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An Analysis of Indonesian Islamic Higher Education Institutions in the Era of Globalization

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Abstract. This study aims to explore how globalization and religious conservatism shape institutional and individual identities within Indonesian Islamic Higher Education Institutions (IHEIs). Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with 30 experienced scholars, selected using purposive sampling from various IHEIs across Indonesia. The study found that globalization is perceived as a double-edged sword, offering opportunities for knowledge expansion and intercultural dialogue while also raising concerns about the erosion of cultural and religious identity. Religious conservatism manifested in a spectrum of responses, from traditionalist interpretations of Islam to advocacy for progressive and inclusive approaches. Participants' responses varied, demonstrating IHEI agency in adapting curricula to integrate modern subjects while safeguarding Islamic principles. The study also highlighted individual agency within IHEIs, where scholars navigate personal beliefs and institutional expectations, advocating for social change within the boundaries of cultural and religious norms. However, this agency is often constrained by institutional structures and societal pressures. These findings underscored the need for context-specific policies that acknowledge diversity within IHEIs and empower both institutions and individuals to navigate the complexities of globalization and religious conservatism while preserving their unique identities.

Keywords: global-local connection; globalisation; Indonesian Islamic higher education; religious conservatism

1. Introduction

The inexorable march of globalization, often framed within a neoliberal paradigm, has irrevocably transformed the landscape of higher education worldwide (Ingram, 2024; Woldegiorgis, 2024). This phenomenon, characterized by the marketization of knowledge (Rakhmani & Sakhiyya, 2024), standardization of

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curricula (Dieudé & Prøitz, 2024; Hidayah, 2021), and the ascendancy of Western epistemologies (Koopman & Koopman, 2023; Mendes, 2023). It poses both challenges and opportunities for Islamic Higher Education Institutions (IHEIs) globally (Daun & Arjmand, 2021; Lahmar, 2023; Poncelet & Ikando, 2024). Extensive literature has examined the impact of globalization on higher education in general (Ingram, 2024; Shahjahan & Grimm, 2023; Sibawaihi & Fernandes, 2023; Woldegiorgis, 2024). It has also explored its effects on Islamic education in specific contexts (Lahmar, 2023; Poncelet & Ikando, 2024; Saada, 2023). However, the Indonesian case remains undertheorized. This is particularly true regarding the dynamic interplay between global forces and local responses within the context of neoliberal globalization and the simultaneous rise of religious conservatism in the country. This introduction situates Indonesian IHEIs within the broader context of globalization and rising religious conservatism, examining how these forces shape their educational practices, socio-cultural roles, and religious identity. It highlights the dynamic interplay between global and local influences, emphasizing the agency and adaptability of these institutions in navigating this complex landscape.

The existing literature on the impact of globalization on higher education has predominantly focused on Western models and experiences (e.g., Bamberger & Morris, 2024; Macfarlane, 2024; Tight, 2022; Zhao & Liu, 2024), often overlooking the unique challenges and opportunities faced by IHEIs in non-Western contexts (Moshtari & Safarpour, 2024; Tight, 2022), particularly in the Muslim world (Haynes, 2021; Visakh & Santhosh, 2024). This Eurocentric bias has led to a homogenization of the discourse on globalization and higher education, neglecting the diverse ways in which globalization is experienced and responded to in different cultural and religious contexts (Bamberger & Morris, 2024). This is particularly evident in the Indonesian case, where the rich Islamic heritage and diverse cultural traditions (Azra, 2023; Miksic, 2023) create a distinct context for the reception and negotiation of globalizing forces (Hoon, 2017). Hence, globalization impacts Indonesian IHEIs by exposing them to diverse influences, creating pressure to conform to global standards (Sukirman, 2022), and challenging traditional authority. While some studies have examined the impact of globalization on Islamic education in Indonesia (e.g., Marjuni, 2022; Rahmawati et al., 2022; Tolchah & Mu'ammam, 2019), these studies have often been constrained by limited depth of analysis, as the majority of studies have been published in national journals (e.g., Marjuni, 2022; Paramita & Sari, 2023; Rahmawati et al., 2022; Tolchah & Mu'ammam, 2019), that frequently demonstrate methodological weaknesses such as small sample sizes or a lack of comparative analysis.

Furthermore, there is a notable paucity of studies published in high-impact, peer-reviewed journals, which are characterized by stringent review processes and rigorous academic standards (Bell et al., 2024), such as requiring robust research designs, large and representative samples, and the use of advanced statistical analysis techniques. Furthermore, these studies have often adopted a top-down perspective, an approach that emphasizes the influence of higher-level entities or structures on lower-level entities or individuals. It focuses on how macro-level

factors, such as global trends, shape the experiences and behaviours of individuals or organizations at the micro-level. This neglect is problematic as it fails to capture the complex and dynamic ways in which HEIs, particularly the Islamic ones, are actively shaping their responses to globalization (e.g., Moshtari & Safarpour, 2024; Young et al., 2024). For instance, some IHEIs may be strategically adopting certain aspects of globalization (Hidayah, 2021), such as international accreditation (Bougherira et al., 2024) or English-medium instruction (Nguyen & Dao, 2024), to enhance their competitiveness and attract foreign students (Zhou & Alam, 2024), while simultaneously resisting other aspects, such as the adoption of secular curricula or Western pedagogical approaches (Lewin et al., 2023), that may conflict with their religious values and cultural traditions (Elugbaju & Fagunwa, 2023).

In addition to the challenges posed by globalization, Indonesian IHEIs are also grappling with the rise of religious conservatism in the country (Sebastian & Othman Alkaff, 2024; Suryani & Muslim, 2024). This manifests in various ways, such as increased pressure to incorporate more conservative interpretations of Islamic teachings into curricula, debates over the enforcement of stricter dress codes and gender segregation policies on campuses, and the growing influence of conservative religious groups in university governance and decision-making processes. This trend, which has gained momentum in recent years, potentially fuelled by socio-political changes, economic factors, globalization anxieties, identity politics, and technological advancements, is reflected in the increasing influence of conservative Islamic groups in various aspects of public life, is reflected in the increasing influence of conservative Islamic groups in various aspects of public life, including education (Hasan & Juhannis, 2024; Suryani & Muslim, 2024). This has led to debates about the role of IHEIs in promoting religious values and practices, and about the balance between religious and secular education (Mukhibat et al., 2024). While some studies have examined the rise of religious conservatism in Indonesia (e.g., Fossati, 2023; Mukhibat et al., 2024; Sebastian & Othman Alkaff, 2024), few have explored its implications for Indonesian IHEIs and their responses to globalization (e.g., Sibawaihi & Fernandes, 2023; van Bruinessen, 2015). The research aims to uncover how scholars within IHEIs interpret and respond to globalization and religious conservatism, examining their perceptions, the manifestations of these phenomena in institutional policies and practices, and the strategies employed to navigate the resulting tensions and opportunities.

This research is crucial as it addresses a significant gap in our understanding of how Indonesian IHEIs are responding to the dual pressures of globalization and rising religious conservatism, particularly by delving deeper into the lived experiences of individuals within these institutions and overcoming the methodological limitations of previous studies that often-lacked depth and rigor. The insights gained from this investigation will be invaluable for shaping policy debates and educational practices not only in Indonesia but also in other Muslim-majority countries facing similar challenges in navigating the complexities of globalization and maintaining their religious and cultural identities. By highlighting the agency and resilience of IHEIs, this research can contribute to the

development of more effective strategies for supporting Islamic higher education in a rapidly changing world. This is particularly important given the increasing pressure on IHEIs to conform to global standards and norms, while also responding to the demands of a more religiously conservative society. A deep understanding of these dynamics is essential for developing policies that promote both quality and relevance in Islamic higher education, ensuring that it remains rooted in local contexts while also engaging with global challenges.

Secondly, this research recognizes the limitations of previous studies that have primarily focused on elite State Islamic Universities (UINs). By expanding the scope to include a wider range of IHEIs, such as *pesantren* and private Islamic colleges, this study aims to capture the diversity of institutional experiences and responses to globalization and religious conservatism in Indonesia. These institutions, which often cater to marginalized communities and play a crucial role in preserving local knowledge and traditions, may be particularly vulnerable to the homogenizing effects of globalization and the pressures of religious conservatism. This research aims to fill this gap by examining how different types of IHEIs are responding to these challenges, and how their responses are shaped by their institutional histories, missions, constituencies, and the broader socio-political context.

Thirdly, the primary objective of this study was to examine the complex interplay between globalization and religious conservatism within the specific context of Indonesian higher education. Given the significant role that Islam plays in Indonesian society and the unique challenges faced by IHEIs in navigating the tensions between tradition and modernity, we believe that focusing on these institutions provides a valuable and insightful lens for understanding this phenomenon. Our intention was not to criticize religious ascendancy in higher education, but rather to explore the diverse ways in which IHEIs respond to the forces of globalization and religious conservatism. We recognize that both Islamic and non-Islamic institutions are grappling with these challenges, but we believe that a focused examination of IHEIs offers a unique opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the specific dynamics at play within this context.

In closing, this study aims to provide a much-needed, in-depth examination of the complex interplay between neoliberal globalization and religious conservatism within Indonesian Islamic higher education, thereby contributing to a more nuanced understanding of this critical field. To achieve this, the research specifically sought to address the following key questions:

1. How do participants experience and interpret globalization and religious conservatism within the context of Indonesian higher education?
2. How do these phenomena manifest in institutional policies and practices within their IHEI, including curriculum development, student recruitment, faculty hiring, and campus culture?
3. What challenges and opportunities do participants encounter in negotiating competing values and demands, such as those related to academic freedom, Islamic teachings, and cultural norms?

4. In what ways do individuals exercise agency and resistance in response to globalization and religious conservatism? What are the implications of these responses for the future trajectory of Islamic higher education in Indonesia?

2. Glocalization and Hybridization: A Theoretical Framework for Understanding Indonesian Islamic Higher Education Institutions

The dynamic interplay of globalization and religious conservatism within Indonesian IHEIs necessitates a theoretical framework that can capture the complex negotiations between global forces and local responses. The concept of glocalization, as introduced by Robertson (1995), offers a valuable lens for understanding this process. Glocalization emphasizes the adaptation of global phenomena to local contexts, recognizing that globalization is not a monolithic force of homogenization (Dieudé & Prøitz, 2024) but rather a dynamic process of interaction and negotiation. In the context of IHEIs, this manifests in the strategic incorporation of global educational standards, technologies, and pedagogical approaches while ensuring their alignment with Islamic values and Indonesian cultural norms. This approach acknowledges the agency of local actors in shaping the impact of globalization (Woldegiorgis, 2024), highlighting their ability to selectively adopt and adapt global influences to suit their specific needs and priorities. It is through this lens of glocalization that we can appreciate the nuanced ways in which IHEIs are responding to the challenges and opportunities presented by a globalized world, neither succumbing to complete assimilation nor retreating into isolationism. The findings of this study illustrate the various ways in which IHEIs are engaging in glocalization, from adopting international accreditation standards (Bougherira et al., 2024) to incorporating technology into their teaching and learning processes. However, this process is not without its challenges, as institutions must constantly navigate the tension between embracing global trends and preserving their unique cultural and religious identity. The delicate balance between openness and preservation is a defining characteristic of glocalization in the context of Indonesian IHEIs.

Hybridization, as theorized by Bhabha (1994), further enriches our understanding of this process. It posits that the encounter between different cultures leads to the creation of new hybrid forms that are neither purely global nor purely local. These hybrid forms are not simply a mixture of pre-existing elements but rather represent a dynamic and creative process of cultural transformation. In the realm of Indonesian IHEIs, this hybridization can be observed in the development of curricula that blend traditional Islamic scholarship with contemporary disciplines, fostering graduates who are both rooted in their faith and equipped to navigate the complexities of the modern world. This hybridization is not merely a matter of adding new courses to the curriculum but rather involves a rethinking of pedagogical approaches and knowledge production to create a truly integrated and holistic learning experience. The study's findings highlight this process of hybridization, with IHEIs incorporating subjects such as environmental studies, digital ethics, and peacebuilding into their curricula, demonstrating a willingness to engage with current global issues through an Islamic lens (Latief & Nashir, 2020). This hybridization of knowledge reflects the IHEIs' efforts to remain

relevant and responsive to the changing needs of society while upholding their core Islamic principles.

Furthermore, hybridization also manifests in the emergence of new forms of Islamic identity that incorporate both global and local influences, reflecting the dynamic and evolving nature of religious expression in the 21st century. These hybrid identities challenge simplistic notions of religious and cultural authenticity, demonstrating the capacity of individuals and communities to creatively adapt and innovate in response to changing circumstances. The findings of this study reveal the ongoing debates and discussions within IHEIs about what it means to be a “modern Muslim,” particularly in the context of women's roles and expectations. These conversations reflect the complex process of negotiating identity in a globalized world, where individuals are constantly exposed to diverse perspectives and cultural influences. The emergence of hybrid identities within IHEIs underscores the fluidity and adaptability of Islamic thought and practice, challenging rigid interpretations and embracing a more inclusive and dynamic understanding of religious identity.

Finally, the concepts of agency and resistance, drawn from postcolonial and social movement theories, offer critical insights into the ways in which individuals and institutions within IHEIs are actively shaping their responses to globalization and religious conservatism. These theories emphasize the power dynamics inherent in the process of globalization and highlight the potential for local actors to challenge and subvert dominant discourses and practices. In the context of IHEIs, this agency and resistance can be observed in the strategic adoption of certain aspects of globalization, such as international accreditation or English-medium instruction, while simultaneously resisting those that may conflict with their core values and beliefs. This resistance can take various forms, from subtle adaptations of curriculum and pedagogy to more overt challenges to the homogenizing forces of globalization and the pressures of religious conservatism. The study's findings demonstrate this agency and resistance in action, with individuals within IHEIs actively questioning Western concepts and striving to develop Islamic responses to contemporary challenges. This active engagement with global forces, coupled with a commitment to preserving their unique cultural and religious identity, exemplifies the dynamic and resilient nature of Indonesian IHEIs in the face of a rapidly changing world.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Theoretical and Methodological Grounding

This research was embedded within a phenomenological framework, which aimed to understand and describe the lived experiences of individuals in relation to the complex interplay of globalization and religious conservatism within Indonesian Islamic Higher Education Institutions (IHEIs). Phenomenology, as a philosophical approach, emphasizes the importance of individuals' subjective experiences and the meanings they attached to those experiences (Bevan, 2014; Rodriguez et al., 2024). In this study, the researchers specifically employed a descriptive phenomenological approach. This involved collecting detailed descriptions of participants' experiences through in-depth interviews, bracketing

the researcher's preconceptions to focus on the participants' perspectives, and identifying significant statements and meanings within their narratives. Through this process, we aimed to uncover the essence of how globalization and religious conservatism were experienced and interpreted by individuals within IHEIs, capturing the complexity and depth of their interactions with and responses to these phenomena. By centering on the lived experiences of participants, this research sought to move beyond surface-level observations and delve into the deeper meanings and understandings that individuals constructed in relation to globalization and religious conservatism. This approach enabled us to gain insights into the multifaceted ways in which these phenomena shaped the educational practices, socio-cultural roles, and religious identity negotiation within Indonesian IHEIs. While offering valuable in-depth insights, this phenomenological study's purposive sampling limits generalizability, and its focus on individual experiences might not fully capture institutional dynamics and power relations within IHEIs.

To ensure clarity and precision in this study, we define globalization as the growing interconnectedness and interdependence of the world's economies, cultures, and populations, fuelled by the cross-border movement of goods, services, technology, investments, people, and information. This multifaceted phenomenon encompasses economic integration through trade and investment, cultural exchange through the dissemination of ideas and values, technological advancements that facilitate communication and collaboration, and the increased mobility of people across borders. Within the specific context of Indonesian Islamic Higher Education Institutions (IHEIs), globalization may manifest through exposure to diverse cultures and ideas, engagement in international collaborations and partnerships, and the adoption of global educational standards and practices. On the other hand, we define religious conservatism as an adherence to traditional religious beliefs and practices, often accompanied by a desire to preserve or return to a perceived "golden age" of religious and moral values. This stance is characterized by an emphasis on tradition, resistance to social and cultural change perceived as threatening to established norms, a focus on upholding moral and family values, and active political engagement to promote policies that align with religious beliefs. In the context of IHEIs, religious conservatism may exert influence on various aspects of institutional life, including curriculum design, student activities, and the formulation of policies that govern the behavior and interactions of the academic community.

3.2 Participant Selection and Sampling Strategy

In this qualitative study exploring the intricate relationship between globalization and religious conservatism within Indonesian Islamic Higher Education Institutions (IHEIs), we strategically employed purposeful sampling to select participants who have specific knowledge or experience relevant to your research question. It also allowed the researchers to select a diverse range of participants from various IHEIs (Campbell et al., 2020), ensuring representation from different institutional types (e.g., state Islamic universities (UINs) and private Islamic colleges), geographical locations (e.g., Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi), and ideological orientations (e.g., modernist, traditionalist, revivalist). Scholars with

less than one year of experience within their respective IHEIs were excluded to ensure a depth of understanding of the institutional context. This deliberate sampling method was particularly well-suited to this qualitative research, allowing the researchers to target individuals with specific experiences, knowledge, and perspectives that directly related to the research phenomenon. This heterogeneity allowed for a comprehensive and deep understanding of the diverse experiences and perspectives related to globalization and religious conservatism within the Indonesian Islamic higher education landscape. Within each selected IHEI, the chosen sampling strategy was used to recruit participants from diverse roles and backgrounds to capture the diverse nature of institutional experiences. In essence, the heterogeneity of the participants allowed the researchers to paint a richer, more detailed, and more accurate picture of the complex relationship between globalization and religious conservatism within Indonesian Islamic higher education.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of participants (N = 30)

Characteristic	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	18	60%
Female	12	40%
Age		
18-24	5	16.67%
25-34	7	23.3%
35-44	8	26.67%
45+	10	33.33%
Year of Working		
1st Year	3	10%
2nd Year	5	16.67%
3rd Year	8	26.67%
4th Year or above	14	46.67%
Field of Study		
Islamic Studies	15	50%
Social Sciences	8	26.7%
Humanities	5	16.7%
Science & Technology	2	6.7%
Other	0	0%
Geographic Location of IHEI		
Urban	20	66.7%
Rural	10	33.3%

3.3 Data Collection

Data collection took place over a period of five months, from January 10th to May 12th, 2024. During this time, the researchers conducted in-depth face-to-face interviews with participants, lasting an average of 60-90 minutes each. The interviews were conducted with 30 participants from various IHEIs across Indonesia, ensuring a broad representation of voices and perspectives. This methodological choice was deliberate, recognizing the unique capacity of semi-structured interviews to capture the depth and nuance of individual experiences (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). The open-ended nature of these interviews

allowed participants to express themselves freely, providing rich and detailed accounts of their lived realities. Furthermore, the flexible structure enabled the interviewer to probe further into emerging themes, fostering a deeper exploration of the complex interplay between globalization and religious conservatism within the IHEI context. By prioritizing the participants' own interpretations and meanings, semi-structured interviews provided a valuable window into the subjective experiences of individuals navigating the dynamic landscape of Indonesian Islamic higher education. Further, the interview protocol was designed to elicit rich and detailed descriptions of participants' lived experiences and the meanings they attached to those experiences (Rodriguez et al., 2024). All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and translated into English for subsequent analysis.

3.4 Data Analysis

The study employed thematic analysis to explore the lived experiences of participants regarding globalization and religious conservatism in Indonesian Islamic higher education (Rodriguez et al., 2024; Stolz, 2023). This iterative process included horizontalization, coding, categorizing, and synthesizing data to uncover core meanings and structures of these experiences (Stolz, 2023). Emphasis was placed on capturing the essence of participants' descriptions and their attributed meanings. Following phenomenological analysis, thematic analysis was also conducted, following Bowen's (2009) framework: initial coding involved thorough reading and highlighting of interview data, followed by categorization; focused coding refined initial categories to align with research questions; and axial coding established connections between categories and subcategories to reveal underlying relationships (Charmaz, 2006). Then, to ensure study rigor, methodological strategies included triangulation of data sources (Sukirman & Kabilan, 2023), member checking to verify findings with participants, reflexivity to acknowledge researcher biases, and maintaining an audit trail for transparency. In this case, the first and second authors independently analyzed the data, and then their findings were compared and contrasted to ensure inter-coder reliability and reduce potential researcher bias. This dual-analyst approach added another layer of scrutiny to the data analysis process, enhancing the trustworthiness and objectivity of the final interpretations. Ethical standards were strictly upheld, including informed consent, confidentiality, and approval from the institutional review board, respecting the cultural and religious context of Indonesian Islamic Higher Education Institutions (IHEIs). In this case, participant confidentiality was prioritized through several key measures. Informed consent was obtained to ensure participants comprehended the study's purpose and the confidentiality procedures. Anonymity was preserved by assigning pseudonyms to all participants, with identifiers such as R1 and R2 representing participant 1 and participant 2, respectively. Data security was maintained through secure storage and restricted access, while data de-identification was employed to eliminate any potentially identifying details. Additionally, a confidentiality agreement signed by the research team reinforced their commitment to safeguarding participant privacy. These combined efforts established a secure and trustworthy environment, facilitating open and honest sharing of participants' experiences.

4. Findings

4.1 Participants' Experiences and Interpretations of Globalization and Religious Conservatism in Indonesian Higher Education

Indonesian Islamic higher education grapples with the complex interplay of globalization and religious conservatism, revealing a spectrum of perspectives and experiences among its stakeholders. The narratives shared by participants highlighted the dual nature of globalization, perceived as both a catalyst for progress and a potential threat to cultural and religious identity (R1, R3, R4, R6, R7, R8). They embrace globalization for "expanding access to knowledge" (R3) and fostering "connections with diverse individuals" (R1) because "the world becomes a smaller place" (R5) for them. Conversely, R8 expressed apprehension, viewing globalization as a potential threat to her religious identity due to the "bombardment of messages that are contrary to our values" (R8).

"Globalization has given me access to a wealth of knowledge and perspectives I wouldn't have otherwise encountered. It's broadened my understanding of Islam." (R13)

"We can access information and connect with people from all over the world. This is a great opportunity to learn and grow." (R7)

In the context of religious conservatism, it is not a monolithic entity but rather a spectrum of responses to the perceived "pressure" (R2, R18) of globalization. Some individuals and institutions found solace in upholding traditional values and adhering to religious teachings as a way to preserve cultural identity and navigate the uncertainties of a rapidly changing world. R3, strongly emphasized the need to "be careful not to let globalization erode our cultural identity" (R3). Meanwhile, others advocated for a more progressive and inclusive interpretation of Islam, one that can adapt to the complexities of modern society and engage with contemporary issues. R12 highlighted her institution's commitment to "countering extremist ideologies and promoting a more inclusive interpretation of Islam" (R12).

"Globalization has brought both opportunities and challenges. The challenge could be the pressure to conform to Western standards." (R2)

"The influx of Western culture can be confusing and make me question my own identity." (R10)

The institutional responses to these dual forces vary significantly. Some universities and colleges actively embrace globalization, fostering "international partnerships" (R29), "diversifying curricula" (R15), and "incorporating technology into their teaching and learning processes" (R17). R9 pointed to his university's establishment of a "Centre for Islamic Civilization and Intercultural Dialogue" as a testament to this proactive stance. Conversely, other institutions prioritize "the preservation of cultural heritage and traditional Islamic teachings" (R1), offering "a more conservative educational environment" (R27) aimed at "safeguarding students" (R16) from the perceived negative aspects of globalization. R6 underscored her college's emphasis on community engagement and the importance of upholding Islamic values. Furthermore, students also play an active role in shaping the discourse around globalization and religious

conservatism. They are increasingly vocal in their demands for a greater voice in shaping the future of their institutions, advocating for both the preservation of their religious and cultural heritage and the need for critical engagement with the modern world. P22 expressed her appreciation for being “encouraged to contribute to community development projects,” while P23 voiced his hope for greater inclusivity within Islamic higher education. In addition, gender adds another layer of complexity to this landscape, as women often face unique challenges in balancing their aspirations for education and empowerment with societal expectations rooted in religious and cultural norms. P28, highlighted her institution’s commitment to “promoting gender equality and empowering women” (R28). This underscores the importance of considering gender as a lens through which to analyze the impact of globalization and religious conservatism on Indonesian Islamic higher education.

In conclusion, the findings reveal the nuanced and multifaceted nature of how globalization and religious conservatism intersect within Indonesian Islamic higher education. Participants’ experiences underscore a dynamic tension between embracing the opportunities presented by globalization and safeguarding traditional religious values. While globalization is celebrated for expanding access to knowledge and fostering global connections, it also raises concerns about preserving cultural and religious identities in the face of overwhelming external influences. Institutions reflect this complexity in their responses, ranging from progressive integration of global practices to a more conservative approach focused on preserving cultural and religious heritage. Additionally, the role of students and gender considerations add further depth to this discourse, highlighting the need for a balanced approach that respects both modernity and tradition. Overall, these findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities that define the landscape of Islamic higher education in Indonesia, emphasizing the importance of nuanced and inclusive strategies in navigating these converging forces.

4.2 Manifestations of Globalization and Religious Conservatism in Institutional Policies and Practices

Curriculum development reflects a dynamic tension between tradition and modernity. While core Islamic disciplines like “jurisprudence and theology” (R1) remain central. Many IHEIs have expanded their curricula to incorporate subjects such as “comparative religion” (R6) and “international relations” (R20, R11, R9). This suggests a recognition of the importance of “equipping students with a global perspective” (R26) while grounding them in “their religious heritage” (R14). Some institutions have gone further, introducing “contemporary subjects” (R19) like “environmental studies, digital ethics, and peacebuilding” (R9), demonstrating a willingness to engage with “current global issues” (R17) through an Islamic lens. Additionally, the inclusion of courses on “entrepreneurship and leadership” indicates a focus on “preparing students for the practical demands of the modern world” (R6). This suggests that the dynamic IHEI curricula, balancing traditional Islamic disciplines with contemporary subjects, signifies an adaptive response to globalization, preparing students for a complex world while upholding religious heritage. This approach, however, necessitates ongoing

dialogue to ensure the harmonious integration of modernity and tradition within the Islamic educational framework.

“Our curriculum is constantly evolving. We have added courses on comparative religion and international relations, but we also maintain a strong focus on Islamic jurisprudence and theology” (R1).

“While adhering to Islamic principles, we've diversified our curriculum to include contemporary subjects” (R7).

Student recruitment and faculty hiring practices also showcase the interplay between openness and conservatism. Efforts to recruit faculty from abroad, while requiring them to “respect local traditions” (R3), exemplify the balancing act between seeking “international expertise” (R23) and upholding “cultural norms” (R23). Similarly, the implementation of “cultural exchange programs” (R7) that “allow students to study abroad” (R12) while maintaining “their connection” (R24) to their roots reflects “a thoughtful approach to embracing globalization” (P7). However, the persistence of “strict dress codes and gender segregation policies” (R2) in some institutions indicates that religious conservatism continues to shape “student experiences and campus culture” (R17).

“Our university has made a concerted effort to recruit faculty from abroad, but we also require them to respect our local traditions” (R3).

“We have also established partnerships with international universities to offer joint degree programs and student exchange opportunities” (R5).

In terms of the integration of technology within IHEIs, the findings presented another arena where globalization and religious conservatism intersect. While many institutions have embraced “technology in classrooms and administrative processes” (P19), some remain cautious about its potential negative impacts on cultural values and religious beliefs. The development of “online courses and programs to reach a wider audience” (R28) demonstrates a willingness to leverage “technology for educational purposes” (R30). However, the concerns raised by some students about the influence of “messages contrary to our values” (R8) highlight the ongoing negotiation between embracing “technological advancements” (R15) and preserving “traditional values” (R4). This tension underscores that IHEIs are not simply adopting technology wholesale but are actively negotiating its integration within their specific context. It's not a matter of blind acceptance or outright rejection, but rather a nuanced process of adaptation and filtering.

“Our institutions integrated technology into our curriculum, but we prioritize character development and spiritual formation alongside academic excellence” (R21).

“We have incorporated technology into our teaching methods and established international partnerships” (R4).

In conclusion, the findings underscore the complex and nuanced ways in which globalization and religious conservatism intersect within Indonesian Islamic higher education institutions (IHEIs). The data reveal a strategic balancing act in

curriculum development, where traditional Islamic disciplines are preserved alongside the incorporation of contemporary subjects aimed at broadening students' global perspectives. This dual focus reflects an institutional commitment to equipping students with both a robust religious foundation and relevant knowledge for the modern world. Similarly, student recruitment and faculty hiring practices demonstrate a careful integration of international expertise with respect for local cultural and religious norms, illustrated by efforts to attract foreign faculty while upholding traditional values. The cautious yet progressive adoption of technology within IHEIs further exemplifies this balancing act, as institutions leverage technological advancements for educational enrichment while addressing concerns about potential impacts on cultural and religious values. Collectively, these findings highlight the adaptive strategies employed by IHEIs to navigate the tensions between globalization and conservatism, aiming to foster environments that honor both traditional values and the demands of contemporary education.

4.3 Challenges and Opportunities in Balancing Academic Freedom, Islamic Teachings, and Cultural Norms

The findings reveal that these institutions face a complex interplay of factors, including the preservation of Islamic teachings, upholding cultural norms, and promoting academic freedom. A recurring theme in the data is the tension between upholding traditional Islamic values and adapting to modern societal norms (R1, R4, R14, R20, R25, R29). This sentiment is echoed by R4, who finds it challenging to harmonize forward-looking interpretations of Islamic texts with traditional conservative cultural norms. The quest for balance between these competing values is further emphasized by (R3), who asserts the institution's commitment to both academic freedom and upholding Islamic teachings.

"Islamic higher education are committed to academic freedom, but we also have a responsibility to uphold Islamic teachings" (R3).

"There is tension between the desire to be a modern university and the pressure to conform to religious norms. We must find a balance" (R1).

Further, the integration of modern knowledge with traditional Islamic scholarship poses a significant challenge. R21 highlights the "constant tension between adhering to traditional Islamic scholarship and incorporating modern scientific methodologies". This reflects the ongoing struggle to reconcile faith and reason within the context of higher education. Despite these challenges, participants also identify opportunities for growth and progress. Open dialogue (R4, R21), critical thinking (R5, R6, R10), and a commitment to social justice (R17, R25) are seen as potential avenues for navigating these complexities. R5 emphasizes the significance of blending Islamic values with contemporary knowledge while remaining receptive to fresh perspectives. Meanwhile, P17 highlights the necessity for graduates to possess not just knowledge, but also a robust moral foundation and a dedication to advancing social justice. This sentiment resonates with the emphasis on critical thinking and challenging traditional norms within the framework of Islamic teachings, as expressed by (P6).

"We encourage our students to be critical thinkers and to challenge traditional norms, but always within the framework of Islamic teachings" (R6).

"The challenge is to ensure that our graduates are not only knowledgeable in their respective fields but also equipped with a strong moral compass and a commitment to social justice" (R17).

Thus, IHEIs face a complex and diverse landscape of competing values and demands. While challenges persist, there is also recognition of the opportunities for growth and progress through open dialogue, critical thinking, and commitment to social justice. By engaging with these issues thoughtfully and proactively, IHEIs can contribute to the development of a more equitable society.

4. Agency and Resistance to Globalization and Religious Conservatism in Indonesian Higher Education

Indonesian Islamic Higher Education Institutions are witnessing a dynamic interplay of agency and resistance in response to the dual forces of globalization and religious conservatism. Participants are not passive recipients of these global and local currents, but rather active agents engaged in shaping their educational and social landscapes. A key manifestation of this agency is the active engagement in debates and discussions surrounding the role of modern Muslims in global society. There are ongoing conversations on campus regarding the definition of "modern Muslim woman" (R2), suggesting a critical examination of traditional roles and expectations. Furthermore, R8 is actively questioning Western concepts and striving to devise Islamic responses to current challenges, demonstrating a desire for agency and autonomy in shaping their own narratives.

"There is a lot of debate on campus about what it means to be a modern Muslim woman. We are trying to find our own path" (R2).

"I think it's important for us to be critical of Western ideas and to develop our own Islamic solutions to the challenges we face" (R8).

Within IHEIs, there is a strong emphasis on fostering critical thinking and intellectual independence. R6 strongly emphasized the significance of promoting students to be critical thinkers and to question traditional norms, while ensuring adherence to Islamic teachings. This approach suggests a recognition of the need for students to develop the ability to analyze and evaluate information through an Islamic lens. Moreover, the aspirations of individuals within IHEIs extend beyond personal growth and encompass a desire for social change and community empowerment. R10 articulated her desire to utilize her "education to empower others and contribute to the creation of a more inclusive and compassionate society". Similarly, R14 also stressed the importance of enabling individuals to be proactive agents of change. This shared commitment to social justice and community well-being highlights the potential of IHEIs to contribute to positive societal transformation.

"We encourage our students to be critical thinkers and to challenge traditional norms, but always within the framework of Islamic teachings" (R6).

"I believe that Islamic higher education can be a driver for social reform, empowering individuals to become agents of change" (R14).

Efforts to promote tolerance and social justice are also evident within these institutions. P4 indicated that she actively encourages her students to be "agents of positive change," promoting a tolerant understanding of Islam. Similarly, P12 also emphasized her institution's commitment to "countering extremist ideologies and promoting a more inclusive interpretation of Islam". These initiatives demonstrate a proactive approach to addressing social issues and fostering a more harmonious society. While these examples highlight the agency and resilience of individuals within IHEIs, it is important to acknowledge the ongoing challenges they face. Navigating the complexities of globalization and religious conservatism can be a daunting task, and there is no single formula for success. However, the shared commitment to critical thinking, open dialogue, and social engagement provides a strong foundation for the future trajectory of Islamic higher education in Indonesia. Drawing on theoretical frameworks like hybridization, IHEIs can adopt strategies that promote critical pedagogy, encourage intercultural dialogue, and facilitate contextualized adaptation. This approach will enable them to embrace the benefits of globalization while remaining grounded in their Islamic values, fostering graduates who are both globally competent and deeply connected to their faith and cultural heritage. Then, by fostering an environment that encourages intellectual curiosity, embraces diversity, and promotes social responsibility, IHEIs can empower their students to become leaders in their communities and contribute to a more just and equitable society.

To sum up, the findings reveal a vibrant and proactive landscape within Indonesian Islamic Higher Education Institutions, where agency and resistance to globalization and religious conservatism are actively shaping the educational environment. Participants are not merely responding to external pressures but are engaged in a dynamic process of defining their identities and addressing contemporary challenges. The ongoing debates about the role of modern Muslim identities and the critical examination of Western concepts reflect a strong desire for autonomy and self-definition. The emphasis on fostering critical thinking and intellectual independence, coupled with a commitment to social justice and community empowerment, underscores the potential for IHEIs to drive meaningful societal change. These institutions are not only navigating the complexities of globalization and conservatism but are also paving the way for a more inclusive and compassionate society. Through their dedication to intellectual rigor, open dialogue, and social responsibility, IHEIs in Indonesia are positioning themselves as pivotal players in shaping a progressive and equitable future for their students and the broader community.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study illuminated the varied responses of Indonesian Islamic Higher Education Institutions (IHEIs) to the competing forces of globalization and religious conservatism. This in-depth analysis critically examined these findings, offering a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and

opportunities facing IHEIs in this dynamic context, while incorporating relevant references from the existing literature.

The participants' perception of globalization as a double-edged sword is a salient theme in the data, echoing concerns raised in the literature about the homogenizing effects of globalization on higher education (Dieudé & Prøitz, 2024; Koopman & Koopman, 2023; Rakhmani & Sakhiyya, 2024). While participants acknowledge the benefits of expanded access to knowledge (Woldegiorgis, 2024), international collaborations (Shahjahan & Grimm, 2023), and cultural exchange, they also express deep-seated concerns about the potential erosion of cultural identity, the dilution of religious values, and the pressure to conform to Western standards of education and societal norms (Mendes, 2023). The study's findings point toward potential strategies for IHEIs navigating the complexities of globalization. This includes adopting a critical approach to globalization through curriculum design and intercultural dialogue, thereby empowering students to engage with global influences while maintaining their cultural and religious identity. Additionally, reinforcing core Islamic disciplines, contextualizing knowledge, and promoting local wisdom can help preserve that identity. Addressing concerns about Western influence necessitates critical pedagogy, the development of indigenous knowledge systems, and a strong emphasis on ethical and moral education grounded in Islamic teachings. These strategies could empower IHEIs to embrace globalization's benefits without compromising their core values. These concerns align with the critiques of Eurocentric bias in the globalization discourse (Bamberger & Morris, 2024), which often overlooks the unique challenges and opportunities faced by IHEIs in non-Western contexts, particularly in the Muslim world (Haynes, 2021; Visakh & Santhosh, 2024).

The allure of globalization lies in its promise of enhanced educational opportunities, exposure to diverse perspectives, and increased international collaboration. This is evident in participants' expressions of appreciation for the "wealth of knowledge and perspectives" (R13) and the ability to "access information and connect with people from all over the world" (R7) that globalization affords. However, the potential drawbacks are equally significant. The influx of Western ideas and values can challenge traditional Islamic teachings and cultural norms, leading to internal conflicts and identity crises among students and faculty. The pressure to adopt Western models of education and research may also lead to the marginalization of indigenous knowledge systems and pedagogical approaches, as highlighted by Tight (2022) in his discussion of the challenges faced by IHEIs in non-Western contexts. This Janus-faced nature of globalization necessitates a critical and discerning approach within IHEIs. Rather than uncritically embracing or rejecting globalization in its entirety, these institutions must actively engage in a process of selective adaptation, carefully choosing which aspects of globalization to adopt and which to resist. This requires a deep understanding of their own cultural and religious values, as articulated by Azra (2023) and Miksic (2023), as well as a willingness to engage in critical dialogue with external forces to ensure that the integration of global perspectives does not come at the expense of their core identity and mission.

The research findings showed that religious conservatism is not a monolithic entity but rather a spectrum of responses to the perceived pressures of globalization, as noted in the existing literature on the rise of religious conservatism in Indonesia (Sebastian & Othman Alkaff, 2024; Suryani & Muslim, 2024). While some individuals and institutions cling to traditional interpretations of Islam as a bulwark against perceived cultural threats, others advocate for a more progressive and inclusive approach that can adapt to the complexities of modern society. This heterogeneity suggests that the rise of religious conservatism in Indonesia is not merely a reactionary phenomenon but a complex interplay of multiple factors, including socio-political dynamics, historical legacies, and individual agency, as suggested by studies such as Fossati (2023) and Mukhibat et al. (2024).

The motivations behind religious conservatism are diverse and complex. For some, it is a way to preserve cultural identity and resist the homogenizing forces of globalization. For others, it is a means of asserting religious values in the face of secularizing influences. Still, others see it as a way to address social issues and promote moral values. This diversity of motivations makes it challenging to develop a one-size-fits-all approach to addressing religious conservatism within IHEIs. These contradicting views serve as a reminder that religious conservatism is not a static or homogenous phenomenon. It is a dynamic and evolving force shaped by a myriad of factors. Recognizing this complexity is essential for developing a more nuanced and effective approach to engaging with religious conservatism within Indonesian IHEIs and fostering an environment that supports both the preservation of religious and cultural heritage and the pursuit of knowledge and progress in a globalized world. Instead, a more subtle and context-specific approach is needed, one that recognizes the legitimacy of different perspectives and seeks to foster dialogue and understanding between different groups. This aligns with the calls for a more detailed understanding of the impact of globalization on Islamic education in specific contexts, as emphasized by Lahmar (2023), Poncelet and Ikando (2024), and Saada (2023). By adopting a contextualized and dialogical approach grounded in pluralism, IHEIs can create a space where diverse perspectives are valued and respected. This approach can facilitate the development of innovative solutions that address the challenges of globalization while upholding the core values of Islamic education and contributing to a more just and equitable society.

The institutional responses to globalization and religious conservatism are as diverse as the individuals and communities they serve, ranging from active embrace to cautious adaptation and even resistance. This kaleidoscope of strategies underscores the agency and resilience of IHEIs in shaping their paths in response to these complex forces, as highlighted by Moshtari and Safarpour (2024) and Young et al. (2024). Some IHEIs proactively embrace globalization, fostering international partnerships, diversifying their curricula, and integrating technology into their teaching and learning processes, aligning with strategies noted by Bougherira et al. (2024) and Nguyen and Dao (2024). These institutions recognize the importance of equipping their students with the skills and

knowledge needed to thrive in a globalized world, while also seeking to leverage the benefits of globalization to enhance their own institutional capacity and reputation.

Conversely, the IHEIs prioritize the preservation of cultural heritage and traditional Islamic values, offering a more conservative educational environment aimed at safeguarding students from the perceived negative aspects of globalization, resonating with the concerns raised by Elugbaju and Fagunwa (2023) and Lewin et al. (2023). These institutions emphasize the importance of maintaining a strong Islamic identity and grounding students in their religious and cultural traditions. They may also be wary of the potential for globalization to undermine traditional values and beliefs, as noted by Daun and Arjmand (2021) in their discussion of the challenges faced by IHEIs in navigating the global-local connection. Preserving cultural heritage and Islamic values doesn't necessitate isolation from globalization. IHEIs can selectively engage with the world, balancing openness to new ideas with a commitment to their core identity, thus preparing graduates for a globalized society while rooted in their traditions. Additionally, this diversity of approaches underscores the importance of recognizing the unique contexts, values, and priorities of individual IHEIs. However, the findings also raised questions about the long-term efficacy and sustainability of different strategies, calling for further research to assess the impact of these diverse approaches on the quality of education, the preservation of Islamic values, and the ability of IHEIs to meet the needs of a rapidly changing society.

The tension between tradition and modernity is a central theme in curriculum development within IHEIs. While core Islamic disciplines remain central to their educational mission, many IHEIs have expanded their curricula to incorporate contemporary subjects such as environmental studies, digital ethics, and peacebuilding. This reflects a growing recognition of the need to equip students with a broader range of skills and knowledge relevant to the 21st century, aligning with the findings of Marjuni (2022) and Rahmawati et al. (2022). This expansion of the curriculum is not without its challenges, however. Integrating modern subjects into a curriculum that is deeply rooted in Islamic tradition requires careful consideration and ongoing dialogue. There are concerns about how to ensure that these new subjects are taught in a way that is consistent with Islamic values and principles. To integrate contemporary subjects into IHEI curricula, a strong foundation in Islamic ethics and principles is essential. This involves establishing a clear ethical framework, incorporating relevant scriptural and traditional references, and exploring moral dilemmas through an Islamic lens. Additionally, contextualizing these subjects to the Indonesian context and utilizing an interdisciplinary approach can enhance their relevance and facilitate deeper understanding. Encouraging critical thinking and dialogue, including comparative analysis and problem-solving, empowers students to engage actively with these subjects within an Islamic framework. Specific strategies can be tailored to each subject: grounding environmental studies in Islamic teachings on stewardship, examining digital ethics through Islamic values, and exploring peacebuilding through concepts of peace, justice, and reconciliation within Islam.

By employing these strategies, IHEIs can equip students with the knowledge and ethical frameworks necessary to navigate the complexities of the modern world while remaining grounded in their faith.

Moreover, there is a need to strike a balance between preserving traditional Islamic knowledge and incorporating modern perspectives, as emphasized by Azra (2023) and Miksic (2023) in their discussions of the Indonesian context. Striking this balance is crucial for the future of Islamic higher education in Indonesia. Graduates need to be equipped with both the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive in a globalized world and the deep understanding of their faith and culture that will allow them to contribute meaningfully to their communities. This requires a curriculum that is both comprehensive and contextually relevant, one that prepares students for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century while also grounding them in their Islamic heritage. The findings of Tolchah and Mu'ammam (2019) suggested that this balance can be achieved through a holistic approach to education that integrates cognitive, affective, and spiritual development

The study highlighted the agency and resilience of individuals within IHEIs who are actively engaged in shaping their educational and social landscapes. They are questioning traditional norms, developing Islamic responses to contemporary challenges, and advocating for social change and community empowerment, echoing the findings of Rukiyanto et al. (2024). This agency is a crucial factor in determining the future trajectory of Islamic higher education in Indonesia. By fostering critical thinking, intellectual independence, and social engagement, IHEIs can empower students to become leaders in their communities and contribute to a more just and equitable society. However, the findings also suggested that this agency is often constrained by institutional structures, cultural norms, and power dynamics, as noted by Sibawaihi and Fernandes (2023) and van Bruinessen (2015). The hierarchical nature of many IHEIs, for example, can limit the ability of students and faculty to challenge established norms and practices. Additionally, societal expectations and cultural traditions can place constraints on individual agency, particularly for women. Overcoming these constraints requires a concerted effort to create a more inclusive and empowering environment within IHEIs, one that values diverse perspectives and encourages critical engagement with complex issues. This aligns with the calls for greater inclusivity and empowerment within Islamic higher education made by scholars such as Hasan and Juhannis (2024) and Hoon (2017).

6. Research Implications

The findings of this study have significant implications for policymakers, educators, and administrators within IHEIs. This study underscores the need for a more detailed and context-specific approach to policy development that recognizes the diversity of perspectives and experiences within Islamic higher education, as highlighted by Roberts and Lamp (2022). Policymakers should avoid one-size-fits-all solutions and instead develop policies that are responsive to the unique needs and challenges of different IHEIs. They should also consider the role of agency and resistance in shaping the responses of IHEIs to globalization

and religious conservatism, creating policies that empower individuals and institutions to chart their own paths. Further, educators and administrators have a critical role to play in fostering an environment that supports critical thinking, open dialogue, and social engagement. This may involve revisiting traditional pedagogical approaches, incorporating diverse perspectives into the curriculum, and creating spaces for students and faculty to engage in meaningful dialogue about complex issues. By doing so, IHEIs can equip their students with the skills and knowledge they need to navigate the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century, while also upholding their Islamic values and contributing to the betterment of their communities.

7. Limitations and Recommendations

This study, while comprehensive, has some limitations. The purposive sampling may not be fully representative of all IHEIs in Indonesia. Future research could employ mixed methods, incorporating quantitative data to complement these qualitative findings. Additionally, the study's focus on individual experiences may not fully capture institutional dynamics and power relations. Further research could explore these aspects in greater detail. Longitudinal studies could also track the evolution of IHEIs over time and assess the long-term impact of globalization and religious conservatism. Further research is also needed to explore these issues in greater depth and to develop context-specific strategies that support the continued relevance and vitality of Islamic higher education in a rapidly changing world. In conclusion, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of the complex landscape of Indonesian Islamic higher education in the era of globalization and religious conservatism. It highlights the challenges and opportunities facing IHEIs and underscores the importance of agency, resilience, and dialogue in shaping the future of Islamic higher education in Indonesia.

8. Conclusion

This study offers a comprehensive and critical analysis of the complex interplay between globalization and religious conservatism within Indonesian Islamic Higher Education Institutions (IHEIs), highlighting the challenges and opportunities facing these institutions in a rapidly changing world. The research questions guiding this study sought to uncover the multifaceted ways in which globalization and religious conservatism are experienced, interpreted, and responded to within IHEIs. The findings reveal that participants experience globalization as both an opportunity and a challenge, embracing its potential for knowledge expansion and intercultural dialogue while also grappling with concerns about the erosion of cultural and religious identity. Religious conservatism, on the other hand, manifests in a spectrum of responses, from adherence to traditional values to advocacy for progressive interpretations of Islam. These phenomena are not merely abstract concepts but are deeply embedded in institutional policies and practices, shaping curriculum development, student recruitment, faculty hiring, and campus culture. The interviews revealed that navigating these competing values and demands presents both challenges and opportunities for individuals within IHEIs, who must balance academic freedom with adherence to Islamic teachings and cultural

norms. In response to these complexities, individuals exercise agency and resistance in various ways, from engaging in critical dialogue to advocating for social change.

Religious conservatism is revealed to be a complex phenomenon, representing a range of responses to the perceived pressures of globalization. While some adhere to traditional interpretations of Islam, others advocate for a more progressive and inclusive approach. This diversity underscores the need for context-specific strategies that foster dialogue and understanding between different perspectives. In addition, the institutional responses to globalization and religious conservatism vary significantly, ranging from active embrace to cautious adaptation and resistance. This diversity reflects the agency and resilience of IHEIs in shaping their own trajectories, but it also raises questions about the long-term efficacy and sustainability of different approaches. Furthermore, curriculum development emerges as a key site of negotiation between tradition and modernity. While core Islamic disciplines remain central, the incorporation of contemporary subjects highlights a growing recognition of the need to equip students with diverse skills and knowledge. However, challenges remain in integrating modern perspectives into a curriculum deeply rooted in Islamic tradition, requiring ongoing dialogue to strike a balance between preserving traditional knowledge and incorporating contemporary insights. Finally, the study also reveals the agency and resilience of individuals within IHEIs who actively engage in shaping their educational and social landscapes. Their critical questioning of traditional norms, development of Islamic responses to contemporary challenges, and advocacy for social change underscore the potential of IHEIs to contribute to a more just and equitable society. However, this agency is often constrained by institutional structures, cultural norms, and power dynamics, highlighting the need for creating a more inclusive and empowering environment within IHEIs.

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