



STRATEGIC FORMULATION OF EDUCATION AT THE ISLAMIC HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION AL BADAR CIPULUS

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the strategic formulation of education at Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam (STAI) Al Badar Cipulus, focusing on how Islamic values are integrated into modern strategic management principles to achieve institutional sustainability and competitiveness. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through interviews, documentation, and observation involving institutional leaders directly engaged in the strategic planning process. Data analysis employed Miles and Huberman's model, including condensation, display, and conclusion drawing to identify key themes in vision mission formulation, strategy selection, and institutional alliances. The findings show that the formulation of vision, mission, and strategic goals (VMSG) at STAI Al Badar is conducted through a participatory mechanism grounded in the values of Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah An-Nahdliyah, emphasizing moderation, inclusiveness, and adaptability. The institution implements a combined differentiation and cost-efficiency strategy while upholding Islamic work ethics of *amanah* (trustworthiness) and *ihsan* (excellence). Furthermore, program diversification and strategic alliances through the establishment of a Campus Owned Business Entity (BUMK) and collaborations with other institutions strengthen financial sustainability and institutional reputation. The study concludes that the success of STAI Al Badar Cipulus lies in its ability to integrate spiritual values with professional management, providing a model for adaptive and value-based strategic management in Islamic higher education institutions.

Keywords: *Internal Quality Assurance System, Pesantren, Education*

INTRODUCTION

Social, economic, and technological changes in the era of globalization have compelled Islamic educational institutions to formulate strategies that are more adaptive, sustainable, and value-based. This changing context not only affects the operational aspects of institutions but also necessitates the repositioning of their vision and mission to remain relevant to the needs of modern society. According to Fadillah and Suwandi (2023), strategic planning in contemporary Islamic education must strike a balance between spiritual values and adaptive capabilities toward external environmental changes. Similarly, Suryadi (2022) found that Islamic educational institutions with long-term

strategic plans rooted in Islamic values tend to be more resilient in the increasingly competitive education sector. Thus, strategic formulation should not merely be viewed as an administrative document but rather as an instrument for institutional transformation.

The formulation of vision, mission, and strategic objectives constitutes the most fundamental phase in the strategic management process of Islamic educational institutions (Samsul, 2025). However, in practice, these elements often remain normative and rhetorical, without being translated into measurable action plans (Rahman, 2023). Isnaini (2022) revealed that most madrasahs in Indonesia lack participatory mechanisms in the formulation of their vision and mission, resulting in limited understanding and ownership among institutional members. Similarly, Mukhlis and Hamzah (2024) emphasized that the exclusion of stakeholders in the process leads to a weak sense of belonging toward institutional direction. Hence, it is essential to design a participatory model of vision and mission formulation that is performance-oriented and contextualized within Islamic values.

Beyond the vision and mission, the selection of general strategies such as differentiation, cost leadership, and focus plays a vital role in enabling Islamic educational institutions to achieve competitive advantage (Adeoye & Munawwaroh, 2025). Nurlina (2021) suggested that differentiation strategies can be implemented through the strengthening of Islamic curricula, integration of religious and general sciences, and the development of distinctive graduate profiles. However, Hidayat (2023) discovered that many Islamic institutions lack clarity in defining their competitive strategies, with several relying merely on short-term “survival strategies” without a clear long-term direction. This indicates a significant gap between classical strategic management theory (Porter) and its contextual application in value-oriented Islamic educational settings.

Program diversification and alliance development have become new imperatives for Islamic educational institutions amid financial challenges and rising competition. Salsabila and Yusuf (2024) argued that Islamic education can expand access and financial sustainability through program diversification, including vocational education, professional training, and non-formal programs rooted in Islamic principles. Furthermore, inter-institutional collaboration—whether among Islamic universities, pesantren, or with the industry—can enhance institutional capacity (Aini & Hasanah, 2023). Nevertheless, Lestari (2022) found that many partnerships among Islamic institutions remain symbolic, lacking clear governance mechanisms, and thus yield unsustainable benefits. Therefore, there is a need to develop alliance strategies based on shared values and institutional cultural compatibility.

Previous studies have also shown that strategy implementation in Islamic education is often hindered by weak managerial capacity and inadequate evaluation systems. Sari and Maulana (2022) noted that most madrasahs do not have effective monitoring systems for tracking the achievement of their strategic plans, resulting in limited impact on educational quality. Similarly, Nasir (2023) highlighted that weak evaluation mechanisms lead to inefficiency and low institutional effectiveness. These findings underscore the importance of new research that not only describes strategic formulation but also assesses the alignment between planning, implementation, and evaluation processes in Islamic educational contexts.

From a theoretical perspective, there remains a significant gap in integrating modern strategic management theory with the unique context of Islamic education. Previous research has often employed descriptive approaches without developing integrative models linking vision-mission formulation, general strategies, diversification, and alliances into a unified conceptual framework (Rahim, 2023). Moreover, the absence of longitudinal and comparative studies across different institutional types madrasahs, pesantren, and Islamic higher education institutions has limited deeper understanding of the factors influencing strategic effectiveness (Sulastri, 2024). Thus, this study aims to address both theoretical and empirical gaps through an integrative and contextual approach.

This study offers novelty through the development of an integrative strategic formulation model that unites participatory vision-mission formulation, Islamic value-aligned strategy selection, program diversification, and sustainable alliance management. This approach seeks to provide an alternative model of strategic management specifically tailored to the realities and future needs of Islamic educational institutions. Theoretically, this research contributes to expanding the scope of strategic management theory by incorporating Islamic values as an integral variable in strategic formulation. Practically, the findings are expected to serve as a guide for leaders of Islamic higher education institutions in formulating and implementing more effective, adaptive, and sustainable institutional strategies (Zulfikar, 2024).

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to explore strategic formulation within Islamic higher education institutions. The qualitative approach is chosen because it enables a deep understanding of managerial behavior, strategic decision-making, and the integration of Islamic values in the formulation process (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The descriptive nature of this research aims to provide an in-depth depiction of how strategic formulation covering vision, mission, strategic objectives, and the choice of general strategy is planned and implemented within the context of Islamic higher education, reflecting both spiritual and managerial dimensions (Sahin & Abu-Raiya, 2022).

The scope of the study focuses on Islamic higher education institutions (PTKI) in Indonesia that have implemented formal strategic planning processes in their organizational management. These institutions represent a unique blend of religious and academic missions, making them an appropriate locus for examining strategic formulation from both faith-based and modern management perspectives (Rahman & Yusuf, 2021). The object of study includes the processes of developing institutional vision, mission, strategic goals, and the selection of competitive strategies such as differentiation, cost leadership, and focus strategies, alongside diversification and inter-institutional alliances.

Operationally, the variable of strategic formulation is defined as the systematic process by which an institution identifies long-term objectives, aligns them with its internal and external environment, and selects appropriate strategies for achieving sustainable competitive advantage (David et al., 2022). In this research, strategic formulation is described through three analytical dimensions: (1) formulation of vision, mission, and strategic objectives, (2) determination of general strategy (differentiation, cost leadership, or focus), and (3) diversification and alliances among Islamic educational institutions.

The research was conducted at selected Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia that represent various typologies public and private, traditional and modern to provide a comparative understanding of strategic management practices. The informants of this study consist of institutional leaders, including rectors, deans, and heads of quality assurance or planning units, who are directly involved in strategic decision-making. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling, as it allows the selection of participants with substantial knowledge and involvement in strategic management (Palinkas et al., 2020).

Data were collected using semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and observation. Semi-structured interviews provided flexibility for in-depth discussions while maintaining focus on key research questions (Kallio et al., 2021). Institutional documents such as strategic plans (Renstra), performance reports, and vision-mission statements were analyzed to triangulate findings and ensure data validity. Observation was conducted to understand the real practices of institutional management and strategy implementation.

The main sources and tools in this study include interview guides, recording devices, and field notes. Data validation was ensured through triangulation of sources and methods, member checking, and peer debriefing (Nowell et al., 2017). The data analysis technique follows Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's (2020) model, which includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring themes related to strategic formulation, decision-making rationale, and institutional adaptation to changing educational environments.

By employing this methodological framework, the study aims to contribute theoretically by expanding the discourse on strategic management within Islamic higher education and practically by providing a model of strategic formulation that integrates Islamic values with modern management principles (Anwar & Abdullah, 2023). The expected outcome is a conceptual framework that strengthens the strategic capacity and sustainability of Islamic higher education institutions in an increasingly competitive and globalized academic environment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Formulation Process of Vision, Mission, and Strategic Goals in Islamic Higher Education Institutions

The formulation of the vision, mission, and strategic goals (VMSG) at Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam (STAI) Al Badar Cipulus Purwakarta demonstrates the application of strategic management grounded in Islamic values and adaptive principles toward external environmental changes. Based on interviews with institutional leaders, the formulation process begins with a SWOT analysis to identify the institution's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The results of this analysis serve as the foundation for forming a VMSG Formulation Team, officially appointed through a Chairperson's Decree, consisting of leaders, lecturers, and unit representatives to ensure a participatory and comprehensive process.

The formulated VMSG affirms STAI Al Badar's identity as a pesantren-based Islamic higher education institution, characterized by the motto "Excellent, Independent, and Cultured." The institution adopts the Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah An-Nahdliyah paradigm, emphasizing moderation, tolerance, and inclusiveness. Islamic values are embedded at the core of every strategic policy, ensuring that the educational vision is not merely academic in orientation but

also serves as a medium for shaping Islamic character and moral integrity consistent with the principle of rahmatan lil 'alamin (mercy to all creation).

Theoretically, this process aligns with Bryson's (2018) concept that effective strategic planning in educational institutions must begin with environmental analysis and involve all stakeholders to ensure the alignment of institutional direction with societal needs. Moreover, the integration of Aswaja values reflects the principles of tawasuth (moderation), tawazun (balance), and tasamuh (tolerance), as articulated by Abdurrahman Wahid (2001) in his notion of cultural Islam. These principles enable the institution to balance Islamic idealism with contemporary realities.

STAI Al Badar also applies adaptive mechanisms through periodic reviews of VMSG and annual strategic planning, reflecting the concept of Adaptive Leadership (Heifetz, 1994) the ability of an educational organization to preserve its core values while adjusting strategies to external dynamics. Hence, the vision and mission formulation at STAI Al Badar is not merely a formal statement but a dynamic guideline that evolves continuously to remain relevant to the changing needs of contemporary Islamic society.

2. General Strategies and Implementation for Achieving Competitive Advantage

In pursuit of competitive advantage, STAI Al Badar Cipulus implements a combination of differentiation and managerial efficiency strategies, tailored to the institution's available resources. Differentiation is achieved by emphasizing its unique identity as a pesantren-based campus that upholds the moderate Islamic values of Aswaja An-Nahdliyah. This approach distinguishes STAI Al Badar from other Islamic higher education institutions by focusing on developing students who are intellectually excellent and religiously grounded.

Managerial efficiency, on the other hand, is realized through transparent, accountable, and professional financial management. The institution's leadership prioritizes effective and credible control of income and expenditure based on public accountability principles. Every academic and administrative unit is optimized for productivity, ensuring that institutional operations are efficient and goal-oriented.

This dual strategy aligns with Porter's (1985) generic strategy framework, which highlights differentiation, cost leadership, and focus as pathways to competitiveness. STAI Al Badar integrates both differentiation and cost efficiency by building a unique identity rooted in Islamic values while maintaining prudent resource utilization. This also corresponds with the Resource-Based View (Barney, 1991), which posits that an institution's sustainable competitive advantage arises not only from tangible assets but also from intangible resources such as values, culture, and reputation.

From the perspective of Islamic education management, the institution's emphasis on efficiency and accountability embodies the values of amanah (trustworthiness) and ihsan (professional excellence), as outlined by Ali and Al-Owaihan (2008) in the Islamic Work Ethic. This principle emphasizes that strategic management in Islamic educational institutions must be grounded in moral and spiritual responsibility rather than purely economic rationality. Through this strategy, STAI Al Badar effectively integrates Islamic work ethics with modern organizational effectiveness to achieve sustainable competitiveness.

3. Program Diversification and Institutional Alliances in Islamic Higher Education

Program diversification and strategic alliances constitute essential policies at STAI Al Badar Cipulus for strengthening competitiveness and ensuring financial sustainability. Based on interviews, the institution has developed various initiatives to expand educational services, including the establishment of a Campus-Owned Business Entity (BUMK) as an alternative source of revenue. This initiative addresses one of the main challenges faced by private institutions limited operational funding by promoting campus economic independence, while simultaneously serving as a practical entrepreneurship laboratory for students.

Furthermore, STAI Al Badar actively builds partnerships with government agencies and donor institutions to access financial and infrastructural support. Academic collaboration is also enhanced through alliances with other Islamic higher education institutions (PTKIS). These partnerships take the form of academic seminars, book discussions, visiting lecturer programs, and inter-campus academic collaborations. Such initiatives provide students with opportunities to gain not only theoretical knowledge but also valuable academic and professional experience beyond the classroom.

This diversification and alliance strategy corresponds to the Strategic Alliance Theory proposed by Hitt, Ireland, and Hoskisson (2017), emphasizing inter-institutional collaboration for resource sharing, network expansion, and quality improvement. In the context of Islamic education, such cooperation embodies the values of dakwah (Islamic outreach) and social synergy, as highlighted by Chapra (2000), who asserts that Islamic educational institutions must serve as agents of moral and economic development autonomous yet collaborative.

STAI Al Badar's approach also aligns with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Educational Ecosystem Theory, which emphasizes that educational institutions cannot thrive in isolation but must interact dynamically with broader social, academic, and policy environments. Consequently, STAI Al Badar's diversification and partnership initiatives are not merely economic strategies but practical implementations of Islamic principles of ta'awun (cooperation) and ukhuwah (brotherhood) in the modern institutional context.

These collaborative efforts have enhanced the institution's reputation, expanded academic innovation opportunities, and strengthened public trust in STAI Al Badar as a credible, inclusive, and competitive Islamic higher education institution. Through such strategies, STAI Al Badar Cipulus successfully integrates spirituality, professionalism, and economic independence into a coherent and sustainable framework for institutional development.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reveal that the strategic formulation of education at Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam (STAI) Al Badar Cipulus Purwakarta is systematically developed through an integrative approach that combines Islamic values with modern strategic management principles. The process of formulating the vision, mission, and strategic goals (VMSG) is carried out through a participatory mechanism involving all institutional stakeholders. It begins with a SWOT analysis to identify the institution's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, followed by the establishment of a formal formulation team through a Chairperson's Decree. This ensures that the resulting VMSG reflects both the Islamic philosophical foundation of *Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah An-Nahdliyah*—

emphasizing moderation, tolerance, and inclusivity—and the institution's responsiveness to external environmental changes.

In achieving competitive advantage, STAI Al Badar Cipulus applies a combined differentiation and cost-efficiency strategy, focusing on developing its distinct identity as a pesantren-based Islamic higher education institution while maintaining transparent, accountable, and professional financial management. This hybrid strategy strengthens institutional credibility, effectiveness, and sustainability. It also reflects Islamic ethical values such as *amanah* (trustworthiness) and *ihsan* (excellence), ensuring that managerial decisions are guided by both professional and moral accountability.

The study also concludes that program diversification and inter-institutional alliances play a vital role in ensuring institutional resilience and long-term development. Through the establishment of a Campus-Owned Business Entity (BUMK) and collaborations with government agencies, donors, and other Islamic higher education institutions (PTKIS), STAI Al Badar has succeeded in enhancing academic quality, financial sustainability, and community engagement. These strategic partnerships reflect the Islamic principles of *ta'awun* (cooperation) and *ukhuwah* (solidarity), while simultaneously expanding the institution's social and academic reach.

Overall, the research concludes that the success of STAI Al Badar Cipulus in formulating and implementing its strategic educational model lies in its ability to integrate Islamic spiritual values, adaptive leadership, and professional management practices. This integrative approach not only sustains institutional growth but also positions STAI Al Badar as a model for developing "Excellent, Independent, and Cultured" Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia.

Recommendations:

Future studies are encouraged to explore the long-term impact of this strategic formulation model on institutional performance indicators such as student satisfaction, academic reputation, and financial independence. Comparative studies across different Islamic higher education institutions would also provide deeper insights into the adaptability and transferability of the STAI Al Badar strategic model within diverse sociocultural and economic contexts.

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