

Exploring Strategic Management Based on Islamic Values in Pesantren-based Higher Education

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Abstract:

This research analyzes strategic management based on Islamic values at Islamic boarding school-based universities in East Java Province. Through a cross-case qualitative approach, this research analyzes the strategic formulation, implementation, and evaluation stages and their implications for improving the quality of education. Interviews, observations, and documentation were conducted to obtain accurate and valid data. Data analysis uses the Miles and Huberman interactive model: data collection, data presentation, data condensation, and drawing conclusions. The results of this research show that the strategic planning process needs to be carried out through deliberation with core stakeholders and HR (human resources) involved in higher education institutions and the need to develop Islamic values in the strategic planning process, namely *istiqamah* (continuously), *da'wah* (inviting people to join), *ittihad* (unity), *mashlahah* (general goodness), *ihtiyat* (prudence). These Islamic values were developed to optimize strategic planning components: scanning, establishing a vision, mission, tag lines, policies, and strategies. These several components form a unit that cannot be separated in the strategic planning process in responding to the future challenges of educational institutions.

Keywords: *Strategic Management, Pesantren-Based Higher Education, Islamic Values*

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis tentang manajemen strategis berbasis nilai-nilai Islam pada perguruan tinggi berbasis pesantren di propinsi Jawa Timur. Melalui pendekatan kualitatif lintas kasus, penelitian ini menganalisis tahapan perumusan, pelaksanaan, dan evaluasi strategis, serta implikasinya terhadap peningkatan mutu pendidikan. Interview, observasi dan dokumentasi dilakukan untuk mendapatkan data yang akurat dan valid. Analisis datanya menggunakan model interaktif Miles and Huberman, yaitu; pengumpulan data, penyajian data, kondensasi data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa proses perencanaan strategik perlu dilakukan dengan melalui musyawarah dengan stakeholder inti dan SDM (sumber daya manusia) yang terlibat di dalam lembaga pendidikan perguruan tinggi serta perlu mengembangkan nilai Islam dalam proses perencanaan strategik yaitu *istiqamah* (terus menerus), *da'wah* (mengajak masyarakat untuk bisa bergabung), *ittihad* (persatuan), *mashlahah* (kebaikan secara umum), *ihtiyat* (kehati-hatian). Nilai Islam tersebut dikembangkan untuk mengoptimalkan dalam komponen perencanaan strategik yaitu scanning, penetapan visi, misi, tag line, kebijakan, strategik. Dari beberapa komponen tersebut merupakan satu kesatuan yang tidak bisa dipisahkan dalam proses perencanaan strategik dalam menjawab tantangan masa depan lembaga pendidikan.

Kata Kunci: *Manajemen Strategik, Perguruan Tinggi Berbasis Pesantren, Nilai-Nilai Islam*

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has many universities spread across all provinces, which shows that the number of universities reaches 4,593 (Wuladari et al., 2022; Anatan & Nur, 2023). This figure consists of: (1) 122 State Universities (PTN); (2) 3,044 Private Universities (PTS); (3) 187 other higher education ministries/institutions (PTK/L); and (4) 1,240 Religious Universities (PTA) (Maulana, 2021). The presence of many state universities and private universities spread across various provinces creates competition and competitive challenges in realizing National Higher Education Standards, involving National Education Standards, Research Standards, and Community Service Standards (Benavides et al., 2020; Toquero, 2020; Shaturaev, 2021).

The complex challenges of higher education in the era of globalization (Bound et al., 2021; Ketat, 2021) include the rapid development of information technology based on digital applications, graduate productivity, workforce preparation according to the needs of the digital era, economic crisis, regional autonomy, higher education competition, high societal needs, international language skills, internationalization of higher education, political, economic, social and cultural changes, significant moral damage, and loss of good personal character.

In facing this challenge, higher education, both public and private, is the primary focus for bringing about significant change because higher education is a means to increase knowledge, insight, and preparation for life in the future (Ahmad, 2020; Rana et al., 2022; Ashour et al., 2021). Success in achieving these goals can be obtained through higher education, especially in the era of Society 5.0 (Rojas et al., 2021; Xu et al., 2021; Aslam et al., 2020). Therefore, universities need to pay attention to the quality of education through a sustainable quality assurance system and implement effective management strategies (Mian et al., 2020; Zaini et al., 2022; Hashim et al., 2022).

Darussalam Islamic Institute (IAIDA) Blokagung Banyuwangi and Zainul Hasan Islamic University (UNZAH) Probolinggo are two universities actively facing future challenges. Both institutions have designed strategic plans (Renstra) as guidelines for responding to future challenges and as a step towards quality institutions.

IAIDA Banyuwangi, with its futuristic vision, has formulated a 2021-2026 Strategic Plan with a focus on Reliable Islamic Boarding School Institutes (Accreditation of Study Programs and Institutions). Through strategic programs, such as providing resources according to standards, awards for academic community achievers, education and mentoring to increase the integrity and recognition of the academic community, establishing partnership networks, as well as career and character development programs for lecturers, IAIDA Banyuwangi strives to achieve its vision, likewise with UNZAH Probolinggo which has strategic programs, including; human resource development,

integrated information systems, performance-based remuneration, IT-based learning, and increasing the active role of alumni.

The initial study results show that these two institutions have implemented their strategic plans well. Previously, IAIDA Banyuwangi was not accredited in 2020, but in 2023 it achieved good accreditation. Study program accreditation achievements have also increased, and the qualifications of lecturers with doctoral degrees have increased from 1% (2021) to 10% (2023). On the other hand, UNZAH Probolinggo achieved Excellent accreditation in 2023 after achieving Good accreditation in 2021. The percentage of study program accreditation and lecturer qualifications also showed an increase.

Although these two institutions have taken positive steps, it should be noted that the implementation of their strategic plans and management has yet to be fully optimal. Therefore, this research aims to reveal the strategic management process for improving the quality of education carried out by IAIDA Banyuwangi and UNZAH Probolinggo. This study asks several research questions as the main focus in this context.

Previously, research in the field of higher education has focused on various aspects, including institutional accreditation, curriculum development, and improving teaching quality (Kumar et al., 2020; Fernandes & Singh, 2022). Several studies emphasize the implementation of quality assurance and academic evaluation systems to improve higher education standards (Muñoz et al., 2022; Alayoubi et al., 2020; Basilotta-Gómez-Pablos et al., 2022). However, there is a void in the literature regarding the implementation of strategic management, especially in Islamic boarding school-based universities. Previous research tends to be more in-depth on academic aspects without considering the influence of Islamic boarding school values in shaping management strategies. Therefore, this research attempts to fill the gap by providing a more comprehensive understanding of how strategic management is implemented in Islamic boarding school-based higher education and how it can improve the overall quality of higher education.

This research brings novelty with an analytical focus on the implementation of strategic management in two Islamic boarding school-based universities, namely IAIDA Banyuwangi and UNZAH Probolinggo. The uniqueness of this research lies in its holistic approach to the challenges of higher education, considering the influence of Islamic boarding school values in management strategies. Furthermore, this study dissects the comparison between the two institutions, identifies differences and similarities in the implementation of strategic management, and provides new insights regarding innovative steps that other universities can adopt.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research adopts a qualitative approach using secondary data from information and documents related to the implementation of strategic management in two Islamic boarding school-based universities: IAIDA Banyuwangi and UNZAH Probolinggo. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to detail the context, processes, and meaning of the phenomena studied (Cuthbertson et al., 2020; Nassaji, 2020; Levitt, 2021). This data includes strategic plans (Renstra), accreditation reports, policy documents, and

related information from both universities (Yuhertiana et al., 2020).

This research involves collecting data through two main types of sources, namely secondary data and interviews (Budianto, 2020). Secondary data was obtained from official documents such as strategic plans (Renstra), accreditation reports, and IAIDA Banyuwangi and UNZAH Probolinggo university policies. This document analysis aims to understand the implementation of strategic management in both institutions. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with related parties, such as university leaders, academic staff, and policymakers, to gain direct and in-depth perspectives on the factors that influence the successful implementation of strategic management. Combining these two data types will likely provide a holistic and in-depth understanding of the context, process, and impact of implementing strategic management in Islamic boarding school-based higher education.

Data analysis in this study adopted two methods: single-site analysis and cross-site analysis (Kramer et al., 2020). First, single-site analysis involves collecting data from observations, interviews, and documentation on each research object. The analysis process uses Miles, Huberman, and Saldana's interactive model, including data collection, presentation, condensation, and drawing or verifying conclusions. The stages include collecting data from various sources, sorting, simplifying, and testing the truth of the conclusions. Second, after individual analysis, the research involved cross-site analysis to compare and integrate findings from each research location, namely IAIDA Banyuwangi and UNZAH Probolinggo. The steps include data analysis based on the research focus on each site, comparison of data findings, analysis of findings across sites, formation of research propositions, and conclusion. This process helps gain an in-depth understanding of implementing strategic management based on Islamic values in Islamic boarding school-based universities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Strategic Formulation in Improving the Quality of Higher Education

Referring to research findings from each location at IAIDA Banyuwangi and UNZAH Probolinggo in improving the quality of higher education, cross-site findings can be obtained at the strategic formulation stage. The strategic formulation process at both universities is based on a tagline, which is the basis for implementing a series of strategic formulations. The tagline of IAIDA Banyuwangi and UNZAH Probolinggo is that it is an Islamic boarding school-based campus because it was born from the womb of the Islamic boarding school. The reference in developing higher education, like universities in general, is developing the Tridharma of Higher Education, but the difference is incorporating Islamic boarding school values into higher education. Islamic boarding school values are those developed by Islamic boarding schools and then applied in universities. Stages of the Strategic Formulation Process for Improving the Quality of Higher Education at IAIDA Banyuwangi and UNZAH Probolinggo.



Figure 1. Stages of the Strategic Formulation Process for Improving the Quality of Higher Education at IAIDA Banyuwangi and UNZAH Probolinggo

The strategic formulation process of IAIDA Banyuwangi and UNZAH Probolinggo has several stages: formulation of vision, mission, goals, synchronization, SWOT analysis, policies, and strategy determination. Islamic values are developed at every stage, and there is a process in their compilation. The strategic formulation process in improving the quality of higher education begins with formulating the vision, mission, and goals. Referring to the findings of strategic formulation research conducted by IAIDA Banyuwangi and UNZAH Probolinggo, the theme stage is the formulation of vision, mission, and goals carried out through deliberation and dialogue. The Islamic values developed are the values of da'wah, it, and mashallah. Next is synchronization with HR. Synchronization with HR is done through interviews, analysis, and dialogue. The Islamic values developed were ijma', that is, Hannah.

The third stage is a SWOT analysis; SWOT analysis is done through deliberation and brainstorming. The Islamic values developed are ihtiyath and tawazun. The fourth stage is the determination of policies and strategies, which is carried out through a deliberative process. The Islamic values developed are just, mashallah, and intimate.

Determining policies and strategies is carried out through deliberation between campus leaders and foundations. Islamic values such as justice, mashallah, and intimacy are principles in forming policies and strategies. The strategic formulation process prioritizes deliberation as the primary means of solving problems.

Thus, the strategic formulation process involves several stages, ranging from deliberation, analysis, development of Islamic values, and establishing policies and strategies. All these steps are directed to effectively realize the campus's vision, mission, and goals.

Table 1. Strategic Formulation Plan

No	Plan	Strategy
1	Fulfillment of resources according to needs and standards	Building synergy of the academic community
2	Education system innovation- teaching, research, and community service	Implementing the Tridharma implementation system of higher education based on quality standards
3	Number of students, discipline, independence, national level achievement	Implementing a system of cooperation with agencies and internal HR development

Strategic Implementation of Improving the Quality of Higher Education

Strategic implementation is implementing policies and strategies that lead to quality higher education. At IAIDA Banyuwangi, policies, and strategies are implemented through several stages, described as follows: through an interview process with parties involved in the strategic implementation field at IAIDA Banyuwangi. Eko Budiwono explained that; "After formulating policies and strategies, we realize that exemplary implementation is essential, according to the message of the Rector, so that the policies that have been formulated are implemented. We, as vice-chancellors, work closely with all levels to work on policies and strategies through various campus programs. These programs are developed by referring to the Tridharma of higher education, namely education, research, and community service. The process of program formation was carried out through deliberation at IAIDA Banyuwangi, both in formal meetings and casual chats. Thus, each program follows established policies and contributes to the development of the campus and society (I_WR1_2023).

From the statement above, to implement the policies and strategies formulated, IAIDA Banyuwangi implements them through programs that refer to the Tidharma of Higher Education. The process of preparing the program-program, it is carried out through deliberation with structural personnel to find the benefits of the program-program

Meanwhile, strategic implementation at UNZAH Probolinggo is a form of implementation of strategic formulation, which includes the formulation of vision, mission, goals, synchronization with human resources, SWOT analysis, formulation of policies and strategies that UNZAH Probolinggo universities have formulated in improving the quality of education. The strategic implementation of UNZAH Probolinggo has several components, which begin with the preparation of programs. In preparing existing programs at UNZAH Probolinggo through an open process with deliberation, each unit head proposed a work program for one year. The process of formulating programs at the beginning of the educational school year. As explained by the Rector of UNZAH Probolinggo "The work program at UNZAH Probolinggo is through an open system; sometimes, the program is proposed from each unit, and sometimes, the program is indeed from the Rector's initiation. It provides full opportunities for all lecturers and structural staff to actualize their ideas" (I_R_2023).

Based on the statement of the Rector of UNZAH Probolinggo above, it can be seen that the program formulation process involves all lecturers and structural staff providing their ideas, whether they are by their fields or not. Vice-Rector II, Mrs. Endah Tri Wisudaningsih, conveyed the same thing that "Mr. Rector opens opportunities for all lecturers and campus structural staff to explore their ideas to develop this campus. Mr. Rector is pleased to have productive human resources, which is indeed the hope of the Rector" (I_R_2023).

This statement shows that the process of compiling programs at UNZAH Probolinggo is done by capturing the aspirations of all lecturers and structural staff through a deliberative forum. This step is done because increasing human resources can increase productivity. The strategy in developing programs at UNZAH Probolinggo through a deliberative forum from campus leaders, then the

results are submitted to the Foundation, as conveyed by the Rector of UNZAH Probolinggo as follows “The work program at UNZAH Probolinggo is through an open system; sometimes, the program is proposed from each unit, and sometimes, the program is indeed from the Rector's initiation. It provides full opportunities for all lecturers and structural staff to actualize their ideas” (I_R_2023).

The arrangement of the program to be carried out is related to how the program can carry the good name of Genggong Islamic Boarding School and how it is able to apply the values of Islamic boarding schools. As for its preparation, each unit head provides program proposals by their respective fields, packages them properly through PPSDMKS for correction, and then submits them to the Foundation. So that such a process does not seem dictatorial, everything is what the Rector said.

Referring to the statement that the critical point in preparing the program is the existence of a good coordination line from structural personnel to the Foundation, the program contains benefits for campuses and Islamic boarding schools.

Strategic Evaluation of Improving the Quality of Higher Education

Referring to research findings from each location at IAIDA Banyuwangi and UNZAH Probolinggo, cross-site findings can be obtained at the strategic evaluation stage. Cross-site findings show monitoring and measuring performance achievements, clarifications, and corrective actions in the strategic evaluation phase. The process in its application develops Islamic values, which will be explained below;

The first stage in strategic evaluation is monitoring, commonly called monitoring. Monitoring is a monitoring activity carried out by the leader to its members to check the effectiveness of the tasks that have been given. Monitoring can be done through coordination between internal leaders, sharing analysis, periodic monitoring, involving organizational structural components, and observing performance analysis. The values developed in monitoring are iqamah and shari'a.

The second stage is the measurement of performance achievements. Kineja is an activity carried out to measure the effectiveness of organizational performance by adjusting predetermined work performance standards. Measurement of performance achievements through team deliberation processes, synergy, special team monitoring, digital system monitoring (SIMPEG), and orderly document administration. The values developed are fairness, shindig, and iqamah.

The third stage is clarification. Clarification can be called Sabayon, which means confirming the data obtained for improvement. The clarification process can be done through dialogue, sharing, and warnings. The values developed are deliberation, radio, qanaah, and responsiveness. The final stage in strategic evaluation is corrective action. Improvement is an improvement activity based on the results of the evaluation carried out at this stage as a reference to determine the formulation and implementation of strategies to be even more effective. Improvement can be done by identifying problems, classifying corrective actions,

incremental improvements, and follow-ups. The developed values are Tabayun and Siddiq.

The fourth stage is corrective action. Corrective action is the process of improving performance reports made by employees. In the process of improvement carried out through consultation and coaching, Islamic values, namely *istiqomah*, sincerity, and *tarbiyah*, were developed. At the same time, the fifth stage is reflection. Reflection is the activity of self-introspection on actions taken to reflect on and improve. Reflection is carried out through direction and correction by developing Islamic values, namely *muhasabah* and *taubah*.

Implications of Strategic Management in Improving the Quality of Higher Education

The main goal for educational institutions and IAIDA Banyuwangi is to improve quality every year. The quality of education cannot necessarily be present just like that but requires a process including the need for strategic management, which includes the process of formulation, implementation, and evaluation so that the application of strategic management will have implications for improving the quality of education. As presented by IAIDA Banyuwangi Rector Ahmad Munib Syafa'at "In realizing the vision and mission of the IAIDA Banyuwangi campus to become a quality campus, a long series is needed, including the need for a sound system, therefore emphasize to all levels of campus management must be neatly organized".

The strategic management aspect is an essential factor in realizing campus ideals because in it, there is a strategic design to realize it. Strategic management impacts higher education quality, such as the achievement of campus accreditation and Study Programs.

The quality of education is the goal of educational institutions, especially UNZAH Probolinggo higher education institutions, so to improve the quality of education, strategic management is needed through three processes: formulation, implementation, and strategic evaluation. In the process of implementing strategic management, there are implications in improving the quality of education, as stated by the Rector of UNZAH Probolinggo "UNZAH Probolinggo, from year to year, always improves to become a better campus, starting by improving the quality of human resource discipline and development and increasing student achievement. At first, when I was given the mandate to become the Rector of UNZAH Probolinggo, I was optimistic about being able to jointly make a campus that could benefit a million people so that one by one, we fixed it, until the change of status, until now we can become a University. Of course, the primary capital to become a quality campus is a neatly arranged strategy that can be done compactly".

From this statement, the main principle in improving the quality of education is the value of optimism and compactness (*Ittihad*). Optimistic value is a provision to work confidently in gradually managing educational institutions with simple facilities. The value of a compact as a form of togetherness in realizing the vision and mission of educational institutions does not mean that there are no conflicts in it, but conflicts can be managed properly. In addition, a strategy that focuses on the vision and mission is also needed to improve the quality of

education. From this expression confirmed by Loviga Denny Pratama, as Head of LP3M "The Rector often said that we must be optimistic that we can develop the UNZAH Probolinggo campus because what we do for the good of the campus is also a form of continuing the da'wah of the Genggong Islamic Boarding School, so the process passed is to improve the management system and determine the strategy to be taken and adjusted to the vision and mission of the campus".

Referring to this statement, the driving factor in improving the quality of education is a sense of optimism, Islamic ummah da'wah built into all elements of human resources, and optimally improving strategic management. The implications of implementing strategic management are as expressed by the Rector of UNZAH Probolinggo "We have received many champion awards, both National and International; when we led, starting from 2013, it took one year to change its status to an Institute by adding programs majoring in PIAUD, PGMI, Sharia Banking, and so on. So, after five years of being an institute, it turned into a university. Then, we added a program majoring in Islamic Architecture in collaboration with the Stock Exchange, BMT. After one year of being at the University, we thought again about what we should target to be measurable, then applied one of the leadership philosophies: "Others sleep, we wake up, others are silent, we move, others run, we run fast". After one year of becoming a University, the acceleration we worked on was academic and non-academic achievements that were measurable with the quality culture earlier. We got 68 National champions and 7 times International champions. We received awards from the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Year 2 became a University with many champions won, namely 148 National and 14 International for one year. Finally, we received many awards this year; in Jakarta, we were named inspirational figures driving education and reportable campus awards, while in Yogyakarta, we received awards, namely Indonesia TOP Leader and Indonesia TOP University Excellent".

Based on the data above, the ideals of the UNZAH Probolinggo campus in improving the quality of education are fundamental, with various academic and non-academic achievements. In addition, strategic management is integral in improving the quality of education at UNZAH Probolinggo. Quality achievements from various lines are part of the success of leaders in realizing the vision, mission, and organizational system of the campus.

Based on the findings of cross-case research at IAIDA Banyuwangi and UNZAH Probolinggo, the strategic management applied to the two universities has similarities in the stages of strategic formulation. The formulation process involves formulating a vision, mission, goals, synchronization with HR, SWOT analysis, and establishing policies and strategies. In this formulation process, Islamic values such as *da'wah*, *ittihat*, *mashlahah*, *ijma'*, *ittihat*, *qanaah*, *ihthyath*, and *tawazun* are applied according to the tagline of pesantren-based universities. Strategic implementation in both universities includes components such as programs, budgeting, SOPs, leadership, and structure, involving aspects of deliberation, top-down, bottom-up, supportive, delegation, democratic, spiritual, and needs analysis. Islamic values include measurable, mashallah, realistic, ta'awun, amanah, intimate, obedient, just, khidmah, uswatun hadanah, and religious.

At the strategic evaluation stage, both universities monitor performance achievement measurement, clarification, corrective action, and reflection (Biondi & Russo, 2022; Diana & Zaini, 2023). The evaluation process involves Islamic values such as. Strategic management in both universities has positive implications, such as increasing HR readiness, achieving "Good" accreditation, improving the qualifications of lecturers and students, and creating quality graduates for the world of work. These implications can be observed through the achievement of "Good" Accreditation, recognition of graduates in the world of work, and infrastructure improvement, creating an integrated and holistic strategic management foundation in supporting the improvement of the quality of higher education (Caeiro et al., 2020; Miranda et al., 2021; Hashim et al., 2022).

This cross-case research makes a valuable contribution to understanding the application of strategic management in improving the quality of education in higher education. Through findings from the cases of IAIDA Banyuwangi and UNZAH Probolinggo, this study illustrates that the formulation, implementation, and strategic evaluation in both universities is carried out by referring to Islamic values contained in the concept of pesantren-based universities. The findings provide insight into how Islamic values can be integrated into strategic management, from strategy formulation to performance evaluation. In addition, this study proves that the application of strategic management in both cases has a significant positive impact, such as increasing HR readiness, achieving "Good" accreditation, improving the qualifications of lecturers and students, and creating graduates who can be accepted in the world of work. The implications of these findings may guide other universities in adopting a holistic and Islamic values-oriented strategic management approach to improve the quality of education effectively and sustainably.

CONCLUSION

By detailing the findings of cross-case research at IAIDA Banyuwangi and UNZAH Probolinggo, it can be concluded that applying strategic management in the context of pesantren-based universities contributes positively to improving the quality of education. The formulation, implementation, and strategic evaluation process at both universities is based on Islamic values reflected in each stage, covering aspects of vision, mission, goals, synchronization with human resources, SWOT analysis, policy setting, and strategy. The results showed that strategic management integrated with Islamic values has a positive impact, such as increasing HR readiness, achieving "Good" accreditation, improving the qualifications of lecturers and students, and creating quality graduates. The implications of these findings provide valuable guidance for other universities to adopt similar approaches, strengthen aspects of strategic management based on Islamic values, and improve the overall quality of education.

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