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Institutional Transformation of Islamic Higher Education: A Lewin Change Model Perspective

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Abstract

The transformation of State Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKIN) from institutes and colleges (IAIN/STAIN) into universities (UIN) involves organizational restructuring, academic expansion, governance reform, human resource development, and cultural adaptation. This study analyzes PTKIN transformation through Lewin's Change Model to develop a contextualized interpretation of organizational change in Islamic higher education. A qualitative integrative literature review synthesized theoretical and empirical literature on higher education transformation, Islamic educational management, and organizational change. Qualitative content analysis and narrative synthesis organized the findings according to the stages of unfreezing, changing, and refreezing. The synthesis identifies three interconnected processes. Unfreezing involves developing institutional readiness in response to policy pressures, modernization, academic competition, and societal expectations. Changing encompasses structural and academic transformation through organizational restructuring, scientific integration, governance adaptation, and human resource development. Refreezing involves institutional consolidation through the institutionalization of new academic practices, quality assurance systems, and organizational values. The analysis further suggests that PTKIN transformation is recursive rather than strictly linear, with the negotiation and reinforcement of Islamic identity serving as an institutional anchor across the three stages. The study concludes that PTKIN transformation can be understood as a recursive process combining organizational change with the continuing negotiation and reinforcement of institutional identity. By contextualizing Lewin's model within Islamic higher education, the study contributes to organizational change

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scholarship and offers a conceptual framework for understanding sustainable institutional transformation in universities grounded in institutional values.

Keywords: Institutional Transformation; Islamic Higher Education; Lewin's Change Model; Organizational Change; Islamic Institutional Identity

INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions are experiencing continuous transformation due to globalization, technological development, changing social expectations, and increasing demands for institutional accountability. Universities are required not only to function as centers of knowledge production but also to develop adaptive organizational systems capable of responding to environmental changes. Institutional transformation involves multidimensional adjustments, including governance reform, academic restructuring, human resource development, leadership improvement, and organizational culture transformation (Altbach et al., 2010). Therefore, higher education change requires a systematic approach that considers both structural transformation and organizational behavior.

In Indonesia, the transformation of State Islamic Colleges (STAIN) and State Islamic Institutes (IAIN) into State Islamic Universities (UIN) represents a significant institutional reform within Islamic higher education. This transformation extends beyond administrative status changes because it involves expansion of academic mandates, integration of Islamic and general sciences, development of new study programs, improvement of governance systems, and strengthening of institutional competitiveness. Such transformation requires universities to maintain their Islamic identity while adapting to modern higher education demands (Marginson, 2016). Consequently, the success of institutional transformation depends not only on government policies but also on internal organizational readiness, leadership capacity, and effective change management.

Organizational transformation in higher education requires a structured change process. Kotter (2012) emphasizes that successful organizational change requires a clear vision, strong leadership, stakeholder involvement, and institutionalization of new practices. Similarly, Burnes (2017) argues that organizational change is a complex process involving interactions between organizational structures, individuals, and external environments. In the context of Islamic higher education, transformation requires effective educational management to ensure that institutional changes contribute to sustainable academic

development. Irawan (2020) highlights that Islamic educational management involves strategic leadership, organizational governance, and continuous institutional improvement to address educational challenges.

Previous studies have examined PTKIN transformation from various perspectives. Arifin (2021) analyzed the policy development of IAIN transformation into UIN and highlighted the role of government policy in institutional expansion. Husain & Wahyuni (2023) discussed the historical and policy dimensions of STAIN/IAIN transformation into UIN, particularly regarding modernization and academic integration. Meanwhile, Utami et al. (2025) examined the transformation process of UIN Sumatera Utara and identified implementation challenges at the institutional level. Although these studies provide important insights, most previous research focuses on policy development, historical analysis, or specific institutional cases.

The existing literature has not sufficiently explained how PTKIN transformation occurs as a structured organizational change process. Previous studies rarely connect initial institutional readiness, implementation mechanisms, and long-term consolidation of transformation within a single analytical framework. This limitation indicates the need for a theoretical approach that explains institutional change as a continuous process rather than merely a policy outcome. Understanding these stages is important because institutional transformation involves resistance management, organizational adaptation, and cultural reinforcement.

This study applies Kurt Lewin's Change Model as the theoretical foundation to analyze PTKIN transformation. Lewin (1947) conceptualized organizational change through three stages: unfreezing, changing, and refreezing. The unfreezing stage refers to creating awareness and readiness for change by challenging existing conditions. The changing stage describes the implementation of new structures, behaviors, and systems, while the refreezing stage focuses on institutionalizing new practices within organizational culture. Cummings et al. (2016) further explain that Lewin's three-stage model remains relevant for understanding organizational transformation in contemporary contexts, including educational institutions.

The novelty of this study lies in applying Lewin's organizational change framework to the transformation of Indonesian Islamic higher education institutions while incorporating PTKIN-specific dimensions. Unlike previous studies that primarily examine policy and historical aspects, this study analyzes transformation through organizational readiness,

structural adaptation, academic development, governance reform, and cultural institutionalization. Furthermore, this study contributes to the literature by contextualizing organizational change theory within Islamic higher education, where transformation involves not only organizational effectiveness but also preservation of religious identity and integration of knowledge domains.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze the transformation process of PTKIN from IAIN/STAIN into UIN using Lewin's three-stage change model. Specifically, this study examines how the processes of unfreezing, changing, and refreezing are reflected in institutional transformation and how these processes influence organizational structure, academic development, human resources, governance, and institutional culture. Through this analysis, the study seeks to provide a conceptual framework for understanding sustainable transformation in Islamic higher education institutions.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative literature review approach to analyze the institutional transformation of State Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKIN), particularly the transition from IAIN/STAIN into UIN, through the perspective of organizational change. The methodological procedures were designed to systematically identify, select, analyze, and synthesize relevant theoretical and empirical literature related to higher education transformation, Islamic education management, and organizational change processes. This section explains the research design, literature selection strategy, data collection procedures, analytical techniques, and the theoretical framework used to develop an integrated understanding of PTKIN institutional transformation.

1. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research approach using an integrative literature review design. A literature review is considered an appropriate research method for analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing existing knowledge to develop a comprehensive understanding of a specific research phenomenon (Snyder, 2019). This approach was selected because the study aims to examine the transformation process of Islamic higher education institutions from IAIN/STAIN into UIN through organizational change perspectives rather than measuring empirical relationships between variables.

The integrative literature review approach enables researchers to combine theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and conceptual discussions from previous studies to construct a broader understanding of a research topic (Torraco, 2016). In this study, the literature review was used to synthesize research related to institutional transformation, higher education reform, Islamic higher education management, and organizational change theory. The qualitative approach was also appropriate because the study focused on interpreting meanings, patterns, and relationships among concepts derived from academic literature (Creswell & Poth, 2023).

2. Data Sources and Literature Selection

The data sources in this study consisted of secondary materials obtained from academic publications, including peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, research reports, and relevant policy documents. The literature selection focused on publications discussing higher education transformation, organizational change, Islamic higher education development, and the application of change management frameworks.

The literature search was conducted through academic databases and digital repositories, including Google Scholar, Garuda, and other scholarly databases. The selection process considered several inclusion criteria: (1) relevance to institutional transformation and organizational change, (2) academic credibility of the sources, (3) publication relevance within the research context, and (4) availability of sufficient conceptual or empirical information to support analysis.

The selected literature consisted of studies discussing the transformation of IAIN/STAIN into UIN, higher education institutional reform, organizational change management, and theoretical discussions regarding Lewin's Change Model. Classical theoretical sources were also included because foundational theories remain relevant for explaining organizational transformation processes.

3. Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was conducted through systematic literature identification, screening, classification, and analysis. The first stage involved identifying relevant publications using keywords such as "Islamic higher education transformation," "IAIN to UIN transformation," "organizational change in higher education," "Lewin change model," and "higher education reform."

The second stage involved screening the collected literature based on thematic relevance. Articles that did not directly discuss institutional transformation, organizational change, or higher education development were excluded. The selected sources were then categorized into several analytical themes, including:

1. Historical development of Islamic higher education institutions;
2. Factors driving institutional transformation;
3. Implementation mechanisms of organizational change;
4. Institutionalization of new structures, cultures, and governance systems.

This procedure follows the principle of literature-based research, where transparent identification and classification of relevant sources are essential to produce credible synthesis and interpretation (Snyder, 2019).

4. Data Analysis Technique

The collected literature was analyzed using qualitative content analysis and narrative synthesis. Content analysis was applied to identify recurring concepts, patterns, and relationships among studies, while narrative synthesis was used to integrate findings from different sources into a coherent theoretical explanation.

The analysis process consisted of three stages. First, relevant information from selected literature was extracted and organized according to research themes. Second, the extracted information was compared and interpreted based on Lewin's Change Model, consisting of unfreezing, changing, and refreezing stages. Third, the findings were synthesized to explain how PTKIN transformation reflects organizational change processes within Islamic higher education institutions.

The analytical framework was developed by connecting institutional transformation dimensions with Lewin's three-stage change model. The unfreezing stage was analyzed through factors that encourage organizational readiness, the changing stage through structural and academic implementation processes, and the refreezing stage through institutionalization of new practices and organizational culture.

5. Research Trustworthiness

To maintain analytical credibility, this study applied source triangulation by comparing findings from various academic publications, including theoretical works,

empirical studies, and institutional transformation research. The interpretation process was conducted by comparing different perspectives to identify similarities, differences, and research gaps. Although this study does not involve direct human participants, academic integrity was maintained through accurate citation, transparent literature selection, and consistent interpretation of previous studies.

RESULTS

The literature synthesis identified five major findings regarding the conceptualization of teacher personality from psychological perspectives. The analysis was based on foundational personality theories developed by Allport, Freud, Skinner, Rogers, Maslow, and Bandura. The findings demonstrate that personality has been conceptualized through different theoretical assumptions, including internal psychological structures, learned behavioral patterns, personal development, and interactions between individuals and their environments. The results are presented according to the main theoretical categories identified during the literature analysis.

1. Literature Identification and Thematic Categorization

The literature analysis identified several major themes related to the transformation of Islamic higher education institutions from IAIN/STAIN into UIN. The selected literature was classified based on four analytical dimensions: (1) historical development and policy transformation, (2) driving factors of institutional change, (3) implementation of organizational transformation, and (4) institutionalization of post-transformation practices.

The literature synthesis shows that PTKIN transformation represents a multidimensional institutional process involving policy reform, organizational restructuring, academic expansion, human resource development, and governance improvement. The transformation was not identified as a single administrative change but as a continuous institutional development process involving internal and external factors.

Table 1. Thematic Categorization of Literature Findings

Theory	Main Scholar
Historical and policy transformation	The conversion from IAIN/STAIN into UIN was driven by national higher education development policies and the need to expand institutional mandates
Driving factors of transformation	Global competition, community needs, academic integration, and institutional development encouraged organizational change

Theory	Main Scholar
Implementation process	Transformation involved restructuring, development of new faculties and programs, governance adaptation, and strengthening human resources
Institutional consolidation	New academic culture, quality assurance systems, and organizational identity were developed to sustain transformation

2. Historical Development and Policy Dynamics of PTKIN Transformation

The literature indicates that the transformation of Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia developed through a gradual historical process. The transition from STAIN and IAIN into UIN represented a shift from institutions primarily focused on Islamic studies toward comprehensive universities integrating religious sciences with general academic disciplines.

Previous studies identified that the transformation was influenced by national education policies, modernization of Islamic higher education, and increasing demands for institutional competitiveness. The expansion of academic mandates became one of the main characteristics of UIN transformation, reflected through the establishment of new faculties, development of multidisciplinary programs, and strengthening of research activities.

The literature review also identified that institutional transformation created changes in organizational structures and academic orientation. The transformation process required PTKIN to adjust administrative systems, academic governance, and institutional management practices to accommodate broader university functions.

3. Factors Driving Institutional Transformation

The synthesis of previous studies identified several internal and external factors influencing PTKIN transformation. These factors were categorized into institutional pressures, academic development needs, social demands, and global higher education challenges.

Table 2. Driving Factors of PTKIN Institutional Transformation

Theory	Main Scholar
Academic development	The need to integrate Islamic studies with science, technology, and professional disciplines
Social demand	Increasing public expectations for higher education institutions with broader academic opportunities
Global competitiveness	The need to improve institutional quality, research capacity, and international recognition

Theory	Main Scholar
Institutional development	The requirement to strengthen governance, human resources, and organizational capacity

The reviewed literature shows that external pressures encouraged institutions to initiate transformation, while internal readiness determined the ability of institutions to implement and sustain organizational change. Institutional leadership, academic resources, and management capacity appeared as important components supporting transformation.

4. Implementation of Organizational Transformation

The literature synthesis identified that PTKIN transformation involved several implementation processes, including organizational restructuring, academic expansion, governance reform, and human resource development. Organizational restructuring occurred through the establishment of new faculties, departments, and academic programs that reflected broader university mandates. The expansion of academic disciplines required adjustments in curriculum development, lecturer competencies, research orientation, and institutional management systems.

In terms of governance, transformation required PTKIN to develop more complex administrative structures similar to comprehensive universities. This process involved strengthening quality assurance mechanisms, improving academic management systems, and developing institutional policies to support sustainable growth.

Table 3. Institutional Changes During PTKIN Transformation

Transformation Aspect	Institutional Change
Organizational structure	Expansion of faculties, departments, and institutional units
Academic system	Integration of Islamic studies and general sciences
Human resources	Development of lecturer competencies and academic capacity
Governance	Improvement of management systems and quality assurance

5. Transformation Process Based on Lewin's Change Model

The literature findings were further organized according to Lewin's three-stage change model: unfreezing, changing, and refreezing.

Table 4. PTKIN Transformation Based on Lewin's Three-Stage Change Model

Change Stage	Literature Findings
Unfreezing	Institutional awareness emerged due to demands for modernization, academic expansion, and improved competitiveness
Changing	Transformation occurred through structural restructuring, academic development, governance adaptation, and human resource strengthening
Refreezing	New institutional practices were strengthened through academic culture development, quality assurance, and organizational consolidation

6. Institutional Challenges After Transformation

The literature review also identified several challenges following the transformation from IAIN/STAIN into UIN. These challenges include maintaining Islamic institutional identity, managing organizational complexity, ensuring human resource readiness, and balancing religious studies with broader scientific disciplines.

Table 5. Challenges in PTKIN Transformation

Challenge	Description
Identity management	Maintaining Islamic characteristics while expanding academic disciplines
Human resource capacity	Ensuring lecturer and staff competencies meet new institutional demands
Organizational adaptation	Managing larger and more complex institutional structures
Sustainability of change	Maintaining transformation outcomes through continuous improvement

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that the transformation of PTKIN from IAIN/STAIN into UIN is a multidimensional process involving structural, academic, governance, human-resource, and cultural changes. These changes are shaped by both external pressures and internal institutional readiness, showing that transformation extends beyond formal administrative conversion. Therefore, the discussion interprets these findings through Lewin's stages of unfreezing, changing, and refreezing to explain how institutional change is initiated, implemented, and sustained.

1. Analysis and Interpretation of Institutional Transformation Findings

The findings indicate that the transformation of PTKIN from IAIN/STAIN into UIN represents a complex organizational transformation process rather than merely an administrative conversion of institutional status. The transition reflects a fundamental shift in institutional orientation, where Islamic higher education institutions expand their academic mandates, organizational structures, governance systems, and institutional capacities. Organizational transformation generally involves changes in strategy, structure, culture, and human resources because institutions must adapt to new environmental demands and expectations (Burnes, 2017). Therefore, the transformation of PTKIN should be understood as a long-term organizational development process that requires continuous adaptation rather than a one-time policy implementation.

The conversion into UIN demonstrates a change in institutional paradigm from a primarily religious higher education model toward a more comprehensive university system integrating Islamic studies with broader scientific disciplines. This transformation requires institutions to redefine their academic identity while maintaining their foundational values. According to Altbach et al. (2019), contemporary higher education institutions face increasing pressure to expand their academic functions, strengthen research capacity, and improve institutional competitiveness. In the context of PTKIN, the expansion of academic fields reflects an effort to respond to societal needs while positioning Islamic higher education within the wider national and global higher education landscape.

The findings also show that organizational restructuring represents a central component of PTKIN transformation. The establishment of new faculties, departments, and academic programs requires changes in governance mechanisms, decision-making processes, and administrative systems. Such structural transformation cannot operate effectively without corresponding development of human resources, particularly lecturer competencies, leadership capabilities, and institutional management skills. Irawan (2019) emphasizes that Islamic educational institutions require strategic management practices that integrate leadership, organizational governance, and institutional development to achieve sustainable educational improvement. Thus, structural transformation and human resource development must progress simultaneously to ensure institutional effectiveness.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that transformation involves the development of a new organizational culture within PTKIN. The transition into UIN requires academic

communities to adopt new values related to interdisciplinary research, scientific integration, quality assurance, and professional governance. Organizational change literature explains that sustainable transformation occurs when new behaviors and practices become embedded within institutional culture rather than remaining as formal policies only (Kotter, 2012). Therefore, the success of PTKIN transformation depends on the ability of institutions to build shared understanding among leaders, lecturers, administrative staff, and academic communities regarding the direction and objectives of organizational change.

Overall, the transformation of PTKIN illustrates that institutional development occurs through gradual adaptation involving structural, academic, managerial, and cultural dimensions. This finding supports the argument that higher education transformation is a complex process shaped by interactions between institutional vision, environmental pressures, and internal organizational capabilities (Kezar & Eckel, 2002). The conversion from IAIN/STAIN into UIN should therefore be viewed as an ongoing organizational change process that requires continuous evaluation and improvement. Rather than representing the final outcome of institutional reform, the establishment of UIN becomes a foundation for further development toward more adaptive, competitive, and sustainable Islamic higher education institutions.

2. PTKIN Transformation Through Lewin's Change Model

The transformation of PTKIN from IAIN/STAIN into UIN can be further understood through the perspective of Lewin's Change Model, which explains organizational change as a progressive process consisting of three interconnected stages: unfreezing, changing, and refreezing. This framework provides an analytical lens to examine how institutions recognize the necessity of change, implement transformation initiatives, and institutionalize new organizational practices. Unlike approaches that view transformation as a linear administrative process, Lewin's model emphasizes that successful change requires organizational readiness, behavioral adjustment, and cultural reinforcement (Burnes, 2020). In the context of Islamic higher education, the model is relevant because institutional transformation involves not only structural adaptation but also academic, cultural, and identity-related changes.

The application of Lewin's model demonstrates that PTKIN transformation represents a dynamic process influenced by internal institutional conditions and external environmental pressures. The transformation from IAIN/STAIN into UIN required

institutions to first develop awareness that existing organizational models were insufficient to address contemporary higher education challenges. Subsequently, institutions needed to implement structural and academic changes before consolidating new systems and values. This perspective allows PTKIN transformation to be examined not only based on policy outcomes but also through the organizational mechanisms that enable sustainable institutional development.

a. Unfreezing: Building Institutional Readiness for Change

The findings indicate that the unfreezing stage in PTKIN transformation emerged from increasing awareness regarding the limitations of existing institutional models and the need to respond to changing higher education environments. The transformation from IAIN/STAIN into UIN was driven by several pressures, including globalization, demands for academic competitiveness, the need for scientific integration, and changing expectations from society toward Islamic higher education institutions. According to Lewin (1947), organizational change begins when existing assumptions, structures, and practices are questioned, creating motivation for individuals and organizations to seek alternative conditions. Therefore, unfreezing represents the process of preparing institutions to recognize that maintaining previous systems may limit future development.

In the context of PTKIN, unfreezing involved broader dimensions than conventional organizational change in business institutions because it was associated with academic, religious, and socio-political considerations. The transformation was not only intended to expand institutional capacity but also to redefine the role of Islamic higher education within national development. Universities must respond to external pressures while maintaining their historical identity and educational mission. According to Tierney (2023), higher education transformation is strongly influenced by institutional culture because universities are value-based organizations where change must be negotiated among multiple academic communities. Therefore, readiness for transformation in PTKIN required the alignment of institutional vision, academic values, and stakeholder expectations.

The unfreezing process also required the development of organizational readiness among leaders, lecturers, administrative staff, and academic communities. Armenakis et al. (1993) explain that readiness for organizational change depends on the extent to which members believe that change is necessary, appropriate, and achievable. In PTKIN transformation, institutional readiness was reflected through efforts to prepare academic

resources, develop strategic plans, and create organizational commitment toward broader university functions. Without adequate readiness, structural transformation may result only in formal institutional changes without producing meaningful academic and organizational improvements.

Furthermore, the need for transformation was strengthened by the changing landscape of global higher education, where universities are required to enhance research capacity, interdisciplinary collaboration, and institutional competitiveness. Altbach et al. (2010) argue that globalization has significantly influenced higher education institutions by encouraging international engagement, knowledge expansion, and organizational adaptation. For PTKIN, these global pressures created incentives to transform from specialized Islamic institutes into comprehensive universities capable of participating in wider academic environments. Thus, the unfreezing stage represented a strategic response to both external challenges and internal aspirations for institutional advancement.

The findings also support the argument of Cummings et al. (2016) that unfreezing should not be interpreted merely as abandoning old practices but as creating psychological and organizational conditions that enable change. In PTKIN transformation, unfreezing involved developing collective understanding that institutional modernization could occur without eliminating Islamic identity. This process required negotiation between tradition and innovation, where religious foundations remained important while new academic orientations were introduced. Consequently, readiness for change became a critical foundation for ensuring that subsequent transformation stages could be implemented effectively.

Overall, the unfreezing stage demonstrates that PTKIN transformation began with the emergence of institutional awareness and recognition of change necessity. The transformation was initiated not only because of regulatory demands but also because institutions needed to adapt to academic, social, and global developments. This finding extends the application of Lewin's model by showing that in Islamic higher education contexts, organizational readiness involves multiple dimensions, including academic modernization, preservation of institutional identity, and alignment with societal expectations. Therefore, unfreezing became a crucial stage that shaped the direction and sustainability of subsequent institutional transformation processes.

b. Changing: Implementing Structural and Academic Transformation

The changing stage represents the implementation phase in which PTKIN begins to translate institutional awareness into concrete organizational transformation. The findings show that the transition from IAIN/STAIN into UIN involved significant adjustments in organizational structure, academic governance, study program development, and institutional management systems. In Lewin's framework, the changing stage occurs when organizations introduce new patterns of behavior, structures, and practices to replace previous conditions (Lewin, 1947). In the context of PTKIN, this stage was reflected through the expansion of academic disciplines, establishment of new faculties, development of multidisciplinary programs, and adaptation of governance mechanisms to meet broader university responsibilities.

The transformation process also required substantial changes in academic orientation and human resource capacity. The development of UIN encouraged the integration of Islamic studies with science, technology, and professional disciplines, requiring improvements in curriculum design, research capacity, and lecturer competencies. According to Gornitzka (1999), higher education reform involves changes in organizational structures and academic practices because universities operate as complex institutions where professional autonomy and institutional strategies interact. Therefore, PTKIN transformation required not only formal restructuring but also the development of academic capabilities that could support the new institutional identity. This finding demonstrates that organizational change in higher education depends on the alignment between structural transformation and the readiness of academic actors.

Furthermore, the changing stage highlights the importance of leadership and strategic management in ensuring that transformation initiatives are implemented effectively. Higher education institutions require adaptive leadership to manage uncertainty, coordinate stakeholders, and maintain organizational commitment throughout the change process. Kezar & Eckel (2002) emphasize that successful institutional change in higher education depends on leadership capacity, collaborative decision-making, and cultural alignment among organizational members. In PTKIN transformation, the changing process therefore represents a continuous negotiation between modernization goals and the preservation of Islamic institutional values, where structural innovation must be accompanied by academic and cultural adaptation.

c. Refreezing: Institutionalizing New Academic Culture

The refreezing stage represents the process through which newly introduced changes become embedded within institutional systems, practices, and organizational culture. The findings indicate that PTKIN transformation does not conclude after the formal conversion of IAIN/STAIN into UIN, but continues through efforts to stabilize new academic structures, governance mechanisms, and institutional values. In Lewin's framework, refreezing occurs when new behaviors and practices become accepted as part of organizational routines and are supported by institutional systems (Lewin, 1947). Therefore, the sustainability of PTKIN transformation depends on the ability of institutions to institutionalize new academic orientations, management practices, and organizational identities.

In the context of Islamic higher education, refreezing involves the consolidation of an integrated academic culture that combines Islamic values with broader scientific development. The establishment of UIN requires institutions to maintain continuous improvement through quality assurance systems, research development, interdisciplinary collaboration, and professional academic management. According to Clark (1998), sustainable transformation in higher education requires the development of an "entrepreneurial university" characterized by strong institutional capacity, adaptive governance, and continuous innovation. This perspective highlights that post-transformation institutions must develop internal capabilities to sustain change rather than relying only on external policy support. Thus, refreezing in PTKIN represents the process of transforming institutional reforms into long-term organizational capabilities.

Furthermore, the institutionalization of transformation requires alignment between organizational culture, leadership practices, and strategic objectives. Higher education institutions are value-driven organizations where sustainable change depends on collective commitment among academic communities. According to Schein (2016), organizational culture plays a central role in maintaining change because shared assumptions, values, and practices determine how members respond to new institutional directions. In PTKIN, the refreezing stage involves strengthening a culture that supports academic excellence while preserving Islamic institutional identity. Therefore, successful transformation is achieved when structural changes, academic development, and cultural adaptation become integrated into the daily practices of the institution.

3. Contextualizing Lewin's Model in Islamic Higher Education

Although Lewin's three-stage model provides a useful analytical framework for explaining the transformation of PTKIN from IAIN/STAIN into UIN, the findings suggest that institutional change in Islamic higher education should not be interpreted as a strictly linear sequence of unfreezing, changing, and refreezing. Transformation within universities involves multiple organizational units, academic communities, professional interests, and institutional routines that may respond to change at different speeds. Cummings et al. (2016) argue that reducing Lewin's ideas to a rigid three-step sequence overlooks the broader dynamic character of his understanding of organizational change. This observation becomes particularly relevant in higher education because universities can be understood as loosely coupled organizations in which academic, administrative, and professional units maintain considerable autonomy while remaining institutionally connected. Weick (1976) explains that educational organizations often exhibit loose coupling, meaning that changes in one organizational component do not automatically produce identical changes throughout the institution. In the PTKIN context, therefore, structural conversion into UIN may occur relatively quickly at the formal level, while changes in academic practices, interdisciplinary orientation, human resource capacity, and institutional culture develop more gradually. The three stages of Lewin's model should consequently be viewed as analytically distinguishable but empirically overlapping processes rather than as rigidly separated phases (Cummings et al., 2016; Weick, 1976).

The findings further indicate that PTKIN transformation involves a tension between formal institutional change and substantive organizational change. The establishment of new faculties, study programs, governance structures, and administrative mechanisms provides visible evidence of transformation, but formal restructuring alone does not necessarily ensure that corresponding academic and organizational practices are fully internalized. Burnes (2017) emphasizes that sustainable organizational change requires alignment among structures, individuals, organizational behavior, and the wider environment rather than modification of formal arrangements alone. This argument can be extended through the institutional perspective of Meyer & Rowan (1977), who demonstrate that organizations may adopt formal structures in response to institutional expectations and legitimacy pressures while everyday organizational practices remain partly disconnected from those structures. Such a perspective is especially relevant to PTKIN transformation because obtaining UIN status represents both an organizational development process and a form of institutional

legitimacy within the Indonesian higher education system. Consequently, the success of transformation should not be evaluated solely by the establishment of new organizational structures or academic units. It should also be assessed through the extent to which these structures reshape academic practices, research orientation, interdisciplinary collaboration, governance behavior, and institutional capacity. This distinction strengthens the interpretation of Lewin's changing stage by highlighting the difference between formal transformation and substantive institutional transformation (Burnes, 2017; Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

A further contextualization of Lewin's model concerns the external institutional pressures surrounding PTKIN transformation. Islamic higher education institutions do not transform independently from their organizational environment; rather, they respond to government regulations, accreditation requirements, professional standards, societal expectations, academic competition, and developments within the broader higher education field. Kezar & Eckel (2002) demonstrate that institutional transformation in higher education is strongly influenced by organizational culture and the capacity of universities to interpret change according to their distinctive institutional contexts. At the same time, DiMaggio & Powell (1983) explain that organizations operating within the same organizational field are influenced by coercive, mimetic, and normative pressures that encourage increasing similarity in organizational structures and practices. This perspective provides an additional explanation for PTKIN transformation. Regulatory policies may generate coercive pressures toward institutional restructuring, competition with other universities may encourage mimetic adoption of academic and governance practices, while professional standards and accreditation mechanisms generate normative pressures for quality improvement. However, PTKIN cannot simply reproduce the organizational models of general universities because their institutional legitimacy also derives from Islamic educational traditions and religious identity. Therefore, the unfreezing and changing stages are shaped by the interaction between external pressures for institutional conformity and internal efforts to preserve distinctive organizational characteristics (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Kezar & Eckel, 2002)

The transformation process also demonstrates that institutional change requires the legitimization of new ideas before those ideas can become established organizational practices. The expansion from an Islamic institute into a comprehensive university introduces new academic disciplines, interdisciplinary relationships, governance arrangements, and conceptions of institutional purpose. Clark (1998) argues that sustainable

transformation in universities depends on strengthening institutional steering capacity, diversifying academic development, and cultivating organizational capabilities that enable universities to adapt continuously. From an institutional change perspective, Greenwood et al. (2002) further explain that significant organizational transformation involves a process of theorization through which existing organizational problems are identified and new arrangements are justified as legitimate solutions. This process is highly relevant to the transformation of PTKIN because the integration of Islamic studies with science, technology, social sciences, and professional disciplines cannot rely solely on regulatory authorization. Institutional actors must also develop a shared intellectual justification for why academic expansion is consistent with the mission of Islamic higher education. In this sense, transformation becomes not merely a process of adding faculties and programs, but also a process of reconstructing institutional meaning. The changing stage therefore involves both organizational restructuring and the legitimization of a new conception of what an Islamic university should represent within contemporary higher education (Clark, 1998; Greenwood et al., 2002)(Clark, 1998; Greenwood et al., 2002).

These findings ultimately suggest that the classical concept of refreezing requires contextual reinterpretation when applied to Islamic higher education. Refreezing should not imply that PTKIN reaches a permanent and static organizational condition after becoming UIN, because universities continue to operate within changing regulatory, technological, academic, and societal environments (Irawan, 2025). Schein (2016) emphasizes that organizational sustainability depends on the institutionalization of shared assumptions, values, and practices through organizational culture, while Scott (2013) conceptualizes institutions as being sustained through interconnected regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive elements. Combining these perspectives provides a more appropriate interpretation of post-transformation PTKIN. Institutional consolidation occurs when new academic structures are formally regulated, supported by professional norms and quality standards, and gradually accepted as legitimate components of institutional identity. Islamic identity, therefore, should not be positioned exclusively within the refreezing stage as something preserved only after transformation has occurred. Instead, it operates across the entire change process by shaping why transformation is considered necessary, how new academic and organizational arrangements are negotiated, and which practices ultimately become institutionalized. Accordingly, this study extends Lewin's model by proposing that PTKIN transformation is better understood as a recursive process of institutional readiness,

structural-academic transformation, and institutional consolidation, with Islamic identity functioning as a cross-stage institutional anchor rather than as a fixed outcome of organizational change.

4. Comparison with Previous Studies and Theoretical Contribution

The findings of this study both confirm and extend previous research on the transformation of Indonesian Islamic higher education. Existing studies generally agree that the conversion of IAIN/STAIN into UIN represents more than a formal change in institutional status. However, previous research has tended to examine particular dimensions of transformation separately, including government policy, modernization, scientific integration, institutional development, or the experience of individual universities. The present study differs by positioning these dimensions within a unified organizational change process based on Lewin's framework. Rather than examining transformation primarily as a policy decision or historical transition, this study interprets PTKIN transformation through the interconnected processes of institutional readiness, structural-academic implementation, and organizational consolidation. The comparison with five closely related studies illustrates this distinction more clearly.

Table 6. Comparison of the Present Study with Previous Research on PTKIN Transformation

Previous Study	Main Focus	Key Finding	Position of the Present Study	Description
Arifin (2021)	Policy of IAIN–UIN transformation	Transformation was shaped by policy formulation, implementation, and institutional considerations.	Extends policy analysis by explaining internal organizational readiness, implementation, and institutionalization through Lewin's model.	Maintaining Islamic characteristics while expanding academic disciplines
Husain & Wahyuni (2023)	Drivers of STAIN/IAIN–UIN transformation	Modernization, globalization, societal demand, and knowledge integration encouraged transformation.	Interprets these pressures as unfreezing forces that create readiness for organizational change.	Ensuring lecturer and staff competencies meet new institutional demands
Muqowim & Lessy (2021)	Integration of Islamic and general sciences	Transformation involves an epistemological shift toward scientific integration.	Places knowledge integration within broader structural, governance, human-resource, and cultural transformation.	Managing larger and more complex institutional structures

Previous Study	Main Focus	Key Finding	Position of the Present Study	Description
Utami et al. (2025)	Transformation of UIN Sumatera Utara	Transformation involved policy, curriculum adaptation, human-resource development, and scientific integration.	Develops a broader conceptual explanation of transformation through readiness, structural-academic change, and consolidation.	Maintaining transformation outcomes through continuous improvement
Muthohirin et al. (2025)	Post-transformation development of UIN	Transformation involves organizational change and multidisciplinary development of Islamic sciences.	Explains post-transformation development as institutional consolidation within a recursive change process.	

The comparison with previous studies demonstrates that the present research extends existing explanations of PTKIN transformation from descriptive and policy-oriented accounts toward a process-based organizational interpretation. Arifin (2021) primarily explains the transformation of IAIN into UIN through the dynamics of government policy, while Husain & Wahyuni (2023) emphasize modernization, globalization, societal demand, and the integration of religious and general sciences as major drivers of institutional conversion. These findings are consistent with the present study but are theoretically repositioned within Lewin's framework. Policy pressure, modernization, competition, and changing societal expectations can be understood as forces of unfreezing that challenge the adequacy of existing institutional arrangements and generate organizational readiness for change. The present study therefore contributes by explaining how external policy and environmental pressures are translated into internal institutional processes involving strategic preparation, organizational commitment, and readiness for transformation.

The findings also complement studies that emphasize epistemological and institution-specific dimensions of transformation. Muqowim & Lessy (2021) highlight the integration of Islamic studies and modern sciences as a central feature of the transition from IAIN to UIN. In contrast, Utami et al. (2025) demonstrate that institutional transformation at UIN Sumatera Utara involved strategic policy, curriculum adaptation, human-resource development, globalization, and the integration of religious and general sciences. The present study extends these findings by positioning scientific integration within a broader process of structural-academic transformation. The integration of knowledge cannot be sustained only

through curriculum reform or intellectual discourse but requires corresponding changes in organizational structures, lecturer competencies, research systems, governance mechanisms, and academic culture. In this sense, the changing stage represents the point at which epistemological aspirations are translated into concrete institutional capacities and organizational practices.

A further comparison with Muthohirin (2025) reinforces the argument that PTKIN transformation continues beyond the formal achievement of UIN status. Their study shows that the development of State Islamic Universities involves both organizational transformation and the advancement of multidisciplinary Islamic thought. The present study interprets these post-transformation developments through the concept of institutional consolidation, in which new academic orientations, quality-assurance systems, governance practices, research cultures, and organizational identities become progressively institutionalized. However, consolidation should not be interpreted as permanent organizational stability. Because higher education institutions continuously respond to regulatory, technological, academic, and societal change, the refreezing stage is better understood as a temporary stabilization that strengthens institutional capacity for subsequent adaptation. This interpretation supports the view that PTKIN transformation is a recursive rather than terminal organizational process.

Taken together, the comparison with these five studies produces the main theoretical contribution of this research. Previous studies have provided important explanations of government policy, transformation drivers, scientific integration, individual institutional trajectories, and post-conversion academic development, but these dimensions have largely been examined separately. The present study connects them within a contextualized Lewinian framework consisting of Institutional Readiness, Structural-Academic Transformation, Institutional Consolidation, while positioning Islamic Identity Negotiation and Reinforcement as a cross-stage institutional anchor. Islamic identity influences why transformation is considered necessary during unfreezing, shapes how academic expansion and knowledge integration are negotiated during changing, and provides cultural legitimacy for new institutional practices during consolidation. Thus, the novelty of this study lies not merely in applying Lewin's model to PTKIN, but in reconceptualizing Islamic higher education transformation as a recursive, multidimensional, and identity-anchored process of organizational change.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the transformation of PTKIN from IAIN/STAIN into UIN represents a multidimensional organizational change process rather than a mere administrative conversion of institutional status. The transformation involves institutional readiness, structural restructuring, academic expansion, governance reform, human-resource development, and the consolidation of new organizational practices. Viewed through Lewin's framework, these developments can be understood through the interconnected processes of unfreezing, changing, and refreezing, in which external pressures and internal aspirations create readiness for change, organizational and academic reforms translate that readiness into implementation, and new structures, values, and practices are gradually institutionalized.

The main theoretical contribution of this study lies in contextualizing Lewin's model within Islamic higher education. The findings suggest that PTKIN transformation is better understood as a recursive process of Institutional Readiness, Structural-Academic Transformation, Institutional Consolidation, with Islamic Identity Negotiation and Reinforcement functioning as a cross-stage institutional anchor. This perspective extends existing studies that have tended to examine policy dynamics, scientific integration, historical development, or post-transformation change separately by connecting these dimensions within a coherent organizational change framework. Accordingly, the novelty of this study lies not merely in applying Lewin's model to PTKIN, but in reconceptualizing Islamic higher education transformation as a multidimensional, iterative, and identity-anchored process.

From a practical perspective, the findings imply that sustainable PTKIN transformation requires more than regulatory approval and formal organizational restructuring. Institutional leaders need to align academic development, governance systems, human-resource capacity, quality assurance, and organizational culture while ensuring that modernization remains compatible with the institution's Islamic identity and educational mission. Future research should empirically examine this proposed framework through comparative case studies, interviews, surveys, or longitudinal research across different UIN institutions to evaluate how readiness, implementation, consolidation, and identity negotiation operate in diverse institutional contexts and influence the long-term sustainability of transformation.

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