## Short Communication

# Universitas Negeri Jakarta's Strategy for Enhancing Professionalism and Competitive Advantage Towards Becoming a World Class University (WCU)

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**Abstract.** This study aims to examine the strategic efforts undertaken by Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ) to enhance human resource professionalism and build competitive advantage in its pursuit of becoming a World Class University (WCU). The era of globalization demands higher education institutions to continuously innovate and improve their quality to remain competitive at the international level. This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach using a case study method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with UNJ leadership, document analysis of UNJ's strategic plan, and indirect observation. The findings reveal that UNJ has implemented various strategies, including faculty and staff qualification improvement programs through advanced studies and professional training, curriculum development aligned with Industry 4.0, enhancement of international scientific publications, and expansion of global partnership networks. However, the university still faces several challenges, such as limited funding for large-scale research and the need for a more globally oriented academic culture. The study recommends strengthening multinational research collaboration, increasing financial support for research-active faculty members, and accelerating institutional digital transformation to support UNJ's vision of becoming a World Class University.

Keywords: Professionalism, Competitive Advantage, World Class University, Strategy.

## 1. Introduction

The dynamics of globalization and the acceleration of the Fourth Industrial Revolution have fundamentally reshaped higher education institutions worldwide. Universities are no longer merely ivory towers focused on teaching; rather, they are expected to be responsive, adaptive, and innovative engines of talent and knowledge creation. In this context, the concept of a World Class University (WCU) has emerged as a global benchmark for institutions that demonstrate excellence in research, education, and societal impact [1]. In Indonesia, the push to attain WCU status is increasingly relevant, with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology urging public universities to strengthen their international competitiveness. As a leading teacher education institution, Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ) holds a strategic position in shaping professional human resources who are not only pedagogically competent but also globally competitive. Academic professionalism is a cornerstone of world-class universities, as it directly influences teaching quality and research productivity [2]. To that end, UNJ must formulate and implement effective strategies to enhance professionalism and build a sustainable competitive advantage.

Academic professionalism in higher education is multidimensional, encompassing ethical integrity, expertise, accountability, continuous development, autonomy, and service orientation. These attributes, when embedded institutionally, create a robust foundation for excellence [3]. This requires structured development programs, international certification pathways, and internal quality assurance [4]. Moreover, a professional academic culture is built not only by institutional policy but also through collaborative academic networks and open access to scholarly resources [5].

Simultaneously, the development of a university's competitive advantage is pivotal to its survival and growth in the global education landscape.

Competitive advantage refers to an institution's ability to create greater value for its stakeholders compared to its rivals For universities, this translates into differentiation in academic offerings, research output, international partnerships, alumni satisfaction, and digital transformation [6]. As Chang highlights, successful higher education institutions invest in innovation, reputation-building, and human resource development [7]. UNJ's identity as an LPTK (Teacher Education Institution) provides a distinct advantage in developing innovative, digital-savvy, and globally minded educators. With its mission to advance education, science, and humanities, and its vision to become a world-class university, UNJ has initiated efforts such as strengthening its research output, reforming curriculum, expanding international collaboration, and embracing educational technology. However, challenges such as limited infrastructure, uneven faculty readiness, and funding constraints persist [8]. These issues reflect broader trends in Southeast Asia's push for higher education reform [9].

World-class universities are characterized by three core features: a concentration of talented faculty and students, robust resources and infrastructure, and effective governance [10]. Additionally, global university rankings emphasize factors such as academic reputation, research impact, international diversity, and graduate employability [11]. In response, institutions like UNJ must continuously refine their strategic focus on research excellence, faculty development, academic autonomy, and internationalization [12]. Such reforms often involve benchmarking against top universities and institutional participation in global academic networks [13]. Moreover, internationalization plays a pivotal role in WCU strategies. This includes student and staff mobility, transnational education, cross-border research, and bilingual instruction [14]. As Kehm and Teichler emphasize, sustainable internationalization also requires policy alignment, curriculum reform, and intercultural competence [15]. The role of global rankings, while controversial, also influences national priorities and institutional policies. Rankings can drive performance-based funding, international marketing, and stakeholder trust, despite concerns over their homogenizing effects.

UNJ's strategies must thus reflect not only internal governance reform but also external adaptability to regional and global demands. As emphasized by UNESCO, non-state actors, market forces, and global policy networks are now essential components in reshaping higher education landscapes. This article seeks to explore the strategic efforts of Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ) in enhancing professionalism and building competitive advantage in its pursuit of becoming a World Class University (WCU). Specifically, the objectives of this study are: (1) to analyze strategies aimed at improving the professionalism of academic and administrative staff; (2) to identify approaches taken to establish national and global competitiveness; (3) to examine challenges encountered in achieving WCU standards; and (4) to evaluate the effectiveness of UNJ's implementation of these strategies and provide recommendations for sustainable improvement.

## 2. Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach using a single case study design as conceptualized by Schueller et al. [16]. Yin's approach emphasizes the importance of understanding real-life phenomena in depth, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly evident. This method is suitable for exploring complex institutional strategies, such as Universitas Negeri Jakarta's (UNJ) efforts toward becoming a World Class University (WCU), where

contextual dynamics, internal policies, and leadership decisions play a significant role [17].

The research was conducted at UNJ, Jakarta, Indonesia, between May and June 2025. Primary data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, including university leaders, deans, research-active lecturers, and administrative staff involved in international affairs. Secondary data comprised strategic documents such as the university's Strategic Plan (Renstra), annual reports, policy documents on internationalization, academic accreditation reports, and university rankings [18]. Document analysis followed Yin's triangulated data sources principle to enhance construct validity. In line with Yin's design logic, three techniques of data collection were applied: in-depth interviews, document analysis, and indirect observation through official websites and institutional media. These sources provided converging lines of inquiry that helped build a comprehensive picture of UNJ's internal and external strategies. The data were analyzed following the stages proposed by Bingham [19], whose procedures—data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing—support Yin's analytical generalization framework. Trustworthiness was ensured through data triangulation and member checking to validate findings against stakeholder input and institutional records.

## 3. Result and Discussion

### 3.1 Institutional Profile of Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ)

Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ) is a public university in Jakarta, Indonesia, originally established in 1964 as the Jakarta Institute of Teaching and Educational Sciences (IKIP Jakarta). It was transformed into a university in 1999 and currently holds a vision of becoming a reputable university in the Asian region. With eight faculties and nearly 100 study programs, UNJ focuses on education, science, humanities, and social sciences. In recent years, the university has made notable strides in national rankings and is now aiming to boost its international visibility.

### 3.2 Strategies for Enhancing Professionalism

UNJ has implemented several initiatives to improve the professionalism of both academic and non-academic staff. For academic staff, the university promotes further studies by supporting lecturers in pursuing doctoral degrees at home and abroad. Over the past three years, there has been a 15% increase in the number of faculty members with doctoral qualifications. UNJ also regularly conducts training workshops on innovative teaching methods (e.g., blended learning, project-based learning), competitive research proposal writing, academic publishing, and the integration of digital learning technologies. Moreover, research grants and incentives are provided for faculty members publishing in Scopus- or WoS-indexed journals or obtaining patents. For administrative staff, the university offers training programs aimed at enhancing managerial, technical, and service competencies, including IT skills, English proficiency, and financial administration. A transparent performance evaluation system based on Key Performance Indicators (KPI) has been established, along with a merit-based rewards system to recognize outstanding faculty and staff [20].

### 3.3 Strategies for Building Competitive Advantage

To increase its competitiveness, UNJ has focused on curriculum innovation, research excellence, international collaboration, and infrastructure development. The university has adopted Outcome-Based Education (OBE) and integrated the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) policy, enabling students to take courses across

disciplines, participate in community service, and engage in industrial internships. Digital learning platforms and blended learning models have also been introduced.

In the research domain, UNJ has created research centers focused on strategic disciplines and actively encourages participation in international collaborative research. Faculty members are incentivized to publish in Q1 and Q2 journals, and proofreading and publication fees are supported. The university is also working toward international accreditation for select programs and improving its global ranking performance by targeting key indicators such as academic reputation and international faculty-student ratios. UNJ has strengthened partnerships with foreign universities through student/faculty exchanges, joint research, and double-degree programs. It also collaborates with industries to align its academic programs with workforce demands. To support all academic activities, UNJ has invested in digital libraries, modern laboratories, smart campus infrastructure, and a centralized academic information system.

### 3.4   Challenges Toward Becoming a World Class University

Despite its efforts, UNJ faces both internal and external challenges. Internally, the university contends with limited funding, bureaucratic rigidity, and the need to shift academic culture toward a more global mindset. While doctoral degree attainment and research output have improved, the number of high-impact publications and citations remains relatively low. Externally, UNJ competes with more established global universities that possess superior resources and networks. National regulations may also limit institutional flexibility, particularly in financial and human resource management. Additionally, rapid technological changes and shifting labor market demands necessitate continuous curriculum and research adaptation.

### 3.5   Effectiveness of Strategy Implementation

Overall, UNJ's strategic implementation has yielded positive outcomes. The university's SINTA ranking has improved, more faculty members hold doctoral degrees, and international research publications and partnerships have increased. However, disparities remain in certain WCU indicators, such as citation impact and the depth of global collaboration. Leadership vision and institutional commitment are key to sustaining momentum and scaling impact.

### 3.6   Alignment with World-Class University (WCU) Framework

UNJ's efforts align with five essential WCU strategies: (a) Research with Societal Impact: UNJ prioritizes applied research to solve national and global challenges, particularly in education and human development. The institution supports IP registration and technology transfer initiatives. (b) Human Resource Excellence: Efforts are made to recruit internationally qualified faculty and provide scholarships for doctoral studies abroad, while also hosting global visiting professors and training support staff. (c) Campus Internationalization: Global perspectives are embedded in the curriculum, English-taught programs are expanding, and international student/faculty exchanges are growing. (c) Digital Transformation: UNJ leverages virtual labs, smart campus systems, and learning analytics to enhance academic delivery and operational efficiency.

(d) Global Reputation and Accreditation: The university actively participates in global rankings and seeks international accreditation for key programs, focusing on performance indicators such as publication quality, global citations, and international partnerships. By consistently implementing these strategies, UNJ is positioning itself as a competitive institution both nationally and globally, producing graduates who are not only competent in Indonesia but also prepared to contribute to global challenges.

## 4. Conclusion

UNJ has made significant progress in advancing professionalism and strengthening its competitive advantage through a series of integrated strategies, including faculty and staff development programs, curriculum and instructional innovations, international research initiatives, and strategic partnerships. These actions reflect a serious institutional commitment toward achieving World Class University (WCU) status. However, challenges persist, including limited funding, internal bureaucracy, and the need for a cultural shift toward global standards. Although strategic implementations have shown positive results, greater optimization is needed to fully meet WCU indicators and sustain long-term success. Based on these findings, several recommendations are proposed: UNJ should diversify its research and innovation funding sources beyond government allocations, intensify high-quality international publications through research collaboration and scholar exchange programs, and strengthen global partnerships through concrete initiatives such as joint degrees and research projects. Enhancing the MBKM program's global relevance, advancing institutional governance capacity, and improving international branding through multilingual platforms and global outreach are also vital. By focusing on these priorities, UNJ can better navigate the competitive landscape of global higher education and realize its vision of becoming a world-class university.

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## 6. Declaration

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## 7. How to Quote

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