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Human Resource Management Based on the PDCA Cycle to Enhance Lecturer Performance in Private Islamic Higher Education Institutions

N Noviyanti*, and Nandang Koswara

Universitas Islam Nusantara, Bandung, Indonesia
*Corresponding author: ynovi.164@gmail.com

Abstract. Lecturer performance is the primary pillar of Tridharma quality in higher education, yet private Islamic colleges must improve it under limited resources. This study analyzes how the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle is implemented in human resource management to improve lecturer performance at two private Islamic colleges in West Java, Indonesia: STIT At-Taqwa Ciparay and STIT Al-Ihsan Baleendah. A qualitative multi-site case study collected data from twelve informants through in-depth interviews, observation, and document review. The data were analyzed with the interactive model of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, and trustworthiness was established through triangulation, member checking, and an audit trail. Planning involves workload analysis and the projection of scientific direction; implementation covers selective recruitment and professional development through kindness-based mentoring; evaluation uses the Lecturer Workload (BKD) report; and follow-up focuses on academic coaching and research assistance. The two institutions apply the same cycle through different instruments: Al-Ihsan evaluates quantitative output audited by its internal quality assurance system, whereas At-Taqwa relies on peer review and structured self-reflection. Both share two weaknesses: mentoring outcomes are not documented, and no baseline indicators exist against which year-on-year change could be demonstrated. The study concludes that consistent integration of the PDCA cycle supports organizational resilience and lecturer productivity, and that Act is the decisive stage, because evaluation without documented follow-up returns the cycle to its starting point rather than advancing it.

Keywords: Continuous Improvement, Human Resource Management, Lecturer Performance, PDCA, Private Higher Education

1 Introduction

Human resource management occupies a central position in higher education, particularly in the pursuit of academic excellence and institutional sustainability. In the context of competition among institutions, lecturers are not merely employees but the primary intellectual assets responsible for the Tridharma, the triad of teaching, research, and community service. The effectiveness with which an institution manages these

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assets determines the quality of its graduates and the contribution of its research. For private Islamic higher education institutions the challenges are compounded: these institutions frequently operate under financial constraint while being required to meet national accreditation standards and to maintain their religious identity [1], [2].

Lecturer performance is linked to how an institution manages its human capital. Performance is not a static outcome but a process influenced by systematic planning, selective recruitment, continuous competency development, and objective evaluation. Empirical evidence nevertheless suggests that human resource management in many private institutions remains largely administrative. Performance review often concludes with the submission of Lecturer Workload reports without meaningful follow-up or development intervention. Bridging this gap requires a transformative approach: education must emphasize 21st-century competencies if the curriculum is to remain relevant [3], [4], and that transformation depends on a management system that enables lecturers to innovate.

The PDCA cycle, originating in the statistical quality control work of Walter Shewhart and developed into a management philosophy by W. Edwards Deming, offers a framework for continuous quality improvement [5]. Applied to human resource management (Fig. 1), Plan involves identifying the lecturer competencies required and projecting future needs on the basis of student ratios and scientific trends. Do represents the execution of recruitment, orientation, and development programs. Check involves the evaluation of performance against defined benchmarks. Act comprises the corrective actions and recognition that return the cycle to its beginning at a higher level. The significance of Deming's formulation for the present study is its insistence that improvement derives from the revision of systems rather than from the exhortation of individuals, which bears directly on institutions where performance review has become a reporting exercise.

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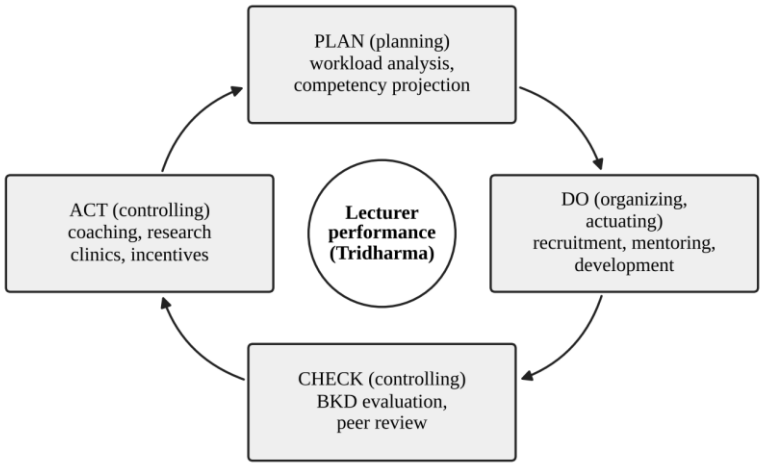


Fig. 1. The PDCA cycle applied to lecturer human resource management, with Terry's management functions as the organizational arrangements that carry each stage.

The cycle also requires a managerial framework capable of carrying it. The classical management functions of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling, as formulated by George R. Terry, provide that framework and are complementary to PDCA rather than alternative to it: Terry's functions describe the organizational arrangements through which each PDCA stage is executed [6]. Where development becomes collective rather than individual, the institution begins to function as a learning organization in which capability is held institutionally and survives the departure of particular lecturers [7].

In the specific environment of private Islamic colleges such as STIT At-Taqwa Ciparay and STIT Al-Ihsan Baleendah, human resource management must also take account of adab-based pedagogy, in which the formation of character and ethical conduct is as significant as technical expertise [8]. Management is not only a matter of technical efficiency but of creating conditions in which kindness-based leadership can operate, fostering mutual respect and psychological safety among faculty [9]. This humanistic dimension is consequential for sustaining lecturer motivation in institutions where financial reward may be less competitive than in state-funded universities.

Human resource management in these institutions must further navigate the Independent Learning environment, which requires lecturers to be flexible and multidisciplinary. This entails a shift from administrative management toward a more strategic model. Evidence on professional development indicates that development

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grounded in actual practice and sustained by mentoring influences performance, whereas isolated training events generally do not [10], which is directly relevant to institutions whose development budgets are limited and must therefore be spent where they have effect.

The absence of literature examining the PDCA cycle specifically within the human resource management of private Islamic colleges constitutes a research gap. Most studies address state universities or general practice without considering the socio-religious conditions of private Islamic institutions, and comparative evidence on how two such institutions with different managerial cultures apply the same cycle is scarce. This study is therefore intended to provide an empirical account of how these institutions can use the PDCA cycle to support organizational resilience and academic productivity [11].

By analyzing practice at STIT At-Taqwa and STIT Al-Ihsan, this research describes how systematic management influences the realization of the Tridharma. It is guided by five questions: how are lecturer needs planned; how are recruitment and development implemented; how is performance evaluated; how is follow-up conducted; and which elements of the management are consistent across the two institutions as against contingent on institutional culture. The objective is to establish whether, and through which mechanisms, a well-executed management cycle can produce improvement in institutional quality and lecturer satisfaction under conditions of limited resource [12].

2 Methods

2.1 Research Design and Sites

This research employs a qualitative approach with a multi-site case study design. This methodology was chosen in order to obtain a contextual understanding of human resource management practices in their own settings, where the object of inquiry is managerial process and meaning rather than measurable frequency. The multiple-case variant allows each institution to be analyzed as a complete case before a cross-case synthesis is developed, so that the comparison rests on two independently grounded analyzes [13].

The research was conducted at STIT At-Taqwa Ciparay and STIT Al-Ihsan Baleendah (Table 1), selected through purposive sampling as private Islamic colleges undergoing quality transformation in West Java. The two sites were chosen deliberately because they operate under the same accreditation framework and face comparable resource constraints while differing in managerial culture: Al-Ihsan has an established internal quality assurance system and a documentary orientation, whereas At-Taqwa operates through a more collegial and reflective practice. Holding the external framework constant while varying institutional culture constitutes the comparative logic of the study, as summarized in Fig. 2. Twelve informants took part across the two institutions, comprising institutional leaders and lecturers.

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Table 1. Research sites and data collection

Aspect	STIT At-Taqwa Ciparay	STIT Al-Ihsan Baleendah
Institution type	Private Islamic college (STIT), West Java	Private Islamic college (STIT), West Java
External framework	National accreditation framework; comparable resource constraints	National accreditation framework; comparable resource constraints
Managerial culture	Collegial and reflective practice	Established internal quality assurance system; documentary orientation
Informants	Leaders and lecturers	Leaders and lecturers
Data collection	Semi-structured interviews; field observation of academic activity, development sessions, and mentoring; document study	Semi-structured interviews; field observation of academic activity, development sessions, and mentoring; document study
Documents examined	Lecturer Workload (BKD) reports, quality manuals, strategic plans, recruitment records, minutes of evaluation meetings	Lecturer Workload (BKD) reports, quality manuals, strategic plans, recruitment records, minutes of evaluation meetings

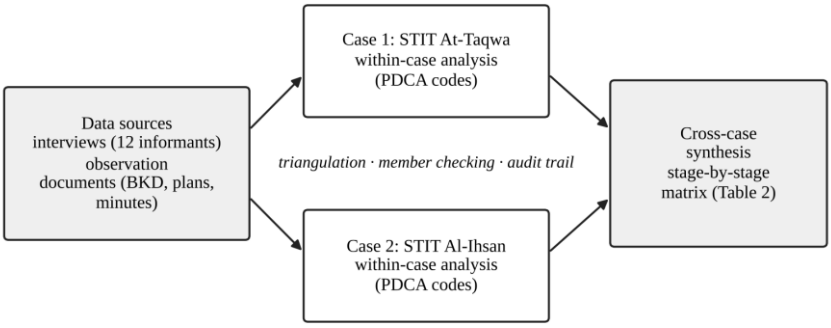


Fig. 2. Multi-site case study design: within-case analysis of each institution followed by cross-case synthesis.

2.2 Data Collection

Data collection techniques were triangulated. In-depth semi-structured interviews explored the reasoning behind management decisions and the practical difficulties of performance management, with leaders interviewed about policy and lecturers about their experience of it. Field observation focused on academic activity and on the

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conduct of faculty development sessions, including the mentoring arrangements each institution had established. Documentation study covered Lecturer Workload reports, institutional quality manuals, strategic plans, recruitment records, and the minutes of evaluation meetings [14].

The three techniques were combined so that statements made in interviews could be tested against observed practice and written records. This mattered particularly for the Check and Act stages, where accounts of evaluation and follow-up could only be assessed by examining whether corresponding documents existed. Interviews were recorded with permission and transcribed before coding, and field notes were written immediately after each visit.

2.3 Data Analysis and Trustworthiness

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing [15]. Field data were categorized according to the four stages of the PDCA cycle, with sub-codes emerging inductively for themes such as workload, research avoidance, and documentary practice. Data were then displayed in comparative matrices juxtaposing the two institutions stage by stage, which made convergent and divergent patterns visible (Table 2). The management functions formulated by Terry were used alongside PDCA as the analytical lens for interpreting how organizational arrangements carry each stage of the cycle [6].

Trustworthiness was established through the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability [16]. Credibility was pursued through source triangulation, comparing the accounts of leaders and lecturers, and through technique triangulation across interview, observation, and documentation, supported by member checking with informants. Transferability was addressed through thick description of each institution's context, dependability through an audit trail of instruments, transcripts, and coding decisions, and confirmability through peer debriefing with colleagues in educational management not involved in the fieldwork.

2.4 Research Ethics

Research ethics were observed throughout. Permission was obtained from both institutions before fieldwork; informants were informed of the purpose of the research and of their right to withdraw; and consent was secured. Because the data concern individual lecturers' performance records, the identities of individual lecturers are not disclosed, and Lecturer Workload documents were examined on the institutions' premises without copying data identifying individuals.

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3 Results

3.1 The Plan Stage: Strategic Needs and Workload Analysis

At both STIT At-Taqwa Ciparay and STIT Al-Ihsan Baleendah the planning stage is where academic needs are translated into human resource requirements. Planning is not treated as a formality but as a substantive exercise consistent with a deep learning-based planning model [17], which ensures that plans concern the quality of the academic ecosystem rather than only the number of lecturers required.

At STIT At-Taqwa, planning begins at the study program level. Program coordinators analyze the curriculum to identify gaps in scientific coverage. Where a new course in Islamic educational technology is introduced, for instance, the planning committee projects the specific competencies required. The committee also considers the existing workload of current lecturers in order to avoid the overload that contributes to declining performance. This approach is contextual, concerned with the relevance of a lecturer's expertise to the needs of the institution's own community.

At STIT Al-Ihsan the approach is more data-centered. The institution produces projections based on enrollment trends and the lecturer-to-student ratios required by the ministry, and develops a five-year recruitment and development roadmap integrated into its Strategic Plan. This involves calculating the Tridharma load so that lecturers have time allocated to research and community service and not only to teaching, which allows the institution to determine whether it requires additional permanent lecturers or specialist adjuncts for particular subjects.

Both institutions demonstrate that effective planning requires correspondence between institutional vision and field data, and both avoid the reactive pattern in which lecturers are recruited hastily to fill vacancies without regard to long-term quality. Document analysis nevertheless identified a limitation common to both: although needs were analyzed and recorded, neither institution had established baseline indicators of lecturer performance against which the effect of subsequent development could be compared. Asked how they would know whether a development program had succeeded, informants at both institutions answered in terms of general impressions rather than recorded change.

3.2 The Do Stage: Recruitment and Professional Development

The implementation stage comprises recruitment and development. Both institutions have moved toward a more structured recruitment process. At STIT Al-Ihsan the recruitment cycle includes administrative screening, academic interview, and a micro-teaching session to assess pedagogical readiness, which allows the institution to appraise both the conduct expected in an Islamic institution and the technical capability required for contemporary teaching [8].

Implementation also covers professional development. Following a kindness-based leadership approach, the leaders at STIT At-Taqwa mentor junior lecturers through a buddy system in which senior lecturers act as coaches rather than supervisors, assisting colleagues with research publication and classroom management [9]. This arrangement

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supports a collegial culture and discourages the harmful conduct that can arise in hierarchical academic settings [18]. Training sessions also address the instructional use of technology, including its application to environmental education [19]. Read in terms of professional learning, the buddy system constitutes a community of practice in which capability is developed through joint participation rather than transmitted in training events [20], which is consistent with evidence that sustained mentoring influences practice where isolated workshops do not [10].

The two institutions differ in how newly appointed lecturers are inducted, and the difference has consequences for the Check stage that follows. At STIT Al-Ihsan, induction is formalized: new appointees receive an orientation covering the institution's quality assurance procedures, the components of the Lecturer Workload report, and the expectations attached to each element of the Tridharma, so that they understand from the outset the terms on which they will be evaluated. At STIT At-Taqwa, induction occurs largely through the buddy relationship, which transmits the institution's working norms effectively but conveys the formal reporting requirements less consistently; junior lecturers there reported learning the requirements of the workload report during their first evaluation period rather than before it. Neither arrangement is complete in itself: the formal orientation at Al-Ihsan conveys procedure without the collegial relation that sustains development, while the collegial induction at At-Taqwa conveys the relation without the procedural clarity.

3.3 The Check Stage: Evaluation of Lecturer Performance

The Check stage is represented by the evaluation of the Lecturer Workload report, which at both institutions is the primary instrument for assessing productivity. The institutions differ in emphasis. STIT Al-Ihsan concentrates on quantitative output, namely the number of publications, hours taught, and community projects completed, and audits these reports quarterly through its internal quality assurance system. This documentary orientation provides the objectivity required for accountability and permits comparison across periods.

STIT At-Taqwa conducts a more qualitative and reflective evaluation. Assessment includes peer review and student feedback, and lecturers are expected to reflect on their own teaching effectiveness. The two approaches are complementary rather than alternative: taken together they indicate that performance is not only the completion of a reporting instrument but the effect of teaching on students' learning. Research on learning analytics in higher education, although concerned with students rather than lecturers, supports the Al-Ihsan orientation by showing that systematically recorded activity data can identify performance patterns earlier than periodic review alone [21], [22], while the At-Taqwa orientation supplies the interpretation that such data cannot provide. The evaluation stage at both institutions identified performance gaps, notably a shortage of research publications among senior faculty, which set the agenda for the Act stage.

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3.4 The Act Stage: Follow-up and Continuous Improvement

The Act stage is where the cycle closes and restarts at a higher level, and at both institutions it is the stage most consequential for sustained improvement. It comprises academic coaching, research assistance, and the provision of incentives or corrective measures.

At STIT At-Taqwa, where evaluation identifies difficulty with research, the institution provides research clinics, which are working sessions in which lecturers draft grant proposals or journal articles collaboratively. This is a form of mentoring directed at the obstacles to publication rather than at the fact of non-publication, and the follow-up is oriented toward supplying the means of improvement rather than issuing warnings [11].

At STIT Al-Ihsan the Act stage is more formally structured. Performance results inform the distribution of internal research grants and access to further study, and lecturers who consistently exceed benchmarks receive institutional recognition. Where performance falls short, the institution requires specific pedagogical training or reduces administrative load so that the lecturer can concentrate on teaching quality. The reduction of administrative load is notable because it treats underperformance as a workload problem rather than solely as a matter of individual effort.

This stage ensures that evaluation does not terminate in a report. By integrating follow-up into the cycle, both institutions support continuous development, and lecturers reported that the knowledge that evaluation would be followed by assistance altered how they regarded the reporting process itself. Follow-up also extends to facilities, since leaders recognized that performance is sometimes constrained by outdated equipment [23]. Document analysis nevertheless identified a limitation shared by both institutions: the outcomes of mentoring and research clinics were not recorded, so neither institution could establish which interventions had produced results, and the Act stage therefore generated no data for the next Plan stage [24].

3.5 Cross-Site Comparison of the PDCA Cycle

Compared across institutions, the two colleges converge on the substance of all four stages and on the two documentary weaknesses identified above, while differing in the instruments through which each stage is enacted, as summarized in Table 2 and Fig. 3.

Table 2. Cross-site comparison of the PDCA cycle in lecturer management

PDCA Stage	STIT At-Taqwa Ciparay	STIT Al-Ihsan Baleendah
Plan	Needs identified at study program level from curriculum gaps and current workload	Projections from enrollment trends and ministry ratios in a five-year roadmap
Do	Buddy system in which senior lecturers coach juniors on publication and teaching	Structured recruitment with micro-teaching; formal development programs

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PDCA Stage	STIT At-Taqwa Ciparay	STIT Al-Ihsan Baleendah
Check	Peer review, student feedback, and structured self-reflection	Quantitative output audited quarterly through the internal quality assurance system
Act	Research clinics addressing the obstacles to publication collaboratively	Grants, further study access, recognition, and redistribution of administrative load
Shared weaknesses	Mentoring outcomes undocumented; no baseline performance indicators	Mentoring outcomes undocumented; no baseline performance indicators

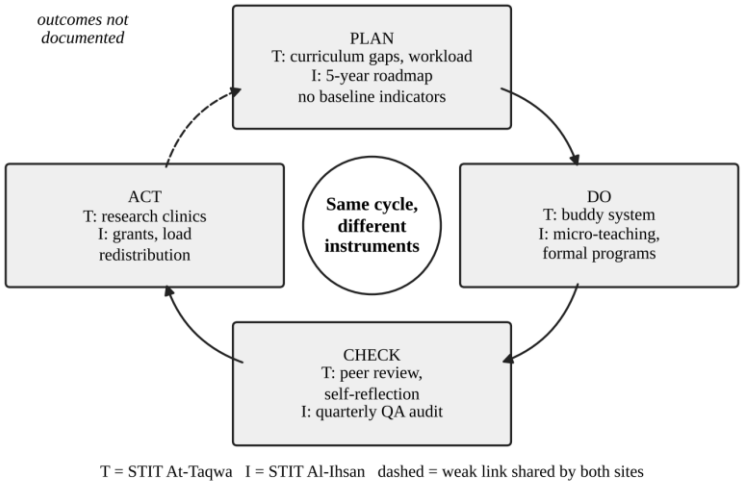


Fig. 3. Cross-site PDCA cycle: shared logic, institution-specific instruments, and the two documentary weaknesses that keep the cycle from ascending.

The pattern in Table 2 indicates that institutional culture determines the instrument rather than the logic of the cycle. At STIT Al-Ihsan an established quality assurance system made documentary evaluation and formal incentive distribution the efficient route. At STIT At-Taqwa a smaller and more collegial faculty made peer review and collaborative clinics efficient. Both produced reported improvement in lecturer engagement, which is the principal benefit of comparing the institutions rather than studying either alone, and both leave the same gap between activity and evidence of outcome.

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4 Discussion

The findings indicate that human resource management in private Islamic higher education involves an interaction between systemic rigor and contextual flexibility. The application of the PDCA cycle at STIT At-Taqwa and STIT Al-Ihsan indicates that lecturer performance is not a matter of individual talent alone but a product of managed organizational process [5]. The contribution of examining two institutions is that it separates what is essential in the cycle from what is contingent: all four stages and both documentary weaknesses appeared at each institution, whereas the instruments of evaluation and follow-up diverged with institutional culture.

The Plan stage confirms the value of deep learning-based planning [17]. In institutions where budgets are constrained, each appointment carries considerable weight, and planning based on scientific trajectory and student need allows an institution to develop rather than merely to maintain itself. This corresponds to the conception of transformative education, in which the objective is to prepare lecturers able to address contemporary demands while remaining grounded in the institution's values [4]. The absence of baseline indicators qualifies this achievement, however, since a plan without a baseline cannot be evaluated except by impression.

The Do stage reveals a reliance on kindness-based leadership [9]. Where state-equivalent remuneration is not available, the relationship between lecturer and institution carries much of the motivational weight. Where leaders provide mentoring rather than instruction, they build organizational resilience [1], [11], which allows private institutions to absorb external changes such as regulatory revision or fluctuation in enrollment. The buddy system is significant in this respect beyond its pastoral character: by situating development in sustained collegial work rather than in discrete training, it builds capability that remains with the institution [7], [20]. The integration of adab-based pedagogy further ensures that lecturers function as ethical exemplars, which fulfills the institutions' stated mission [8].

The Check and Act stages are where institutions commonly fail, and the study indicates that using the Lecturer Workload report as a developmental rather than a compliance instrument is what distinguishes these cases. The data-informed orientation at STIT Al-Ihsan supplies the objectivity required for accountability, consistent with evidence that systematically recorded activity data reveal performance patterns earlier than periodic review [21], [22], while the reflective orientation at STIT At-Taqwa supplies the interpretation that data alone cannot. The follow-up interventions, namely research clinics and training, indicate that the institutions accept responsibility for the lecturer's development rather than attributing shortfall to the individual, which is the position Deming's formulation requires [5].

The transparency of the cycle bears on the working climate. Where the criteria for promotion and recognition are explicit and derive from a consistent cycle, the allocation of opportunity becomes defensible and the conditions that give rise to harmful conduct in academic hierarchies are reduced [18]. Ethical leadership understood in these terms is not separable from managerial competence; it is expressed through the fairness of the procedures an institution maintains [25]. The combination of systematic management

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with the institutions' religious values produces a model that is both procedurally defensible and consistent with their stated mission [3].

The findings also indicate that the consistency of the cycle matters more than the complexity of its procedures. Institutions that follow through on evaluation with concrete action show the higher rate of improvement, and this continuous loop allows an institution to function as a learning organization capable of adapting to changing conditions in Indonesian higher education [7], [12]. The corollary, evident at both sites, is that an undocumented Act stage weakens the whole cycle: where the results of mentoring are not recorded, the next Plan stage begins without evidence, and the cycle repeats rather than ascends.

A further implication concerns the conditions under which the cycle can be sustained in institutions of this kind. Both colleges carry the cycle substantially through the personal engagement of their leaders: at At-Taqwa the research clinics depend on senior lecturers willing to work alongside colleagues, and at Al-Ihsan the quarterly audit depends on the quality assurance officer maintaining the schedule. Neither arrangement is recorded in a procedure that would survive a change of personnel, which is the same vulnerability that the undocumented Act stage produces at the level of individual development. The induction difference identified in the findings is relevant here, since an induction that conveys both the procedural requirements and the collegial norms would reduce the dependence of the cycle on particular individuals. For institutions operating with limited administrative capacity, the practical conclusion is not that more procedure is required but that the procedures already operating should be written down, since the cost of documenting an existing practice is low and the cost of reconstructing it after a departure is high [7], [24].

4.1 Limitations

Several limitations should be acknowledged. The study involved two private Islamic colleges in a single province, so its findings are analytically rather than statistically generalizable. Improvement in lecturer performance was assessed through informant accounts, observation, and workload documentation rather than measured against independent indicators such as publication output over time or accreditation results, so the relationship between PDCA consistency and performance is described rather than demonstrated. Informants were drawn predominantly from leaders and lecturers active in development activity, so the perspectives of less engaged lecturers are underrepresented. Finally, the absence of longitudinal data means that conclusions about the durability of the observed improvements remain inferential [14], [24].

5 Conclusion

This study concludes that the implementation of a human resource management model based on the PDCA cycle supports the improvement of lecturer performance and Tridharma quality at STIT At-Taqwa Ciparay and STIT Al-Ihsan Baleendah. Planning integrated with the institution's scientific direction, recruitment that appraises both

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competence and conduct, and evaluation that leads to substantive follow-up are the characteristics of effective management in these institutions.

The research finds that STIT Al-Ihsan is stronger in systematic, data-informed evaluation, while STIT At-Taqwa provides a model of collegial, kindness-based mentoring. Both approaches contribute to organizational resilience and allow the institutions to maintain academic standards despite resource limitations. The comparison indicates that the logic of the cycle is identical at both institutions while the instruments vary with institutional culture, so that institutions adopting this model should replicate the structure of the cycle and select instruments proportionate to their own conditions.

The study further concludes that the decisive stage is Act. Where evaluation is followed by documented assistance, the cycle advances; where follow-up occurs but is not recorded, as was the case at both sites, the next planning stage begins without evidence and the cycle repeats at the same level. The absence of baseline performance indicators at the planning stage compounds this, since the two weaknesses together prevent either institution from demonstrating change across years.

It is accordingly recommended that private institutions strengthen the Act stage by documenting the outcomes of mentoring and research assistance, that they define baseline performance indicators during planning so that development can be evaluated rather than merely conducted, and that they treat workload redistribution as a standard instrument of performance improvement rather than an exceptional measure. Future research should employ mixed methods to examine the relationship between the consistency of the PDCA cycle and independent indicators such as publication output and accreditation outcomes. Human resource management in Islamic higher education must ultimately combine procedural rigor with the ethical commitments of adab if it is to produce a transformative educational effect.

DECLARATIONS

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, N. and N.K.; methodology, N. and N.K.; investigation and data curation, N.; formal analysis, N. and N.K.; writing—original draft preparation, N.; writing—review and editing, N.K. Both authors have read and agreed to the published version of the article.

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This research received no external funding.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article.

Research Ethics and Informed Consent

Permission was obtained from both institutions before fieldwork, informants were informed of the purpose of the research and of their right to withdraw, and consent was

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secured. Individual lecturers are not identified, and Lecturer Workload documents were examined on institutional premises without copying identifying data.

Data Availability Statement
Anonymized interview transcripts, field notes, and coding records are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. Individual Lecturer Workload records are not available because they contain confidential personnel information.

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