



The Concept of Transforming the Leadership of Islamic Universities in Indonesia Towards A World Class University

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the transformation of leadership in Islamic universities before and after the implementation of the Regulation of the Minister of Religion Number 68 of 2015. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design conducted at the Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan. Data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews with fourteen informants consisting of four students and ten students selected by purposive sampling technique. Data analysis techniques follow the Miles and Huberman method, including data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. Triangulation of sources and techniques is used to ensure the validity of the data. This study aims to describe and analyze the transformation of leadership in Islamic universities before and after the implementation of the Regulation of the Minister of Religion Number 68 of 2015. The results of the study show that there are significant changes in the criteria and leadership selection process after the implementation of the new regulation, which emphasizes the importance of the position of Professor and involves the role of the Selection Commission. This change reduces the participation of the academic community and increases the issue of personal closeness in the appointment of officials, affecting the dynamics of leadership and institutional performance. This study provides insight into the impact of regulations on leadership management in Indonesian Religious Higher Education. In the context of moving towards World Class University, an inclusive and transparent transformational leadership strategy is key to ensuring effective adaptation to new regulations and improving the overall performance of the institution.

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INTRODUCTION

The presence of a leader will never be separated from any activity or organization, be it a formal or non-formal institution. Because in essence, a leader is a pioneer and captain who will escort and guide his members to achieve the desired goals. A leader holds a great mandate and responsibility in the leadership of Islamic education, moreover, he must also have quality and quality that is qualified in managing and planning matters related to his leadership and is competent in influencing his subordinates. Considering that all control is centralized in the leader, it should be able to overcome all management and planning efforts that have been designed to achieve the expected goals (Mahdiya et al., 2021).

The meaning of leadership itself has various meanings but is still in line. According to the opinion leadership means the ability to influence the behavior of people or groups in achieving common goals. Meanwhile, according to Burhanuddin, (2019) leadership is a process of influencing or setting an example for members to achieve the expected organizational goals. In the context of leadership, the roles of managers, leaders, and crackers have significant implications for the management and development of the institution. Managers are responsible for administrative and operational management, while leaders play a role in developing the organization's long-term vision and strategy. On the other hand, the role of crackers is an innovator who encourages positive change through new ideas and creative approaches. The differences in focus and approach of these three roles have a diverse impact on the progress of educational institutions (Armiyanti et al., 2023).

In recent years, leadership transformation in Indonesian universities has become an important issue along with efforts to improve the quality of higher education. Research shows that changes in government regulations and policies affect leadership dynamics in various universities. These changes aim to increase transparency and accountability in the rector selection process, but often face challenges in their implementation (Burhanuddin, 2019).

In particular, the Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan has experienced significant changes in the rector selection process before and after the implementation of the Regulation of the Minister of Religion No. 68 of 2015. These changes include an increase in the requirements for rector candidates and a shift in the role from the Senate to the Selection Commission by the Minister of Religious Affairs, which has caused controversy regarding the participation of the academic community and the potential for nepotism (Samad, 2012). This study examines the impact of these regulations on the effectiveness of institutional leadership and management.

This research uses transformational leadership theory, which emphasizes the importance of change, innovation, and stakeholder involvement in improving organizational performance. This theory is relevant in analyzing how regulatory changes affect leadership dynamics at Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan. Regulation of the Minister of Religion No. 68 of 2015 is an influential policy in the context of Islamic higher education in Indonesia, including at Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan. This policy affects various aspects, including leadership and management practices in the academic environment. Therefore, it is important to understand how these policies affect leadership dynamics in higher education and whether there are significant changes in the roles of managers, leaders, and crackers after their implementation.

The study of leadership transformation (managers, leaders, and

crackers) in universities based on government regulations is still limited. There are at least two articles that according to the researcher are in line with the stipulation of regulations related to leadership appointments, namely "Dynamics of the Policy for the Selection of Leaders of State Islamic Religious Universities" by Zainal Abidin and "Compiling a Final Project on the Juridical Review of PMA 17/2022 Based on Democracy in Islam" by Erlin Epriza.

Although there have been studies that discuss leadership selection policies in universities, such as the work of Zainal Abidin and Erlin Epriza, studies that specifically examine leadership transformation in the context of broader government regulations are still limited. Existing works tend to focus on the policy aspects of selection and juridical review without delving deeper into how government regulations affect leadership transformation from a practical perspective in higher education. In particular, there have not been many studies that integrate the leadership transformation approach with the three main roles (manager, leader, and cracker) in the context of the regulation. This can also be seen in Scopus data using the keyword search transformation, leadership, higher education, World Class University, not a single data was found that discusses the concept of leadership transformation of Islamic universities in Indonesia towards World Class University. From this data, only 9 documents were found and none of them conducted studies related to the concept of leadership transformation of Islamic universities in Indonesia towards World Class University. In fact, this research is important to study as can be seen in the picture below.

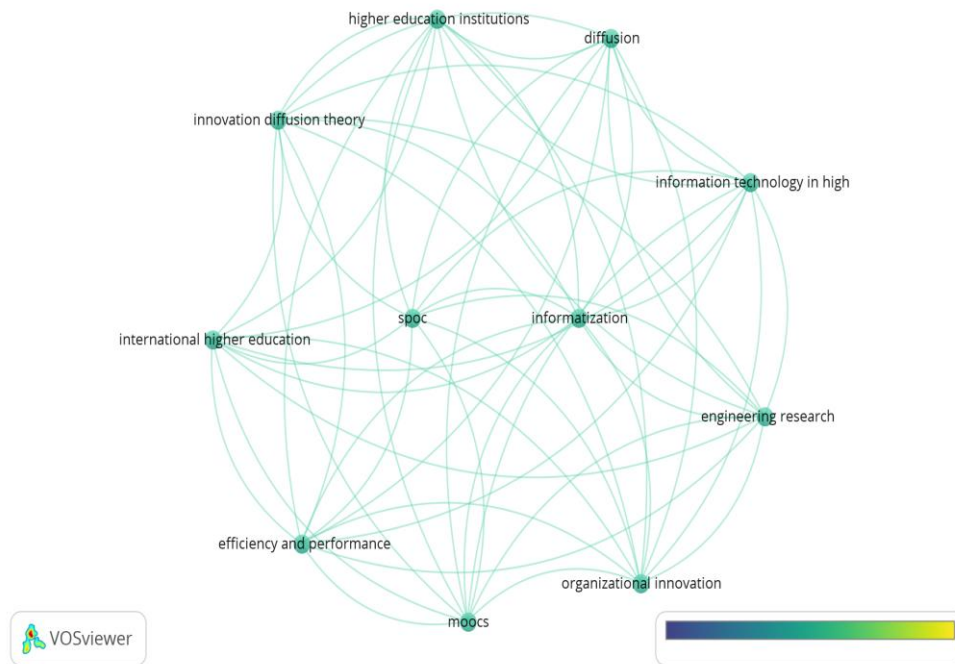


Fig 1. Based on the Scopus database using the keywords transformation, leadership, higher education, World Class University

This research offers novelty by integrating the study of leadership transformation (managers, leaders, and crackers) in higher education with an in-depth analysis of existing government regulations. This research not only fills the gap in the literature by providing insight into how regulation affects leadership roles and functions in higher education, but also develops a leadership model that is adaptive to regulatory changes. The study will use an interdisciplinary approach, combining policy analysis with leadership theory

and practical case studies from several universities in Indonesia. The results of this research are expected to make a valuable contribution to the development of leadership and management practices in higher education, as well as provide insights for further research in this field.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. Qualitative research is not in the form of numbers but uses descriptive data in the form of written and oral data from the observed people or actors (Asril et al., 2023; Damri et al., 2020; Engkizar et al., 2018; Hakim, 2019; Rahman et al., 2018; Thamrin et al., 2022; Zulmuqim, 2017). This research is aimed at describing and analyzing various phenomena, events, attitudes, and perceptions of individuals and groups (Costanza et al., 2012; Fossey et al., 2002; McLeod, 2015). A case study was conducted to investigate leadership transformation in Islamic Universities before and after the Regulation of the Minister of Religion No. 68 of 2015 was implemented.

This research was conducted at the Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan. The source of information for this study was selected purposively. The interview is focused on the experiences and perceptions of lecturers and students about changes in leadership dynamics in the institution. The informants consisted of four lecturers who had been serving for a long time at the Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan and some had held important positions so that they knew deeply about the matter that the researcher was meticulous about. Then there are also 10 informants from students or alumni of the State Islamic University of Sumatra from various stambuks, be it in 2009, 2015, 2018, 2019 or 2023 so that it makes it easier for researchers to compare leadership before and after the Decree of the Minister of Religion No. 68 of 2015 was enforced.

The data collection methods in this study are observation, interviews, and documentation (Mardiana et al., 2022; Skelcher et al., 2020; Veradegita et al., 2021). The observation technique used is participant observation where the researcher is directly involved in the object being observed, because the researcher himself is an alumnus so that he or she more or less knows the policies implemented in the university. The interview technique used is semi-structured where in its implementation it is freer when compared to structured interviews. The purpose of this type of interview is to find problems more openly, and the interviewee is asked for their opinions, and ideas (Adams, 2015; Biasutti et al., 2021; Kallio et al., 2016).

The data analysis technique in this study uses the Miles and Huberman method, where the steps in this study include data collection, data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing (Whittemore & Knafl, 2005; Annisa & Mailani, 2023; Febriani et al., 2023). At the data collection stage, the researcher collects research data. Primary data in the form of interviews with trusted sources and observations to see firsthand the situation, atmosphere, and reality that occurs in higher education. The data obtained during the study were analyzed, both data quality and accuracy by reducing and interpreting the data to obtain conclusions (Alvunger, 2018). Data reduction was carried out by the researcher by listening to the results of interviews from the research subjects. Interview results that do not match the research discussion will be discarded (Purwanto, 2021; Syofyan et al., 2020).

The researcher re-tidied up the results of the observation notes with field notes adjusted to the researcher's discussion. Conclusions are drawn from the data that has been analyzed. Researchers began to make efforts in the form of

interpreting the collected data with the intention of getting accurate conclusions. This study uses data validity techniques with source triangulation and triangulation techniques (Febriani et al., 2022; Oktavia et al., 2023). The use of triangulation here is intended so that researchers can review their findings by comparing sources, methods, or theories (Ashour, 2018; Campbell et al., 2020; Thompson, 2023). The validity of the data was observed through data triangulation between interviews and document analysis in the form of Regulation of the Minister of Religion No. 45 of 2006, Regulation of the Minister of Religion No. 11 of 2014, Regulation of the Minister of Religion No. 68 of 2015 and discussions between researchers. This research is expected to provide a deep understanding of leadership transformation at Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan and its implications for the management of higher education institutions in Indonesia.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Leadership Policy Before and After the Decree of the Minister of Religion No. 68 of 2015

In the election of candidates for the Rector/Chairman of State Islamic Universities, there are several changes to the requirements. One of the prominent changes is the change in the requirements for candidates for Rector/Chairman of Universitas Islam Negeri which initially had enough ranks as doctors and Head Lecturers as stated in the Regulation of the Minister of Religion No. 45 of 2006 (Menteri Agama, 2006) changing the requirements to become doctors and professors as stated in the Regulation of the Minister of Religion No. 11 of 2014 and Regulation of the Minister of Religion No. 68 of 2015 (Menteri Agama, 2014, 2015). The requirements for professors for university rector candidates under the Ministry of Religion can be said to be 'heavier' than for rector candidates at State Universities under the Ministry of Education and Culture (Abidin, 2022). Because based on Article 4 of the Regulation of the Minister of Research, Technology, and Higher Education Number 19 of 2017 concerning the Appointment and Dismissal of State University Leaders, it is emphasized that one of the requirements for university/institute rector candidates is a minimum of Head Lecturer.

Table 1. Comparison of Requirements for Candidates for Rectors/Chairmen of State Islamic Religious Universities

| | Regulation of the Minister of Religion No. 45 of 2006 | Regulation of the Minister of Religion No. 11 of 2014 | Regulation of the Minister of Religion No. 68 of 2015 |
|----------------------|--|--|---|
| Age | 61 years | 60 years | 60 years |
| Education | Strata tiga (S3) | Strata tiga (S3) | Strata tiga (S3) |
| Functional Positions | Head Lector | Head Lector (College/Institute) Professor (University) | Head Lector (College/Institute) Professor (University) |
| Minimal Experience | Rector Stoner, Dean, Head of Center, Assistant Dean, Head of Study Program, or a structural position equivalent to that position | Vice Chancellor, Vice Chairman, Dean, Director, Chairman of the Institution, or equivalent structural position | Head of Department or other designations for at least 2 years |

Table 2. Comparison of the Selection Process for Candidates for Rectors/Chairmen of State Islamic Religious Universities

| Regulation of the Minister of Religion No. 45 of 2006 | Regulation of the Minister of Religion No. 11 of 2014 | Regulation of the Minister of Religion No. 68 of 2015 |
|--|--|---|
| Each senate member elects 1 candidate for Rector (Article 2 letter d). | The Senate Meeting selects candidates for the Rector/Chairman behind closed doors. (Article 6 paragraph (2) letter a). | The Senate provides qualitative consideration of Chancellor/Chairman candidates in a closed manner including aspects of morality, leadership, managerial, academic competence, and cooperation networks. The instrument of qualitative consideration is determined by the Director General. Article 5 paragraph (2) |
| The Senate determines the candidate for Rector who gets the first, second, and third most votes. (Article 2 letter e). | The Senate Meeting selects candidates for Rector/Chairman based on the first, second, and third largest support from Senate members. (Article 6 paragraph (2) letter b). | The Selection Commission formed by the Minister of Religion with an odd number of at least 7 (seven) people conducts a propriety and feasibility test for candidates for Rector/Chairman. (Article 6 paragraphs (1), (2), and (3)) |
| The Senate proposes the results of the election (which obtains the first, second, and third most votes) to the Minister of Religious Affairs through the Director General of Islamic Education (Article 2 letter f). | The Rector/Chairman conveyed the results of the Senate meeting to the Minister of Religious Affairs. (Article 6 paragraph (3) letter c). | The selection commission submits candidates for the Rector/Chairman to the Minister a maximum of 3 (three) people. (Article 6 paragraph (4)). |

In contrast to the Regulation of the Minister of Religion 45/2006 and the Regulation of the Minister of Religion 11/2014, in the Regulation of the Minister of Religion 68/2015 the Senate no longer has the authority to choose candidates for Rector/Chairman but only provides qualitative consideration of candidates for Rector/Chairman in aspects of morality, leadership, managerial, academic competence, and cooperation networks. Actually, if it is observed based on the determination and appointment of the Rector/Chairman of Religious Universities, the Regulation of the Minister of Religion 45/2006, the Regulation of the Minister of Religion 11/2014, and the Regulation of the

Minister of Religion 68/2015 both give the authority to the Minister of Religion to appoint the Rector/Chairman. The only difference is the process in the previous stages.

In the Regulation of the Minister of Religion 45/2006 (Menteri Agama, 2006). The selection of the top three candidates was carried out by the Senate, the results then became a contest for the appointment of the Rector. In the Regulation of the Minister of Religion 11/2014 (Menteri Agama, 2014). The selection of the top three candidates was carried out by the Senate, the results became a consideration for the Position and Rank Consideration Agency (Baperjakat) which was then given to the Minister of Religion. Baperjakat only gives consideration, the final decision is on the Minister of Religion. Meanwhile, in PMA 68/2015 (Menteri Agama, 2015). The Senate tightened qualitative considerations, without determining the top three, then continued with a fit and proper test by the Selection Commission. The final decision remains with the Minister of Religion.

The purpose of the election of the Rector and Chairman of Religious Universities from those originally elected by the senate (Regulation of the Minister of Religion 45/2006) to be chosen by the Minister (Regulation of the Minister of Religion 68/2015) so that there is no polarization of the campus as happened on the campuses of the State Islamic Institute of Jambi, Pontianak, Kudus and Bangka Belitung etc., but in this regulation there are also weaknesses in the election system, many also say that this Regulation of the Minister of Religion there is a practice of buying and selling positions so that it creates new conflicts against the election of Rectors and Chairmen at Religious Universities (Epriza, 2022). In the case of the Regulation of the Minister of Religion regarding the election of rectors in Indonesia, each of the advantages and disadvantages certainly colors every existing system.

With the regulation on the Rector election system made by the Minister of Religion, the campus community has lost the right to vote, and also the Senate Council, which used to have the authority to determine and determine the Rector and Chairman, now no longer has the power to give the most votes to the Rector candidates to be elected. It is as if the Senate Council has no function in the election of the Rector and Chairman of Religious Universities because the one who determines the final result is the Minister of Religion.

Managers, Leaders, and Crackers in the Context of Higher Education

Leadership is a very important factor for the success of an educational institution (Hassan et al., 2018; Hong et al., 2021; Văcar & Miricescu, 2013). Although they both mean leaders, managers, leaders and crackers have their own differences and characteristics.

Manager

The terms management and leadership are often interchangeable. This happens because management activities, which include planning, leading, organizing, and controlling, are considered no different from leadership activities (Yudiatmaja, 2013). Management is the process of planning, organizing, leading and controlling the work of members of the organization/agency and using all the organization's resources to achieve the goals that have been set. Meanwhile, a manager is a person who is responsible for directing efforts aimed at helping the organization achieve its goals. The characteristic of manager leadership is a leader who is able to manage and carry out the administration and operations of educational institutions.

The functions of the manager himself include the ability to prepare programs, the ability to organize personnel, mobilize staff, the ability to optimize institutional power in the educational institution occupied (Schiuma

et al., 2024). Hollingsworth stated the basic things about managers, namely; 1) a manager does administration, 2) a manager maintains what exists, 3) a manager focuses on systems and structures, 4) a manager does supervision, 5) a manager sees things in detail (Yudiatmaja, 2013).

According to the book *Superior Islamic Education in the Era of Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Freedom of Learning*, the manager's job is to make plans, organize, implement, and make reports. The success of the management of the State Islamic University is largely determined by the managerial competence of its managers. To find out a person's managerial ability, it can be seen from his experience in managing institutions, for example, the ability to manage study programs, study centers, manage faculties, manage language development centers, Research and Community Service Institutes, manage postgraduate programs and manage universities (Gold *et al.*, 2001).

In order to carry out their roles and functions as managers, Islamic education leaders must have the right strategy to empower education personnel through cooperation or cooperation, provide opportunities for education personnel to improve their performance, and encourage the involvement of all education personnel in various activities that support the programs organized (King & Bouchard, 2011). A manager in an Islamic college is responsible for managing the administrative, operational, and financial aspects of an educational institution. Their duties include planning academic and non-academic activities, budget management, facility maintenance, and human resource management (Maujud, 2018). They ensure that all processes run smoothly in accordance with the policies and procedures that have been set.

Leader

The term leadership in terms of language, according to Veithzal Rivai, is leadership which comes from the word leader. The word leader appeared in the 1300s, while the word leadership appeared in the 1700s. This leadership theory and model is then based on 4 approaches, namely trait theory, behavioral personality theory, situational leadership theory, and the latest approach to leadership (Iskandar & Lubis, 2020).

The diverse definitions and concepts of leadership are found in various literature materials, each of which differs in its emphasis on meaning. Daft defines leadership as an influence that relates between leaders and followers. According to Andrew, leadership is an important dynamic force that motivates and coordinates the organization in order to achieve its goals (Iskandar & Lubis, 2020; Plowman *et al.*, 2007).

Referring to some of the definitions of leadership according to some of the experts above, it can be concluded that leadership is a process or a skill of a person in influencing others in order to get the same mission and direction in achieving an organizational goal (Iskandar & Lubis, 2020; Schiuma *et al.*, 2024). A leader carries out this process by applying his leadership qualities, namely his trust, values, ethics, character, knowledge, and proficiency (Crossan *et al.*, 2013; Marasan *et al.*, 2021). The implementation of the leader function emphasizes more on human interactions to influence the people led, find something new, carry out changes and updates (Oke *et al.*, 2009). The characteristic of a leader is a leader who has a vision and mission, and is able to invite and inspire others to carry out the vision and mission.

A leader in an Islamic university has a very important role in guiding, motivating, and providing direction to the campus community. They are responsible for building an inclusive academic culture, promoting Islamic values, and inspiring others to reach their highest potential. An effective leader

will shape a shared vision for the institution, facilitate collaboration, and create a conducive learning environment. Leaders tend to focus on developing relationships, coaching talent, and leading cultural change in college. They are responsible for creating a positive atmosphere and motivating staff and students to achieve common goals.

Cracker

Crackers or innovators bring innovation and positive change into educational institutions. They are responsible for identifying new opportunities, developing creative ideas, and implementing innovative solutions to improve the quality of education and learning experiences. With the spirit of innovation and creativity, crackers help Islamic educational institutions remain relevant and responsive to changes in the world of education. Crackers tend to focus on the creation and implementation of new ideas that can increase the effectiveness and relevance of educational institutions. They lead efforts to update and improve existing processes and practices in education. The characteristic of crackers is that they are innovative leaders, have creative ideas so that they can solve problems, turn trouble makers into power.

Of course, in the context of higher education, the roles of managers, leaders, and crackers are not limited to certain positions, but can also be carried out by individuals at various levels and work units in universities. The approach and leadership style that results from one leader to another varies based on the prevailing situational needs (Ansari et al., 2024). According to Rahawarin et al., (2021) based on the concept, nature, attitude, and ways in which the leader conducts and develops leadership activities in the work environment he leads, educational leadership can be classified into 4 types, namely:

First, authoritarian, that is, the leader acts as a dictator over the members of his group. It tends to be excessively domineering, easily igniting opposition or causing apathy. Second. Laissez-faire, i.e. the leader does not give his leadership, in other words he allows his subordinates to do what he wants. Because this type does not provide control and correction to his subordinates at all. In terms of dividing tasks, it is completely left to their subordinates without instructions or suggestions from the leader. So the success of an organization or institution is solely due to the awareness of group members, not because of the influence of leaders. In this case, it results in the unclear organizational structure.

Third, Democratic, namely leadership not as a dictator, but as a leader in the midst of its group members. Democratic leaders always try to stimulate their members to work productively to achieve the expected goals. Every action and effort is always based on the interests and needs of the group, and considers the capabilities of the group.

Fourth, pseudo-democracy/diplomatic manipulation, that is leaders who only appear to be democratic. For example, if a leader has an idea, thought, or concept that he wants to apply in the institution he leads, then it is discussed and discussed with his subordinates, but the situation is arranged and created in such a way that in the end the subordinates are urged to accept these ideas or ideas as a joint decision and a solution for future leadership.

The success of a leader in influencing and directing others to achieve goals is highly dependent on the leader's ability to create motivation in every subordinate, colleague or superior. For this reason, managers, leaders and crackers must be able to choose a leadership style that can make them and the people they lead comfortable so that a job will be done more optimally (Mahdiya et al., 2021).

The Impact of Government Regulations on Leadership Transformation in State Islamic Religious Universities

The Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan is one of the universities that has transformed itself from an Institute to a University based on Presidential Decree No. 131/2014 on October 16, 2014 and ratified by the 6th President of Indonesia, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (Perpres No. 131, 2014). As an institution under the auspices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, it is natural for the State Islamic Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan to follow and comply with all existing regulations like other universities. Although the regulation reaped pros and cons, it did not necessarily make the Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan ignore it, but instead carried it out with full wisdom.

One type of regulation set by the Ministry of Religion is related to the election of leadership at State Islamic Religious Universities which is regulated in the Regulation of the Minister of Religion. The regulation has undergone several changes, including; (1) Regulation of the Minister of Religion No. 45 of 2006 concerning Procedures for the Election of Rector, Vice Rector Candidates, Dean Candidates and Assistant Dean Candidates in the Institut Agama Islam Negeri and Universitas Islam Negeri (Menteri Agama, 2006); (2) Regulation of the Minister of Religion Number 4 of 2007 concerning Procedures for the Election of Chairman, Candidate for Assistant Chairman, Candidate for Head of Department and Candidate for Secretary of Department in the State Islamic Religious College; (3) Regulation of the Minister of Religion Number 11 of 2014 concerning the Appointment and Dismissal of Rectors and Chairmen at Religious Universities Organized by the Government (Menteri Agama, 2014); (4) Regulation of the Minister of Religion Number 68 of 2015 concerning the Appointment and Dismissal of Rectors and Chairmen at Religious Universities Organized by the Government (Menteri Agama, 2015); and the latest is (5) Regulation of the Minister of Religion Number 17 of 2021 concerning Amendments to the Regulation of the Minister of Religion Number 68 of 2015 concerning the Appointment and Dismissal of Rectors and Chairmen of Religious Universities Organized by the Government (Menteri Agama, 2021).

In this study, the focus of discussion is limited to Regulation 68 of 2015 and the previous regulation because the starting point for the change is in the Regulation of the Minister of Religion 68/2015, while the Regulation of the Minister of Religion 17/2021 is almost the same as the Regulation of the Minister of Religion 68/2015 but there is only a slight difference that is not. Based on the results of the researcher's interviews with several speakers at the Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan, both from students and lecturers, it is known that before 2015, the Rector was chosen by the Senate of the Institute or College. That way, the senate better understands the ability and science of its prospective rector, who will lead the university into its future, this is in line with what the author mentioned in the previous discussion regarding the procedure for selecting the Chairman/Rector of Religious Islamic Universities.

Based on the observations of the Resource Persons, all those who are elected as leaders and officials at the Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan can and are able to carry out their leadership in accordance with their fields of knowledge, experience and skills in leading. The advantage of leadership before 2015 before the Minister of Religion Regulation 68/2015 was enacted was that the leader led in accordance with his knowledge, leadership experience and skills in leading because the person who chose already had

certain criteria according to the decision of the University Senate. This is in line with what Qomar said that leaders must be selected through strict requirements to get a credible, most capable, and competent figure. It is also said that leaders have a great responsibility in controlling the organization, must be able to be a good example, block obstacles, overcome difficulties and be responsible for their leadership (Quinn & Spreitzer, 1999). Thus, leadership at the leader and cracker level will be achieved.

However, if you refer to the Regulation of the Minister of Religion No. 45 of 2006 and the Regulation of the Minister of Religion No. 11 of 2014, of course, legality is still commonplace, so that even though there are criteria that have been set, there is still a possibility that those who are close and familiar with the leader above them will get the first opportunity compared to those who do not have any closeness to the leader above them at all. This also happens in several other State Islamic Religious Universities in Indonesia, as stated in several previous studies (Abidin, 2022; Epriza, 2022).

Since 2015 until now, the Rector is no longer elected by the senate but directly by the ministry. Furthermore, the Rector determines other officials within the rectorate, deans to study programs. The difference that occurred was very significant. This can be seen from the absence of criteria that can determine who is the leader or official who will lead the entire leadership at the Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan, from the Rectorate, Dean to Study Program levels. There are even in the ranks of the Head of the Study Program and the Secretary of the Study Program who leads the Study Program without the background of the Rodi, if you look at the ability, knowledge and experience of being a leader is still a junior while there are still some people who are more suitable to occupy the position but are not given the trust to hold it.

There is a tendency for leaders or officials to be people who have a close relationship with the Rector and Dean, not because of their ability and experience as leaders. The impact of the lack of knowledge, experience and leadership ability results in decision-making and the activities carried out, especially at the operational level of leadership in the Study Program which will have a direct effect on the lecture and accreditation process of the Study Program.

However, if there is a problem, a way must be sought, it cannot forever drag on in a sense of helplessness. The step that needs to be taken is to select and appoint leaders objectively based on scientific abilities about what they lead, leadership experience and managerial skills in leading. It is permissible for the Ministry to appoint the Rector, but the Rector still chooses by appointing people who will join his leadership by paying attention to their abilities not only legality or proximity and the possibility of reciprocal reciprocity.

Regarding the ability to carry out leadership at the Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan, based on data obtained by the researcher from the speakers, all speakers who work as lecturers agreed that the best transformation period of the State Islamic University of North Sumatra was during the leadership of Alm. Prof. Dr. Nur Ahmad Fadhil Lubis, MA. He has been the Rector of the Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan since 2010. He is the Rector who brought the North Sumatra State Islamic Institute to become the State Islamic University of North Sumatra in 2015. His efforts in making the Institut Agama Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara into Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan were not easy. He tried to make the integration of knowledge accepted among the academic community even though he had been accused of liberalism, he established a relationship with

the Islamic Development Bank to receive financial support for the development of the Institut Agama Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara. Luck approached, financing the transformation of the State Islamic Institute into a State Islamic University and receiving assistance from the Islamic Development Bank.

For his efforts, the Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan was also built with the addition of the Faculty of Economics and Business, the procurement of language laboratories whose funds were insufficient, finally he established a relationship with the state of Saudi Arabia to ask for help. So that a laboratory was built on campus II of the Institut Agama Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara from the waqf group of Saudi Arabian ambassadors through the Saudi Arabian Embassy, and there are still more of his services that the author cannot mention. For the alumni of the Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan to become lecturers at the place, Prof. Dr. Nur Ahmad Fadhil Lubis, MA is said to be a very charismatic and respected person. So based on these things, the author categorizes him as a leader with a cracker spirit. Leaders who are innovative, have creative ideas so that they can solve problems, turning trouble makers into power.

As for the leadership at the Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan after the Regulation of the Minister of Religion 68/2015, it categorizes it as a leader with a leader spirit because of his ability to guide, motivate, and provide direction to the campus community. He has a vision and mission and is able to guide people in carrying out the vision and mission.

Transformational Strategy Towards a World Class University

According to Ambrose King and Mohrman in Farid Fauzi, a World Class University is a university that has human resources who regularly publish their research results in the top journals in their respective disciplines (Vogel, 2012). Getting to a world-class university is not an easy thing, but it is also not impossible. As Altbach said in Wiji Suwarno that, "For most countries, even large and relatively wealthy ones, only one or two world-class universities are possible or even desirable. For many countries, a world-class university is beyond the ability of the nation to support". The problem lies in what strengths must be possessed by Higher Education in order to enter the realm of this World Class University, because the assessment is quite difficult.

In an effort to achieve the status of a World Class University, State Islamic Religious Universities, such as the Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan, need to implement an integrated transformational strategy. First, strengthening transformational leadership is very important. Transformational leaders use their extraordinary charisma to motivate employees and subordinates and meet their emotional needs, so that as a result employees are able to think beyond themselves and work to build a good team (Lee et al., 2023). This leadership must create an inspiring and clear long-term vision, encourage innovation, and increase the involvement of various stakeholders, including the academic community and external parties such as governments, industry, and the international community (Saif et al., 2024).

In addition, reform in the selection process and leadership qualifications is also crucial. Changing the requirements for prospective rectors from only needing a doctoral degree and the position of Head Lector to a doctoral degree and professor is a good first step. However, the selection process must be transparent and meritocracy-based to reduce nepotism and increase the participation of the academic community. The establishment of an independent selection commission, made up of various stakeholders, can enhance the credibility and accountability of this process.

Academic and research capacity building is the next strategy. Investments in modern educational and research facilities, such as laboratories and research centers, are essential. With adequate facilities, the productivity of research conducted by lecturers and students can be maximized. Therefore, in order for Islamic Universities to have research credibility that can be justified in their validity, originality, methods and issues, the efforts that must be made by Islamic Universities are a. State Islamic Religious Universities make benchmarking of research standards (research direction and research process); b. validation of research results conducted by lecturers and students; c. examining the originality of research conducted by lecturers and students; d. the outcome of the research must be applied to the community; e. research that is a high reference index for researchers. In addition, collaborating with universities and international research institutions can improve education and research standards and provide global exposure to lecturers and students.

Effective management and governance are also key elements in a transformational strategy. Successful leaders must be able to combine the roles of manager, leader, and cracker. As a manager, you should focus on efficient administrative and operational management to support academic activities. As a leader, you must be able to develop a strategic vision and motivate the entire academic community to achieve common goals. As a cracker, drive innovation and positive change through creative approaches and innovative solutions to the challenges facing the institution. The transformation towards a World Class University requires a comprehensive and integrated strategy, focusing on strengthening transformational leadership, reforming the leadership selection process, developing academic and research capacity, and effective management. By implementing these strategies, State Islamic Religious Universities such as the Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan can improve the quality of education and research, as well as compete at the global level.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the implementation of the Regulation of the Minister of Religion No. 68 of 2015 has brought significant changes in the requirements and selection process for candidates for Rector/Chairman at State Islamic Universities. The new requirements that require candidates to have a doctoral degree and the position of Professor tighten the selection criteria compared to the previous regulations. In addition, the shift from the dominance of the Senate in the selection process to the role of the Selection Commission formed by the Minister of Religion shows a major change in the dynamics of leadership in State Islamic Religious Universities. These changes, although aimed at improving the quality of leadership, raised several issues, such as reduced participation of the academic community in the selection process and increased potential for personal closeness in the appointment of officials. This affects the internal dynamics and overall performance of the institution.

This research makes an important contribution to the understanding of leadership transformation in Islamic Religious Universities and offers a more adaptive leadership model to regulatory changes, which can be used to strengthen the management and management of religious higher education institutions in Indonesia towards a World Class University. Subsequent researchers may consider comparative studies with other universities that have similar characteristics to gain a more comprehensive perspective. In addition, this study can be followed by quantitative analysis to measure the impact of

regulations more objectively and broadly.

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