

PTN-BH Autonomy in Pierre Bourdieu's Perspective: Transformation of Capital and Habitus, Policies to Improve the Quality of Higher Education in Indonesia

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Abstract

From an ontological perspective, the change in State Universities with Legal Entity status (PTN-BH) shows a move from being just government-run offices to separate legal bodies that have a lot of freedom in teaching, running the university, and managing money. However, this independence has caused a big gap between the ideal goals of policies and the real situation on the ground. This study seeks to examine the structural gap issue in PTN-BH by using Pierre Bourdieu's approach to sociology. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method based on Capital, Habitus, and Field theories to show that there is an imbalance where economic capital builds up more than cultural capital, like academic quality. Because of limited funding from the ministry, PTN-BH has to focus on practical solutions, which has led them to greatly increase the number of students they take in. Consequently, a crisis occurs in Field Capital (infrastructure) and Teaching Capital (teacher ratio), which are disproportionate to the number of learning groups. The novelty of this research lies in identifying the contradiction between financial capital accumulation and the devaluation of spatial and pedagogical quality a contradiction rarely discussed in the managerial literature. The proposed solution is multisectoral capital synchronization, including strengthening political capital from local governments to ensure the sustainability of graduate competitiveness at the global level.

Keywords

PTN-BH; Pierre Bourdieu; economic capital; field capital; policy habitus.

INTRODUCTION

Ontologically, the transformation of State Universities with Legal Entity (PTN-BH) is a manifestation of the shift in the essence of higher education in Indonesia, moving from a bureaucratic implementing unit to an independent legal entity [3]. The existence of PTN-BH brings great hope for achieving ideal international quality through broad

autonomy in academic, management, and particularly financial sectors [4].

However, along the way, a sharp discrepancy has emerged between policy idealism (das Sollen) and field reality (das Sein). This phenomenon creates a structural gap that threatens education quality due to an unbalanced reliance on certain forms of modal. According to Pierre Bourdieu's view, PTN-BH can be seen as a Field where different forms or

ways of acting are involved [1]. Right now, the biggest issue comes from unequal access to economic resources: the ministry isn't providing enough money, and students don't have much financial ability, which leads to a major problem. To meet their operational needs, PTN-BHs have developed a practical way of thinking, where they take in many students to collect a lot of Single Tuition Fees (UKT). However, the increase in the number of students is not matching up with the available Field Modal (infrastructure and classrooms) and Teaching Modal (number of lecturers). The mismatch is clearly shown by the fact that there are not enough teachers available for the different subjects compared to the number of students in the learning groups. This problem then leads to a reactive Policy Habitus. If the economy is made stable by using ways to reduce risks, like getting money from political sources such as local and central governments, then academic policies would be the main guide for improving the quality of graduates. Because of not enough money, PTN-BH has to lower the quality of their work to keep their institution going [5]. In reality, when it comes to Cultural Modal, PTN-BH already has a solid base in diversity. So, there needs to be a system that brings all the existing modalities together [8]. To build a stronger economy, we need to include more than just students. We should also focus on improving the social system by working with industrial sectors and local government groups [6]. The success of PTN-BH in developing its graduates, teaching staff, and educational personnel

largely depends on the institution's ability to transform economic resources into high-quality cultural resources within a mutually supportive and interconnected system. If there isn't this teamwork, the autonomy of PTN-BH will cause problems in space and lower the quality of education, which goes against the main reason it was created. This article addresses a gap in existing research by examining the conflict between economic accumulation and the availability of field structures through the lens of Pierre Bourdieu, providing a better understanding of the quality issues in PTN-BH [7].

ONTOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION OF PTN-BH AND THE OCCURRING GAP

The Meaning of Ontological Transformation: Change in the Core Identity of Institutions

From an ontological perspective, the word "transformation" used for State Universities with Legal Entity (PTN-BH) does not simply mean changing a label or renaming an organization's structure. It's a transformation in what the university is, how it looks, and how it operates as a higher education institution [3]. In the past, universities that had Working Unit (Satker) or Public Service Agency (BLU) status functioned entirely as state bureaucratic units. All decisions, like starting new study programs, choosing lecturers, and deciding how to spend the budget, relied a lot on the long and strict rules of the central ministry bureaucracy. When a university has PTN-BH status, it becomes a separate and independent legal entity. The campus is now treated like a legal entity just like a public

company; it has its own separate money that isn't part of the government's funds, and it can take care of its own affairs without getting in the way of complicated government rules [4].

At the level of legal and policy idealism (*das Sollen*), this change in status was meant to achieve high-minded and carefully planned goals focused on gaining independence and achieving top-quality international standards. The state gives a lot of independence, allowing PTN-BH to compete internationally and meet the standards of a World Class University (WCU) [11]. This independence includes three main areas: (1) academic freedom, which means having full control over creating flexible study plans, opening or closing programs based on current needs, and doing research without strict rules; (2) management and staff freedom, which allows the ability to create efficient work structures and independently hire non-civil servant teachers and staff to bring in the best talent; and (3) financial freedom, which gives the power to find, manage, and use money on their own, including through research, turning patents into products, running business units, and managing endowment funds [4].

The Real World (*Das Sein*): The Appearance of Differences and Missing Parts

However, over time, the PTN-BH path has faced serious challenges from the real world (*das Sein*). The freedom that is supposed to help you soar can sometimes feel like a weight you have to carry just to stay alive. This difference happens because of a few main reasons: (a) the government isn't covering enough of the costs, and the amount of state support (BOPTN) stays the same or even goes down compared to what's needed for running the institutions [4]; (b) there's not enough variety in where the money comes from, since Indonesia's system for research and industry isn't fully developed yet [7]; and (c) some universities are passing on their costs to students by raising tuition fees and institutional development contributions (SPI), and by increasing the number of students who come through private or independent pathways [10]..

Structural Threats to Education Quality

The gap between expectations (independence through innovation) and reality (independence through student quota exploitation) spawns a highly serious structural threat to the essence of education in Indonesia.

Tabel 1. Summarizes the key gaps.

Aspect	<i>Das Sollen</i> (Idealism)	<i>Das Sein</i> (Reality)	Gap Description
Status of PTN-BH	Independent, full autonomy, equal to public corporation	Heavy operational burden, minimal state subsidy	Autonomy becomes a burden rather than freedom [4]
Funding	Diversification from research,	Heavy dependence on UKT and independent pathways	Commercialization of education [10]

	industry, endowment		
Quality	World Class University, ideal lecturer-student ratio (1:45–1:30)	Ratio >1:60, even 1:80 in popular majors; shortage of space and lecturers	Crisis of Field Modal and Teaching Modal [13]
Access	Social justice, diversity	High UKT, expensive independent pathways	Exclusion of lower class [12]

The core of the gap phenomenon is that PTN-BH is trapped in a pragmatic habitus: accepting as many students as possible to collect UKT, thereby sacrificing spatial quality, lecturer-student ratios, and research productivity [1].

Structural Threats to Education Quality

From the gaps identified above, three major structural threats emerge: (1) Field Modal crisis (infrastructure): classrooms become overcrowded, laboratories are used beyond capacity, and shift lectures extend into late evening [7]; (2) Teaching Modal crisis (burnout lecturers): the lecturer-student ratio skews far from ideal standards, depriving lecturers of time for quality research [13]; and (3) commercialization and social exclusion: higher education gradually becomes exclusive, accessible only to the upper-middle class, damaging the cultural diversity and social justice that PTNs should safeguard [10].

DATA AND FACTUAL TRENDS

To empirically ground the structural gaps described above, this section presents five clusters of factual data derived from regulations and observable phenomena in Indonesia (up to 2024). Each data group is clearly connected to Pierre Bourdieu's theory.

Expansion Data of Independent Pathway Quotas (Evidence of Seeking Economic Capital)

To show that there is a Pragmatic Habitus where universities focus on gaining economic capital by increasing the number of students, one can look at the admission quota rules:

1. Regulatory fact

According to the regulation by the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, public higher education institutions (PTN-BHs) are allowed to take in independent pathway students, but only up to 50% of their total admission spots. This is much higher than the limit for BLU/Satker PTNs, which can only accept up to 30% of their admission quota [3].

2. Field reality

Many PTN-BHs use up this 50% limit because they charge independent pathway fees like Institutional Development Contributions (IPI) or admission costs that can be as high as tens or even hundreds of millions of rupiah for each student.

3. Bourdieu's perspective

This shows clearly how the PTN-BH Field uses legal systems to gain money from the upper-middle class, which takes away from its role in society [1].

UKT Increase Polemic Phenomenon (Evidence of Symbolic Capital)

The Single Tuition Fee (UKT) issue caused big student protests across the country, especially during the 2024 UKT situation.

1. Phenomenon

The Single Tuition Fee (UKT) crisis caused big student protests across the country, especially during the 2024 UKT unrest [4]. There was a sudden increase in the top UKT categories across different PTN-BHs, along with a bureaucratic message saying that "higher education is a secondary need."

2. Field reality

Even though PTN-BH says it has cross-subsidies, students from vulnerable groups are often placed into UKT categories that don't fit their financial situations because the verification process is too strict.

3. Bourdieu's perspective

The statement "college is a tertiary need" shows a clear example of symbolic thinking that suggests only people with strong economic resources should have access to good quality education at top PTN-BH campuses [2,12].

Lecturer and Student Ratio Data (Evidence of Teaching Capital Crisis)

The increase in the number of students taking independent pathways causes an imbalance in the learning groups, creating a structural gap.

1. The ideal standard shows that, based on best practices, the ratio of lecturers to students in the Social and Humanities group should be 1 teacher for every 45 students, while in the Exact Sciences group, it should be 1 teacher for every 30 students [13].

2. In many well-known fields like Law, Communications, and Management at PTN-BHs, the student-to-teacher ratio is often higher than 1:60, and in some regular classes, it can go up to 1:80. The central government's limits on hiring Civil Servant (CPNS) lecturers make PTN-BHs have to employ Non-Civil Servant Permanent Lecturers (DTNP) or Adjunct Lecturers, who are usually on contract.

3. From Bourdieu's point of view, lecturers face situations where they are taken advantage of and experience unstable and uncertain working conditions. Lecturers lose their focus on research because they get stuck in a routine of teaching many classes to earn credits, which gives them financial benefits [8].

The share of BOPTN compared to actual operational needs (showing less political influence)

Why are campuses forced to "squeeze" students? Because the state is gradually reducing its political influence.

1. Factual data: State University Operational Assistance (BOPTN) given by the government usually covers less than 30 to 40 percent of the total Single Tuition Cost (BKT) or the ideal operating costs needed for a world-class PTN-BH [4].

2. The actual situation is that the rectorate has to find the remaining 60 to 70 percent on its own. Since the campus business units like hotels, patent commercialization, and academic hospitals haven't started making steady income yet, student UKT has become the main support.

3. From Bourdieu's point of view, the state gives some freedom but takes away the financial support. This pushes the people in charge within the Field (like rectors and deans) to use survival strategies by taking advantage of students [1,5].

Slow Addition of "Field Capital" (Space/Infrastructure Crisis)

The real situation is that increasing the number of students by thousands each year is not matched by the building of new lecture halls every year. So, as a

result, new policies are created, like offering classes that go into the evening, making class schedules shorter, and having labs that can handle more students than usual. According to Bourdieu's view, the money new students bring in is mostly used for everyday running costs like paying staff salaries and keeping old equipment working, instead of being used to build new facilities or improve the infrastructure. This leads to a lower quality of the learning experience [2,7].

Summary of Data Clusters

Tabel 2. gives an overview of the five data groups, where each group is linked to its source and connected to the related theories.

No.	Data Cluster	Key Finding	Source	Bourdieu's Concept
1	Independent pathway quota	Up to 50% of total admission; high IPI	Permendikbudristek [3]	Economic modal domination
2	UKT increase polemic	Surge in highest brackets; "tertiary need" narrative	2024 protests [4]	Symbolic modal
3	Lecturer-student ratio	>1:60 (exceeds ideal 1:45/1:30)	Higher education statistics [13]	Teaching modal crisis
4	BOPTN proportion	Only 30-40% of operational needs	PP No.26/2015 [4]	Withdrawal of political modal
5	Infrastructure addition	Not proportional to student growth	Field observations [7]	Field modal crisis

PIERRE FELIX BOURDIEU'S THEORY

Pierre Bourdieu's sociological theory is one of the most detailed and complete ideas in modern sociology. Bourdieu tried to resolve the traditional discussion about whether structure or agency is more important. The main idea of his theory is about how social inequality comes about and continues because of culture and the education

system, not just because of economic factors. There are three main ideas, known as Bourdieu's trilogy [1,2].

Habitus (System of Dispositions/Habits)

Habitus is a set of habits and tendencies that are deeply planted in a person's mind and behavior, formed through their past experiences and the surroundings they grew up in. In the

educational or PTN-BH setting, when a school runs into money problems, a Pragmatic Habitus starts to show up. Campus leaders might think that taking in as many students as they can to get UKT funds is a good and only possible choice, even if it means lowering the quality [2].

Modal

Bourdieu rejects that modal is solely monetary. He splits up modalities into four types [1]: (a) Economic Modal, which includes money, material wealth, and assets; (b) Cultural Modal, which covers knowledge, skills, and educational degrees; (c) Social Modal, which refers to networks, relationships, and connections; and (d) Symbolic Modal, which involves honor, prestige, reputation, and legitimacy. In the PTN-BH context, World Class University ranking and the "Favorite Campus" label are examples of Symbolic Modal [12].

Field (Arena)

A field is a place where people interact and compete, following specific rules that govern how things work there. In the world of higher education, like PTN-BH, institutions try hard to win recognition and money [8]. Bourdieu also talked about something called Symbolic Violence, which is a kind of oppression that people don't realize they're experiencing because it feels like it's just part of life. In the PTN-BH context, when UKT fees become very high and students choose to pay them to get a place, the lower-income class is quietly pushed aside from accessing quality education. However, the system is still considered

"fair" because it is justified by claims of autonomy and educational quality [2,10].

PROBLEM ANALYSIS: CAPITAL INEQUALITY IN THE PTN-BH FIELD

The Economic Model Takes Control Over the Cultural Model

In the PTN-BH field, the money from the central government is often not enough to cover the costs of running operations [4]. This causes a change in the habits of higher education managers: Economic priorities mean that the economic model becomes the main factor in all decisions made by institutions. The challenge of having limited freedom and no government financial support means PTN-BH has to find the rest of the money needed to keep operating on its own. As a quick way, PTN-BH builds up Economic Modal by expanding its own pathways, and UKT also increases [3,7]. In Bourdieu's analysis, when educational institutions focus on economics, a big change occurs: (a) a Pragmatic Habitus is formed, where policymakers look at new study programs based on how profitable they are, not on how urgent they are for science; (b) a Symbolic Modal is created, where campuses start to accept and normalize this shift. High tuition costs that are justified as a way to ensure quality; and (c) the undermining of Cultural Capital, where market-driven logic takes precedence over academic reasoning, leading to an increase in the number of graduates and a decline in the value of scientific expertise [1,2,12].

The Influence of Economic Capital on Cultural Capital

In the PTN-BH field, the central government often does not provide

enough money to cover the costs of running operations [4]. This causes a change in how higher education managers think and act: Economic priorities mean that the economic model becomes the main factor in all decisions made by institutions. The challenge of having little control and no financial support from the government pushes PTN-BH to find and cover the rest of the money needed to keep operating on its own. As a shortcut, PTN-BH builds up Economic Modal by expanding its own pathways, and UKT also increases [3,7]. In Bourdieu's view, when schools focus more on money, big changes happen. First, a new way of thinking, called Pragmatic Habitus, starts where decision-makers look at new courses based on how much money they can make, not how important they are for science. Second, campuses start accepting very high fees for classes, pretending it's about quality. Third, the idea of what makes good education gets mixed up with market values, leading to more graduates being produced and less value placed on real scientific skills [1,2,12].

Pierre Bourdieu's Analysis: Domination of Economic Capital over Cultural Capital.

The focus on economic accumulation through massive student admissions creates a severe Structural Gap on campus. First, Field Modal crisis (infrastructure): funds raised from new students are primarily consumed by routine operational expenses rather than being invested in new buildings, creating overcrowded, non-conducive learning

environments [7]. Second, Teaching Modal crisis (burnout among lecturers): the influx of students is not matched by a proportionate increase in permanent lecturer recruitment. The lecturer-to-student ratio continues to drift further from ideal benchmarks, forcing lecturers to handle dozens of credits and heavy administrative duties, devastating research productivity [13].

STRATEGIC SOLUTIONS IN PIERRE BOURDIEU'S PERSPECTIVE

The current economic priority at PTN-BH serves as clear evidence of educational commercialization driven by an unbalanced funding system. Autonomy is no longer viewed as academic freedom, but as an obligation to generate revenue. How can PTN-BH escape this trap?

Multisectoral Modal Conversion

PTN-BH must cease its reliance on student funds. Universities need to revitalize Endowment Funds through Social Media (successful alum networks and industrial philanthropy) [6]. Empowered by strong endowment funds, universities can offer cross-subsidies to underprivileged students, preserving educational quality without the need for continuous UKT hikes.

Research Commercialization (Not Student Commercialization)

PTN-BH must convert intellectual expertise (Cultural Modal) into patents and licenses for industrial sale [1]. According to Bourdieu's theory, optimizing Cultural Capital is necessary, as universities house a wealth of intellectual expertise and scientific discoveries. PTN-BH must bolster Social

Modal through industrial networks and actively convert it into economic value [8].

Lecturer Roles and Research Downstreaming

To break free from the student commercialization trap, PTN-BH must pivot towards research commercialization. Lecturers possess intellectual expertise, innovations, and research outputs—pure Cultural Modal [1]. Downstreaming implies that campus lab research materializes into tangible products, licenses, or applied technologies purchased by industry, transforming academic thought into a sustainable alternative economic model. By reducing massive teaching burdens and prioritizing high-value economic innovation, lecturers can reclaim their Symbolic Modal (academic prestige) nationally and globally. Furthermore, they must activate Social Modal by forging robust cooperative networks with industry and government [6,8].

CONCLUSION

PTN-BH status presents both opportunities and challenges. The current gap phenomenon results from modal imbalances, where the urgent need for funds (economic modal) forces an expansion in student volume that far exceeds physical field and teaching capacities [1,2]. The five clusters of factual data presented in this article independent pathway quotas, UKT polemics, lecturer-student ratios, BOPTN insufficiency, and slow infrastructure addition collectively confirm the existence of a structural gap between *das Sollen* and *das Sein*. Without inter-modal

synergy and a shift in *habitus* from pragmatic management to strategic-academic management, this autonomy will ultimately degrade Indonesia's competitiveness [7,10].

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