

DYNAMICS OF THE PRIVATE ISLAMIC COLLEGE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN INDONESIA: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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ABSTRAK

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji dinamika sistem pendidikan Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Swasta (PTKIS) di Indonesia melalui pendekatan tinjauan sistematis (systematic review). Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan mengidentifikasi, mengevaluasi, dan mensintesis sejumlah artikel ilmiah, laporan kebijakan, serta dokumen relevan yang terbit dalam rentang waktu sepuluh tahun terakhir. Metode yang digunakan meliputi penelusuran basis data akademik dengan kata kunci tertentu, seleksi dokumen berdasarkan kriteria inklusi dan eksklusi, serta analisis tematik terhadap isu-isu utama yang muncul. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa PTKIS di Indonesia menghadapi berbagai tantangan, antara lain terkait tata kelola kelembagaan, pendanaan, mutu akademik, serta daya saing lulusan. Di sisi lain, terdapat pula inovasi dan inisiatif strategis yang dilakukan oleh PTKIS dalam meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan, memperluas akses, dan memperkuat kolaborasi dengan pihak eksternal. Kajian ini menyimpulkan bahwa penguatan sistem pendidikan PTKIS membutuhkan pendekatan holistik yang mencakup aspek regulasi, pendanaan berkelanjutan, pengembangan sumber daya manusia, dan transformasi digital untuk merespons tuntutan zaman.

KataKunci: Pendidikan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Swasta, sistem pendidikan, tantangan, inovasi, tinjauan sistematis.

ABSTRACT

This article aims to examine the dynamics of the education system in Private Islamic Religious Higher Education Institutions (Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Swasta/PTKIS) in Indonesia through a systematic review approach. The study was conducted by identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing a range of scholarly articles, policy reports, and relevant documents published over the past ten years. The method involved searching academic databases using specific keywords, selecting documents based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, and conducting thematic analysis of key emerging issues. The findings indicate that PTKIS in Indonesia face various challenges, including institutional governance, funding, academic quality, and graduate competitiveness. On the other hand, several innovations and strategic initiatives have been undertaken by PTKIS to improve educational quality, expand access, and strengthen collaboration with external parties. This review concludes that strengthening the PTKIS education system requires a holistic approach encompassing regulatory reform, sustainable financing, human resource development, and digital transformation to meet the demands of the times.

Keywords: Private Islamic Religious Higher Education, education system, challenges, innovation, systematic review.

INTRODUCTION

Private Islamic College (PTKIS) are a vital component of the Islamic college system in Indonesia. The strategic role of PTKIS extends beyond the development of Islamic scholarship; it also encompasses a social mission to cultivate Muslim generations who are morally grounded, competent, and responsive to the demands of the contemporary era. With a total of 848 institutions across the country, PTKIS represent a dominant force in providing access to Islamic higher education, particularly in regions underserved by public universities (Yuyun Wulandari, 2024).

However, despite this important role, PTKIS face serious challenges across several dimensions, including institutional structure, managerial capacity, curriculum development, and supporting infrastructure. Numerous studies have highlighted persistent issues such as weak accreditation status,

poor governance systems, limited human resource competencies, and inadequate infrastructural support ((Masruri et al., 2016); (Gunawan, 2017); (Lukman Asha, 2020). These challenges significantly impact the quality of academic services, the competitiveness of graduates, and the institutional capacity to respond to community needs and global challenges.

To gain a comprehensive understanding of these issues, this paper adopts a multi-dimensional approach, analyzing both internal factors (institutional structure, leadership, curriculum, human resources) and external factors (societal needs, technological development, and government policy). This approach aims to identify key weaknesses, opportunities, and strategic directions for strengthening PTKIS in the future. The analysis is based on relevant, up-to-date literature and quantitative data obtained from the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs.

This paper is structured around several key thematic areas that reflect the strategic issues in the management and development of PTKIS: 1) Institutional and Governance Challenges in PTKIS — examining problems related to accreditation, leadership, internal quality assurance systems, legal status, and institutional governance; 2) Quality-Based Management Reform and Professional Human Resources — analyzing PTKIS management capacities in developing competent human resources, performance evaluation systems, and a quality-driven organizational culture; 3) Curriculum Transformation and the Relevance of Islamic Education — assessing the need for integrative curriculum innovation that bridges classical Islamic knowledge with contemporary competencies such as digital technology, entrepreneurship, and global literacy (Syafei et al., 2024); 4) Infrastructure and Access to Learning Resources — reviewing limitations in physical facilities, laboratories, and access to literature and international journals that affect teaching and research quality (Achmad Ruslan Afendi, 1967; Dini Permanasari, 2024); and 5) Digitalization and Technological Adaptation — evaluating the readiness of PTKIS to adopt digital technologies for learning, administration, and academic services, including the use of e-learning platforms and campus information systems (Maisah, 2025).

This article aims to present a comprehensive analysis of the dynamics, challenges, and opportunities faced by PTKIS within the broader context of Islamic higher education transformation in Indonesia. Through a systematic mapping of these issues, the study is expected to provide policy recommendations and strategic insights for enhancing PTKIS so that they remain relevant, competitive, and contributive to national development grounded in Islamic values.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a qualitative research employing a descriptive-analytical approach, focusing on the review of literature and policy documents concerning Private Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKIS) in Indonesia. The primary aim of this research is to identify the challenges, internal and external dynamics, and strategic directions for strengthening PTKIS in the context of contemporary Islamic higher education.

Type of Research

The research design applied in this study is library research, which systematically examines written sources relevant to the research theme. This study does not involve experiments or field data collection; rather, it emphasizes the collection and analysis of documents, reports, and credible, up-to-date scholarly literature.

Time and Location of Research

The study was conducted between January and May 2025. The literature review activities were carried out both online and offline, by accessing scientific databases and Islamic higher education policy documents through university libraries, online repositories, and official government websites—particularly those of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs.

Research Subjects

The subjects of this study are not individuals or groups, but rather policy documents, academic articles, and scholarly publications discussing PTKIS. The selected documents were chosen based on their relevance to the research topic and the significance of their contributions to understanding the dynamics and challenges faced by PTKIS.

Type of Data

The study utilizes secondary data, derived from documents, journal articles, policy reports, academic books, previous research, and official statistics on Islamic higher education in Indonesia. The data are qualitative in nature and serve to support the thematic analysis conducted by the researcher.

Instruments and Data Collection Techniques

The primary instrument used in data collection is a literature review guideline, developed to select and evaluate relevant sources. Data collection was carried out through systematic searches using specific keywords across various databases such as Google Scholar, Garuda, Sinta, and DOAJ, along with document retrieval from official websites of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Directorate of Islamic Higher Education (Diktis).

Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using content analysis and thematic analysis approaches. The analysis procedure involved identifying key issues from the data sources, organizing them into main thematic categories (such as institutional structure, management, curriculum, human resources, and technology), and critically interpreting the findings to formulate conclusions and recommendations. The validity of the study was ensured through rigorous selection of sources with recognized academic and policy authority.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results and Discussion

A. Definition of Private Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKIS)

Private Islamic Higher Education Institutions (*Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Swasta* – PTKIS) are higher education institutions based on Islamic values and managed by private entities such as foundations, Islamic civil society organizations, or other non-governmental legal entities (Zaim, 2021). Unlike Public Islamic Higher Education Institutions (*Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Negeri* – PTKIN), which operate under direct government supervision, PTKIS enjoy greater autonomy in institutional management, although they are still subject to national higher education standards and regulations issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia.

PTKIS emerged as a response to the public's growing demand for access to Islamic higher education, particularly in regions not yet served by PTKIN or other public universities (Sumanto AL Qurtuby, 2021); (Tim, 2022). PTKIS provide educational opportunities for communities seeking not only knowledge and technology but also deeper understanding of Islamic teachings and the development of strong religious character. Hence, PTKIS serve a dual role: as academic institutions producing qualified graduates and as centers for promoting Islamic values in society.

The primary objective of PTKIS is to produce excellent human resources who combine academic competence with a solid understanding of Islamic teachings (Muhammad Ammar Al Azizi, 2024). PTKIS offer education in classical Islamic sciences—such as tafsir (Qur'anic interpretation), hadith, fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), and theology—as well as modern applied sciences including Islamic economics, Islamic educational management, Islamic psychology, information technology, and more. Thus, graduates are expected not only to be experts in their respective fields but also to serve as agents of change, applying Islamic values in social, economic, and cultural spheres.

A distinguishing feature of PTKIS is its integration of knowledge and Islamic values, reflected in its vision, mission, and curriculum (O. Hidayat, 2024). PTKIS instill moral and spiritual values such as *akhlaq karimah* (noble character) and the principles of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (mercy to all creation) so that students become devout, ethical individuals who contribute positively to society. As community-based institutions, PTKIS also maintain close ties with local communities through outreach programs, religious training, and grassroots da'wah initiatives.

Administratively, PTKIS are governed by the Directorate of Islamic Higher Education (Diktis) under the Ministry of Religious Affairs. However, in practice, they retain a degree of autonomy in managing resources, formulating internal policies, and building partnerships both nationally and internationally (Dirjen Pendis, 2018). This autonomy enables PTKIS to be more innovative and responsive in developing educational systems that align with contemporary societal needs and the evolving dynamics of Indonesian Muslim communities.

Furthermore, PTKIS serve as community empowerment centers, integrating social, economic, and religious activities into their institutional mission (Saiful Hadi, 2024). Many PTKIS take the lead in community development programs based in mosques, pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), or local

Muslim communities. As such, PTKIS are not merely centers of formal education but also act as social laboratories where students and faculty can implement Islamic teachings in real-life settings.

In this regard, PTKIS hold a strategic role in advancing Islamic education in Indonesia while reinforcing Islamic values amid the complexities of modernization and globalization. Strengthening the quality of PTKIS is therefore a pressing issue that requires serious attention from all stakeholders, including the government, civil society, and the private sector.

B. The Educational System in PTKIS

PTKIS operate an educational system designed to meet the needs of the Muslim community in producing knowledgeable, morally upright, and socially engaged generations in an era of global change. The educational framework of PTKIS is rooted in Islamic principles while remaining open to the advancement of modern science and technology. This reflects the spirit of Islam as a religion that upholds the pursuit of knowledge and encourages intellectual development across all ages (Anwar et al., 2023).

The PTKIS education system aims not only to produce academically competent graduates but also to foster spiritual, emotional, and moral wholeness. To achieve this, PTKIS implement key educational models that define their identity and strength:

1. Integration of Knowledge and Religion

A fundamental characteristic of PTKIS is the integration of secular sciences with Islamic values. This model seeks to eliminate the dichotomy between religious and general sciences—a longstanding issue in Islamic education. Knowledge is seen as part of Islamic teaching and a means to achieve collective welfare (*maslahah*). Through this integrative approach, PTKIS encourage students not only to understand Islamic theological concepts but also to apply these values across various disciplines such as economics, law, technology, and health. PTKIS graduates are thus expected to become Muslim professionals who uphold Islamic ethics in their respective fields (Suprpto & Sumarni, 2022).

2. Character-Based Education

Character education is a major focus in the PTKIS system. All academic activities are directed toward nurturing students who are morally upright, responsible, and exemplary in society. Through academic instruction, guidance, and spiritual development programs, students are instilled with values of honesty, discipline, social responsibility, and Islamic brotherhood (*ukhuwah Islamiyah*). These values

are not only taught theoretically but also practiced on campus through religious activities, student organizations, and community service. This character-building approach aims to produce future leaders with strong moral and spiritual integrity (Rasyid et al., 2024).

3. Competency-Based Curriculum

To address the challenges of the labor market and rapidly evolving societal needs, PTKIS implement a competency-based curriculum. This curriculum is designed to equip students with both academic and practical skills relevant to professional demands while preserving Islamic identity across disciplines. The competencies include mastery of knowledge, analytical thinking, communication, leadership, and information technology. PTKIS also emphasize soft skills development through training, seminars, and fieldwork, enabling graduates to compete at both national and global levels. The competency-based curriculum is dynamic and regularly updated to ensure relevance to scientific advancements and societal needs (Sitika et al., 2023).

With an educational philosophy that emphasizes integration of knowledge and religion, character development, and competency-based learning, PTKIS play a strategic role in shaping intelligent, devout, and productive Muslim generations. The PTKIS education model demonstrates that Islamic institutions can adapt to modern developments without losing their foundational identity and core values. The success of this system largely depends on the shared commitment of institutional leaders, faculty, students, and society in realizing a holistic and competitive Islamic education vision.

C. Factors Influencing the Education System in PTKIS

The education system in Private Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKIS) is shaped by various factors that directly or indirectly influence its direction, quality, and implementation. These factors work synergistically and dynamically to create an educational ecosystem that enables PTKIS to respond to contemporary challenges while preserving the Islamic values that form its core identity.

1. **Government Policies.** Government policies, particularly those from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, play a pivotal role in shaping the direction and system of education in PTKIS. These policies cover various aspects, including national higher education standards, accreditation systems, and curriculum

development guidelines. The implementation of national standards (SN-Dikti), institutional and program accreditation, and the adoption of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) models significantly influence the formulation of vision, mission, and academic programs in PTKIS (Agus Zaenul Fitri, 2019). Additionally, policies on religious moderation, character education, and PTKIS involvement in national initiatives such as *Merdeka Belajar–Kampus Merdeka* are critical elements that must be adopted to ensure alignment with societal needs and national development priorities.

2. **Human Resources (HR).** The quality of human resources—particularly lecturers and academic staff—is a key determinant of the quality of education in PTKIS. Lecturers with advanced academic qualifications (at least a master’s degree for undergraduate programs) and strong pedagogical skills significantly impact the learning process and student competency development. Likewise, professional administrative staff who are proficient in technology-based academic systems play a crucial role in supporting academic and non-academic operations. To improve HR quality, PTKIS must encourage faculty to pursue doctoral studies, engage in research and scientific publications, and participate in training and certification relevant to their disciplines (Candra Wijaya, 2019).
3. **Facilities and Infrastructure.** Adequate facilities and infrastructure are vital in supporting effective learning processes in PTKIS. Comfortable classrooms, well-stocked libraries, laboratories, IT centers, and supporting facilities such as student dormitories, worship spaces, and student activity centers greatly influence teaching and learning quality. Moreover, the current digital era requires PTKIS to provide technology-based learning resources, such as e-learning platforms, computer labs, and reliable internet access. Institutions with comprehensive facilities are better positioned to attract prospective students, improve academic services, and create a conducive learning environment (Fadhillah Sabrina Sudiro, 2024).
4. **Challenges of Globalization.** Globalization has significantly impacted education systems worldwide, including PTKIS. The rapid flow of information and technological advances demand that PTKIS adapt to global developments to remain relevant and competitive. PTKIS must design curricula that not only emphasize Islamic knowledge but also equip students with skills required in the global labor market, such as digital literacy, foreign language proficiency

(particularly English and Arabic), and 21st-century skills like critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration. Additionally, PTKIS face the challenge of balancing local Islamic values with global cultural trends that often undermine religious and cultural identity. Therefore, integrating strong Islamic character education that is responsive to global dynamics is essential (R. Hidayat et al., 2019).

These four key factors—government policy, human resource quality, infrastructure, and globalization—must be considered holistically and complementarily in the development of the PTKIS education system. PTKIS are expected not only to serve as academic institutions but also as centers for the cultivation of Islamic values that are adaptive to the changing times.

D. Challenges in the Governance of PTKIS

The challenges in managing Private Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKIS) are complex and require strategic and comprehensive solutions. Below are key challenges commonly faced by PTKIS in Indonesia:

1. **Funding and Financial Sustainability.** One of the classic and persistent challenges for most PTKIS is limited funding. As private institutions, PTKIS primarily rely on student tuition fees and contributions from their founding foundations. Unlike state Islamic universities (PTKIN), PTKIS generally do not receive substantial direct government funding, compelling them to manage finances more creatively and efficiently (Ratnasari et al., 2025). This heavy dependence on tuition revenue makes PTKIS vulnerable to fluctuations in student enrollment, which ultimately affects the development of infrastructure, faculty incentives, and the overall quality of educational services. To address this, many PTKIS have begun to develop income-generating units, establish partnerships with industries, or seek competitive grants from the government and donor agencies.
2. **Educational Quality.** Improving the quality of education remains a strategic concern for PTKIS. In areas such as curriculum design, faculty qualifications, research capacity, and scientific publication, PTKIS still lag behind public universities. This gap is largely due to limited access to advanced resources such as modern laboratories, cutting-edge research

facilities, and international collaboration opportunities (Setiawan, 2023); (Fakhruddin, 2016). As a result, PTKIS often struggle to produce graduates who are not only strong in Islamic knowledge but also competitive in the job market. Moreover, the low number of doctoral-qualified lecturers and the lack of collaborative research efforts are ongoing challenges that hinder academic excellence.

3. **Accreditation and Standardization.** Accreditation is mandatory for all higher education institutions, including PTKIS, to ensure the quality and standardization of education delivery. However, many PTKIS face difficulties in fulfilling the rigorous requirements set by the National Accreditation Board for Higher Education (BAN-PT), which cover management systems, curriculum quality, research, community engagement, and infrastructure (Sururin, 2017). Some PTKIS struggle with preparing proper documentation, due to a shortage of professional administrative staff, poorly organized data, and a lack of quality assurance culture within the institution. As a result, many PTKIS receive only a “C” or “Fair” accreditation status, which affects public perception of their institutional quality.
4. **Curriculum Relevance to the Job Market.** A major criticism of PTKIS curricula is their insufficient responsiveness to the evolving needs of the labor market. Curricula that focus too heavily on normative religious content without balancing practical skills (both soft and hard skills) leave graduates ill-prepared for increasingly competitive employment environments (June & Jayanti, 2021). The lack of emphasis on entrepreneurial skills, information technology, leadership, and cross-cultural communication often makes PTKIS graduates less appealing to industry employers. To remain relevant, PTKIS must undertake curriculum reform that aligns with global trends such as the digital economy, halal industries, Islamic fintech, and technology-driven community development.

These challenges demand strategic responses from PTKIS management to improve competitiveness and institutional quality. Internal policy reform, faculty development, funding diversification, and stronger partnerships with industry and international networks are essential steps that must be prioritized to ensure the long-term relevance and sustainability of PTKIS in the global era.

E. Development Strategies for PTKIS

The development of Private Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKIS) requires a strategic, well-planned, and sustainable approach in order to meet global challenges and enhance institutional competitiveness. As the educational landscape continues to evolve, PTKIS must adopt comprehensive strategies to improve the quality of educational services and strengthen their role as leading Islamic educational institutions in society. The following are key strategies that can be implemented in the development of PTKIS:

1. **Enhancing Lecturer Quality.** Lecturers are one of the most crucial elements in determining the academic quality of a higher education institution. Therefore, PTKIS must remain committed to continuously improving the qualifications of their academic staff. A strategic step in this direction is to encourage lecturers to pursue graduate and doctoral studies, both domestically and abroad, to enhance their academic competence and broaden their global perspective (Imam Turmudi, 2021); (Warlizasusi, 2017). Lecturers should also be encouraged to engage in research and publish in reputable national and international journals. Research activities not only improve lecturers' competencies but also serve as essential indicators in institutional accreditation processes. PTKIS can also organize regular training, workshops, and seminars to enhance pedagogical skills and the integration of technology in teaching. By investing in the professional development of lecturers, PTKIS can deliver more competitive educational services aligned with national and global standards.
2. **Strengthening Collaboration with Industry and Other Institutions.** PTKIS must develop and expand collaborative networks with industries, government institutions, international organizations, and other educational institutions both at home and abroad. Such collaboration is vital for providing students and lecturers with broader exposure to professional and academic environments (Wijiharta et al., 2021). Industry partnerships allow PTKIS to create internship programs that offer students practical experience before entering the job market. These collaborations also facilitate applied research aligned with market needs. Cooperation with international institutions enables student and faculty exchanges, joint degree programs, and collaborative research initiatives, thereby boosting PTKIS's global reputation and competitiveness.

3. **Utilizing Technology in Education.** In the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and rapid digital advancement, PTKIS must integrate information and communication technologies into their educational practices. The implementation of e-learning and blended learning models serves as an effective means to expand learning access and increase flexibility (Khasanah, 2024). By utilizing a Learning Management System (LMS), PTKIS can develop interactive digital content such as educational videos, electronic modules, online discussion forums, and digital assessments. These technologies enhance both the effectiveness and engagement of the learning process. Furthermore, the use of technology can be extended to modernize academic administrative systems through online platforms, digital libraries, and tech-based services—laying the groundwork for adaptive, future-ready digital campuses.
4. **Diversifying Funding Sources.** Financial sustainability is a key factor in the long-term success of PTKIS management. Therefore, PTKIS must identify and develop alternative funding sources to support institutional operations and growth (Maulida et al., 2024). In addition to tuition fees, PTKIS can pursue research grants from government and international donors. Establishing strong alumni relations through donation campaigns and endowment funds can also support campus infrastructure development, scholarships, and faculty welfare. Private sector partnerships offer further funding opportunities, including sponsorships, joint research, and CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) programs aligned with PTKIS's Islamic values-based human capital development mission. With a well-structured funding diversification strategy, PTKIS can strengthen financial stability and support long-term institutional advancement.

By implementing these strategies synergistically and sustainably, PTKIS are expected to improve educational quality, expand collaborative networks, and establish themselves as excellent, modern, and responsive Islamic institutions. The strengthening of academic, managerial, and financial capacities serves as the foundation for realizing the broader vision of producing graduates who are ethical, highly competitive, and capable of contributing to the advancement of the Muslim community and the nation.

F. Ministry of Religious Affairs Policies toward PTKIS

The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (MoRA RI) plays a strategic role in guiding and supporting the development of Private Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKIS). As the authority overseeing Islamic education in the country, the ministry formulates policies aimed at enhancing the quality, competitiveness, and sustainability of PTKIS so that they can contribute effectively to the formation of highly qualified and Islamic-character human resources (Nafal et al., 2024).

In response to the growing need for quality Islamic higher education institutions, the ministry has introduced a range of regulatory, facilitative, and capacity-building policies to ensure PTKIS's continued relevance. These policies cover institutional development, academic affairs, human resources, and the strengthening of management systems.

1. **Institutional Strengthening and Accreditation.** MoRA encourages PTKIS to strengthen their institutions by upgrading their status from colleges (*sekolah tinggi*) to institutes or universities and by improving the quality of their academic programs. A concrete measure includes the mandatory accreditation of institutions and study programs through the National Accreditation Board for Higher Education (BAN-PT) or relevant independent accreditation agencies such as LAMDIK or LAM-PTKes. These policies aim to ensure that PTKIS meet national higher education standards and are competitive with other universities (Gunawan, 2017).
2. **Enhancing the Quality of Faculty and Educational Staff.** The ministry gives special attention to the quality of PTKIS human resources. Programs such as scholarships for master's and doctoral studies for PTKIS lecturers represent strategic policies to improve academic qualifications. In addition, MoRA facilitates training, workshops, and certifications to enhance lecturers' pedagogical, professional, and ethical competencies (Nafal et al., 2024).
3. **Curriculum Modernization and Digitalization of Education.** The ministry also promotes curriculum modernization in PTKIS to align with scientific and technological developments as well as the demands of the labor market. The curriculum must be designed to produce graduates who are not only well-versed in Islamic sciences but also possess relevant digital-era skills (Agus Zaenul Fitri, 2019). One of MoRA's key initiatives is the implementation of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) to ensure measurable competencies aligned with global standards.

Additionally, PTKIS are encouraged to adopt digital learning platforms and Learning Management Systems (LMS) to support remote and blended learning.

4. **Strengthening Governance and IT-Based Management.** As part of bureaucratic reform and improved accountability, MoRA requires PTKIS to implement higher education governance based on good governance principles—transparency, accountability, responsiveness, and efficiency (Pane & S, 2021). To support this, the ministry provides digital platforms such as EMIS (Education Management Information System) and SIPDIKTI (Islamic Higher Education Information System) for online reporting of academic and institutional data. These systems help ensure data validity and serve as a basis for institutional development planning.
5. **Financial Support and Grant Programs.** MoRA provides financial support to PTKIS through competitive grant programs, including Accreditation Assistance Grants, Research and Community Service Grants, and Infrastructure Development Grants. These programs aim to enhance the quality of faculty and student research, strengthen campus facilities, and support community engagement activities in line with the *Tri Dharma Perguruan Tinggi* (Ratnasari et al., 2025).
6. **Promotion of Religious Moderation.** Another strategic policy is the promotion of religious moderation within PTKIS. MoRA emphasizes the importance of instilling values such as tolerance, balance (*tawazun*), justice (*'adl*), and respect for diversity in Indonesia's pluralistic society (Astuti, 2025). Through faculty training, moderation-oriented curriculum development, and student programs that promote inclusive attitudes, MoRA envisions PTKIS graduates as intelligent individuals and pioneers of social harmony (Fuad, 2019).

Overall, the Ministry of Religious Affairs' policies toward PTKIS are designed to ensure that these institutions become credible, professional, and adaptable centers of Islamic higher education. With this holistic policy framework, PTKIS are expected to excel not only academically but also to become globally competitive Islamic institutions contributing significantly to knowledge and society.

G. The Dynamics of the Private Islamic Higher Education System (PTKIS) in Indonesia

The Islamic higher education system in Indonesia is characterized by its unique and complex nature. As an integral part of the national education system, Islamic Higher Education Institutions

(*Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam* or PTKI) serve not only as academic institutions but also as centers for the development of Islamic values, morality, and spirituality in society. Within the PTKI framework, two main types of institutions exist: State Islamic Higher Education Institutions (*Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Negeri* or PTKIN) and Private Islamic Higher Education Institutions (*Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Swasta* or PTKIS). Although public attention often focuses more on PTKIN, PTKIS play a highly significant role in expanding and strengthening Islamic education throughout the country.

According to data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, as of 2024, there were a total of 922 Islamic higher education institutions, comprising 59 PTKIN and 848 PTKIS. This overwhelming number of PTKIS illustrates the substantial contribution of the private sector to the development of Islamic higher education (Yuyun Wulandari, 2024). PTKIS are present in various regions, including remote areas not yet reached by public institutions. Their presence provides broader access to formal, structured, and accredited Islamic education for local communities.

Nevertheless, the dynamic growth of PTKIS is inseparable from a range of fundamental challenges. One of the main issues is the quality of human resources, particularly lecturers and academic staff. Many PTKIS still struggle with limited numbers of doctoral-qualified lecturers, professors, and certified professional educators. This significantly affects their capacity to meet national accreditation standards and to innovate in teaching and research. Likewise, the physical facilities and digital infrastructure in many PTKIS remain inadequate, which hampers the implementation of modern and technology-driven learning methods.

From a curriculum perspective, PTKIS are expected to continuously adapt so that their programs go beyond the traditional Islamic scholarly heritage (*turāth*) and incorporate contemporary disciplines and skills relevant to the modern labor market. This presents its own challenges, as many PTKIS have historical roots in *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) or other traditional religious institutions, which emphasize spirituality and ritual practices (Makki, 2016). Therefore, developing an integrated curriculum that combines religious and worldly sciences is a critical agenda for the future of PTKIS.

Another dynamic lies in institutional governance. Many PTKIS are still managed in a traditional and even highly personalistic manner, where the founders or foundation boards maintain full control over

institutional policy. This leadership model often hinders the development of a merit-based and accountable management system. In the context of Islamic education management, this is a serious concern, as Islamic institutions are expected to model just, participatory, and value-oriented leadership practices.

Despite these challenges, a number of PTKIS are making positive strides in institutional reform. Several have made significant progress in institutional accreditation, strengthening research capacity, and expanding international cooperation networks. Digital transformation programs are gradually being implemented to improve academic administration systems, e-learning platforms, and digital library services. Additionally, PTKIS participation in national programs such as *Merdeka Belajar–Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) provides substantial opportunities to broaden students' learning experiences and promote inter-institutional collaboration.

From a theoretical standpoint, these dynamics can be understood through the systems theory approach in educational management. The Islamic higher education system—including PTKIS—is a subsystem of the national education system, consisting of inputs, processes, outputs, and feedback. When one of these components is disrupted—such as inadequate lecturer qualifications or irrelevant learning processes—the resulting output in terms of graduate quality will also be compromised. Therefore, any systemic reform must be comprehensive, rather than piecemeal, targeting multiple interconnected aspects.

Several studies have highlighted the importance of reform within PTKIS. For instance, (Gunawan, 2017) emphasized the need for implementing internal quality assurance systems as a strategic step toward improving academic standards. Meanwhile, (Mustopa; Hisam Ahyani; Ahmad Hapidin, 2021) developed a model that strengthens the ideological and spiritual foundations of Islamic higher education, based on the inclusive values of *Islam rahmatan lil- ‘ālamīn*—rejecting extremism, promoting tolerance, and encouraging innovation and academic excellence.

In addition to these challenges, PTKIS also hold great potential. Indonesia's large Muslim population represents a strong market base for Islamic higher education. Interest in Islamic education continues to grow, especially among younger generations who seek to integrate religious values with professional competencies (Imam Turmudi, 2021). With regulatory support, government incentives, and

strategic collaboration with industry and international organizations, PTKIS can evolve into globally competitive Islamic higher education institutions.

Overall, the dynamics of the PTKIS educational system in Indonesia reflect the complex interplay between ideal values and managerial realities. Amid the various challenges they face, PTKIS continue to demonstrate a strong commitment to growth and transformation. This calls for a collective commitment from all stakeholders—government, foundations, academic communities, and the broader public—to position PTKIS as a vital pillar in nurturing knowledgeable, ethical, and socially impactful Muslim generations.

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CONCLUSION

Private Islamic Higher Education Institutions (Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Swasta or PTKIS) are an integral part of the Islamic higher education system in Indonesia. They play a crucial role in expanding access to Islamic education, particularly in regions that are not yet reached by State Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKIN). PTKIS represent the community's participation in enlightening the nation through a framework grounded in moderate, inclusive, and transformative Islamic values.

The educational system in PTKIS is inseparable from the core values of Islamic education, which integrate spiritual, intellectual, and social dimensions. This system encompasses various interrelated components, including curriculum design, institutional management, academic personnel, and infrastructure.

Several internal and external factors influence the PTKIS educational system. Internal factors include the quality of human resources, curriculum development, and leadership, while

external factors involve government regulations, technological advancements, and labor market demands. These dynamics present multiple challenges, such as limited funding, disparities in institutional quality, and low global competitiveness.

Nevertheless, development strategies have been formulated by both PTKIS institutions and the Ministry of Religious Affairs as the primary regulatory body. These strategies include improving academic and non-academic quality, strengthening governance, internationalizing academic programs, and utilizing digital technology in both learning and institutional management.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs' policies have become a key factor in strengthening institutions, improving accreditation, and promoting equitable access to quality Islamic higher education. Programs such as institutional capacity-building grants, faculty development initiatives, and integrated information systems demonstrate the government's concrete support for PTKIS.

Overall, the dynamics of the PTKIS education system in Indonesia reflect a complex process of transition and transformation. On one hand, PTKIS possess significant potential as pillars of Islamic education; on the other hand, they still face fundamental challenges that require collective attention and action.

Based on this research, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Institutional Capacity Building: PTKIS should implement continuous internal management reforms, including the adoption of internal quality assurance systems and the development of merit-based leadership.
2. Strengthening Human Resources: There is a need for intensive programs from both the government and foundations to enhance the qualifications of lecturers and academic staff through Master's and Doctoral scholarships, pedagogical training, and research support.

3. Developing a Relevant Curriculum: PTKIS curricula should be designed using an integrative approach that strengthens Islamic knowledge while also equipping students with 21st-century skills such as digital literacy, entrepreneurship, and critical thinking.
4. Technology Utilization and Digitalization: PTKIS should leverage technological advancements to expand access to education, increase institutional management efficiency, and foster a digital-based learning ecosystem.
5. Strategic Partnerships with Government and Industry: Stronger collaboration between PTKIS, the government, the private sector, and civil society organizations is essential for program development, funding, and maximizing graduate employability.
6. Promoting Moderate Islamic Identity: PTKIS are expected to be at the forefront of developing a friendly, tolerant, and solution-oriented Islam, thereby serving as a moral and intellectual force in addressing contemporary global challenges.

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