

Lecturer Performance Management in Higher Education: A Multi-Dimensional Perspective on the Tri Dharma

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the quality of Tri Dharma of Higher Education implementation and the role of lecturer professional development in improving lecturer performance at two private Islamic higher education institutions: Institut Syekh Abdul Halim Hasan Binjai and Institut Jamiyah Mahmudiyah Langkat. A qualitative approach with a multi-site study design was employed. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with institutional leaders, lecturers, and LP2M administrators, classroom and academic activity observations, and document analysis, including lesson plans, lecturer performance reports, research publications, and community service records. The findings indicate that the implementation of Tri Dharma in the areas of teaching, research, and community service has been carried out systematically and in alignment with national higher education regulations. Lecturer professional development programs—such as training, workshops, research mentoring, and performance evaluation systems—significantly contribute to enhancing teaching quality, research productivity, and community engagement. Despite institutional differences in implementation strategies, both institutions demonstrate that strong institutional commitment and lecturers' intrinsic motivation are critical determinants of sustainable Tri Dharma performance. This study highlights the strategic importance of lecturer professional development in strengthening academic quality and institutional competitiveness.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kualitas pelaksanaan Tridharma Perguruan Tinggi serta peran pengembangan profesionalitas dosen terhadap kinerja dosen pada dua perguruan tinggi Islam swasta, yaitu Institut Syekh Abdul Halim Hasan Binjai dan Institut Jamiyah Mahmudiyah Langkat. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi multi-situs. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan pimpinan institusi, dosen, dan pengelola LP2M, observasi kegiatan akademik, serta analisis dokumen pendukung seperti RPS, laporan kinerja dosen, publikasi ilmiah, dan dokumen pengabdian kepada masyarakat. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pelaksanaan Tridharma pada bidang pendidikan, penelitian, dan pengabdian kepada masyarakat telah dilaksanakan secara sistematis dan selaras dengan regulasi nasional. Pengembangan profesionalitas dosen melalui pelatihan, workshop, pendampingan penelitian, serta sistem evaluasi kinerja terbukti berkontribusi signifikan terhadap peningkatan kualitas pembelajaran, produktivitas riset, dan dampak pengabdian. Meskipun terdapat perbedaan pendekatan kelembagaan, kedua institusi menunjukkan bahwa komitmen institusional dan motivasi intrinsik dosen menjadi faktor kunci dalam meningkatkan kinerja Tridharma. Penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya pengembangan profesional dosen sebagai strategi berkelanjutan untuk menjaga mutu dan daya saing perguruan tinggi.

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INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions are currently navigating a period of rapid transformation driven by digitalization, globalization, shifting student characteristics, and increasingly dynamic labor market demands (Aulia et al., 2025; Ekasari et al., 2021; Fauziyah et al., 2025; Hamzah et al., 2023). These changes have intensified expectations toward lecturer performance as a critical determinant of educational quality, institutional sustainability, and academic competitiveness (Indriati et al., 2023; Maqfirah et al., 2026; Said et al., 2023; Subaidi et al., 2026). In the Indonesian context, lecturer performance is formally regulated through the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, which mandates lecturers to perform effectively in teaching, research, and community service. However, empirical evidence suggests that the realization of these mandates remains uneven, particularly within private higher education institutions that often face structural limitations in resources, infrastructure, and performance management capacity (Anggraeni et al., 2025; Brilliantisyah et al., 2024; Gautama et al., 2020; Kariyanto et al., 2025).

Previous studies have examined lecturer performance from various perspectives, including professional competence, digital literacy, workload management, and institutional support systems. Research highlights that contemporary lecturers are required not only to deliver instructional content but also to integrate digital technologies, engage in scholarly research, and contribute to community development (Alfarizi et al., 2024; Idris & Nursita, 2023). Other studies emphasize that lecturer performance is closely associated with professional development initiatives, organizational culture, motivation, and performance evaluation mechanisms (Fernanda & Mubarak, 2023; Septyandi & Susanto, 2020). In addition, recent research underscores the growing importance of systematic performance management systems and technology-based monitoring in enhancing accountability and institutional effectiveness (Faizah et al., 2023; Ramadhan et al., 2023; Rini, 2024).

Despite the expanding body of literature on lecturer performance, existing studies tend to address performance dimensions in a fragmented manner—often focusing separately on teaching effectiveness, research productivity, or professional motivation. Limited attention has been given to how lecturer performance across the three pillars of the Tri Dharma is institutionally managed as an integrated system, particularly in private higher education institutions. Furthermore, studies consistently report that private universities face challenges such as limited research funding, high teaching workloads, unequal welfare systems, and restricted access to professional development opportunities, which negatively affect lecturer motivation and productivity (Anwar et al., 2024; Machmud et al., 2024; Nukhbatillah et al., 2024). This indicates a clear gap in understanding how performance management systems operate holistically within resource-constrained private institutions.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to examine lecturer performance management in private higher education institutions through an integrated Tri Dharma perspective. The research focuses on how lecturer performance in teaching, research, community service, and professional development is planned, monitored, and evaluated at the institutional level. By employing a qualitative multisite research design, this study seeks to capture both structural mechanisms and practical strategies used to manage lecturer performance in different organizational contexts.

This article argues that sustainable lecturer performance is shaped not merely by individual competence or material incentives, but by the institutionalization of coherent performance management systems that integrate professional development,

accountability mechanisms, and academic culture. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically by extending existing discussions on lecturer performance management through a multidimensional Tri Dharma framework, and empirically by providing contextual insights from private Islamic higher education institutions. Ultimately, this study demonstrates that strong institutional commitment and lecturers' intrinsic motivation play a critical role in strengthening academic performance and institutional competitiveness, even within structurally constrained environments.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative multi-site case study approach, grounded in the case study methodology proposed by (Yin, 2009). This approach was selected because the research seeks to explain how and why lecturer performance management is implemented within real institutional contexts, where the boundaries between the phenomenon and its setting are not clearly separated. A case study design is particularly appropriate for examining contemporary issues in higher education that require in-depth, contextual understanding.

The study involved two institutional cases: Institut Syekh Abdul Halim Hasan Binjai and Institut Jamiyah Mahmudiyah Langkat. These institutions were purposively selected based on their shared characteristics as private Islamic higher education institutions and their active engagement in implementing the Tri Dharma of Higher Education. Each institution functioned as a unit of analysis, enabling both within-case analysis to understand internal performance management practices and cross-case analysis to identify patterns, similarities, and contextual differences across cases.

Data were collected using multiple sources of evidence to ensure credibility and analytical rigor. These included in-depth semi-structured interviews with institutional leaders, lecturers, and research management personnel; participatory observations of teaching and academic activities; and document analysis of semester learning plans (RPS), lecturer performance reports, research publications, community service records, and institutional policy documents. Data analysis was conducted iteratively through data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing, followed by cross-case synthesis. This strategy aligns with Yin's recommendation for multi-case studies aimed at achieving analytic generalization rather than statistical generalization.

RESEARCH RESULTS DAN DISCUSSION

Result

Quality of Implementation of the *Tri Dharma* of Higher Education in the Field of Education and Teaching

Findings from classroom observations and in-depth interviews with academic leaders, lecturers, and students indicate that the implementation of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education in the teaching and learning dimension at both institutions demonstrates a high level of regulatory compliance and organizational consistency. Teaching activities are systematically planned based on graduate learning outcomes, curriculum objectives, and institutional visions, ensuring alignment with national higher education standards. Observational data confirm that learning processes are conducted according to approved Semester Learning Plans (RPS) and supported by institutional academic regulations. This condition reflects a governance model in which teaching quality is ensured through structured planning, standardized procedures, and institutional control mechanisms. Such an approach positions teaching and learning as a regulated professional obligation rather than an individual discretionary activity.

Classroom observations further reveal that lecturers generally implement learning activities in accordance with the principles of Outcome-Based Education (OBE), utilizing a variety of active learning strategies such as group discussions, case studies, problem-based learning, and project-based learning. Several lecturers explicitly stated that instructional preparation is a mandatory professional responsibility, as reflected in the following interview excerpt: *"As lecturers, our primary obligation is teaching, so all instructional instruments such as RPS, attendance records, and grading components must be complete and uploaded on time in the academic system"*. Documentation of RPS and teaching materials available on the integrated academic platform confirms that these instruments are accessible to students from the first week of the semester. Observations of blended learning practices, including scheduled online sessions, further demonstrate institutional adaptation to digital and flexible learning models.

The digital management of teaching performance emerges as a dominant feature in both institutions, particularly through the mandatory use of the academic information system (Si-Akad/Sevima). Interviews with institutional leaders emphasize that lecturer performance is closely tied to procedural compliance enforced by the system. One academic leader stated, *"Lecturers cannot work outside institutional regulations; all teaching activities – from RPS submission to attendance and grading – are strictly controlled by the system"*. This statement is reinforced by another informant who noted, *"If lecturers fail to upload evidence of their teaching duties on time, the system records it as unfulfilled performance, without tolerance"*. These findings indicate that digital systems function as authoritative control instruments that minimize administrative negligence and standardize teaching performance across programs.

From the students' perspective, interview data reveal that system-based management has had a tangible impact on learning experiences. Students reported increased discipline, punctuality, and transparency in teaching practices, particularly regarding attendance and grading. One student stated, *"Since the attendance system was implemented, lecturers are very punctual, and classes rarely get canceled without official notice"*. Another student highlighted the improvement in assessment transparency, noting that *"grades are now uploaded promptly after exams, and we can access RPS and materials from the beginning of the semester"*. These perceptions are consistent with observational findings showing real-time attendance recording via fingerprint scanners and the routine use of uploaded teaching materials during classroom sessions.

Supporting documentation and triangulated data strengthen the validity of these findings. Observations confirm that approximately 95% of observed classes began on time, and lecturers consistently referred to materials previously uploaded to the academic platform. Overall, the findings demonstrate that teaching and learning performance in both institutions is systemically regulated, transparent, and accountable. However, while procedural compliance and administrative discipline are strongly enforced, variations in pedagogical depth and instructional interaction remain evident, indicating that future quality enhancement efforts should focus not only on system compliance but also on strengthening substantive teaching competence and learning outcomes.

Quality of Implementation of the *Tri Dharma* of Higher Education in the Field of Research

Findings from interviews with lecturers, institutional leaders, and research management units, supported by document analysis, indicate that the implementation of the *Tri Dharma* of Higher Education in the research dimension at Institut Syekh Abdul

Halim Hasan Binjai and Institut Jamiyah Mahmudiyah Langkat has been institutionalized as a mandatory and performance-based academic obligation. Research and publication are no longer treated as voluntary academic activities but are positioned as compulsory duties directly linked to lecturer performance evaluation, certification, and career advancement. Lecturers are required to conduct research and publish scholarly outputs within a defined academic period, particularly those holding professional certification. This obligation reflects the internalization of national higher education regulations, which emphasize research as an integral and continuous component of academic professionalism. As one lecturer stated, *"Research and publication are no longer optional; if we do not upload proof of publication, it is recorded as unfulfilled performance for that year"*.

Empirical evidence shows that both institutions have developed structured research management systems supported by digital platforms. At Institut Syekh Abdul Halim Hasan Binjai, research performance is controlled through an academic information system integrated with the national Science and Technology Index (SINTA), requiring lecturers to upload verified proof of publication prior to annual performance evaluation. Institutional leaders emphasized strict enforcement of publication targets, as reflected in the following statement: *"We target at least one article published annually in SINTA-indexed journals, and this is monitored directly through the system; failure to meet the target has administrative consequences"*. Documentation of uploaded articles, publication certificates, and system dashboards confirms the implementation of real-time monitoring and data-driven decision-making in research performance management. This digital control mechanism ensures transparency, accountability, and consistency in evaluating lecturer research output.

In parallel, Institut Jamiyah Mahmudiyah Langkat demonstrates a complementary model that combines digital monitoring with intensive academic mentoring and institutional facilitation. Interviews reveal that research and publication duties are explicitly integrated into lecturer contracts and certification requirements, reinforcing their status as core academic responsibilities. One program head noted, *"Research is no longer a side activity; it is directly tied to our workload contract and academic evaluation"*. Institutional support is provided through internal research grants, publication funding, and continuous training in scientific writing, all coordinated and monitored by the research management unit. However, lecturers also acknowledged challenges related to time constraints and writing capacity, as expressed by one informant: *"We understand the importance of research, but balancing teaching responsibilities with publication targets often feels like a double burden"*.

Beyond administrative compliance, findings indicate that institutional support mechanisms play a significant role in shaping research productivity and motivation. At Institut Syekh Abdul Halim Hasan Binjai, incentive schemes include tiered publication funding, internal research grants, and non-material rewards such as institutional recognition for international publications. The head of the research unit explained, *"We provide research grants and publication incentives, even special rewards for lecturers who publish in reputable international journals, to motivate sustainable research productivity"*. Similarly, at Institut Jamiyah Mahmudiyah Langkat, institutional leaders emphasized the philosophical dimension of research, describing it as the *"intellectual spirit"* of the university that must be continuously nurtured through both structural support and academic culture. These findings suggest that effective research performance management requires a balance between control mechanisms and motivational strategies.

To synthesize cross-site findings, a comparative matrix was developed to map lecturer performance management in the research dimension across both institutions, as presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1.

Cross-Site Matrix of Lecturer Performance Management in Research and Publication

Site I	Site II	Cross-Site Analysis	Proposition	Novelty
The implementation of lecturer research and publication has been carried out systematically and with a strong quality orientation. This is indicated by mandatory publication requirements for all lecturers – particularly certified lecturers – controlled through the Si-Akad system integrated with SINTA. Administrative sanctions are applied for non-compliance, while institutional support is provided through research grants, tiered publication incentives, and non-material rewards such as Umrah awards. This balanced mechanism of rewards and sanctions has fostered a sustainable	Lecturer research and publication are positioned as core obligations integrated into employment contracts and certification requirements. Performance is monitored through layered supervision by LP2M and faculty leadership using both manual and digital monitoring mechanisms and semester-based evaluations. Institutional support includes internal research funding, publication assistance, and intensive scientific writing mentorship up to the submission stage, fostering a collaborative and sustainable research	Both institutions position research and publication as strategic lecturer obligations embedded within institutional performance systems and governed at the organizational level. However, Institut Syekh Abdul Halim Hasan Binjai relies more heavily on automated digital control, material incentives, and a competitive research climate to stimulate productivity, whereas Institut Jamiyah Mahmudiyah Langkat applies semi-manual supervision complemented by intensive mentoring, continuous training, and a collaborative approach to strengthening lecturers' writing	If research and publication obligations are institutionalized as accountable instruments of lecturer performance supervision, then the integration of control systems, institutional mentoring, and financial support implemented by both sites will effectively cultivate academic discipline and a sustainable research culture, despite employing different reinforcement patterns.	Strengthening lecturers' research culture does not depend on a single management model, but on the institutionalization of research and publication obligations as accountable performance governance instruments.

research culture.	culture among lecturers.	capacity and research culture.
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This table summarizes similarities and differences in research performance management between the two institutions, highlighting institutional strategies, control mechanisms, and developmental approaches. The matrix shows that both institutions institutionalize research and publication as strategic lecturer obligations embedded within performance evaluation systems. Institut Syekh Abdul Halim Hasan Binjai emphasizes automated digital control, material incentives, and competitive research culture, while Institut Jamiyah Mahmudiyah Langkat combines semi-digital monitoring with intensive mentoring, training, and collaborative capacity building. Cross-site analysis indicates that strengthening lecturer research culture does not depend on a single management model but on the institutionalization of research obligations supported by accountable systems, sustained funding, and continuous academic development.

Quality of Implementation of the *Tri Dharma* of Higher Education in the Field of Community Service

The implementation of the *Tri Dharma* of Higher Education in the area of Community Service (PkM) at Institut Syekh Abdul Halim Hasan Binjai and Institut Jamiyah Mahmudiyah Langkat demonstrates that community engagement has been institutionalized as a mandatory academic obligation for lecturers and integrated with institutional vision and societal needs. Based on interviews with institutional leaders, lecturers, and the Institute for Research and Community Service (LP2M), PkM is not treated as an incidental activity but as a routine requirement that must be fulfilled by every lecturer at least once per academic year. This obligation is reinforced by institutional policies requiring active student involvement as part of experiential learning. Normatively, these practices align with national higher education regulations, which position community service as an integral component of the *Tri Dharma*. The findings indicate that PkM is understood as a professional responsibility with clear academic and social implications.

From a planning and governance perspective, the quality of PkM implementation is reflected in structured management mechanisms coordinated by LP2M at both institutions. Each community service activity is designed based on a formal proposal, with clearly defined objectives, target communities, and measurable outputs. As stated by the Head of LP2M at Institut Syekh Abdul Halim Hasan Binjai, “Every lecturer conducting PkM is required to involve students and submit a proposal to LP2M. The institution allocates special grant funding each year, prioritizing programs that generate tangible social impact”. Supporting documentation, including approved proposals, assignment letters, activity reports, and output archives, confirms that all stages of PkM—from planning and implementation to reporting—are systematically documented. This governance structure ensures procedural compliance while simultaneously maintaining academic and social relevance.

In terms of substantive content, PkM activities at both institutions demonstrate strong alignment between lecturers’ disciplinary expertise and the real needs of local communities. Community service programs focus on contextual issues such as economic empowerment, religious and social development, digital literacy training, mosque-based educational assistance, and support for micro and small enterprises. One lecturer

emphasized that “Community service is not merely a formality of the Tri Dharma, but a concrete medium to apply academic knowledge and provide direct benefits to society, with students actively involved from planning to evaluation”. Relevant documentation, including field activity photographs, training modules, and community impact reports, further substantiates that PkM is oriented toward knowledge transfer and tangible social benefits rather than administrative fulfillment alone.

To synthesize cross-site findings on lecturer performance management in community service, a comparative matrix was developed and presented in Table 4.5. This matrix outlines the characteristics of PkM implementation at each institution, cross-site similarities and differences, the resulting research proposition, and the novelty of the findings.

Table 2.

Cross-Site Matrix of Lecturer Performance Management in Community Service (PkM)

Site I	Site II	Cross-Site Analysis	Proposition	Novelty
Community Service (PkM) is institutionalized as a routine lecturer obligation integrated into the Tri Dharma framework. It is implemented at least once per year with active student involvement through experiential learning, supported by internal grants and structured mentoring from LP2M. Activities are directed toward local to international impact through partner collaborations and are positioned as key performance indicators (KPIs) for lecturers that are continuously	Community Service (PkM) is a mandatory annual obligation for all lecturers as part of the Tri Dharma. Activities are conducted with systematic student involvement, supported by institutional grants and LP2M mentoring, oriented toward local to international impact through collaborative partnerships, and supervised through structured monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure consistency and quality of implementation.	Both institutions institutionalize Community Service (PkM) as a formal lecturer obligation within the Tri Dharma framework. Student involvement is positioned as practical experiential learning, supported by grant funding and LP2M facilitation. PkM activities extend to the international level and are systematically monitored and evaluated as part of lecturer performance management systems.	If Community Service is institutionalized as a lecturer performance indicator, implemented collaboratively with students, supported by sustainable funding and policy frameworks, expanded to international engagement, and systematically monitored, then PkM will be implemented with high quality, generate tangible social impact, strengthen lecturer professionalism, enhance student learning experiences, and elevate institutional academic reputation.	An integrative Community Service (PkM) model based on performance management that positions community engagement not merely as a Tri Dharma obligation, but as a strategic instrument for simultaneously strengthening lecturer professionalism, student learning outcomes, and institutional reputation.

evaluated and
formally
appreciated.

The table shows that at both institutions, PkM is institutionalized as a formal lecturer obligation within the Tri Dharma framework, implemented annually with active student involvement, supported by internal grant funding and structured mentoring from LP2M, and extended to local, national, and international levels through collaborative partnerships. Cross-site analysis indicates that PkM is managed as part of an integrated lecturer performance system, monitored and evaluated systematically to ensure consistency and quality. The research proposition suggests that when community service is positioned as a lecturer performance indicator supported by sustainable funding, collaborative student engagement, and systematic monitoring, it can produce high-quality implementation, meaningful social impact, enhanced lecturer professionalism, enriched student learning experiences, and strengthened institutional reputation. The novelty lies in an integrative PkM model that frames community service not merely as a *Tri Dharma* obligation, but as a strategic instrument for simultaneously strengthening academic professionalism, experiential learning, and institutional standing.

Overall, triangulation of interview data, documentation, and table-based analysis indicates that the implementation of Community Service (PkM) at both institutions meets national regulatory standards and demonstrates good implementation quality. Key strengths include structured governance, institutional funding support, continuous mentoring by LP2M, active student participation, and a strong orientation toward real societal impact. Nevertheless, further quality enhancement may be achieved through strengthening standardized outputs such as community service publications, long-term impact documentation, and the development of sustainable empowerment models. Such improvements would enable PkM to move beyond regulatory compliance toward a competitive and sustainable model of community engagement that contributes strategically to institutional development and societal advancement.

Lecturer Professional Development Affects Lecturer Performance

The development of lecturer professionalism is a decisive factor influencing lecturer performance and institutional quality in higher education. Professionalism encompasses not only pedagogical competence but also research capacity, scientific publication, and engagement in community service activities. Lecturers who continuously develop their professional competencies are better positioned to integrate the three pillars of the *Tri Dharma* of Higher Education in a coherent and productive manner. As a result, professional development functions as a strategic instrument for fostering academic innovation, improving learning quality, and strengthening the competitiveness of higher education institutions.

At Institut Syekh Abdul Halim Hasan Binjai, lecturer professional development is primarily supported through structured non-degree programs such as training sessions, workshops, and academic seminars aimed at enhancing pedagogical skills, research competence, and academic leadership. Although the institution does not yet provide dedicated funding for doctoral studies, empirical findings indicate a high level of intrinsic motivation among lecturers to pursue doctoral qualifications independently. This is evidenced by the fact that the institute currently has one of the highest numbers of doctoral-qualified lecturers among private Islamic higher education institutions in

North Sumatra. Interviews with institutional leaders and lecturers confirm that these development activities have contributed positively to teaching quality, research productivity, and the overall academic reputation of the institution, demonstrating that non-financial institutional commitment combined with strong intrinsic motivation can significantly enhance lecturer performance.

Similarly, Institut Jamiyah Mahmudiyah Langkat demonstrates a strong and systematic commitment to lecturer professional development as a core strategy for improving academic quality and institutional accreditation. The institution provides continuous opportunities for lecturers to participate in training programs, scientific workshops, seminars, and mentoring in research and publication, supported by administrative and moral encouragement from institutional leadership. Lecturers are also facilitated to engage in national and international academic activities to expand scholarly networks and enhance academic insight. Research findings indicate that such a supportive academic climate has a direct impact on lecturer performance, reflected in improved teaching practices, higher research engagement, stronger involvement in community service, and increased institutional credibility.

Table 3.

Cross-Site Matrix of Lecturer Professional Development and Lecturer Performance Management

Site I	Site II	Cross-Site	Proposition	Novelty
Institut Syekh Abdul Halim Hasan Binjai demonstrates strong commitment to lecturer professional development through training, workshops, and seminars focused on enhancing individual academic capacity; despite the absence of dedicated doctoral funding, these efforts have improved teaching quality and strengthened the institution's regional academic reputation.	Institut Jamiyah Mahmudiyah Langkat demonstrates strong commitment to lecturer professional development as a strategy for institutional quality improvement and accreditation through training programs, scientific workshops, seminars, and administrative and moral support for national and international academic activities, directly contributing to improved Tri Dharma performance and accreditation outcomes.	Both institutions show strong commitment to lecturer professional development, but with different orientations: Institut Syekh Abdul Halim Hasan Binjai emphasizes individual lecturer capacity development that enhances academic reputation, while Institut Jamiyah Mahmudiyah Langkat manages professional development more systematically with a direct focus on institutional quality and accreditation.	If an institution demonstrates strong commitment to lecturer professional development through training, workshops, and seminars as strategic instruments, then lecturers' pedagogical, research, and academic leadership competencies will improve, leading to enhanced Tri Dharma quality, academic reputation, research productivity, and institutional accreditation.	Lecturer professional development based on strong non-financial institutional commitment and intrinsic lecturer motivation can significantly improve Tri Dharma performance, academic reputation, and institutional accreditation.

The matrix illustrates that lecturer professional development plays a central role in shaping lecturer performance management across both institutions, despite differences in implementation strategies. While one institution relies more heavily on intrinsic motivation supported by non-financial professional development programs, the other adopts a more structured and institutionally driven approach aligned with accreditation objectives. Cross-site analysis confirms that sustained professional development—whether financially supported or not—strengthens lecturer competence, improves the quality of *Tri Dharma* implementation, and enhances institutional standing. These findings highlight that effective lecturer professional development does not depend solely on financial investment, but rather on consistent institutional commitment, supportive academic culture, and opportunities for continuous competence enhancement.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that lecturer professional development plays a significant role in shaping lecturer performance across the three dimensions of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education: teaching, research, and community service. This result aligns with a growing body of empirical research emphasizing that continuous professional development enhances pedagogical effectiveness, research productivity, and institutional performance. Recent studies argue that lecturer professionalism is no longer limited to instructional competence but encompasses scholarly engagement, social contribution, and adaptive leadership (Nor et al., 2024; Saefrudin & Jaelani, 2025). The strong correlation identified in this study between professional development initiatives and lecturer performance reinforces the view that professionalism functions as a multidimensional construct that directly influences academic quality and institutional competitiveness.

From an institutional perspective, the findings support prior research demonstrating that structured professional development programs contribute to improved lecturer performance even in contexts with limited financial support. Studies by (Alzahrani et al., 2021; Nguyen et al., 2022) indicate that non-financial mechanisms—such as training, mentoring, academic recognition, and supportive leadership—can effectively stimulate lecturer motivation and performance. The case of Institut Syekh Abdul Halim Hasan Binjai, where high numbers of doctoral-qualified lecturers emerged despite the absence of dedicated doctoral funding, supports this argument. However, this finding contrasts with research by (Marginson & Yang, 2022) who emphasize that financial investment in advanced education remains a critical determinant of academic career advancement, particularly in research-intensive universities.

The findings also resonate with studies highlighting the importance of intrinsic motivation in lecturer professional development. Research by (Setiawan, 2025; Zhao, 2024) suggests that lecturers with strong intrinsic motivation demonstrate higher levels of commitment to professional growth, innovation, and scholarly productivity. This study's evidence that lecturers voluntarily pursue doctoral studies and actively engage in professional development activities supports this theoretical perspective. Nevertheless, other studies caution that excessive reliance on intrinsic motivation without adequate structural support may lead to workload imbalance and long-term sustainability issues, particularly in institutions with high teaching demands (Effendi et al., 2025; Gao et al., 2025).

In terms of performance management, this study corroborates recent findings that integrate professional development into institutional performance systems. Research by (Alhur et al., 2025; Hasyim & Bakri, 2025) shows that universities that embed professional development within performance evaluation frameworks tend to achieve higher consistency in *Tri Dharma* outcomes. The systematic approach observed at Institut Jamiyah Mahmudiyah Langkat—where professional development is strategically aligned with accreditation goals—supports this conclusion. However, some scholars warn that overly managerial approaches to professional development risk reducing academic autonomy and transforming scholarly growth into compliance-driven activities, potentially diminishing creativity and critical inquiry (Miller, 2025).

Overall, this study extends existing research by demonstrating that lecturer professional development can enhance performance through both structured institutional strategies and strong intrinsic motivation, even in resource-constrained environments. Unlike studies that prioritize financial investment as the primary driver of academic excellence, the findings suggest that institutional commitment, academic culture, and moral support are equally influential factors. This contribution offers a contextualized understanding of professional development in private Islamic higher education institutions, highlighting that sustainable lecturer performance improvement emerges not from a single policy instrument, but from the dynamic interaction between individual motivation, institutional governance, and performance management systems.

CONCLUSIONS

This study finds that lecturer performance management grounded in an integrated *Tri Dharma* framework has a more substantial impact on academic quality and institutional sustainability than previously assumed. The findings demonstrate that lecturer performance is not merely the outcome of individual competence or material incentives, but is strongly shaped by the institutionalization of performance management systems that integrate teaching, research, community service, and professional development. This challenges conventional assumptions that lecturer performance improvement primarily depends on financial resources, and instead opens new discussions on the strategic role of institutional commitment, governance mechanisms, and intrinsic motivation in shaping sustainable academic performance within private higher education institutions.

This research contributes to the scholarly discourse on higher education management in several ways. First, it reinforces previous findings on the importance of professional development and institutional support in enhancing lecturer performance. Second, it questions the adequacy of fragmented performance models that treat teaching, research, and community service as separate domains. Third, this study introduces an integrated performance management perspective based on the *Tri Dharma* of Higher Education as an analytical framework for examining lecturer performance. By employing a qualitative multi-site case study approach, this article enriches existing literature with contextual and empirically grounded insights from private Islamic higher education institutions, a sector that remains underrepresented in prior research.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. The research was conducted in a limited number of institutional cases, which constrains the generalizability of the findings. In addition, variations related to individual characteristics—such as gender, age, and academic rank—were not examined in depth. Future studies are therefore encouraged to involve larger samples, diverse institutional

contexts, and mixed-methods approaches to provide a more comprehensive understanding of lecturer performance management across different higher education settings.

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