

CULTIVATING CIVIC VIRTUE AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT THROUGH STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS: EVIDENCE FROM IPNU SUMBER HARTA

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Abstract: *The cultivation of civic virtue and social engagement among students is increasingly important in addressing social change, declining community participation, and the influence of digital culture. This study examines the role of Ikatan Pelajar Nahdlatul Ulama (IPNU) Sumber Harta in fostering civic virtue and strengthening students' social engagement. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through interviews, participant observation, and document analysis involving organizational advisors, former leaders, active administrators, and community figures. The findings indicate that IPNU promotes civic virtue through responsibility, discipline, tolerance, leadership, civic awareness, and commitment to the common good. The organization also enhances social engagement through religious activities, social services, charitable programs, and community participation initiatives. Supporting factors include strong leadership, value-based organizational culture, cadre development, and community support, while financial limitations and competing responsibilities remain challenges. Faith-based student organizations can serve as effective platforms for civic education and active citizenship development.*

Keywords: *Civic Virtue, Social Engagement, Student Organizations, IPNU, Civic Education, Youth*

INTRODUCTION

The cultivation of civic virtue and social engagement among young people has become one of the central concerns of contemporary education. In an era characterized by rapid technological advancement, digital transformation, and increasing social complexity, educational institutions are challenged not only to produce academically competent graduates but also to nurture responsible citizens who possess strong moral character, social awareness, and active participation in public life. While formal education provides foundational civic knowledge, the formation of civic dispositions and participatory attitudes often requires

experiential learning environments that extend beyond classroom settings.¹ Consequently, student organizations have emerged as strategic platforms for developing civic competencies, leadership capacities, and social responsibility among adolescents and young adults.²

Civic virtue is commonly understood as a collection of moral and civic dispositions that encourage individuals to prioritize the common good, participate in collective affairs, and demonstrate responsibility toward society. Rooted in classical political philosophy, particularly the works of Aristotle, civic virtue emphasizes the importance of active citizenship, ethical conduct, and public engagement as prerequisites for a flourishing society.³ Contemporary scholars further conceptualize civic virtue as encompassing values such as responsibility, discipline, tolerance, respect for diversity, honesty, solidarity, and commitment to democratic principles.⁴ Individuals who possess civic virtue are more likely to contribute positively to their communities, participate in civic activities, and engage constructively in addressing social issues.

Closely related to civic virtue is the concept of social engagement, which refers to individuals' active involvement in social, community, and voluntary activities aimed at promoting collective welfare. Social engagement reflects the practical manifestation of civic values through participation in community service, social action, volunteerism, and collaborative problem-solving initiatives.⁵ Research consistently demonstrates that socially engaged youth tend to exhibit higher levels of empathy, leadership, social responsibility, and civic commitment compared to those who remain detached from community activities.⁶ Therefore, strengthening social engagement among students represents a critical investment in the development of democratic societies and sustainable communities.

The relationship between civic virtue and social engagement has attracted growing scholarly attention. Scholars argue that civic virtue provides the normative foundation for civic participation, while social engagement offers practical opportunities through which civic values

¹ Adiyono Adiyono et al., 'Skills of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Class Management', *Al-Hayat: Journal of Islamic Education* 6, no. 1 (2022): 104–15, <https://doi.org/10.35723/ajie.v6i1.229>.

² Barry Checkoway, 'What Is Youth Participation?', *Children and Youth Services Review* 33, no. 2 (2011): 340–45, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2010.09.017>.

³ Fred Miller, *Aristotle's Political Theory*, 1 July 1998, <https://plato.stanford.edu/eNtRIeS/aristotle-politics/>.

⁴ Barbara Kelly, *Teaching Respect as a Civic Virtue in Diverse Societies*, 2010, <https://doi.org/10.82308/34808>.

⁵ Muhammad Amin Abdullah, 'Islamic Studies in Higher Education in Indonesia: Challenges, Impact and Prospects for the World Community', *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 55, no. 2 (2017): 391–426, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2017.552.391-426>.

⁶ Helen Dancer, 'Power and Rights in the Community: Paralegals as Leaders in Women's Legal Empowerment in Tanzania', *Feminist Legal Studies* 26, no. 1 (2018): 47–64, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10691-018-9371-6>.

are enacted and reinforced.⁷ In this regard, youth organizations, student associations, and community groups serve as important civic learning environments where young people acquire democratic skills, social competencies, and civic commitments through direct participation and interaction with others.⁸ Such organizations function as laboratories of citizenship, enabling members to practice leadership, cooperation, deliberation, and community service in real-world contexts.

Within the Indonesian context, youth and student organizations have historically played a crucial role in shaping civic consciousness, national identity, and social transformation. Since the pre-independence era, youth organizations have served as vehicles for intellectual development, political mobilization, and social activism. Their contribution continues to be relevant in contemporary Indonesia, particularly in strengthening democratic values, social cohesion, and community participation among younger generations.⁹ Among various youth organizations, Ikatan Pelajar Nahdlatul Ulama (IPNU) occupies a distinctive position due to its integration of Islamic values, educational development, and civic engagement.

IPNU, established on February 24, 1954, was founded as a student-based organization under the auspices of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the largest Islamic organization in Indonesia. Since its inception, IPNU has been committed to developing students' intellectual capacity, religious understanding, leadership skills, and social responsibility while preserving the principles of Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah. The organization serves not merely as a forum for extracurricular activities but as a comprehensive cadre-building institution that prepares students to become knowledgeable, morally grounded, socially responsible, and nationally committed citizens. Through various educational, religious, and community-based programs, IPNU seeks to strengthen both personal character and public responsibility among its members.

The significance of IPNU's role becomes increasingly evident in contemporary society, where young people face diverse challenges, including moral degradation, declining social solidarity, excessive individualism, digital dependency, and weakening civic participation. These challenges require educational interventions that extend beyond formal schooling and

⁷ Dewi Ayu Hidayati et al., 'Empowerment Strategy of Village Community Based on Freshwater Aquaculture', *Sosiohumaniora* 23, no. 2 (2021): 141–48, <https://doi.org/10.24198/sosiohumaniora.v23i2.31719>.

⁸ Abdul Goffar and Wildan Miftahussurur, 'Preventing Early Marriage through School–Community Partnerships in Islamic Education', *Dinamika: Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat* 2, no. 2 (2025): 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.70437/dinamika.v2i2.20>.

⁹ Arskal Salim and Azyumardi Azra, eds, 'The Political Backdrop of the Enactment of the Compilation of Islamic Laws in Indonesia', in *Shari'a and Politics in Modern Indonesia* (ISEAS Publishing, 2003), <https://doi.org/10.1355/9789812305206-010>.

engage students in meaningful social experiences. Student organizations such as IPNU offer opportunities for experiential learning through leadership training, organizational management, religious activities, social service programs, community outreach initiatives, and collaborative problem-solving. Such experiences contribute to the internalization of civic values while simultaneously fostering active participation in community affairs.

From a theoretical perspective, this study is informed by Aristotle's concept of civic virtue and Robert Putnam's theory of social capital. Aristotle argued that human beings are inherently social and political creatures whose flourishing depends upon active participation in communal life and the cultivation of moral virtues (Aristotle, 2009). Civic virtue, therefore, develops through habitual engagement in activities that promote collective well-being and social harmony. Meanwhile, Putnam (2000) emphasizes that social networks, trust, and shared norms constitute valuable forms of social capital that facilitate cooperation and collective action. Participation in organizations such as IPNU enables students to build social relationships, strengthen trust, develop shared values, and cultivate civic-minded behaviors.¹⁰ Consequently, student organizations function not only as educational institutions but also as mechanisms for generating social capital and fostering civic development.

Previous studies have highlighted the significant contributions of IPNU and related organizations in various educational and social domains. Research by Al Jawad and Iriani (2024) demonstrates that IPNU contributes substantially to non-formal Islamic education through activities such as Qur'anic recitation programs, religious training, and community-based learning initiatives.¹¹ Similarly, Siregar et al. (2025) found that IPNU plays an important role in character formation through leadership training, religious education, and social service activities.¹² Other studies have emphasized the organization's contribution to community development, communication effectiveness, organizational cohesion, and the internalization of Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah values.¹³

Despite the growing body of research on IPNU and Islamic student organizations, existing studies have largely concentrated on religious education, leadership formation,

¹⁰ Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (Simon and Schuster, 2000).

¹¹ Zahranita Iriani and Ulil Albab Al Jawad, 'Kontribusi IPNU Dan IPPNU Dalam Pengembangan Pendidikan Islam Nonformal Di Kota Sorong', *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 3, no. 1 (2024): 282–95.

¹² Farhan Siregar et al., 'Peran Strategis IPNU Dalam Membangun Karakter Generasi Muda', *At-Tadris: Journal of Islamic Education* 4, no. 1 (2025): 36–47, <https://doi.org/10.56672/gtec7582>.

¹³ Yusuf Hanafiah et al., 'Bridging Science and Religion: A Governance Strategy Islamic Education Institutions at the Secondary Level Based on Scientific Integration', *Al-Fahim : Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 1 (2025): 150–67, <https://doi.org/10.54396/alfahim.v7i1.1892>.

organizational communication, and institutional effectiveness. While these studies acknowledge the educational and social functions of IPNU, they rarely examine the organization through the analytical lenses of civic virtue and social engagement. Consequently, there remains limited understanding of how participation in faith-based student organizations contributes to the formation of civic dispositions, active citizenship, and community-oriented behavior among students.

Moreover, previous studies predominantly focus on organizational outcomes at the institutional level or within urban contexts, leaving a significant empirical gap regarding how civic values are cultivated, internalized, and enacted within grassroots branches operating in local communities. As a result, the micro-level processes through which organizational values are translated into concrete civic practices remain insufficiently explored.

This study addresses these gaps by investigating IPNU Sumber Harta, a grassroots Islamic student organization that has actively implemented leadership, religious, social, and community empowerment programs since 2017. The novelty of this research lies in its integration of civic virtue theory and social capital theory to explain how a faith-based student organization functions as a civic learning arena. Unlike previous studies that emphasize religious or organizational dimensions, this study demonstrates the mechanisms through which civic values are transformed into social engagement practices and identifies the organizational factors that facilitate or constrain this process. By linking Islamic student activism with civic education and community participation, this research offers a new empirical and conceptual perspective on youth civic development in contemporary Indonesia.

Accordingly, this study aims to explore the contribution of IPNU Sumber Harta to the cultivation of civic virtue and social engagement among students, focusing on organizational programs, value internalization processes, and the supporting and inhibiting factors that shape organizational effectiveness.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research approach with a descriptive case study design to explore the contribution of student organizations to the cultivation of civic virtue and social engagement among students. Qualitative research is particularly suitable for investigating social phenomena within their natural settings and for understanding participants' experiences,

perceptions, and meanings in depth.¹⁴ The case study design was selected because it allows researchers to examine a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context and generate a comprehensive understanding of organizational practices and their social implications.¹⁵

The research was conducted at the Pimpinan Anak Cabang (PAC) of the Ikatan Pelajar Nahdlatul Ulama (IPNU) in Sumber Harta District, Musi Rawas Regency, South Sumatra, Indonesia. This location was purposively selected because PAC IPNU Sumber Harta has actively implemented educational, religious, leadership, and social programs aimed at fostering student development and community participation. Furthermore, the organization represents a grassroots-level student movement that has received limited scholarly attention despite its growing role in youth empowerment and civic education.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure the inclusion of individuals possessing relevant knowledge and experience regarding the organization's activities and impacts. A total of eleven informants participated in this study, consisting of three organizational advisors, two former chairpersons, four active administrators, and two community leaders. These participants were considered capable of providing rich and diverse perspectives on the implementation of organizational programs, character formation processes, and social engagement initiatives.

Data were collected between March and May 2026 through three complementary techniques: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore participants' experiences, perceptions, and evaluations concerning the role of IPNU in cultivating civic virtue and social engagement. The interview format allowed flexibility for probing and clarification while maintaining consistency across participants.¹⁶ Participant observation was employed to examine organizational activities directly, including religious gatherings, leadership training sessions, community service programs, and social events. This method enabled the researcher to capture naturally occurring interactions, behaviors, and organizational dynamics. Additionally, document analysis was conducted using organizational records, activity reports, meeting documents, photographs, and other relevant materials to enrich and corroborate the findings.

¹⁴ John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (SAGE Publications, 2016).

¹⁵ Robert K. Yin, *Applications of Case Study Research* (SAGE Publications, 2011).

¹⁶ Steinar Kvale and Svend Brinkmann, *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing* (SAGE, 2009).

Data analysis followed the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, consisting of three interconnected stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data condensation involved selecting, simplifying, and organizing information obtained from interviews, observations, and documents. Subsequently, data were systematically displayed through thematic categorization to facilitate interpretation and pattern identification.¹⁷ Finally, conclusions were drawn through an iterative process of comparing findings across different data sources and refining interpretations until coherent themes emerged.

To ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings, this study employed methodological triangulation and source triangulation. Methodological triangulation was achieved by comparing data obtained through interviews, observations, and document analysis, while source triangulation involved examining information from multiple participant groups.¹⁸ Furthermore, prolonged engagement in the field and continuous verification of emerging findings contributed to enhancing the credibility and dependability of the research results.

Through these methodological procedures, the study sought to provide a comprehensive and reliable understanding of how IPNU Sumber Harta functions as a catalyst for cultivating civic virtue and strengthening social engagement among students within its local community.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Cultivating Civic Virtue through Student Organizational Activities in IPNU Sumber Harta

The findings reveal that IPNU Sumber Harta serves as a significant civic learning environment for students by fostering civic virtue through organizational participation, leadership development, religious activities, and community engagement. Rather than functioning merely as an extracurricular association, IPNU acts as an informal educational institution where students learn to internalize civic values and practice them in everyday social interactions.¹⁹ The organization facilitates the development of civic dispositions such as responsibility, discipline, tolerance, leadership, social awareness, and commitment to collective welfare, all of which are fundamental elements of civic virtue within democratic societies.²⁰

¹⁷ Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*.

¹⁸ Yvonna S. Lincoln and Egon G. Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry* (SAGE, 1985).

¹⁹ Siregar et al., 'Peran Strategis IPNU Dalam Membangun Karakter Generasi Muda'.

²⁰ Robert D. Behn, *Rethinking Democratic Accountability* (Globe Pequot Publishing Group Incorporated/Bloomsbury, 2001).

One of the most evident contributions of IPNU to civic virtue formation is the cultivation of responsibility. The organizational structure requires members to participate actively in planning, implementing, and evaluating various programs. Through committee assignments, leadership roles, and organizational duties, students learn to be accountable not only for themselves but also for the success of collective activities.²¹ This process reflects what Aristotle described as the development of virtue through habitual practice, whereby moral character emerges from repeated engagement in responsible actions.²²

This finding is strongly reflected in the testimony of Marvel Hardianto, the Chairperson of PAC IPNU Sumber Harta, who explained: *“In IPNU, we are taught responsibility, discipline, and social concern. Every activity has a committee structure and assigned responsibilities. Through these roles, we learn how to be accountable for the trust that has been given to us.”*

Similarly, Leo Andrias, Secretary of PAC IPNU Sumber Harta, emphasized that organizational participation has strengthened members’ awareness of their duties and commitments: *“As cadres, we are responsible for managing the organization and carrying out our roles properly. We are taught to be disciplined, responsible, and concerned about fellow members and the wider community.”*

These statements indicate that civic virtue is cultivated not through theoretical instruction alone but through direct organizational experience, where members are continuously exposed to situations requiring accountability, commitment, and collective responsibility.

Another important dimension of civic virtue identified in this study is discipline. Informants consistently reported that organizational activities emphasize punctuality, commitment, and adherence to agreed-upon regulations. Meetings, training sessions, religious gatherings, and community programs are organized according to established schedules, requiring members to manage their time effectively and respect organizational procedures. Such practices contribute to the development of self-discipline, which scholars identify as an essential component of civic character.²³

According to Edi Supriyanto, Head of Cadre Development: *“IPNU teaches us to be disciplined and punctual in every activity. Members are expected to attend meetings on time*

²¹ ‘Religion, State, and the Problem of Gender: New Modes of Citizenship and Governance in Diverse Societies’, *McGill Law Journal*, n.d., accessed 1 February 2026, <https://lawjournal.mcgill.ca/article/religion-state-and-the-problem-of-gender-new-modes-of-citizenship-and-governance-in-diverse-societies/>.

²² Miller, *Aristotle’s Political Theory*.

²³ Ram A. Cnaan et al., ‘Congregations as Social Service Providers: Services, Capacity, Culture, and Organizational Behavior’, *Administration in Social Work* 28, nos 3–4 (2004): 47–68, https://doi.org/10.1300/J147v28n03_03.

and complete the responsibilities entrusted to them. These habits gradually become part of our daily lives.”

The cultivation of discipline through organizational routines demonstrates how student organizations can function as practical environments for character education. Through repeated participation in structured activities, students develop behavioral patterns that support responsible citizenship and social participation.

The findings further demonstrate that leadership development constitutes a major pathway through which civic virtue is cultivated within IPNU. Leadership is nurtured through cadre training programs, committee responsibilities, public speaking exercises, and organizational decision-making processes. Members are encouraged to take initiative, coordinate activities, communicate effectively, and solve problems collaboratively.²⁴ These experiences strengthen students’ confidence while simultaneously preparing them for future civic and community leadership roles.

Widodo Kalalo, the first Chairperson of PAC IPNU Sumber Harta, highlighted the organization’s emphasis on leadership formation: *“We encourage members to become committee leaders, event coordinators, and public speakers. Through these experiences, they learn how to lead others, make decisions, and take responsibility. Many members who were initially shy are now confident enough to speak in public and lead community activities.”*

Likewise, Jajang Muhariyansah, a former chairperson, explained: *“Through cadre training programs such as Makesta, students learn not only organizational skills but also democratic values, deliberation, and leadership. These experiences help them become active and responsible citizens.”*

These findings support previous studies indicating that participation in youth organizations promotes civic competence by enhancing leadership capacity, communication skills, and democratic engagement.²⁵

Tolerance and respect for diversity also emerged as crucial dimensions of civic virtue cultivated through IPNU activities. The organization consistently promotes values derived from the Ahlussunnah wal Jama’ah tradition, including tasamuh (tolerance), ukhuwah (brotherhood),

²⁴ David V. Day and Lisa Dragoni, ‘Leadership Development: An Outcome-Oriented Review Based on Time and Levels of Analyses’, *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior* 2, no. Volume 2, 2015 (2015): 133–56, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-032414-111328>.

²⁵ Moh Mahfudz Faqih et al., ‘Transformational Leadership in Developing the Quality of Lecturers’ Careers in Islamic Higher Education’, *Journal of Educational Management Research* 4, no. 1 (2025): 27–41, <https://doi.org/10.61987/jemr.v4i1.760>.

and social harmony. Members are encouraged to respect differences, cooperate across social backgrounds, and contribute to community cohesion.²⁶

Frendika Akbar Pratama explained: *“One of the most important lessons I learned from IPNU is tolerance. Members come from different villages and backgrounds, but we learn to respect one another, cooperate, and work together without discrimination.”*

Similarly, Kyai Askan Arifin, one of the organizational advisors, emphasized: *“Tolerance and unity are strongly emphasized in IPNU. Members are taught to respect differences in religion, ethnicity, and viewpoints while maintaining social harmony and national unity.”*

These findings are consistent with Galston’s (2001) argument that civic virtue requires citizens to respect diversity and engage constructively with others despite differences. In pluralistic societies, tolerance serves as a crucial foundation for social cohesion and democratic stability.²⁷

Another significant finding concerns the development of civic awareness and national commitment. Through cadre training activities and organizational discussions, students are introduced to concepts of citizenship, nationalism, and democratic participation. Informants highlighted the importance of *hubbul wathan minal iman* (love of the homeland as part of faith) as a guiding principle in organizational education.

Jajang Muhariyansah noted: *“During cadre training, members receive materials on nationalism and civic awareness. They are taught that loving and contributing to the nation is part of their religious responsibility.”*

This finding illustrates how IPNU integrates religious identity with civic responsibility, creating a model of citizenship that combines Islamic values with national commitment. Such integration is particularly important in Indonesia, where religious organizations often play a central role in civic education and social development.²⁸

From the perspective of social capital theory, the findings further demonstrate that organizational participation strengthens trust, cooperation, and social networks among members. Putnam (2000) argues that these elements constitute essential forms of social capital that facilitate collective action and civic participation. Through continuous interaction, shared

²⁶ Robin Bush, *Nahdlatul Ulama and the Struggle for Power Within Islam and Politics in Indonesia* (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009).

²⁷ William A. Galston, ‘Political Knowledge, Political Engagement, and Civic Education’, *Annual Review of Political Science* 4, no. Volume 4, 2001 (2001): 217–34, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.4.1.217>.

²⁸ Salim and Azra, ‘The Political Backdrop of the Enactment of the Compilation of Islamic Laws in Indonesia’.

experiences, and collaborative activities, IPNU members develop strong interpersonal bonds and a sense of collective responsibility toward their communities.²⁹

Overall, the evidence indicates that IPNU Sumber Harta cultivates civic virtue through a multidimensional process involving responsibility, discipline, leadership development, tolerance, civic awareness, and religiously grounded citizenship values. These findings suggest that student organizations function as effective civic education institutions by providing experiential learning opportunities that enable young people to practice democratic values and social responsibility in real-life contexts. Consequently, IPNU serves not merely as a student association but as a catalyst for producing socially responsible, civically engaged, and morally grounded citizens capable of contributing positively to society.

Strengthening Students' Social Engagement through Community-Based Programs

Social engagement has become an increasingly important dimension of youth development in contemporary societies. Beyond academic achievement and individual success, young people are expected to develop a strong sense of social responsibility, community awareness, and active participation in addressing collective challenges. Educational scholars argue that meaningful engagement in community activities contributes significantly to the development of democratic citizenship, social cohesion, and civic responsibility.³⁰ In this regard, student organizations function as important social institutions that bridge the gap between formal education and community participation by providing practical opportunities for youth to engage with societal issues.

The findings of this study demonstrate that IPNU Sumber Harta strengthens students' social engagement through a wide range of community-based programs that integrate religious, educational, and social objectives. These programs serve not only as organizational activities but also as mechanisms for fostering social awareness, collective responsibility, and active participation in community life. Through sustained involvement in these activities, students acquire practical experiences that enable them to understand social realities, develop empathy toward others, and contribute positively to their surrounding environment.³¹

²⁹ Putnam, *Bowling Alone*.

³⁰ Yvonne Hill et al., 'Students' Perceptions of Quality in Higher Education', *Quality Assurance in Education* 11, no. 1 (2003): 15–20, <https://doi.org/10.1108/09684880310462047>.

³¹ Pilar Martín-Hernández et al., 'Fostering University Students' Engagement in Teamwork and Innovation Behaviors through Game-Based Learning (GBL)', *Sustainability* 13, no. 24 (2021): 13573, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132413573>.

From the perspective of social capital theory, community participation serves as a crucial mechanism for strengthening social relationships and promoting collective action. Putnam (2000) argues that social capital consists of networks, trust, and shared norms that facilitate cooperation among individuals and groups. Organizations that encourage regular interaction among members contribute significantly to the formation of social capital by creating opportunities for collaboration and mutual support.³² Within the context of IPNU Sumber Harta, organizational programs create social spaces where students interact with peers, religious leaders, educators, and community members. These interactions foster trust, solidarity, and reciprocal relationships that strengthen community integration and social participation.

A significant contribution of IPNU to social engagement lies in its emphasis on community-oriented activities. Programs such as religious gatherings, social services, environmental campaigns, charity initiatives, and community development activities encourage students to move beyond personal interests and engage with broader social concerns.³³ Through these activities, participants learn that social responsibility is not merely an abstract concept but a practical commitment that requires active involvement and collective effort. Such experiences contribute to the development of civic-minded individuals who recognize their role in promoting social welfare and community well-being.³⁴

Furthermore, the organization provides an important platform for experiential learning. Scholars have emphasized that civic and social competencies are most effectively developed through participation rather than passive instruction. Community-based programs allow students to experience real social interactions, confront social challenges, and develop practical skills necessary for effective community engagement.³⁵ Through participation in organizational activities, students learn how to cooperate with others, communicate across diverse social groups, coordinate collective actions, and contribute to problem-solving processes. These competencies are essential for fostering long-term civic participation and democratic engagement.

³² Putnam, *Bowling Alone*.

³³ Ali Akbar, 'Philosophical Hermeneutics and Contemporary Muslim Scholars' Approaches to Interpreting Scripture', *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 47, no. 5 (2021): 587–614, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0191453720931912>.

³⁴ Joshua D. Atkinson, 'Chapter Title : Qualitative Methods Book Title : Journey into Social Activism Book Subtitle : Qualitative Approaches This Chapter Explores ', *Journey into Social Activism*, no. May 2021 (2017): 27–64.

³⁵ Sudipta Chowdhury and Ammar Alzarrad, 'Advancing Community-Based Education: Strategies, Challenges, and Future Directions for Scaling Impact in Higher Education', *Trends in Higher Education* 4, no. 2 (2025): 21, <https://doi.org/10.3390/higheredu4020021>.

Another important dimension of social engagement observed in this study is the cultivation of empathy and social sensitivity. Community-oriented programs expose students to the realities of social inequality, economic hardship, and communal needs. Direct interaction with beneficiaries of social programs encourages participants to develop a deeper understanding of societal challenges and strengthens their willingness to contribute to collective welfare.³⁶ Research has consistently demonstrated that participation in volunteer and community service activities enhances empathy, prosocial behavior, and social responsibility among young people.³⁷ In this regard, IPNU's social programs function as effective instruments for nurturing socially conscious and compassionate individuals.

In addition, the integration of religious values within community-based activities provides a distinctive framework for social engagement. As a student organization affiliated with Nahdlatul Ulama, IPNU promotes social participation through Islamic principles such as ta'āwun (mutual assistance), ukhuwah (brotherhood), maslahah (public benefit), and social solidarity.³⁸ These values encourage members to perceive community service not only as a civic responsibility but also as a religious obligation. Previous studies have highlighted the important role of faith-based organizations in promoting civic engagement and strengthening social capital by connecting religious commitment with public service.³⁹ The integration of religious values and social action within IPNU contributes to the formation of students who are both socially engaged and morally motivated.

Table 1**Community-Based Programs and Their Contribution to Social Engagement**

Community-Based Program	Main Objective	Contribution to Social Engagement
Religious Gatherings and Islamic Studies	Strengthening religious understanding and community interaction	Enhances social networks and community participation

³⁶ Mary Jane Gardner et al., 'What's in It for Me? Perceived Value of Marketing Activities as a Driver of Consumer Engagement on Social Network Sites.', *Marketing Management Journal* 32, no. 2 (2022), <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&profile=ehost&scope=site&authtype=crawler&jnl=1534973X&AN=161608457&h=yFr78T8iAQzp0KBuGht4ha%2F5YymbFfU6z1EGihCC1JOu33pYJaaTHpnGNGVYG%2FwGWbYOhzDS51sD%2FZGzCWNNEA%3D%3D&crl=c>.

³⁷ Hussein Raja Al-Shuqairat et al., 'Islamic Historiography and Modernity: A Systematic Literature Review on the Evolution of Muslim Societies in the Postcolonial Era', *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 15, no. 1 (2025): 240–60, <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.151.14>.

³⁸ Moh Ashif Fuadi, 'Tradisi Pemikiran Moderasi Beragama Nahdlatul Ulama', *Al-Fikra: Jurnal Ilmiah Keislaman* 21, no. 1 (2022): 12–25, <https://doi.org/10.24014/af.v21i1.16692>.

³⁹ Heidi A. Campbell, 'Understanding the Relationship between Religion Online and Offline in a Networked Society', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 80, no. 1 (2012): 64–93, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/lfr074>.

Charity and Social Assistance Programs	Supporting vulnerable community members	Develops empathy, compassion, and social responsibility
Community Service Activities (<i>Gotong Royong</i>)	Improving public facilities and environmental conditions	Promotes cooperation, solidarity, and collective action
Ramadan Social Programs	Providing support during religious occasions	Strengthens social cohesion and volunteerism
Youth Leadership Activities	Developing organizational and leadership skills	Encourages active participation and community involvement
Educational and Cadre Development Programs	Building student capacity and civic awareness	Enhances social competence and civic engagement
Community Collaboration Initiatives	Strengthening partnerships with local institutions	Expands social networks and collaborative participation

The findings also indicate that social engagement within IPNU extends beyond participation in isolated activities and evolves into a sustained pattern of community involvement. Through continuous engagement in organizational programs, students develop a stronger sense of belonging to their communities and become more willing to contribute to social improvement efforts. This transformation reflects the concept of active citizenship, whereby individuals move from passive membership in society to meaningful participation in collective affairs.⁴⁰ Consequently, organizational participation serves as a formative experience that shapes students' civic identity and strengthens their commitment to community development.

Moreover, the organizational environment facilitates the development of bridging and bonding social capital. Bonding social capital emerges through close relationships among members, creating strong internal solidarity and mutual support. Simultaneously, bridging social capital develops through interactions with community leaders, religious institutions, educational organizations, and local residents. According to Putnam (2000), both forms of social capital are essential for fostering inclusive communities and promoting sustainable civic participation.⁴¹ By creating opportunities for interaction across diverse social groups, IPNU contributes to strengthening social cohesion and collective resilience within the local community.

Overall, the evidence suggests that IPNU Sumber Harta functions as a significant catalyst for strengthening students' social engagement through community-based programs. By

⁴⁰ Mochamad Arif Faizin, 'Islamic Boarding Education Management Reform: Transformation Strategies to Improve Competitiveness and Relevance', *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan* 16, no. 2 (2024): 2497–506, <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v16i2.4462>.

⁴¹ Putnam, *Bowling Alone*.

integrating religious values, community service, leadership development, and collaborative participation, the organization creates meaningful opportunities for students to develop social responsibility, empathy, civic commitment, and active citizenship. These findings reinforce existing scholarship emphasizing the importance of youth organizations as critical spaces for civic learning and community engagement. More importantly, they demonstrate that student organizations can serve as effective mechanisms for preparing socially responsible citizens capable of contributing positively to democratic society and community development.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Development of Civic Virtue and Social Engagement

The cultivation of civic virtue and social engagement among students is not solely determined by organizational programs but is also influenced by various supporting and inhibiting factors within the organizational and social environment. Youth organizations operate within a complex ecosystem where institutional support, social networks, organizational culture, and resource availability significantly shape their effectiveness in achieving educational and civic objectives.⁴² Consequently, understanding these factors is essential for evaluating the sustainability and impact of civic-oriented student organizations such as IPNU. Scholars have argued that successful youth development initiatives require supportive social structures, meaningful participation opportunities, and positive relationships that encourage young people to engage actively in civic and community life.⁴³

One of the most important supporting factors identified in this study is the strong involvement of religious leaders, organizational advisors, and community figures. As a student organization affiliated with Nahdlatul Ulama, IPNU benefits from guidance provided by kyai, educators, and senior organizational members who serve as mentors and role models. Their involvement strengthens organizational legitimacy and ensures that civic and social values are consistently reinforced through both formal activities and informal interactions. Mentorship has long been recognized as a crucial element in youth development because it provides guidance,

⁴² Christian Hampel and Paul Tracey, 'Introducing a Spectrum of Moral Evaluation: Integrating Organizational Stigmatization and Moral Legitimacy', *Journal of Management Inquiry* 28, no. 1 (2019): 11–15, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1056492618790897>.

⁴³ William A. Galston, 'Political Knowledge, Political Engagement, and Civic Education', *Annual Review of Political Science* 4, no. Volume 4, 2001 (2001): 217–34, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.4.1.217>.

emotional support, and opportunities for learning through observation and practice.⁴⁴ In the context of IPNU Sumber Harta, the presence of respected religious and community leaders creates a supportive environment that encourages students to develop responsible attitudes and actively participate in community affairs.

Another significant supporting factor is the value-based organizational culture embedded within IPNU. Unlike many secular youth organizations, IPNU integrates civic development with Islamic ethical principles rooted in the tradition of Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah. Values such as *tasamuh* (tolerance), *ta'āwun* (mutual assistance), *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), and *maslahah* (public benefit) provide a moral framework that guides members' behavior and interactions. These values encourage students to perceive social participation as both a civic responsibility and a religious obligation. Previous studies have demonstrated that organizations grounded in shared moral values often exhibit higher levels of commitment, solidarity, and collective action because members are motivated by both personal and communal goals.⁴⁵ Consequently, the integration of religious and civic values strengthens the organization's capacity to cultivate socially responsible and civically engaged students.

The cadre development system also represents a critical supporting factor. Through structured leadership training, organizational mentoring, and continuous learning activities, students acquire the competencies necessary for active participation in civic and social life. Such programs contribute not only to skill development but also to the formation of civic identity and leadership confidence. Positive youth development theory emphasizes that young people are more likely to become engaged citizens when they are provided with opportunities to develop competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring.⁴⁶ The cadre system within IPNU reflects these principles by creating a developmental pathway through which members gradually assume greater responsibilities and leadership roles.

Community support further enhances the effectiveness of organizational activities. The positive relationship between IPNU and local communities enables students to participate directly in religious events, social initiatives, and community development programs. This

⁴⁴ Julia Pryce et al., 'Understanding Youth Mentoring Relationships: Advancing the Field with Direct Observational Methods', *Adolescent Research Review* 6, no. 1 (2021): 45–56, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40894-019-00131-z>.

⁴⁵ Putnam, *Bowling Alone*; Campbell, 'Understanding the Relationship between Religion Online and Offline in a Networked Society'.

⁴⁶ Hafiz Muhammad Ahmad Quadri and Prof Dr Ali Akbar Al-Azhari, "The Role of Islamic Religious Institutions in Strengthening the Religious Identity of Muslim Youth in Canada: An Analytical and Research-Based Study", *Contemporary Journal of Social Science Review* 3, no. 4 (2025): 229–45, <https://doi.org/10.63878/cjssr.v3i4.1716>.

support creates opportunities for experiential learning and facilitates the practical application of civic values. According to Putnam (2000), social trust and community networks constitute essential forms of social capital that facilitate cooperation and collective action. In this regard, community acceptance functions as an important resource that enables the organization to sustain its programs and expand its social impact.⁴⁷

Additionally, strong interpersonal relationships among members contribute significantly to organizational sustainability. Shared experiences, collective activities, and common values foster solidarity and mutual support within the organization. These social bonds strengthen commitment, encourage participation, and create a sense of belonging that motivates members to remain actively involved. Social capital theory suggests that such relationships facilitate cooperation by generating trust, reciprocity, and shared norms.⁴⁸ Therefore, member solidarity represents an important asset in sustaining civic and social engagement initiatives.

Despite these strengths, several inhibiting factors continue to challenge the organization's efforts to cultivate civic virtue and social engagement. One of the most significant obstacles is financial limitation. As a student-based organization, IPNU relies largely on voluntary contributions, community assistance, and support from affiliated institutions. Limited financial resources often constrain the implementation of programs, reduce the scale of activities, and restrict opportunities for organizational expansion. This challenge is consistent with previous research identifying inadequate funding as a common issue faced by youth organizations, particularly in rural and developing contexts.⁴⁹

Transportation and geographical constraints also affect participation levels. Many members live in different villages and must travel considerable distances to attend meetings, training sessions, and community activities. Inadequate transportation facilities and travel costs can discourage participation, especially among students with limited economic resources. Such challenges are particularly relevant in rural areas where infrastructure development remains uneven and mobility options are limited.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Putnam, *Bowling Alone*.

⁴⁸ Rehan Ahmad et al., 'Social Exchange Theory: Systematic Review and Future Directions', *Frontiers in Psychology* 13 (2023): 1015921.

⁴⁹ Uthman Mehdad Al-Turabi and Jasser Auda, 'Toward a Maqāṣid-Based Legal Reform: Systemic Thinking for Social Transformation in the Modern Muslim World', *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Law* 8, no. 2 (2025): 209–28, <https://doi.org/10.35719/fhw10v84>.

⁵⁰ Ali Rif'an et al., 'POLITICAL PRAGMATISM IN THE CONTEXT OF ISLAMIC LAW: THE RELEVANCE OF IBN TAYMIYYAH'S THOT TO MERITOCRACY AND THE INTEGRITY OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS', *Jurnal Asy-Syukriyyah* 27, no. 1 (2026): 23–53, <https://doi.org/10.36769/asy.v27i1.1629>.

Another important challenge concerns the competing responsibilities faced by students. Members often balance organizational commitments with academic obligations, family responsibilities, and personal activities. While organizational participation offers valuable developmental opportunities, time constraints can limit students' ability to engage consistently in programs and activities. Previous studies have shown that competing commitments frequently reduce participation rates among young people despite their positive attitudes toward civic engagement.⁵¹ Consequently, maintaining active involvement requires continuous organizational adaptation and flexibility.

Furthermore, varying levels of awareness regarding the benefits of organizational participation constitute another obstacle. Some students perceive organizational activities as secondary to academic achievement or consider them time-consuming and irrelevant to their immediate goals. Such perceptions can reduce recruitment effectiveness and limit the organization's ability to attract new members. This challenge reflects broader societal trends characterized by increasing individualism, digital distractions, and declining participation in traditional civic institutions.⁵²

Scheduling conflicts also present practical difficulties. Organizational activities frequently overlap with school programs, family events, or other community obligations, making it difficult to maximize participation. The challenge of coordinating activities among students with diverse schedules requires effective organizational planning and communication.

Despite these obstacles, the findings suggest that the supporting factors within IPNU Sumber Harta substantially outweigh the inhibiting factors. The organization's strong value-based culture, effective cadre development system, supportive leadership, and positive community relationships provide a solid foundation for sustaining civic education and social engagement initiatives. Although financial, logistical, and participation-related challenges remain, these limitations have not diminished the organization's ability to function as a meaningful platform for youth development.

⁵¹ Ihsan Yilmaz and Denitsa Pirinova Sokolova-Shipoli, *Muslim Legal Pluralism in the West: Transnationalism, Political Participation, Citizenship and Shari'a* (Springer Nature, 2024).

⁵² Heidi A. Campbell and Ruth Tsuria, *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in Digital Media* (Routledge, 2021).

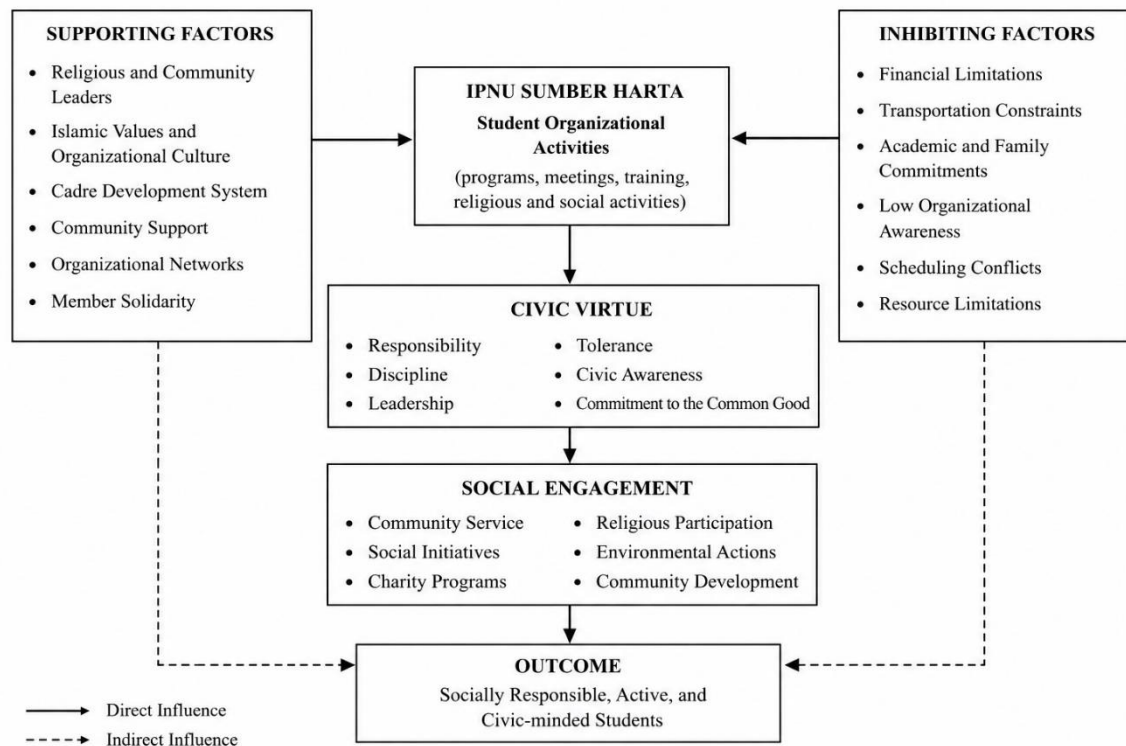


Figure 1
Factors Influencing the Development of Civic Virtue and Social Engagement in IPNU Sumber Harta

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the success of civic virtue and social engagement development within IPNU Sumber Harta results from the interaction between organizational strengths and environmental conditions. The organization's ability to leverage community support, religious values, social networks, and leadership development opportunities has enabled it to maintain its role as an important agent of civic education and social transformation. These findings reinforce the broader argument that youth organizations can serve as effective institutions for cultivating responsible citizenship when supported by strong social capital, sustainable leadership, and meaningful opportunities for participation.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that IPNU Sumber Harta plays a significant role in cultivating civic virtue and strengthening students' social engagement through organizational, religious, educational, and community-based activities. Participation in IPNU fosters responsibility,

discipline, tolerance, leadership, civic awareness, and commitment to the common good, while community-oriented programs enhance empathy, social responsibility, and active citizenship.

The effectiveness of these efforts is supported by strong leadership, value-based organizational culture, cadre development, and community support. However, financial limitations, transportation constraints, and competing student responsibilities remain key challenges. Despite these obstacles, IPNU has sustained its contribution to youth development and civic participation.

The findings highlight that faith-based student organizations can function as effective civic learning arenas by integrating religious values, civic education, and community engagement. This study contributes to the literature by demonstrating how grassroots Islamic student organizations promote civic virtue and social engagement, thereby strengthening civic culture and social cohesion in contemporary Indonesian society.

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