Strengthening SPMI in Increasing the Competitiveness of Islamic Higher Education in the Era of Globalization

Slamet Setiawan[1*], Diana Faridatul Khasanah[2], Arinda Firdianti[3], Abdul Muhith[4]
[1,2,3,] Pascasarjana MPI, Universitas Islam Lampung
[4] STKIP Muhammadiyah OKU Timur

Jl. Jenderal Sutiyoso No.7, Metro, Kec. Metro Pusat, Kota Metro, Lampung
Email : wafiabqary@gmail.com[1], diananada0402@gmail.com[2], arind.f@gmail.com[3], muhith.research@gmail.com[4]

Abstract*. This study examines the role of the Internal Quality Assurance System (SPMI) in enhancing the competitiveness of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTI) in the era of globalization. The purpose of the research is to understand how SPMI can improve the quality of education, research, and graduates in PTI. The method used is a qualitative approach with a descriptive design, through case studies of several PTIs that have implemented SPMI. The results show that the application of SPMI significantly contributes to improving academic quality and the competitiveness of PTIs. Strategies for strengthening SPMI that involve enhancing internal capacity, academic innovation, and international collaboration are key to success. This research recommends that PTIs strengthen their commitment to SPMI through targeted policies and conduct ongoing evaluations to maintain educational quality. The implications of this study emphasize the importance of SPMI in building the global competitiveness of PTIs, as well as in creating graduates who are prepared to face the challenges of the job market.*

Keywords*: Competitiveness, Islamic Higher Education, Strengthening SPMI, Quality Assurance System, Globalization*

1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization has brought major challenges to all universities in the world, including Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTI). Universities today are not only required to meet national education standards but also compete on the global stage. In the context of Islamic College, the challenges of globalization include the need to adapt to rapid changes in technology, economy, and socio-culture. According to Sutrisno (2021), globalization has created dynamics that force universities to innovate in their learning systems and education management in order to survive amidst global competition. Islamic College faces a major challenge to adapt to international standards while maintaining the Islamic values that are their identity.

In facing global competition, the quality of education is the main factor that determines the competitiveness of a university. Quality education is not only seen in terms of curriculum and learning processes, but also from the results of graduates who are able to compete in the international job market. As part of improving quality, universities are required to implement an effective Internal Quality Assurance System (SPMI). SPMI is a system designed to ensure that the education process runs according to established standards, and produces graduates who meet the expected qualifications. According to

research conducted by Mahmud (2020), SPMI in higher education plays an important role in maintaining and improving academic quality and public trust in the institution.

The Internal Quality Assurance System (SPMI) not only functions as a tool to ensure compliance with educational quality standards, but also as an instrument for conducting continuous evaluation and improvement. SPMI provides a framework that allows higher education institutions to continuously measure, assess, and improve various academic and non-academic aspects systematically. This is very important in the era of globalization, where higher education institutions are expected to be able to adapt to rapid environmental changes. Hidayat (2018) emphasized that strengthening SPMI is a strategic step to increase the competitiveness of higher education institutions, especially in facing increasingly fierce global competition.

The urgency of strengthening SPMI in Islamic College is increasing along with the increasingly fierce competition in the era of globalization. Islamic College must not only compete with other universities in the country, but also with educational institutions around the world. According to Abdullah and Santoso (2019), globalization has changed the paradigm of higher education, where the quality of graduates and the relevance of study programs are the main factors determining the competitiveness of a university. In this regard, SPMI plays a key role in ensuring that Islamic College can continue to improve its quality and contribute significantly to the global world of education.

In the context of Islamic College, strengthening SPMI must also pay attention to Islamic values which are the main foundation of every aspect of education. According to Hasanah (2022), it is important for Islamic College to find a balance between quality assurance that is in accordance with international standards and the application of Islamic principles in education. Strengthening SPMI in Islamic College must include curriculum adjustments, improving lecturer competencies, and developing research that is relevant to global needs and in accordance with Islamic values.

2. THEORETICAL STUDY

Internal Quality Assurance System (SPMI)

The Internal Quality Assurance System (SPMI) is a system designed to ensure that higher education institutions can maintain and improve the quality of education in a sustainable manner. According to Hakim (2019), SPMI functions as an integrated evaluation tool in the higher education management system to monitor and improve

academic and non-academic performance. The basic principle of SPMI is an effort to achieve relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency in the implementation of education. Every higher education institution is expected to be able to meet these standards to ensure that graduates have competencies that are in accordance with the demands of the world of work and the global community.

The standards contained in SPMI cover several main aspects, such as relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency. Relevance refers to the ability of higher education institutions to provide educational programs that are in accordance with the needs of society and the labor market. Effectiveness reflects the ability of institutions to achieve educational goals, while efficiency emphasizes the optimization of resources to achieve desired results. According to Supriyadi (2021), good implementation of SPMI can increase the competitiveness of higher education institutions by improving academic quality, research innovation, and international collaboration.

In the context of policy, both nationally and internationally, SPMI has become an important part of the higher education system. In Indonesia, national policy stipulates that every university must implement SPMI as a way to maintain accreditation and institutional quality. At the international level, educational quality standards are regulated by various institutions, such as the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), which sets quality guidelines for universities in Europe (Rahman, 2020). This policy encourages Islamic College to continue to improve the quality of education in order to compete in the global market.

Competitiveness of Higher Education Institutions

The competitiveness of higher education institutions refers to the ability of institutions to compete globally in terms of the quality of education, research, and innovation. According to Abdullah (2020), higher education institutions that have high competitiveness are those that are able to produce graduates with competencies that are relevant to industry needs and contribute to the development of science and technology. Several main factors that influence the competitiveness of higher education institutions include academic quality, research productivity, and innovation and collaboration capabilities.

Indicators of competitiveness in the global era are often measured through various international university rankings. These indicators include the quality of study programs, the number of scientific publications, and the level of employability of

graduates (Hasan, 2021). Higher education institutions that are able to collaborate with industry and international research institutions usually have higher competitiveness because they can offer more relevant and up-to-date educational programs. Technology also plays an important role in increasing this competitiveness. The use of technology in learning, research, and campus management can increase the efficiency and effectiveness of institutions, as well as expand their international reach.

Globalization and Islamic Higher Education

Globalization has had a significant impact on higher education, especially for Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTI). Globalization requires Islamic College to adapt to international standards while maintaining the Islamic values that are the core of their education. According to Zainuddin (2022), the impact of globalization on Islamic College can be seen in the increasing need to equip graduates with global competencies, such as mastery of technology, foreign language skills, and cross-cultural understanding. Globalization also opens up opportunities for Islamic College to collaborate with international educational institutions in the fields of research and academic development.

However, Islamic College also face major challenges in balancing between maintaining Islamic identity and following global education standards. Many Islamic College must adjust their curriculum and improve the quality of lecturers to meet global demands. According to Yusof (2020), one of the biggest challenges is integrating Islamic values into higher education that meets international quality criteria. This requires innovation in developing curricula and educational programs that are relevant to the global context.

In facing global challenges, Islamic College need to adjust their curriculum to be more relevant to the demands of the global market. The quality of graduates produced must be able to compete in the international job market, which often demands high technical, language, and adaptability competencies. Universities must also develop study and research programs that are in accordance with global needs while maintaining Islamic values as a characteristic of Islamic education (Fauzan, 2021).

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive design to understand how the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) in several Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTIs) can improve institutional competitiveness in

the era of globalization. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore phenomena in depth in a real context (Creswell, 2018). The descriptive design provides a detailed description of the implementation of IQAS and its impact on the quality of education in PTIs, so that the research results can be more accurate in describing the reality in the field.

Case studies are used as a research design to provide a deeper focus on the specific experiences of several PTIs that have implemented IQAS. Yin (2017) explains that case studies are an effective method for exploring contemporary phenomena in real-life contexts, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are unclear. In this context, case studies allow for an in-depth analysis of how each Islamic College implements IQAS and how it impacts institutional competitiveness.

The data sources used in this study consist of primary data and secondary data. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with various related parties in PTIs, including leaders, lecturers, and internal quality assurance teams. In-depth interviews are an appropriate data collection technique in qualitative research because they can explore the views and experiences of subjects in detail (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Data obtained from interviews will provide a direct perspective on the implementation of SPMI as well as the obstacles and opportunities faced by Islamic College.

In addition, secondary data will be obtained from various literature, reports, and documents related to the implementation of SPMI in Islamic College. According to Merriam (2019), secondary data is important to complement primary data and provide a broader context for analysis. Secondary data, such as college annual reports, accreditation documents, and previous studies on SPMI, will help strengthen the findings and provide a strong basis for further analysis.

The main data collection techniques used in this study are in-depth interviews and documentation analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore more comprehensive information regarding the implementation of SPMI and its impact on PTI's competitiveness. According to Patton (2015), in-depth interviews provide flexibility for researchers to adjust questions based on respondents' answers, so that the data obtained is richer and more meaningful. In addition to interviews, documentation from various sources will also be analyzed to gain a broader understanding of the context of SPMI implementation in Islamic College.

For data analysis, descriptive analysis techniques were used to understand and describe the influence of SPMI on increasing the competitiveness of Islamic College. Miles and Huberman (2014) stated that descriptive analysis in qualitative research helps researchers identify patterns and themes from the collected data, thus facilitating understanding of the phenomena being studied. This analysis process includes data coding, categorization, and interpretation to identify key factors that contribute to the successful implementation of SPMI in Islamic College.

Thus, this research method is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of SPMI in increasing the competitiveness of Islamic College, as well as the challenges and opportunities faced by these institutions in the era of globalization.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of SPMI in Improving the Competitiveness of Islamic Higher Education Institutions

The implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System (SPMI) has a crucial role in improving the competitiveness of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTI). Effective implementation of SPMI can encourage improvements in the quality of academics, research, and graduates of Islamic College. According to Yusuf and Karim (2019), SPMI helps ensure that the curriculum, teaching methodology, and academic evaluation are in accordance with international standards. In addition, the implementation of SPMI also allows Islamic College to continue to improve the quality of graduates, so that they can be more competitive in the global market. With SPMI, institutions also have a clear framework for evaluating and improving the education process on an ongoing basis.

SPMI also provides encouragement in strengthening the curriculum, increasing the capacity of lecturers, and improving facilities and infrastructure. For example, through quality assurance, universities can conduct periodic evaluations of the curriculum to remain relevant to industry needs and global demands (Hidayat et al., 2020). Lecturer capacity development is also a major focus, because good teaching quality requires lecturers who are skilled and continue to develop in their fields. In the context of facilities and infrastructure, SPMI provides direction for more effective management of educational facilities to support the learning and research process.

SPMI Strengthening Strategy in Islamic College

Strengthening SPMI in Islamic College requires several important strategies, one of which is increasing the capacity and role of the internal quality assurance team. This team plays a vital role in ensuring that all elements of the institution understand and implement the established quality standards. According to research by Susilo and Herawati (2021), ongoing training for the quality assurance team is essential to improve their ability to carry out evaluations and supervision effectively. This can ensure that the quality standards applied can be adapted and implemented in accordance with global developments.

In addition, Islamic College needs to develop quality standards that are in accordance with global demands, especially in the fields of technology and research. According to Rahman (2020), one indicator of international competitiveness is the ability of universities to produce innovation through quality research. Therefore, SPMI needs to be designed in such a way as to encourage the development of research that is relevant to the needs of industry and the global community. Islamic College must also actively collaborate with international universities, both for benchmarking and knowledge exchange. This collaboration can be a means to improve academic and research quality, as well as learn best practices from more advanced international institutions (Zulkifli, 2021).

Barriers and Solutions in Strengthening SPMI

Although SPMI can provide many benefits for Islamic College, its implementation often faces various obstacles. One of the main obstacles is internal resistance from various parties within the institution, such as lecturers and administrative staff, who may feel burdened by the new procedures required by SPMI (Mahmud & Ismail, 2022). In addition, limited resources, both in terms of funds and infrastructure, are also a major challenge in implementing SPMI comprehensively.

To overcome these obstacles, several strategic solutions can be taken. First, training and education for all parties in the institution regarding the importance of SPMI can help reduce internal resistance. According to Haryanto (2021), ongoing training for staff and lecturers can increase their understanding of the long-term benefits of SPMI. Second, more adequate funding from the government and external sources is needed to strengthen the infrastructure and facilities that support the implementation of SPMI.

Finally, a strong management commitment is needed to ensure that the implementation of SPMI runs consistently and sustainably (Faisal, 2020).

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the research results, the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System (SPMI) has been proven to have a very important role in improving the quality of education and the competitiveness of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTI). SPMI functions as an instrument to ensure that every process of education, research, and community service runs in accordance with the established quality standards. With SPMI, Islamic College is able to conduct periodic evaluations of academic performance, monitor the quality of graduates, and increase competitiveness at the national and international levels. In an increasingly competitive era of globalization, Islamic College is faced with the challenge of continuing to improve academic quality in order to compete with universities around the world.

One of the main findings of this study is that strengthening SPMI must involve various strategic aspects, including increasing internal capacity, academic innovation, and collaboration with international universities. Increasing internal capacity includes ongoing training for lecturers, administrative staff, and quality assurance teams, so that they are able to understand and implement SPMI well. Academic innovation is also key in strengthening SPMI, especially in developing a curriculum that is relevant to global needs and industry demands. This study also highlights the importance of international collaboration in the form of benchmarking and knowledge exchange, which allows Islamic College to learn from best practices in the world of global higher education. Thus, the implementation of SPMI not only improves the quality of education, but also provides a real contribution in creating graduates who are ready to compete in the global job market.

In order to achieve the success of the implementation of SPMI, this study provides several recommendations that can be implemented by Islamic College. First, Islamic College needs to strengthen their commitment to the implementation of SPMI through targeted policies and programs. This commitment can be realized in the form of adequate resource allocation for the implementation of quality assurance programs, such as improving infrastructure, developing research, and improving the quality of lecturers. In addition, it is important for Islamic College to involve all stakeholders, including

students, in efforts to implement SPMI so that a comprehensive quality culture is created in the academic environment.

Second, continuous evaluation of the implementation of SPMI is very necessary to ensure that the quality of education and competitiveness of Islamic College continues to be maintained and improved. This evaluation can be carried out through internal and external audits, as well as assessments of the achievement of predetermined quality targets. With continuous evaluation, Islamic College can immediately identify weaknesses and obstacles in the implementation of SPMI, and take appropriate corrective steps. In addition, continuous evaluation also allows Islamic College to adjust its quality assurance strategy to global developments and market demands.

Overall, this study confirms that SPMI is an important element in building the competitiveness of Islamic College in the era of globalization. Strengthening SPMI, through increasing internal capacity, academic innovation, and international collaboration, can help Islamic College achieve higher standards of education quality and be able to compete in the international arena. Effective implementation of SPMI and continuous evaluation will ensure that Islamic College continues to develop and contribute to the development of quality and highly competitive human resources in the increasingly dynamic era of globalization.

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