



EXTERNAL CONDITIONS AND SWOT ANALYSIS FOR SHARIA ECONOMICS MASTER'S PROGRAM

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Abstract

This research aimed to comprehensively measure the quality of education within the Master's Program in Sharia Economics at UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan. The goal was to identify its strengths and weaknesses for future planning and development. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed. Informants included all program stakeholders: leaders, lecturers, staff, and students. The research took place over one semester (six months) at the university. The validity of the findings was ensured through data and source triangulation and member checks. The results indicate that the Master's Program in Sharia Economics is progressing toward becoming a nationally competitive institution in developing science and technology, aligned with the vision of UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid. This is evident from its national-scale performance and the integration of local wisdom and Indonesian values. Key findings show that curriculum documents are well-structured, and the integration of lecturer research and community service into courses has been implemented, though it requires further refinement. The program's success is driven by consistently applying the Determination, Implementation, Evaluation, Control, and Improvement (DI^EP) stages across all services. However, program management faces several internal weaknesses and external challenges (as discussed in the SWOT analysis). Based on this analysis, the program is expected to define strategic improvements to maximise its contribution to the broader community.

Keywords: *Sharia Economics; Education Quality Measurement; Stakeholder*

A. Introduction

Discourse on gratitude or being grateful is always a hot topic of discussion. This is because gratitude seems easy when it is only expressed in words, but in practice it seems like a very difficult task. In applying gratitude, Implementing a unified regional economy demands rigorous effort, both internally from each member state and regionally, to uphold joint commitments (Farrell, 2005). The involvement of all parties across ASEAN member countries is crucial to ensure that efforts to establish ASEAN as a competitive region for investment and free trade ultimately benefit all members.

Southeast Asian nations, collectively known as ASEAN, are entering a new era of economic and trade integration as the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). The AEC is designed to strengthen various sectors, primarily as a defence mechanism against global economic shocks. The initiative seeks a stable, prosperous, and highly competitive region characterised by balanced economic growth and reduced poverty and socioeconomic disparities (Bruni, 2013). This policy had been planned for some time. However, its implementation was expedited by the urgent need for enhanced bilateral cooperation and the strengthening of ASEAN member states against competition from foreign products.

While the AEC presents significant opportunities, promising to bolster regional political stability and security, increase overall competitiveness in the global market, stimulate economic growth, reduce poverty, and improve the standard of living for its population (Luxchaigul et al., 2016), the Indonesian public must also acknowledge potential risks. Concerns exist that the AEC could foster a predatory "survival of the fittest" economic culture, where the strong overpower the weak (Jailani et al., 2022).

As a participant in the AEC integration, Indonesia must capitalise on this era of increased freedom. The Indonesian economy, including the Sharia economic and banking industry, must maintain robust growth to support regional competitiveness (Kahf, 2022). Concerns that foreign

competitors might seize the domestic market are prevalent but are arguably unfounded, provided Indonesia demonstrates high competitiveness. As the country with the world's largest Muslim population, Indonesia is uniquely positioned to be the pioneer and a global hub for the development of Sharia industry and finance. This potential is immense, and by leveraging the education sector that focuses on Sharia finance and banking, Indonesia can compete effectively within the AEC. Nevertheless, opportunities are accompanied by threats that could impede strengthening the Islamic finance and banking industry, a vital pillar of the Indonesian economy (Harahap, 2017).

Based on the evidence presented, the necessity of conducting a SWOT Analysis is apparent. SWOT analysis systematically identifies various internal and external factors used to formulate strategies for implementing Sharia economics education in the Master's Program in Sharia Economics at UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan. The underlying logic is maximising strengths and opportunities while minimising weaknesses and threats.

The modern concept of Islamic economic education extends beyond classroom instruction, encompassing all aspects of character building, knowledge enhancement, skills development, and values that shape individuals into better human beings (Adinugraha, 2021). Education is fundamentally a systematic process of transmitting knowledge, skills, values, and norms to the next generation (Musthofiyah et al., 2021). In this context, Islamic economic education plays a critical role in shaping personality and fostering understanding of the surrounding world (Lestari et al., 2021).

The program has continually intensified the curriculum implementation based on the Indonesian National Qualifications Framework. Demands from society and graduate users for the scientific relevance of the program, particularly in light of advances in science and technology and the dynamics of modern society, are actively discussed.

This ensures that development strategies are responsive and alumni competencies can compete successfully in the professional world.

The Postgraduate Program at UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan manages the Master's Program in Sharia Economics. It boasts professional and qualified lecturers, including several faculty members holding Doctoral degrees and occupying academic positions such as Lector and Associate Professor. These adequate human resources are expected to deliver learning services that meet national Higher Education standards, including comprehensive guidance for student theses. With high service standards, the program aims to produce quality graduates with strong insight and extensive professional networks who can make meaningful contributions to the progress of Sharia Economics in Indonesia.

The program aligns its objectives with the vision and mission of the UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Postgraduate Program. Its scientific vision is to become a leading and competitive Master's Program in developing creative and innovative Sharia economics focused on Islamic financial institution management with an Indonesian perspective at the national level by 2036. The program's mission includes: a. Providing professional, superior, and accountable higher education in Sharia economics integrated with technology; b. Executing professional and innovative Islamic financial institution management processes in adherence to Sharia principles; c. Implementing a creative and innovative quality management service system within Sharia financial institutions and developing scientific partnerships and communication in Islamic financial institution management at local, national, regional, and international levels and optimising the role of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education to produce competent Sharia Economics Masters graduates (UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, 2023a).

Given this background, this research aims explicitly to describe the external conditions of the Master's Program in Sharia Economics at UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan and analyse them using the SWOT framework. The primary benefit of this research is providing a precise

description of the significance and urgency of Sharia economic education within Indonesia's state religious education institutions.

B. Method

This study adopted a descriptive qualitative research design aimed at obtaining an in-depth understanding of institutional and academic practices within the Master's Program in Sharia Economics at UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan. A qualitative approach was selected to capture social realities, perceptions, and experiences of academic stakeholders in their natural setting. The research was conducted at the Master's Program in Sharia Economics, located at Jl. Kusuma Bangsa No. 9, Pekalongan, Central Java, Indonesia, over the course of one academic semester (approximately six months). The research subjects were determined using purposive sampling, involving key stakeholders who possessed direct knowledge and experience relevant to the research objectives. These informants included program leaders, lecturers, administrative staff, and enrolled students.

Data were collected through multiple techniques, namely in-depth semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and document analysis (such as curriculum documents, academic guidelines, and institutional reports). The use of multiple data collection methods enabled a comprehensive exploration of the research focus and strengthened data richness. Data analysis was carried out iteratively and inductively, following the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, as proposed by Miles and Huberman. Throughout the analytical process, the researcher continuously compared emerging patterns and themes across data sources to ensure analytical rigor. To ensure the trustworthiness of the research findings, several validation strategies were employed, including data triangulation, source triangulation, and member checking. Credibility was further enhanced through prolonged engagement in the research field and reflective interpretation of the data.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Results

The establishment of the UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan Postgraduate Program (PPs) represents an effort to enhance high-level educational services. The goal is to produce graduates who are competent in Islamic knowledge and professional and socially responsible for transforming Muslim communities, particularly along Java's northern coast and throughout Indonesia. Following extensive efforts by the formation team since 2009, the PPs were officially authorised to open and admit new students in late 2011, as stipulated by Decree No. Dj.I/1813/2011 dated December 15, 2011. The Directorate of Islamic Higher Education entrusted UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan to immediately manage two Master's programs: Islamic Religious Education and Family Law. Operations began in 2012, drawing significant public interest (UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, 2023a).

To meet the increasing demand for human resources and respond to widespread public interest, PPs UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan was again entrusted in 2020 to manage two new Master's programs: the Sharia Economics Master's Study Program (Operational Permit Decree No. 199 of 2020) and the Madrasah Ibtidaiah Teacher Education Master's Study Program (Operational Permit Decree No. 189 of 2020), both enacted on March 9, 2020 (UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, 2023c).

A self-evaluation of the Sharia Economics Master's Program reveals notable strengths that must be maintained, alongside recognised weaknesses that pose challenges for future educational improvement. Overcoming these requires internal collaboration, hard work from PPs staff, and essential external support from various stakeholders, partners, and the wider community. Leveraging these strengths and addressing the weaknesses catalyses continuous improvement in educational quality and governance. The program aims to achieve its vision: to become a leading and competitive Master's Program in the creative and innovative development of Sharia economics, focusing on managing Sharia financial

institutions with an Indonesian perspective at the national level by 2036 (UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, 2023b).

Regarding governance and cooperation, the program consistently enhances its quality assurance system. Ambiguities in regulations are swiftly resolved through comprehensive socialisation to ensure legal certainty and clear guidance for the academic community. Partnership relations with external parties, including local government and the private sector, are being actively developed and expanded. Existing collaborations at the local, national, and international levels, formalised through MoUs, are continually maintained and implemented, with future goals centred on professionalism and expanding outreach to stakeholders across various relevant fields.

Since its launch in 2020, the program management has strived to optimise the learning process to prepare graduates with high Grade Point Averages and study durations that align with the curriculum. A critical area for improvement among prospective graduates is Arabic and English language proficiency. Evaluation of Arabic-based courses and the current average TOEFL score (around 400) indicates that language skills need significant enhancement. The program addresses this by facilitating a language matriculation program and requiring lecturers to utilise foreign language literature, including classical al-turats texts and English scientific journals, in their teaching and thesis supervision (Yuwono, 2019). Regarding Human Resources (HR), all lecturers meet the Lector/Associate Professor academic ranks and possess teaching certificates. The program also encourages support staff to pursue higher education and competency development.

Curriculum implementation consistently aligns with the Indonesian National Qualifications Framework (KKNI) (Hendrawan & Kandriasari, 2023). Program development is an ongoing discussion considering societal demands and user needs regarding scientific relevance, technological advancements, and modern dynamics. This ensures that alum competencies remain competitive in the job market. The curriculum encompasses planning, implementation, and evaluation, structured with

main, supporting, and other competencies to achieve institutional goals (Aruan et al., 2021). Its continuous review ensures alignment with the institution's vision/mission and optimises learning.

Financing for the Sharia Economics Master's Program currently relies on state budget (APBN) funding, specifically from Non-Tax State Revenue (PNBP) and DIPA funds. Plans involve enhancing mutually beneficial cooperation with various institutions to diversify funding. Existing facilities and infrastructure require additions and expansion due to increasing public interest. Practical laboratories, including the Mini Bank, Falak Science, Language, Computer, and Judicial labs, are available and continually equipped through institutional assistance and APBN funds. However, the quantity of equipment and room size must be increased to facilitate smoother practical implementation. The library, a key supporting facility, offers internet access but requires a greater quantity of literature, scientific journal collections, and the development of e-journals to enrich its services.

Regarding research and community service (Tri Dharma), the quality and quantity of lecturers' research have increased annually, with students frequently involved. Research quality is reinforced by a requirement for output to be published in reputable journals. Student academic and non-academic achievements are substantial, reflecting the maximised outcomes of the program. The learning process integrates lecturer research and community service results, using them as case studies and lecture references (Hakim et al., 2020). Finally, a conducive academic atmosphere is fostered through adequate facilities (like widespread internet connectivity) and regular internal activities, such as scientific discussion forums between and among lecturers and students, field trips, and academic benchmarking activities.

2. Discussion

a. The Sharia Economics Master's Program Profile

Postgraduate studies at UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan officially commenced in 2011. This was based on the Decree of the Director General of Islamic Education No. DJ. I/1813/2011, which authorised the establishment of two initial Master's programs: Islamic Family Law and Islamic Religious Education. The first batch of new students was accepted in the 2012/2013 Academic Year. Dr Makrum, M.Ag, served as the inaugural Postgraduate Director, assisted by Dr Imam Kanafi, M.Ag, as Assistant Director. Both original programs received BAN-PT accreditation on December 27, 2018 (UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, 2023d).

In 2020, the Ministry of Religious Affairs entrusted the Postgraduate Program with two new programs. The first was the Master's Program in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Teacher Education, authorised by the Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia No. 189, dated March 20, 2020. The second was the Master's Program in Sharia Economics, authorised by the Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia No. 199, also dated March 20, 2020. Subsequently, in 2021, the Postgraduate Program at UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan was granted permission to establish a Master's Program in Arabic Language Education, based on the Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia No. 761 of 2021 (Sun et al., 2020).

The vision of the UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan Postgraduate Program is to become a leading and competitive Postgraduate Program in developing Islamic science and technology with an Indonesian perspective at the national level by 2036. Its mission is to provide education to produce masters who have spiritual intelligence, breadth of knowledge, loyalty to Indonesianness, independence, and pioneering in life; developing science, technology, and art through research for the interests of Indonesia and humanity at the postgraduate level; pioneer and take an active role in strengthening and empowering the community; and carrying out postgraduate institutional governance in a professional, transparent and accountable manner to achieve the

satisfaction of the academic community and stakeholders (Magister Ekonomi Syariah UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, 2023).

The aim is to produce graduates who have spiritual intelligence, breadth of knowledge, loyalty to Indonesianness, independence, and pioneering; development of science and technology with an Indonesian perspective through research; the formation of a strong and empowered society in national and state life; and the implementation of professional, transparent and accountable institutional governance to achieve the satisfaction of the academic community and stakeholders. (Hasani et al., 2021).

The strategy is to implement and develop a curriculum that focuses on competencies that make spiritual aspects, breadth of knowledge, loyalty to Indonesianness, independence and pioneering in life as a framework for scientific development and paradigm; developing Islamic, open and progressive, inclusive insight and developing critical-constructive awareness; improving the quality of educational research through research methodology training and writing research results in nationally and internationally accredited journals; promote research results of lecturers and students at national and international levels; involving stakeholders in community empowerment efforts; facilitating academics in community empowerment activities; prepare regulations regarding effective and efficient Postgraduate governance standards; increasing the performance of all academics and employees; developing academic information services to support quality lectures; prepare regulations regarding postgraduate governance standards that are effective and efficient; developing academic information services to support quality lectures; and developing institutional networks (Poedjiastutie et al., 2018).

The values of the Master of Sharia Economics Study Program are spirituality, science, exemplary, integrity, justice, Indonesian-ness, togetherness, transparency, and entrepreneurship. (Magister Ekonomi Syariah UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, 2023).

The Scientific Vision of the Sharia Economics Master's Study Program is to become a leading and competitive Master's Study Program

in the development of creative and innovative Sharia economics in the field of managing Indonesian-oriented Sharia financial institutions at the national level by 2036 (UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, 2023b).

b. The Application of SWOT Analysis Considering Macro External Factors

In the macro environment, the external conditions of the political, economic, policy, social, cultural, scientific, and technological developments outside the UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan environment (Kim et al., 2021) Illustrate the dynamics and impact of each sector, both directly and indirectly, on the development of the UIN K. H. Postgraduate Program. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan and the Sharia Economics Master's Study Program. More details are described in the following table:

Table 1. SWOT Analysis of Macro External Conditions

| Aspect | Opportunity | Threats |
|-----------|---|---|
| Political | <p>Conducive political conditions in Indonesia influence the development of education because politics and education are two interrelated things. Politics is a reference for the implementation of education. The implementation of education in Indonesia is regulated in Article 29 of the 1945 Constitution, including its amendments.</p> <p>Economic development, especially Sharia economics, cannot be separated from a country's political conditions and policies. As evidence, the presence of the National Sharia Economic and Financial Committee (KNEKS), the Halal Product Guarantee Organising Agency (BPJPH), and the OJK Deputy for Sharia Banks is a political product/decision.</p> | <p>The existence of new universities in the Pekalongan area and surrounding areas that provide postgraduate-level education increases competition student</p> |

| Aspect | Opportunity | Threats |
|---------|---|---|
| Economy | <p>Therefore, from a political perspective, the development of the Sharia Economics Study Program in Indonesia has enormous opportunities.</p> <p>Stable economic conditions have an impact on increasing people's per capita income. The increase in per capita income is a reflection of improvements in the economic welfare of society. The essence of economic development is to create GNP (Gross National Product) growth. GNP growth is shown by increasing the quality of education, increasing agricultural income, and decreasing poverty rates (Saraswati et al., 2021).</p> <p>The Central Statistics Agency (BPS) recorded Indonesia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita at USD 3,927 or around IDR 56 million per capita per year. (https://finance.detik.com/berita-ekonomi-bisnis/d-4415935/pendapatan-per-kapita-ri-naik-jadi-rp-56-juta-pertahun).</p> <p>These two things are an opportunity for the institution providing higher education, the Sharia Economics Master's Study Program at UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, in terms of institutional development. The increase in per capita income of the population and UMK every year provides opportunities for the community, especially parents, to continue their children's education to a higher level.</p> | Threats in the economic sector, in 2019, the world experienced the threat of a recession due to negative economic growth in several countries. It is feared that this matter could directly or indirectly hinder the research process or the interests of prospective students. |

| Aspect | Opportunity | Threats |
|---------------------|--|---|
| Policy | <p>Policies regarding scholarships, Student Creativity Programs, research grants, and community service for lecturers.</p> <p>Institutional changes from STAIN Becoming an IAIN can boost the institutional image and public interest</p> <p>In continuing his studies at UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan. IAIN plans to become a UIN</p> <p>To increase the community's trust in UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan.</p> | <p>The emergence of the Minister of Research, Technology and Higher Education Regulation Number 53 of 2018 concerning Foreign Universities is a threat in itself to the development of study programs in Indonesia in general and the Sharia Economics Master's Study Program at UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan in recruiting prospective new students.</p> <p>Scientific research and community empowerment results are published in journals within IAIN.</p> <p>Pekalongan has not been fully utilised as a reference for policymaking for the leadership of UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan.</p> |
| Social and Cultural | <p>Many job opportunities in the Sharia economics sector require applicants to be university graduates. Also, prospective workers and/or employees with a master's academic qualification will have added value for their future career development.</p> <p>High public awareness of education is also an opportunity for the Study Program.</p> | <p>The competition from other universities in the Pekalongan area and surrounding areas also threatens the quantity and quality of prospective students.</p> <p>For certain groups of people, fanaticism regarding college selection is very high. This fanaticism also poses a threat to the development</p> |

| Aspect | Opportunity | Threats |
|------------------------|--|---|
| | The presence of the Sharia Economics Master's study program can increase public literacy in Sharia economics and finance. This can change people's culture in social life, especially in Sharia economic awareness and behaviour. | of the Study Program. Many prospective students choose universities based on the groups or organisations they have previously joined. |
| Science and Technology | The development of Science and Technology contributes to providing opportunities for institutional development. The development of science and technology provides opportunities for developing e-learning-based learning processes. | |

Source: Qualitative analysis results, 2025.

c. SWOT Analysis: An Assessment Rooted in Micro-External Factors

On a micro level, the analysis includes various aspects such as competitors, graduate employers, sources of prospective students and lecturers, educational staff, e-learning and distance education programs, open courseware, the needs of industry/business and society, and existing partners and alliances (Shangguan et al., 2020). These details are further elaborated in the following table:

Table 2. SWOT Analysis of Micro External Conditions

| Aspect | Opportunity | Threats |
|------------|---|---|
| Competitor | Postgraduate at UIN K.H. Wahid Pekalongan | Similar study programs in Abdurrahman and the |

| Aspect | Opportunity | Threats |
|----------------|--|---|
| | <p>Pekalongan is the only religious college in the state of Islam in the former Pekalongan residency area. Through the vision and mission of the Study Program Master of Islamic Economics Postgraduate UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, there is an excellent opportunity for the Study Program to become a superior study program in developing science that is integrated with Islamic values and has an Indonesian outlook.</p> | <p>surrounding areas have the same program.</p> |
| Graduate Users | <p>Users of UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan Postgraduate graduates come from educational and non-educational fields. In the economic sector, the rapid development of financial institutions and Sharia business provides opportunities for graduates of the Sharia economics master's study program to obtain employment. In the non-education sector, graduates of the UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan Postgraduate Program also have the opportunity to work as entrepreneurs, banking employees, Sharia financial institution employees, consultants, private employees, and others. This is based on the graduate profile that each study program at the Postgraduate</p> | <p>It is recorded that in the nearby area of Pekalongan and its surroundings, there are more than 10 universities, and 2 of them have similar study programs.</p> <p>Graduate users vote college already famous, bona fide, and superior.</p> |

| Aspect | Opportunity | Threats |
|----------------------------------|--|---|
| Source of Prospective Students | <p>Program at UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan has formulated.</p> <p>Sources of prospective students for the Master of Sharia Economics Study Program at UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan come from various circles without distinguishing between ethnic, religious, racial, and customary elements (culture) as long as they fulfil the requirements to become new students at the Master of Sharia Economics Study Program at UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, in particular and generally at the Postgraduate Program at UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan.</p> <p>The strategic location between the East and West regions makes UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan one of the institutes used as students' study destinations.</p> | <p>The source of prospective students only comes from the Pekalongan, Pemalang, Batang, and Tegal regions.</p> <p>Pekalongan's location is close to a big city, so it is possible that College students in big cities, namely in the West, choose IAIN Cirebon and UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, meanwhile, the Eastern region chooses UIN Walisongo and several other Islamic universities.</p> |
| Source for Prospective Lecturers | <p>The admission selection system and strict lecturers give postgraduates lecturers of superior quality and are highly competitive.</p> | <p>Failure to fulfil the quota for prospective lecturers in certain formations, for example, cum laude formations from A-accredited study programs.</p> |

| Aspect | Opportunity | Threats |
|--|---|--|
| Sources of Educational Personnel | Prospective lecturers who come from the Strict CPNS selection system and come from bona fide colleges and quality make the Postgraduate program an Excellent postgraduate program. Prospective educational staff in the Master of Sharia Economics Study Program at UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan come from graduates of at least S1. Specifically for laboratory assistants and librarians, diplomas must be relevant to their field. | Lecturers prefer to work at the institute or at more bona fide universities. Sources of educational staff, most of whom come from the area around Pekalongan. |
| E-Learning | The lecture system or academics already utilise e-learning | Lack of reliable computer/IT for practitioners to manage the web or internet-based learning |
| World needs business/industry and public | Most of the staff are lecturers. Postgraduates are still young, energetic, and clever in using technology in education and teaching. | |
| Partner | The many needs of the institution, educational and non-educational, towards graduates, Master of Sharia Economics | The needs of the business world and Today's industry demand people to think creatively to create business opportunities themselves, so not only waiting to apply work Still working with partners a little around the area of Pekalongan. |

| Aspect | Opportunity | Threats |
|----------|---|---|
| Alliance | <p>partner to develop study programs for postgraduate studies.</p> <p>Expanding partnership with institutions in the field of research at the National and Asian levels in Southeast Asia.</p> <p>UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Postgraduate Program, Pekalongan, is already cooperating with other countries, so there is a chance to spread wings internationally.</p> | Program development partners' studies required by graduate users are still limited. |

Source: Qualitative analysis results, 2025.

d. Development Strategy Analysis for Enhancing Institutional Competitiveness

The following table outlines the development strategy for the UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan Postgraduate Study Program and the Master's Program in Sharia Economics, which aims to generate appropriate alternative development programs.

Table 3. Development strategy

| Strategy | Alternative solution | Problem solved |
|---|--|---|
| Emphasising the excellence of the Study Program in terms of the innovative creative economy as a distinguishing feature from similar Study Programs in other universities | Providing courses on creative economic development strategy and Sharia innovation management as core subjects | The presence of similar study programs in Pekalongan and the surrounding areas, which have the same study program |
| Require a collaborative research program for lecturers and students | Students involved in lecturer-student research collaborations are asked to conduct research for their thesis from the research section | The results of scientific work and community empowerment research published in journals within UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Striving for decentralised (autonomous) academic management of Study Programs so that academic services to lecturers and students will be more effective and efficient | System changes academic management, integrated and online | Pekalongan have not been fully utilised as a reference for policy-making for the leadership of UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan |
| Building partnerships with the ASEAN Cooperative Organisation related to economic activities | Providing opportunities for Sharia Economics lecturers and master's students to have direct experience related to real economic development in the field | Academic management: The study program is still in progress, centralised or less autonomous |

Source: Qualitative analysis results, 2025.

Based on the research conducted, which included an assessment of external conditions and a SWOT analysis, the Master's Program in Sharia Economics at UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan exhibits a learning process characterised by being interactive, holistic, integrative, scientific, contextual, thematic, practical, collaborative, and student-centred.

The program's learning centres on the interaction among lecturers, students, learning resources, and the learning environment. Instructional formats include lectures, responses and tutorials, seminars, research, and community service (Xing & Maia, 2022). The methods employed are group discussions, simulations, case studies, collaborative, cooperative, project-based, and problem-based learning. The process adheres to a predefined semester learning plan, meeting the necessary characteristics for a high-quality learning environment (Bogaert et al., 2023).

Standard Achievement Strategy

The program's strategy for achieving its objectives is structured around the following actions: a. Curriculum Review: Periodically reviewing the curriculum (every 4-5 years) to align it with the demands of the job market and stakeholder interests, b. Academic Guidebook: Providing a comprehensive academic guidebook, c. Service and Discipline: Ensuring excellent service and strict discipline in learning, per the established curriculum. Infrastructure: Completing and optimising infrastructure, learning resources, and media to facilitate learning outcomes, etc. Soft Skill Enhancement: Conducting workshops, field trips, and academic benchmarking to improve students' soft skills. Assessment: Carrying out programmed and formal examinations as part of the assessment process, etc. Monitoring and Feedback: Study program and supervisor monitoring, coupled with opportunities for students to provide feedback to enhance learning quality. Research Integration: Integrating the lecturer's research and community service results into the learning process, I. Matriculation: Implementing a matriculation program to ensure students meet minimum Arabic and/or English proficiency standards.

These strategies are further divided into specific short, medium-, and long-term goals:

Graduate Quality: Producing high-quality Master's (S2) Sharia Economics graduates, indicated by an average student GPA of 3.00 each semester. Research Output: Producing at least four research and lecturer service titles annually in education. Collaboration: Cooperation with various parties to develop and implement education, research, and community service. Governance: Implementing sound, autonomous study program governance that supports the academic community in carrying out the Tri Dharma of Higher Education.

Graduate Quality: Producing high-quality Master's (S2) Sharia Economics graduates specialising in their field, with an average graduate GPA of 3.10. Research Output: Producing at least six research and lecturer service titles annually in education. Collaboration: (Same as Short-Term Goal 3), Governance: (Same as Short-Term Goal 4).

Graduate Quality: Producing Master's (S2) Sharia Economics graduates with specialisation in their field, with quality indicators including: (a) average graduate GPA of 3.20; and (b) average length of study of eight semesters. Research Output: Producing at least eight research and lecturer service titles annually in education. Collaboration: (Same as Short-Term Goal 3), Governance: (Same as Short-Term Goal 4).

D. Conclusion

Based on the overall findings and analytical synthesis, this research concludes that the Sharia Economics Master's Program at UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan has successfully established itself as a promising academic entity within Indonesia's Islamic higher education landscape. The program aligns with the university's vision of developing creative and innovative Sharia economics rooted in Indonesian values. Its governance structure, curriculum design, and research and community engagement integration consistently apply the DIEP (Determination, Implementation, Evaluation, and Improvement) framework, contributing to measurable progress in academic quality and stakeholder satisfaction. However, the SWOT analysis reveals that external challenges persist while internal strengths—such as competent human resources, well-structured curriculum, and growing research productivity—form a solid foundation. These include increasing competition from similar programs, limited infrastructure expansion, and the need for stronger international collaborations.

Academically, this study reinforces the theoretical perspective that sustainable program development in Islamic economics education requires synergy between internal capacity building and responsiveness to macro- and micro-external conditions. It also offers a new practical insight: institutional resilience in Islamic higher education depends on academic excellence and adaptive strategies that integrate socio-political, economic, and technological dynamics. Thus, the program's strategic direction must continuously balance innovation with tradition, ensuring its graduates are

globally competitive and locally grounded.

Future research should further explore the dynamics of institutional competitiveness among Islamic higher education programs through comparative and longitudinal studies. Expanding the variables to include digital learning ecosystems, international accreditation mechanisms, and cross-border academic collaborations would provide deeper insights into how Sharia economics education can evolve within the rapidly transforming global educational landscape. This study ultimately contributes to the broader discourse on enhancing Islamic economic education as a pillar of sustainable human development in the Muslim world.

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