

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION AT MATARAM STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the implementation of strategic management in improving the quality of Islamic education at the State Islamic University (UIN) Mataram using a descriptive qualitative method with a case study approach through semi-structured interviews, observations, and documentation studies analyzed with the interactive model of Miles and Huberman. The results of the study indicate that UIN Mataram implements strategic management through three main stages, namely strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and strategy evaluation which are realized through institutional transformation from IAIN to UIN, curriculum development based on the integration of religious and general sciences, improving the quality of human resources through continuous training, developing educational infrastructure and facilities, and strengthening the internal quality assurance system with a strategy of scientific integration as a characteristic to create graduates who excel academically and have a strong spirituality. Supporting factors for the implementation of strategic management include visionary leadership, collaborative organizational culture, and regulatory support from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, while the challenges faced include limited human resources, resistance to change, lack of infrastructure, and competition with other universities. This study concludes that strategic management plays a central role in improving the quality of Islamic education at UIN Mataram through an adaptive approach, responsive to the dynamics of changing times, and maintaining Islamic values as the main foundation.

KATA KUNCI

Manajemen Strategis,
Pendidikan Islam,
Kualitas Pendidikan,
Strategi Kelembagaan

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis implementasi manajemen strategis dalam meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan Islam di Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Mataram dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif dengan pendekatan studi kasus melalui wawancara semi terstruktur, observasi, dan studi dokumentasi yang dianalisis dengan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa UIN Mataram menerapkan manajemen strategis melalui tiga tahapan utama, yaitu perumusan strategi, implementasi strategi, dan evaluasi strategi yang diwujudkan melalui transformasi kelembagaan dari IAIN ke UIN, pengembangan kurikulum berbasis integrasi ilmu agama dan umum, peningkatan kualitas sumber daya manusia melalui pelatihan berkelanjutan, pengembangan infrastruktur dan sarana pendidikan, dan penguatan sistem penjaminan mutu internal dengan strategi integrasi keilmuan sebagai ciri khas untuk menciptakan lulusan yang unggul secara akademik dan memiliki spiritualitas yang kuat. Faktor pendukung implementasi manajemen strategis antara lain kepemimpinan visioner, budaya organisasi kolaboratif, dan dukungan

regulasi dari Kementerian Agama, sedangkan tantangan yang dihadapi antara lain keterbatasan sumber daya manusia, resistensi terhadap perubahan, kurangnya infrastruktur, dan persaingan dengan perguruan tinggi lain. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa manajemen strategis berperan sentral dalam meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan Islam di UIN Mataram melalui pendekatan adaptif, responsif terhadap dinamika perubahan zaman, dan menjaga nilai-nilai Islam sebagai landasan utama.

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic education plays a crucial role in shaping national character and developing human resources based on Islamic values (Taufik, 2020). Within the context of Islamic higher education, the State Islamic University (UIN) Mataram is a strategic institution in producing graduates with integrity and competence in various fields. To address the increasingly complex challenges of the times, a structured and adaptive managerial approach is required, one of which is through the application of strategic management (Schaeedler et al., 2022).

Strategic management in higher education plays a role not only in long-term planning but also in formulating policies oriented towards quality, organizational effectiveness, and institutional competitiveness (Mensah, 2020). At UIN Mataram, strategic management serves as a framework for developing the institution's vision and mission, designing academic policies, and aligning institutional development programs with the needs of society and the workplace (Ahmad Sa'adi & Ilhamsyah, 2024). This strategy also helps the university anticipate external changes and respond proactively to them.

The implementation of strategic management at UIN Mataram is achieved through various stages, including internal and external environmental analysis, strategy formulation, work program implementation, and performance evaluation. One concrete example is the institutional transformation from IAIN to UIN, which not only represents a change in nomenclature but also reflects a commitment to improving the quality of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education (Fridiyanto & Firmansyah, 2025). This transformation is part of a broader strategy to expand the scope of scientific knowledge and enhance the institution's reputation nationally and internationally.

Strategic management is also crucial in developing a curriculum that integrates religious and general knowledge. This is done to produce graduates who excel not only academically but also possess a strong spirituality. Research shows that this strategy contributes to increasing the curriculum's relevance to societal needs and increasing student and graduate satisfaction (Lutfiana et al., 2023; F. Tharaba et al., 2025). The role of lecturers and educational staff is also enhanced through ongoing training and professional development.

However, the implementation of strategic management at UIN Mataram also faces several challenges, such as limited human resources, resistance to change, and the need for visionary and collaborative leadership. Therefore, synergy between university leaders, faculty, educational staff, and external stakeholders is necessary to realize the formulated strategy (Rådberg & Löfsten, 2024). Regular evaluation is

crucial to ensure that the implemented strategy remains relevant and adaptable to changing circumstances.

Thus, strategic management plays a central role in improving the quality of Islamic education at UIN Mataram. Through this approach, the university can not only improve academic and institutional quality but also make a significant contribution to national development and the strengthening of Islamic values in modern society (Muhammad et al., 2022).

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a descriptive qualitative method with a case study approach, aiming to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of strategic management within the State Islamic University of Mataram. This approach is considered relevant because it can holistically and comprehensively depict the social realities and dynamics of educational policy within the context of Islamic institutions. According to Creswell, a qualitative approach allows researchers to explore the meanings, perspectives, and lived experiences of participants involved in a complex and contextual phenomenon (Purnomo et al., 2024; M. F. Tharaba & Wahyudin, 2024).

Data collection techniques in this study included semi-structured interviews and observations. Interviews were conducted with university leaders, heads of study programs, and relevant officials in the field of strategic planning to gather information on the process of formulating, implementing, and evaluating educational strategies. Observations were made of academic and managerial activities related to improving educational quality. Meanwhile, documentation studies were conducted by reviewing official documents such as the Strategic Plan (Renstra), accreditation reports, academic performance reports, and internal quality evaluation documents (Ma`arif et al., 2022).

The data obtained were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was carried out to filter important information, data presentation in narrative and thematic form, and conclusions were drawn inductively based on data patterns and trends. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation techniques, namely by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and relevant documents (Asipi et al., 2022). This model is effective in developing a strong and systematic understanding of the role of strategic management in improving the quality of Islamic education at UIN Mataram.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Basic Concepts of Strategic Management

Strategic management is a systematic process of formulating, implementing, and evaluating strategic decisions that help an organization achieve its goals. In the educational context, strategic management plays a crucial role in designing institutional policy directions to improve quality, competitiveness, and sustainability. This process encompasses three main stages: strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and strategy evaluation (Izzah et al., 2024; Palah et al., 2022).

Based on interviews, UIN Mataram's strategic management concept is characterized by being adaptive and responsive to the dynamics of changing times while maintaining Islamic values as its primary foundation. This aligns with the

strategic management concept of Islamic education put forward in various studies, where Islamic education requires a strategy that can integrate Islamic values with the demands of modernity (Rahmatullah & Maisyarah, 2025). Based on an interview with Muhammad Taisir, the Head of the Islamic Religious Education Study Program, "the strategy used must be appropriate to the needs of the times, but still carry the spirit of Islam," describing a scientific paradigm that refers to the integration of religious and general knowledge.

The process of formulating a vision and mission involving all stakeholders demonstrates the application of participatory strategic management. As stated by Jamil, strategic planning for Islamic higher education must involve various parties in the formulation process to achieve predetermined goals (Effendi, 2025; Fridiyanto & Firmansyah, 2025; Purnomo et al., 2024). This participatory approach is evident in Erwin Padli's statement, Secretary of the Islamic Education Study Program, that "evaluation is not only top-down, but lecturers and students also provide input. So it is more participatory." This demonstrates that UIN Mataram applies democratic and inclusive strategic management principles in its strategic decision-making process.

Strategic management aims not only to achieve internal efficiency but also to adapt the organization to the ever-changing external environment. This is crucial because educational institutions such as Islamic universities must adapt to changing times, technology, and societal needs. Therefore, an effective strategy must be based on a thorough analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, known as a SWOT analysis (Abdullah & Nento, 2024; Shelti D. M. Sumual et al., 2025).

In the context of modern strategic management, UIN Mataram implements an approach that integrates transformational leadership with performance-based management. This concept aligns with strategic management theory, which emphasizes the importance of long-term vision, internal and external environmental analysis, and appropriate strategy formulation to achieve organizational goals (Greve, 2021; Rahmah et al., 2021). The implementation of strategic management at UIN Mataram also reflects efforts to create competitive advantage through academic program differentiation and the development of competitive advantages in Islamic and general sciences.

A crucial aspect revealed from the interview results is the implementation of the concept of scientific integration as a core strategy of UIN Mataram. Mr. Jumarin, Dean of the Faculty of FITK, emphasized that "the integration of Islamic values has become the spirit of this campus' strategy. In every policy there are principles of justice, honesty, and responsibility. Even general courses are still connected to Islamic values so that students have both moral and academic provisions." This concept of integration is reinforced by the statement that "scientific integration is a characteristic of UIN. So religious knowledge and general knowledge are not separated, but combined."

The implementation of this scientific integration aligns with research on the integration-interconnection paradigm in Islamic higher education, which emphasizes the importance of uniting various types of knowledge for scientific development (Suwendi et al., 2024). Lia, a graduate student who directly uses this strategy, felt the positive impact: "From my experience, the integration is really felt. Lecturers often connect modern theories with Islamic perspectives, so we get both sides: knowledge and morals." This shows that the implementation of scientific integration is not only conceptual but has been implemented in learning practices.

In its implementation, strategic management requires the involvement of all organizational elements, including leadership, teaching staff, and education personnel. With an integrated and quality-oriented approach, strategic management serves as a crucial foundation for continuously improving the quality of Islamic education (Jami & Muharam, 2022; Purnomo et al., 2024).

Implementation of Strategic Management in Islamic Higher Education

The academic planning strategy of PAI UIN Mataram was implemented through the Leadership Working Meeting (Rakerpim) of FTK UIN Mataram on February 15, 2023, where the PAI Study Program participated in designing the annual academic program based on the Renstra and the orientation of superior accreditation quality (Admin Prodi PAI. n.d, n.d.). The Head of the PAI Study Program, H. Muhammad Taisir, M.Ag., stated, "We at the PAI Study Program are committed to continuing to innovate. developing a digital-based curriculum, improving lecturer competency through regular training, and partnership programs with schools," demonstrating the integration of concrete strategic planning in the program.

The implementation of strategic management at UIN Mataram demonstrates a comprehensive approach to the development of Islamic higher education institutions, encompassing five main aspects, based on an interview with the Head of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Study Program, Muhammad Taisir. Regarding the implementation of the academic strategic plan, Mr. Taisir explained that "The implementation of the strategic plan in the academic field is carried out through curriculum updates adapted to the needs of the times, but still rooted in Islamic values. Thus, students are not only academically strong but also have a moderate Islamic foundation." This curriculum integration strategy reflects the institution's ability to balance the preservation of Islamic values with adaptation to contemporary scientific developments (Moslimany et al., 2024). This approach aligns with the concept of strategic management in Islamic higher education, which emphasizes the importance of integrating ethical and moral capabilities with technological and functional capabilities to face the challenges of globalization. Strategic management is defined as the art and science of formulating, implementing, and evaluating cross-functional decisions that enable an organization to achieve its goals (Zainuddin et al., 2025).

The development of human resources, curriculum, and infrastructure in the Islamic Religious Education Study Program is also carried out systematically. Human resource development is carried out through lecturer training and institutional competency, as recommended by the Islamic Religious Education Study Program academic study on academic quality development at IAIN/UIN Mataram (Admin Prodi PAI. n.d, n.d.). The Islamic Religious Education curriculum is strengthened through transformation in accordance with the 2021 Independent Learning and Independent Campus policy, which incorporates elements of digitalization and real-world relevance(Halim et al., 2023). Infrastructure is focused on improving learning support facilities such as PPL rooms, digital media, and simulation laboratories in line with aspects of quality-standard learning management, which identifies infrastructure as one of the main pillars (Siregar & S, 2021).

The human resource development strategy at UIN Mataram is implemented through a comprehensive, multi-dimensional approach. According to Mr. Taisir,

"The strategy involves training, workshops, doctoral studies, and research opportunities. Lecturers and educational staff are also given the opportunity to increase their capacity, thereby improving the quality of educational services." The implementation of this human resource development strategy reflects a long-term investment in human capital as the primary foundation for improving institutional quality, in line with research showing that improving the quality of Islamic educational institution management through human resources during the pandemic is a crucial factor in maintaining and improving academic standards (Bahri, 2022). The doctoral study program and research opportunities demonstrate the institution's vision of building academic capacity that can compete nationally and internationally. Management strategies for improving lecturer performance in Islamic educational institutions require a holistic approach that includes competency development, a measurable evaluation system, and providing clear career development opportunities (Supriyani, 2025).

In the implementation of the internal quality assurance system, Mr. Taisir emphasized that "The internal quality assurance system is carried out through periodic academic audits, lecture monitoring, and evaluation of the learning process. All of these refer to national quality standards, so that there is assurance of quality in each faculty." This internal quality assurance system reflects the adoption of modern standards in the management of the quality of Islamic higher education which refers to the National Standards of Higher Education (SN Dikti) as stated in Permenristekdikti No. 32 of 2016 that the quality of a study program or university must be assessed not only from the achievement of each Dikti Standard, but also from the achievement of how these standards interact with each other to achieve goals. A systematic approach to quality assurance demonstrates an organizational culture oriented towards continuous improvement and performance accountability, where every academic activity is monitored and evaluated periodically to ensure the consistency of the quality of educational services (Bista, 2025; Hildesheim & Sonntag, 2020).

The strategy for developing educational infrastructure and facilities is carried out in stages with a focus on modernization, as explained by Mr. Taisir, "Infrastructure development is carried out in stages, for example, the construction of new buildings, laboratories, digital libraries, and IT facilities. All are directed to support the learning process to be more modern and effective." The phased approach to infrastructure development demonstrates realistic and sustainable strategic planning, enabling the institution to optimize limited resources while maintaining development momentum. Investments in information technology and digital libraries reflect the institution's vision of creating a conducive learning environment for the digital generation, in line with the fundamental concept of academic management in Islamic universities, which emphasizes the importance of integrating technology into the learning process to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of academic services (Indra Agus Salam et al., 2023).

The implementation of cooperation and partnerships is a crucial strategy in improving the quality of UIN Mataram, as explained by Mr. Taisir, "Collaboration is a crucial strategy. UIN Mataram has established MoUs with other campuses, research institutions, and even foreign universities. The goal is to expand access for students and lecturers, both for academic exchanges and joint research." This international collaboration strategy demonstrates a global orientation in institutional development, where UIN Mataram strives to build strategic networks

to improve academic and research quality (Jakubakynov et al., 2024). Collaboration with various institutions, including foreign universities, provides opportunities for the academic community to access global resources and knowledge, which aligns with the trend of developing strategic issues in Islamic religious higher education institutions that emphasize the importance of international collaboration in enhancing the competitiveness and reputation of institutions (Anam et al., 2022; Sibawaihi et al., 2025).

Strategy-based performance evaluation and measurement are conducted through Management Review Meetings (RTM) and internal quality assurance mechanisms (Hoverstadt et al., 2023; Kathuria & Lucianetti, 2024). Although specific data from PAI is not yet available, this RTM model is a common practice at the faculty and study program levels, where curriculum, human resources, and infrastructure are evaluated and followed up based on AMI findings and institutional accountability. According to an article written by Wahidmurni, he recommended the development of a program specification document and a comprehensive evaluation of the curriculum and practice facilities, which has also been adopted by PAI in its continuous improvement process. (Wahidmurni et al., 2022).

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of Strategic Management

The main factors supporting the strategic management process at UIN Mataram are visionary leadership and a collaborative organizational culture. The transformation from IAIN to UIN has been driven by strong leadership, adopting strategic management to address external dynamics (Yani, 2022). In an interview, the Vice Rector stated, "Forward-looking leadership and driving cultural change are key to the success of our strategy," reflecting an awareness of the importance of an adaptive and integrated organizational culture.

Furthermore, regulatory and institutional policy support from both the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the university itself is crucial. The implementation of SWOT, Strategic Plans, and strategic integration within each institutional policy demonstrates strong regulatory support (Azhar et al., 2024). The Head of the LPM also emphasized in an interview, "Clear regulations from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the internal legal framework provide a strong strategic foundation," demonstrating consistency between the university's external and internal policies.

The main supporting factors for strategic management at UIN Mataram stem from leadership commitment, academic community involvement, and synergy with external stakeholders. The rector and faculty leaders' commitment to the strategic vision and mission is evident in their public statements about strengthening academic quality, external collaboration, and institutional transformation, which serve as important drivers in the development and implementation of campus strategies; this accelerates the implementation of priority programs and the mobilization of internal resources. Furthermore, a relatively adaptive institutional culture (e.g., academic units that have adopted knowledge management and human resource development initiatives) supports the strategy formulation and evaluation process, as it facilitates information flow, curriculum improvement, and faculty capacity in research/education. Similar findings regarding the role of leadership, knowledge management, and human resource development as supporting factors also appear in publications and theses/dissertations at UIN Mataram that examine the strategic management of Islamic educational institutions and related units over the past five years.

However, significant internal and external challenges remain. Internally, there is a lack of infrastructure due to suboptimal budget allocation and a relatively homogenous organizational culture, making it take longer for change to be accepted (Faizin, 2023). Externally, competition from other universities and general regulations that have not fully addressed the context of Islamic education are slowing down digital transformation (Rojiid Arbi Muhyardho & Imamul Muttaqin, 2024). An interview with the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Technology (FTK) revealed, "Regional competition and the lack of digital infrastructure force us to be more creative in adapting strategies to limited resources," highlighting challenges that require strategic anticipation.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research and discussion regarding the implementation of strategic management in improving the quality of Islamic education at the State Islamic University of Mataram, it can be concluded that strategic management at UIN Mataram has been implemented comprehensively through three main stages, namely strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and strategy evaluation with adaptive and responsive characteristics to the dynamics of changing times while maintaining Islamic values as the main foundation reflected in the paradigm of integration of religious knowledge and general knowledge. The implementation of strategic management is realized through various concrete strategies including institutional transformation from IAIN to UIN, development of a curriculum based on scientific integration, improving the quality of human resources through continuous training and further studies, gradual development of educational infrastructure and facilities, strengthening the internal quality assurance system through periodic academic audits, and developing cooperation and partnerships with various domestic and foreign institutions, where the strategy of scientific integration is a distinctive characteristic that distinguishes UIN Mataram in producing graduates who are not only academically superior but also have strong spirituality and morals. Although implementation is supported by visionary leadership, a collaborative and participatory organizational culture, and strong regulatory support, it still faces challenges in the form of limited human resources, resistance to change, lack of infrastructure due to suboptimal budget allocation, and intense competition with other universities. This study proves that strategic management plays a central role in improving the quality of Islamic education at UIN Mataram by providing a systematic framework to achieve the institution's vision and mission, thus successfully increasing the institution's competitiveness, expanding the scope of knowledge, and building a good reputation at the national and international levels, which requires strong synergy and commitment from all stakeholders as well as periodic evaluation to ensure the strategy remains relevant and can be adjusted to the dynamic development of the situation.

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