

## GOVERNANCE AND INTERNATIONALIZATION OF INDONESIAN ISLAMIC HIGHER EDUCATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF UIII & UIN SGD BANDUNG

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### ABSTRACT

Governance and internationalization are critical determinants in the transformation of Islamic higher education institutions into globally competitive entities. This study explores the governance frameworks and internationalization strategies of Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia (UIII) and Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung (UIN SGD Bandung), focusing on their alignment with Salmi's (2009) world-class university transformation model, which emphasizes talent concentration, abundant resources, and favorable governance. Through qualitative analysis of secondary data, including institutional annual reports (2021–2023) and semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, this research identifies disparities in autonomy, resource mobilization, and internationalization initiatives stemming from differences in governance status—PTN-BH for UIII and PTN-BLU for UIN SGD Bandung. Findings reveal that UIII leverages its autonomy to enhance resource flexibility, establish global partnerships, and attract a diverse international student body, positioning itself as a global hub for Islamic scholarship. Conversely, UIN SGD Bandung focuses on regional engagement through outward mobility and dual-degree programs but faces challenges not only in financial independence but also in its limited prioritization in national-level internationalization policies. These factors constrain its ability to implement more impactful global initiatives and enhance postgraduate program quality. The study concludes that while UIII exemplifies third-generation cross-border education, UIN SGD Bandung remains within the first-generation model. Furthermore, criticism of governance and internationalization becomes an essential aspect of this research, considering the disparities between the two that mutually impact these aspects.

**Keywords:** Indonesian Islamic higher education; governance; internationalization; world-class university; UIII; UIN SGD Bandung

## TATA KELOLA DAN INTERNASIONALISASI PENDIDIKAN TINGGI ISLAM INDONESIA: STUDI KOMPARATIF TERHADAP UIII & UIN SGD BANDUNG

### ABSTRAK

Tata kelola dan internasionalisasi merupakan determinan penting dalam transformasi institusi pendidikan tinggi Islam menjadi entitas yang kompetitif secara global. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi kerangka tata kelola dan strategi internasionalisasi Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia (UIII) dan Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung (UIN SGD Bandung), dengan fokus pada kesesuaiannya dengan model transformasi world-class university menurut Salmi (2009), yang menekankan konsentrasi talenta, kelimpahan sumber daya, dan tata kelola yang mendukung. Melalui analisis kualitatif terhadap data sekunder, termasuk laporan tahunan institusi (2021–2023) dan wawancara semi terstruktur dengan administrator universitas, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi disparitas dalam otonomi, mobilisasi sumber daya, dan inisiatif internasionalisasi yang disebabkan oleh perbedaan status tata kelola—PTN-BH untuk UIII dan PTN-BLU untuk UIN SGD Bandung. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa UIII memanfaatkan otonomi untuk meningkatkan fleksibilitas sumber daya, membangun kemitraan global, dan menarik mahasiswa internasional yang beragam, menjadikannya pusat global untuk studi Islam. Sebaliknya, UIN SGD Bandung berfokus pada keterlibatan regional melalui mobilitas luar negeri dan program gelar ganda, tetapi menghadapi tantangan tidak hanya dalam kemandirian finansial, tetapi juga karena kurangnya prioritas dalam kebijakan internasionalisasi di tingkat nasional. Faktor-faktor ini membatasi kemampuan UIN SGD Bandung untuk melaksanakan inisiatif global yang lebih berdampak dan meningkatkan kualitas program pascasarjana. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa UIII mencerminkan pendidikan lintas-batas generasi ketiga (third-generation cross-border education), sementara UIN SGD Bandung masih berada dalam model generasi pertama. Selain itu, kritik terhadap tata kelola dan internasionalisasi menjadi sebuah hal yang esensial dalam riset ini. Mengingat hadirnya ketimpangan antar keduanya yang saling berimplikasi dalam kedua aspek tersebut.

**Kata kunci:** pendidikan tinggi Islam Indonesia; tata kelola, internasionalisasi; *world-class university*; UIII; UIN SGD Bandung

## INTRODUCTION

olved alongside the nation's history. Beginning with Sekolah Tinggi Islam (STI) in the 1940s, which later became Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII), it developed into PTAIN in the 1960s, then IAIN, and eventually UIN in the 2000s. These transformations reflect efforts to integrate Islamic scholarship with general sciences while preserving a strong religious identity (Arifudin, 2021; Nurdin, 2021).

Despite significant progress in terms of the number of institutions, programs offered, and accessibility, Islamic higher education in Indonesia still faces substantial challenges, particularly in quality and global competitiveness. On the global stage, these institutions often lag behind in key performance indicators such as research productivity, program accreditation, and international rankings. For instance, only Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta and Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang have made it into the top 20 Indonesian universities according to Webometrics, while Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta remains ranked at 23rd (Bridgestock, 2021; Webometrics, 2023). This gap underscores the need for greater attention to structural factors that influence the performance of Islamic higher education institutions.

In discussions about transforming institutions into world-class universities (WCU), governance has been identified as a critical element, alongside the concentration of talent and abundant resources. Governance, in this context, refers not only to administrative frameworks but also to institutional autonomy, efficient resource management, and the capacity for innovation in response to global dynamics. However, there is a significant disparity in governance status and implementation between UIII, which began its operational activities only 3–4 years ago and was immediately granted PTN-BH (state university with legal entity) status, and UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, which has existed since the 1960s but remains categorized as a PTN-BLU (public service agency state university).

Internationalization is central to achieving World-Class University (WCU) status. It is defined as the integration of international, intercultural, and global dimensions into the purpose, functions, and delivery of higher education. Knight (2004) encompassing both internationalization at home and cross-border activi-

ties such as student mobility and global research collaboration. Knight (2014) later expanded this through the Three Generations of Cross-Border Education: from student mobility, to program and provider mobility, to the formation of education hubs that attract global talent, institutions, and innovation ecosystems.

On the policy level, Salmi (2009) outlined three state-led approaches to building world-class universities: supporting select high-potential institutions, restructuring through mergers, or establishing new institutions from scratch. Although not solely focused on internationalization, Salmi's framework highlights the strategic value of global engagement in national higher education agendas. Combined, Knight's conceptual tools and Salmi's strategic models emphasize that internationalization must be viewed not merely as a set of activities, but as a transformative process shaping institutional identity, capacity, and global relevance.

UIII, as a new university designed with a global vision, has demonstrated remarkable progress, successfully attracting students from 77 countries within its first three operational years. This achievement reflects UIII's ability to compete in the global education market and establish a robust academic reputation in a short period. Meanwhile, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung has prioritized internationalization in its strategic plan by developing exchange programs, international collaborations, and globally oriented classes. However, challenges remain, particularly in enhancing postgraduate program quality and expanding global partnerships (UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2023a). In this context, the internationalization efforts of both universities warrant further scrutiny. While internationalization is undoubtedly important for enhancing visibility, it is worth questioning whether these efforts merely serve to meet world-class university indicators—adopted uncritically by these institutions—without adequately considering other factors that could also enhance institutional visibility.

The comparison between UIII and UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung—though not entirely equivalent—serves to highlight disparities within Indonesian Islamic higher education. Despite UIN Bandung's established record in internationalization, rankings, and collaborations, the government has chosen to create a new institution under the banner of world-class aspirations. This invites reflection

on whether internationalization efforts are strategically grounded or primarily driven by global trends.

**METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative design to examine governance and internationalization at UIII and UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with key institutional leaders, annual reports (2021–2023), and online media. Interview transcripts were analyzed using NVivo 14 and thematic analysis to identify patterns in governance, academic capacity, international collaboration, mobility, admissions, scholarships, and institutional visibility (Braun & Clarke, 2023). While annual performance reports provide quantitative financial data, online media offer insights into recent institutional achievements. Scholarly articles and policy analyses contextualize these findings within broader debates on world-class university aspirations and the distinct challenges facing Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia (Mohammed et al., 2020; Nasution et al., 2020; Salmi, 2009).

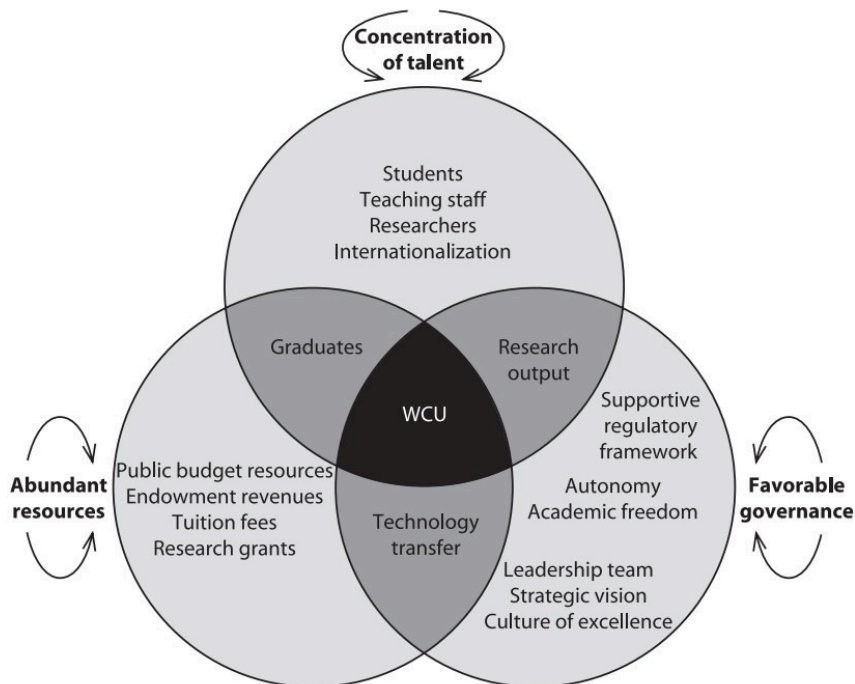
In this research, the author presents the results using the framework of Global Higher Ed-

ucation Governance Towards World-Class University (Salmi, 2009) and the internationalization of higher education within the context of the Three Generations of Cross-Border Education (Knight, 2014). In the discussion, the author reflects on and critically reviews the governance and internationalization practices between the two universities.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

***Governance Comparison between UIII & UIN Sunan Gunung Djati towards World-Class University***

A governance framework that prioritizes talent concentration, resource availability, and institutional autonomy provides the foundation for world-class universities. Strong governance—such as the PTN-BH model adopted by UIII—enhances global competitiveness, strategic autonomy, and internationalization. Therefore, the author conducts secondary data analysis using the UIII Annual Reports (2021–2022) and the UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung Annual Reports (2021–2023). The secondary data is then categorized within the world-class university governance transformation frameworks outlined by Salmi (2009).



**Figure 1. World-class University Governance Transformation Model**

Source: Salmi, 2009

### *Concentration of Talents*

The concentration of top-tier talent within a university is a critical determinant in its transformation into a world-class university (WCU). This concentration encompasses not only faculty members, researchers, and academic staff but also students selected through rigorous admissions processes. Universities that successfully attract and retain high-quality talent are significantly more likely to achieve WCU status (Mohammed et al., 2020; Nasution et al., 2020; Salmi, 2009). This section provides a comparative analysis of talent concentration at Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia (UIII) and Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, focusing on two key aspects: (1) the composition of faculty, researchers, and

academic staff, and (2) the intake and composition of students (Nasution et al., 2020).

### *Composition of Lecturers, Researchers, and Academic Staff*

The quality of lecturers, researchers, and academic staff is central to talent concentration, shaping a university's education, research output, and global reputation. Thus, highly qualified faculty with international experience and strong research records significantly strengthen institutional performance. As noted by Mohammed et al. (2020), the presence of top-tier talent among faculty and researchers can play a pivotal role in advancing a university's reputation on the global stage.

**Table 1. Composition of Faculty Members at UIII and UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung Based on Educational Attainment**

University	Master's Degree (S2)	Doctoral Degree (S3)	Comparison Percentage
Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia (2022)	-	70	0 : 100%
UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung (2023)	449	437	50.68% : 49.32%

Source: UIII, 2022; UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2023a

In 2022, UIII employed 70 faculty members, all of whom held doctoral degrees, reflecting a 100% S3 composition. Although this number is small compared to established PTN-BH universities such as the University of Indonesia, UIII's faculty size is proportionate to its status as a newly established institution. Despite its limited numbers, UIII has successfully recruited highly distinguished scholars with strong research performance, as reflected in high h-indexes and citation counts among its senior academics. This selective recruitment strategy highlights UIII's ambition to position itself as a world-class university.

In contrast, UIN SGD Bandung, established in 2005, had 886 faculty members in 2023, comprising 437 doctoral degree holders (49.32%) and 449 master's degree holders (50.68%). The university also recorded significant growth in academic capacity, increasing its number of professors from 47 in 2021 to 81 in 2023, alongside a rise in doctoral-level faculty. However, despite this quantitative expansion, research productivity remains a key

challenge for achieving stronger international competitiveness.

### *Admissions and Student Composition*

In 2023, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung received 106,564 undergraduate applicants but admitted only 7,406 students—an acceptance rate of about 7%—highlighting its strong appeal and highly competitive admissions (UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2023a). At the postgraduate level, however, quantitative data on the number and composition of master's and doctoral students at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung is not yet available. However, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung has also begun to attract international students, although their numbers remain small, with 77 foreign students enrolled in 2023 (UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2023a). In comparison, in 2024, Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia (UIII) received 3,500 applications from 77 countries, with 60% of applicants being international students from countries such as Afghanistan, Pak-

istan, Egypt, and Yemen. As a relatively new university, UIII admitted 120 master's and 60 doctoral students, a smaller number compared to UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung (S. Umam, personal communication, November 7, 2024). However, the international diversity and focus on developing postgraduate and doctoral programs position UIII as a step ahead in establishing itself as a research university.

**Abundant Resources**

A key factor in becoming a world-class university is the availability of abundant resources, which attract top academic and research talent. To strengthen capacity, universities must diversify their funding sources. Generally, funding derives from four main sources: (1) government budgets for operations and research; (2) research contracts from public and private grants; (3) endowments and donations; and (4) tuition fees (Salmi, 2009). A diverse funding base and maximized revenue allow higher education institutions to attract or employ PhD holders, professors, and researchers with competitive remuneration packages (Nasution et al., 2020). Therefore, this analysis draws on the universities' Annual Performance Reports (2021–2023) and highlights institutional autonomy as a key factor in securing and managing non-government funding.

UIII has operated as a PTN-BH since its establishment, granting it broad financial and managerial autonomy. In contrast, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung has been a PTN-BLU since 2008, relying mainly on non-tax state revenue (PNBP) integrated into the state budget (APBN) and subject to stricter state financial regulations. Compared to PTN-BLU institutions, PTN-BH universities have greater flexibility in managing income from diverse sources, including external partnerships, enabling more adaptive and strategic resource allocation (Rudhianto et al., 2022).

Despite its PTN-BH status, UIII's revenue primarily relies on funding from the State-Owned Legal Entity University Operational Assistance Fund (BPPTN-BH), as stipulated in DIPA Pendis Document No. SP DIPA-025.04.1.426302/2022. UIII manages the state budget allocated through the Directorate General of Islamic Education (Pendis), Ministry of Religious Affairs, for its operational expenses (UIII, 2022). However, UIII has begun to increase its autonomous revenue in its second

year of operation, albeit modestly. Below are detailed funding sources for UIII in 2021 and 2022:

**Table 2. UIII Funding Sources 2021-2022**

Year	Funding Sources	Amount	Percentage
2021	BPPTN-BH (Bantuan Pendanaan Perguruan Tinggi Badan Hukum)	Rp39.829.287.000	100%
	BPPTN-BH	Rp63.215.420.352	82,41%
2022	Revenue from Tuition Fees, Bank Interest/ Profit Sharing, Dormitories, Grants, and DPU Business Units	Rp11.119.955.998	17,59%

Source: UIII, 2021; 2022

As shown in the table, UIII remains highly dependent on Funding Assistance for State Legal Entity Universities (BPPTN-BH), which is expected given its status as a newly established institution. Despite this reliance, UIII achieved a high budget realization rate of 96.2% in 2021 (UIII, 2021). By 2022, the university had begun generating independent revenue through its Business Unit (DPU), including land leasing, a cafeteria, and laundry services. These activities generated IDR 605 million from land leasing, IDR 20.98 million from cafeteria operations, and IDR 3.34 million from laundry services (UIII, 2022).

As a PTN-BLU institution, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung has a proportional revenue composition between the State University Operational Assistance Fund (BOPTN) from the state budget and its PNBP and BLU revenues. Below are details of UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung's revenue sources for 2021–2023:

**Table 3. UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Funding Sources 2021-2023**

Year	Funding Sources	Amount	Percentage
2021	BOPTN	Rp258.319.547.000	58,13%

Year	Funding Sources	Amount	Percentage
2022	PNBP/BLU Revenue	Rp186.024.878.000	41,87%
	BOPTN	Rp287.650.877.000	58,37%
2023	PNBP/BLU Revenue	Rp205.142.920.000	41,63%
	BOPTN	Rp415.422.622.000	67%
	PNBP/BLU Revenue	Rp207.970.058.000	33%

Source: UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2021; 2022a; 2023b

In 2023, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung's PNBP/BLU revenue declined to 33%, down from 41.87% in 2021 and 41.63% in 2022. This revenue derives from grants, research collaborations, and various BLU business units established since gaining PTN-BLU status, including the Language Development Center, Integrated Laboratory, student dormitory (Ma'had Al-Jamiah), health clinic, hall and sports facilities, bottled water production, SGD Pay Marketplace, Agroeducation Zone, psychology services, teacher professional education program, and an elementary school (SGD Channel, 2022).

Although both UIII and UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung have diversified revenue sources, further income diversification remains crucial for achieving world-class status. Neither has established an endowment fund, and research income is still limited. For UIII, PTN-BH autonomy demands stronger financial sustainability to support its global vision, while UIN Bandung must optimize and expand its revenue streams to qualify for PTN-BH status.

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### *Favorable Governance*

Alongside the presence of a concentration of talent and abundant resources, favourable governance plays a critical role in the transformation of universities into world-class institutions. Institutional autonomy is a key indicator of favourable governance. The independence of institutions in conducting academic and non-academic activities significantly impacts their transformation. Specifically, Michavila and Martinez (2018) argue that institutional autonomy underpins the strong performance of leading European universities in global rankings such as ARWU. Greater autonomy fosters academic freedom, innovation, and creativity, enabling institutions to respond more effectively to the evolving demands of a globalized world.

Under Government Regulation No. 4 of 2014, Indonesian public universities are classified as PTN-BH (full legal and financial autonomy), PTN-BLU (partial autonomy with limited financial flexibility), and PTN Satuan Kerja (fully under ministerial control, with revenues treated as state income).

UIII has held PTN-BH status since its establishment due to its designation as a National Strategic Project (PSN) (Sekretariat Wakil Presiden RI, 2022). UIII's governance consists of the Board of Trustees, Rector, and Academic Senate, established under Government Regulation No. 23 of 2019. Its Research, Cooperation, and Engagement Division and International Office lead its world-class transformation. As a PTN-BH and the only education-sector National Strategic Project, UIII benefits from strong autonomy and institutional stability to pursue global ambitions.

In contrast, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, as a PTN-BLU, has limited autonomy but actively advances internationalization through its International Office. Its 2024–2029 Strategic Plan prioritizes global engagement, focusing on academic quality, research excellence, employ-

ability, and competitiveness through initiatives such as international recruitment, exchanges, curriculum internationalization, double degrees, international accreditation, and global research collaborations (UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2024a).

***Internationalization of Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia (UIII) and Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung (UIN SGD Bandung)***

The internationalization of higher education is defined as the integration of international, intercultural, and global dimensions into the goals, functions, and delivery of higher education institutions (Knight, 2005). This process is often viewed as part of a strategic effort to enhance global competitiveness, which aligns with the neoliberal agenda. Within the neoliberal framework, higher education is not only seen as an intellectual space but also as a commodity marketed in the global market.

According to Knight and de Wit, internationalization can be implemented at various levels, including institutional, national, and structural (Knight & Wit, 2018). However, this implementation is often influenced by neoliberal principles, such as economic efficiency, reduced public funding, and a push for privatization. Within this framework, internationalization is frequently used to promote the commercialization of education and facilitate the global mobility of students as commodified "human capital" (Bamberger et al., 2019).

Maringe and Foskett (2012) observed that "internationally focused" universities, which

are capable of internationalizing both domestically and across borders, are often idealized within the neoliberal paradigm. However, this model may reinforce global inequalities, as only a small number of institutions possess the resources to achieve this.

Other research indicates that internationalization functions as a tool to promote "meritocratic competition," which often overlooks the entrenched inequalities within the education system (Bamberger et al., 2019). In developing countries, such as those in Latin America, neoliberalism has driven the commercialization of higher education systems by increasing the role of private institutions and reducing the state's role in accreditation and evaluation (Austin Henry & Beserra, 2022). Neoliberalization also affects curricula, prioritizing neoliberal values such as mastering directly marketable skills over humanities, arts, and critical thinking (Gyamera & Burke, 2018).

Therefore in this context, the author uses the classification of Three Generations of Cross-Border Education (Knight, 2014). This classification was chosen based on three rationales: the differing transformation strategies toward becoming a World-Class University (WCU) employed by the two universities, differences in autonomy status, and differences in capacity. While there are overlapping points between the Three Generations of Cross-Border Education classification and the At-Home and Abroad Internationalization framework, the author views the three key differences between the two universities mentioned earlier as more appropriately classified under the leveling of their internationalization efforts.

**Table 4. Operationalization of Internationalization Activities Based on the Three Generations of Cross-Border Education**

Generation	Focus	Description
First Generation	Student/People Mobility	Student mobility from their home country to another for education. Includes full-degree programs, research projects, field studies, internships, and exchange programs.
Second Generation	Program and Provider Mobility	Program mobility: Twinning programs, franchises, validation/recognition, joint/double awards, online programs. Provider mobility: Offshore branch campuses, virtual universities, mergers/acquisitions, and independent institutions.

Generation	Focus	Description
Third Generation	Education Hubs	Institutions become education hubs attracting students, researchers, faculty, academic communities, programs, companies, and research institutions for education, training, knowledge production, and innovation. Includes student hubs, talent hubs, and knowledge/innovation hubs.

Source: Knight (2014)

Furthermore, the internationalization process of the Indonesian UIII and UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung is articulated by the author into five thematic areas: visibility and promotion (Hung & Yen, 2022), centers of excellence and research (Fry, 2024), mobility activities (de Wit & Altbach, 2020), international cooperation (Chan, 2004), and

admissions and scholarships (Tong, 2021). These five themes were initially developed from raw data, based on patterns identified through interview coding and document analysis. Relevant literature was then used to validate and enrich each theme, ensuring both empirical grounding and theoretical alignment.

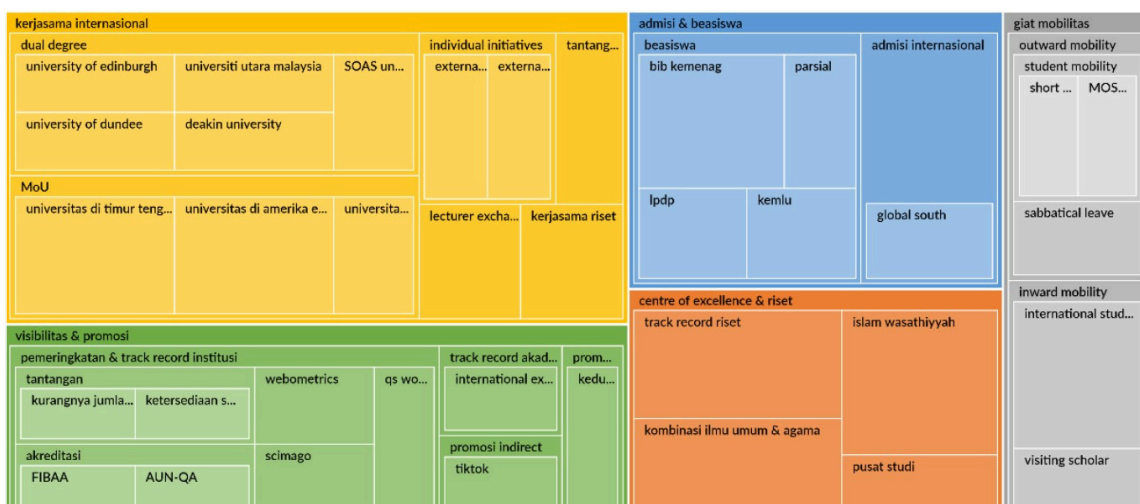


Figure 2. Hierarchy Chart of Thematization of Internationalization at UIII and UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung

Source: Author (Processed using NVivo14)

**Visibility & Promotion**

UIII has positioned itself as a globally oriented Islamic university, achieving notable progress in visibility, internationalization, and student and faculty mobility despite its young age. Its strategy combines academic partnerships, global promotion, and inclusive scholarship programs. Meanwhile, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung has prioritized internationalization in its development agenda, aiming to become a superior, competitive, and innovative

university in Southeast Asia by 2029 under the spirit of *rahmatan lil ‘alamin* (H. Munir, personal communication, October 25, 2024).

UIII enhances its visibility through educational diplomacy via Indonesian embassies, attracting 3,500 applicants from 77 countries in 2024–2025, with students admitted from around 40 countries. Social media exposure, including a viral TikTok post about its library, has further increased recognition. Its internationally trained faculty strengthen global networks through publications, conferences, and joint re-

search. UIII also targets entry into global rankings such as QS, though limited alumni data remains a challenge due to its recent establishment (S. Umam, personal communication, November 7, 2024).

UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung enhances its international visibility through participation in global rankings. It holds “A” institutional accreditation, is recognized as the top State Islamic University in Indonesia, and has been listed among the top 100 universities in Asia by Webometrics. In 2018, it also received the Sinta Award for the highest research pro-

ductivity in Indonesia (Indiraphasa, 2023). Thus, in the 2023 Scimago Institutional Ranking, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung ranked first among PTKIN, 16th nationally, and 575th in Asia. Several graduate programs are accredited by FIBAA and selected undergraduate programs by AUN-QA. Despite these gains, expanding international accreditation remains constrained by limited resources, time, and funding. (H. Munir, personal communication, October 25, 2024; UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2023b).

**Table 5. Indonesian Universities Publication Ratio Rankings**

Ranking	University	Publication Ratio
1	Universitas Airlangga	1,47
2	Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia	1,44
3	Institut Teknologi Bandung	1,04
4	Universitas Indonesia	1,03
5	Universitas Padjadjaran	0,90
6	Institut Teknologi Sepuluh November	0,79
7	Universitas Gadjah Mada	0,76
8	Universitas Diponegoro	0,73
9	Universitas Sebelas Maret	0,59
10	Universitas Brawijaya	0,59

Source: UIII, 2024a

***International Cooperation***

International cooperations serves as primary focus for UIII. One of its flagship initiatives is the dual degree program in collaboration with prestigious universities such as the University of Edinburgh, SOAS University of London, and the University of Dundee in the United Kingdom, as well as Deakin University in Australia. This program provides students with the opportunity to study for one year at UIII and another year at the partner university, resulting in a dual degree from both institutions. As of 2024, the program with the University of Edinburgh specializes in Islamic Studies, while the partnership with SOAS University of London covers a broader range of disciplines, including social sciences and economics. The collaboration with the University of Dundee focuses on Islamic Economics, Finance, and Business, while the agreement with Deakin University is centered

on education. Additionally, nearly all academic programs at UIII use English as the medium of instruction, except for the takhassus programs in the Faculty of Islamic Studies, which utilize Arabic (S. Umam, personal communication, November 7, 2024).

Conversely, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung has yet to establish internationally standardized academic programs, and all teaching and learning activities are conducted in Indonesian. Nevertheless, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung does offer a dual degree program at the master's level in collaboration with Universitas Utara Malaysia (UUM). Under this program, 43 students participate in one year of coursework at UUM and one year at UIN, earning dual recognition from both universities. Similar to UIII’s dual degree program, this initiative is also part of the Beasiswa Indonesia Bangkit and LPDP scholarship schemes (H. Munir, personal communication, October 25,

2024; UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2024b).

UIII has also established research collaborations with universities such as the University of Melbourne and Northwestern University. These joint research initiatives span various fields, including social sciences and environmental studies. UIII continues to expand its network of collaborations with institutions in the United Arab Emirates and Lebanon. Although the collaboration with Lebanon is currently on hold due to security conditions, UIII remains committed to fostering partnerships with higher education institutions in the Middle East (S. Umam, personal communication, November 7, 2024).

UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung has expanded its global reach through MOUs with universities in Iran, Ethiopia, Jordan, Malaysia, and the United States, covering education, research, and conferences. However, ensuring concrete implementation—such as exchanges and joint research—remains challenging, particularly due to limited financial resources and reliance on internal funding (H. Munir, personal communication, October 25, 2024).

In terms of faculty activities, UIII has initiated a visiting scholar program, where faculty members from foreign universities are invited to teach for a full semester. Examples include faculty from Al-Azhar University and Morocco, who are now permanent teaching staff at UIII, as well as faculty members from the United States. UIII also offers sabbatical leave for its faculty members to conduct research abroad (S. Umam, personal communication, November 7, 2024).

UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung is strengthening its international engagement through faculty participation in conferences across Malaysia, Brunei, and Thailand, as well as appointments as external examiners at Universiti Malaya and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. Budget constraints, however, limit broader global participation. The university also hosts international scholars, such as Professor Bart Barendregt from Leiden University, and maintains a faculty exchange program with Universiti Sains Malaysia involving the Faculties of Science and Technology and Sharia. (H. Munir, personal communication, October 25, 2024).

### ***Student Mobility***

UIII adopts an inward student mobility strategy, attracting students primarily from South Asia and Africa. Afghan students form the largest group, largely supported by a Ministry of Foreign Affairs scholarship program aimed at advancing women's education. Students from Pakistan and several African countries also make up a significant portion of the cohort. (S. Umam, personal communication, November 7, 2024).

In contrast, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung prioritizes outward mobility. It sent 18 students to an eight-day short course at Universitas Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), and through the MORA Student Mobility Awards (MOSMA), four students studied for one semester in the United States, Morocco, and Malaysia in 2022 (H. Munir, personal communication, October 25, 2024). However, a significant challenge for the student mobility program is the limited duration of these programs, most of which are short-term, as well as insufficient funding to support long-term mobility programs.

On the other hand, foreign students studying at UIN predominantly come from developing countries. These include 20 international students from Somalia, 21 from Malaysia, and others from countries like Pakistan and Afghanistan. Before beginning their regular academic courses, these foreign students undergo a free one-year Indonesian language training program at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung's Language Center (H. Munir, personal communication, October 25, 2024).

### ***Admission & Scholarship***

UIII's student mobility strategy is closely linked to its scholarship-driven admissions model. By 2024, international students comprised nearly 50% of its population, and about 99% of all students received scholarships. Funding comes from LPDP—now extended to support international students at UIII—the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, international donors (such as the Netherlands), and the Ministry of Religious Affairs through the BIB scheme. These scholarships generally cover tuition and living costs, broadening access across economic backgrounds. Starting in 2025, UIII's dual-degree program will also be funded by LPDP, expanding global study opportunities for

domestic students (S. Umam, personal communication, November 7, 2024).

UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung has attracted growing interest from abroad, with 170 applicants this year from countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Somalia. However, of 49 admitted students, only 30 enrolled, largely due to limited scholarship support. While UIN offers tuition waivers, dormitories, and Indonesian language training, it cannot cover living costs, airfare, or visas, which many applicants expect. Recruitment remains focused on developing regions, with limited success in attracting students from Europe or the United States, reflecting challenges in global perception and promotional resources. (H. Munir, personal communication, October 25, 2024).

***Global Islamic Education Hub vs. Regional Initiatives: A Comparative Analysis of UIII and UIN SGD Bandung Internationalization Efforts***

UIII’s internationalization efforts align with the third generation of cross-border education (Education Hub), as defined by Knight (2014). This is evident in its focus on inward mobility, with 50% of its students being international, and its establishment of five dedicated centers of excellence to enhance academic innovation (UIII, n.d., 2021, 2022). In contrast, UIN SGD Bandung remains in the first generation of cross-border education, focusing primarily on outward student mobility. Programs such as the MORA Student Mobility Awards and dual degrees with Universiti Utara Malaysia reflect this emphasis on regional engagement rather than global hub development.

**Table 6. Comparison of UIII and UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung Internationalization**

Institution	Key Features
Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia	<b>3rd Generation of Cross-Border Education (Education Hub):</b> Focus on inward mobility, with 50% international students and 12 international faculty members. Five centers of excellence established for global research and innovation.
Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung	<b>1st Generation of Cross-Border Education (People/Student Mobility):</b> Emphasis on outward mobility through short courses, student exchanges, and dual degree programs with regional universities.

Source: Author

***Reflections on the Governance Comparison of UIII and UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung***

The comparison between UIII and UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung highlights notable governance disparities. While long-established institutions like UIN Bandung continue to face quality constraints, the government chose to establish UIII as a new flagship institution.

First, in terms of talent concentration, several UIII faculty members previously served in other PTKIN institutions. However, UIII has a significantly higher proportion of doctoral-degree holders and international faculty, supported by substantial state resources that facilitate global recruitment. This suggests that its

ability to attract international talent is closely linked to financial capacity. Second, regarding resources, UIII has received exceptional state funding through the BPPTN-BH scheme—100% in its first operational year and 82.41% in its second—whereas UIN Bandung received a 67% BOPTN allocation in 2023. Third, although both institutions operate with a degree of autonomy—UIII as PTN-BH and UIN Bandung as PTN-BLU—the extent and practical effectiveness of this autonomy differ considerably. As Rachman (2017) highlights in the case of Universitas Indonesia, autonomy granted to PTN-BH institutions is often ambiguous in practice.

The above discussion illustrates the broader dilemma inherent in Indonesia’s policy on the

financial autonomy of higher education institutions. Despite their autonomy—UIII as a PTN-BH and UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung as a PTN-BLU—both institutions face coercive pressures to meet specific internationalization benchmarks aligned with the global governance model of a world-class university. Government policies during the era of performance-driven accountability in higher education have driven institutional competition and benchmarking, particularly in the context of Asian nations' pursuit of world-class universities (Lee et al., 2023). This situation reflects what DiMaggion & Powell (1983) describe as coercive isomorphism, where the state, through regulatory mechanisms and funding policies, exerts control over universities by imposing performance indicators and standardization requirements for internationalization (performance-based funding). The underlying assumption of the government using performance-based funding as a tool is that it will incentivize higher education institutions to alter the way they function to increase the quality and quantity of education and research through specific measurable goals (Matveeva, 2025).

These coercive pressures are manifested in the adoption of the world-class university model as a standard of global governance. In the 2000s, many countries joined the global race to build a world-class university in the knowledge society, with these initiatives being institutionalized in many countries including European and Latin-American countries as well as in Asia (Shin & Kehm, 2013). The high proportion of state funding (BPPTN-BH/BOPTN) serves as a mechanism through which the government maintains its influence, even as nominal autonomy is granted to these institutions via their PTN-BH and PTN-BLU statuses (Aprimadya, 2024; Ozturk, 2020; Pratolo et al., 2020).

Ultimately, UIII has been positioned as a pioneer in advancing Indonesia's Islamic civilization, with the government mobilizing substantial resources to make it the sole National Strategic Project in the education sector during President Joko Widodo's second term. While UIII holds the potential to spearhead Indonesia's knowledge diplomacy on the global stage, its establishment also serves as an echo chamber, highlighting the government's neglect of the quality of other Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia.

### *A Critical Review of the Internationalization of UIII and UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung*

Despite this, the internationalization process at both institutions still leans towards the neoliberalization of higher education, prioritizing global rankings as tools for institutional marketing and branding, ultimately leading to the commodification of higher education (Mintz, 2021; Giroux, 2017). Neoliberalism has reshaped higher education through marketization—rising tuition fees, performance metrics, and shifting academic values—while neoliberal managerialism tends to deprofessionalize academia by replacing disciplinary expertise with managerial techniques (Morley, 2024).

Both institutions prioritize global rankings to enhance visibility. UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung is listed in Webometrics and Scimago and aims to enter QS, while UIII aspires to achieve QS recognition as a newer institution. This reflects a broader neoliberal logic that promotes inter-university competition through ranking metrics such as research output, employability, and internationalization. Efforts in research, mobility, collaboration, admissions, scholarships, and centers of excellence similarly align with global ranking standards (Hazelkorn, 2015; McLaughlin et al., 2018). University rankings serve as strategic tools and play a role in institutional branding in higher education, influencing marketing and enrollment results.

In this context, global rankings remain crucial since Indonesian higher education institutions still lack significant visibility on the global stage. Yuda (2024) for instance, suggests that Indonesian higher education institutions should not rush to withdraw from international rankings. Recently, universities such as the University of Zurich, Utrecht University, Renmin University of China, Nanjing University, and Lanzhou University have opted out of global rankings. However, these universities already possess all the necessary pre-condition advantages to be world-class institutions without depending on any ranking agencies. These advantages include their established reputations, academic cultures, research productivity, and a profound sense of knowledge production that their scholars uphold as a moral responsibility—not merely as an administrative obligation.

Additionally, Welch (2023) highlights the disciplinary gap within global ranking systems,

which often exhibit biases toward fields such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), while undervaluing the importance of methods and disciplines like the humanities and social sciences. In this regard, Welch's argument is relevant to Islamic universities on the global stage. Universities such as Al-Azhar University and the Islamic University of Madinah are marginalized in global rankings. As of 2025, both institutions are ranked only within the 1001-1200 range in the QS World University Rankings, despite their outstanding reputations in classical Islamic sciences. With differing standards, Islamic universities find themselves sidelined in global rankings.

In the context of UIII and UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, both of which prioritize visibility through rankings, it can be argued that their internationalization efforts tend to align with the neoliberal trends in education (Stack, 2020; Erkkilä & Piironen, 2021). Rankings tend to simplify universities into comparable commodities, reinforcing the idea that institutions can be measured in like-for-like terms. While visibility is important, from the perspective of Islamic scholarly tradition, perhaps expertise and piety—longstanding hallmarks of Islamic scholarship—should also be considered meaningful forms of visibility that draw students beyond numerical rankings.

The tradition of Islamic higher education that began in informal settings such as ribath, zawiyah, and madrasas within mosques (Makdisi, 1981; Berkey, 1992). These educational concepts persist today, where students engage in mulazamah (close study under scholars) and pursue informal learning to obtain ijazah or sanad (scholarly certification) from reputable scholars. Islam's early encounters with literacy, through the Qur'an and Hadith, fostered a dual system that emphasized textual authority and oral authentication via sanad, which became foundational for the emergence of distinct educational forms such as kuttah, halaqah, maktab, masjid, and later madrasah.

The outcomes of such educational systems should not be underestimated. For example, figures like Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah (Buya Hamka) and Ustadz Aceng Zakaria did not hold formal state-recognized degrees, yet their scholarship, piety, and expertise were widely acknowledged by both Indonesian and global audiences. This reinforces findings on Islamic educational traditions and their contem-

porary relevance, demonstrating how traditional models of knowledge transmission continue to produce respected scholars and religious authorities outside formal credentialing systems (Bruinessen, 1995; Lukens-Bull, 2013), challenging the hegemony of global rankings as the primary measure of educational quality and scholarly achievement.

## CONCLUSION

The study reveals clear contrasts in governance and internationalization between UIII and UIN SGD Bandung. As a PTN-BH institution, UIII leverages broad autonomy to manage resources flexibly, build global partnerships, and attract diverse international students, aligning with a third-generation cross-border education model centered on knowledge hubs and inward mobility. In contrast, UIN SGD Bandung, operating under the more restrictive PTN-BLU framework, faces financial and policy constraints that limit its global engagement, reflecting a first-generation model focused mainly on regional student mobility. These differences underscore the role of governance, resource flexibility, and strategic support in advancing internationalization. At the same time, the findings invite reflection on whether the pursuit of global standards risks diluting the distinct identity of Islamic higher education, which has traditionally emphasized expertise, piety, and moral integrity.

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