

NEEDS ANALYSIS OF INTEGRATING RESEARCH AND COMMUNITY SERVICE INTO LEARNING AT ISLAMIC HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis kebutuhan integrasi penelitian dan pengabdian kepada masyarakat dalam pembelajaran pada perguruan tinggi Islam melalui studi kasus di UIN Sumatera Utara, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, dan UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. Penelitian menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Data diperoleh melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan studi dokumentasi dengan melibatkan pimpinan, pengelola akademik, pengelola penelitian dan pengabdian kepada masyarakat, dosen, serta mahasiswa. Data dianalisis melalui kondensasi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan, sedangkan keabsahan data dijamin melalui triangulasi sumber, triangulasi teknik, dan *member checking*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ketiga perguruan tinggi memiliki modal kelembagaan yang kuat untuk mengembangkan integrasi tridarma, tetapi kesiapan implementasinya masih beragam. Integrasi membutuhkan mekanisme kelembagaan yang menghubungkan unit penelitian dan pengabdian dengan fakultas, program studi, dosen, dan mahasiswa. Kesiapan dosen tidak hanya mencakup kompetensi penelitian, tetapi juga kemampuan pedagogis dalam mengintegrasikan hasil penelitian dan pengalaman pengabdian ke dalam pembelajaran. Mahasiswa membutuhkan penguatan literasi akademik, keterampilan penelitian, kolaborasi, dan pengalaman lapangan. Integrasi tridarma perlu dikembangkan secara sistematis melalui kebijakan, koordinasi, penguatan kapasitas sumber daya manusia, dan dukungan kelembagaan berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: Integrasi Tridarma, Pembelajaran, Perguruan Tinggi Islam

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the need to integrate research and community service into learning at Islamic higher education institutions through case studies at UIN Sumatera Utara, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, and UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. The study employed a qualitative method with a case study approach. Data were collected through observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis involving institutional leaders, academic administrators, research and community service managers, lecturers, and students. Data were analyzed through data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, while data validity was ensured through source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and member checking. The findings indicate that the three universities have strong institutional foundations for developing the integration of the three pillars of higher education, although their implementation readiness varies. Integration requires institutional mechanisms that connect research and community service units with faculties, study programs, lecturers, and students. Lecturer readiness encompasses not only research competence but also pedagogical capacity to integrate research findings and community service experiences into learning. Students require strengthened academic literacy, research skills, collaboration, and field experience. The integration of the three pillars of higher education should be systematically developed through policies, coordination, human resource capacity building, and sustainable institutional support.

Keywords: Integration of the Three Pillars of Higher Education, Learning, Islamic Higher Education

INTRODUCTION

Islamic higher education institutions occupy a strategic position in building an educational ecosystem that is oriented not only toward the acquisition of academic knowledge and skills but also toward the development of scholarship rooted in Islamic values and capable of making tangible contributions to addressing societal challenges (Afdareza et al., 2020; Mahariah et al., 2023; Okolie et al., 2019; Syahrul, 2017). In this context, higher education should not be understood merely as a space for classroom-based learning but as an academic ecosystem that brings together education, research, and community service in an integrated manner (Preiser-Houy & Navarrete, 2006; Rodríguez-Izquierdo, 2017). These three functions constitute an interconnected whole within the implementation of the three pillars of higher education and should mutually reinforce one another. Learning provides students with opportunities to acquire knowledge and academic experiences, research generates new knowledge and findings, while community service serves as a means of applying knowledge to address societal needs and challenges. The integration of these three functions is increasingly important for Islamic higher education institutions because education is expected not only to produce academically competent graduates but also individuals with social awareness, moral responsibility, and the ability to actualize Islamic values in real-life contexts (Bawole, 2024; Nigro & Wortham, 2023).

The increasingly dynamic higher education environment further strengthens the need for such integration. Advances in digital technology, changing student characteristics, the growing complexity of social challenges, and demands from the world of work have encouraged higher education institutions to develop learning that is contextual, experiential, and relevant to societal needs. In practice, however, the relationships among learning, research, and community service in higher education institutions often remain fragmented. Research tends to be positioned as an independent academic activity, community service is implemented as a separate program, while learning remains largely focused on content delivery and the achievement of learning outcomes. This condition may create a gap between the knowledge acquired by students and the real-world problems faced by society. At the same time, research findings and community service experiences, which have considerable potential to serve as learning resources, are not always utilized systematically in the learning process. This situation indicates the need to examine more deeply how the integration of the three pillars of higher education, particularly research and community service, can be developed as an integral component of learning in Islamic higher education institutions (Ardiansyah et al., 2020; Parker et al., 2009).

Previous studies have demonstrated the importance of the relationship among research, learning, and community service in improving the quality of higher education. Studies on research-based learning, for instance, have shown that student involvement in research processes can strengthen critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, academic literacy, and investigative skills. Other studies on community-based learning and service learning have also demonstrated that learning experiences involving students in community contexts can enhance social skills, civic awareness, reflective abilities, and understanding of real-life issues. Furthermore, research on the integration of the three pillars of higher education emphasizes that connecting education,

research, and community service can strengthen the relevance of higher education institutions to societal development needs. In the context of Islamic education, several studies have also highlighted the importance of learning that connects Islamic knowledge with social realities, enabling students to move beyond conceptual understanding and develop the attitudes and skills necessary to implement Islamic values in community life (Lubis et al., 2023, 2024).

Nevertheless, these studies reveal several limitations. Most research has focused on integrating research or community service through particular learning approaches, such as research-based learning, project-based learning, service learning, or experiential learning. Other studies have concentrated on the effectiveness of implementing established learning models rather than mapping needs before developing such integration. Consequently, institutional needs, lecturers' needs, students' needs, resource readiness, and forms of integration considered relevant by stakeholders have not been comprehensively examined. This limitation is particularly significant in the context of Islamic higher education institutions because their institutional characteristics, scholarly orientations, and social mandates possess distinctive features that differentiate them from general higher education institutions. The integration of research and community service into learning in Islamic higher education should therefore not be understood merely as a pedagogical strategy but also as an institutional need related to the development of academic culture, curriculum relevance, student competency enhancement, and the actualization of Islamic values.

This research gap indicates the need for foundational research specifically examining the need to integrate research and community service into learning in Islamic higher education institutions. Needs analysis constitutes a critical stage prior to the development of an integration model, policy, or product. Without adequate needs mapping, integration risks becoming merely normative and administrative, without sufficiently considering actual conditions and the needs of its primary users. Therefore, this study offers novelty through an empirical mapping of the need to integrate research and community service into learning by comparing the contexts of three Islamic public universities: UIN Sumatera Utara, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, and UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. This cross-institutional comparative approach enables the study to identify general patterns of need while also revealing institution-specific characteristics. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the needs analysis stage as the foundation for developing the integration of the three pillars of higher education into learning, rather than directly developing or testing a particular model.

This study holds both academic and practical significance. Academically, the findings are expected to enrich the scholarship on the integration of the three pillars of higher education by providing empirical insights into the need to integrate research and community service into learning within Islamic higher education institutions. Practically, the findings can serve as a basis for higher education institutions to formulate policies, curriculum strategies, and learning mechanisms that are more effectively integrated with research and community service activities. The findings may also provide an initial foundation for subsequent research aimed at developing

integration models, testing their effectiveness, and producing implementation-oriented products or policies suited to the characteristics of Islamic higher education institutions. Based on this context, this study aims to analyze the need to integrate research and community service into learning in Islamic higher education institutions through case studies at UIN Sumatera Utara, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, and UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, focusing on identifying the needs, perceptions, readiness, and supporting aspects required as a foundation for developing a more systematic, contextual, and sustainable integration of the three pillars of higher education.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative method with a case study approach to analyze the need to integrate research and community service into learning in Islamic higher education institutions. A qualitative approach was selected because the study sought to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences, perceptions, needs, readiness, and practices related to integrating research and community service into the learning process from the perspectives of relevant stakeholders. A case study approach was employed because the research focused on the integration of the three pillars of higher education within specific and complex institutional contexts, allowing the phenomenon to be explored comprehensively in its natural settings. The study was conducted at three Islamic public universities: UIN Sumatera Utara, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, and UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. The three sites were purposively selected based on their characteristics as Islamic public universities with established experience in education, research, and community service, as well as institutional capacity and academic activities relevant to the research focus. Selecting three institutions from different geographical regions also aimed to capture diverse perspectives and identify both common patterns of need and institution-specific characteristics in integrating research and community service into learning.

The research data consisted of primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained from informants purposively selected based on their involvement in and knowledge of the implementation of learning, research, and community service. The informants included university or faculty leaders, academic administrators, research and community service managers, heads of study programs, lecturers, and students. Informants were selected based on their capacity to provide relevant information concerning the needs, readiness, opportunities, challenges, and forms of integration of the three pillars of higher education into learning. Secondary data consisted of policy and academic documents related to research, community service, and learning, including academic guidelines, curricula, semester learning plans, research and community service policies, activity reports, study program documents, and other relevant institutional documents.

Data were collected through observation, interviews, and document analysis. Observations were conducted to identify learning conditions and practices related to research and community service activities. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the

informants to explore their perceptions, experiences, needs, readiness, and challenges regarding the integration of research and community service into learning. Document analysis was conducted to complement and verify information obtained through observations and interviews by examining relevant institutional documents.

The data were analyzed interactively through data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data obtained from observations, interviews, and documents were first transcribed, classified, and coded according to the research themes and subsequently organized into categories reflecting needs, readiness, forms of integration, supporting factors, and implementation challenges. Cross-case analysis was conducted to compare findings across the three universities and identify similarities, differences, and emerging patterns concerning the integration needs. Data trustworthiness was ensured through source and methodological triangulation. Source triangulation involved comparing information obtained from institutional leaders, administrators, lecturers, and students, while methodological triangulation involved comparing findings from observations, interviews, and document analysis. In addition, member checking was conducted with informants to ensure that the interpretations accurately reflected their experiences and information, while peer debriefing was used to strengthen the objectivity and credibility of the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Need to Integrate Research and Community Service into Learning

The findings from three Islamic public universities—UIN Sumatera Utara, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, and UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung—indicate that integrating research and community service into learning has become increasingly relevant to the development of Islamic higher education. This need arises not only from the demands of implementing the three pillars of higher education but also from the need to make learning more contextual, applicable, and directly connected to real-life societal issues. The findings demonstrate that learning focused primarily on content delivery and the achievement of cognitive competencies may create a gap between the academic knowledge acquired by students and the social realities they encounter beyond the university environment. Therefore, research and community service need to be positioned as learning resources that can enrich the educational process.

The need for such integration is reflected in several forms. First, there is a need to utilize lecturers' research findings as learning materials. Research conducted by lecturers generates new knowledge that is relevant to the academic disciplines being taught. When research findings are not integrated into learning, students may receive knowledge that is static and disconnected from current developments in their respective fields. Integrating research findings enables course content to be updated based on empirical evidence and advances in knowledge. From the perspective of research-based learning, students are positioned not merely as recipients of knowledge but as learners who are introduced to the processes through which knowledge is generated, tested, and developed. Thus,

research can function both as a source of learning content and as a learning approach that encourages students to develop critical, analytical, investigative, and reflective thinking skills.

Second, there is a need to integrate community service experiences into the learning process. Community service activities provide empirical experiences concerning social, educational, religious, economic, and cultural issues faced by communities. These experiences have pedagogical value because they can serve as authentic contexts for learning. Students can recognize that theories learned in the classroom are directly connected to real-life problems and community needs. Within the framework of experiential learning, concrete experience constitutes an essential component in the construction of knowledge. Learning does not stop at conceptual understanding but proceeds through experiencing, reflecting on experiences, constructing concepts, and testing them in real-life situations. Therefore, integrating community service into learning can strengthen experiential learning while simultaneously fostering students' social awareness (Bajunid, 2024; Zubaidah & Mahanal, 2026).

Third, the findings reveal the need to develop learning processes that connect research and community service simultaneously. Within this framework, research is not merely a process of generating knowledge, while community service is not simply an activity for applying knowledge; rather, both are positioned within an interconnected learning cycle. Community problems can serve as sources for identifying research problems, research findings can be used to design solutions, and experiences gained through community service can provide materials for academic evaluation and reflection. This cycle demonstrates a dynamic relationship among learning, research, and community service. Conceptually, this condition reinforces the idea of university engagement, in which higher education institutions function not only as centers of knowledge production but also as institutions actively engaged in addressing societal challenges (Duarte et al., 2024; Gurukkal, 2020; Moda & Chauhan, 2026).

In the context of Islamic higher education, the need for integration also has an additional dimension, namely strengthening the relevance of Islamic values. The integration of research and community service is not merely intended to improve students' academic competencies but also to develop an awareness that knowledge carries social and moral responsibilities. Islamic values such as public benefit (*maslahah*), justice, trustworthiness (*amanah*), social concern, and responsibility can be actualized through learning oriented toward addressing community problems. Thus, the integration of the three pillars of higher education can serve as a means of bringing together scholarly, Islamic, and societal dimensions. This reinforces the distinctive character of Islamic higher education institutions, which are expected not only to produce academically competent graduates but also individuals committed to community service and social responsibility.

These findings demonstrate that the need for integration is not merely pedagogical but also institutional. Higher education institutions require mechanisms that enable research findings and community service experiences to be documented, mapped, and utilized as learning resources. In this context, integration requires policies that encourage lecturers to connect their research and community service activities with the courses they teach. Without supportive policies and institutional mechanisms, integration will largely depend on individual lecturers' initiatives. Such

conditions may result in uneven implementation of integration across study programs and academic units.

Stakeholders' Perceptions of the Integration of Research and Community Service into Learning

The findings indicate that, in general, stakeholders at the three universities hold positive perceptions of integrating research and community service into learning. Lecturers view integration as a strategy for updating learning materials, increasing the relevance of courses, and introducing students to real-world issues. Students tend to perceive integration as an opportunity to gain more contextual learning experiences that extend beyond theoretical instruction. Meanwhile, institutional administrators view integration as a strategy for strengthening the interconnectedness of the three pillars of higher education while simultaneously improving the quality of academic governance.

These positive perceptions indicate a paradigm shift in how students are positioned within the learning process. Students are no longer viewed merely as consumers of knowledge but as active subjects who can participate in the production and application of knowledge. The constructivist perspective supports this view by positioning knowledge as something constructed through experience and interaction. When students become involved in research and community service activities, they gain opportunities to develop understanding through concrete experiences, discussions, observations, problem analysis, and reflection.

From the lecturers' perspective, research integration provides opportunities to introduce up-to-date knowledge into the classroom. Lecturers can utilize research findings as case studies, discussion materials, small-scale research projects, or data sources for student analysis. Meanwhile, community service experiences can be used to introduce authentic problems as learning materials. This approach strengthens problem-based learning because students are confronted with complex issues that do not always have a single solution. They are required to identify problems, analyze their underlying causes, explore alternative solutions, and evaluate their potential impacts.

However, positive perceptions do not necessarily mean that all stakeholders share the same understanding of integration. Some stakeholders tend to understand integration simply as incorporating research findings into course materials, whereas others interpret it as involving students directly in research and community service activities. These differences in understanding indicate the need for a clearer conceptualization of integration. Integration should not be understood merely as transferring research findings into teaching materials but as a process that connects the entire knowledge cycle, beginning with problem identification and continuing through knowledge production, application, reflection, and evaluation.

In the context of Islamic higher education, these perceptions are also related to the need to strengthen the relationship between knowledge (*ilm*) and action (*amal*). The knowledge acquired by students should ideally not remain at the level of theoretical understanding but should be translated into actions that generate meaningful benefits for society. This principle is consistent with the orientation of Islamic education, which views knowledge as a foundation for developing individuals

who are knowledgeable, morally grounded, and socially responsible. Therefore, the integration of research and community service can serve as a pedagogical medium for developing students' academic competencies alongside their social and Islamic character (Healey & Jenkins, 2020; Preiser-Houy & Navarrete, 2006).

Institutional, Lecturer, and Student Readiness for the Integration of the Three Pillars of Higher Education

The findings from UIN Sumatera Utara, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, and UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung indicate that readiness to integrate research and community service into learning varies across institutions. In general, the three universities possess relatively strong institutional foundations, as they have organizational structures, units responsible for research and community service, academic resources, and experience in implementing the three pillars of higher education. However, field findings indicate that the existence of these institutional structures does not automatically mean that research and community service have been systematically integrated into learning. Implementation readiness is influenced by several factors, particularly institutional policies, inter-unit coordination mechanisms, lecturer capacity, student readiness, infrastructure availability, funding support, and the institution's ability to connect research and community service outcomes with the curriculum and learning process.

At the institutional level, findings from UIN Sumatera Utara indicate that readiness for integration is supported by the existence of units and structures responsible for academic affairs, research, and community service. This provides an initial foundation for developing the integration of the three pillars of higher education into learning. However, the main challenge lies in how various activities managed by these units can be systematically connected to learning programs at the faculty and study program levels. The findings indicate that integration cannot rely solely on the existence of research and community service institutions but requires mechanisms that enable lecturers' research findings, community service experiences, and various issues identified in society to be systematically identified and utilized as learning resources. Thus, institutional readiness at UIN Sumatera Utara should be understood not only in terms of the availability of organizational structures but also in terms of the institution's capacity to establish connectivity between the units managing the three pillars of higher education and study programs as the primary implementers of learning.

The findings from UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta reveal a readiness profile closely associated with the university's academic complexity and institutional capacity. The growing scope of research and community service activities provides significant opportunities to utilize the outcomes of the three pillars of higher education as learning resources. However, the broader and more complex the academic activities, the greater the need for structured integration mechanisms. In this context, institutional readiness is determined not merely by the number of research and community service activities conducted but also by the extent to which these activities are connected to the curriculum, courses, and students' learning experiences. These findings demonstrate that productivity in the three pillars of higher education and their integration are two distinct dimensions. A university may have high levels of research and community service activity, but without mechanisms for translating and

disseminating these outcomes into learning, such activities may not fully generate pedagogical impacts for students.

Meanwhile, at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, readiness for integration also reflects institutional capacity that can be further developed by strengthening the relationship between academic activities and research and community service. The findings indicate that the need for integration becomes increasingly relevant when research and community service are positioned as integral components of the learning process rather than merely as activities conducted in parallel by lecturers or institutions. Research experiences and findings can be utilized to enrich course content, while community service experiences can provide authentic contexts for problem-based learning. Thus, institutional readiness at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung is not limited to structural and policy readiness but also encompasses the capacity to develop an academic ecosystem that enables students to gain learning experiences through both the production and application of knowledge.

A cross-case comparison of the three research sites reveals a relatively similar pattern, namely a gap between structural readiness and implementation readiness. Structurally, all three universities possess institutional foundations for implementing the three pillars of higher education. However, integrating research and community service into learning requires more specific operational readiness. In this regard, the existence of research and community service units alone is insufficient to indicate that integration has been effectively implemented. What is needed is what this study conceptualizes as an *institutional bridging mechanism*, namely a mechanism that actively connects research and community service units with faculties, study programs, lecturers, and students. Such mechanisms may include curriculum integration policies, the use of research findings as teaching materials, the integration of community service activities into courses, student involvement in research and community service projects, and documentation systems that enable the outcomes of the three pillars of higher education to be accessed and utilized in learning.

At the lecturer level, findings from UIN Sumatera Utara, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, and UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung demonstrate that lecturer readiness is a critical component in determining the success of integration. Lecturers occupy a strategic position because they serve as the direct link between research findings, community service experiences, and the learning process. However, lecturer readiness cannot be measured solely by research productivity or involvement in community service activities. More substantively, readiness is associated with pedagogical capacity to transform research and community service experiences into meaningful learning experiences for students. A lecturer may possess extensive research experience but may not necessarily have the pedagogical capacity to develop *research-based teaching*, design learning projects centered on real community issues, or integrate research findings into the Semester Learning Plan.

In this context, the findings indicate that strengthening lecturer capacity is an important need across the three research sites. Lecturers need the ability to identify research findings relevant to their courses, develop case studies based on real-world issues, design research-based assignments, and involve students in data collection and analysis processes. Similarly, community service experiences can be transformed into learning materials through case studies, problem-solving projects, field-based

reflection, and community-based learning. In this way, research and community service are not merely additional activities conducted outside the classroom but become integral components of pedagogical design that enrich the learning process.

Student readiness at UIN Sumatera Utara, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, and UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung also emerged as an important aspect of the findings. The integration of the three pillars of higher education requires students to possess more complex competencies than those demanded by conventional learning. Students are expected not only to understand course content but also to demonstrate academic literacy, the ability to seek and evaluate information, basic research skills, teamwork, communication, problem-solving abilities, and readiness to interact with communities. Student involvement in research and community service requires different levels of readiness depending on their educational level and existing competencies.

In this context, integration needs to be implemented progressively and in stages. At the initial stage, students can be introduced to research findings and community service experiences through case studies and classroom discussions. At the next stage, students can be involved in small-scale research projects, field observations, or course-based community service activities. At more advanced levels, students can participate in more complex research and community service processes, ranging from problem identification, data collection, and analysis to solution development and impact evaluation. Such a gradual approach is important to ensure that integration does not place excessive demands on students but instead becomes a progressive process for developing academic and social competencies (Brew, 2013; Darari et al., 2019).

Theoretically, the findings from the three universities can be analyzed through the perspective of organizational change readiness theory. Integrating research and community service into learning is not merely a technical change in the teaching and learning process but represents a transformation of academic culture. This transformation shifts learning from a model centered on knowledge transmission toward one that connects knowledge production, knowledge application, and experiential reflection. Therefore, the success of integration depends heavily on the readiness of both the organization and the individuals involved. Institutions need to establish supportive policies and systems, lecturers need to possess pedagogical and academic competencies, and students need to be prepared to learn through research experiences and social engagement.

The cross-case findings from UIN Sumatera Utara, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, and UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung thus demonstrate that the primary challenge in integrating the three pillars of higher education does not lie in the absence of research and community service activities but rather in the suboptimal connectivity between these activities and the learning process. All three universities possess sufficient initial foundations to develop integration, but implementation readiness requires strengthening institutional coordination, lecturer capacity, student readiness, and mechanisms for translating research and community service outcomes into curricula and learning practices. These findings further emphasize that the integration of the three pillars of higher education cannot be limited to formal policies or their inclusion in institutional documents. Integration must be realized through concrete and measurable learning practices.

Therefore, readiness for the integration of the three pillars of higher education at the three universities can be understood as multidimensional and progressive. Institutional readiness provides the foundation through policies, governance, infrastructure, funding, and coordination; lecturer readiness serves as the driving force through the ability to integrate research and community service into pedagogical design; while student readiness represents the recipient and active participant who determines the meaningfulness of learning experiences. If any of these components is insufficiently prepared, integration may remain merely administrative. Conversely, when all three components are developed simultaneously, research and community service can be transformed into learning resources that enrich students' academic experiences while strengthening the distinctive character of Islamic higher education, which connects knowledge, Islamic values, and community service (Foshee et al., 2016; Healey et al., 2014; Liu et al., 2025).

Supporting Factors and Challenges in Integrating Research and Community Service

The findings indicate that several factors support the integration of research and community service into learning. The first factor is leadership commitment and institutional policy. Leadership support is essential because integration requires changes in academic governance, curriculum development, funding systems, and the distribution of lecturers' workloads. The second factor is the presence of a strong research and community service culture. The more actively lecturers engage in research and community service, the greater the potential for empirical materials that can be utilized in learning. The third factor is cross-unit and interdisciplinary collaboration. Societal problems are complex and therefore require multidisciplinary approaches that enable students to gain broader perspectives.

In addition, the development of digital technology is an important supporting factor. Academic information systems and digital repositories can be used to document research findings and community service outcomes, making them easily accessible to lecturers and students. Digitalization enables the development of an institutional knowledge base that can be utilized as a learning resource.

However, integration also faces several challenges. One of these is the high workload of lecturers. Lecturers often face simultaneous demands related to teaching, research, community service, publication, and administrative responsibilities. If integration is not accompanied by appropriate workload arrangements, lecturers may perceive it as an additional burden. Another challenge is the lack of a common understanding of the concept of integration and the absence of clear indicators for measuring its success.

Challenges also arise in terms of coordination. Research and community service are often managed by different units from those responsible for learning. Such governance fragmentation can hinder information exchange. Therefore, integration requires a *whole-of-institution* approach, which positions all academic units as components of a single, interconnected ecosystem of the three pillars of higher education.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that integrating research and community service into learning in Islamic higher education institutions represents a strategic need for strengthening the relevance and quality of higher education. Based on case studies at UIN Sumatera Utara, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, and UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, the findings indicate that all three universities possess relatively adequate institutional foundations through the existence of units responsible for academic affairs, research, and community service. However, implementation readiness varies, and systematic mechanisms linking research and community service outcomes with curricula and learning processes have not yet been fully established. At the lecturer level, integration requires strengthening pedagogical capacity to transform research findings and community service experiences into learning resources and meaningful learning experiences. At the student level, integration requires strengthening academic literacy, research skills, collaboration abilities, and readiness to interact with communities progressively in accordance with learning outcomes. The findings also indicate that the success of integration is strongly influenced by institutional policies, inter-unit coordination, resource support, lecturer capacity, and student readiness. Therefore, the integration of the three pillars of higher education should be developed through institutional mechanisms that sustainably connect research, community service, and learning. The findings of this study provide an empirical foundation for developing a more systematic, contextual, and institutionally appropriate model for integrating the three pillars of higher education within Islamic higher education institutions.

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