

Universitas Negeri Padang & Ikatan Konselor Indonesia

Editorial Office: Jurusan Bimbingan dan Konseling | Faculty of Education | Universitas Negeri Padang

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Volume 14 Number 3 2025



KONSELOR

ISSN 1412-9760 (Print) | ISSN 2541-5948 (Online)

Editor: Afriyadi Sofyan

Publication details, including author guidelines

URL: <https://counselor.ppj.unp.ac.id/index.php/konselor/about/submissions>

A Gratitude from the Perspective of Students' Organizational Culture: A Study of IMM and PMII Members in South Sulawesi, Indonesia

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Article History

Received: Friday, July 04, 2025

Revised: Wednesday, July 30, 2025

Accepted: Friday, August 01, 2025

How to cite this article (APA)

Mutmainnah., Yusuf, S., Adiwinata, A. H., Saripah, I., Asbar, A., Masnur, M., & Mustakim, M. (2025). A gratitude from the perspective of students' organizational culture: A study of IMM and PMII members in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. KONSELOR, 14(3), 217–229. <https://doi.org/10.24036/02025143128-0-86>

The readers can link to article via <https://doi.org/10.24036/02025143128-0-86>

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A Gratitude from the Perspective of Students Organizational Culture: A Study of IMM and PMII Members in South Sulawesi, Indonesia

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Abstract: This study examines the dynamics of student gratitude from the perspective of organizational culture within two prominent Islamic student organizations in South Sulawesi: IMM (Indonesian Muhammadiyah Student Association) and PMII (Indonesian Muslim Students Movement). Gratitude, as a vital attitude and value, is explored through the lens of organizational culture, which shapes how gratitude is expressed and internalized within these organizations. The research employed a saturated sampling method, involving 530 active students who held leadership or committee roles during the 2022-2023 period. Participants were selected from seven universities in South Sulawesi. Data were categorized into three levels of gratitude: low, moderate, and high. To gain deeper insights, virtual group discussions (VGD) were conducted with 6 participants, representing various levels of gratitude. The study's findings suggest that organizational culture in IMM and PMII plays a significant role in fostering gratitude, with members demonstrating appreciation through acts of kindness, volunteerism, and community service. The integration of religious and cultural values in the organizational practices of both IMM and PMII enhances the sense of collective responsibility. It supports the development of responsible, empathetic, and socially engaged citizens. This research contributes to understanding how gratitude, as a personal and collective virtue, can be cultivated within the framework of organizational culture, promoting social justice, inclusion, and the holistic development of students. The findings provide valuable insights for the development of guidance and counseling models that focus on enhancing students' gratitude in academic settings.

Key Words: Student gratitude; Organizational culture; IMM; PMII

INTRODUCTION

Building gratitude within student organizational culture is a fundamental attitude and value that must be intentionally nurtured and promoted within the student community. Research consistently shows that gratitude plays a pivotal role in enhancing mental well-being, improving interpersonal relationships, and fostering a positive environment conducive to both personal and academic growth (Deichman & Warren, 2025; Fuertes, 2024a; Man & Jing, 2025a). In the context of student development, gratitude serves as an essential psychological resource that not only enhances emotional well-being but also fosters optimism, resilience, and social connectedness (Buenconsejo et al., 2024; Kaur et al., 2025). By embedding gratitude into student organizational culture, students are better equipped to cultivate values that support their personal growth while also contributing to the collective welfare of their community.

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In this context, student organizations (Ormawa) play a vital role in shaping students' attitudes and values, as they create environments that encourage the cultivation of gratitude alongside other important values. According to Indonesian national regulations and policies, Ormawa are recognized as vehicles for fostering critical thinking, personal interests, and the overall well-being of students (Basri & Dwiningrum, 2020). Given their central role in student development, Ormawa creates environments that allow students to grow both personally and collectively. This recognition underscores the critical role that student organizations play in fostering well-rounded individuals who are not only academically successful but also socially responsible. In Indonesia, ormawa, including the Indonesian Muhammadiyah Student Association (IMM) and the Indonesian Muslim Students Movement (PMII), are officially recognized platforms for developing character, leadership, and social responsibility. These organizations contribute to the holistic development of students by promoting not only academic achievement but also personal and social growth (Nikmah & Syafnan, 2024; Shobahiya et al., 2025). Affiliated with Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), IMM and PMII are dedicated to instilling core values such as social responsibility, justice, and inclusivity, while also advocating for social change through humanitarian initiatives (Budiman et al., 2025; Mukhsin et al., 2024; Ramadhan et al., 2024). These positive organizational cultures create environments conducive to the flourishing of gratitude. In this context, gratitude transcends individual sentiment, evolving into a collective experience that significantly influences the organization's values and practices. Within IMM and PMII, gratitude is nurtured through a variety of religious, social, and humanitarian activities, including volunteer work and acts of kindness, which motivate students to contribute to society actively.

As the demand for collaborative and adaptable professionals rises, universities are increasingly recognizing the critical role of soft skills in shaping the leaders of tomorrow. While academic success remains essential, the importance of developing well-rounded individuals with strong interpersonal abilities cannot be overlooked. In today's interconnected world, employers are placing greater emphasis on candidates who can navigate complex social dynamics, communicate effectively, and collaborate in teams. In this context, participation in ormawa activities offers students invaluable opportunities to hone these vital soft skills. With the growing demand for non-academic capabilities, such as communication, teamwork, and leadership, student organizations provide the ideal environment for cultivating these skills. In today's global context, where students face significant challenges, including high unemployment rates, Ormawa activities serve as crucial platforms for developing the skills necessary to succeed in a competitive job market. According to data from Indonesia's Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS), as of February 2022, 5.83% of Indonesia's 208.54 million working-age citizens were unemployed, with nearly 14% of this group holding a diploma or degree. This statistic underscores the increasing importance of non-academic skills. Beyond academic achievements, ormawa activities also enhance students' social engagement and emotional intelligence.

Given the increasing significance of soft skills in both personal and professional contexts, it is increasingly essential to equip students with the necessary tools to thrive in a complex, interconnected world. Participation in student organizations, such as Ormawa, not only enhances non-academic capabilities but also encourages the cultivation of values that contribute to both personal development and collective well-being. In this regard, understanding how organizational culture influences students' emotional and social competencies is crucial.

Therefore, this study aims to examine how the organizational culture within IMM and PMII in South Sulawesi shapes student gratitude dynamics. Specifically, it investigates how these organizations incorporate gratitude into their daily practices and leverage it as a tool to promote social justice, inclusion, and the holistic development of students' intellectual, emotional, and moral growth. By understanding the relationship between organizational culture and gratitude, the study offers valuable insights that can inform the design of effective guidance and counseling interventions aimed at enhancing gratitude among university students and fostering more well-rounded individuals who are not only academically competent but also socially responsible and emotionally intelligent.

METHOD

Participants

This study employs a saturated sampling method, where all individuals who met the inclusion criteria were invited to participate. Saturated sampling is a widely used technique in both qualitative and quantitative research, ensuring that all members of a defined population are included based on specific, predefined criteria (Creswell, 2015). The inclusion criteria for this study were as follows: (1) active membership in IMM or PMII during the 2022–2023 period, (2) enrollment at one of seven universities in South Sulawesi, and (3) holding a leadership or committee position within the organization. The final sample consisted of 530 active students who fulfilled these criteria. These participants were drawn from seven universities located in South Sulawesi, representing two prominent Islamic student organizations, IMM and PMII.

Instrumentation

The instrument used in this study is the Indonesian version of the Gratitude Scale, adapted by Listiyandini et al. (2015) in their work measuring gratitude: the preliminary development of the Indonesian gratitude scale. This instrument was selected due to its ability to measure both personal gratitude (toward others) and transpersonal gratitude (toward God or higher powers), making it well-aligned with Indonesia's cultural and religious values. The scale consists of 30 items, which are rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). These items assess three key dimensions of gratitude: (a) sense of appreciation, (b) positive feelings about life, and (c) expressions of thankfulness. The Indonesian version of the Gratitude Scale has demonstrated robust psychometric properties, including established construct validity and internal consistency, confirming its reliability for use within Indonesian populations. Its design effectively captures both individual and collective expressions of gratitude, making it particularly suitable for assessing gratitude within the context of religious and cultural practices in Indonesia.

Procedures & Data Analysis

The data collection for this study involved both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of how organizational culture influences gratitude among students. Initially, data were gathered digitally through Google Forms, which were distributed to participants via organizational networks and facilitated by academic advisors or faculty members from each of the seven participating universities. Before completing the survey, participants were informed of the study's purpose, and digital consent was obtained, ensuring anonymity and confidentiality. The survey responses were categorized into five levels of gratitude: very low, low, moderate, high, and very high.

To complement the quantitative data, qualitative insights were gathered through virtual focus group discussions (VGD), which were conducted via Zoom. Six participants were purposively selected, with three each from the Indonesian Muhammadiyah Student Association (IMM) and the Indonesian Muslim Students Movement (PMII), representing various levels of gratitude identified from the survey results. Each VGD session lasted 60 minutes, during which participants discussed: (a) the meaning of gratitude, (b) how it is expressed, and (c) the perceived benefits of gratitude within organizational contexts. These discussions were recorded and transcribed for further qualitative analysis.

For the quantitative analysis, descriptive statistics were employed to summarize the distribution of gratitude levels across participants. SPSS 26.0 was used to calculate Cronbach's alpha for reliability and perform correlation analyses for construct validity, revealing trends and patterns of gratitude within the student organizations. The qualitative data from the VGD sessions provided deeper contextual insights, complementing the quantitative results and offering a more comprehensive understanding of how organizational culture fosters and influences gratitude. By combining both data sets, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of how gratitude is cultivated and expressed within student organizations.

RESULTS

Descriptive Analysis of Gratitude Components

The demographic characteristics of the participants, presented in Table 1, provide an overview of the distribution by university affiliation and organizational membership. A total of 530 students participated in the study.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n = 530)

No	University	IMM	PMII	Total	Percentage
1	Hasanuddin University (UNHAS)	26	17	43	8%
2	State University of Makassar (UNM)	22	30	52	9.8%
3	UIN Aladdin Makassar (UINAM)	20	38	58	11%
4	Islamic University Makassar (UIM)	19	48	67	13%
5	University Muslim Indonesia (UMI)	30	51	81	15%
6	University of Muhammadiyah Makassar (UNISMUH)	84	25	109	21%
7	University of Muhammadiyah Enrekang (UNIMEN)	102	18	120	23%
Total		303	227	530	100%

This diversity establishes a robust framework for comprehending how organizational culture influences the development of gratitude across diverse academic environments. Specifically, gratitude was analyzed through three core components: Sense of Appreciation (SA), Positive Feelings (PF), and Expressions of Gratitude (EG). Table 2 provides the descriptive statistics for each of these components, offering a detailed overview of the data.

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis of Gratitude Components (n = 530)

Descriptive Statistics								
	N	Range	Min	Max	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
SA	530	22	23	45	37.55	.140	3.219	10.361
PF	530	22	28	50	39.40	.152	3.504	12.279
EG	530	28	26	54	46.02	.140	3.230	10.431
Total	530	70	77	147	122.97	.364	8.385	70.302

As shown in Table 2, it is evident that EG has the highest mean (46.02), indicating that students in both organizations express their gratitude most strongly through tangible actions such as helping others and engaging in religious practices. This reflects the core values of both IMM and PMII, which actively promote volunteerism and community involvement. Following this, PF and SA have means of 39.40 and 37.55, respectively, suggesting that while students have a strong appreciation for life and others, their emotional responses are somewhat less pronounced compared to their outward expressions of gratitude.

The standard deviation values indicate varying perceptions of gratitude among the participants. Notably, PF has the highest standard deviation (3.504), suggesting a broader range of individual differences in students' feelings of happiness and life satisfaction. This variability could be attributed to different personal circumstances and perspectives among the respondents. In contrast, SA has the lowest standard deviation (3.219), indicating more uniform perceptions of appreciation among the respondents. The range values further highlight the variability in gratitude expression, particularly for EG, with a range of 28 (26-54). This wide range suggests that while most students consistently express gratitude, there are notable differences in the intensity of this expression. The narrower ranges for SA and PF (22 each) suggest that these dimensions of gratitude are perceived more consistently across participants.

This variability in the expression of gratitude across the components underscores the significance of utilizing reliable measurement instruments. Accordingly, the internal consistency and construct validity of the gratitude measures employed in this study were affirmed by the low standard error and substantial variance observed for each component. These findings demonstrate that the measurement

tools are both robust and aptly capture the multidimensional nature of gratitude. Additionally, the use of the Indonesian version of the Gratitude Scale, which has exhibited strong psychometric properties in previous studies (Listiyandini et al., 2015), further reinforces the validity of the results.

Descriptive Analysis of Each Item

A detailed analysis of responses to items P01–P30 was conducted to examine how students expressed gratitude. Items were classified into favorable and unfavorable responses, providing insights into the internalization and expression of gratitude among participants.

Table 3. Descriptive Analysis of Each Statement Item

Items	n	Range Statistic	Minimum Statistic	Maximum Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Deviation Statistic	Variance Statistic
P01	530	3	2	5	3.68	.030	.682	.465
P02	530	4	1	5	4.58	.034	.781	.610
P03	530	3	2	5	3.51	.032	.726	.526
P04	530	4	1	5	4.59	.028	.651	.424
P05	530	3	2	5	4.38	.029	.660	.435
P06	530	4	1	5	4.72	.029	.675	.455
P07	530	4	1	5	3.62	.040	.911	.831
P08	530	4	1	5	4.43	.036	.827	.685
P09	530	3	2	5	3.56	.034	.784	.614
P10	530	3	2	5	3.56	.032	.747	.557
P11	530	3	2	5	3.98	.040	.927	.860
P12	530	4	1	5	3.90	.031	.706	.498
P13	530	4	1	5	3.74	.039	.887	.787
P14	530	4	1	5	3.76	.038	.879	.773
P15	530	4	1	5	3.75	.036	.818	.668
P16	530	3	2	5	4.05	.034	.783	.614
P17	530	4	1	5	3.95	.031	.712	.508
P18	529	4	1	5	3.75	.040	.925	.855
P19	530	4	1	5	4.38	.041	.948	.898
P20	530	3	2	5	4.62	.027	.614	.377
P21	530	4	1	5	4.48	.033	.749	.560
P22	530	4	1	5	4.41	.033	.764	.583
P23	530	4	1	5	4.46	.035	.816	.665
P24	530	3	2	5	4.01	.031	.721	.520
P25	530	4	1	5	3.74	.037	.861	.742
P26	530	3	2	5	4.15	.033	.762	.581
P27	530	3	2	5	4.49	.030	.699	.489
P28	530	2	3	5	4.12	.029	.676	.457
P29	530	4	1	5	3.98	.028	.652	.425
P30	530	4	1	5	4.62	.026	.595	.354

Based on Table 3, the responses to items P01–P30 were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and variance, reflecting patterns of gratitude among 530 participants. The highest mean values (P06 = 4.72, 'My health is a blessing from God'; P30 = 4.62, 'I feel I have been granted enough; it is my responsibility to assist those who are less fortunate'), while the lowest mean (P03 = 3.51, 'God does not play a significant role in the success I have achieved'), suggest more neutral or lower responses. Items P01, P03, P07, P09, P10, P11, and P13 are classified as unfavorable statements, primarily within the SA and PF aspects, with means ranging from 3.5 to 3.9. These scores reflect a tendency of respondents to disagree with negative statements, such as "God is unjust" or "I feel

lonely," indicating that the majority of respondents reject negative expressions, aligning with the expectation for unfavorable items. Conversely, items P02, P04, P05, P06, P08, P19, P20, P21, P22, P23, P27, and P30, categorized as favorable, show higher means (4.38–4.72), affirming positive values like helping others and acknowledging God's role. These items reflect an active engagement in gratitude-related behaviors, such as participating in social causes and receiving social support, which align with the values promoted within IMM and PMII.

The variability in standard deviations (0.595–0.948) suggests differences in responses across participants. Items with higher means generally show lower standard deviations, indicating strong consensus on positive values. This supports the notion that EG is the strongest dimension. The instrument's distribution of responses suggests reliability and effectiveness in detecting varying gratitude levels, making it suitable for further construct validity testing and application in psychological measurement.

Descriptive Profile of Student Gratitude

To assess the overall levels of gratitude among students, the total scores were categorized into three levels: low, moderate, and high. The distribution is as follows:

Table 4. Gratitude Categorization Result

Gratitude Level	Total Score Range	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Low	30–69	22	4.15%
Moderate	70–109	185	34.9%
High	110–150	323	61.1%
Total		530	100%

This classification reveals that the vast majority of students (61.1%) exhibited high levels of gratitude, with only a small proportion (4.15%) scoring in the low range. These findings suggest that, overall, the students from both IMM and PMII demonstrate a strong tendency toward gratitude, particularly in terms of expressing their gratitude through collective and prosocial behaviors. This strong inclination can be attributed to the organizational culture shaped by the Islamic values imparted within the organizations, which emphasize social responsibility, empathy, and collective welfare, core principles of Islamic teachings. Through this culture, IMM and PMII nurture a sense of moral duty, promoting acts of kindness, volunteerism, and social service.

DISCUSSION

The Role of Organizational Culture in Shaping Gratitude among IMM and PMII Students

The data from both quantitative surveys and qualitative virtual group discussions (VGD) show that the organizational cultures of IMM (Indonesian Muhammadiyah Student Association) and PMII (Indonesian Muslim Students Movement) significantly contribute to developing gratitude among their members. The prominence of expressions of gratitude (EG) highlights the organization's strong emphasis on these values. This high level of gratitude further reinforces the idea that organizational culture, especially in faith-based student organizations, plays a pivotal role in shaping students' emotional, social, and moral development. In the VGD with six respondents, their answers reflected the three dimensions of gratitude: sense of appreciation (SA), positive feelings (PF), and expressions of gratitude (EG) among students. As the data suggests, the organizational culture in both IMM and PMII creates a strong sense of collective responsibility, with students feeling deeply connected to one another and the broader community. Specifically, they highlighted how IMM and PMII foster a deep appreciation for life's blessings and encourage positive emotional responses, as well as the active expression of gratitude through social service and community involvement.

Qualitative Insights: The Three Dimensions of Gratitude

a. Sense of Appreciation (SA)

The Sense of Appreciation (SA) serves as a cornerstone in fostering gratitude within IMM and PMII. Respondent 1 (IMM, female) emphasized, *"Gratitude is essential in helping us remain positive and focused on our academic and organizational challenges. IMM teaches us to be thankful for every opportunity given by Allah and to share kindness with others."* This statement underscores IMM's emphasis on gratitude as a central value in both personal development and organizational life. IMM actively fosters a culture where students are encouraged not only to appreciate the educational opportunities they receive but also to recognize the support and kindness from others. By doing so, IMM cultivates a sense of appreciation that extends beyond individual success, promoting a holistic view of gratitude that encompasses personal and collective growth.

Further elaborating on this, Respondent 2 (IMM, male) added, *"The organizational activities have taught me to value every process, both in academic pursuits and the challenges of life. I have learned to seize every opportunity for growth, whether through insights gained from professors, peers, or organizational experiences."* This perspective highlights how IMM's activities not only teach academic skills but also foster an environment that encourages students to value the process of learning itself, including challenges and interactions within the organization. Such an environment nurtures an SA that extends to every aspect of the students' experiences, including their academic and social development.

The teachings of Islam, embedded within IMM, further reinforce this value. Islam encourages gratitude for every blessing, no matter how small, fostering a culture of appreciation that is integral to the organization's mission. As Pohan et al. (2025) posits, religious communities like IMM often cultivate gratitude through shared responsibilities, social support, and an emphasis on collective well-being. These principles encourage students to acknowledge both the tangible and intangible blessings in their lives, deepening their appreciation for the opportunities they have.

Similarly, in PMII, the organizational culture supports the development of SA through active engagement in social causes. Respondent 1 (PMII, male) shared, *"In PMII, we learn to be grateful by engaging in social actions like distributing food during Ramadan. This helps us focus on the needs of others and strengthens our sense of empathy and community."* This statement illustrates how SA in PMII is intertwined with social action. The connection between a sense of appreciation and social action is clear. The religious teachings and cultural practices within PMII encourage students to express gratitude by focusing on the needs of others, reinforcing the idea that appreciation for one's blessings should be reciprocated through prosocial behaviors. Religious organizations promote prosocial behavior by emphasizing that gratitude should lead to action (Al-Thani, 2025; Foulds et al., 2025). This is evident in both IMM and PMII, where the culture of gratitude extends beyond individual acknowledgment and becomes a catalyst for social engagement and collective well-being.

b. Positive Feelings (PF)

Another dimension of gratitude that emerged strongly in the discussions is Positive Feelings (PF). Respondent 3 (IMM, Female) explained, *"In IMM, gratitude is not just about words but actions. We are encouraged to actively participate in social causes and to be grateful for the support of others. This cultural approach fosters a sense of community."* This statement underscores how gratitude, when expressed through prosocial actions such as volunteering and supporting others, generates positive emotional outcomes. IMM's organizational culture encourages active participation, enabling students to transform their gratitude into meaningful actions that benefit the community, thereby fostering emotional resilience.

This aligns with research by Long et al. (2025), who found that religious communities, by emphasizing communal values and shared responsibilities, often cultivate prosocial behaviors that lead to stronger positive feelings. Such behaviors help individuals feel more connected to their community and enhance their emotional resilience. Similarly, Emmons and McCullough (Fuertes, 2024b; Man & Jing, 2025b; Wong et al., 2024) argue that gratitude, when expressed through action, contributes significantly to emotional well-being, as it fosters a sense of fulfillment and interconnectedness. In this

way, IMM's focus on active expressions of gratitude not only reinforces the importance of social support but also nurtures positive emotional outcomes within the organization.

Furthermore, Respondent 3 (PMII, Female) elaborated, "PMII has helped me cultivate a positive outlook on life, fostering openness, acceptance, and a focus on appreciating each step in both personal and organizational journeys." This perspective highlights how PMII's culture nurtures PF not only by cultivating a sense of gratitude for personal blessings but also by fostering emotional resilience and an openness toward others. The emphasis on gratitude as a core value empowers students to develop a positive outlook, which is essential for promoting emotional well-being and attaining a sense of accomplishment.

This view demonstrates that gratitude, when integrated into both spiritual and social practices, leads to stronger positive feelings that promote emotional well-being and a deeper connection with others. In PMII, students are encouraged to experience gratitude not only as an internal attitude but also as a social and spiritual expression, enhancing their overall sense of positivity and fulfillment. Shaukat et al. (2025) and Basit et al. (2024) argue that religious and cultural organizations help individuals channel their gratitude into prosocial behaviors, which ultimately contribute to a greater sense of emotional and social connectedness. In both organizations, gratitude serves as a powerful tool for personal transformation and social bonding. While IMM focuses more on practical engagement and community service, PMII places a strong emphasis on spiritual and social gratitude, both of which contribute to students' emotional well-being and a stronger sense of community.

c. Expressions of Gratitude (EG)

The final dimension, EG, was discussed in great detail by the respondents, who emphasized the importance of demonstrating gratitude through actions rather than words. Respondent 1 from IMM explained, *"Through participating in fundraising for humanitarian solidarity actions, I express gratitude by helping others in need. These actions make me realize how much we can contribute to society's well-being."* This sentiment aligns with Emmons and McCullough (2003) as cited in Anglin et al. (2022) who argue that gratitude, when actively expressed, leads to greater social cohesion and personal fulfillment. Moreover, Seligman et al. (2005) mentioned in Hakkim & Deb (2022) support this by noting that acts of kindness, like those demonstrated in fundraising, can enhance the emotional well-being of both the giver and the recipient, reinforcing the connection between gratitude and social action.

Similarly, Respondent 2 from IMM stated, "Expressing gratitude through blood donation drives helps me give back to the community. It's a way to be thankful for my health and support others in critical times." This view resonates with the findings of Aknin and Whillans (2021) and Post (2014), who explain that gratitude expressed through altruistic behaviors, such as donating blood, enhances both individual well-being and community health. Additionally, Algoe et al. (2016) highlight that such prosocial actions not only improve physical and mental health but also strengthen community bonds, showing how gratitude can fuel acts of generosity.

In PMII, the concept of gratitude through social action was also strongly emphasized. Respondent 3 from PMII shared, "I volunteered for two months in a remote area teaching elementary students. My gratitude is shown through service, helping bridge educational gaps in Indonesia's farthest and most isolated regions." This practice aligns with Liu and Li. (2025), who argue that gratitude expressed through service-oriented activities significantly enhances social connectedness and community resilience. Furthermore, (Mushtariybonu, 2025) explain that such volunteer work fosters a sense of belonging and solidarity, which is central to building strong, cohesive communities.

Lastly, Respondent 4 from PMII expressed, "Joining social action movements with fellow students to raise awareness on social inequality allowed me to express my gratitude. Speaking up for marginalized communities strengthens our shared sense of justice." This response is consistent with Grant (2012) and Hartnett (2010) and Rappaport (2025), who state that gratitude expressed in advocacy fosters a stronger commitment to social justice and equity. Additionally, argue that engagement in social justice movements not only expresses gratitude but also promotes collective empowerment, demonstrating that advocacy is a powerful way to channel gratitude for the collective good.

These actions reflect theoretical perspectives that emphasize the transformative power of gratitude through tangible contributions to the community. The various expert opinions previously discussed

support the tendency among students who are actively involved in organizations, as their sense of gratitude is experienced continuously and has a positive impact on society. Organizational activities, particularly those involving social engagement, provide students with the opportunity to express their gratitude through tangible actions. This is reflected in the findings of the quantitative data, which indicate that the component of EG received the highest average score, with a mean score of 46.02. This score suggests that participants tend to express their gratitude through direct actions, such as helping others and engaging in religious practices as a form of thanks. Students actively involved in organizations, such as IMM and PMII, not only gain emotional benefits from expressing their gratitude but also collectively contribute to the formation of a positive culture that promotes social engagement and societal progress. Thus, the practice of expressing gratitude serves as a mechanism that connects religious values and social culture into concrete activities, benefiting both individuals and the broader community.

Religious and Cultural Values in Gratitude Practices

The values of Islam and the traditions of Indonesian society are instrumental in fostering a positive culture within student organizations such as IMM and PMII. At the core of this cultural framework are the religious teachings and social principles of Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), two of the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia (Hafid et al., 2022; Herlambang & Mappanyompa, 2025). These institutions provide the moral and theological foundations that shape the actions and ethos of their affiliated student organizations. The values upheld by Muhammadiyah and NU profoundly influence how IMM and PMII engage in social action and charitable initiatives, reinforcing their commitment to social justice, community service, and ethical responsibility (Alifuddin et al., 2024; Qorib & Umiarso, 2025). Muhammadiyah, founded in 1912 by Ahmad Dahlan, emphasizes reformist values—promoting social justice, the empowerment of marginalized groups, and the use of education as tools for both personal and societal transformation (Maraulang, 2025). These principles are evident in IMM's activities, which nurture students' commitment to charity, social service, and advocacy for justice. IMM encourages its members to engage in humanitarian aid, social service, and work toward societal reform, aligning with Muhammadiyah's emphasis on purification of society through religious and social change (Amin, 2020).

In contrast, NU, established in 1926, advocates for a moderate approach to Islam, harmonizing Islamic teachings with Indonesia's rich cultural heritage (Sirait, 2024). PMII, grounded in the NU tradition, emphasizes inclusivity, tolerance, and the significance of community service. PMII's activities, ranging from social justice advocacy, poverty alleviation, to public education deeply rooted in NU's values of social welfare and community solidarity (Miftah & Erzad, 2024). NU's inclusive and moderate stance enables PMII to foster a shared sense of responsibility, focusing on empowering communities while respecting the diversity of Indonesia's social and religious fabric. The influence of Muhammadiyah and NU extends beyond religious and social action to guidance and counseling, where their emphasis on moral development, empathy, and social responsibility aligns closely with positive psychology and values-based counseling approaches. Both IMM and PMII instill values that encourage students to develop emotional intelligence and social responsibility, crucial components for counselors who seek to not only support individual growth but also contribute positively to the broader community.

Furthermore, Indonesia's cultural value of gotong royong (mutual cooperation) significantly strengthens these values. This tradition encourages students to engage in collective efforts for the betterment of society, promoting positive behaviors and collaboration within IMM and PMII. By practicing gotong royong, students actively contribute to community welfare, fostering a cooperative, inclusive, and supportive organizational culture (Viridiyanti, 2025). The application of gotong royong enhances the gratitude expressed by students, ensuring that their contributions are not only inwardly felt but also expressed through collective action aimed at societal well-being. Through the incorporation of religious values and Indonesian cultural traditions into counseling practices, IMM and PMII establish a holistic framework that fosters counselors dedicated to ethical conduct, community welfare, and the emotional growth of individuals. This integration of spiritual and social values into guidance practices enables counselors to support clients holistically, addressing not only personal growth but also broader societal needs.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study offer valuable insights for the development of student leadership and organizational culture within educational institutions. One of the key takeaways is the potential for campus counselors and student organization mentors to design programs that integrate gratitude as a core value. By embedding gratitude into student development initiatives such as leadership training, mentoring programs, and reflection journals, educational institutions can cultivate more empathetic, socially responsible, and ethically grounded leaders. Moreover, the incorporation of collective spiritual practices that emphasize gratitude can significantly enhance students' emotional resilience and ethical commitment, encouraging a holistic approach to personal and social growth.

IMM (Indonesian Muhammadiyah Student Association) and PMII (Indonesian Muslim Students Movement) exemplify how student organizations can serve as models for fostering both critical thinking and moral transformation. Grounded in Islamic values and cultural traditions, these organizations demonstrate that student leadership can be not only intellectually challenging but also ethically transformative. Their integration of religious and cultural values into everyday practices illustrates how students can simultaneously develop intellectually and ethically, contributing positively to both their personal lives and the community at large.

A fundamental implication of these findings is the need for institutions to strengthen character-building programs that are grounded in gratitude. Cultivating a culture of gratitude helps institutions equip students with more than just intellectual skills. It fosters the emotional intelligence and ethical responsibility necessary for making meaningful contributions to society. This gratitude-based framework supports the development of emotionally intelligent and socially engaged individuals who can lead with integrity, compassion, and a commitment to societal well-being.

In the field of Guidance and Counseling, the integration of gratitude into student development programs holds significant promise. Through the inclusion of gratitude into counseling practices, guidance counselors can help students build emotional resilience, self-awareness, and prosocial behaviors, all of which are essential for their personal, academic, and social success. Gratitude-based interventions provide counselors with tools to help students manage stress, improve well-being, and enhance emotional intelligence. Furthermore, by instilling gratitude as a core principle, counselors can promote ethical decision-making and social responsibility, equipping students to navigate complex social dynamics in personal and professional settings. This approach aligns with positive psychology and the growing emphasis on holistic well-being in contemporary counseling practices.

While the study provides valuable insights, its limitations, such as the focus on only two organizations and reliance on self-report data, suggest areas for further exploration. Future research should expand to include other organizations and employ more robust methodologies to deepen the understanding of gratitude's impact on student development and social well-being. Expanding the study to include other student organizations would increase the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, developing and testing gratitude-based interventions grounded in religious values and collective action could provide valuable insights into fostering social connections, mental well-being, and leadership skills among students. These interventions would further enhance the understanding of gratitude's impact within student organizations, offering practical applications for promoting personal and communal development.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all parties involved in this research. Special thanks are extended to the respondents from the seven universities who generously dedicated their time and effort to complete the gratitude survey instrument. Their valuable contributions were crucial to the success of this study, and we deeply appreciate their participation.

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