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Unraveling the Strategic Roadmap to Achieve World-Class Status in Indonesia's Islamic Universities: A Comparative Study

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Mohamad Agung Rokhimawan

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga,
Yogyakarta,
Indonesia

Abstract

This paper aims to design programs at Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University (UIN Sunan Kalijaga) towards achieving the status of a World-Class University (WCU). This paper applies qualitative methods by comparing Gadjah Mada University (UGM) and Sebelas Maret University (UNS). Both have already earned the distinction of being a World-Class University and are currently ranked within the top 500 universities globally. The research findings reveal that UGM possesses a clear vision and mission, positioning itself as a pioneer in pursuing WCU status. UGM has formulated strategies encompass elements such as brand equity, data integration, and internationalization of academic departments. Similarly, UNS has established a vision statement aiming for excellence at the international level and has devised a strategy encompassing achievement orientation, customer satisfaction, teamwork, integrity, and visionary entrepreneurship. By shedding light on the actual condition of UIN Sunan Kalijaga State in terms of program implementation, this research makes a significant contribution towards achieving WCU status by drawing comparisons with international university standards. Ultimately, this study serves as a valuable resource for Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University in its quest to become a World-Class University by examining successful strategies employed by other institutions.

Keywords: Islamic university, World-class university, Strategic roadmap, Comparative study

1. Introduction

In today's globalized world, assessing the international quality of higher education institutions has gained utmost importance. As nations strive to become knowledge and innovation hubs, evaluating universities' global standing has garnered significant attention (Wedlin, 2011). International ranking institutions like ARWU (Academic Ranking of World Universities), THES (Times Higher Education Supplement), and Webometric have become pivotal in evaluating universities based on diverse criteria (Akyol Özcan, 2023). ARWU, known as the Shanghai Ranking, is distinguished for its rigorous evaluation methodology. It assesses faculty quality, research productivity, and institutional size, assigning specific weights to each criterion (Qureshi et al., 2023). Faculty expertise and research output, indicative of intellectual contributions and impact, are vital indicators of international

standing (Peris-Ortiz et al., 2023).

Concurrently, institutional size plays a role in determining global influence (Guo et al., 2023). ARWU relies on quantifiable metrics to provide a quantitative snapshot of a university's global presence. THES employs a unique framework to assess international university quality, encompassing research excellence, employability of graduates, global reputation, and educational quality (Guo et al., 2023). THES also underscores the importance of an institution's international image in attracting global students and faculty and fostering cross-cultural exchange and collaboration (Rezaei et al., 2018). This approach encompasses both qualitative and quantitative aspects of university excellence.

Meanwhile, Webometric has emerged as an innovative assessor of international university quality, focusing on web presence, visibility, digital resources, and scholarly impact in the digital age. Webometric acknowledges that online visibility and digital resources indicate global outreach and engagement (Alim, 2021). Scholarly impact, measured through web citations and mentions, signifies the extent of a university's research resonance beyond borders (Jati, 2023). This approach aligns with the evolving nature of academic influence in an interconnected, technologically driven world.

However, an apparent disparity emerges when examining the program implementation at UIN Sunan Kalijaga and its pursuit of World Class University (WCU) status (Sibawaihi & Fernandes, 2023). UIN Sunan Kalijaga falls notably short in critical criteria, including research quality, graduate workforce absorption, and international student presence, raising questions about the effectiveness of its WCU recognition strategy (Lee, 2013). In terms of research quality, UIN Sunan Kalijaga's performance registers a marginal percentage, indicating that its research output and impact lag behind established international standards. The citation impact of its research papers, for instance, remains relatively low, suggesting limited global recognition and influence. According to the latest available data, UIN Sunan Kalijaga's research publications in reputable international journals account for only a small fraction of its total research output, with a majority of publications being in local or regional journals (UIN Sunan Kalijaga Research Report, 2022).

Regarding graduate employability, concerns arise about the institution's capacity to equip graduates with skills that will seamlessly integrate into the global job market, a crucial facet of international university status (Jackson, 2016). A recent tracer study conducted by UIN Sunan Kalijaga revealed that only a modest percentage of its graduates secured employment in multinational companies or organizations with a global presence (UIN Sunan Kalijaga Graduate Tracer Study, 2021). This suggests a need for curricular enhancements and industry collaborations to better align graduate skills with the demands of the global workforce.

In terms of internationalization, UIN Sunan Kalijaga's limited international student and faculty presence and collaborations suggest that efforts to foster a diverse, globally interconnected academic environment have not yielded the desired results (Jackson, 2016). Data from the university's international office indicates that the number of international students and faculty members remains relatively low, accounting for a small fraction of the overall student and staff population (UIN Sunan Kalijaga International Office Report, 2022). Furthermore, the university's international research collaborations and exchange programs are limited in scope and impact (UIN Sunan Kalijaga International Cooperation Report, 2022).

Progress in these areas appears to result from individual initiatives rather than a comprehensive, strategic implementation of the institution's WCU status plan (Dian et al., 2023). This underscores the need for a more cohesive, institution-wide approach to bridge the gap between the current state and envisioned international excellence. This paper's significance lies in shedding light on the strategic planning and program implementation at UIN Sunan Kalijaga, focusing on achieving prestigious World Class University (WCU) status. This paper identifies crucial determinants of a university's internationalization journey by juxtaposing UIN Sunan Kalijaga's strategic plan and implementation with the experiences of UGM and UNS. Policymakers within the university and relevant government ministries can derive valuable insights from this comparative analysis. The findings can potentially guide future decisions, ultimately steering UIN Sunan Kalijaga toward a more successful path in pursuing World Class University status. Therefore, this paper can

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serve as a compass, aligning UIN Sunan Kalijaga's aspirations with global standards of excellence.

2. Theoretical Review

A world-class university is a university that has achieved a high level of excellence in teaching, research, and service and is recognized internationally for its academic quality and reputation (Guo et al., 2023). To become a world-class university, there are three key factors that a university needs to consider and be supported by the government: Concentration of Talent, Abundant Resources, and Appropriate Governance (Tian, 2023). In terms of talent concentration, a university must attract and retain the best talents to achieve world-class status (Li, 2023). This can be achieved through internationalization, including recruiting internationally qualified professors and experienced and qualified academic staff and maintaining a balanced proportion between undergraduate and graduate students.

The second factor is abundant resources. A university must have sufficient resources to support education facilities, research, and other academic activities (Rosser, 2023). This can be achieved through resource diversification, not solely relying on government subsidies but also cooperation with private companies/industry. Abundant resources are essential to prepare education facilities, research, and other academic activities, to provide appropriate physical infrastructure, and to keep highly qualified academicians (Lee, 2013). The third factor is good governance, which is closely related to positive governance, including the right policies, solid and inspiring leadership, and precise management, which is essential for the development of a university (Salmi, 2009). Supportive funding and administration regulations can facilitate the university's academic and holistic development (Chankseliani et al., 2021). good governance means favorable governance can affect a university's development (Yudianto et al., 2021). For instance, regulating supportive funding and administration can smoothen the university's academic and holistic development.

The importance of these three factors for a university to become world-class is widely recognized in the literature. For example, a study by Ha Thi Hai Do and Anh Ngoc Mai (2023) explored the Chinese government's role in building world-class universities. She found that concentration of talent, abundant resources, and appropriate governance were crucial factors in achieving this goal. Another study by Jamil Salmi (Salmi, 2009) argued that high talent concentrations, abundant resources, and appropriate governance were the key features of world-class universities. Several studies in China, India, and Japan identify benchmarking and international cooperation, academic autonomy, governance, government subsidies, university-industry collaboration, and research output as essential factors for achieving world-class status (Tilak, 2016; Yang et al., 2021; Yonezawa, 2023). In addition, the rankings of world-class universities in international student flows globally highlight the importance of talent attraction and retention (Dowsett, 2020; Hazelkorn, 2018). Overall, the literature suggests that concentration of talent, abundant resources, and appropriate governance are essential for a university to become world-class.

3. Methods

This study applies a qualitative research method coupled with a comparative analysis approach. The study focuses on a comparative examination of Gadjah Mada University (UGM) and Sebelas Maret University (UNS) as case studies. This selection was not arbitrary. It, however, was guided by meticulous considerations aimed at unraveling the strategic nuances behind their successful attainment of a commendable position within the Webometric version of the World Class University (WCU) ranking. The rationale underpinning the selection of UGM and UNS is multi-faceted. Firstly, their well-established status among the top 500 institutions in the Webometric WCU ranking demonstrates their substantial impact on the global academic landscape (Gardiana et al., 2023). Their notable presence is a testament to their academic excellence and international influence. Secondly, the deliberate and calculated efforts undertaken by these universities to not only secure but also

elevate their respective rankings warrant in-depth exploration (Dimyati et al., 2023). The strategies, initiatives, and best practices they have employed to maintain a competitive international standing serve as a goldmine of insights for institutions aspiring to similar achievements.

To gain insights into the specific strategies employed by UGM and UNS, this study analyzed a range of publicly available data sources. Primary data sources included the universities' strategic plans, annual reports, and official policy documents related to their internationalization and WCU pursuits. Specifically, UGM's "Strategic Plan 2020-2024" (UGM, 2019) and UNS's "Towards World Class University: Strategic Roadmap 2018-2023" (UNS, 2018) were thoroughly examined to understand their overarching visions, missions, and strategic objectives. Additionally, their annual reports from the past five years (2018-2022) were analyzed to assess the implementation and progress of their strategies (UGM Annual Reports, 2018-2022; UNS Annual Reports, 2018-2022).

Furthermore, relevant policy documents, such as internationalization policies, research and innovation policies, and quality assurance policies, were studied to comprehend the specific initiatives and actions taken by these universities to achieve their WCU goals (UGM Internationalization Policy, 2021; UNS Research and Innovation Policy, 2020). Complementing these primary data sources, secondary data sources, including news articles, media reports, and academic journal articles discussing the strategies and achievements of UGM and UNS, were also reviewed. These sources provided valuable insights into the external perceptions and impacts of their strategies, as well as independent evaluations and analysis.

The study's data collection process revolves around the policies UGM and UNS implemented to pursue the WCU predicate. These policies were meticulously gathered and subsequently subjected to a comprehensive analysis, which entailed a thorough comparison with UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta's policies. This comparative analysis allowed for the identification of common patterns, unique approaches, and best practices employed by UGM and UNS in their pursuit of global recognition. Such a methodical approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of the intricate policy landscape surrounding the quest for WCU status, allowing for the identification of crucial differentiators and potential areas for improvement.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 The Road to WCU

Albatch (2005) defines a World Class University (WCU) as an institution dedicated to generating and preserving knowledge on a global scale. WCUs offer top-tier education across all levels, cater to national needs, and contribute to the broader international community (Altbach, 2005). The term gained prominence in 2003 when Shanghai Jiao Tong University and the 2004-2005 Times Higher Education Supplement (THES) published global university rankings (Erkkilä et al., 2023). Between 2004 and 2009, THES collaborated with Quacquarelli Symonds to create the QS World University Ranking (Ali, 2022). Shanghai Jiao Tong University's rankings are the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) (Docampo et al., 2022).

Several key factors influence the emergence of WCUs. First, the percentage of students enrolled in universities in OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries has substantially increased (Cantwell & Grimm, 2018). Second, this growth is mainly driven by non-government sectors, with private universities playing a significant role (Ansari, 2023). Third, many OECD countries have seen a significant rise in female enrolment in professional programs like medicine, law, engineering, and computer science (Ananthram et al., 2023). Fourth, traditional notions of universities have evolved, with students increasingly opting for full-time study immediately after high school (Hicks et al., 2023). Fifth, during the 1990s, university funding failed to keep pace with increasing student numbers, prompting universities to seek supplementary funding from external sources (Hazelkorn, 2011).

ARWU responded to these changes by introducing its world university rankings in 2003,

shifting the focus from abundant funding resources to other indicators of excellence (Liu et al., 2019). Universities began to recognize the importance of achieving WCU status, which signifies prestige for the institution and the nation. Higher achievements prove a university's role in technology, intellectual leadership, and its contribution to societal needs (Amsler & Bolsmann, 2012; Tjahjadi et al., 2022). According to Salmi (2017), universities occupy a central position within these pillars, as higher education plays a vital role in developing a flexible, productive, and skilled workforce. Seven key characteristics universities must exhibit to achieve WCU status include having an international curriculum, promoting student exchanges, increasing global student intake, emphasizing faculty development and communication, utilizing information technology, supporting collaboration with foreign institutions, and advancing internationalization (Marginson, 2017). Additionally, three critical characteristics of WCUs are related to a focus on talent regardless of a country's economic status, the necessity of high tuition fees to support these institutions, and the importance of fulfilling elements such as a competitive environment, unlimited scientific research, academic freedom, creative thinking, innovation, academic independence, flexibility, and the removal of conservative policies (Hong, 2020; Johnston et al., 2023).

Salmi proposed two significant paths to achieving WCU status (Salmi, 2009). The first is the external dimension: This involves the role of governments at the state or province level and the availability of funding sources to elevate an institution's status. Three methods include choosing universities with leading potential, pushing institutions to transform and align with WCU models, and building a new university from scratch. The second is the internal dimension: At the institutional level, Salmi emphasized the importance of strategy, which involves leadership and strategic vision, sequencing, and internationalization. WCUs require strong leadership, clearly articulated ideas and missions, and strategic plans that can be translated into concrete programs and goals.

Heyneman and Lee (2013) provided eleven strategies for achieving WCU status, including performance-based funding, diversified funding sources, institutional differentiation, institutional autonomy, property ownership, tax benefits, open competition for research with government sponsorship, autonomy in professional accreditation and licensing, incentives for diversity among students and faculty, incentives for quality improvement, and incentives for public policy assessment related to WCUs.

Meanwhile, Marginson (2017) identified three critical conditions influencing WCU achievement. The first condition is that countries or nations must have a strong will and financial capacity to support their universities continuously. Sustained government funding and support are vital. The second one is internal conditions. Universities must have the requisite human and physical resources to support research, teaching, communication, leadership, and institutional organization. Adequate infrastructure, expert faculty, and research capabilities are essential. The last one is strong leadership and effective policies. Visionary leadership and supportive policies are crucial for universities to pursue WCU status successfully. Therefore, seeking World Class University (WCU) status involves comprehensive leadership, funding, governance, and internationalization strategies.

4.2 UIN and World-Class University

Even though it is not currently listed, UIN Sunan Kalijaga aspires to achieve World-Class University (WCU) status. The university's leadership is committed to addressing long-term challenges and steering all policies, strategies, programs, and activities toward the goal of becoming a renowned institution in Islamic Studies on a global scale (Hadijaya et al., 2019). Since the 1990s, UIN Sunan Kalijaga has partnered with McGill University in Canada through the Canadian International Development Agency to enhance its role in Islamic modernization (Jabali, 2014). Many academicians from UIN Sunan Kalijaga actively engage in international activities, including pursuing master's and doctoral studies abroad, participating in global conferences, hosting visiting professors and research students, and delivering guest lectures at various universities worldwide. UIN Sunan Kalijaga's vision is to lead in integrating Islam and science to improve civilization (Hidayat, 2023). To achieve this

vision, the university has outlined missions that encompass integrating Islamic, scientific, and Indonesian studies into education, promoting multidisciplinary research, solving national issues with Islamic insights and science, and fostering collaboration to enhance the quality of higher education (*Vision-Mission-Goals*, n.d.). In line with its vision and missions, the university's objectives include producing graduates with strong academic and professional capabilities, nurturing scholars who are knowledgeable, ethical, and socially responsible, and fostering respect for scientific and humanitarian values.

To evolve into a world-class university, UIN Sunan Kalijaga has devised a comprehensive 2014-2038 Development Master Plan, divided into four stages: basic (2015-2019), growth (2020-2024), independent (2025-2029), and WCU stage (World Class University) (Wahyudi, 2016). During the initial stages, the university aims to establish itself as a leading institution at the national and regional levels, rank among the top Islamic universities in Indonesia, enter the top ten universities in the country, and secure AUN-QA accreditation for two study programs (*UIN Sunan Kalijaga*, n.d.). These stages are marked by specific goals, including attaining AUN-QA accreditation for multiple study programs and recognition from QS Stars.

UIN Sunan Kalijaga has initiated measures to meet international criteria for top-ranked universities. Faculty and students are encouraged to engage with research findings from Western and Islamic scholars, adhere to international journal article standards, and improve language proficiency in English and Arabic (Abdullah, 2017). Various efforts are being made to improve educational administration to international standards, encompassing various aspects such as classes, publications, research, partnerships, student enrolment, and faculty recruitment to attain WCU status in Islamic Studies (Kesuma et al., 2019). The university is making strides to upgrade its information technology infrastructure to be accessible to international stakeholders.

4.3 UGM's Path to World-Class University (WCU)

UGM has been recognized internationally. From 2013 to 2015, it was ranked 105th in Asia and 555th globally by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) (Ihza, 2023). Before 2013, it had consistently been in the top 500 globally. QS ranks universities based on academic reputation, faculty-to-student ratio, research output, and internationalization (Azzahra & Zahra, 2023). UGM performed well in these areas, scoring 7.5 for the faculty-to-student ratio and 20.6 for citations per paper (Griffin & Dennis, 2019). Though UGM lags behind UI and ITB, which rank in the top 500 globally and 86th and 67th in Asia, respectively, UGM's consistent presence in the top 500 indicates preparedness for WCU status (Murdowo, 2018). This aligns with the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education's 2015-2019 plan to enhance national competitiveness by pushing universities to achieve top 500 global rankings. UGM's vision and mission reflect its commitment to becoming a WCU (Tanhueco-Nepomuceno, 2019). Its mission includes providing quality education, conducting research, and offering social services while preserving and advancing sciences for societal benefit.

UGM's transformation towards WCU aligns with Jamil Salmi's theoretical framework, emphasizing talent concentration, financial abundance, and effective governance (Salmi, 2009). Concentrating on talent involves recruiting students from various provinces and implementing student exchange programs (Bae et al., 2023). Faculty talent is cultivated by hiring international lecturers and internationalizing faculties through AUN accreditation. International promotion efforts extend to the Middle East, ASEAN, and Europe, and UGM offers International Undergraduate Programs across multiple faculties. Innovations include interdisciplinary summer courses, post-doctoral fellow invitations, research consortiums, and publication incentives (Rüland, 2023). Secondly, UGM diversifies its financial resources through government funding, research contracts, endowments, grants, and tuition fees. Government funds constitute a significant portion of its income, with societal funds contributing to its financial stability (Huda et al., 2020). Lastly, good governance is integral to UGM's global recognition (Achmad Perguna et al., 2023). It operates autonomously, guided by accountability, transparency, non-profit orientation, quality control,

effectiveness, and efficiency, as outlined in Bill No. 12, 2012.

4.4 UNS's Path to World-Class University (WCU)

UNS has shown progress in global rankings, moving from 1,361st in 2011 to 88oth in 2015, according to Webometrics Ranking Web of Repositories (Faishol & Subriadi, 2022). Similarly, its rank on 4ICU improved from 1,483rd in 2012 to 894th in 2014 and 88oth in 2015 (4ICU, 2023). According to THES, UNS ranked 201st in Asia in 2011 (Rakhmani & Siregar, 2016). UNS's vision is to be an international leader in science, technology, and the arts rooted in national cultural values. Its mission revolves around education, research, and social services, emphasizing empowerment. To achieve its vision and mission, UNS has set eight goals, including creating an environment conducive to self-development, producing well-rounded graduates, fostering infrastructure for research and innovation, and advancing national cultural values (*Mission Statement*, n.d.).

UNS has devised a strategic plan, "UNS ACTIVE," focusing on achievement orientation, customer satisfaction, teamwork, integrity, visionary thinking, and entrepreneurship (Susantiningrum & Triharyanto, 2015). UNS's transformation toward WCU comprises three critical theoretical frameworks: talent concentration, financial abundance, and good governance (Febriani, 2018). To concentrate talent, UNS has increased student intake through various admission programs and international exchanges. Regarding financial resources, UNS diversifies its income sources by managing revenue-generating entities like UNS Medical Centre, bookstores, travel services, and more. UNS has embraced sound governance principles, transitioning to a State University Corporation in 2016 (*Universitas Sebelas Maret Booklet*, 2019). This change enhances the university's ability to utilize assets flexibly and strategically to pursue its goals.

Both UGM and UNS are taking strategic steps to achieve World-Class University status. They focus on talent development, financial sustainability, and effective governance, with a solid commitment to quality education, research, and internationalization. These universities aspire to significantly impact the global stage while preserving their cultural values and benefiting society.

4.5 A Comparative Study of UIN Sunan Kalijaga, UGM, and UNS

UIN Sunan Kalijaga, UGM, and UNS share a common goal of achieving World Class University (WCU) status and have implemented various strategies to achieve this objective. While UIN Sunan Kalijaga is still in the early stages of its WCU pursuit, UGM and UNS have made significant strides and can serve as valuable case studies for UIN Sunan Kalijaga to learn from. UGM has formulated a clear vision and mission, positioning itself as a pioneer in pursuing WCU status through its Strategic Plan 2020-2024. This plan outlines UGM's goal of becoming a "World-Class Research University" by 2024, with a focus on conducting research that addresses global challenges and contributes to the advancement of knowledge (UGM, 2019). UIN Sunan Kalijaga seems to grapple with reconciling the divide between worldly and heavenly sciences, while UGM and UNS do not face such epistemological challenges (Maemonah et al., 2023).

To enhance its brand equity and global reputation, UGM launched the "UGM World Class" campaign, which involved strategic marketing and communication efforts, including targeted social media campaigns, participation in international education fairs, and partnerships with global media outlets. Additionally, UGM leveraged its alumni network as brand ambassadors to increase global visibility and attractiveness (UGM Alumni Report, 2022). UGM and UNS incorporate national cultural values, like Pancasila, into their visions, showcasing their readiness to balance global and local interests. Conversely, UIN Sunan Kalijaga does not explicitly integrate national values into its vision. UGM and UNS also emphasize the significance of national and local obligations alongside their pursuit of world-class status (Sukoco et al., 2021).

UGM also implemented a comprehensive data integration strategy to facilitate data-driven decision-making. The university developed a centralized data management system, integrating data

from various academic and administrative units. This system enables real-time monitoring of key performance indicators, such as research output, citation impact, international collaborations, and student enrolment. Strategically, UIN Sunan Kalijaga differs from UGM and UNS. While UGM and UNS have formulated strategies to achieve their world-class university status, UIN Sunan Kalijaga has not translated its strategies into institutional formulations, leaving them primarily in individual discourses. In focusing on student and faculty talent, world-class universities excel in selecting the best students (Banker & Bhal, 2020).

UGM placed significant emphasis on internationalizing its academic programs and research activities. The "UGM Global Classroom" program offers courses taught entirely in English and attracts international students (UGM Global Classroom, 2023). UGM has also actively pursued international research collaborations, such as its partnership with the Max Planck Institute for the Physics of Complex Systems, resulting in several high-impact publications and joint research projects (UGM Research Collaboration Report, 2022). UGM and UNS diversify their funding sources, including government funds, research contracts, endowments, grants, and tuition fees (Dimyati et al., 2023; Rakhmani & Siregar, 2016). They also have revenue-generating corporations and signed cooperation contracts with government agencies and private companies. Government policies encourage universities to act as agents of knowledge and technology transfer (Gachanja, 2023; Padilla-Meléndez & Del-Aguila-Obra, 2022). Certain universities, including UGM and UNS, operate as State University Corporations, granting them autonomy in managing academic and non-academic affairs.

In contrast, UIN Sunan Kalijaga operates as a State University Society Service Agency, lacking the same degree of autonomy. Key differences include service charge regulations, financial report patterns, operational governance, and human resource management. UGM and UNS benefit from the freedom granted by their State University Corporation status, placing them in more advantageous positions than UIN Sunan Kalijaga, which operates as a State University Society Service Agency. Both UGM and UNS have employed strategies that focus on enhancing brand equity, data integration, internationalization, and fostering an entrepreneurial mindset. These strategies have proven effective in propelling their respective institutions towards WCU status, as evidenced by their improved rankings and international recognition.

Based on the comparative analysis of strategies employed by UGM and UNS in achieving WCU status, some key recommendations for UIN Sunan Kalijaga include developing a comprehensive strategic plan aligned with WCU criteria and leveraging its strengths in Islamic studies and cultural heritage (Fitri et al., 2020); enhancing brand equity through targeted marketing and positioning as a hub for Islamic research (Juhaidi & Syaifuddin, 2023); implementing data-driven decision-making with a centralized data management system (Bejinaru & Prelipcean, 2017); prioritizing internationalization by offering programs in English, seeking global research collaborations, and facilitating student/faculty exchanges (Opeyemi Ishaaq El-Mubarak & Hassan, 2021); fostering an entrepreneurial mindset through curriculum integration, business incubators, and industry partnerships (Ulya, 2018); and strengthening research capabilities by investing in infrastructure, faculty development, and focused research centers on globally significant areas (Fitri et al., 2020). However, UIN Sunan Kalijaga should navigate the balance between global standards and preserving its Islamic identity, considering organizational factors and stakeholder engagement for successful implementation (Opeyemi Ishaaq El-Mubarak & Hassan, 2021; Ulya, 2018). UIN Sunan Kalijaga faces unique challenges, including epistemological issues, limited financial resources, and a different governance status. To enhance its competitiveness, UIN Sunan Kalijaga must address these challenges and consider aligning its strategies with those of UGM and UNS.

5. Conclusion

This paper concludes that the unique context of UIN Sunan Kalijaga underscores the necessity for a customized approach that addresses its distinct challenges and aspirations. Achieving World-Class University status demands a deliberate and all-encompassing strategy covering talent development,

financial sustainability, and effective governance. Achieving recognition as a World-Class University necessitates having vital elements in place. These encompass a focused approach to nurturing talent among students and faculty, adequate financial resources, and effective governance mechanisms. From UGM, UIN Sunan Kalijaga learned the ways UGM has articulated a vision positioning itself as a higher education pioneer, supported by a strategic framework encompassing brand equity, data integration, and academic internationalization. In contrast, UNS gives significant lessons for UIN Sunan Kalijaga on the importance of formulating a strategic roadmap focusing on achievement orientation, customer satisfaction, teamwork, integrity, visionary leadership, and entrepreneurship. Considering both universities, UIN Sunan Kalijaga must undergo a strategic overhaul to align itself with the trajectory toward World-Class University status.

Furthermore, institutional culture and resistance to change can impede the effective implementation of these strategies. As an Islamic university with deep-rooted traditions, UIN Sunan Kalijaga may encounter cultural barriers or resistance from stakeholders who perceive these strategies as compromising the institution's religious and cultural identity. Navigating this balance between preserving core values and embracing global standards will require strong leadership, open communication, and effective change management strategies. External factors, such as government policies, economic conditions, and political instability, can also impact the implementation of these strategies. Changes in funding priorities, regulations, or socio-political environments may necessitate adjustments or delays in the execution of certain initiatives.

Additionally, comparative studies with other Islamic universities pursuing WCU status can offer valuable insights into the unique challenges and opportunities faced by these institutions. Such studies can facilitate knowledge sharing, identify best practices, and potentially lead to the development of tailored frameworks or models for Islamic universities aspiring to achieve global recognition. In conclusion, while the path towards achieving WCU status is challenging, the recommendations outlined in this study provide a strategic roadmap for UIN Sunan Kalijaga to enhance its international standing and contribute to the advancement of Islamic higher education on a global scale.

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