

## Strategic Repositioning of the Islamic Education Management Study Program at PTKI: Integration of Results-Based Quality Management to Enhance Graduate Competitiveness

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### Abstract

This study examines efforts to reposition the Islamic Education Management (MPI) Study Program within the Islamic Religious Higher Education (PTKI) ecosystem through a strategic review of national regulations and curriculum adaptability to workplace demands. This research aims to formulate strategic steps to align the curriculum and quality management practices with industry needs to improve graduate competitiveness. Although the MPI curriculum development has referred to the Indonesian National Qualifications Framework (KKNI) and Graduate Learning Outcomes (CPL), tracer study data still shows low absorption of graduates into managerial positions and relevant educational fields. Meanwhile, DIKTIS policies, such as the PTKI Curriculum Guide and KMA No. 347/2022, have established quality standards, but their implementation remains hampered by structural and cultural barriers at the study program level. Using literature study methods and institutional policy analysis through official documents and empirical data from several PTKIN, this study finds an urgent need for a paradigm shift from administrative management to outcome-based quality management supported by cross-sector collaboration. The repositioning of MPI demands the presence of an adaptive curriculum, strategic partnerships with the industrial world, and the active role of DIKTIS as a solution-oriented policy facilitator.

### Keywords

Adaptive Curriculum, DIKTIS Policy, Graduate Competitiveness, Islamic Higher Education, Quality Management



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## INTRODUCTION

Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia play a pivotal role in developing human resources who are not only proficient in religious knowledge but also adaptable to the dynamic demands of social and economic development. However, data from BPS indicate that although university graduates (D4/S1) have a lower open unemployment rate compared to those with secondary education, the proportion of unemployed among this group remains significant (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2024). This situation underscores the urgency for higher education institutions, including MPI programs, to realign their curricula with labor market needs so that

graduates possess not only formal qualifications but also the skills and job readiness required to thrive in an increasingly competitive workforce. In response to the evolving landscape of the labor market and the imperatives of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, Islamic Higher Education Institutions (Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam/PTKI) under the auspices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemenag RI) face significant challenges in maintaining the relevance and quality of their graduates. The Islamic Education Management (Manajemen Pendidikan Islam/MPI) study program is one such initiative designed to produce graduates capable of managing educational institutions based on Islamic values while contributing to the advancement of the national education sector.

Nevertheless, empirical evidence reveals a noticeable gap between the expected and actual outcomes of MPI graduates. According to the tracer study report of UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang (2023), 'only 32% of MPI graduates were employed in educational managerial roles directly aligned with their academic training, while 48% transitioned into non-educational sectors such as services, trade, and general administration.' Similarly, the tracer study conducted by UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta (2022) and IAIN Madura (2022) noted that 'more than half of the graduates entered sectors unrelated to education, indicating a misalignment between graduate competencies and labor market absorption.' These findings collectively point to a persistent mismatch between graduate competencies and labor market requirements. This discrepancy persists despite the Strategic Plan of the Directorate General of Islamic Education 2020–2024, which prioritizes the enhancement of PTKI graduate quality to ensure their competitiveness at both national and international levels (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2020).

From a policy perspective, the Revised PTKI Curriculum Development Guide (2018) underscores the importance of strengthening soft skills, integrating Islamic values with market demands, and fostering partnerships with the professional world. In contrast, Saudi Arabia under its Vision 2030 agenda has implemented more structured outcome-based interventions. For example, ETEC's Jahiziya program mandates standardized tests for final-year university students to assess readiness for the labor market, including knowledge, skills, and values relevant to in-demand fields (Education and Training Evaluation Commission (ETEC), 2023). At the same time, national initiatives such as Skills Week, Waad National Training, and the formation of Sector Skills Councils explicitly align curricula and training with industry needs (Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development (Saudi Arabia), 2025). These measures have coincided with declines in Saudi unemployment (7% in Q4 2024) and rising labor force participation, particularly among women, illustrating the impact of stronger education-to-employment policies (Callen, 2025).

Ideally, the MPI curriculum should enable students to cultivate managerial, leadership, entrepreneurial, and educational technology competencies. However, literature analysis suggests that curriculum implementation remains suboptimal. A study by Setiawan (2023) found that most MPI programs still emphasize conceptual aspects, with minimal exposure to real-world managerial practices demanded by the job market (Setiawan, 2023). Moreover,

engagement with external stakeholders such as educational institutions, education departments, and industry players remains limited in curriculum development (Mashurim et al., 2024).

The complexity of MPI graduates' underemployment is further compounded by employer perceptions and structural barriers related to nomenclature. Although the MPI program equips graduates with managerial and educational competencies, the term 'Islamic Education Management' is not widely recognized in the formal labor market, particularly within civil service recruitment and private sector classifications. This lack of alignment between academic nomenclature and job classification frameworks often limits MPI graduates' access to managerial or administrative positions that are more easily attainable for graduates from programs with standardized titles such as 'Education Management' or 'Public Administration.' To address this gap, interim measures such as inter-ministerial nomenclature advocacy particularly between the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform—could help harmonize academic titles with national job classifications. Such efforts would not only broaden employment pathways for MPI graduates but also enhance institutional recognition of the program's relevance to labor market needs. A notable case in the 2023 civil servant recruitment at Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta (UNY) revealed that MPI graduates were deemed ineligible due to nomenclature differences with general Educational Management (MP) programs, despite having comparable competencies. This reflects a recognition gap in the qualifications of MPI graduates, which undermines their competitiveness in both public and non-religious private sectors.

On the regulatory front, the Ministerial Decree No. 347 of 2022 concerning the National Standards for Islamic Higher Education (SNPTKI) has outlined quality standards encompassing curriculum content, instructional processes, academic staff, graduates, and governance. Unfortunately, the implementation of internal quality assurance mechanisms across many State Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKIN) tends to focus primarily on fulfilling accreditation requirements, rather than strengthening outcome-based quality and graduate employability (Slamet et al., 2020).

Based on the aforementioned issues, this study is driven by two central research problems. The first concerns the quality management strategies implemented by MPI programs to prepare graduates who are relevant and competitive in the labor market. The second relates to the effectiveness of DIKTIS policies in supporting the enhancement of MPI graduate quality amid the challenges of labor market absorption. This inquiry is significant as it provides a comprehensive overview of the current state of quality management implementation in MPI programs, while also assessing the effectiveness of national policies in strengthening MPI as a key pillar in the development of Islamic education in Indonesia.

This study aims to analyze the quality management practices employed within MPI programs and to examine the effectiveness of DIKTIS policies in reinforcing the alignment of MPI graduates with labor market needs. Specifically, this study aims to evaluate the quality management strategies implemented by MPI programs and analyze the effectiveness of DIKTIS policies in improving graduate employability. Through a literature-based institutional analysis,

the findings are expected to enrich the discourse on Islamic higher education quality development and provide a foundation for policy recommendations to support academic program managers and policymakers in designing more adaptive and competitive graduate development strategies.

## **METHODS**

This study aims to analyze the quality management practices employed within Islamic Education Management (MPI) programs and to examine the effectiveness of DIKTIS policies in aligning MPI graduates with the needs of the labor market. It adopts a literature-based institutional analysis to evaluate the quality management strategies implemented by MPI programs and to assess the impact of DIKTIS policies on graduate employability. The study seeks to enrich the academic discourse on Islamic higher education quality development and to provide a foundation for policy recommendations that support program managers and policymakers in designing more adaptive and competitive strategies for graduate development.

The data in this study were obtained from three primary sources: policy documents, academic literature, and secondary empirical data. The policy documents comprise official regulations and guidelines issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, including Ministerial Decree No. 347 of 2022 on the National Standards of Islamic Higher Education (SNPTKI), the PTKI Curriculum Development Guide (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2018), and the Strategic Plan of the Directorate General of Islamic Education 2020–2024 (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2020). The academic literature reviewed includes scholarly articles, books, and research reports focusing on quality management, curriculum innovation, and graduate employability, drawing on key contributions from Harvey and Green (1993), Slamet (2020), Setiawan (2023), and Mashuri, Ballani, Mehri, Barnawi, and Jubaedi (2024). Meanwhile, secondary empirical data were obtained from tracer study reports of MPI graduates conducted by several Islamic higher education institutions, such as UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang (2023), UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta (2022), and IAIN Madura (2022). The data collection process involved retrieving official documents and reports from the Ministry of Religious Affairs' websites, academic journal databases, and national repositories, ensuring that all materials were credible and relevant to the research objectives.

The collected data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis to identify and classify key themes related to the quality management of MPI graduates and the effectiveness of DIKTIS policies in improving graduate employability. The analytical process followed the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2014). To ensure the validity of the findings, source triangulation was applied by cross-verifying data and interpretations across different document types and literature sources. This document-based design provides a comprehensive and evidence-based understanding of the current condition of MPI graduate quality management, thereby offering valuable insights and practical recommendations for policymakers and program administrators in enhancing the responsiveness and competitiveness of Islamic higher education institutions.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings derived from document analysis and literature review provide a comprehensive overview of the current landscape of quality management practices within the Islamic Education Management (MPI) study programs, as well as the implementation of policies by the Directorate of Islamic Higher Education (DIKTIS) in promoting graduate employability. Overall, the results of this study are categorized into two primary domains: first, the quality management strategies implemented within MPI programs, and second, the DIKTIS policies aimed at enhancing graduate quality and relevance to labor market demands.

It is important to note that this study did not identify specific, systematically documented best practices from PTKIN campuses related to quality management strategies that directly address graduate employability. Although some initiatives and isolated programs exist, comprehensive and measurable models of implementation remain limited and uneven across institutions. This suggests a potential gap in how many Islamic higher education institutions operationalize quality assurance frameworks in relation to labor market relevance. While several programs have achieved “Excellent” or “Very Good” accreditation status, this accreditation primarily reflects institutional compliance and academic standards rather than a direct measurement of graduate employment outcomes. This situation indicates the need for stronger policy integration and more outcome-oriented quality management systems that explicitly link accreditation, curriculum quality, and graduate employability.

It was found that nearly all MPI programs within State Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKIN) have adopted an Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) system as mandated by Ministerial Decree (KMA) No. 347 of 2022. This assurance system is carried out through a series of initiatives, including periodic curriculum evaluations, monitoring of graduate learning outcomes (CPL), and faculty development programs to enhance lecturer competencies. However, document analysis indicates that IQA implementation remains heavily administratively oriented—focusing more on accreditation compliance and reporting—rather than on strengthening outcome-based graduate quality.

In terms of curriculum development, MPI programs generally adhere to the PTKI Curriculum Development Guide (2018), which is aligned with the Indonesian National Qualification Framework (KKNI) and formulated learning outcomes. The curricula include components of soft skills, leadership, and entrepreneurship that conform to national competency standards. Nevertheless, the integration of employability-oriented skills and practical competencies required by the labor market remains limited, particularly in areas such as educational technology proficiency, modern institutional management, and educational entrepreneurship.

Data obtained from tracer studies conducted at three PTKIN institutions—UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, and IAIN Madura—reveal a consistent pattern. At UIN Malang (2023), 32% of MPI graduates were employed in educational management roles, while 48% transitioned into non-educational sectors such as services, trade,

and general administration. At UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta (2022), among graduates who secured employment within six months post-graduation, only 39% were employed in education-related managerial roles, whereas 61% entered other sectors. Similarly, the tracer study from IAIN Madura (2022) reported that 41% of graduates worked outside their field of study, predominantly in trade, non-educational government administration, and small-scale entrepreneurship.

These findings consistently demonstrate a general trend across the three institutions. MPI graduates are not fully absorbed into employment sectors that match their academic training and competencies. Table 1 presents the findings on Quality Management Strategies in the Islamic Education Management (MPI) Program.

Table 1. Findings on Quality Management Strategies in the Islamic Education Management (MPI) Program

No	Quality Management Aspect	Key Findings	Source(s)
1	Academic Quality Assurance	The implementation of Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) is in place, focusing on curriculum evaluation, faculty development, and CPL monitoring. However, it remains predominantly administrative and accreditation-oriented.	KMA No. 347/2022; Setiawan (2023)
2	Curriculum Development	The curriculum refers to the Indonesian National Qualification Framework (KKNI) and Learning Outcome Standards (CPL), including soft skills, entrepreneurship, and leadership. However, the integration of employability skills remains suboptimal.	PTKI Curriculum Guide (2018); Mashuri et al., (2024)
3	Tracer Study Results (UIN Malang)	32% of graduates work in educational management; 48% are employed outside the education sector.	UIN Malang (2023)
4	Tracer Study Results (UIN Jakarta)	39% are employed in educational or managerial fields; 61% are absorbed in services, business, and general administration sectors.	UIN Jakarta (2022)
5	Tracer Study Results (IAIN Madura)	41% of graduates work in fields unrelated to their academic background, including trade, general administration, and small-scale entrepreneurship.	IAIN Madura (2022)

In the domain of national policy, documentation analysis indicates that the Directorate of Islamic Higher Education (DIKTIS) has formulated a number of regulatory instruments and guidelines aimed at strengthening the quality of graduates from Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI). The PTKI Curriculum Development Guideline (2018) serves as the primary reference for curriculum design based on the Indonesian National Qualification Framework (KKNI) and Learning Outcomes (CPL). Meanwhile, Ministerial Decree (KMA) No. 347 of 2022 establishes the national standards for Islamic higher education, covering core elements such as content, process, faculty, facilities and infrastructure, and graduate outcomes. Additionally, the Strategic Plan of the Directorate General of Islamic Education 2020–2024 outlines the goal of enhancing PTKI's partnership networks with industry through link-and-match initiatives.

However, the implementation of these policies at the MPI program level continues to encounter several persistent challenges. In terms of curriculum development, the application of DIKTIS's guidelines varies across departments, and there is no consistent mechanism for substantive oversight and evaluation. Moreover, the industry partnership programs mandated in the strategic plan have not been fully realized in practice. Empirical data suggests that external stakeholder involvement in curriculum development remains largely symbolic, lacking tangible follow-up initiatives such as internships, guest lectures, or joint certification programs.

Regarding regulatory harmonization, there exists a disconnect in nomenclature alignment between DIKTIS and other ministries. A notable example is the 2023 CPNS (civil servant recruitment) case at Yogyakarta State University (UNY), where an MPI graduate was deemed ineligible due to the formal naming of the study program, despite its equivalent academic substance with conventional Education Management. Finally, in terms of institutional capacity building, there is still an absence of affirmative programs from DIKTIS specifically aimed at enhancing the managerial capacity of MPI departments to develop industry-responsive curricula and sustainable link-and-match collaborations.

Overall, the findings highlight a clear gap between policy formulation at the national level and its operationalization at the program level. Furthermore, challenges related to internal quality management and limited engagement with the labor market continue to impact the employability and relevance of MPI graduates within their intended professional domains, as presented in table 2.

### **Evaluation of Quality Management Strategies in MPI Programs**

The implementation of quality management strategies in MPI programs has yet to fully reflect a holistic and outcome-oriented approach. According to document analysis, internal quality assurance systems (SPMI) have been implemented in accordance with the mandate of KMA No. 347 of 2022 (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2022). However, in practice, these efforts remain predominantly administrative, with a strong emphasis on fulfilling accreditation requirements rather than improving learning outcomes (Setiawan, 2023; Slamet et al., 2020). This practice stands in contrast to the principles of Total Quality Management (TQM), which

emphasize continuous improvement cycles and active participation from all institutional components (Sallis, 2011).

From the perspective of Outcome-Based Education (OBE), quality management should assess learning success through the measurement of graduate skills and job readiness. Yet, tracer study data from UIN Malang (2023), UIN Jakarta (2022), and IAIN Madura (2022) reveal that only 32–39% of MPI graduates work in fields aligned with their academic discipline. This suggests that the Learning Outcomes (CPL) defined in the curriculum have not been fully translated into competencies demanded by the labor market demands (Holmes, 2013; Yorke, 2006).

Another critical issue lies in the limited and largely symbolic involvement of the labor market in curriculum design and evaluation. Literature highlights that stakeholder involvement is a key indicator of institutional quality (Barrie, 2006; Harvey & Green, 1993). Within PTKINs, however, employer engagement often occurs only at the level of consultation and rarely extends to co-curricular design, structured internships schemes, or collaborative competency development.

In this context, the concept of curriculum responsiveness (Wheelahan, 2010) becomes especially relevant—namely, the ability of a curriculum to adapt to industrial and social dynamics. The MPI curriculum currently lacks emphasis on digital pedagogy, technological literacy, and social entrepreneurship, demonstrating a lag behind global standards for employability. Furthermore, the future-ready curriculum model advocated by UNESCO (2021) has not yet been systematically adopted as within MPI departments (UNESCO, 2021).

Consequently, the quality management strategy of MPI programs remains underdeveloped, falling short of its potential to support graduate competitiveness. Future enhancement initiatives must shift from administrative compliance toward competence-based development and cross-sector collaborative practices (Jamil et al., 2021; OECD, 2019).

### **Analysis of DIKTIS Policy Effectiveness**

As the academic authority overseeing Islamic higher education, DIKTIS holds a strategic position in directing quality assurance policies. Foundational documents such as the Strategic Plan of the Directorate General of Islamic Education 2020–2024, the PTKI Curriculum Development Guide (2018), and KMA No. 347/2022 provide a comprehensive normative framework. However, policy effectiveness ultimately depends on implementation capacity, inter-agency coordination, and robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms (Grindle, 1980; Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1983).

A major limitation in the current system lies in the absence of evaluation mechanisms grounded in graduate employment indicators and post-graduation competency assessments. Although DIKTIS policies emphasize aspects of input and process quality, they have yet to comprehensively address the outcome and impact dimensions of educational quality (OECD, 2019). This gap reveals a policy orientation that remains heavily procedural rather than outcome-based, thereby limiting the ability to measure the real effectiveness of educational interventions in improving graduate employability.

Furthermore, weak synergy between DIKTIS and institutions that employ graduates significantly undermines the relevance of existing policies. In practice, collaborations between higher education institutions and industries are often ad hoc, unsustained, and lacking structured follow-up mechanisms (Mashurim et al., 2024; Zamzami, 2019). Such fragmented partnerships contradict the essence of the Triple Helix model proposed by Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff (2000), which emphasizes the vital collaboration among universities, industries, and government bodies in driving innovation and ensuring graduate relevance to labor market demands (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000). The situation is further compounded by regulatory misalignment across ministries, which hampers the absorption of MPI graduates in the workforce. The 2023 CPNS recruitment case at UNY, for example, highlighted how disciplinary nomenclature within PTKINs remains unrecognized across government sectors, posing risks of structural exclusion from the national labor system (OECD, 2019; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010).

In addition, DIKTIS has not yet developed affirmative programs that directly enhance the institutional capacity of MPI departments. The absence of targeted initiatives such as curriculum innovation grants, industry-adaptation training, or professional certification facilitation demonstrates a gap in strategic intervention. Higher education literature consistently stresses that strengthening institutional capacity is fundamental to achieving meaningful and sustainable quality reform (Altbach et al., 2009; Brennan & Shah, 2000). Therefore, the current effectiveness of DIKTIS policies remains constrained, particularly in implementation support and institutional strengthening. A strategic reorientation is necessary—shifting from a regulatory-centered framework toward facilitation- and collaboration-based approaches, complemented by more robust, outcome-oriented monitoring mechanisms.

For comparative purpose, in Saudi Arabia, graduate employability has become a central policy agenda under the Vision 2030 transformation framework. Through the

Education and Training Evaluation Commission (ETEC), the government has implemented standardized Graduate Readiness Assessments (Jahiziya) to evaluate the core competencies and job readiness. This system provides measurable outcome indicators that inform curriculum development, accreditation processes, and employer engagement. Additionally, the establishment of Sector Skills Councils facilitates structured collaboration between higher education institutions, industries, and government bodies, ensuring that curricula remain responsive to evolving labor market needs. These policies reflect a strategic shift from input-oriented quality assurance to outcome-based accountability, demonstrating how coordinated state–industry–university mechanisms can effectively bridge the gap between higher education and employment opportunities.

Overall, Saudi Arabia’s employability framework illustrates a national model that integrates standardized assessment, labor market intelligence, and industry-based curriculum reform, offering lessons for strengthening the governance of graduate employability within PTKINs (Education and Training Evaluation Commission (ETEC), 2023; OECD, 2019; Vision 2030, 2021).

## **CONCLUSION**

The findings of this study reveal a systemic gap between the internal quality management design of Islamic Education Management (MPI) programs and the actual demands of the labor market. Although most MPI programs have adopted frameworks such as Internal Quality Assurance (SPMI), the Indonesian National Qualifications Framework (KKNI), and Learning Outcomes (CPL), the prevailing quality orientation remains largely administrative and lacks a clear focus on learning outcomes and graduate competencies. It has yet to reach the transformational dimension envisioned by paradigms such as Total Quality Management (TQM) and Outcome-Based Education (OBE). Empirical evidence from tracer studies conducted at several PTKIN institutions shows that more than one-third of MPI graduates have entered fields unrelated to their academic background, underscoring the limited relevance, responsiveness, and applied value of the current curriculum.

From a policy perspective, the Directorate of Islamic Higher Education (DIKTIS), as a strategic unit under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, has formulated several key regulations aimed at enhancing graduate quality. These include the PTKI Curriculum Development Guideline and the National Standards for Islamic Higher Education. However, the implementation of these policies continues to face challenges, particularly regarding consistency, cross-sectoral coordination, and insufficient institutional support for MPI departments in strengthening capacity, innovating curricula, and establishing sustainable labor market partnerships. Furthermore, the lack of regulatory harmonization across ministries undermines the professional recognition of MPI graduates, as illustrated by the CPNS recruitment case at UNY.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that improving the quality of MPI graduates cannot rely solely on administrative compliance or normative policy. A more strategic and collaborative approach is required—one that emphasizes outcome-based quality management, curriculum alignment with industry needs, systematic employer engagement, and the repositioning of DIKTIS as an active facilitator of institutional development rather than merely a regulatory body. In addition, cross-ministerial policy advocacy is essential to secure the formal recognition of PTIKI graduate nomenclature and to ensure their inclusive and equitable integration into the national workforce system.

This study is limited to document-based analysis and does not include stakeholder interviews or direct field data. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted within this scope. Future research should involve multi-stakeholder perspectives, including employers, alumni policymakers, and university leaders, through qualitative interviews, institutional case studies, and cross-country comparative analyses to generate more comprehensive insights and actionable policy recommendations. With such an orientation, it is expected that MPI graduates will not only possess strong academic competence but also demonstrate professional readiness, adaptability, and competitiveness in accordance with the demands of the modern era, thereby securing a rightful place in both national and global employment ecosystems.

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