



ISLAMIC SCIENCES IN TRANSITION: Post-Reformation Developments in Indonesia's State Islamic Universities

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Abstract: The transition of State Islamic Colleges (IAIN/STAIN) to State Islamic Universities (UIN) marks a fundamental shift in the institutional structure and epistemology of Islamic higher education in Indonesia. This article critically investigates the new form of UIN following the transformation era, which successfully integrated Islamic sciences with modern disciplines. Institutional transformation and the development of Islamic thought through an integrative, academic, and contextual paradigm have contributed to this successful transition. This reflects how UIN transformation has become more accommodative and inclusive, with deliberate efforts to integrate various fields of religious and modern sciences. This research is based on a qualitative study using document analysis, expert interviews, and focus group discussions. The article also traces the early dynamics of academic Islamic studies, the emergence of the conversion project, and examines its evolution in the current post-reform era. It argues that significant institutional dynamics and epistemological shifts have revived the academic and critical paradigm of Islamic sciences. Thus, UIN has emerged as a center for multidisciplinary Islamic intellectual currents that are responsive to humanitarian issues and global Islamic academic discourse.

Keywords: Islamic Education, Islamic Studies, Transformation, Islam and Science, Critical Thinking, Multidisciplinary Approach

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Introduction

ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS UNIVERSITIES face serious challenges from globalization,¹ especially advances in information technology.² Contemporary religious studies, or Islamic studies, necessitate a new approach that is oriented toward academic paradigms and critical thinking in addressing the new issues of the 21st century.³ Such an approach is critical to address contemporary humanitarian issues,⁴ such as the need for digital literacy, the dynamics of global citizenship, and the issue of religious extremism in social media.⁵ The contribution of State Islamic Universities (UIN) to the implementation of the Islamic academic and critical paradigm is one of the factors that contribute to providing solutions to the problem of globalization, as well as being a factor in the revival of Islamic studies in Indonesia more broadly.⁶

¹ Sudirman Sudirman et al., "The Transformation of State Islamic Higher Education Institutions into World-Class University: From Globalisation to Institutional Values," *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 12 (January 2025): 101705, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.101705>.

² Lehlohonolo Kurata et al., "Teaching Religious Studies with Artificial Intelligence: A Qualitative Analysis of Lesotho Secondary Schools Teachers' Perceptions," *International Journal of Educational Research Open* 8 (June 2025): 100417, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedro.2024.100417>.

³ See Mark Woodward, "Islamic and Religious Studies: Challenges and Opportunities for Twenty-First Century Indonesia," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 3, no. 1 (2009): 1–34, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2009.3.1.1-34>. See Zamakhsyari Dhofier, "Then Intellectualization of Islamic Studies in Indonesia," *Indonesia and the Malay World*, ahead of print, 1992, <https://doi.org/httpsdoi.org/10.1080/03062849208729783>.

⁴ Husamah et al., "Islam and Sustainability Issues, How Far Has the Relationship Progressed? A Bibliometric Analysis," *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 12 (2025): 101703, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.101703>.

⁵ Nafik Muthohirin and S. Suherman, "Muhammadiyah's Educational Philosophy and Contextualization of Islamic Moderation: Challenges to Religious Extremism," *Strengthening Professional and Spiritual Education through 21st Century Skill Empowerment in a Pandemic and Post-Pandemic Era*, 2024, 166–72, <https://doi.org/10.1201/9781003376125-22>.

⁶ Suyadi et al., "Academic Reform and Sustainability of Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia," *International Journal of Educational Development* 89 (March 2022): 102534, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2021.102534>.

The discourse of Islamic thought within the critical-academic paradigm at State Islamic universities in Indonesia is highly complex and multifaceted.⁷ As previously explained, it is rooted in the challenges of emerging global humanitarian problems.⁸ Azyumardi Azra stated that UIN contributed to the transformation of Islamic higher education in Indonesia. UIN successfully introduced a formal structure that integrates religious and modern sciences into a single curriculum. According to him, this integrative approach aims to produce graduates with broad insights and enable Islamic scholars to engage in discussions and seek solutions to humanitarian issues and academic methodology. These higher Islamic institutions have subsequently become a crucial part of the modernization of Islamic education in Indonesia.⁹

The transformation of state Islamic colleges (IAIN/STAIN) to UIN greatly emphasizes the intersection of disciplines and their broader and more limitless reach, enabling students to not only study religion but also analyze religious studies through approaches such as sociology, anthropology, literature, education, communication, and other disciplines.¹⁰ It is not surprising that,

⁷ See Zalfa Hania Alya B, Andina Elok, and Puri Maharani, *Proceedings of the International Conference for Democracy and National Resilience 2022 (ICDNR 2022)*, in *Proceedings of the International Conference for Democracy and National Resilience 2022 (ICDNR 2022)* (Atlantis Press SARL, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-494069-75-6>. See also John H. McGlynn, "Silent Voices, Muted Expressions: Indonesian Literature Today," *Manoa* 12, no. 1 (2000): 38–44, <https://doi.org/10.1353/man.2000.0022>. See Also Zico Junius Fernando et al., "The Freedom of Expression in Indonesia," *Cogent Social Sciences* 8, no. 1 (2022): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2022.2103944>.

⁸ See M. Hashim Kamali and Lena Larsen, *Shari'ah and Human Rights: A Coursebook*. (Bandung: PT Pustaka Mizan, 2022). See Also Syamsul Arifin et al., "Interseksi Hak Asasi Manusia Dan Shari'ah Di Indonesia," *ISLAMICA: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 12, no. 2 (2018): 279–305, <https://doi.org/10.15642/islamica.2018.12.2.261-287>.

⁹ Fuad Jabali, Jamhari, and Subhan Arief, "Impact Study Cooperation Between IAIN and McGill Universit: Impact on the Development and Modernisation of Islam in Indonesia," *Repository.Uinjkt.Ac.Id*, 2002.

¹⁰ Agus Zaenul Fitri, Muntahibun Nafis, and Luluk Indarti, "Multidisciplinary, Interdisciplinary, and Transdisciplinary (MIT) Learning Approach and Strategy Based on Indonesian National Qualification Framework

upon graduating from UIN, PTKIN alums have found themselves in various job positions.¹¹ On the one hand, this transformation has paved the way for the modernization of Islamic higher education in Indonesia.¹² However, it has also created a new problem with the decreasing interest of students in choosing to study in religion-based majors.¹³

The institutional transformation and development of thought at UIN have not only remained confined to the academic sphere but have also expanded into significant public discussions.¹⁴ This phenomenon has occurred because UIN alums—who now serve as social activists, academics, researchers, and religious educators in various Islamic institutions—have brought a spirit of change into society.¹⁵ Islamic studies, previously focused on a theological-conservative approach, have now evolved to become more analytical and inclusive, along with the introduction of a scientific approach to understanding Islam. Observers of Islamic higher education emphasize that this new direction has given rise to an academic paradigm that encourages integration and connectivity

(KKNI) Curriculum," *Ulumuna* 24, no. 1 (July 2020): 183–204, <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v24i1.375>.

¹¹ Azyumardi Azra, "Islamic Education and Reintegration of Sciences: Improving Islamic Higher Education," *Media Syari'ah* 15, no. 2 (2013): 257–64. See Also Bustamam, Kamaruzzaman-Ahmad, and Patrick Jory, *Islamic Studies and Islamic Education in Contemporary Southeast Asia* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Yayasan Ilmuwan, 2011).

¹² An understanding of "integration and interconnection" as a scientific methodology that combines religion and science can be seen in M. Amin Abdullah, *Islamic Studies Di Perguruan Tinggi Pendekatan Integratif-Interkonektif*. (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2006).

¹³ See Abdul Chalik and Akhmad Muzakki, *International Journal of Management and Administrative Sciences (IJMAS) The Impact of IAIN to UIN Conversion towards the Development of Islamic Sciences and University Management in Indonesia*, 4, no. 04 (n.d.): 16–34.

¹⁴ Ahmad Amir Aziz and Miftahul Huda, "Contribution of Islamic University to Development of Mosque-Based Non-Formal Islamic Education in Lombok Indonesia," *Al-Hayat: Journal of Islamic Education* 8, no. 3 (September 2024): 982–98, <https://doi.org/10.35723/ajie.v8i3.677>.

¹⁵ Interviewed R. Maulana, "How was the Implication to Alumnas of the Impact of Learning Based on Academic Paradigm?" (November 26, 2018).

across disciplines.¹⁶ In this context, several other scholars view institutional reform as part of the strategy of Islamic higher education to adapt to the dynamics of the job market, ensuring that its graduates are professionally competitive.¹⁷ Consequently, several UINs have made structural adjustments by renaming some of their faculties, aiming to produce graduates capable of addressing contemporary socio-religious issues.¹⁸

Scientific Framework in the Unity of Islamic Paradigm

The discourse on the integration of Islamic paradigms with scientific knowledge has emerged as a significant subject in both global and Indonesian intellectual spheres.¹⁹ This integration encompasses not only the fusion of religious and secular knowledge within a practical curriculum but is also grounded in profound philosophical enquiries concerning ontology, epistemology, and axiology.²⁰ This discourse emphasizes that science is not devoid of values, and the advancement of knowledge is intrinsically linked to its foundational worldview. Numerous Muslim academics have significantly influenced this intellectual domain by delineating the ontological principles and epistemological approaches for synthesizing Islamic teachings with the broader scientific framework.

¹⁶ Read more in M. Amin Abdullah, *Islamic Studies Di Perguruan Tinggi Pendekatan Integratif-Interkoneksi*.

¹⁷ More Information can be found in Abdul Chalik and Muzakki, *International Journal of Management and Administrative Sciences (IJMAS) The Impact of IAIN to UIN Conversion towards the Development of Islamic Sciences and University Management in Indonesia*.

¹⁸I interviewed R. Maulana on "How was the Implication to Alumna as Impact of Learning Based on Academic Paradigm" (November 26, 2018).

¹⁹ Mohammad Muslih et al., "Al-Qur'an-Based Paradigm in Science Integration at The Al-Qur'an Science University, Indonesia," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 80, no. 1 (March 2024), <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v80i1.9459>.

²⁰ Ade Firman Khanafi, Syamsul Arifin, and Fahrudin Mukhlis, "Muhammad Iqbal's Islamic Education Philosophy: Critical Analysis MBKM Curriculum," *Kanz Philosophia: A Journal for Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism* 11, no. 1 (June 2025): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.20871/kpjpm.v11i1.390>.

Prominent global leaders include Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas,²¹ Ismail Raji al-Faruqi,²² Seyyed Hossein Nasr,²³ Ziauddin Sardar,²⁴ Osman Bakar,²⁵ and more recently, intellectuals such as Nader Hashemi²⁶ and Ebrahim Moosa.²⁷ Each scholar offers distinct philosophical insights that contribute to the development of a scientific framework rooted in Islamic metaphysics and ethical principles. Al-Attas asserts that the dilemma in modern Muslim education and knowledge arises from the erosion of *adab* (appropriate discipline) and the encroachment of secular, materialistic epistemologies that are disconnected from *tawhīdic* metaphysics.²⁸ His notion of the Islamization of knowledge²⁹ does not include the repudiation of Western science, but rather the reconfiguration of it in alignment with an Islamic perspective, wherein God is regarded as the supreme source of truth. His work, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam*,³⁰ establishes the basis

²¹ Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Islam and the Philosophy of Science*. (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: ISCTAC, 2001).

²² Ismail Razi Al-Faruqi, *Islamization OF General Principles and Work Plan*, in *Herndon: International Institute of Islamic Thought*, no. 1 (1989).

²³ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Science: An Illustrated Study*. Wellingborough (Islamic Science: An Illustrated Study, 1976).

²⁴ Ziauddin Sardar, *Islamic Futures: The Shape of Ideas to Come*, in *Future of Muslim* (London; New York: Mansell Publishing, 1985).

²⁵ Osman Bakar, *Science and Religion in the Twenty-First Century: The Islamic Perspective* (2002).

²⁶ Nader Hashemi, "Islam, Secularism, and Liberal Democracy: Toward a Democratic Theory for Muslim Societies," *Islam, Secularism, and Liberal Democracy: Toward a Democratic Theory for Muslim Societies*, 2009, 1–336, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195321241.001.0001>.

²⁷ Ebrahim Moosa, *What Is a Madrasa?* (University of North Carolina Press, 2015).

²⁸ Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*, 2nd Editio (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1993).

²⁹ Mohd Faizal Musa, "Naquib Al-Attas' Islamization of Knowledge: Its Impact on Malay Religious Life, Literature, Language and Culture," in *Naquib Al-Attas' Islamization of Knowledge: Its Impact on Malay Religious Life, Literature, Language and Culture*, ed. Mohd Faizal Musa (ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute, 2021), 1–32.

³⁰ Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, "Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam," in *Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization*, preprint, 1995, 107.

for comprehending how the Islamic notion of reality (*haqīqah*) can function as the ontological foundation for knowledge creation.

Ismail Rājī al-Faruqi promotes an epistemological initiative aimed at reconstructing the social sciences and humanities grounded in *tawhīd* (divine unity), which he identifies as the core of the Islamic worldview.³¹ In his work, Islamization of Knowledge, al-Faruqi advocates for Muslim scholars to scrutinise the premises of Western epistemology rigorously and to reconstruct academic disciplines in alignment with the ethical and theological principles of Islam. He emphasises structural changes, advocating for institutional transformation in Muslim universities via revised curricula, techniques, and research objectives.³²

Seyyed Hossein Nasr adopts a metaphysical approach by challenging the mechanical and desacralized characteristics of contemporary science.³³ Nasr advocates for a resurgence of classical Islamic cosmology, in which nature is perceived as a sign (*āyah*) of God and knowledge is regarded as a means to attain divine presence.³⁴ He perceives the issue not only in substance but in the fundamental nihilism of contemporary scientific rationalism, which separates facts from values and existence from knowledge.³⁵

Osman Bakar enhances Nasr's perspective by providing a more systematic examination of the epistemological categories within Islamic tradition, specifically by reassessing the

³¹ Ismā'īl Rājī al-Fārūqī, *Al Tawhīd: Its Implications for Thought and Life* (International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2000), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvk8w28n>.

³² Muhammad Mumtaz Ali, *Issues in Islamization of Human Knowledge; Civilization Building Discourse of Contemporary Muslim Thinkers* (Kuala Lumpur: IIUM Puvlisher, 2014).

³³ Murshida Rahman, "Seyyed Hossein Nasr's Views of Modern Science: An Evaluation," *Philosophy and Progress*, September 19, 2024, 215–40, <https://doi.org/10.3329/pp.v73i1-2.75233>.

³⁴ Muhammad Fiqih Cholidi and Safiya Fadlulah, "Cosmology in Islam, Constructing Islamization of Nature Science," *Jurnal Al-Dustur* 5, no. 1 (June 2022): 126–47, <https://doi.org/10.30863/jad.v5i1.2572>.

³⁵ Asfa Widiyanto, "Traditional Science and Scientia Sacra: Origin and Dimensions of Seyyed Hossein Nasr's Concept of Science," *Intellectual Discourse* 25, no. 1 (2017): 249–74.

classification of sciences (*taqāsīm al-‘ulūm*) in classical texts authored by al-Fārābī, al-Ghazālī, and Ibn Sīnā.³⁶ Bakar contends that the Islamic perspective offers a cohesive understanding of knowledge, wherein both revealed sciences (*al-naqliyyah*) and acquired sciences (*al-‘aqliyyah*) constitute a singular, harmonious entity, unified by the notion of *tawhīd*.³⁷ Ziauddin Sardar provides a postmodern critique of modern science, characterising it as a cultural construct influenced by Western values, colonialism, and capitalist motivations.³⁸ He promotes the establishment of an “Islamic science” that is socially equitable, forward-looking, and attuned to the requirements of Muslim communities.³⁹ Meanwhile, several Indonesian scholars also pay attention to the framework of the Islamic scientific paradigm, as written by Azra,⁴⁰ Abdullah,⁴¹ Ali,⁴² Chalik,⁴³ and Zarkasyi.⁴⁴

³⁶ Osman Bakar, *Classification of Knowledge in Islam: A Study in Islamic Philosophies of Science*, ISSR Library (Islamic Texts Society, 1998).

³⁷ Osman Bakar, “Tawhid and Science: Essay on the History and Philosophy of Islamic Science,” *The Muslim World* LXXXIII, nos. 3–4 (1993): 329–35.

³⁸ Sardar, *Islamic Futures: The Shape of Ideas to Come*.

³⁹ Syamsuddin Arif and Shanaz Nurzaini Bey, “Ziauddin Sardar’s Critism of Modern Science,” *Proceedings of International Conference on Muslim Society and Thought* 4 (July 2024): 406–17, <https://doi.org/10.15642/ICMUST.4.2024.1773>; Rilliandi Arindra Putawa, “Islamization of Science: Ziauddin Sardar’s Critique of the Universality of Science,” *Dharmakirti: International Journal of Religion, Mind and Science* 1, no. 2 (April 2024), <https://doi.org/10.61511/ijroms.v1i2.2024.291>.

⁴⁰ Azyumardi Azra, “Genealogy of Indonesian Islamic Education: Roles in the Modernization of Muslim Society,” *Heritage of Nusantara* 4, no. 1 (2015): 7823–30, <https://doi.org/10.31291/hn.v4i1.63>.

⁴¹ M. Amin Abdullah, “Islamic Studies in Higher Education in Indonesia: Challenges, Impact and Prospects for the World Community,” *Al-Jami’ah* 55, no. 2 (2017): 391–426, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2017.552.391-426>.

⁴² Nur Ali et al., “Interreligious Literacy Learning as a Counter-Radicalization Method: A New Trend among Institutions of Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia,” *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 32, no. 4 (2021): 383–405, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09596410.2021.1996978>.

⁴³ Abdul Chalik, *Dampak Konversi IAIN Ke UIN: Pengalaman UIN Syahid Jakarta* (Surabaya: Lembaga Penelitian IAIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 2012).

⁴⁴ Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi, “Imam Zarkasyi’s Modernization of Pesantren in Indonesia: (A Case Study of Darussalam Gontor),” *Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies* 8, no. 1 (2020): 161–200, <https://doi.org/10.21043/QIJS.V8I1.5760>.

The Academic Paradigm Shift

Islamic studies have experienced significant developments in the contemporary era, with various polemics, especially those that occur in several universities in developed countries, as evidenced by the number of scholars who produce research works on Islam and Muslims.⁴⁵ Both studying them through historical and geographical aspects, and an interdisciplinary approach with other disciplines.⁴⁶ In the context of the United States (US), the resurgence was also influenced by the occurrence of terrorism on 9/11, the migration of Muslim populations to developed countries, and US diplomatic relations with the Muslim world.⁴⁷

Although interest in Islamic studies has increased at the global level, on the contrary, it has decreased in Indonesia.⁴⁸ Among the factors contributing to the lack of interest in studying Islamic sciences is the curriculum scheme of the Islamic study program, which has not kept pace with the times. Furthermore, there are still a few Islamic education stakeholders at PTKIN who have not implemented a multidisciplinary Islamic education model. Therefore, academics who dare to take on the role of presenting methodologies that are critical of Islamic studies are a necessity. Thus, they can achieve the ideal of giving birth to institutional and intellectual transformation in Islamic religious universities.⁴⁹

The academic paradigm of Islamic studies has become a crucial aspect in PTKIN's transformation project. In some cases of UIN, for example, the curriculum model set by UIN Sunan

⁴⁵ Charles Kurzman and Carl W Ernst, "Islamic Studies in US Universities," *Middle East Studies for the New Millennium: Infrastructures for Knowledge* 35, no. 3 (2018): 112–15, <https://doi.org/10.35632/ajiss.v35i3.492>.

⁴⁶ Read More in Azyumardi Azra, "The Significance of Southeast Asia (the Jawah World) for Global Islamic Studies: Historical and Comparative Perspectives," *Kyoto Bulletin of Islamic Area Studies* 8, no. March (2015): 69–87.

⁴⁷ Mumtaz Ahmad, Zahid Bukhari, and Sulayman Nyang, *Observing The Observer The State Of Islamic Studies In American Universities* (London Wshington: The International Institute of Islamic Thought & Gutenberg Press, 2012).

⁴⁸ Chalik and Muzakki, *International Journal of Management and Administrative Sciences (IJMAS) The Impact of IAIN to UIN Conversion towards the Development of Islamic Sciences and University Management in Indonesia*.

⁴⁹I interviewed M. Amin Abdullah on *institutional transformation from IAIN to UIN* (November 27, 2018).

Gunung Djati Bandung and UIN Imam Bonjol Padang shows the need to synthesize Islamic doctrine (*naqli*) with modern sciences (*áqli*). This need aims to create an integrated learning atmosphere, where students can learn local wisdom while motivating them to think empirically and academically.⁵⁰ This fact is also practiced by UIN Raden Fatah Palembang, which utilizes Malay cultural values in the formation of students' character and skills.⁵¹

Along with contemporary social issues, the methodology for Islamic studies has undergone a further transformation. In the last two decades, it has shifted from a purely traditional approach to a highly multidisciplinary one, combining empirically based scientific studies and critical investigations, as implemented so far by several UINs, such as UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, and UIN Sunan Kalijaga.⁵² After converting in 2017, UIN Mataram's progressivity has seen a significant increase in achievements, driven by its multidisciplinary and global vision and curriculum. Competent human resources also support this progress. Recently, UIN Mataram has also achieved a significant increase in the number of student enrollments, and there are 19 study programs (more than 50% of the total) that are accredited Very Excellent by BAN-PT until the end of 2024. In fact, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the publications of UIN Mataram lecturers who were reported to the institution's repository reached many documents in the form of

⁵⁰ Taufiqurrahman, Ahmad Taufik Hidayat, and . Erman, "The Integration of Science in Islamic Science University of Malaysia: A Model for Islamic Study Development in UIN Imam Bonjol Padang," *Journal of Educational and Social Research* 11, no. 1 (January 2021): 232–44, <https://doi.org/10.36941/jesr-2021-0021>; Aabidah Ummu 'Azizah et al., "Attitudes and Views of Universitas Ahmad Dahlan to the Transable Ideology: An AIK Learning and Local Wisdom Based Preventive Approach," *Progresiva : Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Pendidikan Islam* 13, no. 02 (June 2024): 201–18, <https://doi.org/10.22219/progresiva.v13i02.32147>.

⁵¹ Abdurrahmansyah, "Design and Curriculum Implementation Based on Malay Culture in Islamic University," 2021, <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.210715.102>.

⁵² Mahbub Ghozali and Ahmad Murtaza MZ, "Integrative Development Patterns of Qur'anic Studies in Islamic Universities: An Analysis of Integrative Ideas at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta," *JURNAL TARBIYAH* 30, no. 1 (June 2023): 146, <https://doi.org/10.30829/tar.v30i1.2554>.

journal articles and books. This shows the dedication of UIN Mataram, which responds to global humanitarian problems with an intellectual attitude. Impressively, UIN Mataram has 63 professors in various disciplines, which means strengthening its position as an Islamic intellectual center in Eastern Indonesia. The works of several of its professors, such as Abdul Wahid and Atun Wardatun⁵³ and Abdul Quddus,⁵⁴ answer the challenges of UIN in its role in developing an academic and multidisciplinary Islamic paradigm. Wahid and Atun, in their article, offer the latest perspective to understand gender relations, authority, and power in Indonesia. Quddus, in his inaugural address, wrote "Islamic Eco-Theology: Reconstruction of Islamic Theology for Earth Sustainability & Human Prosperity",⁵⁵ which broke the paradigm of Islamic theology from an anthropocentric to an eco-centric approach.

The epistemology of Islamic thought that developed at UIN harmonizes religious texts with scientific investigation gradually as the transition project progresses. In the process, the transformation also promotes the ethos of Islamic education in an indirect way, where knowledge from various disciplines merges into a comprehensive understanding.⁵⁶

In addition, the historical transition from IAIN to UIN reflects a significant transformation in higher education policy, which aims to increase the relevance and legitimacy of Islamic studies in

⁵³ Abdul Wahid and Atun Wardatun, *Heterarki Masyarakat Muslim Indonesia; Pencarian Metodologi Alternatif* (IRCiSoD: IRCiSoD, 2025).

⁵⁴ Abdul Quddus, "Ecotheology Islam: Teologi Konstruktif Atasi Krisis Lingkungan," *Ulumuna* 16, no. 2 (November 2017): 311–46, <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v16i2.181>.

⁵⁵ Jarman Arroisi et al., "Pursuit of Spiritual Happiness: Abu Hamid al-Ghazali on The Theory of Human Nature," *Progresiva: Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Pendidikan Islam* 12, no. 02 (December 2023): 291–306, <https://doi.org/10.22219/progresiva.v12i02.29265>.

⁵⁶ Sekar Ayu Aryani, Sunarsih Sunarsih, and Kurnia Rahman Abadi, "Scientific Paradigm Towards World-Class University: Comparative Study on UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta and UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang," *ESENSIA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 18, no. 1 (April 2017): 13–28, <https://doi.org/10.14421/esensia.v18i1.1467>.

the contemporary academic landscape.⁵⁷ This metamorphosis lays the foundation of a paradigm that focuses not only on the mastery of religious texts but also on the application of interdisciplinary approaches that address global challenges, which are becoming increasingly important in an interconnected world.⁵⁸ In this case, Mukti Ali (IAIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta) and Harun Nasution (IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta) are the first intellectual actors to design a model for the renewal of Islamic thought at IAIN, which will later inspire the progressive thinking of several students, such as Ahmad Wahib, Djohan Effendi, M. Dawam Rahardjo (Mukti Ali student), Nurcholish Madjid (Harun Nasution student), and Ahmad Baiquni. It is through these works of young intellectuals that the discussion of religion and social transformation becomes particularly engaging in limited discussion forums.

The academic paradigm of Islamic studies that developed at UIN is a response to the dominance of normative and textual religious learning patterns in the era before the 1980s.⁵⁹ When it was still called IAIN/STAIN, the nomenclature of the subject of teaching was still limited to the science of *tafsir*, *hadith*, *fiqh*, and *ushul fiqh*. The teaching method remains *taqlidi* and traditional, emphasizing the mastery of memorizing classical Islamic texts (*turats*). Meanwhile, the cultivation of Islamic values is still indoctrinated, with minimal opportunities for opinion, criticism, and contextualization. In general, Islamic sciences are only studied as a normative system that does not open up a space for discussion of social phenomena in that era. Additionally, the teaching of sociology of religion, anthropology, critical history, and various

⁵⁷ Syamsul Arifin, "Dimensi Profetisme Pengembangan Ilmu Sosial Dalam Islam Perspektif Kuntowijoyo," *Teosofi : Jurnal Tasawuf Dan Pemikiran Islam* 4, no. 2 (2014): 477–507.

⁵⁸ Aditama Aditama, Nafik Muthohirin, and Muhammad Rafliyanto, "Analyzing Ecotheology from The Perspective of Islam and Christianity," *Progresiva : Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Pendidikan Islam* 12, no. 01 (June 2023): 131–52, <https://doi.org/10.22219/progresiva.v12i01.27291>.

⁵⁹ See Achmad Jainuri, *Ideologi Kaum Reformis: Melacak Pandangan Keagamaan Muhammadiyah Periode Awal* (Surabaya: LSAM, 2002).

subjects that integrate socio-humanities-based sciences remains very limited.

However, outside of learning activities in the classroom, Islamic studies students at IAIN are free to study various references based on critical and rational approaches, such as the *Tawhid Treatise* (*Risalah Tauhid*, 1975), written by Muslim reformer Muhammad Abduh⁶⁰ and *Islamic Theology: Historical Schools of Comparative Analysis* by Harun Nasution,⁶¹ and books on the sociology of religion by Western scholars and other domestic critical Islamic thinkers. One of the alums of IAIN Surabaya (now UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya) described the situation of student Islamic discussion in that era as a phenomenon of the intellectual peak of students at PTKIN. Instead, students gain critical and in-depth intellectual experience through discussion forums outside the classroom, which are limited to a small group of students. The discussion is usually attended by no more than 10 students, held in the mosque, field, or in front of the rector's office or faculty building in a circle, by inviting one speaker, and continued with a question and answer at the end.

The creation of more modern and inclusive Islamic studies started in the late 1970s, bringing post-traditional Muslim scholars into the social, political, and religious scene, which required changes to Islamic education methods and course structures to match modern subjects.

The discourse of Islamic thought that developed in the public sphere was the result of the reading of key figures on the social reality that occurred in that era. Among several figures who became agents of changing the discourse of progressive Islamic thought, for example, are Mukti Ali (1923–2004), Harun Nasution (1919–1998), Nurcholish Madjid (1939–2005), and Abdurrahman Wahid (1940–2009). These first-generation Muslim scholars laid the foundation for substantive Islamic discourse in Indonesia.⁶² They are intellectuals who dare to break the stagnation of Islamic

⁶⁰ See Muhammad Abduh, *Risalatut Tawhid*. (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1975).

⁶¹ Read Harun Nasution, *Teologi Islam: Aliran-Aliran Sejarah Analisa Perbandingan* (Padang Panjang: Institut Seni Indonesia Padang Pajang, 1983).

⁶² Carool Kersten, *Berebut Wacana: Pergulatan Wacana Umat Islam Indonesia Era Reformasi* (Bandung: Mizan, 2018).

thought and encourage constructive dialogue between Islamic studies and the subjects of modern thought, especially the topics of democracy, secularism, liberalism, human rights, gender, and citizenship.

Furthermore, various other Muslim intellectual works by M. Dawam Rahardjo, Amien Rais, Kuntowijoyo, M. Amin Abdullah, Ahmad Syafii Ma'arif, Adi Sasono, A. M. Saefuddin, Endang Saifuddin Anshari, and Imadudin Abdurrahim contributed to the rise of progressive Islamic discourse in Indonesia.⁶³ These thinkers spoke of Islam as a doctrine, a social transformation movement, and a tool for peace dialogue. They also examine issues of economics, development, democracy, pluralism, *civil society*, and other modern state thinking with a more open Islamic approach than in previous times. Thus, a more contextual and progressive interpretation of Islamic studies is an alternative perspective needed to address contemporary socio-religious problems.

However, at the beginning of its development, the academic paradigm of Islamic studies faced much opposition from Islamic scholars with traditional-normative beliefs. However, the dissemination of Islamic thought by this neo-modernist group continued to experience significant development until the Reform era rolled out and democracy was opened in 1998. This Islamic discourse continues to occur, primarily driven by lecturers and activists among lecturers, Islamic students from PTKIN, as well as media columnists from Islamic organizations (Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama).⁶⁴ Greg Barton describes the situation of religious discourse in those years as a phenomenon of religious

⁶³ Fachry Ali and Bachtiar Effendy, *Merambah Jalan Baru Islam* (Bandung: Mizan, 1986). Read also Greg Barton, *Gagasan Islam Liberal Di Indonesia: Pemikiran Neo-Modernisme Nurcholish Madjid, Djohan Effendi, Ahmad Wahib Dan Abdurrahman Wahid, 1968-1980* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1999). Syamsul Arifin, Tongat, and Wahyudi, *Intelektualisme Profetik: (Respons terhadap Isu-isu Kontemporer di Seputar HAM, Radikalisme, Ekologi, dan Pendidikan)* (UMMPress, 2018).

⁶⁴ Although at the beginning of Early Islamic Studies, the discourse initiated by neo-modernist Islamic groups was initially rejected by Traditionalists, this discourse eventually changed many people's views on religious doctrine regarding responses to modern social problems. See more in Barton, *Gagasan Islam Liberal Di Indonesia: Pemikiran Neo-Modernisme Nurcholish Madjid, Djohan Effendi, Ahmad Wahib Dan Abdurrahman Wahid, 1968-1980*.

discourse that had a “hatching effect,” because debates, for example, about “Liberal Islam vs. Conservative Islam,” greatly influenced the emergence of religious discussions at the university level and in rural communities.⁶⁵

Due to rising religious extremism, UIN has promoted moderate Islamic views. Scholars embed religious moderation in curricula and work to foster a peaceful, respectful, and non-violent religious life.⁶⁶ The Islamic studies curriculum at UIN embodies an integrative, multidisciplinary framework. The transition from IAIN to UIN reflects both historical evolution and a pragmatic reaction to contemporary concerns. It transcends theology to tackle social challenges, epitomizing a dynamic, contemporary, and principled approach in Indonesian Islamic higher education.⁶⁷ The aim is solely to produce scholars who can engage in contemporary religious society problems and be competitive in global discourse.

Neo-modernist Islamic scholars established the foundation for academic Islamic studies, advocating for transparency and progressive ideas. Although incomplete, these concepts were further developed by a new generation of intellectuals in the 2000s, who adopted alternative discourse in a more democratic context. This signified a second resurgence of Islamic studies. The conversion of IAIN/STAIN to UIN, supported by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Islamic Development Bank (IDB), signified

⁶⁵ Quoted from Fazlur Rahman, “Islam: Challenges and Opportunities,” in *In Alford T. Welch and P Cachia (Eds) Islam Past Influence and Present Challenge* (Edinburg: University Press, 1979), 315–27. See also Barton, *Gagasan Islam Liberal Di Indonesia: Pemikiran Neo-Modernisme Nurcholish Madjid, Djohan Effendi, Ahmad Wahid Dan Abdurrahman Wahid, 1968-1980*.

⁶⁶ Yauma Trin Sunda and Agus Zaenul Fitri, “The Effect of Aswaja Values and Javanese Islam on Students’ Moderate Islamic Thinking,” *El Harakah: Jurnal Budaya Islam* 24, no. 2 (November 2022): 301–17, <https://doi.org/10.18860/eh.v24i2.16924>; Muthohirin and Suherman, “Muhammadiyah’s Educational Philosophy and Contextualization of Islamic Moderation: Challenges to Religious Extremism.”

⁶⁷ Farabi Fakih, “Reading Ideology in Indonesia Today,” *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde / Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia* 171, no. 2 (2015): 347–63, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22134379-17102007>.

both institutional reform and a transformation in the scientific paradigm of Islamic higher education.⁶⁸

One of the impacts of the conversion of IAIN into UIN on the enthusiasm for Islamic studies with an academic paradigm is the change in nomenclature of 5 faculties; for example, what happened at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, including the Faculty of Sharia became the Faculty of Sharia and Law; the Faculty of *Ushuluddin* became the Faculty of *Ushuluddin* and Islamic Thought; the Faculty of *Adab* became the Faculty of *Adab* and Culture; the Faculty of *Da'wah* became the Faculty of *Da'wah* and Communication Sciences; and the Faculty of *Tarbiyah* changed to the Faculty of *Tarbiyah* and Teacher Training. This promotes modifications in pedagogy, encompassing curriculum, syllabus, methodologies, and varied scientific viewpoints. Education evolves to be more scholarly, analytical, and receptive. Students acquire greater opportunities for field and literary research and exhibit increased autonomy in generating transdisciplinary scientific work.⁶⁹

Thus, the conversion expands opportunities for the advancement of Islamic studies within an academic framework. Mottos such as UIN Jakarta's "Reading the World" and UIN Bandung's "Wahyu Guides Science" emphasize the necessity of integrating normative and academic dimensions. Absence of this equilibrium may result in religious education fostering fanaticism or, if excessively scholarly, engendering secularism and skepticism towards religion. Nevertheless, obstacles persist, as UIN grads infrequently achieve prominence in disciplines such as physics, medicine, or digital technology.

Changes in nomenclature that affect the formulation of course structure and syllabus, especially those that occur in the five

⁶⁸ This conversion project was initiated by UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta in 2001, followed by UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta and UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim (2004), and then continued at several other state Islamic universities in Indonesia. Regarding the concerns of this conversion project, please refer to the information provided by Abdullah, *Islamic Studies Di Perguruan Tinggi Pendekatan Integratif-Interkoneksi*.

⁶⁹ Interviewed M. Amin Abdullah on *the Institutional and Intellectual Transformation of Islamic State University* (November 2018).

faculties mentioned earlier, have an impact on the openness of attitudes and courage of students, lecturers, and UIN graduates in arguing or answering various contemporary social problems through historical, hermeneutical, and empirical-rational approaches.⁷⁰

In addition, this criticism is also supported by an informal collection of young intellectuals from IAIN/UIN Yogyakarta and Jakarta, known as *Madzab Ciputat* and *Madzab Yogyakarta*. The progressive Islamic thought of young intellectuals who belong to the Muhammadiyah Young Intellectuals Network (JIMM) and are not affiliated with it strongly colors the public debate.⁷¹ Their various writings in many national print media, books, and periodicals explained contemporary socio-political phenomena of the time, which were read through a theological approach. The strength of argument built into their various writings always combines dogmatic and academic methods. A peculiarity of thought emerged as a generational group that continued the idea of renewal of Islamic thought by Muslim intellectuals in the first generation of the 1970s.

Islamic Studies in the Post-Reformation Era

The transformation of Islamic studies into a more academic and critical field gained momentum after the post-Reformation era, especially following the IAIN/STAIN to UIN conversion under Government Regulation No. 45 of 2002. This transition reshaped Islamic higher education in Indonesia with a focus on

⁷⁰ In addition to being influenced by the IAIN conversion project into UIN, the basis of Islamic renewal thinking, which later influenced the pattern of religious thought and views of UIN scholars, was laid by Mukti Ali when establishing the Department of Comparative Religion at Sunan Kalijaga UIN Yogyakarta (1970). Mukti Ali's efforts in laying the foundations of Islamic renewal are explained through five projects, including (1) the purification of Islamic teachings; (2) the Reformation of Islamic doctrine with modernity; (3) Islamic education reform; (4) defending Islam from outside influences and attacks; and (5) releasing the Indonesian nation from the shackles of colonialism. Read more in Mukti Ali, *Alam Pikiran Islam Modern Di Indonesia*, 3rd ed. (Yogyakarta: Jajasan Nida, 1971), 21.

⁷¹ Carool Kersten, *Berebut Wacana: Pergulatan Wacana Umat Islam Indonesia Era Reformasi*.

transformative values, multiculturalism, and a global outlook. Its success is reflected in three key areas: curriculum reform, institutional development, and the adoption of modern pedagogy.

PTKIN's success in reforming the curriculum is most evident in its integration of Islamic disciplines with contemporary academic disciplines.⁷² This curriculum reform aims to establish UIN as an inclusive Islamic university that reconciles traditional Islam with modernity, while responding to global educational demands. At UIN Jakarta, the conversion aims to enhance Islamic higher education through the integration of Islamic and secular disciplines.⁷³ The integrated curriculum is intended as a holistic vision to produce competent Muslim scholars, respond to scientific developments, and address humanitarian challenges.

Asmanto said that updating Islamic education by adding programs that integrate Islamic studies with social sciences and information technology will help students grow in a well-rounded way.⁷⁴ So, this new approach to the curriculum addresses the misconception that UIN graduates lack skills, are unprofessional, and cannot work in non-religious fields. Precisely with this new approach, UIN's curriculum reform can produce Islamic scholars who have spiritual awareness and intellectual competence.

In the post-reform era, UIN institutions experienced both institutional and epistemological reforms. Several PTKINs, including UIN Sunan Ampel, UIN Jakarta, UIN Mataram, and UIN Yogyakarta, began positioning women in key academic and leadership roles. This shift reflects a commitment to progressive thinking, inclusivity, and gender equality, demonstrating how

⁷² Tasman Hamami and Zalik Nuryana, "A Holistic–Integrative Approach of the Muhammadiyah Education System in Indonesia," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 78, no. 4 (December 2022), <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v78i4.7607>.

⁷³ Presidential Decree (May 20, 2002). Retrieved from Presidential Decree (Keppres) on the Change of IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta to UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta.

⁷⁴ Budi Asmanto et al., "The Evolution of Islamic Educational Institutions in Indonesia," *JMKSP (Jurnal Manajemen, Kepemimpinan, Dan Supervisi Pendidikan)* 8, no. 1 (February 2023): 262–72, <https://doi.org/10.31851/jmksp.v8i1.11117>.

UIN actively challenges gender-biased traditions and fosters a more equitable model of Islamic education.

The institutional dynamics of UIN also involve independence (autonomy) in determining the university's internal policies, which enables management to be more open and flexible. This autonomy also provides a massive opportunity for UIN to open various new study programs, which are generally based on secular sciences, such as those in mathematics, biology education, medicine, architectural sciences, psychology, engineering, early childhood education, chemistry, and others. Meanwhile, the study program of religion, science of the Quran, *al-Hadith*, *tarbiyah*, *sharia*, *da'wah*, and *Ushuluddin* was expanded with interdisciplinary teaching methods. Thus, this institutional reform contributes significantly to the new face of PTKIN, which is more dynamic and modern.

UIN has opened more than 100 new study programs to date, more than two decades after the first conversion project began. The introduction of new study programs has successfully attracted many students, positioning UIN as a competitor that public universities without a religious basis should consider. The Directorate General of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia noted in the *2020 Higher Education Statistics* research that Islamic Religious Education (undergraduate programs) and Islamic Education Management (master programs) were two study programs under UIN that were included as the two most extensive study programs that attracted students in Indonesia.⁷⁵

UIN implements modern pedagogical practices by creating an active and participatory teaching system, integrating technology into learning, conducting authentic and formative interdisciplinary and contextual assessments, and fostering the development of soft skills and critical thinking.⁷⁶ The teaching of

⁷⁵ PDDikti Kemendikbud, "Statistik Pendidikan Tinggi (Higer Education Statistic) 2020," *Pangkalan Data Pendidikan Tinggi*, 2020, 1–300.

⁷⁶ Luqman Hakim, Anfasa Naufal Reza Irsali, and Tsamarah Nabilatul Watsiqoh, "The Innovation of Information and Communication Technology in Contextual Teaching and Learning Models Based PAI Learning," *Progresiva*:

Islamic studies continues to be associated with contemporary issues, such as human rights, the environment, and technology.⁷⁷ Lecturers employ a teaching approach that encourages students to examine the behavior of religious communities through social sciences, humanities, and scientific approaches. It aims to form character, ethics, creativity, and analytical thinking skills. Then, since the COVID-19 pandemic occurred in Indonesia (2020), the integration of technology in learning has become more prevalent by utilizing e-learning, such as Moodle, Google Classroom, and other blended learning methods.⁷⁸ Through this modern pedagogical adoption, the teaching of Islamic studies at UIN will produce pious undergraduate graduates and competently contribute to providing solutions to global problems. Thus, this modern pedagogical adoption also marks a shift from dogmatic to active, dialogical, and transformative learning patterns.

Despite the various successes, the development of Islamic studies has not been without challenges. The modernization of PTKIN encounters several new and real challenges in the post-reform era. These challenges include two internal and external factors. There are at least five internal factors that PTKIN is currently facing, namely: 1) a decrease in the number of students taking religious study programs compared to the Faculty of Psychology, the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, the Faculty of Medicine, and several other science faculties⁷⁹; 2) insufficient teaching staff; 3) the nomenclature of the changing

Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Pendidikan Islam 12, no. 02 (December 2023): 275–90, <https://doi.org/10.22219/progresiva.v12i02.28525>.

⁷⁷ Muhammad Ahmad Ibrahim AlJahsh, "Science and Islamic Ethics: Navigating Artificial Womb Technology through Quranic Principles," *Heliyon* 10, no. 17 (2024): e36793, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e36793>.

⁷⁸ Natalia Zakharova et al., "The Specifics of Integrating Distance Learning Technologies with Traditional Classroom Instruction: How to Design Educational Curricula in Modern Education?," *Heliyon* 10, no. 20 (2024): e38740, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e38740>.

⁷⁹ Amir - Syafurrohman, "Transformasi IAIN Menjadi UIN Sebuah Dilema Pendidikan Tinggi Islam," *Jurnal Penelitian Agama* 22, no. 2 (2021): 167–86, <https://doi.org/10.24090/jpa.v22i2.2022.pp167-186>.

curriculum/courses; 4) limited infrastructure; and 5) varying levels of student achievement.⁸⁰

Meanwhile, external challenges arise due to the dynamics of identity politics, as evidenced by the rise of ultra-conservative Islamic movements and the infiltration of ideologies and narratives of religious extremism through offline and online channels.⁸¹

Although the challenges posed by internal factors are very striking, the government and PTKIN institutional leaders are overcoming them through strategic planning and adequate resource allocation. Meanwhile, in responding to challenges from external factors, the Ministry of Religion and PTKIN leaders continue to be resilient to the threat of radical Islamic ideologies and movements through the dissemination of religious moderation values.⁸² In fact, on several occasions, several PTKIN leaders have also expressed their special attention to various challenges in the post-reform era. The Rector of UIN Sunan Kalijaga for the 2016-2020 period, Yudian Wahyudi, is wary of the threat of religious extremism and the Islamic state on campus. He threatened to expel students who were involved in radical Islamic movement activities. To fight against religious extremism, Islamic universities should adjust their curriculum to include ideas of religious moderation and multicultural education.

The modernization of UIN is required to further demonstrate its relevance to contemporary issues during an ever-evolving political and social landscape. For example, questioning the relationship between Islamic studies and social and political phenomena remains important. This illustrates that the paradigm

⁸⁰ Sudarto, "Madrasah Education Reform In Indonesia," *Maqolat: Journal of Islamic Studies* 1, no. 1 (January 2023): 18-24, <https://doi.org/10.58355/maqolat.v1i1.4>; Chalik, *Dampak Konversi IAIN Ke UIN: Pengalaman UIN Syahid Jakarta*.

⁸¹ Abdul Malik, "New Variants of Ultra-Conservative Islamic Schools in Indonesia: A Study on Islamic School Endeavor with Islamic Group Movement," *Power and Education* 16, no. 1 (March 2024): 14-28, <https://doi.org/10.1177/17577438231163042>.

⁸² Benny Afwadzi et al., "Religious Moderation of Islamic University Students in Indonesia: Reception of Religious Texts," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 80, no. 1 (March 2024), <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v80i1.9369>.

of Islamic higher education is not an ivory tower but rather develops because it is influenced by social, political, cultural, and all aspects of life. Therefore, PTKIN is advised to encourage the formation of critical thinking and civic involvement among students to facilitate their active participation in community life.⁸³ This situation underscores the necessity for curriculum revisions, the adoption of digital technology, and motivating stakeholders at PTKIN to innovate and respond actively to globalization.⁸⁴

Table 1. The development of Islamic studies at UIN in the post-Reformation era

Aspect	Developments	Challenges	Responses
Curriculum Reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Integration of Islamic disciplines with contemporary academic fields (e.g., social sciences, IT). · A holistic vision to produce scholars with spiritual and intellectual competence. · Interdisciplinary teaching methods in Islamic studies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Decline in enrollment for religious study programs compared to secular fields. · Curriculum nomenclature changes. · Varying student achievement levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Strategic planning and resource allocation by the government and PTKIN leaders. · Emphasis on curriculum innovation to align with globalization demands.
Institutional Dynamic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Increased autonomy for UINs in policymaking and program development. · Expansion of study program (100+ new programs, including secular sciences). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Insufficient teaching staff. · Limited infrastructure. · Competition with non-religious public universities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Opening interdisciplinary programs to attract more students. · Institutional reforms to modernize management and governance.

⁸³ Cecep Sumarna, "New Paradigm of Indonesian Islamic Education: Analysis of Changes in the Relations of Islamic Education Institutions with Post-Reform Political Power," *INFLUENCE: INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SCIENCE REVIEW* 5, no. 2 (April 2023): 108–19, <https://doi.org/10.54783/influencejournal.v5i2.140>.

⁸⁴ Ali Nurdin, "Modernization of Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia at A Glance: Barriers and Opportunities," *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding* 8, no. 3 (March 2021): 288, <https://doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v8i3.2490>.

Aspect	Developments	Challenges	Responses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Gender inclusivity (women in strategic roles). 		
Pedagogical Adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Active, participatory teaching systems. · Integration of technology (e.g., e-learning platforms). · Contextual assessments and focus on critical thinking. · Linking Islamic studies to contemporary issues (human rights, environment). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Resistance to shifts from dogmatic to dialogical learning. · Digital divide in technology adoption. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Training for lecturers in modern pedagogical methods. · Promotion of blended learning and digital tools.

Conclusion

The institutional transformation and shifting epistemological orientation of Indonesia's State Islamic Universities (UIN) have marked the emergence of a more academic, open, and critical paradigm within Islamic sciences. Islamic studies are no longer confined to normative and traditional domains; instead, they are being recontextualized through interdisciplinary integration with modern scientific disciplines, ranging from social sciences and humanities to technology and environmental studies. This integrative paradigm—rooted in the dynamic interplay between revelation (*naqli*) and reason (*aqli*)—has fostered a new academic ethos that is inclusive, contextual, and globally engaged. It encourages the development of Islamic scholarship that is not only faithful to tradition but also responsive to contemporary societal challenges. As a result, Islamic higher education is becoming a site where classical knowledge dialogues with modernity, creating space for new interpretations, critical inquiry, and practical contributions to the broader academic and public spheres. It reflects a meaningful and strategic shift in how Islamic knowledge is produced, taught, and applied within higher education.

institutions in the post-reformation era, signaling the maturation of UINs as institutions of both religious and intellectual renewal.

However, the development of Islamic studies within UINs still faces enduring challenges. The decreasing interest in religious study programs, the need for more qualified academic personnel, and infrastructure improvement are internal concerns that require strategic interventions. Externally, issues such as identity politics and the persistent threat of religious extremism continue to demand resilient institutional responses and evidence-based policymaking. Addressing these challenges is crucial for affirming UIN's identity as a dynamic institution—capable of bridging revelation and science, tradition and modernity, Islam and global realities. Future studies should further explore how UINs can operationalize this integrative paradigm in curriculum design, research collaboration, and public engagement to strengthen their role in shaping inclusive and transformative Islamic scholarship.

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