusion, and success of all students (Moreira 2020). To compare international students in international classes through the teaching experience of lecturers on the capacity of their students, especially the language skills of students (Coryell et al. 2022).

Nevertheless, the goal of internationalization is basically to improve the quality of higher education in various fields. In the fields of research, teaching, and technology, ideally, if a university is at the level of *World Class University* (WCU), the results of the study received international recognition. This can be achieved by increasing the capacity of researchers. Research universities are branded as the direction of their development and at the same time differentiators, such as programs to strengthen the capacity of researchers and their mobility (Adriansen & Madsen 2021). In this era of globalization, cooperation between the world of universities and industry is needed, very strategic for these two arenas: the first study is that it must have commercial potential. However, this collaboration is often a challenge in itself, as shown by the results of the research did not find the right way for both potential commercialization and non-academic utilization (Cyran 2023). Another study was carried out to map collaborative research in the health sector on strengths and weaknesses, especially cross-border collaboration and coordination, and among funding encountered various obstacles(Badenhorst, Mansoori & Chan 2016; Guthrie et al. 2019).

Another aspect that must be developed is the capacity of education personnel in supporting internationalization, of course, they will be in contact with foreign students or experts at the university. Investment support needs to be carried out both from the public and private domains to increase academic capacity at universities (Kwete et al. 2021). Strategies to respond to capacity in the form of evaluation and formulation as a need (Jantassova et al. 2021This trend brings two effects, namely competition to be the best, and continuous quality improvement. In the Islamic Religious Universities both in the position of Work Units and the form of Public Service Agencies. In reality, State Islamic Universities still face many obstacles related to financial management and access, as well as demands to increase the capacity of their human resources. This difference in access, of course, is important to examine how to implement student mobility, lecturer exchanges, and international research cooperation within State Islamic universities and State Public Universities.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

Approach

The approach in the research of Internationalization Program Management in the International Office (IO) of three State Islamic Universities and one private university (UII Yogyakarta) in Realizing a World Class University was a phenomenological approach that was part of a qualitative approach. This approach had the principle that reality should reveal itself and that it was what it was without the intervention of others. The phenomenological approach was used to be able to capture the typical reality in the implementation of internationalization programs at each university that was the location of the research.

Data collection techniques

In the process of observing and recording research data, the researcher simultaneously analyzes the observed reality and the need for data relevant to the research. In addition to observations, in-depth interviews were conducted with the managers of the International Office 4 of the State Islamic University, namely Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University Yogyakarta, Walisongo State Islamic University Semarang, Sunan Gunung Djati State University Bandung, Universitas Islam Indonesia Yogyakarta, and one public university, namely Universitas Negeri Lampung. Furthermore, a study of documents was needed both online and in the International Office guidance document.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Implementation of Student Mobility

University Name	Program	Implementation	Purpose
UIN Walisongo	Studying with Study Programs at the target university and workshops at the University were attended by students at UIN, and Southeast Asia	The implementation is adjusted to the quota and financed by the campus	International recognition program time & limited number of students
UIN Sunan Kalijaga	Study Program at a university in Southeast Asia	The implementation is adjusted to the quota and financed by the campus	International recognition program time & limited number of students
UIN Sunan Gunung Djati	Study Program at a university in Southeast Asia	The implementation is adjusted to the quota and financed by the campus	International recognition program time & limited number of students
Universitas Islam Indonesia	Study Programs at the universities targeted to Southeast Asia, and Asia	The implementation is adjusted to the quota and financed by the campus	International recognition program and 1-year international students
Universitas Negeri Lampung	'Darmawisata' RI and Student exchange Southeast Asia, Asia, and Europe	The activity was financed by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, independently, and sponsorship, as well as the cooperation of the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs	International recognition program for Indonesia students and foreign students for 1 year

Table 1. Providing clues about the similarities of programs within State Islamic Universities, such as UIN Walisongo Semarang, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, and Universitas Islam Indonesia Yogyakarta, namely joint lecture activities at each University in Southeast Asia. In this case, many activities are carried out at various universities in Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand. However, specifically for UIN Walisongo, there are something different, namely international workshop activities that are attended by foreign or international students from various universities in Central Java and West Java. The encouragement of the activity program is an effort to fulfill international recognition.

In contrast to the activities carried out by the University of Lampung, there was a 'Darmawisata' program financed by the Ministry of Research and Higher Education whose participants were foreign or international students to participate in tourism activities by introducing culture in Indonesia and universities in Indonesia. In addition, student exchanges were also very intense.

Table 2. Implementation of Lecture Exchange

University Name	Program	Implementation	Constraints
UIN Walisongo Semarang	Lecturers teach on campuses that carry out MoU and MoA.	Teaching activities, international seminars, and external examiners	Limited financing
UIN Sunan Kalijaga	Lecturers teach on campuses that do MoU and MoA	Teaching activities, international seminars, and external examiners	Limited financing
UIN Sunan Gunung djati	Lecturers teach on campuses that do MoU and MoA	Teaching activities, international seminars, and external examiners	Limited financing
Universitas Islam Indonesia	Lecturers teach on campuses that do MoU and MoA	Teaching activities, international seminars, and external examiners	Financing is available independently & Ministry of Education and Culture
Universitas Negeri Lampung	Lecturers teach on campuses that do MoU and MoA	Teaching activities, international seminars, sabbaticals, and external examiners	Financing by the University and the Ministry of Education & Culture, and sponsorship cooperation.

Table 2. Shows the program, implementation and constraints based on documents and interviews that have been processed by the researcher. There are similarities in the lecturer exchange program, especially for external examiners, but obstacles related to financing within the State and private Islamic University are still experiencing difficulties, and are a challenge in itself. In contrast to Universitas Negeri Lampung (UNILA), the cooperation carried out is already running and the budgeting can be maximized.

Table .3 Implementation of Research Cooperation

University Name	Program	Implementation	Constraints
UIN Walisongo	Asian and European targets, and Middle East	Research collaboration	Limited budget
UIN Sunan Kalijaga	Targets Asia, Europe, Australia, USA, and Middle East	Research collaboration, matching grant research program	Institutions and sponsorships
UIN Sunan Gunung djati	Asia, Middle East, Europe	Research collaboration	Institution
Islamic University of Indonesia	Asia, Europe, Australia, and USA	Research collaboration	Budget available independently and Domestic and foreign cooperation
State University of Lampung	Asia, Europe, Australia, Russia, and USA etc.	Research collaboration, matching grant research program	Institutions, sponsorships, World Bank etc.

Table 3. The implementation of research cooperation shows that there was still a disparity in access to international cooperation in the environment of research cooperation within PTKIN. On the other hand, the Ministry of Culture shows concrete cooperation steps, especially in science and technology development research, such as research development programs carried out in collaboration with the World Bank and other financial institutions. This is supported by the ministry that previously had a science and technology program. In this case, national and international collaborative cooperation was needed pioneering and that was appropriate and needed by the industrial world, as well as universities.

IV. DISCUSSION

The study of the university's internationalization strategy in the global world is based on the university's efforts to achieve its position or status as a university in the global world. These various achievements cannot be separated to meet and even exceed the standardization required by various reputable certification bodies. In the context of higher education in Indonesia, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Reset, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia through Decree Number 236/O/2024 concerning International Accreditation Institutions. Institutions that are recognized as international accreditation institutions, in the determination of their attachments are as many as 13 international accreditation institutions, such as ABET, IABEE, JABEE, KAAB, IChemE, ASIIN, IAAHEH, AHPGS, ACQUIN, AMBA, AACSB, and IACBE.

The thirteen international accreditation institutions can be used as a challenge in the State Religious Universities within the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia. Among these challenges is the institutional situation related to budgeting strategies, especially about the program of activities and access to world-class universities. The management system of ordinary work units as a higher education institution is the central government and has limited authority in the budget management system. However, in contrast to the work units of public service agencies (BLU and PTNBH) that have leeway in non-academic budget governance, at least there is the ease of exploration.

Table 1. The student mobility program is an activity that aims to provide student recognition at the international level. The environment of State Islamic Religious Universities, is still very limited, different compared to public and private universities. As a result, a report conducted by universities in Kazakhstan has programs for the top 15 countries in the world, although student mobility activities are still at a low level, as a university policy (Rustemova et al. 2020). These activities at least provide international recognition for students. These activities are used to encourage the improvement of the quality of education, research, intercultural competence, and other measurements according to needs (Spencer-Oatey & Dauber 2019). In addition to student recognition to provide various things of progress made by world-class universities, the issue of independent learning, practicing opinions, and taking open initiatives, is a distinct division of the world's top university culture. Strengthening and developing student knowledge, skills, and competencies is the main orientation in the development of student mobility in the future(De La Torre, Pérez-Encinas & Gómez-Mediavilla 2022).

Strengthening knowledge in the student mobility program is recognized as a very short time provided. In the context of strengthening and developing the knowledge, skills, and competencies of students who participate in the student mobility program, at least it can motivate studying abroad and cross-cultural competencies (Cotton et al. 2019). However, there are several challenges, namely professionalism, cultural and personal(Conroy & McCarthy 2021). Professionalism is the performance of the organization needed by any institution because quality shows the quality of work (Storie et al. 2020). In addition to quality, skills, and competencies are personal and team abilities needed by the organization.

Table 2. Shows that within the State Islamic University, there are different abilities in the development program of lecturer exchange with reputable universities abroad, due to the personal network of alumnae of foreign universities. The potential for personal guarantee is the main factor in the development of lecturer exchange activities, such as the network owned by alumnae at foreign universities. In addition, universities within the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia have not been included in the World University Class Ranking. This is also an obstacle and challenge that it faces. The stages faced are the change of the usual task force and becoming a Public Service Agency, and the budget of the University within PTKIN is also not as large as the budget of the university within the Ministry of Education and Culture. Therefore, national policies and comparative progress are needed to increase participation in value change at the global level and accelerate the upgrading of industrial and technological needs (Kergroach 2019). Equal treatment for educational institutions is a necessity and requires the goodwill of the government for equal and equal treatment, such as the study conducted on Turkey's national policy related to efficiency and contribution to knowledge development and socio-economic development (Mammadov & Aypay 2020). The orientation carried out focuses more on developing internationalization capacity, especially financial support for digital learning technology (Jantassova et al. 2021). In addition, the universities in Zambia (UNZA) are doing a somewhat different way, a joint effort to improve productive capacity for research, publication, and academics, and redefining the concept of internationalization in the global southern world and there are similarities with universities in Georgia (Rubin-Oliveira & Wielewicki 2019; Masaiti et al. 2021).

Meanwhile, in determining the criteria for a university to be included in the World University Ranking (WUR), it at least meets several criteria: research quality, graduate work readiness, international views, and teaching quality. In programs to improve the quality of learning, comprehensive evaluations are needed that are oriented to international standards, such as outcome-based learning (OBE), as the continuous training program on the development of the curriculum of health study programs in Tanzanian universities has experienced a significant increase(Balandya et al. 2022). Efforts to collaborate continue to be carried out by various universities in the UK and Chinese and by improving cross-cultural and cross-country learning (O'Dea, Wang & O'Dea 2023). In addition to the learning aspect, there are many universities in developed countries, emphasizing more on the readiness of graduates in the world of work. In the discourse of the university internationalization program, the job readiness of graduates is a problematic concept with the reality faced by every university, such as the study of the perception of student job readiness to study in the UK (Fakunle & Pirrie 2020). One of the main problems is that language barriers are often used as a concern in itself, especially for Asian students studying at Europa (Download & Donate 2021). In line with the study of the difficulties experienced by students with language skills, technology, and partnering with different cultures, so that there are many programs to overcome the obstacles of these students (Naicker, Singh & van Genugten 2022).

The quality of research for lecturers and the involvement of students, the improvement of student experience with new things, and especially the implementation of research abroad. The benefits of this involvement can provide new motivation in the community and university students in the country. These new experiences and academic culture can encourage student exploration, influence the academic community and its structure, and encourage a change in student orientation in the global world (Martínez-Nicolás 2020). The idea of academic success must be supported by research, learning, publication, and academic community services. All of these activities depend on specific practices and institutional mobility (Hopkins et al. 2019). The challenge of internationalization globally does require partnerships to disseminate knowledge between universities that have world-class university rankings (Owen 2020; Faiz & Mohamed 2022). In the context of knowledge exploration, the development of a university's academic culture is a fundamental effort.

The quality of learning is a staple activity and is even used as the core of academic activities. Because this learning can transfer, internalize, and even develop knowledge. International business teaching references contribute to the development of internships as an implementation International cooperation as a pedagogy of learning covers three main aspects: an understanding of the competencies that students develop and added value related to future jobs when students have done internships in overseas companies (Hermann, Amaral & Bossle 2021). In addition, it is enriched with training on students' competency needs(Taylor et al. 2010; Wong & Oh 2023). Internships or training abroad programs help provide students with global thinking recognition, and strengthen confidence (Thompson et al. 2022). This is also proven by several universities both under the Ministry of Religion and the Ministry of Culture, that students who complete mobility study programs,

internships, and training encourage a change in attitudes of independence and confidence. The experience aspect is an important instrument to build student motivation in the state (Korhonen et al. 2019).

Table 3. Giving clue, that in the environment of the universities of the Ministry of Education and Culture, collaborative research has been pioneered for a long time and has reaped many results of its collaboration, especially in the fields of science and technology. Universities funded by the industrial world. The development of research at well-known and leading universities in Indonesia is built through continuous individual relationships because it is an individual trust that is the majority of them. Individual-level development continues at the university level. In addition, in other countries, individual activities are continued with institutional and inter-country cooperation (Ma & Montgomery 2021). As an example in African universities, researchers in the Covid-12 era have fostered innovative research patterns (Fonkou et al. 2021). In Malaysia, his university also collaborates with foreign countries, dominated by science and technology (By, Mustaffa & John 2019). In the last ten years, in the State Islamic Religious Universities, there has been an increasing trend about the results of their research being published in prestigious national and international journals, and also have international reputable journals. However, publications are still dominated by social, cultural, and religious fields.

V.   CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study produced findings that were then contextualized the needs and challenges of internationalization programs and the requirements of international accreditation institutions. In this case, the government's goodwill is needed for the fulfillment and selection of the national education budget without having to distinguish between the Ministry of Religion and the Ministry of Education and Culture. The provision of access and budget quotas is equal and also follows the demands of increasing the ranking of the same.

The problem faced by the State Islamic University under the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia is the problem of access to budget provision, which is far different. For instance, the problem of student mobility programs, lecturer exchanges, and international collaborative research. Some of these limitations are findings that hinder and will complicate internationalization programs and the fulfillment of the international accreditation process recognized by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

This study certainly still has many shortcomings, both research methods and issues related to the problem of managing internationalization programs in the State Islamic Religious Higher Education environment. Therefore, another approach that is more comprehensive and relevant to the future is needed.

Conflict of interest: The author conducted this research and there was no conflict with the International Office in several State Islamic Universities and State Public Universities in this research area.

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