



## Internal and External Cooperation in Private Islamic Religious Colleges (STAI Pati's Efforts Towards Competitive Advantage)

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### ABSTRACT:

This research is motivated by the condition of Private Islamic Religious Colleges including Pati Islamic College which is relatively limited, where the development costs only come from student payments, so of course the situation is very different when compared to State Islamic Religious Colleges (PTKIN) when viewed from the side of facilities, infrastructure and other budgets. to support existence and competitive advantage, it is necessary to cooperate with other agencies. This study aims to determine the form of cooperation carried out by Pati Islamic College and its implementation both internally and externally. This is important to study, because Pati Islamic College is a private Islamic College which has several limitations compared to State Universities when facing various problems and challenges in improving quality towards competitive advantage. This research is a descriptive qualitative research with data sources obtained from interviews, observations and documentation. The results of this study indicate that efforts to increase competitive advantage are carried out by optimizing cooperation starting from the strengths and needs within the institution, good cooperation management based on mutually beneficial commitments and also to lead to institutions that are widely known to the public and have competitiveness. The form of cooperation is carried out in academic and non-academic fields, both internally and externally. Internal cooperation is carried out between study programs or between institutions that still exist within the Higher

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Education environment itself, while external cooperation is carried out between universities. All cooperation carried out refers to the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, namely, education and teaching, research and community service.
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## **Introduction**

Increasingly tight competitions indirectly affect private Islamic religious universities to always try to maintain their existence in the midst of society. Many factors influence the helplessness of these private Islamic religious universities, including; First, the freedom of State Islamic Religious Universities (PTKIN) to open various departments and study programs so that the existence of Private Islamic Religious Universities (PTKIS) is increasingly threatened. Second, Law Number 12 of 2012, concerning Higher Education, which requires all Universities to be accredited, both institutions and the study programs they manage. This encourages Private Universities to compete to maintain and even improve their accreditation status. Third, society tends to entrust their children to study at State Islamic Religious Universities (PTKIN) rather than Private Islamic Religious Universities (PTKIS). It is as if Private Islamic Religious Universities (PTKIS) tend to only accept overflow from prospective students who are not accepted at State Religious Universities (PTKIN) whose numbers are also not that many. Meanwhile, fourthly, as stated in Article 11 of Ministerial Decree No. 234 of 2000 concerning Guidelines for the Establishment of Higher Education Institutions, it states that the source of funding for higher education institutions is provided by the relevant higher education institution organizers to ensure the smooth running of higher education institutions in accordance with the role, duties and functions of higher education institutions.

It is not easy for a Private Islamic Religious College (PTKIS) to be able to compete with State Islamic Religious Colleges (PTKIN) which in terms of facilities, infrastructure and budget are all fully supported by the government. Meanwhile, Private Islamic Religious Colleges (PTKIS) are relatively limited, where the development costs only come from student payments, so of course the situation is very different when compared to State Islamic Religious Colleges (PTKIN). It is also undeniable that with very limited funding sources or budgets, many PTKIS do not yet have adequate learning places, and some still do not have their own buildings and are still rented. Given these conditions, of course, achieving

competitive advantage is a difficult thing that certainly requires determination, seriousness, and continuous business continuity.

If adopting some corporate strategies, they always try to realize a strong competitive position through cooperation with their suppliers. So if applied to PTKIS institutions, competitive advantage can be built in many ways, including by creating products or output in the form of quality graduates, providing good service to customers, and building an efficient marketing system. This shows that competitive advantage can be achieved by directing a customer-oriented college strategy accompanied by quality service and marketing effectiveness and efficiency.

To build an efficient marketing or distribution system, Ganesan added that efforts to build competitive advantage can only be done through long-term cooperative relationships. (Ganesan, Shankar, 1994) This opinion is supported by Morgan and Hunt who implicitly state that relationship marketing is a concept to face competition today. Their research states that there are several aspects of partnership including the benefits of relationships, appreciation and communication. (Morgan, Robert M & Sehlby D Hunt, 1994) In addition, Gabriano and Johnson focus more on the discussion of commitment and trust, thus encouraging companies to view long-term investment as cooperation, and without ignoring short-term profits, the results of which will increase the efficiency, productivity and effectiveness of the partnership business. (Johnson, Jean L, 1999) In James as quoted by Joko, the working partnership model is built through constructs that influence trust, namely communication and outcomes given comparison levels which lead to positive results and firm working relationships, namely satisfaction. (Joko Cahyono, 2010)

In order to face the various problems mentioned above, Private Islamic Religious Colleges should have an appropriate strategy to deal with them, including in building cooperation. Because this cooperation can be an important part in overcoming several weaknesses experienced by PTKIS. Optimizing PTKIS cooperation in accordance with internal and external demands is important to do. Cooperation must experience a shift and increase towards better quality related to academics and non-academically. This strategy can basically provide direction to organizations or institutions to face challenges and threats that arise at present and in the future by considering their strengths and weaknesses. As previously described, it can be concluded that the key to the success of an

organization in the future lies in the organization's ability to establish long-term cooperation with several parties. Based on the description above, the researcher will focus the research on how to determine the forms of cooperation carried out by STAI Pati in order to achieve competitive advantage.

## **Literature review**

Cooperation is a form of social interaction, namely a joint effort of two or more people to carry out tasks to achieve a common goal. (Abu, 2007) Roucek and Warren in Ahmadi said that working together means working together to achieve a common goal. Usually involves the division of tasks, where each person does each job that is their responsibility in order to achieve a common goal. (Abu, 2007) Hadari Nawawi defines cooperation as an effort to achieve a common goal that has been set through the division of tasks / work not as a work compartment but as a single work unit, all of which are directed at achieving goals. (Engkoswara, 2012) According to Berry and Parasuraman in Morgan & Hunt (Morgan & Hunt, 1994) it is stated that relationships are built on the basis of mutually beneficial commitments such as in the process of one consumer becoming loyal to a particular brand and then making repeat purchases. This cooperation is divided into two, namely internal cooperation and external cooperation. Internal cooperation is cooperation carried out by universities with other parties that are still under the same auspices or one agency. External cooperation is cooperation between universities and other parties outside the institution. This cooperation is usually done by collaborating with institutions, business entities or other universities both domestically and abroad.

The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture through the Cooperation Report System or Simlemkerma has released 20 forms of cooperation that can be carried out by universities which can be realized in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or Memorandum of Agreement (MoA). In general, the 20 forms of cooperation are a fraction of the campus "jargon" of the Tridharma of Higher Education, namely Education, Research, and Community Service. Before the formation of the 20 forms or the term "skim" of cooperation, the formulation of cooperation only applied to the Tridharma of Higher Education.

If this is used in the MoU, it is certainly reasonable as part of the formalities and mutual agreements that apply at the Ministry of Education and Culture.

However, this will be complicated if applied to the MoA which is a continuation of the MoU. For that, below are 20 Schemes of Cooperation Forms taken from the Lamkerma Kemendikbud (Permendikbud, 2014). According to the statement of the Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture Nadiem Makarim, this form of cooperation will make it easier for units, faculties or study programs to formulate the form of cooperation.

Cooperation between universities with other universities, business and industry, community and government brings benefits to students, academics and institutions. Cooperation fostered by universities supports efforts to prepare non-technical skills (soft skills) for students, in addition to learning academic knowledge and reasoning (knowledge) for students, technical skills (hard skills). The progress of institutional resources and infrastructure as a result of cooperation also indirectly supports learning for students. So universities need to plan cooperation programs well.

## Method

This research is a field research with a descriptive qualitative approach with the aim of analyzing internal and external cooperation of STAI Pati towards competitive advantage. Primary data was obtained from the Head of STAI Pati, Deputy Head and cooperation documents. Secondary data was obtained from staff and other scientific works relevant to this research. The data were collected by interview, observation and documentation, then analyzed with several stages including data reduction, data condensation, data analysis and conclusions.

## Results

STAI Pati is one of the PTKI institutions that does not have enough human resources with a background in various disciplines, accompanied by the availability of very inadequate supporting facilities. This is what certainly has shortcomings or even inability to carry out various activities of the Tridharma of Higher Education (education and teaching, research, and community service), so that in order to contribute to national development, this university requires cooperation. because through cooperation between institutions, both in academic and non-academic fields, it will be able to improve the ability of the institution or to achieve competitive advantage.

The cooperation carried out by STAI Pati is divided into two, namely internal cooperation and external cooperation. Internal cooperation is cooperation carried out by universities with other parties that are still under the same auspices or one agency. External cooperation is cooperation between universities with other parties outside the agency. This cooperation is carried out by collaborating with institutions, both institutions related to academics and non-academics, business entities, government agencies and other universities both at home and abroad with a pattern of mentor-mentee cooperation or collaboration.

In general, the relationship that is desired to be achieved in this internal and external cooperation is in the form of depth and closeness between the institution and the partner. This relationship is very much needed for continuity and sustainability. All activities are focused on generating value for customers. The relationship that is built is assessed from the perspective of benefits for satisfying customer needs, so that the relationship is able to generate value for customers, the relationship will promise a long-term relationship and have an impact on the performance of the university concerned. The principles carried out in this cooperation standard are prioritizing the interests of national development, respecting equality of quality, mutual respect, producing improvements in the quality of education, sustainable and considering cultural diversity at the local, national, and/or international levels.

The form of cooperation that has been carried out by STAI Pati is manifested in a memorandum of understanding (MoU) and memorandum of agreement (MoA), where the work formulation only applies to the Tridharma of Higher Education including education, teaching, research and community service. The MoU is a formal part of the mutual agreement then followed up with the MoA. This cooperation will make it easier for units, faculties or study programs to formulate the form of cooperation. Even the points mentioned can still be developed further according to the agreement that will be implemented. The parties responsible for cooperation at STAI Pati are the chairman, vice chairman, quality assurance institution and head of public relations and cooperation. The chairman is responsible for determining and ratifying the Higher Education Cooperation Standards, signing the agreed cooperation, giving a mandate to carry out cooperation in technical matters and delegating cooperation activities to relevant implementers. The vice chairman in charge of public relations and cooperation is responsible for compiling the Higher Education Cooperation

Standards, coordinating and synchronizing within the university itself and external parties (agencies outside the university), planning, developing, and implementing cooperation with other parties, studying and checking each article in the draft MoU and monitoring and evaluating the implementation of cooperation.

The Quality Assurance Institute (LPM) is responsible for assisting the Vice Chairperson in preparing Higher Education Cooperation Standards, assisting the Vice Chairperson in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of cooperation. Meanwhile, the Public Relations and Cooperation Section is responsible for administering all cooperation, assisting the administrative process of cooperation proposed by the Department, institution, study program, team, and/or individual within the higher education environment. In addition, it also facilitates, prepares and implements the MoU signing ceremony, develops and maintains the information system and administration of work implementation. As for the Implementers of Higher Education Cooperation, they are institutions, study programs, teams, and/or individuals within the higher education environment. As implementers, these implementing ranks are responsible to the Chairperson.

Cooperation that has been carried out internally is more directed at efforts to work together in a mutual cooperation manner in advancing the institution so that the institution can be competitive in a superior manner. In its implementation, this internal cooperation between institutions complements each other's shortcomings, fulfills each other's needs and helps each other if needed, both in academic and non-academic fields, while external cooperation is another party, meaning individuals, associations, foundations, and/or institutions, both legal entities and non-legal entities, which carry out activities by mobilizing energy and thoughts to achieve humanitarian, social and religious goals that are non-profit in nature.

The collaboration includes: 1) Joint research, which is an agreement to collaborate in terms of joint research, namely conducting research involving lecturers, students or academics with reference to the benefits of both parties. 2) Student exchange, carried out with the aim of adding experience and knowledge to each campus that is invited to collaborate, and is currently also carried out through the Independent Campus program to study in one faculty or study program between institutions that collaborate with the nearest campus. 3) Scientific

periodical publication, in this collaboration, formulates the creation of journals and there is a memorandum of understanding in it whose purpose is to benefit both parties who collaborate, both with fellow PTKIS and State Universities. 4) Organizing Scientific seminars/conferences, including joint activities in holding national or international seminars whose participants consist of two parties from the University or even from outside the campus concerned or other institutions. 5) Community Service, in the form of joint activities between lecturers or students from one campus with another or cooperation involving the Research and Community Service Institute unit between Universities. 6) Joint Curriculum/ Program Development, including by aligning perceptions of a curriculum. 7) Graduate Distribution, namely creating trade jobs, or job exchanges that are mutually beneficial for both parties. 8) Sending practitioners as lecturers, by asking their figures to give lectures that are conducted at certain moments in the form of public lectures or general stadiums. 9) Lecturer and Instructor Training to strengthen human resources. 10) Credit transfer, recognition of a number of study loads (SKS) that have been obtained by a student at a campus, so that so far it has been known as transfer students.

## **Discussion**

The cooperation implemented by STAI Pati both internally in higher education institutions and externally in other institutions is an effort to solve the institutional isolation faced by higher education institutions, both at the local, regional, national, and international levels, especially in efforts to improve the academic quality of each higher education institution. The scope of this cooperation covers many fields which of course support the improvement and achievement of the Tridharma of Higher Education. The form of cooperation carried out is in accordance with the statement of the Minister of Education and Culture that there are 20 schemes of cooperation that can be carried out by Higher Education Institutions with other Higher Education Institutions or with other institutions to improve quality. (Permendikbud no. 14, 2014)

The efforts that have been made in cooperation are one form of social interaction between institutions internally in Higher Education Institutions and between institutions outside of Higher Education Institutions to achieve the same and mutually beneficial goals. This is in accordance with Abu's opinion that cooperation is a joint effort of two or more people to carry out tasks to achieve

the desired goals together. (Abu Ahmadi, 2007) Roucek and Warren in Ahmadi said that working together means working together to achieve common goals. Usually involves the division of tasks, where each person does each job that is his/her responsibility in order to achieve a common goal. (Abu Ahmadi, 2007) Hadari Nawawi defines cooperation as an effort to achieve a common goal that has been set through the division of tasks/work not as a work compartment but as a single work unit, all of which are directed at achieving goals. (Engkoswara and Aan Komariah, 2012)

The principle of mutual benefit implemented is in accordance with what Berry and Parasuraman put forward in Morgan & Hunt that relationships are built on the basis of mutually beneficial commitments (Morgan, Robert M & Sehlby D Hunt, 1994) such as in the process of one consumer becoming loyal to a particular brand and then making repeat purchases. Part of the partnership identifies that the commitment between them is the key to achieving results that create value for them, and they strive to build and maintain valuable monetary attributes in their cooperative relationships. Distributors whose role as intermediaries specifically do not take leadership in the working relationship. The responsibility for leadership is generally in top management. On the other hand, distributors have the responsibility to encourage the development of relationships with end-use customers and the responsibility for the distributor's work must fulfill commitments with the manufacturer. (Anderson, James C, & James A. Narus, 1990)

Cooperation is a joint effort that is carried out consciously by supporting and strengthening each other so that good synergy is achieved. The existence of this synergy can be seen from the existence of better results when compared to working alone. (Multi Media College, 2015) Good cooperation is mutualistic or mutually beneficial cooperation. In order for cooperation in various fields carried out by universities with various parties both domestically and abroad to be carried out without violating applicable laws and regulations and in line with the vision and mission of the university concerned, there needs to be a standard for domestic and foreign cooperation.

All the cooperation that has been done is to achieve the competitive advantage of the institution. Competitive advantage is an advantage possessed by an organization or company, where the advantage is used to compete and compete with other organizations or companies, to get something. A factor is said

to have a competitive advantage when the factor has something that competitors do not have, does something better than other factors, or is able to do something that other factors cannot do. (Kuncoro, M, 2006)

The superiority of an institution can arise from the ability of the institution to utilize various resources and capabilities as strategic assets. The success of managing these strategic assets will determine the unique advantage of the company that is able to create a differential position compared to competitors. If competitive advantage is based on structural characteristics, such as market power, economies of scale, or product lines, then currently the emphasis on business to deliver superior value consistently becomes the focus on its customers. To do this, competitive advantage is not only a function in the role of the institution but is more dependent on the ability of the institution to change radically.

There are four basic needs for resources that must be met in achieving sustainable competitive advantage, namely: (Ni Nyoman-resmi-ni ketut adi mekarsari, 2017) a). Value, with the added value owned will increase the company's competitive advantage. b). Uniqueness among similar companies and potential competitors. If a company has its own uniqueness, its competitive advantage among competitors will increase. c). Cannot be imitated perfectly. Companies with products that cannot be imitated perfectly by their competitors have added value in achieving competitive advantage, d). There must be no similar strategy that can replace resources. If there is no strategy that can replace resources, then a company will achieve its own competitive advantage.

Collaboration can be carried out through planning, developing previous interactions and not infrequently in the form of utilizing the emergence of opportunities that require strategy adaptation (Samimi & Silva, 2019). Strategy adaptation is a natural thing in dynamic situations (Barizki et al., 2021) as a form of institutional agility. However, through good strategic planning, it will be clearer in providing a picture of the target of cooperation partners, so that the hope of cooperation will be more dominantly realized from planning based on strategic needs and identification of opportunities rather than unexpected opportunities that require strategic adaptation in their follow-up. So it is hoped that cooperation is related to strategic planning so that implementation is more strategically valuable, as is the strategic role of graduate competence in mastering

knowledge, hard skills and soft skills, which contribute to the superiority and competitiveness of institutions.

Good strategic planning will provide guidance not only in determining strategic partner targets, but will also provide guidance in choosing various alternative forms of Cooperation activities that are more appropriate for student competency development and more strategically valuable in contributing to the superiority and competitiveness of institutions. In his work *Competitive Strategy*, Michael P. reveals several strategies that companies can use to compete, namely; 1) Competition is the core of success and failure. Success or failure depends on the company's courage to compete. Without daring to compete, success is impossible to achieve. (Michael E Porter: 1997)

## Conclusion

Based on the description above, the author concludes that the demands for improving quality that apply to all Islamic religious universities, both state and private, have become a challenge for Islamic religious universities to adapt and compete. Therefore, there are many ways that can be used to realize competitive advantages, one of which is to establish cooperation both internally and externally

a. Internal cooperation is carried out between one work unit and another work unit within the scope of the Islamic religious university itself, both in academic and non-academic fields.

b. External cooperation

External cooperation is cooperation carried out in academic and/or non-academic fields with other universities, the business world, or other parties, both domestically and abroad. The purpose of cooperation between universities is to increase the effectiveness, efficiency, productivity, innovation, quality, and relevance of the implementation of the Tridharma of higher education. The forms of cooperation patterns that can be carried out by universities are (1) mentor-mentee, and/or; (2) collaboration. All forms of cooperation that are carried out should be based on the strategic plan and statutes of the university.

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