



## STRATEGY OF HIGHER COMPETITIVENESS IN IMPROVING COMPETITIVENESS IN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS UNIVERSITI IN THE PROVINCE OF SOUTH SUMATERA.

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<p><b>Received:</b> 11<sup>th</sup> January 2022 <b>Accepted:</b> 11<sup>th</sup> February 2022 <b>Published:</b> 28<sup>th</sup> March 2022</p>	<p>The purpose of this study is to describe the reasons why it is important to increase competitiveness in PTKIS, describe PTKIS strategies in increasing competitiveness, and uncover factors supporting and inhibiting strategies in increasing competitiveness in South Sumatra Province in PTKIS in South Sumatra Province. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach. Data collection techniques used are observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis using Creswell model and data validity technique using data triangulation.</p> <p>The results of the research are: First, the competitiveness strategy of universities is influenced by five factors, namely the presence of new competitors, reduced public interest in Islamic religious colleges, increased quality of old competitors, absorption of graduates is less attractive to users of educational services, and competitors between universities. Islamic religion. Second, the strategy of universities in increasing the competitiveness of PTKIS through several ways, namely higher education innovation, program differentiation, improving the quality of education, cost management, improving the reputation (image) of universities, and managing superior human resources. Third, supporting factors for good university management, good lecturer qualifications, support for facilities and infrastructure to support academic activities, good cooperation with other institutions, and soft skills strengthening programs for graduates (alumni). While the inhibiting factors are the lack of publication of scientific papers (journals) of national and international repute, do not have online-based journals that are indexed or nationally accredited, management of education costs is still centered on foundations, financial sources still rely on non-governmental organizations, shifting educational aspirations of the community (people of the community). Islam) which used to be more concerned with religious education to general knowledge along with the pace of national development, the opportunities for graduates to get a job are getting narrower</p>

**Keywords:** Higher Education Strategy, Competitiveness of PTKIS.

### INTRODUCTION

Islamic Higher Education is the embodiment of the Islamic Education System which is regulated by Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System and Government Regulation Number 47 of 2008 concerning Compulsory Education (Law No. 20 of 2003). Islamic Higher Education functions to develop capabilities and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation in the context of the intellectual life of the nation. Furthermore, it is also expected to develop an Islamic academic community. innovative, responsive, creative, skilled, competitive, and cooperative through the implementation of the Tridharma, and developing Science and Technology in relation to integration with Islam by paying attention to and applying humanities values (Ministry of Religion; 2009).

Islamic Higher Education Institutions have an important role in encouraging the improvement of the quality of life and self at the higher education level. Higher education is one of the important pillars in the national education

system (Irjus Indrawan; 2021). Based on government data through the Ministry of Religion during the 2010-2014 period, Islamic religious universities have experienced the expansion and equity of higher education. This is indicated by the increase in the number of PTKI institutions which increased to 574 in 2010 and 679 in 2014 or an increase of 18.29% in five years from the original 574 in 2010, 609 PTKI in 2011, 645 PTKI in 2012, 665 PTKI in 2013, and 679 PTKI in 2014 (Ministry of Religion; 2009).

The main problem is private universities, where many private universities (PTS) and Islamic religious universities (PTKIS) have closed their business or closed their study programs because they could not compete. According to central APTISI data, as many as 30 percent or 800 private universities (PTS/PTKIS) in Indonesia went out of business (Tobari: 2015). According to the Coordinator of Kopertis Wilayah II, Prof. Dr. Diah Natalisa, MBA, there are at least 7 private universities in South Sumatra that do not have operational permits, so PTS cannot accept new students ([http://www.tribunnews.com/regional/2013/08/19\\_/this-7](http://www.tribunnews.com/regional/2013/08/19_/this-7)). Meanwhile, based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in the 2013/2014-2015/2016 period in the province of South Sumatra has experienced a decrease in the number of PTS, namely in the 2013/2014 period there were 115 PTS and 2 PTN and in the 2015/2016 period there were 106 PTS and 2 PTN (<https://www.bps.go.id/statictable/2015/09/14/1839>).

In addition, other problems at PKIS in the administration of higher education, for example (1) the standards and scientific quality at PTKI are not adequate, (2) mastery of foreign languages (English and Arabic) is not maximized, (3) scientific and educational interaction between lecturers and students unsatisfactory, (4) there are still many lecturers who have not adhered to scientific standards, and (5) weak research culture. From this portrait, it can be understood that the quality of PTKIS is still minimal. This is also due to the decrease in public interest in continuing their studies at PTKIS on average every year. In order to improve the quality of PTKIS with competence and professionalism of educators and education staff, it is necessary to formulate a strategy for improving PTKIS performance to achieve the PTKIS vision and mission through improving the quality of educators and education personnel through educational qualification standards, increasing competence and professionalism towards achieving quality education and PTKIS governance. clean and transparent.

So that there are not many PTS/PTKIS that go out of business, it is necessary to raise awareness among PTS and PTKIS managers that the impact of industrialization and its various demands cannot be avoided. Every PTS/PTKIS must remain aware of and accept the fact that competition is a natural thing and whether or not it wants to be faced in the era of industrialization and globalization. PTS managers are required to always prepare their institutions to face every form of competitive power in the existing higher education industry. In addition, it is necessary to formulate strategies to be able to increase excellence so that they can have high competitiveness with other universities.

According to Stephen Taylor, Strategy is a broad and integrated unified plan that links the company's strategic advantages with environmental opportunities and challenges and which is designed to ensure that the company's main goals can be achieved through proper implementation by the company (Stephen Taylor, Laura Hall, Derek : 2008). Hitt said, Strategy is a number of integrated and coordinated actions taken to exploit core competencies and gain competitive advantage (Harris, Michael: 2000).

According to Fred R. David Strategic is the science of formulating, implementing and evaluating cross-functional decisions that enable the organization to achieve its goals (Fred R. David and Forest R. David: 2015). Strategic management as an art and science in terms of making (formulating), implementing (implementing) and evaluating (evaluating) strategic decisions between functions that enable an organization to achieve its goals in the future (Husaini Usman: 2015). Lawrence R. Jauch and Wiliam F. Gluech in Taufiqurahman write Strategic is a number of decisions and actions that lead to the preparation of a strategy or a number of effective strategies to help achieve company goals. Wheelan and Hunger strategic is a unified series of decisions and actions that determine the company's performance in the long term (Taufiqurakhman: 2016).

According to Sofjan, strategy is the determination of decisions that must be taken in dealing with competitors in an environment that is mutually dependent and the determination of the goals and objectives of an organization that is fundamental in the long term (Sofjan Assauri: 2013). Strategy is an action plan that aligns organizational resources and commitment to achieve superior performance.

Furthermore, according to Fred and David, the stages in strategy formulation are (1) Strategy formulation. Includes activities to develop the organization's vision and mission, identify opportunities and external threats to the organization, determine the organization's internal strengths and weaknesses, set long-term organizational goals, create a number of alternative strategies for the organization, and choose certain strategies to use, (2) Strategy implementation. Require the company to set annual targets, make policies, motivate employees, and allocate resources so that strategic formulation can be implemented, (3). Strategic implementation includes developing a culture that supports the strategy, creating an effective organizational structure, redirecting marketing efforts, preparing budgets, developing and utilizing information systems, and linking compensation for employees to organizational performance. (4) Strategy evaluation: This stage is the final stage of strategic management. The three main activities in strategy evaluation are: Reviewing the external and internal factors that form the basis for formulating the current strategy. Then measure performance, take corrective actions. Strategy evaluation needs to be done because success today is not a guarantee for success tomorrow (Fred R. David and Forest R. David: 2015).

Competitiveness is efficiency and effectiveness that has the right target in determining the direction and results of the goals to be achieved which include the final goal and the final achievement process in facing competition. Sumihardjo, gave an explanation of the term competitiveness, namely: "The word power in the sentence

competitiveness means strength, and the word competitiveness means achieving more than others, or being different from others in terms of quality, or having certain advantages. This means that competitiveness can mean the strength to try to be more than others or excel in certain things, whether done by a person, group or certain institution. Furthermore, Musa and Najib, argued that competitiveness includes: (1) the ability to strengthen its market position, (2) the ability to connect with the environment, (3) the ability to continuously improve performance, and (4) the ability to establish a profitable position (Musa Hubeis and Muhammad Najib: 2015).

Meanwhile, according to Walter competitiveness is an organization that seeks to identify ways to gain a "competitive advantage" or "differential advantage" over other organizations offering similar programs with similar target groups or markets. The key decision here involves the basis on which the organization will seek to differentiate itself from competitors. The basis for differentiation may lie in one or more other strategic decision areas; for example, the particular type of program the organization emphasizes or the uniqueness of specific goals and objectives. On the other hand, the basis for differentiation may be non-strategic; for example, the sense of exclusivity that membership in the organization might suggest (Alan Walter Steiss; 2008).

Porter's competitive strategy is to develop a plan for how the business will compete, what its goals should be and what policies are needed to achieve those goals (Michael Porter; 2001). Furthermore, the definition according to Porter Competitive Marketing Strategy or competitive strategy is a combination of the end (goals) that the company strives for with the tools (wisdom) and the company trying to get there. One of the objectives of a competitive strategy for a business in an organization is to find a position in the organization where universities can best protect themselves against competitive pressures or can influence these pressures positively.

The competitiveness of universities according to the description above is the ability of universities to show competitive advantage and offer more value for their performance in certain respects, by showing the most favorable situations and conditions, compared to other universities.

Universities can be positioned to have competitiveness when a university has met certain achievement indicators starting from input, process and output towards the practice of the values of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education. The image of a university is important to increase its visibility in the eyes of the public, both nationally and internationally, which later turns out to be very influential on the ranking of the university. One of the criteria is a number of international recognitions, be it research, quality of human resources, laboratories, teaching and learning processes, as well as in terms of information technology capacity and web popularity.

Even though the College is a non-profit organization, it is still a corporate that produces products in the form of educational services. Universities serve stakeholders, including students as consumers whose wants and needs must be satisfied through excellent service performance. Competitive advantage basically occurs when an organization can do something that competing organizations cannot. Or in other words, competitive advantage occurs when the ability of the organization exceeds the strongest competitors. In simple terms, competitive advantage shows the differences and uniqueness among competitors (Cravens: 2009).

Competition in Islamic Religious Colleges (PTKIS) does not only occur between PTKIS and public or private universities, but also competition between PTKIS themselves. The presence of universities, both public universities and Islamic universities in each district that has more than one university, makes higher education institutions have to compete in terms of quality and quantity. Therefore, to maintain the existence of PTKIS in competition, it must have advantages compared to other universities. So it is necessary to develop a competitive advantage in PTKIS in order to compete.

According to Ismail Solihin, to achieve human resources, it is necessary to have a university strategy-making process carried out through strategic management activities with the aim of aligning the mission and goals of the university with various developments that occur in the university environment, both internally and externally, so that universities can adjust their goals and objectives. a strategy made with the environmental changes that occur so that universities gain a competitive advantage in the field of human resources (Ismail Solihin: 2015).

Meanwhile, according to Taufiqurrakhman Competitive strategy is defined as a set of coordinated commitments and actions designed to exploit these competencies and achieve competitive advantage. Strategic Management and its Relation to Competitiveness, namely (1) Strategic flexibility is a set of capabilities used to respond to various demands and opportunities in a competitive, dynamic, and uncertain environment. (2) Strategic intent is the management of the company's resources, capabilities, and core competencies to realize the company's goals in a competitive environment. (3) Strategic mission is a unique statement with the scope and operations of the company in terms of products and markets. One company that successfully formulates this well will provide guarantees to customers of what goods and services will be obtained from the company concerned (Taufiqurrakhman: 2016).

From the description above, it can be concluded that competitive advantage is a PTKIS formulation strategy designed to achieve profitable opportunities and cannot be imitated by competitors to maximize its role in Islamic education, which can be done through innovation strategies, quality improvement, and cost strategy. So to realize competitive advantage, a human resource management strategy is needed in the organization, including PTKIS.

According to Porter, the success or failure of a company depends on its competitive advantage. Every company must be able to create and maintain its competitive advantage in their industry, if it is to survive and if it needs to grow (Michael E. Porter). This conception also applies to a university, especially a private Islamic religious college (PTKIS). Adhering to this conception, every PKIS manager needs to always evaluate the competitive position

of his PTKIS and carry out the specific action steps needed to improve it in order to excel in the competition. A PKIS that is able to develop its competitive advantage at least will not be abandoned by its students and the interest of prospective students remains high for the PTKIS.

According to Schuler & Jackson, companies gain competitive advantage through the use of human resources, wisely and innovatively (Schuler & Jackson; 2010). According to Wahyudi, "To gain a competitive advantage, a company must analyze its resources to identify its weaknesses in order to build an ability to achieve excellence. These resources are real resources (financial and physical assets), intangible resources (reputation in quality) and human resources (Agustinus Sri Wahyudi: 2015). Through university strategic planning, a PTKIS can see objectively internal and external conditions, so that it can anticipate changes in the business environment and be able to survive in the increasingly fierce competition of educational institutions.

Based on the results of initial observations related to strategies in increasing competitive advantage in three Islamic religious universities in South Sumatra Province, namely STAI Baturaja, Ogan Komering Ulu Regency, Ash Shiddiqiyah STAI Lem debris, Ogan Komering Ilir Regency, and STAI Rahmaniya Sekayu, Musi Banyuasin Regency, which has a good character. same. Where the three universities are located in the middle of other private universities and are faced with quite large competition.

First STAI Baturaja, Ogan Komering Ulu Regency, is one of the first Islamic universities to be established in South Sumatra Province. Based on the history STAI Baturaja was founded on August 20, 1982 by forming the Islamic Education Foundation and establishing the Tarbiyah Science College with a study program of Islamic religious education. Furthermore, on January 2, 1984 STAI Baturaja received a recommendation from UIN Raden Fatah and a year later on July 26 1985 STAI Baturaja received an operational permit from the Director General of Islamic Education in Jakarta through a Decree of the Director General of Islamic Institutional Development. From this brief history, it is known that STAI Baturaja has been running for ±38 years.

With a long journey, it is certain that STAI Baturaja has experienced various problems both internally and externally, internally, for example, the management of education costs that have not been optimal and the lack of adequate facilities and infrastructure and STAI Baturaja is faced with threats from outside (external) for example the rapid growth of universities both both public and private (University of Baturaja, STIKES Ma'arif, AKMI Baturaja, and STIE Dwisakti) and not to mention the addition of universities from other regions to encourage tighter competition and increase. In addition, the increasing demand for certification for all professions in the field of education is also a threat to the existence of STAI Baturaja. However, STAI Baturaja is able to stand tall and survive in the midst of globalization developments and increasingly fierce competition between universities. Armed with strengths, for example, having teaching staff with various and relatively high rank qualifications, and having 2 study programs, namely Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Islamic Economics (EKSY) which are not owned by surrounding universities.

In addition, by taking advantage of the opportunities that STAI Baturaja has for example the high interest of the community to follow further studies, the increasing public need for educational output, research and community service as a result of regional autonomy policies, so STAI Baturaja can still devote itself to the community, namely to carry out education at the Islamic tertiary level with the aim of becoming the Leading Islamic College in South Sumatra which has a superior and modern vision in the combination of developing Islamic education and research and service with an Islamic spirit and upholding Ukhuwah Islamiyah in the future. Since its establishment STAI Baturaja has graduated ± 3000 scholars spread across the Greater OKU Region (OKU, South OKU, and East OKU) and has served in institutions both public and private for the Government and the community.

Second, STAI Ash Shiddiqiyah Lem debris, Ogan Komering Ilir Regency, is a relatively new university, which is only about 8 years old. Based on the history STAI STAI Ash Shiddiqiyah was founded in 2012. However, at a relatively new age, STAI STAI Ash Shiddiqiyah is able to compete with universities that have been established previously. STAI STAI Ash Shiddiqiyah in its development is very prolific where at the age of only 8 years it already has six study programs namely Islamic Education Management, Sharia Economic Law, Sharia Economics, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Education, English, and Indonesian Language. The Islamic High School "As-Shiddiqiyah" is a higher education institution under the auspices of the Pon Foundation. bubonic plague. As-shiddiqiyah who has the task of providing education and community service. Regarding the competitiveness of STAI Ash Shiddiqiyah, it cannot be separated from the threats and weaknesses that have been faced during the last few years. Based on the internal factors of STAI Ash Shiddiqiyah, there are still weaknesses, for example, the study program that is owned has not independently carried out its management and is still dependent on the institution, and the absence of representative hall facilities and the laboratory for each study program has not been maximized. And also the threat from outside (external) competition between public and private universities is getting tougher (STAI An Nur, STEBIS Darussalam, and Uniski) which are all under the auspices of Kopertais Region VII.

To overcome these problems and threats, STAI Ash Shiddiqiyah utilizes its strengths, for example the existence of religious leadership in both the organizing body and the high school as well as the existing departments/study programs, having good quality lecturers (4 Doctoral Degrees and 31 Masters/Masters), and STAI Ash Siddiqiyah has partnerships with ministries and several local governments in South Sumatra, private companies and religious organizations. In addition, it is also supported by opportunities, for example the image of STAI Ash Shiddiqiyah in the community is quite good, because it is influenced by the Ash Shiddiqiyah Islamic Boarding School Yayan, and also the existence of government policies on Good Governance both in the realm of government and

private institutions so that STAI Ash Shiddiqiyah is able to maintain its existence in carry out Islamic religious higher education, especially in the Ogan Komering Ilir Regency area with the aim of "Being a Superior and Competitive Higher Education Institution according to the field of expertise within the framework of Akhlaq Al-Karimah in South Sumatra". The definition of superior has a substantive meaning that has high competitiveness value. Understanding competitive has a substantive meaning of the ability to compete. The excellence of the Ash-Shiddiqiyah Islamic College Lemrub Jaya OKI will be built from academic works that are substantial and can be competed in the PTAIS field of South Sumatra. Excellent in education, research and community service at local, regional, national and even international levels.

Third, the Rahmaniya Islamic School (STAIR) is a higher education organization established by the Rahmany Foundation in 2002. After being officially declared to have received an operating permit by an operational permit SK. The Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia No: D1.11/245/2003 which is also located at Jalan Merdeka No. 531. In the same year the high school opened its first admissions for the 2002/2003 Academic year. The Rahmaniya Islamic High School or commonly abbreviated as STAI Rahmaniya was established by opening two study programs, namely: the S1 Study Program for Islamic Religious Education, and the Ahwalu Asyasyah S1 Study Program.

STAI Rahmaniya Sekayu, Musi Banyuasin Regency was established in the 2002/2003 academic year with Drs. H. Riduan Sakni, M.A. Then followed by Drs. H. Abd. Amri Siregar, M. Ag and currently STAI Rahmaniya is chaired by Mr. Sonin, M.Pd.I. STAI Rahmaniya. Various challenges both from within (internal) and from outside (external) faced by STAI Rahmaniya as an Islamic higher education educational institution, for example, financial management and campus policies are centered on the Foundation, the quality of raw input is still low, the potential and sources of institutional funding have not been fully explored. professional so that funding still relies on receipts from student tuition fees. Meanwhile, from outside (external), there are university competitors in Musi Banyuasin Regency (Open University, Sriwijaya Polytechnic etc.), decreased public trust, decreased student interest in continuing higher education, and community demands for the quality of education so that this has an impact on the sustainability of STAI. Rahmaniya.

To overcome this, STAI Rahmaniya has strengths, namely STAIR's very strategic location and located in the center of the city of Musi Banyuasin Regency, precisely in Sekayu so that it is very affordable for students, lecturers' educational qualifications are in accordance with the abilities and average of S-2 and also S-3, graduates are able to compete with other universities, and study program accreditation is worth B as a condition for graduates to be able to take part in the CPNS selection. In addition, STAI Rahmaniya has the opportunity. There are still elementary, junior high school/MTS, SMA/SMK/MA both public and private which still need Islamic teaching experts. and STAIR's collaboration with the local government and other parties in supporting the implementation of Islamic religious higher education in Musi Banyuasin Regency. So that STAIR is able to compete with other universities both in terms of institutions and the quality of graduates.

Seeing these conditions, it is very important for PTKIS to develop a strategy with the aim of increasing competitive advantage at the local, regional, national, and even international levels. So that researchers are interested in researching Higher Education Strategies in Improving Competitiveness in Private Islamic Higher Education (PTKIS) in South Sumatra Province.

### **METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach through the point of view of education science with participatory observation to describe, describe, explore and describe the management of the reward system for the organizational culture of universities in Riau Province. Qualitative research is best suited to address research problems where it is necessary to explore (Creswell, John W).

The main characters in qualitative research are: First: tracing the problem and its development in detail centered on one particular phenomenon. Second, the theories and regulations used are the basis for formulating the problem. Third, in formulating research problems and questions and achieving research objectives in general, it is determined by the direct experience of the researcher participating in the social setting in the preliminary study "grand tour" until the research process is carried out. Fourth, data collection starts with a simple choice of words. Fifth, the analysis of the described data and the themes displayed in the analysis are interpreted into meaning and Sixth, the search for research reports both regarding the structure and various forms of data presentation is very flexible and is determined by the reflection of the researcher's subjectivity (Mukhtar, 2013).

The subject of this qualitative research will involve several informants who are expected to be able to provide complete information about Higher Education Strategies in Increasing Competitiveness in Islamic Religious Universities in South Sumatra Province, namely: Three Foundation Trustees; Three Chairs of PTKIS; Three Deputy chairmen; Thirteen Lecturers and Six Academic Staff at Islamic Religious Universities in South Sumatra Province (STAI Baturaja, Ogan Komering Ulu Regency, Ash Shiddiqiyah STAI, Ogan Komering Ilir Regency, and STAI Rahmaniya Sekayu, Musi Banyuasin Regency). The research was conducted centered on the angle of the subject being studied. The secondary data that the writer wants are the first related to Islamic Religious Universities in South Sumatra Province (STAI Baturaja, Ogan Komering Ulu Regency, STAI Ash Shiddiqiyah Lemrub, Ogan Komering Ilir Regency, and STAI Rahmaniya Sekayu, Musi Banyuasin Regency), the second is geographic data, the three organizational structures, four conditions of lecturers, five conditions of students, six curricula, seven facilities and infrastructure,

eight visions and missions, the nine strategies of higher education in increasing competitiveness in Islamic religious universities.

The most common data collection methods used in qualitative research are: (1) observation, (2) interviews, and (3) document or artifact analysis. Artifacts may include audio and video recordings, photos, games, artwork, or other items that provide insight into context or participants (Mukhtar, 2013).

While the data analysis that will be carried out in this research is by following the steps: 1) processing and preparing data for data. Analysis, this step involves transcription of interviews, scanning of materials, typing of field data or sorting and organizing the data into different types depending on the source of information; 2) read the entire data. The first step is that the information obtained is reflected in its overall meaning; 3) analyze in more detail by coding the data; 4) apply a coding process to describe the settings, people, categories and themes to be analyzed; 5) describe these themes to be re-presented in the form of narrative/qualitative reports. The most popular approach is to apply a narrative approach in presenting the results of the analysis; and 6) data interpretation, namely interpreting the data that has been collected at the research site. Interpretation/meaning can take the form of new questions that need to be answered (Creswell, 2017).

### RESULTS

#### 1. The Importance of Higher Education Strategy in Improving PTKIS Afternoon Power

Even though the College is a non-profit organization, it is still a corporate that produces products in the form of educational services. Universities serve stakeholders, including students as consumers whose wants and needs must be satisfied through excellent service performance. Competitive advantage basically occurs when an organization can do something that competing organizations cannot. Or in other words, competitive advantage occurs when the ability of the organization exceeds the strongest competitors. In simple terms, competitive advantage shows the differences and uniqueness among competitors (Cravens: 2019).

The sustainability of the organization of private Islamic religious colleges (PTKIS) in the future is highly dependent on the ability of the PTKIS in building a competitive advantage. Hubeis said that competitive advantage is a dynamic process because it must be carried out continuously so it needs a barrier so that it is difficult to imitate. Competitive advantage illustrates that a company can act better than other companies even though they are operating in the same industry environment.

The tight competition between PTKIS in South Sumatra Province is increasingly visible when recruiting new students. Various strategies are carried out by various PTKIS to attract as many new students as possible considering that the majority of PTKIS's sustainability currently still depends on the existence of students. This condition has the consequence that if PTKIS fails to recruit a significant number of students on an ongoing basis, then the chance for the PTKIS to continue in the future will be very small.

Universities that do not have competitiveness will be abandoned by the community. Because not having competitiveness means not having an advantage, and not being superior means that there is no reason for a university to survive in a competitive society for the long term. Competitiveness relates to how effective an organization is in a competitive market, compared to other organizations that offer the same or similar products or services. Companies that are able to produce good quality products or services are effective companies in the sense that they will be able to compete.

Porter said: "competition is at the core of the success or failure of firms. Competition is at the core of a company's success or failure. There are two sides caused by competition, namely the success side because it encourages institutions to be more dynamic and competitive in producing graduates and providing the best service for education service users, so that competition is considered a motivating opportunity. While the other side is failure because it will weaken institutions that are static, afraid of competition and unable to produce quality products, so that competition is a threat to the company (Michael Porter: 1995). According to Muhardi, operational competitiveness is an operation function that is not only oriented inward (internally) but also externally (externally), namely responding proactively to its target market.

Competitiveness is the concept of comparing the ability and performance of an organization, sub-sector or country to sell and supply the goods or services provided in the market. The competitiveness of a country can be achieved from the accumulation of the strategic competitiveness of each company. The process of value added creation is within the scope of the company (Mudrajad Kuncoro: 2007). The Minister of National Education defines competitiveness as the ability to show better, faster or more meaningful results. The capabilities in question are (1) the ability to strengthen its market share, (2) the ability to connect with the environment, (3) the ability to continuously improve performance, (4) the ability to enforce a favorable position (Regulation of the Minister of National Education No. 41 of 2007).

##### a. Newcomers

The presence of new entrants or competitors is certainly an unpleasant thing for anyone. Newcomers are not only in the external environment, the internal environment also applies. However, the existence of competitors needs to be viewed positively as an effort to increase (motivation) productivity by generating new ideas or innovations which then lead to the preparation of effective (internal and external) strategies that are proactive in a competitive environment. As an illustration, the following components within the academic scope can explain the implications of this matter.

**Institutional Components.** The emergence of many similar educational institutions with various levels of education as well as offering facilities will affect the decrease in the enthusiasm of new students, the decline in the quality of prospective students due to choosing the more favorite (public/private), reduced education subsidies, as well as reduced opportunities to appear for lecturers or outstanding students to a higher institutional level. Another thing is the breakthrough of several public and private universities that have opened various new study programs from diploma level, extension to foreign universities.

**Regulatory Components.** The dependence of PTN/PTS on government regulations and bureaucracy results in policies and the flow of information that often cannot be anticipated quickly. Although in many ways PTS in particular can be flexible, it is often too loose. Likewise with PTN, policy elaboration is often limited to a certain level, regulations that come to replace one can be said to have a role in making a PTN/PTS dynamic or pessimistic.

### b. Supplier

The ability of institutions and lecturers to gain access to suppliers will determine their level of competitive ability. However, some suppliers sometimes have strong bargaining power in determining who is entitled to what and how much. This condition is able to make institutions/lecturers helpless or at least reduce their competitive strength. Suppliers can also be interpreted as inputs or sources of prospective new students. For example SMA, SMK, MA and Islamic Boarding School as a contribution to the sustainability of higher education.

### c. Buyer

Buyers or users of educational services are those who have an interest in the product to be purchased or used. They have bargaining power that will add or reduce value to the product. In addition, the buyer/user is also an important factor to see how the ability of the institution and the products it produces (alumni and research results) can contribute or add value to the environment of the buyer/user.

### d. Substitute Products

The product of substitution in education is another tertiary institution as an alternative that can carry out the same function as the previous university. For example, universities, high schools, academics, and others as existing universities (old competitors) or other institutions that have the same program. Other products can also be in-house training, consulting facilities and information services, libraries, as well as educational curriculum development. Other institutions within the university that can play a role, such as the Institute for Research and Community Service, can also contribute to producing superior products other than regular products.

### e. Between Competitors

Between competitors is a tight environment with various educational institutions that have their own competitive advantages. In the context of education, we recognize educational levels such as diplomas, bachelors, masters, and doctorates, then course institutions, academies, universities/institutes, both public and private, with various levels of accreditation and achievements offered to the public. In addition, educational facilities and costs as well as the lure of scholarships also give color to the competition. In the end, this condition will give rise to educational institutions with very satisfactory predicate: groups of superior and non-superior universities, elite and non-elite educational institutions, educational institutions with specialization, or affiliated with foreign educational institutions and others.

If taken in the context of higher education, then basically there are three core processes of the education process (core process), namely teaching (teaching), research (research), and services (services). This means that in managing the three core processes, universities are required to have advantages so as to create adequate competitiveness. Excellence as a form of competitiveness, among others, can be seen from the ability of universities to respond to global changes, as a consequence of competition in the world of education.

In the context of competition in education, the principles of healthy and correct competition are developed. The principles of fair and proper competition according to Islam, among others: giving the best to the community as users of educational services, not cheating, and positive cooperation. The principle of giving the best to can be in the form of providing the best quality graduates, providing competitive costs compared to others and providing the best service to students. In this concept, all educational activities, from input activities to process and output activities, are aimed at winning hearts or building a community image by providing the best.

Islamic Religious Colleges (PTKIS) must develop a strategy to realize universities that have advantages, so that PTKIS can compete in carrying out higher education and be able to survive in implementing Islamic-based higher education. PTKIS strategies are arranged in education, so that PTKIS will be able to compete by changing distinctive competences into competitive advantages. At the PTKIS level, the university's strategy tries to answer the question of what programs are superior to be able to compete. And how to implement the educational program can be done in an integrative way.

## 2. Higher Education Strategy in Improving the Competitiveness of PTKIS

To realize Islamic religious universities (PTKIS) that have competitiveness, there are at least six strategies that must be carried out, namely innovation, program differentiation, quality of education, cost management, university reputation, and human resources. Higher education innovation is carried out not only by institutional innovation, but also overall innovation, starting from leadership, management, services, curriculum, and others. Innovation is a process where organizations use their skills and resources to develop new products and new operating systems so that they become better (excellent) (Winardi: 2008). Meanwhile, Law 18 2002 defines innovation as "research, development, and/or engineering activities aimed at developing the practical application of new scientific

values and contexts, or new ways to apply existing science and technology into products or production processes". Law No. 18 of 2020).

An innovation strategy is a strategy to achieve a premium margin related to the creation and acceptance of customers for a new product or service. Innovation is a way that companies use to create new resources, produce competitive advantages or exploit them. existing resources by increasing their potential to generate above-average profits. The main reason underlying the implementation of an innovation strategy is to create a new product life cycle even though it makes an existing product obsolete. Thus, the innovation strategy makes it different from the product development strategy which prolongs the life cycle of an existing product. It's just that there are still a few companies that make innovation a fundamental way to make relationships with their markets.

Program differentiation encourages PTKIS to be able to find its own uniqueness in the target community. The uniqueness of the services that are put forward allows a PTKIS to attract the greatest interest of prospective students who have potential. Various ease of maintenance, additional features, flexibility, convenience and others that are difficult to imitate by opponents are the implementation of differentiation. This type of strategy is usually aimed at users of educational services who relatively do not prioritize price in their decision making (price insensitive).

The quality of education that is meant is the ability of educational institutions to utilize educational resources to increase their abilities optimally. Educational institutions are said to be of high quality if the inputs, processes, and results are adequate. In general, the inputs, processes, and results (outputs) are very influential in determining the quality of education. however, generally existing educational institutions always rely on the quality of their inputs, including advanced educational institutions. For this reason, PTKIS managers must concentrate on efforts to make good inputs through excellent processes so that they can produce superior outputs. Inputs that are being processed very well produce very good outputs. And low input through excellent processing produces good output. For more details in the following table:

Table.4.19. Input Process Business is getting better (Mujamil Qomar).

No	Input State	Process State	Output condition
1.	good	Very good	Superior
2.	Currently	Special	Very well
3.	Low	Very special	good

If the PTKIS leadership is able to bring about changes in students from good to special, from moderate to excellent, and from low to good, then PTKIS has been able to provide true education. So education really exists as an institution that is able to help and give way to nobility for students so that positive-constructive changes really occur. Therefore, continuous quality improvement must be a mandatory strategy in increasing competitiveness in Islamic religious universities. With this strategy, it is hoped that universities will have advantages so that they have competitiveness through improving the quality of higher education by optimizing human resources and funding sources. According to Mujamil Qomar, there are at least three factors in improving the quality of PTKIS, namely the adequacy of educational resources, the quality of the teaching and learning process that can encourage active students, and the resulting quality has the capability of knowledge, attitudes, and skills (Mujamil Qomar).

The Low Cost Strategy (cost leadership) emphasizes efforts to produce standard products (same in all aspects as competing products) at a very low cost per unit. These products (goods and services) are usually aimed at consumers who are relatively easily affected by price shifts (price sensitive) or use price as a decision-making factor. Reputation or image of universities as a factor in increasing competitiveness is one of the key elements of intangible resources that will be a source of creating conditions for a company's sustainable competitive advantage. The image or reputation is obtained through a series of accumulated abilities and experiences so that the university has the best performance for stakeholders. The factors that shape the reputation are

- 1) Social responsibility. Is the concern of the company or university towards the environment, especially regarding the individuals around them.
- 2) Reputation of top leadership. The skills that leaders need to have in management; reputation and ability of top management in maintaining the reputation of the company or college.
- 3) Governance, namely the knowledge and art of balancing the sharing of interests of all stakeholders and making choices among various options with the support of all kinds of information to become a responsible company or university.

According to Alma, the factors that can affect the image of a university are (Alma: 2007):

- 1) Lecturer. The service, which is a product produced by a university, is strongly influenced by competent and professional lecturers in their fields and gives lectures regularly. Lecturers who have scientific competence, so that they can master the material for which they are responsible are highly expected by students, lecturers can explain smoothly, systematically and easily to understand, can master class and discipline.
- 2) Libraries. Libraries are an important element in the development of science and the development of higher education. A representative library is reflected in the floor area, the number of books and book titles in the library, the availability of online media and the allocation of college budgets in the procurement of books every year.
- 3) Educational technology. Aids in the form of educational technology are very meaningful for the development of knowledge, especially in the teaching and learning process. Universities that have complete educational technology can improve the quality of services, especially in the academic field.



- 4) Art and sports activities. Art and sports activities that get achievements or awards will improve the image of universities in the eyes of the community.
- 5) Campus publishing. Campus is a complex community environment where communication is established, it is necessary to hold campus publications such as journals, bulletins, scientific magazines, or campus newspapers.
- 6) Activities of a scientific nature. In the form of seminars, workshops, workshops held on campus and off campus
- 7) Alumni. The existence of an alumni association from a university is a matter of pride for its members. With this organization they can exchange information with each other.
- 8) Campus appearance.
- 9) A magnificent, clean, comfortable and safe campus is a facility expected by students.
- 10) Easy to reach. The strategic location is in the city center or easily accessible by public transportation.

Human resources, related to strategies in increasing competitiveness, according to Hotner, processes related to human resource strategies and organizational competitive advantage strategies have at least two approaches, namely first to identify the implementation of high-performance work. Implementation of high performance is the application of an orderly work process so as to create an effective and efficient work system. By identifying the implementation of high-performance work will affect the performance of employees and the organization, because the organization will be increasingly busy with the application of human resource management literature. The second approach, namely strategic management based on the concept of human resource management practices and policies, should guide decisions about the strategic direction and position of the organization, so as to create competitive advantage. the hallmark of this approach is that organizations pursuing a particular strategy need to adopt a set of human resource management strategy policies that are suitable both in organizational structure and competitive advantage strategy (Hotner Tampubolon: 2016).

Meanwhile, according to Raymond A. Noe, the dimensions of human resource strategy in increasing competitiveness, namely managing the environment, managing internal and external environmental factors enable HR to make the greatest contribution to competitiveness. Creating a positive environment for HR includes linking human resource management practices to company goals, i.e. Ensuring that HRM practices comply with national government, central government and local government laws, designing motivating and satisfying work HR and maximize customer service, quality, and productivity. Obtaining and preparing HR, this field is related to identifying HR requirements, namely planning, employee recruitment, and employee selection. As well as regarding employee training so that they can have the various skills needed to carry out their work. HR assessment and development, including measuring employee performance, preparing employees for future work roles and identifying employees' interests, goals, values, and career problems. And create a working relationship and work environment that benefits the organization and employees. Compensating HR, includes creating salary payment systems, appreciating employee contributions, and providing employee benefits (Hotner Tampubolon: 2016).

The dimensions of human resource management that contribute to competitiveness, namely managing the HR environment include (HR is required to have the ability to translate PTKIS vision and mission, strategies, and policies and ensure that HR practices are in accordance with the law), obtain and prepare HR (planning, recruiting, and selecting lecturers and employees), HR assessment and development (measuring the performance of lecturers and employees, preparing lecturers/employees for future work roles and identifying various interests, goals, values, and career issues lecturers and employees), and providing compensation to HR (creating payroll systems, rewarding employee contributions, and providing allowances for lecturers and employees).

**3. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of PTKIS Competitiveness**

In carrying out the university's strategy in increasing the competitiveness of PTKIS in South Sumatra Province, there are supporting factors and inhibiting factors. Following are the results of the analysis of findings in the field related to supporting and inhibiting factors: There are several supporting factors in increasing the competitiveness of PTKIS in South Sumatra Province, for example.

Table. 4.20.

Analysis of the Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of PTKIS Competitiveness

Faktoc	PTKIS		
	STAI Baturaja	STAI Ash Shiddiqiyah	STAI Rahmadiyah
Supporter	1) Has an LPMA which is currently also a quality assurance institution at the study program level. 2) Already have standardized quality standards and are socialized to the entire academic community. 3) There is a standard operating procedure (SOP) that relates to quality assurance. 4) Adequate facilities and	1) The existence of religious leadership, both the organizing body and the high school, along with the existing departments / study programs. 2) Lean organizational structure or governance with division of authority which includes elements of leadership and implementation in	1) The level of motivation of the managers of institutions and study programs to improve accreditation, as well as the full support of the foundation in implementing improvement programs. 2) STAIR leadership commitment in institutional development efforts.

	<p>infrastructure.</p> <p>5) Softskill strengthening program (scouts, LDK, HIMA Study Program)</p> <p>6) the total number of permanent teaching staff at STAI Baturaja is 20 people, consisting of: Islamic Religious Education PS (PAI) 14 people Sharia Economics PS (EKSY) 6 people.</p> <p>7) the number of active students until April 2018 were: Islamic Religious Education Study Program (PAI) 759 people, Sharia Economics Study Program (EKSY) 191 people.</p> <p>8) STAI Baturaja has succeeded in producing graduates of the Strata1 Program. Positions occupied by alumni include Lecturers, Principals, Supervisors, Teachers, SKPD Structural Officials, entrepreneurs, as well as consultants etc.</p>	<p>the field of education.</p> <p>3) Lecturers who have met S-3 qualifications are 5% (2 people), 7% are currently studying S-3 (3 people), S-2 qualifications reach 81% (31 people), and those who are studying S- 2 as much as 7% (3 people);</p> <p>4) Have educators who are certified as professional lecturers.</p> <p>5) Infrastructure owned in the form of campus buildings equipped with language laboratories, computer laboratories, religious laboratories, law laboratories, and libraries</p> <p>6) Number of Students Reached 594 students</p> <p>7) The location of the campus is in the environment of the Islamic boarding school</p>	<p>3) Partnership network with institutions inside or outside Ramaniy</p> <p>4) There is cooperation with conochophilip in providing scholarships for underprivileged students and for outstanding students.</p> <p>5) The number of students reached 542 students.</p> <p>6) Student activities to support and channel student talent interests (BEM, DPM, LDK, IKA STAIR)</p> <p>7) 95% of lecturers with master's education qualifications and 11 permanent lecturers have professional certification.</p> <p>8) Availability of information systems that encourage efficient and effective implementation of academic administration and lectures.</p> <p>9) STAIR curriculum has accommodated the students' soft skills (thinking, communication, and character skills) which are integrated in the course.</p>
<p>Inhibitor</p>	<p>1)The role and involvement of the STAI Baturaja Senate in setting institutional policies has not been optimal</p> <p>2)The education curriculum is still less dynamic.</p> <p>3)Teaching methods are generally still relatively conventional</p> <p>4)Career advancement, regeneration of structural and functional positions are relatively slow.</p> <p>5)Utilization of information and communication technology has not been optimal.</p> <p>6)Limited funds for STAI development</p> <p>7)Graduate marketing efforts are less structured and planned</p> <p>8)The role of alumni in</p>	<p>1) There are still permanent lecturers of study programs who do not match the educational qualifications. for example, in the PGMI study program, there are no lecturers who have the qualifications of a master's degree in PGMI.</p> <p>2) There are no lecturers' research results published in international journals.</p> <p>3) The majority of STAI students have educational backgrounds from public schools. So that it becomes a challenge for STAI to improve religious abilities for</p>	<p>1) Management and leadership have not been accompanied by the ability to manage a university in a modern way.</p> <p>2) The STAI curriculum has not been able to respond to the development of science and technology as well as changes in society that are increasingly complex</p> <p>3) The teaching and learning process carried out by STAI is mostly still traditional and formalistic. Perhaps this is a result of the lack of clarity in the current curriculum so that the direction of education in a PTKIS is not</p>

	<p>participating in developing STAI Baturaja has not been optimal.</p>	<p>students.</p> <p>4) The lack of books in the development of study programs as well as student references</p> <p>5) The implementation of the KKNI curriculum has not run optimally at the study program level so that the impact on the process and learning outcomes is not maximal.</p> <p>6) Lecturer-student academic interaction in the aspects of research and community service is still lacking for the personal formation of Muslim students' intellectuals</p>	<p>understood by education implementers in the field.</p> <p>4) The lack of interest in high school graduates who have high academic potential to study at STAI causes most STAI students to be less than ideal. Many PTKIS are forced to accept this less than ideal quality because they are afraid of a shortage of students if they are too selective in choosing students.</p>
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From several similarities related to supporting and inhibiting factors, for example, the lecturers owned by each PTKIS already have good qualifications and some have even completed their doctoral education and also have professional certification from the ministry of religion. In addition, support from various agencies in implementing education helps universities in developing institutions.

**CONCLUSION**

In accordance with the findings in the field regarding the strategy of higher education in increasing the competitiveness of Islamic religious universities in South Sumatra Province, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The strategy of higher education in increasing competitiveness is very important to be carried out by PTKIS where from the results of the analysis of the external and internal environment of universities there are several factors, namely the emergence of new universities, reduced public interest (SMA/SMK/MA) to continue at PTKIS, competitors The old universities are getting stronger, the absorption of educational service users is less desirable, and the competition is getting tighter between universities in an area. So the implication of this strategy is that it is hoped that PTKIS will still survive in implementing Islamic higher education in South Sumatra Province.
2. The implementation of higher education strategies in increasing the competitiveness of PTKIS through several ways, namely higher education innovation, program differentiation, improving the quality of education, managing costs, improving the reputation (image) of universities, and managing superior human resources.
3. The supporting factors and inhibiting factors in the implementation of higher education strategies in increasing the competitiveness of PTKIS are supporting factors for good higher education management, good lecturer qualifications, supporting facilities and infrastructure to support academic activities, establishing good cooperation with other institutions, and programs to strengthen soft skills for graduates (alumni). As for the inhibiting factors, namely the lack of publication of reputable scientific papers (journals) both nationally and internationally, do not have online-based journals that are indexed or nationally accredited, the management of education costs is still centered on foundations, financial sources still rely on community self-help, shifting aspirations for public education ( Muslims) who used to be more concerned with religious education to general knowledge in line with the pace of national development, the opportunities for graduates to work as civil servants are getting narrower as a result of zero growth (or even minus growth) of the government in the field of personnel. Meanwhile, jobs in the private sector do not provide attractive rewards for PTKIS graduates.

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