



## BEYOND THE CIRCLE: THE SPREAD OF IMM CADRES ACROSS STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS IN MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITIES

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### ABSTRACT

This study critically examines the role of the Muhammadiyah Student Association (Ikatan Mahasiswa Muhammadiyah—IMM) in preparing functional cadres for student organizations (Ormawa) at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta (UMS). As an autonomous student wing of Muhammadiyah, IMM holds a strategic mandate in leadership development—not only for its internal structure but also to support the broader ecosystem of student leadership within the university. Employing a descriptive approach with a mixed-methods design, the study integrates basic quantitative analysis through percentage-based calculations and qualitative analysis using the Miles and Huberman model, which involves data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and document analysis. The findings reveal that in 2022, IMM's contribution to the formation of functional cadres in Ormawa accounted for only 4% of the total leadership demand, indicating a significant gap between the organization's idealized role and its actual implementation. Key challenges identified include low student participation in the *Darul Arqam Dasar* (DAD) training program and insufficient cadre readiness in terms of ideological understanding and leadership capacity. The study recommends a comprehensive strengthening of cadre development strategies—both in quality and quantity—to enhance IMM's contribution to student leadership sustainability at UMS.

**Keywords:** Muhammadiyah; Student Organization; IMM; Cadre Development; Student Leadership

### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji secara kritis peran Ikatan Mahasiswa Muhammadiyah (IMM) dalam menyiapkan kader fungsionaris organisasi mahasiswa (Ormawa) di Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta (UMS). Sebagai organisasi otonom Muhammadiyah di tingkat mahasiswa, IMM memegang mandat strategis dalam proses kaderisasi, tidak hanya untuk kebutuhan internal organisasi, tetapi juga dalam mendukung keberlanjutan kepemimpinan di berbagai Ormawa di lingkungan kampus. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif dengan metode campuran: analisis kuantitatif sederhana berbasis persentase dan analisis kualitatif model Miles dan Huberman yang mencakup tahapan reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam dan studi dokumentasi. Temuan utama menunjukkan bahwa kontribusi IMM dalam menyiapkan kader fungsionaris Ormawa pada tahun 2022 hanya mencapai 4% dari total kebutuhan yang ada, mengindikasikan adanya disparitas yang signifikan antara idealisasi peran strategis IMM dan realitas implementasinya. Kendala utama yang diidentifikasi mencakup rendahnya partisipasi mahasiswa dalam kegiatan Darul Arqam Dasar (DAD) dan lemahnya kapasitas kader dalam hal ideologis maupun kepemimpinan. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan penguatan strategi kaderisasi berbasis kualitas dan kuantitas secara simultan guna memperkuat peran IMM dalam membangun ekosistem kepemimpinan mahasiswa yang berkelanjutan di UMS.

**Kata Kunci:** Muhammadiyah; Organisasi Mahasiswa; IMM; Kaderisasi; Kepemimpinan Mahasiswa



## INTRODUCTION

Organizational development is often not accompanied by a proportional growth of successor cadres, leading to potential imbalances that can undermine institutional sustainability (Al-Kindi, 2019). A robust cadre system is essential to ensure both continuity and the realization of organizational objectives. This imperative is particularly relevant for *Muhammadiyah*, a major Islamic movement in Indonesia, which relies heavily on its cadre-based infrastructure to sustain its mission (Rahman & Rahman, 2024). Within the Muhammadiyah ecosystem, autonomous organizations (*Organisasi Otonom*, or Ortom) serve as vital arms for cadre development, nurturing individuals to become future leaders within the broader Muhammadiyah structure (Kadar Risman, 2022; Ibnu Rusd, 2020). Among these, the Muhammadiyah Student Association (*Ikatan Mahasiswa Muhammadiyah* or IMM) holds a strategic position within the Muhammadiyah Youth (*Angkatan Muda Muhammadiyah/AMM*), yet its practical effectiveness in contributing to leadership regeneration remains insufficiently examined (Ibrahim et al., 2024).

As an official Ortom of Muhammadiyah, IMM carries the mandate to foster the religious, intellectual, and social development of Muslim university students (IMM, 2021; Susanti et al., 2024). Conceived as both a student movement and a leadership incubator, IMM is tasked with preparing cadres not only for its internal hierarchy but also for broader participation in student governance and civil society. With a structured presence from campus-based commissariats to national leadership, IMM is institutionally positioned to produce high-quality leadership. However, the degree to which IMM translates its vision into a tangible impact across campus-based student

organizations (*Organisasi Mahasiswa*, Ormawa) remains an open question. In particular, there is a need to assess how effectively IMM channels its training programs into external organizational ecosystems—beyond its own internal sphere.

Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta (UMS), one of the leading Muhammadiyah Higher Education Institutions (*Perguruan Tinggi Muhammadiyah*, PTM), offers a critical case for evaluating IMM's cadre development function. IMM is expected not only to facilitate internal leadership formation but also to influence student leadership dynamics across campus. In this context, IMM is entrusted to embody the principle of *fastabiqul khairat* (competing in goodness) and to align the student movement with Muhammadiyah's broader socio-religious mission (Hidayat et al., 2018; Kamil Waruwu et al., 2023). However, a persistent gap between IMM's strategic ideals and its empirical influence raises concerns about the depth and reach of its cadre regeneration strategy. This discrepancy underscores the necessity for empirical scrutiny into the structure, implementation, and outcomes of IMM's leadership development programs.

The question of IMM's efficacy in cultivating a sustainable leadership pipeline reflects broader organizational concerns that encompass structural, doctrinal, and contextual dimensions (Nashir, 2000; Risman & Asman, 2023). At UMS, IMM is widely perceived as a central actor in realizing this vision. The Surakarta branch, in particular, has demonstrated promising indicators, such as strong organizational loyalty—a result of a distinctive culture that combines structural discipline with normative commitment (Amrulloh, 2020). Nevertheless, such internal achievements do not automatically translate into influence beyond IMM's organizational borders. Understanding the extent and limitations of IMM's diaspora—its spread

and presence within various student organizations—is therefore essential for evaluating the organization’s broader relevance.

This study seeks to explore the organizational diaspora of IMM across student bodies at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta. It focuses on how IMM members are integrated into various student organizations, from faculty-level associations to university-wide councils, and investigates the effectiveness of IMM’s cadre formation programs—particularly the *Darul Arqam Dasar* (DAD)—in preparing student leaders. It also addresses the practical challenges IMM faces, such as limited institutional resources, uneven student participation, and the coordination dynamics with other campus entities. This inquiry aligns with recent findings highlighting the interplay between ideological commitment and organizational performance in student leadership development (Lailam et al., 2022).

Accordingly, this research is guided by the following question: To what extent does IMM contribute to the preparation and distribution of leadership cadres within student organizations at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, and what structural or situational challenges shape this process? The primary objective is to analyze IMM’s strategic role in shaping campus-based leadership, evaluate the effectiveness of its training mechanisms, and identify key obstacles and opportunities in its leadership diaspora. Through this investigation, the study aims to contribute to the academic discourse on Islamic student movements, offering critical insights into how ideological, organizational, and contextual factors converge in shaping leadership formation within Muhammadiyah’s educational framework.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopted a qualitative case study design, enriched with basic quantitative data to support and contextualize the analysis (Safira Zai & Atiyyatul Fahiroh, 2024). The case study approach was selected for its capacity to explore complex social phenomena in depth and within their natural settings. It was deemed particularly suitable for examining the dynamics of cadre development and the dissemination of leadership (here referred to as "diaspora") within the Muhammadiyah Student Association (IMM) at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta.

Data collection relied on two primary techniques: semi-structured interviews and document analysis. These methods were employed to elicit rich, nuanced accounts of the lived experiences and institutional practices surrounding cadre training and organizational leadership. Complementing the qualitative data, basic descriptive statistics—such as percentages of cadre participation in structured programs—were used to offer a numerical lens that helped strengthen the analytical foundation.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling, targeting individuals with first-hand experience and contextual knowledge of IMM’s internal training programs and its broader organizational ecosystem. The study engaged 12 informants, including current and former IMM leaders, cadre trainers, student organization representatives (Ormawa), and faculty advisors overseeing student affairs. This sample was deemed sufficient to reach data saturation, where additional interviews yielded diminishing returns in terms of new insights.

The interviews were guided by a semi-structured protocol comprising open-ended core questions clustered around key themes:

experiences with cadre training (e.g., Darul Arqam Dasar), pathways to leadership, organizational support systems, and strategic challenges in IMM's leadership outreach efforts. Probing questions were employed to delve into participants' motivations, value orientations, and their interpretations of IMM's institutional role.

Parallel to the interviews, a documentary analysis was undertaken to triangulate findings and deepen the contextual understanding. The documents reviewed included official IMM records, cadre training materials, leadership activity reports, and resolutions issued by IMM and affiliated student bodies. These materials were accessed through both formal channels—such as institutional requests to IMM commissariats and university offices—and informal networks via key informants who shared internal organizational documents. The document analysis served not only to validate interview data but also to clarify procedural norms and trace the strategic evolution of cadre development initiatives within IMM.

Data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman (as cited in Sugiyono, 2010), which involves three interconnected stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. In the data reduction phase, interview transcripts and documents were meticulously reviewed, with salient information coded and grouped under thematic categories such as cadre formation, leadership diaspora, and institutional challenges. This was followed by the data display phase, during which categorized data were organized into thematic matrices and comparative tables, enabling a cross-case analysis of perspectives across informant types. In the final phase, conclusions were drawn based on emergent patterns and subsequently verified through triangulation

with documentary evidence and, where necessary, follow-up consultations with participants.

To ensure research trustworthiness, the study employed multiple strategies. Methodological triangulation was conducted by comparing data from diverse sources, while informant heterogeneity across IMM commissariats and organizational roles helped prevent mono-perspective bias. Additionally, the researcher maintained ongoing reflexivity, critically examining their own positionality and interpretive assumptions throughout the research process. This reflexive stance helped sustain analytic objectivity and ensure fidelity to the study's aims.

## RESULTS

### Identification of Student Organization Officer Needs at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta

The mapping of student organizations (Ormawa) at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta (UMS) reveals a complex and expansive structure involving organizations at university, faculty, and residential levels. These organizations serve vital functions in fostering student leadership, religious engagement, academic collaboration, and community service.

At the university level, Ormawa are grouped into two main categories: (1) cadre and da'wah-based organizations, and (2) general-purpose student bodies. The cadre and da'wah-based organizations consist of seven main groups, including Ikatan Mahasiswa Muhammadiyah (IMM) Korkom, Hizbul Wathan (HW), Tapak Suci Putera Muhammadiyah (TS-PM), Mahasiswa Pecinta Al-Qur'an (MPQ), Lembaga Dakwah dan Pengabdian Masyarakat (LDM-PM), the student press Ar-Rasail, and Namlah, a student Arabic debate group.

Other university-level student bodies include the Student Executive Board (BEM-U), the Student Representative Council (DPM-U), and a diverse set of Student Activity Units (UKM-U), which are classified into five domains: Publication, Sports, Martial Arts, Arts, and Special Interests. Among these, notable publication units include LPM Campus and LPM Pabelan; sports units encompass football, volleyball, basketball, badminton, and tennis; martial arts units outside cadre groups include Lemkari, Taekwondo, and Kempo. Arts units consist of the university marching band, student choir (PSM Voca Al-Kindi), and a film and arts group (USF). Meanwhile, Special Interest units feature the likes of Rapma Radio, the Muhammadiyah University English Course (MUEC), the English Debating Society (MEDS), Malimpa (nature lovers), Prisma (research development), Kopma (student cooperative), and KMS (emergency corps).

Across these various university-level organizations, a total of 998 student functionaries are involved, with an average of 33 functionaries per organization. Full breakdown of these numbers is presented in Table 2.

At the faculty and program levels, student organizations become increasingly decentralized. Each faculty maintains its own internal structure, typically composed of an IMM commissariat, a Student Representative Council (DPM), a Student Executive Board (BEM), and one or more faculty-level Student Activity Units (UKM-U). Furthermore, each academic program supports a Student Association (*Himpunan Mahasiswa Program Studi* or HMP) tailored to its specific field of study. In total, 103 faculty-level organizations operate across 12 faculties, supported by 3,399 student functionaries.

Additionally, student leadership structures extend into residential education environments, notably Pondok Hajjah Nuriyah Shobron and Pesma KH. Mas Mansyur. In these institutions, leadership is represented by IMM commissariats and the International Student Organization (ISO), the latter functioning as a student executive body for international students. Altogether, these three residential organizations account for an additional 92 student leaders.

In total, the number of student functionaries required to maintain the university's student organization system stands at 4,489, as summarized in the following tables.

**Table 1. Number of Student Organizations at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta**

No.	Organizational Category	Number of Organizations
1	University Level	30
2	Faculty and Study Program Level (across 12 faculties)	
3	Residential Institutions (Shobron and Pesma)	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>136</b>

**Table 2. Number of Student Functionaries Across Organizational Levels**

No.	Category of Student Organization	Number of Functionaries
1.	University-Level Ormawa (BEM-U, DPM-U, etc.)	36
2.	Publication Units (3 UKM-U)	99
3.	Sports Units (4 UKM-U)	99
4.	Martial Arts Units (4 UKM-U)	159
5.	Arts Units (3 UKM-U)	73

6.	Special Interest Units (13 UKM-U)	532
	<b>Total (University Level)</b>	<b>998</b>
7.	Faculty-Level Organizations (103 Ormawa)	<b>3.399</b>
8.	Residential Organizations (Shobron & Pema)	92
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>4,489</b>

### Student Participation in Darul Arqam Dasar (DAD)

A key concern arising from the above organizational structure is the apparent imbalance between leadership roles available and the ideological preparation received through cadre formation programs. Darul Arqam Dasar (DAD), as a foundational leadership and ideological training initiative aligned with Muhammadiyah values, is expected to serve as a preparatory platform for all student functionaries. However, during the study period, only 249 students across all faculties participated in DAD.

While faculties such as Islamic Studies (43 participants), Psychology (33), and Communication and Informatics (24) reported moderate levels of involvement, other faculties lagged significantly. Geography, for instance, saw only three participants, and Law only seven. These discrepancies signal a significant shortfall in structured leadership preparation across the student body.

**Table 3. Number of Students Participating in Darul Arqam Dasar by Faculty**

No.	Faculty	DAD Participants
1	Islamic Studies	43
2	Psychology	33
3	Communication and Informatics	24

4	Teacher Training and Education	25
5	Economics and Business	25
6	Engineering	20
7	Medicine	23
8	Dentistry	17
9	Health Sciences	18
10	Pharmacy	11
11	Law	7
12	Geography	3
Total		249

The stark contrast between the 4,489 organizational roles and the limited number of trained participants underscores a critical issue: the need to institutionalize cadre training for all student functionaries. This is essential to maintain the ideological integrity and leadership quality within Muhammadiyah-based student organizations.

### DISCUSSION

#### The Strategic Role of IMM in Preparing Cadres for Student Organization Leadership

The role of *Ikatan Mahasiswa Muhammadiyah* (IMM) in shaping student leadership at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta (UMS) is both strategic and indispensable. IMM serves not merely as a student association but as a key actor in the structured development of leadership cadres across campus-based organizations. Its function extends beyond faculty-based representation to include special residential environments such as the Hajjah Nuriyah Shobron Dormitory and the KH. Mas Mansyur International Student Boarding School (*Pesma*), which operate not only as student housing but also as formative spaces for character building and leadership cultivation in alignment with Muhammadiyah values.

This study examines IMM's cadre development initiatives by focusing on *Darul Arqam Dasar* (DAD)—a foundational leadership training program that introduces students to Muhammadiyah's philosophical, ideological, and organizational principles. As the first formal stage in the Muhammadiyah leadership pipeline, DAD is designed to produce intellectually competent, morally grounded, and spiritually conscious individuals who are expected to contribute meaningfully to both intra-campus organizations and broader societal contexts.

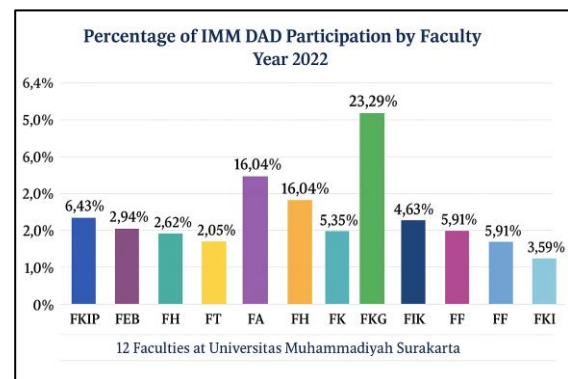
To evaluate IMM's effectiveness in fulfilling cadre demands for student organizational structures, a basic quantitative analysis was conducted using DAD participation rates as the primary indicator. This metric was chosen for its formal and structured nature, making it a reliable proxy for systematic cadre preparation. The findings indicate that in the observed academic year, 249 students from 12 faculties and an additional 30 from the IMM Hajjah Nuriyah Shobron Dormitory participated in DAD. This figure corresponds to 7.32% of the total incoming student population, highlighting a modest yet significant level of formal cadre engagement.

When juxtaposed with the institutional demand for approximately 4,489 student organization functionaries across faculties, the participation rate underscores both the impact and the limitations of IMM's current outreach. It suggests a need for expanded recruitment strategies and broader institutional collaboration to ensure that leadership development efforts through DAD can more comprehensively meet organizational demands.

The distribution of DAD participation across faculties also offers a diagnostic insight into where IMM's influence is

strongest and where further engagement is needed. While this study employs a basic descriptive approach, it opens avenues for more nuanced inquiries—such as longitudinal tracking of cadre performance post-DAD or comparative analysis with other campus-based leadership programs. Ultimately, this research affirms IMM's pivotal role in student leadership formation, while also emphasizing the need for continual evaluation and strategic enhancement of its cadre development mechanisms.

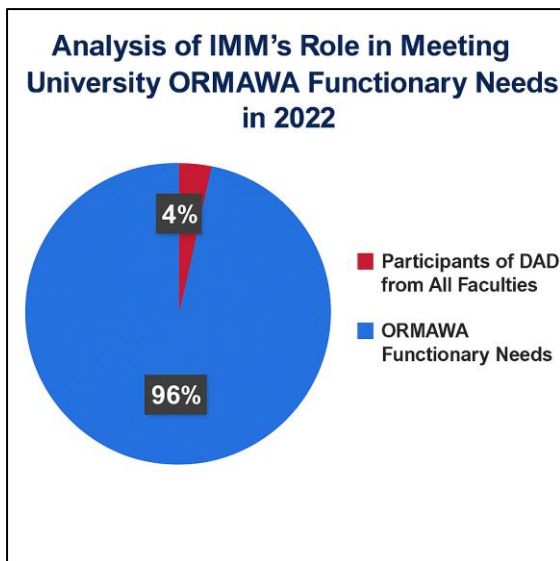
**Picture 1. Distribution of IMM DAD Participation Across Faculties**



The data illustrated in Picture 1 indicates that the proportion of IMM-affiliated students who participated in *Darul Arqam Dasar* (DAD) and subsequently served as organization functionaries within each faculty in 2022 reached only 4%, amounting to just 249 individuals. This figure is disproportionately low in light of the university's cadre policy, which explicitly prioritizes students with DAD certification for formal leadership roles (Susila, Ihwan; Alghofari, Ahmad Khold; Hendrawan, Muhammad Al Fatih; Shobahiya, 2022). The remaining 96% gap points to a critical underrepresentation of IMM-trained cadres and raises questions about the organization's effectiveness in responding to leadership demands at the faculty level.

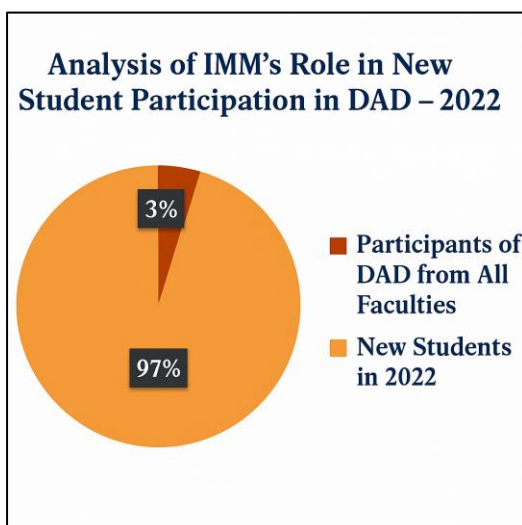


**Picture 2. IMM's Institutional Contribution to University-Level Student Leadership**



In Picture 2, IMM's overall contribution to the provision of university-wide student organization functionaries is quantified at just 3%, based on the number of new students who joined DAD in 2022. Of the total 7,049 newly admitted students, only 249 underwent the required DAD training, leaving 97% without the prioritized credential for student leadership. This stark imbalance highlights not only IMM's limited reach but also a broader structural issue in the cadre development pipeline at the university level.

**Picture 3. Proportion of DAD Participants Among Incoming Students in 2022**



As shown in Picture 3, the proportion of new students participating in DAD during 2022 was critically low. The data underscores the persistent challenge in mobilizing broader student engagement with IMM's cadre programs. This trend may be attributed to a lack of awareness, interest, or perceived relevance among students regarding the DAD initiative. The low participation rate, therefore, demands strategic reorientation in IMM's recruitment efforts, communication strategies, and program design to better resonate with the motivations of the university's evolving student demographic.

### **Challenges and Strategic Responses in Cadre Development within Ikatan Mahasiswa Muhammadiyah (IMM) at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta**

Ikatan Mahasiswa Muhammadiyah (IMM) operates in alignment with the ideological mission of Muhammadiyah, particularly the call to *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*, and aspires to contribute meaningfully to the realization of Muhammadiyah's broader ideals (Putra, 2019). As stipulated in the Statute of Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta (UMS), Section Three, Article 94, the leadership of student organizations at the university, faculty, and study program levels must be filled by Muhammadiyah cadres, particularly those affiliated with IMM.

To foster a deeper understanding of *Kemuhammadiyahan*, students are encouraged to participate in *Darul Arqam Dasar* (DAD), which serves as the principal entry point into IMM membership (Islam, 2021; Saleh, Asmara, & Khasanah, 2023). This initiation mechanism is expected to facilitate the distribution of IMM cadres across various student organizations—from university-level bodies down to program-level associations—thereby expanding the influence of *dakwah*



*amar ma'ruf nabi munkar* across the entire student ecosystem at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta.

Nevertheless, the ideal vision of IMM's role in cultivating Islamic leadership within student organizations is not without challenges. Based on interviews conducted with IMM members and stakeholders, several obstacles were identified that hinder the effective preparation and deployment of cadres. Concurrently, a number of strategic responses were also suggested to address these challenges and optimize the function of IMM as a transformative leadership institution. The identified challenges and proposed solutions are summarized in the table below.

**Table 3. Challenges and Strategic Responses in Cadre Development**

No.	Challenge	Strategic Response
1.	Limited number of deployable cadres	Expand recruitment through DAD and strengthen post-DAD mentoring and development programs.
2.	Inadequate cadre preparedness	Enhance the quality of training with personalized and targeted coaching approaches.
3.	Delays in cadre deployment	Ensure timely deployment of DAD graduates through synchronized coordination and retention strategies.
4.	Cadres' reluctance to engage in <i>Ormawa</i>	Provide ideological enrichment and confidence-building programs to empower engagement beyond IMM.
5.	Lack of communication among cadres	Foster more structured interaction through frequent and meaningful

		coordination forums.
6.	Shift in cadre loyalty toward <i>Ormawa</i>	Reinforce Muhammadiyah identity and ideological grounding through continuous education and internal consolidation.
7.	Scheduling conflicts between IMM and <i>Ormawa</i>	Cultivate time-management awareness and create flexible scheduling mechanisms.
8.	Prevalent individualism among students	Promote the value of soft skills and community engagement as essential complements to academic and professional development.

These findings reflect IMM's ongoing struggle to balance its internal consolidation with external engagement. They resonate with Muhammadiyah's philosophical foundation as outlined in the *Matan Keyakinan dan Cita-Cita Hidup Muhammadiyah* (MKCHM), which calls for the formation of morally upright, progressive, and socially responsible individuals. IMM is expected not merely to produce functionaries, but to nurture ideologically aligned leaders capable of translating Muhammadiyah's ideals into practical action. This is in accordance with the prophetic model of leadership exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad, particularly through the ethical mandate of *amar ma'ruf nabi munkar*, which remains central to IMM's mission.

In the realm of higher education, student organizations (*Ormawa*) are critical platforms through which students internalize Islamic values while simultaneously developing

essential competencies such as leadership, critical thinking, collaboration, and public responsibility. IMM plays a pivotal role in this ecosystem by ensuring that its cadres are not only active participants in these organizations, but also act as bearers of Muhammadiyah's transformative vision. Previous studies support this view, noting IMM's potential as both a spiritual and organizational force within the student body (Subagja, 2016; Hidayat, Husnil; Agustin, Reza Febrina; Azzahra, 2021).

## CONCLUSION

This study sheds light on the strategic yet underleveraged role of *Ikatan Mahasiswa Muhammadiyah* (IMM) in cultivating student leadership within Muhammadiyah-affiliated higher education institutions. Although IMM carries a formal mandate and is ideologically aligned with Muhammadiyah's broader mission, its relatively limited influence in shaping student organizational leadership at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta reveals a significant disconnect between institutional aspirations and the actual processes of cadre development. The findings point to the urgent need to revitalize IMM's leadership framework by adopting more inclusive, systematic, and ideologically coherent training strategies. Enhancing the scale, depth, and consistency of cadre formation may position IMM as a more effective force in advancing *dakwah* and organizational regeneration within the Muhammadiyah movement.

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