



Integrating Pesantren Cultural Values into Madrasah Organizational Development: A Human Service Perspective from Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how pesantren cultural values are integrated into madrasah organizational development and how this integration shapes human service quality in Islamic education. Rather than assuming these values as inherently beneficial, the study critically explores both their enabling and constraining roles within contemporary organizational settings. The research positions madrasah as a faith-based human service system that seeks to balance moral formation, institutional accountability, and community well-being amid increasing bureaucratic demands. A qualitative case study was conducted at MA NU Banat Kudus, Indonesia, employing in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Thematic analysis was applied through an iterative coding process to trace how values were articulated by participants and enacted in concrete organizational practices. Findings indicate that core pesantren values ikhlas (sincerity), ukhuwah (solidarity), ta'dzim (respect), and istiqamah (discipline) are embedded in leadership practices, collegial collaboration, and pedagogical interactions. These values contribute to organizational commitment, teamwork, and moral responsibility, while also generating tensions related to hierarchy, participation, and professional expectations. Their integration supports institutional cohesion and service delivery, yet requires continuous negotiation to avoid rigidity and excessive moral pressure. The study demonstrates that pesantren ethics function as a culturally grounded ethical framework that both enables and shapes leadership integrity, social accountability, and human service effectiveness in faith-based educational institutions. The findings extend human service theory by illustrating how local spiritual values operate as context-dependent organizational resources, informing but not replacing modern principles of sustainable and participatory organizational development in Asian educational contexts.

Keywords: Cultural Values, Education, Human Service, Learning, Organizational Development

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Indonesia's madrasah system functions not merely as a provider of religious instruction but as a significant component of the nation's human service system, contributing to moral development, social welfare, and community cohesion. Rooted in Islamic principles, madrasahs play a central role in shaping character, transmitting ethical values, and fostering human capital aligned with both spiritual and civic responsibility¹⁾. Within this educational ecosystem, pesantren institutions have long served as moral incubators and cultural reference points, emphasizing ikhlas (sincerity), ta'dzim (respect), ukhuwah (solidarity), and istiqamah (discipline) as ethical foundations for learning, leadership, and social interaction²⁾.

These values have historically structured relationships among teachers (kyai), students (santri), and surrounding communities, shaping patterns of authority, care, and moral responsibility. The pesantren tradition represents a holistic educational model integrating intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions, which resonates with human service principles emphasizing care, ethics, and service to others³⁾. In many Asian contexts, where education is closely intertwined with moral and social formation, Indonesia's pesantren–madrasah model reflects a culturally grounded approach to human service delivery that combines education, moral formation, communal support, and civic engagement.

At the same time, the increasing influence of modernization, standardization, and bureaucratic governance has introduced new tensions within madrasah institutions⁴⁾. As madrasahs adapt to state regulations, performance indicators, and global competitiveness, the transmission of pesantren values is often challenged by formal administrative demands. Organizational structures that prioritize efficiency, accountability, and measurable outcomes may marginalize less tangible ethical dimensions such as humility, sincerity, and empathy. As a result, madrasahs risk becoming procedural organizations detached from their original moral and humanitarian orientations⁵⁾. Maintaining alignment between managerial efficiency and ethical purpose has therefore emerged as both a strategic and moral challenge for contemporary Islamic education in Indonesia.

1.2. Problem Statement

Although pesantren cultural values remain central to Indonesia's Islamic educational heritage, their integration into modern madrasah management is frequently symbolic rather than systemic. Many institutions formally reference pesantren principles in vision statements, ceremonies, or school rituals, yet these values are not consistently translated into everyday leadership practices, collaborative work structures, or participatory decision-making processes⁶⁾. Consequently, the moral–communal character that historically distinguished pesantren-based education may be diluted within bureaucratic routines and performance-oriented management systems.

The core challenge lies in reconciling bureaucratic governance models characterized by standardization, hierarchy, and accountability with the ethical and communal orientation intrinsic to pesantren pedagogy, which emphasizes moral guidance, collective responsibility, and service ethics⁶⁾. While pesantren values may strengthen organizational cohesion and moral commitment, they may also generate tensions related to authority, participation, and professional autonomy if applied uncritically⁷⁾. For example, the emphasis on ta'dzim (respect for authority) may complicate participatory leadership practices, while strong moral expectations may unintentionally increase emotional labor or conformity pressures among educators.

Existing research on Islamic education has predominantly focused on curriculum reform, religious pedagogy,

institutional accreditation, or leadership styles, with limited attention to organizational development from a human service perspective. From this perspective, education is understood not merely as instructional delivery but as an integrated system of care, empowerment, and community service⁸⁾. Moreover, although studies on servant leadership, value-based management, and Islamic educational leadership exist, few empirically examine how pesantren values are operationalized within organizational structures and everyday practices, or how their benefits and limitations are negotiated in modern institutional contexts⁹⁾. This gap highlights the need for critical, empirically grounded research that examines how pesantren values function in practice as organizational resources within faith-based human service institutions.

1.3. Research Objectives

In response to these challenges, this study investigates the integration of pesantren cultural values within madrasah organizational development from a human service perspective. Rather than assuming these values as inherently beneficial, the study adopts a critical and contextual approach to examine how they are enacted, negotiated, and experienced within contemporary organizational settings. Specifically, the study aims to:

- Explore how pesantren cultural values are embedded in madrasah leadership practices and institutional management.
- Analyze how these values shape organizational behavior, collaboration, and educational service delivery, including the tensions and constraints that may arise in their implementation.
- Develop a conceptual model that links pesantren cultural ethics with human service principles, clarifying their role as context-dependent organizational resources in faith-based educational institutions.

By addressing these objectives, the study contributes to the refinement of culturally responsive models of organizational development and human service practice. It advances understanding of how local spiritual values can inform ethical leadership and service quality while remaining subject to critical reflection and organizational negotiation in modern educational environments.

1.4. Theoretical and Practical Significance

1.4.1. Theoretical Significance

This study contributes to organizational development and leadership theory by critically integrating Islamic moral psychology with human service ethics, rather than treating religious values as universally positive organizational assets. It situates pesantren culture in dialogue with Servant Leadership Theory, which emphasizes humility, service, and moral stewardship, and Affective Events Theory (AET), which explains how emotional experiences influence work attitudes and performance¹⁰⁾. By combining these perspectives, the study conceptualizes pesantren ethics as context-dependent emotional and behavioral resources that may both enable and constrain organizational cohesion and resilience.

Unlike prior studies that primarily emphasize normative alignment between Islamic values and leadership ideals, this research empirically examines how pesantren values are enacted, negotiated, and sometimes contested within everyday organizational practices¹¹⁾. The study refines the concept of faith-based engagement by defining it not as a generic form of spiritual motivation, but as a situational process through which spiritual values interact with organizational structures, leadership authority, and emotional labor demands¹²⁾. In doing so, the study extends human service theory by demonstrating how local spiritual values function as mediating mechanisms between leadership behavior, organizational climate, and service outcomes in faith-based educational institutions.

1.4.2. Practical Significance

Practically, this study offers evidence-based insights for leaders, educators, and policymakers within Indonesia's Islamic education sector. It provides guidance for designing leadership and management systems that seek to maintain cultural authenticity while responding to modern demands for accountability, transparency, and participatory governance¹³). Rather than promoting direct value adoption, the findings emphasize the importance of reflective and adaptive translation of pesantren ethics into managerial practices.

The results can inform leadership development and training programs for madrasah principals and administrators by illustrating how values such as ikhlas (sincerity) and ukhuwah (solidarity) may be operationalized through consultative decision-making, ethical supervision, and collaborative work cultures¹⁴). At the same time, the study highlights potential risks associated with uncritical value implementation, such as hierarchical rigidity or moral pressure on staff, offering cautionary insights for policy and practice.

Overall, the study underscores that effective organizational development in education requires not only administrative competence but also ethical reflexivity, emotional awareness, and contextual sensitivity qualities embedded in pesantren traditions but requiring continuous organizational negotiation in contemporary settings¹⁵).

1.5. Pesantren Cultural Values

The pesantren tradition represents one of Indonesia's oldest and most enduring educational systems, designed not only to transmit religious knowledge but also to cultivate ethical awareness, emotional discipline, and social responsibility. The values embedded within this system form a composite of spiritual integrity, social humility, and communal solidarity, shaping the moral identity of learners and educators¹⁶). Core principles such as ikhlas (sincerity) and istiqamah (steadfastness) reflect spiritual integrity; ta'dzim (respect) and tawadhu' (humility) signify social hierarchy and moral etiquette; while ukhuwah (solidarity) embodies communal responsibility and mutual care.

Scholars of Islamic moral psychology emphasize that education in the pesantren tradition operates as a process of ethical cultivation (tazkiyah al-nafs), aiming toward adab, or moral discipline rooted in divine consciousness. This orientation aligns with the human service philosophy that prioritizes care, empathy, compassion, and social justice¹⁷). However, while these values promote moral cohesion, they may also shape power relations and expectations of conformity within institutional life.

The alignment between pesantren ethics and Servant Leadership Theory clarifies their organizational relevance while also revealing potential tensions. Servant leadership emphasizes service-oriented authority and moral example, yet in pesantren contexts, leadership grounded in moral authority may simultaneously encourage commitment and limit dissent or participatory critique¹⁸). Thus, pesantren values function not only as spiritual ideals but also as organizational norms that influence leadership legitimacy, interpersonal relations, and professional boundaries within faith-based institutions.

1.6. Madrasah Organizational Development

Organizational development (OD) in madrasahs involves aligning spiritual mission with managerial structures so that institutional practices reflect both administrative efficiency and moral integrity. Unlike secular schools that often prioritize measurable performance indicators, madrasahs emphasize value-based governance, moral leadership, and collective accountability¹⁹). Their effectiveness is therefore assessed not only through academic outcomes but also through ethical

conduct, cooperation, and social responsibility.

Drawing on OD theory, effective educational organizations cultivate adaptive cultures that align human behavior with institutional purpose. In madrasahs, this adaptation requires translating pesantren values into administrative routines, decision-making processes, and interpersonal relations²⁰). This translation process is neither automatic nor neutral, as values may be interpreted differently by leaders, teachers, and staff depending on organizational position and experience.

Madrasah development often relies on transformational and servant leadership behaviors that foster trust, moral authority, and emotional commitment²¹). Leaders who internalize ikhlas and ukhuwah may inspire cooperation and shared purpose; however, over-reliance on moral authority can also obscure power asymmetries and constrain professional autonomy if not balanced with transparent governance mechanisms²²). Consequently, madrasah organizational development is best understood as a dynamic moral negotiation rather than a purely administrative reform process.

1.7. Human Service Perspective

From a human service perspective, education is a multidimensional process integrating psychological, ethical, and social care functions. Human service systems aim to promote individual well-being while enhancing community welfare through empathy, empowerment, and relational support²³). Education, within this framework, operates as a form of social service that enables individuals to develop dignity, competence, and social responsibility.

Human service theory defines service quality not solely by technical efficiency but by relational trust, ethical conduct, and emotional responsiveness. These principles resonate with the pesantren–madrasah tradition, where educators act as moral mentors and institutions function as community support systems²⁴). However, human service scholarship also emphasizes the risks of emotional labor, moral overload, and boundary strain among service providers issues that remain underexamined in faith-based educational settings.

By situating madrasahs as community-based human service institutions, this study highlights how pesantren values can enhance psychosocial support, moral resilience, and cultural continuity, while also necessitating safeguards to protect staff well-being and professional balance.

1.8. Conceptual Framework

Building on the preceding discussion, this study proposes an integrated conceptual framework linking pesantren cultural values, leadership behavior, organizational climate, and educational service outcomes:

Pesantren Cultural Values → Leadership Behavior → Organizational Climate → Educational Service Quality

The framework conceptualizes pesantren values as moral and emotional antecedents that shape leadership behavior. Leaders influenced by ikhlas, ukhuwah, and ta'dzim may demonstrate humility, empathy, and service orientation in decision-making and interpersonal relations. These behaviors contribute to an organizational climate characterized by trust, solidarity, and shared accountability. At the same time, the framework acknowledges that these value-driven processes may also generate tensions related to authority, participation, and emotional expectations.

The model integrates Servant Leadership Theory and Affective Events Theory (AET) to explain how ethical conduct and emotionally meaningful experiences influence motivation, attitudes, and performance. By incorporating a human service perspective, the framework situates madrasah leadership within a humanistic management paradigm that values relational care alongside task efficiency.

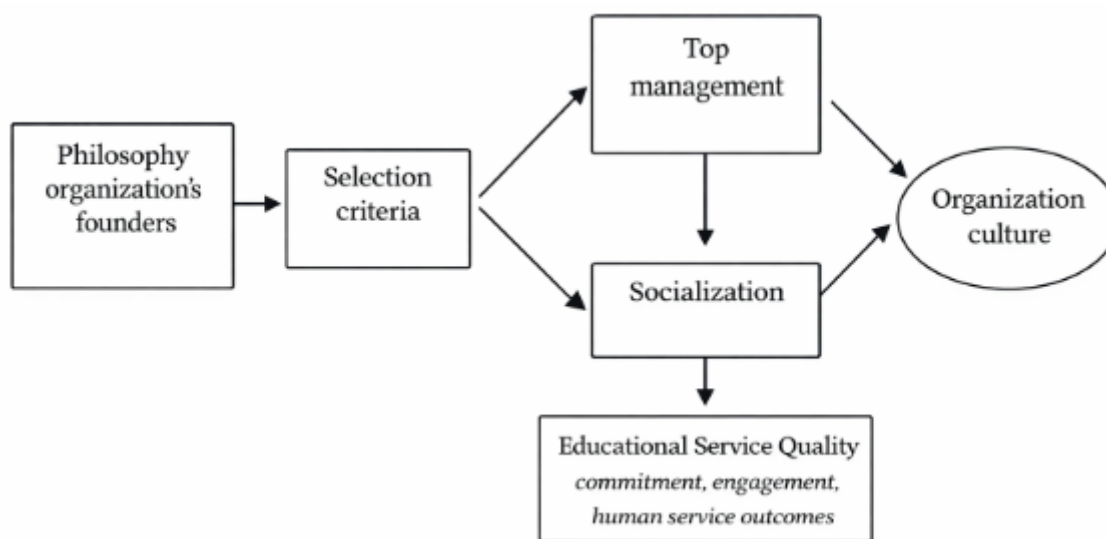


Figure 1. Conceptual model of pesantren value integration in madrasah organizational development

Figure 1 illustrates the hypothesized relationships among the study's key constructs, highlighting leadership behavior as a mediating mechanism through which cultural values influence organizational climate and service outcomes. The model emphasizes both enabling pathways and potential points of tension, reinforcing the need for reflective and context-sensitive leadership in faith-based human service institutions.

1.9. Synthesis and Research Gap

The reviewed literature indicates that pesantren values provide a distinctive cultural foundation for ethical leadership and organizational sustainability in Islamic education. While previous studies have examined pesantren pedagogy, moral education, and religious curricula, relatively few have analyzed how these values are operationalized within organizational development processes. Similarly, the application of human service theory to Islamic educational institutions remains limited, particularly regarding leadership behavior, emotional dynamics, and institutional culture.

Moreover, existing research tends to emphasize the normative benefits of pesantren values, offering limited critical examination of their organizational constraints, power implications, or emotional consequences. This study addresses these gaps by empirically examining how pesantren ethics are enacted in daily organizational life and by proposing a conceptual model that situates these values within a human service organizational framework.

By extending Servant Leadership Theory and Affective Events Theory into a faith-based educational context, the study contributes a nuanced understanding of how spiritual values function as both enabling and regulating forces in organizational development. In doing so, it positions the madrasah as a complex human service institution where moral ideals, organizational structures, and professional practices continuously interact.

2. Methods

2.1. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore leadership practices, organizational culture, and the enactment of pesantren cultural values within a pesantren-based madrasah. A qualitative approach was selected to capture participants' interpretations, experiences, and meaning-making processes, rather than to validate predefined normative assumptions about pesantren values. Qualitative inquiry is particularly suited to examining social and cultural phenomena in which organizational meanings are constructed through interaction and practice.

The case study approach enabled an in-depth examination of a bounded institutional setting MA NU Banat Kudus shaped by pesantren traditions and contemporary administrative structures. This design allowed for close attention to contextual specificity, institutional routines, and interpersonal dynamics through which values are negotiated in practice. Rather than seeking statistical generalization, the study aimed to generate analytically transferable insights relevant to other faith-based educational and human service organizations operating in comparable cultural contexts.

2.2. Participants

Participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure inclusion of individuals with sustained engagement in the institution's leadership, teaching, and organizational life. The study involved fifteen participants, consisting of one principal, ten teachers, and four alumni of MA NU Banat Kudus, Central Java, Indonesia. Teachers had a minimum of three years of service, ensuring familiarity with institutional norms and leadership practices, while alumni were selected based on their continued involvement in school-related activities.

This composition enabled the study to capture multiple organizational perspectives, including formal leadership, day-to-day instructional practice, and retrospective reflections on institutional culture. The inclusion of alumni provided an external yet informed viewpoint, allowing triangulation between current practices and longer-term value transmission. All participants received written and verbal explanations of the study's aims and procedures and provided informed consent prior to participation.

2.3. Data Collection

Data were collected over a three-month period using semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis to enhance triangulation and contextual depth. Semi-structured interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes and were conducted in Indonesian to facilitate culturally grounded expression. Interview guides focused on leadership behavior, collaboration, discipline, decision-making processes, and the enactment of pesantren values such as ikhlas (sincerity), ukhuwah (solidarity), ta'dzim (respect), and istiqamah (discipline). Follow-up questions were used to elicit concrete examples, tensions, and perceived challenges associated with these values.

All interviews were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim. Participant observation was conducted during morning assemblies, classroom instruction, and teacher meetings, focusing on observable interactions, leadership practices, and moments of value reinforcement or negotiation. Field notes documented both routine practices and critical incidents. Document analysis included institutional policies, meeting minutes, internal guidelines, and curricular materials to examine how pesantren ethics were formally articulated within organizational structures.

Ethical standards were upheld in accordance with established qualitative research principles. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage, and pseudonyms were used to ensure anonymity. Institutional permission was obtained prior to data collection, and all data were securely stored in password-protected files.

2.4. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis following a six-phase analytic framework. Analysis began with repeated readings of interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents to achieve data familiarization. Initial codes were generated inductively, capturing participants' language and concrete descriptions rather than theoretical categories. Examples of early codes included "moral obligation," "consultative leadership," "respect for authority," and "emotional burden."

During the second phase, codes were compared and clustered through axial coding to identify relationships among leadership practices, organizational climate, and value enactment. Coding decisions were documented in analytic memos to enhance transparency. In the final phase, selective coding was used to refine overarching themes that reflected recurring organizational patterns.

Three primary themes were identified: (1) value-driven leadership, (2) organizational discipline and collaboration, and (3) spiritual motivation in service. These themes were validated through cross-checking across interviews, observations, and documents. Representative quotations and observational excerpts were used in the Results section to demonstrate the empirical grounding of each theme.

2.5. Trustworthiness

Methodological rigor was ensured through the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was enhanced through data triangulation and member checking, whereby participants reviewed thematic summaries to confirm interpretive accuracy. Transferability was supported through thick description of the institutional context and participant characteristics.

Dependability was ensured by maintaining a detailed audit trail documenting data collection procedures, coding iterations, and analytical decisions. Confirmability was strengthened through peer debriefing and reflexive memo-writing, allowing systematic examination of interpretive assumptions and minimizing undue researcher influence.

2.6. Ethical Considerations and Researcher Reflexivity

Ethical compliance and reflexivity were integral to the research process. Participants received detailed information regarding study objectives, confidentiality, and data use, and all provided informed consent. Data security procedures were strictly applied.

Given the researcher's prior familiarity with pesantren culture, reflexive practices were explicitly incorporated to mitigate potential bias. Reflective journals were maintained to document assumptions, emotional responses, and interpretive shifts during data collection and analysis. Regular peer consultation served as an external check on analytic interpretations, encouraging critical distance and alternative readings of the data. This reflexive approach acknowledged the researcher's positionality while prioritizing participants' perspectives.

2.7. Summary of Methodological Rigor

In summary, the study's methodological design ensured analytical depth, transparency, and ethical integrity in examining how pesantren cultural values operate within madrasah organizational development. The integration of interviews, observations, and document analysis grounded findings in empirical evidence rather than normative assumptions. Explicit attention to coding procedures, reflexivity, and trustworthiness strengthens the credibility of the analysis. This methodological framework supports the interpretation of findings presented in the subsequent section, where participant voices and organizational practices illustrate the negotiated integration of pesantren values in a contemporary faith-based human service institution.

3. Results

3.1. Integration of Values in Organizational Practices

Findings from interviews, observations, and document analysis indicate that pesantren cultural values are consistently referenced and enacted in the daily routines and organizational practices of MA NU Banat Kudus. These values are not limited to formal symbols or ceremonial language; rather, they are embedded in recurring institutional rituals, communication patterns, and normative expectations. Teachers, administrators, and students frequently described their work as an extension of worship (*ibadah*), positioning *ikhlas* (sincerity) as a central moral reference in teaching and service.

Morning assemblies, communal prayers, and routine staff reflections function as structured mechanisms for reinforcing moral discipline (*istiqamah*) and shared responsibility. Observations showed that these activities simultaneously foster collective identity and regulate behavior by establishing expectations of punctuality, obedience, and consistency. Ethical guidelines articulated in meetings and internal documents emphasize *ta'dzim* (respect) toward authority, humility (*tawadhu'*) among colleagues, and attentiveness toward students. While participants generally perceived these norms as supportive, some teachers noted that such expectations also created pressure to consistently demonstrate moral conformity.

Interpersonal communication further illustrates how values are enacted in practice. Teachers often begin meetings or classes with expressions of gratitude and short moral reminders, framing professional duties as moral obligations rather than purely administrative tasks. Institutional documents, including vision statements and internal regulations, explicitly highlight service, cooperation, and self-discipline as professional standards. One teacher stated, "We do not separate teaching from worship; being sincere and consistent is part of our responsibility before God, but sometimes it also means we must suppress personal difficulties." This account illustrates how value integration simultaneously reinforces moral commitment and shapes emotional expectations.

Overall, the integration of pesantren values generates a distinct moral rhythm within the organization, expressed through disciplined routines, ethical self-regulation, and collective accountability. Practices such as punctual attendance, honest reporting, and mutual supervision reflect *istiqamah*, while leadership humility and service orientation embody *ikhlas* and *tawadhu'*. These findings suggest that pesantren culture functions as a practical ethical infrastructure that sustains organizational integrity, while also subtly regulating behavior and emotional expression within the institution.

3.2. Leadership Behavior and Collaborative Practice

Leadership practices at MA NU Banat Kudus are strongly shaped by principles associated with Servant Leadership Theory, particularly service orientation, moral example, and relational humility. The principal and senior teachers are

widely perceived as moral role models who lead primarily through example rather than formal authority. Participants consistently described the leadership style as approachable, patient, and spiritually grounded. One teacher remarked, “Our leader reminds us that managing a school is managing souls, not just programs, and that is inspiring but also demanding.”

Leadership decision-making is largely conducted through *musyawarah* (deliberative consultation), enabling teachers to participate in policy discussions and institutional planning. This participatory approach reflects the *ukhuwah* ethic of solidarity and collective responsibility and contributes to high levels of trust and organizational identification. However, several participants noted that final decisions still tend to align with senior authority, indicating that participation operates within clearly defined hierarchical boundaries.

Leadership meetings commonly begin with brief religious reflections, which set an ethical tone and reaffirm shared moral commitments. These moments function as affective events that shape emotional engagement and reinforce collective purpose, consistent with Affective Events Theory. At the same time, such practices may also discourage open disagreement, as questioning decisions can be perceived as insufficient respect (*ta'dzim*) toward leadership.

Teacher collaboration extends beyond formal task coordination and is often described as voluntary and relational. Teachers support one another in lesson preparation, classroom management, and mentoring, motivated by a sense of moral duty rather than contractual obligation. One participant explained, “We help each other because we are family, not because it is written in the rules.” This form of collaboration reflects organizational citizenship behavior grounded in spiritual solidarity. Nevertheless, some teachers acknowledged that constant availability and mutual obligation occasionally blurred professional boundaries and increased workload pressures.

Overall, leadership grounded in moral authority and empathy fosters organizational stability, trust, and emotional engagement. At the same time, these findings reveal that value-driven leadership involves ongoing negotiation between care, authority, and professional autonomy, highlighting both its strengths and its constraints within a faith-based organizational context.

3.3. Institutional Climate and Human Service Quality

The institutional climate of MA NU Banat Kudus is characterized by a strong sense of moral community, frequently described by participants as *kekeluargaan* (familial atmosphere). Observations revealed a school environment shaped by empathy, mutual respect, and moral discipline, aligning closely with human service principles of care and relational trust. Academic achievement and ethical development are treated as interconnected goals, with teachers regularly integrating moral reflection into instructional activities.

Moral discipline extends beyond classroom instruction into broader organizational interactions. Teachers consistently model courteous communication, respect for colleagues, and attentive care toward students, contributing to a climate of psychological safety. Administrative procedures, including teacher evaluations, incorporate qualitative assessments of sincerity, cooperation, and commitment. While these practices reinforce ethical professionalism, some participants expressed concern that moral evaluation criteria remain implicit and open to subjective interpretation.

Teachers reported observable effects of this ethical climate on student behavior. Students were described as demonstrating increased discipline, honesty, and social awareness, including participation in community service activities and peer support. One teacher stated, “Our goal is not only to produce smart students but good human beings who serve others.” These outcomes represent tangible expressions of *pesantren* values in educational service delivery.

The moral and spiritual climate also influences teacher motivation and job satisfaction. Many teachers reported a strong emotional attachment to the institution and a sense of meaning derived from their work. However, sustaining this engagement often requires managing emotional fatigue associated with continuous moral expectations and service demands. These findings indicate that pesantren-based institutional climates can enhance human service quality while simultaneously generating emotional labor that requires organizational recognition and support.

Table 1 synthesizes the major themes generated through thematic analysis and illustrates how pesantren cultural values are operationalized across organizational practices, leadership behavior, and institutional climate. Rather than merely listing values, the table highlights the functional role these values play in shaping concrete organizational processes and human service outcomes. The themes reflect patterns that consistently emerged across interview data, observational field notes, and institutional documents.

Table 1. Themes of Pesantren Value Integration in Leadership and Organizational Culture

Major Themes	Key Organizational Manifestations	Representative Pesantren Values	Analytical Interpretation
Integration of Values in Organizational Practices	Ritualized routines, ethical norms, self-regulation, behavioral consistency	Ikhlas, Istiqamah	Values function as moral reference points that guide daily conduct, reinforce discipline, and sustain ethical accountability beyond formal regulations.
Leadership Behavior and Collaboration	Servant-oriented leadership, consultative decision-making (musyawarah), collegial support	Amanah, Ukhuwah, Tawadhu'	Leadership legitimacy is derived from moral authority and service orientation, fostering trust and cooperation while maintaining hierarchical structure.
Institutional Climate and Human Service Quality	Familial atmosphere (kekeluargaan), ethical mentoring, emotional engagement	Ta'dzim, Empathy, Discipline	Organizational climate promotes care and moral development, enhancing service quality while also shaping expectations of emotional commitment and conformity.

3.4. Synthesis

Overall, the findings demonstrate that pesantren cultural values play a central role in shaping leadership behavior, organizational collaboration, and human service quality within the madrasah. These values are embedded through rituals, interpersonal interactions, and institutional norms, creating a culture of sincerity, humility, and solidarity. Leadership operates as moral stewardship, where authority derives from ethical example rather than formal control, and collaboration reflects collective care rather than procedural compliance.

At the same time, the findings reveal that value integration is not without tension. Moral authority may limit open critique, collective solidarity may increase emotional and workload demands, and ethical expectations may blur professional boundaries. The institutional climate thus reflects both moral cohesion and continuous negotiation between care, discipline, and autonomy.

By illustrating these dynamics, the results provide a balanced empirical foundation for understanding how pesantren values function within a contemporary faith-based human service organization. The madrasah emerges not only as a morally cohesive institution but also as a complex organizational space where ethical ideals, leadership practices, and human service demands intersect.

4. Discussion

4.1. Overview of Findings

The findings of this study indicate that pesantren cultural values play a significant role in shaping leadership behavior, organizational interaction, and human service practices within the madrasah context. Rather than functioning as abstract moral ideals, these values are embedded in everyday routines, leadership practices, and institutional norms that influence how work is understood and performed²⁵. Pesantren values such as ikhlas (sincerity), ukhuwah (solidarity), ta'dzim (respect), and istiqamah (discipline) operate as organizing principles that structure commitment, collaboration, and ethical conduct.

At the same time, the findings suggest that the integration of these values is not uniformly experienced as positive or unproblematic. While many participants described enhanced commitment, emotional attachment, and moral purpose, others implicitly revealed tensions related to authority, emotional expectations, and professional boundaries²⁶. Leadership practices aligned with Servant Leadership Theory emphasizing humility, empathy, and moral accountability were associated with high levels of trust and cooperation, yet they also relied heavily on moral authority rather than formal accountability mechanisms.

Overall, the results indicate that pesantren ethics transform leadership and management from purely transactional systems into moral service frameworks. However, this transformation involves continuous negotiation between care and control, solidarity and hierarchy, and moral commitment and professional autonomy²⁷. These findings extend beyond the educational setting by illustrating how faith-based values shape organizational behavior within human service institutions while simultaneously introducing context-specific constraints.

4.2. Theoretical Implications

Theoretically, this study contributes to organizational and human service scholarship by situating spirituality not as an assumed virtue but as an empirically observable organizational resource with both enabling and regulating functions. By integrating Affective Events Theory (AET) and Servant Leadership Theory, the findings demonstrate how emotional experiences generated through rituals, moral reminders, and leadership interactions influence work attitudes, engagement, and behavior.

Consistent with AET, spiritual practices and value-laden interactions act as affective events that generate emotions such as gratitude, moral pride, and collective belonging. These emotions enhance cognitive engagement and behavioral consistency. At the same time, the findings indicate that repeated moral framing of work can also intensify emotional labor, particularly when sincerity and discipline become implicit performance expectations. This nuance refines AET by showing that affective events in faith-based organizations may produce both motivational and regulatory effects.

The study also clarifies the distinction between organizational commitment and work engagement in faith-based contexts. Commitment reflects identification with the institution's moral mission, whereas engagement refers to sustained psychological investment in daily tasks. The findings suggest that spiritual meaning mediates this relationship, but that such mediation is contingent on organizational conditions, leadership openness, and workload balance.

Importantly, this study refines the concept of faith-based engagement. Rather than presenting it as a generalized spiritual motivation, the findings define faith-based engagement as a context-dependent process in which spiritual values interact with leadership authority, organizational norms, and emotional expectations. This conceptualization differentiates faith-

based engagement from existing engagement constructs by emphasizing moral obligation, transcendental meaning, and communal accountability, while also acknowledging their potential to constrain dissent and increase conformity pressures.

4.3. Organizational Perspective

From an organizational perspective, the integration of pesantren values enhances trust, cohesion, and moral legitimacy key assets for human service organizations. Leadership practices grounded in service and humility foster psychological safety and relational trust, enabling cooperation and shared responsibility²⁸⁾. However, reliance on moral authority may reduce the visibility of power asymmetries and limit critical dialogue if not complemented by transparent governance structures.

The consultative decision-making model (*musyawarah*) observed in the madrasah aligns with participatory leadership principles and increases teachers' sense of ownership. Nevertheless, the findings indicate that participation occurs within hierarchical boundaries shaped by *ta'dzim*, suggesting that consultation does not always equate to equal influence²⁹⁾. This nuance highlights the need to distinguish symbolic participation from substantive shared decision-making in faith-based organizations.

The study further reveals that moral coherence, rather than procedural compliance, drives organizational performance in this context. Teachers interpret their roles as moral stewardship, which strengthens resilience and commitment. Yet this moral framing can also intensify workload expectations and blur professional boundaries, particularly when service is framed as religious devotion³⁰⁾. These findings suggest that organizational sustainability depends not only on value alignment but also on institutional mechanisms that recognize and manage emotional and moral labor.

4.4. Cultural and Social Dimensions

Culturally, the integration of pesantren values demonstrates how indigenous moral traditions can coexist with modern organizational demands. The pesantren–madrasah model illustrates that cultural continuity and institutional modernization are not inherently contradictory³¹⁾. Values such as humility, discipline, and respect provide ethical orientation amid bureaucratic complexity and external accountability pressures.

At the same time, the findings caution against romanticizing cultural authenticity. While pesantren ethics reinforce social cohesion and moral identity, they may also sustain conservative norms that limit innovation or critical questioning³²⁾. This duality underscores the importance of critically engaging with local cultural frameworks rather than adopting them unreflectively.

Socially, the madrasah functions as a community-centered human service institution that extends moral influence beyond formal education. Teachers act as moral agents, reinforcing civic virtues and social responsibility. However, the expansion of moral expectations into community roles may increase role strain for educators, particularly in contexts of limited institutional support³³⁾. These findings suggest that faith-based education contributes to social welfare most effectively when ethical commitment is balanced with professional sustainability.

4.5. Faith-Based Human Service Model

Building on these findings, the study proposes a faith-based human service model comprising three interconnected components:

- Moral Foundations (Pesantren Values): Spiritual principles that shape ethical orientation and collective identity.
- Leadership Transmission Mechanism: Servant leadership practices that translate values into organizational norms.
- Behavioral Outcomes: Commitment, engagement, and service quality shaped by moral meaning and emotional experience.

Unlike purely normative models, this framework emphasizes interaction and negotiation rather than linear causality. Moral values inspire leadership behavior, leadership shapes organizational climate, and climate sustains engagement yet feedback loops also allow organizational pressures to reshape how values are interpreted and enacted.

The model reconceptualizes resilience as moral-organizational endurance rather than mere adaptability. Resilience emerges from shared meaning but requires institutional safeguards to prevent moral exhaustion³⁴). By linking micro-level motivation with macro-level organizational sustainability, the model extends human service theory to account for spirituality as both a resource and a constraint.

In summary, the discussion demonstrates that pesantren cultural values function as powerful yet complex organizational resources within madrasah-based human service systems. They enhance leadership legitimacy, emotional engagement, and ethical coherence, while also introducing tensions related to authority, participation, and emotional labor³⁵). Recognizing these dual effects strengthens the analytical rigor of the study and addresses concerns regarding uncritical affirmation.

The limitations of this study and directions for future research are addressed in the Conclusion, which also synthesizes the broader implications of the findings for theory, practice, and policy in faith-based human service organizations.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that pesantren cultural values ikhlas (sincerity), ukhuwah (solidarity), ta'dzim (respect), and istiqamah (discipline) play a significant role in shaping leadership behavior, collaboration patterns, and organizational practices within a madrasah context. Rather than operating as abstract ideals, these values function as practical moral reference points that guide everyday decision-making, interpersonal relations, and professional conduct. The findings indicate that organizational commitment and work engagement are closely connected through shared moral meaning, contributing to sustained service quality in a faith-based human service environment.

At the same time, the study demonstrates that this relationship is not linear or uniformly positive. Work engagement emerges as a mediating process through which moral commitment is translated into performance, yet this mediation is contingent on leadership practices, organizational climate, and workload balance. Teachers' affective commitment, rooted in spiritual conviction and ethical accountability, can foster proactive engagement and resilience, but it may also intensify emotional labor and expectations of moral conformity if not institutionally moderated. These findings underscore the need to view spiritual motivation as a context-dependent organizational resource rather than an inherently self-sustaining force.

Integrating pesantren ethics into contemporary management structures can strengthen collegial collaboration, leadership legitimacy, and moral orientation in educational organizations. However, effective integration requires reflective governance mechanisms that balance moral authority with transparency, participation, and professional boundaries. The pesantren-madrasah model thus offers a culturally grounded contribution to human service theory and practice, illustrating how local spiritual values can inform ethical leadership and service delivery while remaining subject to critical organizational negotiation.

Overall, this study affirms that spirituality, when embedded within organizational systems, can enhance meaning, commitment, and ethical coherence in human service work. Its contribution lies not in idealizing pesantren culture, but in empirically demonstrating how faith-based values operate as both enabling and regulating forces within organizational life.

5.1. Implications and Recommendations

This study advances human service and organizational theory by refining the role of spirituality within established frameworks rather than proposing it as a standalone explanatory construct. By extending Affective Events Theory (AET) and Servant Leadership Theory into a faith-based educational context, the findings show that moral emotions and spiritual experiences shape engagement and behavior through everyday organizational interactions.

The concept of faith-based engagement is clarified as a situational and relational process in which spiritual values interact with leadership authority, organizational norms, and emotional expectations. This conceptualization differentiates it from generic engagement models by emphasizing transcendental meaning and moral obligation, while also recognizing their potential to generate emotional strain. The study therefore contributes to the literature by positioning value-based engagement as both a psychological and socio-organizational phenomenon.

For leaders in Islamic educational institutions and other faith-based organizations, the findings highlight the importance of reflective value translation rather than direct value imposition. Leadership development programs should cultivate moral accountability (*amanah*) and sincerity (*ikhlas*) through ethical modeling, structured reflection, and transparent supervision, while also encouraging open dialogue and feedback.

Participatory governance mechanisms such as *musyawarah* should be strengthened to ensure that consultation is substantive rather than symbolic. Clear role definitions, workload monitoring, and emotional support systems are necessary to prevent moral overload and role strain among educators. Embedding *ukhuwah* (solidarity) and *ta'dzim* (respect) within professional culture should therefore be accompanied by institutional safeguards that protect autonomy, well-being, and innovation.

At the policy level, quality assurance frameworks for madrasahs and other faith-based institutions should incorporate indicators beyond academic performance, including ethical leadership practices, staff well-being, and community engagement. Such frameworks should explicitly recognize both the strengths and the organizational risks associated with value-based governance.

Teacher education and leadership certification programs may benefit from integrating ethical reflexivity and emotional labor awareness as core competencies. These policy directions can support culturally responsive educational governance in Indonesia and offer transferable insights for other Asian contexts seeking to balance cultural heritage with modern accountability requirements.

5.2. Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations that inform directions for future research. First, as a single-case qualitative study conducted within one madrasah, the findings are analytically rather than statistically generalizable. Future studies should employ comparative or multi-site designs to examine how pesantren values operate across different institutional, regional, or governance contexts.

Second, while this study relied on qualitative methods to capture depth and meaning, mixed-method approaches incorporating quantitative measures of engagement, workload, or emotional labor could strengthen empirical validation of the proposed framework. Longitudinal research is also recommended to explore how value internalization and leadership practices evolve over time.

Finally, although reflexive strategies were applied to mitigate researcher bias, future research may benefit from cross-cultural or interdisciplinary research teams to enhance analytical distance and comparative insight. Despite these limitations, the study provides a robust foundation for examining faith-based organizational development within human service systems.

In sum, this study demonstrates that integrating pesantren cultural values into madrasah organizational life can enhance ethical orientation, relational cohesion, and service commitment when accompanied by reflective leadership and organizational safeguards. By linking spirituality, engagement, and resilience within a human service framework, the research contributes a balanced and empirically grounded model of faith-based organizational development.

The pesantren–madrasah tradition is thus positioned not as an idealized template, but as a culturally rich and analytically complex model that offers valuable insights for ethically grounded and socially sustainable human service institutions across Asia.

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