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# The Contents of Indonesian Muslim Academics' Psychological Contract: A Case Study at the University of Darussalam Gontor

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### **Abstract**

This case study describes the dynamics of psychological contracts within the academic environment, with a focused examination on the experiences of academics at University XYZ. Eight distinct psychological contracts emerge, encompassing appropriate compensation, fair distribution of workload, flexible working hours, full attention from the university, full organisational supports, clear systems and rules, quick movement, and good culture. Each representing a unique set of expectations and obligations. Additionally, the study sheds light on the development of these contracts, highlighting how prior experiences, interactions within the university, institutional policies, and organizational culture collectively shape and influence academics' perceptions of their roles and responsibilities. The findings provide invaluable insights into the nuanced interplay between individual expectations and institutional obligations, offering a deeper understanding of the factors that underpin a thriving academic community. Moreover, this study serves as a foundation for fostering an environment that supports the holistic development of both academics and the institution.

Keywords: Indonesian Muslim academics, contents of psychological contract, development of psychological contract

#### Introduction

Indonesia, as the fourth largest education system in the world (Korotkov & Yarrow, 2022), currently has 3,115 HEIs and 296,040 academic staff in total (Ministry of Education, Culture Research, and Technology, 2022). Such academic staff, according to the Indonesia Act No 14 Year 2005, are obliged to carry out their main tasks called *Tri Dharma* which include teaching, research, and community service. In addition to such roles, they are also assigned to do academic advisory and supervisory functions for students and perform other tasks given

by their institutions (Arquisola et al., 2020; Lubis & Huda, 2019). Therefore, they are presently being urged to enhance their quality for better performance (Halim et al., 2018).

Furthermore, Indonesia is a country with multitudinous number of Islamic higher education institutions. Islamic higher educations in Indonesia emerged with various historical backgrounds (Indra, 2016; Musnandar, 2008). There are three types of Islamic higher education in Indonesia, namely *sekolah tinggi agama Islam*, *institut agama Islam* and *universitas Islam*. Each of them has different organizational systems. Beyond their shared focus on Islamic education, each type features unique organizational systems that shape the academic, administrative, and cultural aspects of these institutions.

## Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam (STAI)

STAI institutions typically serve as specialized schools of Islamic learning, emphasizing religious studies and knowledge. The organizational structure of STAI is often designed to cater to the specific needs of Islamic education, with a keen emphasis on religious scholarship. Faculty members in STAI institutions are central to the organizational framework, as they play a crucial role in imparting religious knowledge, nurturing spiritual development, and upholding the traditions of Islamic thought. The administrative structures in STAI are tailored to support these goals, fostering an environment where religious education takes precedence.

# **Institut Agama Islam (IAI)**

IAI institutions, on the other hand, adopt a more comprehensive approach to Islamic education, offering a diverse range of academic disciplines alongside religious studies. The organizational system in IAI reflects this multidisciplinary focus, with faculties dedicated to both Islamic and secular fields. The administrative structures are designed to facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration, creating a space where Islamic values are integrated into broader academic domains. The organizational challenge lies in harmonizing the dual roles of religious educators and contributors to secular academic disciplines within the institution.

### **Universitas Islam (UI)**

At the highest echelon of Islamic higher education, UI institutions encompass a wide array of academic disciplines, mirroring the structure of conventional universities. The organizational system in UI is complex, featuring various faculties and departments catering to diverse fields of study. Faculty members in UI institutions are expected to excel in their specific disciplines while upholding Islamic principles in their academic and personal lives. The administrative structures here are designed to support a balance between academic excellence and the integration of Islamic values into a global educational context. The challenge lies in maintaining cohesion and a shared vision across the diverse academic landscape within the university.

While these three types of Islamic higher education institutions share a common commitment to Islamic values, their organizational systems reflect their unique educational philosophies and goals. Exploring the content of the psychological contract will contribute not only to the academic discourse on Islamic higher education, but also to the broader understanding of how the intricate interplay between institutional structures and individual aspirations influences the professional journey of academic staff.

## The Establishment of University of Darussalam Gontor

University of Darussalam Gontor (Unida Gontor) was established by the three brothers, the late KH Ahmad Sahal, K.H. Zainuddin Fannani, and K.H. Imam Zarkasyi, shortly after founding the Darussalam Gontor Modern Islamic Institution (PMDG- Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor) in Ponorogo, Indonesia, in 1926. The rapid progress and remarkable achievements of the school soon sparked the idea of creating a world-class Islamic university. Their aspiration was to establish a higher learning institution capable of producing genuine and authoritative Muslim scholars (ulama). After the school's first graduate in 1942, the founders made an initial attempt to establish higher education known as Underbow and Bovenbow. However, due to colonial and wartime conditions, the program could not continue.

The institutional renewal in PMDG began with the endowment of the PMDG to an institution called the Waqf Board of PMDG. The commitment to this endowment has been publicly declared by the three founders of the institution. In the 1958 Waqf Charter of PMDG, they clearly stated that the school was no longer their personal property but belonged to the Waqf for the Muslim Ummah. With the signing of the waqf charter, PMDG is no longer the personal or individual property, as commonly found in traditional institutions. By doing so, institutionally PMDG becomes the property of the Muslim community, and all members of the Muslim community are responsible for all its affairs.

The Waqf Board then becomes the highest body in PMDG. This body is responsible for appointing kyai for a term of five years. Thus, the kyai acts as a representative and is accountable to the waqf institution. For this reason, the Waqf Board has five programs related to the fields of education and teaching, equipment and facilities, endowments and funding sources, caderisation, and welfare, all of which are summarized in the Panca Jangka program of PMDG. With such an organizational structure, kyai and their families do not have any material rights from PMDG. Kyai and teachers also do not handle money from the students, so they never differentiate between wealthy and self-sufficient students. Financial matters are the responsibility of the administrative office staff, consisting of several senior students and teachers who can be replaced periodically. Thus, the management of the educational organization becomes dynamic, open, and objective.

Furthermore, based on the waqf charter, PMDG was mandated to be further developed into an Islamic university and serve as a major centre for Arabic and Islamic Studies. Therefore, despite various challenges and considerable efforts, the vision materialized on the 1st day of Rajab 1383/17th November 1963, with the establishment of Darussalam Institute of Education (IPD- Institut Pendidikan Darussalam). the university embodies the aspirations of the three founding fathers with the testament to establish a high-quality and meaningful university. In his inaugural speech, Imam Zarkasyi, the acting Rector, envisioned the institute becoming like the centuries-old Al-Azhar University in Egypt, a leading center for Islamic Studies worldwide. The hope was also for the institute to emulate Aligarh Muslim University in India, symbolizing Muslim revival through the integration of both Islamic and Western knowledge. The aspiration extended to the sincerity of the guardians and lecturers of the University of Darussalam Gontor, similar to Muslim scholars in Syanggit, Mauritania. The campus design was envisioned to resemble Shantiniketan in India, a village that taught the world from its remote and harmonious setting. Therefore, historically, Unida Gontor is a waqf-based university. This makes the application of Tri Dharma (three obligations of higher education institutions) are based on the vision, mission, and spirit of PMDG. Figure 1 shows the history of University of Darussalam Gontor.

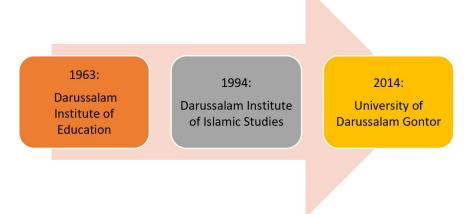


Figure 1. The History of University of Darussalam Gontor

In its establishment, IPD had two faculties, Ushuluddin and Tarbiyah. In 1985, when the late KH. Imam Zarkasyi (the youngest of the Trimurti) passed away, IPD could not be elevated to the status of a university despite regularly graduating students. It later evolved into the Darussalam Institute of Islamic Studies (ISID- Institut Studi Islam Darussalam) in 1994, primarily by introducing the new faculty, Shari'ah. Two years later, in 1996, the institute expanded and relocated to a new site in Siman, Ponorogo. In 2010, ISID initiated a new postgraduate program, and several departments across faculties naturally began and developed based on national accreditation standards. With the newly established postgraduate program in Islamic Studies, the institute is now gearing up for the next phase of setting up an Islamic University, as envisioned by its founders. Following the Decree of the Gontor Waqf Board and the recommendation of the headmaster of PMDG, the committee for the establishment of University of Darussalam Gontor was assigned in 2013.

Finally, in 2014, the Darussalam Institute of Islamic Studies officially became a university with the Minister of Education's Decree Number 197/E/O/2014, dated July 4, 2014, concerning the Establishment Permit for Universitas Darussalam Gontor. On the following Saturday, September 18, 2014, the University of Darussalam Gontor was officially inaugurated by Prof. Dr. Ja'far Abdussalam, the Secretary-General of the World Islamic University League, at the auditorium of Darussalam Gontor Islamic Institution.

## Vision, Mission, and Values of Uphold by University of Darussalam Gontor

While striving for excellence and contributing to the Muslim community Unida Gontor continues to uphold the vision, mission, and spirit of the PMDG for the realization of the testament of the founders. The university upholds the vision, mission, and spirit of the Islamic teachings in practicing the pillars of higher education. Its vision is to become a qualified and meaningful *pesantren*-based university, as a centre for science development oriented to the Islamisation of contemporary knowledge and as a centre for the study of the language of the Qur'an for the welfare of mankind. Meanwhile, the university has three missions, namely:

1. Organising education, teaching, research, and community service within the framework of the Islamization of contemporary knowledge and the development of the language of al-Qur'an;

- 2. Developing a system of *pesantren*-based higher education as the basis of campus life in order to develop various competencies in accordance with the needs of the community;
- 3. Building cooperation with various parties locally and internationally, in order to establish the three pillars of university, develop human resource, and strengthen the network.

Aside from having vision and mission, Unida Gontor also developed its objectives. The first objective is to implement education, teaching, research, and community service within the framework of the Islamization of contemporary Science and the development of the language of Al-Qur'an. Meanwhile, the second objective is to produce people who have faith, noble character, knowledgeable, think creatively, master ten basic competencies which include problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, people management, coordinating with others, emotional intelligent, judgment and decision making, service orientation, negotiation, and cognitive flexibility that is able to apply their knowledge creatively, innovatively and professionally, and able to compete at national and international levels.

Such vision, missions, and objectives are drawn upon its spirits and principles, namely sincerity, simplicity, self-reliance, Islamic brotherhood, and freedom. The spirits and principles are embedded within the ethos of Unida Gontor to foster an environment of mutual respect and a profound commitment to Islamic education. These foundational principles guide the actions and interactions of all members of the university, creating a nurturing and supportive environment for personal and intellectual growth.

## 1. Sincerity

Sincerity signifies selflessness, meaning to do something not driven by the desire for specific benefits. All actions are carried out with the sole intention of worship, for the sake of Allah. The is sincere in educating, the students are sincere in being educated and educating themselves, and the assistants of the Kyai are sincere in assisting in the educational process. KH Imam Zarkasyi, one of the founding fathers, said that the spirit of sincerity is the foundation of every aspect within the boarding university and the key to the acceptance of deeds in the sight of Allah SWT. Everything is done with the sole intention of worship, for the sake of Allah. Within the boarding university, an atmosphere is created where all actions are based on sincerity. Sincerity in social interactions, in advising and being advised, in leadership and being led. Sincerity in educating and being educated, sincerity in discipline, and so forth.

There is an atmosphere of sincerity among fellow students, between students and teachers, between students and *kyai*, between teachers, and so on. The cultivation of sincerity in education is manifested through the exemplary actions of the founders of the boarding university, who endowed the entire institution, except for the personal residence of the *kyai*. Another example of instilling the spirit of sincerity is seen in the education of students, where *kyai* willingly provide their teachings without monetary compensation. Even to this day, there is no salary system for lecturers in Unida Gontor; instead, the term "family welfare" is used. Such an atmosphere needs to be nurtured so that everyone can continue to contribute for the greater good, not driven by a desire for personal gain. This is made possible through sincere intentions, purely for the sake of Allah.

## 2. Simplicity

Simplicity means that life within this boarding university is an educational experience enveloped by an atmosphere of simplicity. Simplicity here does not imply passivity or resignation, nor does it mean poverty and destitution. Simplicity, in this context, signifies alignment with needs and appropriateness. It carries values of strength, capability, resilience, and self-mastery in facing the struggles of life. Behind this simplicity radiates a magnanimous spirit, courage to progress, and a steadfast refusal to retreat in any circumstance.

Simplicity also does not imply passivity; rather, it is a manifestation of the strength of capability, resilience, and self-control in facing life's struggles. This spirit is a valuable asset for building an unwavering attitude in confronting various difficulties. The education of simplicity encompasses various aspects, including simplicity in dressing, haircuts, eating, sleeping, speaking, behaving, and even thinking. The personal life of the kyai, including their home, dressing style, eating habits, behaviour, and the way they educate students, serves as an example of leading a simple life. This approach ensures that less privileged students do not feel inferior, and wealthy students do not develop arrogance.

However, simplicity at Unida Gontor is not rigid. The measure of simplicity is regulated within its management framework, utilizing things that align with needs while considering efficiency and effectiveness. For example, the construction of multi-story buildings at Unida Gontor is not for show or to impress; instead, it is based on educational needs and requirements, demonstrating a practical and purposeful approach to simplicity.

### 3. Self-reliance

Self-reliance or the ability to help oneself not only means that students are capable of learning and managing their own affairs but also that the Islamic boarding university itself, as an educational institution, must be self-reliant. This implies that the institution should be capable of sustaining itself, ensuring that it does not continuously depend on the assistance or compassion of others for its survival.

The ability to help oneself is not only applicable to individual students but also to the institution. Being self-reliant means constantly learning and training oneself to manage one's affairs without continuously relying on the kindness of others. This principle applies both to independent individuals and self-sufficient institutions.

In the daily life of Unida Gontor, students are educated to take care of their own needs, manage mini-stores, organizations, activity units, secretariats, dormitories, sports, and courses. Everything is organized by and for the students. Therefore, Unida Gontor is cautious about accepting assistance from external sources, as there is a concern that such help may compromise the self-reliant spirit being fostered in the boarding university. However, this approach does not mean that Unida Gontor becomes inflexible, rejecting those who genuinely want to contribute to the development of the institution. Instead, it signifies that any assistance should be non-binding to preserve the essence of self-reliance.

## 4. Islamic brotherhood

Life in the boarding university is filled with close brotherhood, where all joys and sorrows are shared together in the bonds of brotherhood as fellow Muslims. This brotherhood extends not only during their time within the boarding university but also influences the direction of unity among the people in society once the students return from the university.

The spirit of brotherhood forms the foundation for interactions among students, *kyai*, and lecturers in the boarding university's life system. It is from this foundation that a willingness to share in both joy and sorrow grows, fostering a sense of togetherness where pleasures and sorrows are experienced collectively. This awareness of sharing is not only expected to be applicable within the boarding university but is intended to become an integral part of each individual's character after completing their education at the boarding university and contributing to society.

The spirit of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) is evident in the daily interactions among students, where mutual respect and appreciation are instilled between senior and junior students. This interaction among students is woven into the fabric of Islamic brotherhood, and there are no barriers that can separate them within the boarding university. Furthermore, this spirit influences the direction towards unity among the people in society after they graduate and become active members of the community.

#### 5. Freedom

Freedom in thought and action, freedom in determining the future, freedom in choosing one's path in life, and even freedom from various negative influences from the outside. This freedom should not be abused by becoming excessively liberal, leading to a loss of direction, purpose, or principles. Therefore, this freedom must be returned to its original form, which is freedom within the boundaries of positive discipline, with full responsibility both within the boarding university life and in society.

The meaning of freedom lies in being free within positive boundaries, with full responsibility, both within the life of the Islamic boarding university and in society. As explained by former President of Unida Gontor, KH. Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi, "Freedom does not mean being free without rules, but it means being free with responsibility, in accordance with the rules, because in any aspect of life, there is no freedom without rules." Additionally, this spirit is reflected in the institution's motto, emphasizing freedom from the interests of specific groups or political parties and standing "above and for all groups."

The development of the values of *pesantren* has become a tradition practiced by PMDG. This is carried out every year at the beginning of the new academic year, with the organized introduction week known as Khutbatu-l-'Arsy. Khutbatu-l-'Arsy is the series of activities lasting approximately one and a half months that aims to introduce everything within the school to the entire academic community of Unida Gontor and solidify the understanding of the values of the *pesantren*.

The Khutbatu-l-'Arsy, held annually, serves the purpose of ensuring that the entire academic community understands and appreciates the values instilled by Unida Gontor. Gontor's leaders often emphasize in their speeches the role of Gontor in upholding Islamic values and the *pesantren*, emphasizing the need for maximum commitment. All elements of PMDG, especially the cadres, are expected to have a high level of militancy in safeguarding and preserving the values of PMDG. The implementation of the Charter of Endowment of PMDG 1958, including ideas, values, systems, content, and the mission of the Trimurti (founders of PMDG), is considered established, precise, solid, consistent, and disciplined.

The curriculum at Unida Gontor is crafted to harmonize Islamic teachings with academic pursuits. Students are provided with an understanding of their chosen fields, underpinned by the ethical framework provided by Islam. This approach ensures that graduates leave the

university not only as skilled professionals, but also as individuals grounded in Islamic values, poised to make positive contributions to both their professions and society at large.

Unida Gontor has experienced significant institutional growth as an Islamic university. Unida Gontor stands has been an example of the harmonious integration of academic rigor with Islamic principles. This university is renowned for its unwavering dedication to providing a holistic education that not only enriches the intellect, but also nurtures the spirit. With a strong foundation in Islamic traditions, Unida Gontor has established itself as an institution dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and moral values for successive generations of students.

Additionally, Unida Gontor has played a role in improving the quality of Islamic education in Indonesia and has actively participated in various social and humanitarian activities. With strong Islamic values as its foundation, the university continues to promote innovation in learning and research while preserving the traditional heritage of recognized Islamic education. In other words, Unida Gontor places great emphasis on research endeavours that are aligned with Islamic principles. The university's research infrastructure and distinguished research centres provide fertile ground for pioneering breakthroughs. These endeavours are particularly oriented towards research endeavours that tackle societal issues while adhering to ethical principles and aligning with Islamic teachings. This commitment to ethical research extends to all fields, from the sciences to the humanities, reinforcing the institution's dedication to upholding Islamic values in the pursuit of knowledge. This makes Unida Gontor become a key higher education institution in producing young generations with integrity, broad knowledge, and a commitment to making positive contributions to the society and the nation.

Unida Gontor established with a commitment to blend Islamic values with contemporary educational practices, it has emerged as a distinguished institution of higher learning in the region. Its commitment to fostering intellectual community is evident in the diverse array of academic programs offered, ranging from Islamic studies and theology to the sciences, humanities, and social sciences. What sets Unida Gontor apart is its emphasis on nurturing a holistic educational experience that encompasses not only rigorous academic training, but also a deep appreciation for moral and ethical values rooted in Islamic teachings. This ethos is reflected in the engaged community of scholars, students, and staff who collectively contribute to the university's dynamic and intellectually stimulating environment. The faculty members are not only encouraged to pursue their academic prowess, but also to instil Islamic ethics and values into the educational journey of their students.

Unida Gontor recognizes that its mission extends far beyond the walls of its campuses. The institution actively engages with the wider community through a range of initiatives aimed at addressing societal needs while upholding Islamic values. From community outreach programs to partnerships with local organizations, Unida Gontor serves as a force for positive change, embodying the principles of compassion, justice, and service that are central to Islam.

# **Human Resource Management at University of Darussalam Gontor**

Regarding people management, through the Human Resources Bureau, Unida Gontor consistently encourages all members of the academic community to enhance their competencies in their respective fields professionally. The profession of an academic should entail having the necessary competencies and academic qualifications by means of transforming, developing, and disseminating knowledge and technology through education, research, and community service.

Unida Gontor prioritizes its human resources to establish a high-quality university with Islamic values. Unida Gontor is one of the private Islamic universities based on *pesantren* principles, implementing a boarding system for all its students. However, it's not just the students who reside in the dormitories; faculty members and educational staff also receive housing facilities.

These efforts are undertaken to realize the vision of Unida Gontor, especially in enhancing the quality of its human resources through a Professional Oriented and Spiritual Oriented approach. The professional approach includes improving quality through advanced degree studies, scholarships for Arabic language enhancement in Qatar, academic writing, and scientific meetings and assignments. Meanwhile, the spiritual approach encompasses activities such as remembrance (dhikr), contemplation, emotional refinement, and physical exercise.

The human resources design devised by Unida Gontor facilitates the institution in managing its resources to create a religious environment (Spiritual Habit) so that its human resources not only master general knowledge, but also excel in religious studies, particularly in Islam.

Additionally, Unida Gontor is currently implementing a program of generating 100 Ph.D. holders as a gesture of gratitude to the PMDG on its 100th anniversary. PMDG has significantly contributed to the development of Unida Gontor. This program has been underway and the academic staff have been distributed to various universities, both domestically and internationally. As expressed by President of Unida Gontor, Prof. Dr. Amal Fathullah Zarkasyi:

"Gontor is now 100 years old, and with all its contributions to Unida Gontor, we intend to contribute 100 Ph.D. holders as a gift to the institution on its 100th anniversary. Insha Allah, this program has been running for several years, and these scholars have continued their studies at various universities, both within and outside the country."

In addition to the doctoral program, Unida Gontor also emphasizes the intellectual strengthening of its human resources in Islamic knowledge by organizing weekly Islamisation studies on campus. Similarly, the cultivation of *pesantren* values is a mandatory annual event. Another effort involves improving Quranic recitation skills for every faculty member and educational staff. For those faculty members with Quranic memorization abilities, a Quranic centre is provided as a space to review and reinforce their memorization skills.

Unida Gontor has a policy of organizing scientific meetings to enhance the knowledge and experience of its educators. The activities include conventions, workshops, seminars, and discussions with the aim of increasing the knowledge of lecturers on recent developments in various academic units, from faculties and departments to study groups among academic staff. Scientific meetings are considered part of human resource management to broaden the knowledge of lecturers through discussions and seminars.

Assignments given to lecturers at Unida Gontor are considered obligations, as everything done by human resources is intended as an act of worship. Whether in the implementation of community service, teaching practice, or student activities, lecturers play a role in supervising these activities. Additionally, lecturers at Unida Gontor are frequently involved in campus or

faculty committees, receiving direct guidance from the rector or faculty deans. In these committees, lecturers are given instructions on their tasks.

The university also strives to enhance the spiritual knowledge of its human resources through activities such as dhikr (remembrance of Allah), contemplation, emotional control, and physical exercise. In addition to academic activities, the university emphasizes the importance of spiritual activities such as congregational prayers, Quranic recitation, obligatory and voluntary fasting, and more. Lecturers with Quranic memorization are facilitated in Markaz Quran to review their memorization. To increase understanding of Islam, the university conducts Islamisation programs, aiming to provide knowledge about Islam and prevent the adoption of liberal or secular ideologies. The university has its own institution, LAZISWAF, for managing zakat (charitable giving) and waqf (endowment), making it easier for lecturers to contribute.

Lecturers at Unida Gontor are provided with housing facilities within the university campus. The allocation of housing is based on criteria such as seniority, full-time status, family status, and alumni status. The university also implements monitoring and evaluation as an essential aspect of human resource management. Monitoring of tasks and responsibilities assigned to lecturers is regularly conducted by the Human Resources Department and the Quality Assurance Unit, working in collaboration with the heads of academic units. Each head of the academic unit is required to report the performance of lecturers to the Human Resources Department.

Monitoring and evaluation are crucial in organizational management, particularly in human resource management. Without proper monitoring and evaluation, the effectiveness of the management may be compromised. Unida Gontor conducts monitoring of tasks and responsibilities, and evaluation is carried out at the end of each program. The focus is primarily on identifying weaknesses that need improvement when implementing educational management. The purpose of monitoring is to ensure that the work is done on target as planned. The evaluation involves assessing each department, providing feedback to help educators understand and address any issues in their work.

The university conducts comprehensive evaluations of human resources through weekly meetings, which are assessed by leaders, foundation heads, rectors, and others. Feedback and evaluations are provided to staff members with subpar performance, allowing them to understand their shortcomings.

Overall, within the context of Unida Gontor's commitment to the development of its human resources, the issue of academic staff's psychological contract emerges as a central and critical aspect. The university's multifaceted approach might significantly influence the psychological contract, delineating the mutual expectations and obligations between the institution and its academic workforce. Moreover, Unida Gontor's comprehensive and intentional approach to human resources development underscores the significance of the psychological contract with academic staff. The interplay between professional development opportunities, spiritual well-being initiatives, and strategic programs could directly influence and shapes the psychological contract, solidifying the mutual commitment and understanding between the institution and its academic workforce.

## **Discussion Questions**

- 1. What are the contents of Indonesian Muslim academics' psychological contract?
- 2. How are Indonesian Muslim academics' psychological contracts developed?

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