









“Shaping organizational image through strategic religious HR practices and work ethics in Indonesian higher education”

AUTHORS	Sahat Silalahi  Adi Hutomo  Agung Sutoto  Slamet Susilo  Lisa Yuniarti  Mohammad Mulyadi  Hotnier Sipahutar 
ARTICLE INFO	Sahat Silalahi, Adi Hutomo, Agung Sutoto, Slamet Susilo, Lisa Yuniarti, Mohammad Mulyadi and Hotnier Sipahutar (2025). Shaping organizational image through strategic religious HR practices and work ethics in Indonesian higher education. <i>Problems and Perspectives in Management</i> , 23(4), 13-28. doi: 10.21511/ppm.23(4).2025.02
DOI	http://dx.doi.org/10.21511/ppm.23(4).2025.02
RELEASED ON	Tuesday, 14 October 2025
RECEIVED ON	Monday, 14 April 2025
ACCEPTED ON	Tuesday, 30 September 2025
LICENSE	 This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License
JOURNAL	"Problems and Perspectives in Management"
ISSN PRINT	1727-7051
ISSN ONLINE	1810-5467
PUBLISHER	LLC “Consulting Publishing Company “Business Perspectives”
FOUNDER	LLC “Consulting Publishing Company “Business Perspectives”



NUMBER OF REFERENCES

55



NUMBER OF FIGURES

2



NUMBER OF TABLES

9

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BUSINESS PERSPECTIVES



LLC "CPC "Business Perspectives"
Hryhorii Skovoroda lane, 10,
Sумы, 40022, Ukraine
www.businessperspectives.org

Type of the article: Research Article

Received on: 14th of April, 2025

Accepted on: 30th of September, 2025

Published on: 14th of October, 2025

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Sahat Silalahi, MSc, Senior Research Associate, Research Center for Cooperative, Corporation, and People's Economy, Indonesian National Research and Innovation Agency, Indonesia. (Corresponding author)

Adi Hutomo, MSc, Senior Research Associate, Research Center for Cooperative, Corporation, and People's Economy, Indonesian National Research and Innovation Agency, Indonesia.

Agung Sutoto, MSc, Senior Research Associate, Research Center for Cooperative, Corporation, and People's Economy, Indonesian National Research and Innovation Agency, Indonesia.

Slamet Susilo, MSc, Senior Research Associate, Research Center for Social Welfare, Village, and Connectivity, Indonesian National Research and Innovation Agency, Indonesia.

Lisa Yuniarti, MSc, Senior Research Associate, Research Center for Social Welfare, Village, and Connectivity, Indonesian National Research and Innovation Agency, Indonesia.

Mohammad Mulyadi, Ph.D., Professor, Directorate of Political, Legal, Defence, and Security Policy, Indonesian National Research and Innovation Agency, Indonesia.

Hotnier Siphahutar, MSc, Senior Research Associate, Research Centre for Domestic Government, Indonesian National Research and Innovation Agency, Indonesia.



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Conflict of interest statement:

Author(s) reported no conflict of interest

Sahat Silalahi (Indonesia), Adi Hutomo (Indonesia), Agung Sutoto (Indonesia), Slamet Susilo (Indonesia), Lisa Yuniarti (Indonesia), Mohammad Mulyadi (Indonesia), Hotnier Siphahutar (Indonesia)

SHAPING ORGANIZATIONAL IMAGE THROUGH STRATEGIC RELIGIOUS HR PRACTICES AND WORK ETHICS IN INDONESIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

Abstract

In today's competitive landscape, faith-based institutions can gain advantages by leveraging strategic HR practices to build a strong religious image. This study examines the effects of religious HR practices comprising religious training and development, recruitment and selection, remuneration and compensation, and performance appraisal on religious organizational image. Religious work ethics was included as a moderator to assess its role in the relationship between religious training and development and religious organizational image. A survey was conducted in January 2025 in Jakarta, Indonesia, involving 418 academic staff from three universities representing three major religions: Yarsi University (Islam), Krida Wacana (Christianity), and Atma Jaya (Catholicism). The sample consisted of 274 Muslims, 70 Christians, and 74 Catholics, reflecting the national religious composition. Respondents were chosen for their direct experience with religious HR practices. Data were collected through face-to-face surveys and analyzed using PLS-SEM. Results show that religious training and development ($\beta = 0.249$), recruitment and selection ($\beta = 0.103$), remuneration and compensation ($\beta = 0.129$), and performance appraisal ($\beta = 0.153$) positively influence religious organizational image. Additionally, religious work ethics have a positive moderating effect on the relationship between religious training and development, as well as on the religious organizational image ($\beta = 0.107$). Multigroup analysis reveals the strongest combined effects among Catholic respondents ($r^2 = 0.30$), followed by Islam worshippers ($r^2 = 0.252$) and Christians ($r^2 = 0.136$), with no significant difference between groups ($p > 0.1$). These findings confirm that religious HR practices effectively enhance religious organizational image regardless of institutional religious affiliation.

Keywords

human resource, organization, religious, image, ethics, universities, Jakarta, Indonesia

JEL Classification

O15, M51, M54

INTRODUCTION

In an era marked by intensifying competition, faith-based institutions increasingly seek to differentiate themselves by articulating a credible religious identity. This identity functions not only as an embodiment of institutional ethos but also as a strategic asset that enhances legitimacy and reinforces stakeholder relationships (Ghosh, 2022; Witvliet et al., 2023). The conversion of abstract religious doctrines into reputational capital is contingent upon HR systems that successfully embed religious values into organizational behavior. A key challenge in this endeavor lies in the formulation of well-defined dimensions of religious HR practices that are capable of shaping employee conduct in sustained ways (Kwong et al., 2021; Zafar & Jafar, 2024). These dimensions must holistically encompass the entire spectrum of HR activities encountered by employees, ranging from recruitment to performance appraisal, so that religious values are consistently internalized and applied.

This challenge is particularly relevant in the higher education sector, where institutions face increasing competition for student enrolment, reputation, and long-term sustainability. Globally, universities are pressured to adopt branding strategies that convey both academic quality and institutional distinctiveness (Le et al., 2023). As a result, the religious image has emerged as a powerful tool for faith-based institutions to attract and engage communities seeking education that integrates academic learning with spiritual values (Rine et al., 2021). In the context of Indonesian higher education, Act No. 12 of 2012 grants faith-based universities significant autonomy to incorporate religious doctrines into their organizational culture. Concurrently, it imposes quality assurance requirements to maintain academic standards and accountability. This dual mandate underscores the critical need to align HR practices with the institution's religious values. However, its effectiveness depends heavily on the capacity of university personnel to embody the institution's religious mission through a comprehensive religious HR practice. Staff and faculty members, therefore, must demonstrate both professional competence and alignment with the institution's values.

Despite the growing recognition of religious branding as a strategic tool within faith-based universities, there remains a limited understanding of how each dimension of religious HR practices contributes to the development of a coherent religious organizational image, which in turn creates challenges for management in applying these practices effectively in organizational operations. Compounding this issue is the persistent challenge of aligning institutional values with the diverse employees' personal work ethos shaped by personal life experiences (Grabowski et al., 2021). This necessitates a continuous process of value instillation. In this context, the level of religious work ethics, rooted in an individual's personal faith, potentially influences the effectiveness of alignment efforts through religious training and development. These unresolved issues underscore a critical gap in both theoretical frameworks and practical implementation, particularly concerning how distinct dimensions of religious HR practices shape religious organizational image. Furthermore, it is essential to examine how individuals' religious work ethics interact with religious training and development, potentially moderating their impact on religious organizational image.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

This present study adopts the resource-based view as its theoretical foundation to underscore the strategic value of organizational resources that are rare, valuable, inimitable, and non-substitutable. Resource-based view is particularly appropriate for this study because it shifts the analytical focus from external market conditions to internal organizational strengths, emphasizing that sustainable competitive advantage originates from the effective mobilization and integration of internal resources, most notably, human capital. As an inward-looking framework, resource-based view posits that the uniqueness of a firm's internal practices, such as its HR systems, learning capabilities, and talent development mechanisms, can differentiate it from competitors operating in the same industry or market (Malisic et al., 2025; Hronova & Spacek, 2021). In contrast to other strategic models that prioritize external factors such as market

positioning or industry structure, the resource-based view provides a nuanced understanding of how internally driven competencies, like innovative HR practices, can drive long-term performance outcomes (Uyanik, 2023; Dovbischuk, 2022). Within the scope of this study, HR practices are viewed not merely as operational tools but as core strategic assets that embody the firm's unique identity and capacity for value creation.

Strategic HR practices have increasingly been recognized as a critical component within the resource-based view, as they play a central role in leveraging internal organizational capabilities. By aligning HR practices with organizational values and mission, companies can leverage the capabilities of their workforce to enhance performance and drive innovation (Malhotra et al., 2024; Eshete & Birbirssa, 2024). Zhang et al. (2024) argue that the congruence between organizational and employee values enhances overall organizational effectiveness. When HR practices are aligned with

employee values, it fosters stronger collaboration between line managers and HR managers, leading to improved adherence to HR policies and positively impacting organizational performance (Castaner & Oliveira, 2020). Moreover, studies suggest that a supportive organizational culture engages employees, enhances commitment, and reduces turnover rates, thereby promoting organizational stability (Sari et al., 2024; Sasongko, 2022). This collaboration is essential in reinforcing the institutional framework that governs human resources, ultimately contributing to higher employee satisfaction and retention rates, key factors in sustaining competitive advantage (Chimakati & Odiyo, 2023).

Nevertheless, studies on HR practices and competitive advantage among organizations have been criticized for their lack of context-specificity and failure to account for competitive environmental uncertainty. Prior studies have examined the relationship between HR practices and competitive advantage in broad, abstract terms, often overlooking the particularities of the industry, sector, or market in which organizations operate (Kwong et al., 2021). This lack of contextual sensitivity undermines the practical relevance and strategic applicability of HR practices, especially in rapidly evolving or highly specialized fields (Zafar & Jafar, 2024; Apascaritei & Elvira, 2022; Gerhart & Feng, 2021). In reality, the effectiveness of HR practices in generating competitive advantage is deeply influenced by the specific dynamics of the competitive landscape in which a firm operates (Mohamed et al., 2025; Shamout et al., 2022; Kwong et al., 2021). Apascaritei and Elvira (2022) emphasize that designing HR strategies that truly enhance competitive positioning requires continuous assessment of both internal capabilities and external environmental factors. In other words, aligning HR practices with organizational strengths is not a static activity but a dynamic and adaptive process, responsive to shifting market demands (Piwowar-Sulej, 2021; Budhwar et al., 2023). Therefore, when grounded in the appropriate business context, HR practices become more than just an administrative function; they evolve into a strategic catalyst for organizational agility and long-term value creation. Conversely, when HR practices are implemented within a misaligned competitive context,

they risk becoming irrelevant or, worse, may distort the organization's image in ways that are incongruent with the expectations of the target market.

The evolving nature of competition compels organizations to move beyond merely offering functional benefits and features, shifting instead toward fostering emotional engagement with consumers. This trend has contributed to the intensification of competition in specific market contexts, wherein emotional attachment-based marketing strategies are employed to engage a niche consumer segment. Furthermore, various studies suggest that religious-based emotional attachment has evolved into a strategic tool for attracting and retaining loyal consumers (Akin & Gurbuz, 2024; Ferdousi & Abedin, 2023; Cardoso et al., 2022). A primary reason is that religious beliefs are deeply embedded within individuals and serve as a dominant motivator in their search for products or services that support the actualization of those beliefs (Brandao, 2025; Granqvist et al., 2020). Consequently, organizations must design HR practices that align with religious values and effectively instill these values in their employees. When internalized, these values can be conveyed through employee interactions with consumers, thereby shaping a perception of religiosity that aligns with the target market's expectations.

A critical and increasingly relevant question within the aforementioned HR framework is how managers can effectively operationalize organizational values rooted in religion through concrete and actionable HR practices. This entails more than surface-level alignment; it requires an intentional integration of religious principles into key HR functions. In this regard, Fesharaki and Sehhat (2018) proposed a four-dimensional model of religious HR practices, with conventional HR dimensions executed through religious approaches that reflect the organization's intended positioning. These dimensions encompass the entire spectrum of HR activities related to the employee lifecycle, including recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, and compensation. Through this comprehensive approach, organizations can ensure that internal HR development activities remain aligned with the company's religious values (Ghosh, 2022; Witvliet et al., 2023).

The four-dimensional religious HR practices framework provides managers with a functional tool to assess and identify areas that may require refinement or modification to sustain competitiveness in a dynamic market environment. The first dimension, religious training and development, refers to the structured integration of religious or faith-based principles into the learning and development processes within an organization (Fesharaki & Sehhat, 2018). Religious training and development aim to instill religious values while equipping employees with the technical and procedural knowledge needed to align organizational practices with those religious values (Walter, 2024; Mayhew & Rockenbach, 2021). This approach is typically found in organizations that explicitly position themselves based on religious values, such as financial institutions, faith-based non-profits, or value-driven companies in culturally religious contexts. The second dimension, religious recruitment and selection, involves attracting and selecting candidates whose values align with the organization's religious foundations. Beyond assessing technical skills, religious recruitment and selection incorporate value-based criteria to ensure cultural and spiritual fit, fostering workplace cohesion (Hallin et al., 2022). This may include faith-based language in job ads, questions assessing religious commitment, and evaluating candidates' readiness to uphold the organization's spiritual values. The third dimension, religious remuneration and compensation, emphasizes the alignment of reward systems with religious principles that uphold justice, transparency, and ethical accountability. Unlike conventional compensation models that focus solely on performance metrics or market benchmarks, religious remuneration and compensation integrate moral and spiritual values into how financial and non-financial rewards are structured and distributed (Yasmeen, 2023). Transparent mechanisms for salary determination, bonuses, and incentives are central to this approach, fostering trust and reinforcing the organization's commitment to ethical conduct (Fesharaki & Sehhat, 2018). The fourth dimension, religious performance and appraisal, integrates religious values into the evaluation of employee performance by emphasizing both professional outcomes and ethical behavior (Lina et al., 2022). Rather than focusing solely on productivity or targets, religious performance ap-

praisal considers attributes such as honesty, sincerity, teamwork, and adherence to spiritual values in the workplace (Yasmeen, 2023). This approach promotes a holistic understanding of performance, encouraging employees to align their conduct with the organization's religious identity.

While religious HR practices dimensions are considered comprehensive, individual factors frequently emerge as intervening variables that exert substantial and unavoidable influence. In many cases, management tends to prioritize the formulation of legal-procedural aspects, disregarding employees as the core subjects of HR practices (Otoo et al., 2025). Moreover, a rigid top-down procedure may hinder creativity, underscoring the importance of two-way training formats that promote employee interactivity and incorporate their feedback (Otoo et al., 2025). In this context, religious work ethics function as a critical boundary condition that determines the effectiveness of religious HR practices in shaping religious organizational image. Religious work ethics refers to a set of moral principles and behavioral standards in the workplace that are grounded in religious beliefs and teachings (Raza et al., 2024). It shapes how individuals approach their work, interact with others, and make decisions, based on the values promoted by their faith tradition. Meta-analytic evidence from 21 countries shows that high levels of religious work ethics are linked to reduced workplace deviance and increased organizational commitment. These studies also indicate that individuals with strong work ethics are more likely to effectively internalize organizational values through training and development initiatives (Rubbab et al., 2024; Abellan, 2023).

Yet, an ongoing scholarly debate concerns how individual work ethos interacts with organizational training and development initiatives. An analysis by Al Halbusi et al. (2023) supports the substitution view, suggesting that ethically grounded employees require minimal or even no continuous development, as moral behavior is inherently embedded in their character. Furthermore, recent studies suggest that investments in training and development programs often outpace their intended objectives, or, more critically, may even thwart employees' basic psychological needs for autonomy (Devine & Ash, 2021; Liu et al., 2024).

Conversely, other scholars argue that individual work ethics function as an amplifier for continuous training and development efforts. From this perspective, ethically grounded employees are better positioned to internalize organizational values and translate them into consistent behaviors (Yasmeen, 2023). This view emphasizes that the compatibility between religious training and development and employees' religious work ethics remains essential, as they provide personal value reinforcement and reduce the risk of ineffective or misaligned training and development programs.

The aforementioned ambiguity underlines the need to treat religious work ethics as a moderator in the relationship between religious training and development and religious organizational image. Moreover, unlike the other three dimensions, religious training and development offer a distinct advantage due to their inherent flexibility and potential for continuous implementation (Maley et al., 2024). This allows organizations to adapt training content in response to the evolving ethical and developmental needs of employees. In contrast, other HR practices, such as recruitment, remuneration, and performance appraisal, are typically more rigid and standardized, often requiring significant budgetary adjustments, which can limit their flexibility and responsiveness in practice.

This present study aims to examine the influence of religious training and development, religious recruitment and selection, religious remuneration and compensation, and religious performance appraisal on religious organizational image within Indonesian higher education institutions that operate based on religious values. It also investigates the moderating role of religious work ethics in strengthening the effect of religious training and development on religious organizational image.

The hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows:

- H1: Religious training and development positively influence religious organizational image.*
- H2: Religious recruitment and selection positively influence religious organizational image.*

H3: Religious remuneration and compensation positively influence religious organizational image.

H4: Religious performance appraisal positively influences religious organizational image.

H5: Religious work ethics moderate (strengthen) the positive influences of religious training and development on religious organizational image.

2. METHODS

The analysis was conducted at three prominent Indonesian universities that explicitly identify as Islamic, Catholic, and Christian institutions, respectively. The three universities are Yarsi University (Islam), Krida Wacana (Christianity), and Atma Jaya (Catholicism). Therefore, the sampling frame, which represents the three major religious groups in Indonesia, helps minimize potential response bias associated with single-group representation. As this study involved human participants, ethical approval was also obtained from the Indonesian National Research and Innovation Agency (Ref. 346/KE.01/SK/04/2024, dated April 30, 2024).

Academic and support staff were selected as respondents due to their capacity to assess the focal constructs, thereby enhancing the study's rigor and validity. According to internal data from the three universities, there were a total of 1,278 staff members, consisting of both academic and support staff. Based on the Lemeshow formula, with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, a minimum sample size of 296 respondents was required (Levy & Lemeshow, 2013). The survey was conducted in January 2025, as this period marks the time when employee evaluations are typically carried out for the preceding year. Consequently, it is likely that the employees had completed one full cycle of the HR programs implemented throughout the year.

Permission to conduct the survey was formally requested from the management of the three universities. Upon receiving approval, a screening questionnaire was distributed via an online ap-

plication to potential respondents. The inclusion criteria required participation in training related to organizational values and a minimum length of employment at the university. These criteria were intended to ensure that respondents had likely experienced at least one full cycle of HR programs and were, therefore, able to provide objective responses.

The main data collection was conducted through face-to-face interviews using paper-based questionnaires, administered in sessions with no more than 50 participants each. Prior to participation, respondents were provided with a clear explanation of the study's purpose and detailed instructions for completing the questionnaire. They were informed that their involvement was entirely voluntary and that they retained the right to withdraw at any time without facing any consequences. Participants were also assured that their identities would remain confidential and would not be used for purposes beyond this study. Afterward, respondents were asked to sign an informed consent form stating: "I have read and understood the explanation about this study. I hereby declare that I agree / do not agree to participate as a respondent in this research."

Participants were also offered small, randomly distributed incentives to encourage engagement. Over the course of one month, interviews were conducted with 600 respondents; of these, 418 responses were complete and usable. Therefore, the survey yielded an effective response rate of 69.7%, which was well above the minimum required sample size of 296.

All items used a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Scales for religious training and development, religious recruitment and selection, religious remuneration and compensation, and religious performance appraisal were adapted from Fesharaki and Sehhat (2018), religious work ethics from Linando et al. (2023), and religious organizational image from Lee et al. (2023). Religious training and development, religious recruitment and selection, and religious work ethics each comprised three items, whereas religious remuneration and compensation, religious performance appraisal, and religious organizational image comprised four. These scales

have already been validated in previous surveys involving religion-based HR practices, individual work ethics, and organizational image. In addition, we consulted experts in the fields of HR management and organizational studies to ensure the face validity of the scales. A pre-test was also conducted with 30 respondents prior to the main survey, during which participants were asked to provide feedback on the wording and clarity of the items. Revisions to the scales were made based on their input. The questionnaire items are displayed in Appendix A.

Data were analyzed with partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM), which accommodates complex causal paths and is robust to non-normal data (Hair et al., 2019; Zeng et al., 2021). Sample adequacy was confirmed with the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin statistic and Bartlett's test of sphericity. Harman's single-factor test screened for common-method bias, and multicollinearity diagnostics were inspected. The main analysis was conducted in three stages. Firstly, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to assess the measurement model's validity and reliability, including composite reliability and discriminant validity. Secondly, the structural model was estimated and tested for both direct and moderating effects. Thirdly, a multigroup analysis was conducted by categorizing the sample into three religious groups and examining whether there were significant differences in the effects of the predictors on the outcome.

A total of 418 usable responses were collected, consisting of 274 Muslims, 74 Catholics, and 70 Christians. The sex distribution was balanced, with 225 females (53.8%) and 193 males (46.2%). The largest age cohort was 31–40 years ($n = 163$; 39.0%), followed by 21–30 years ($n = 126$; 30.1%), 41–50 years ($n = 94$; 22.4%), and ≥ 51 years ($n = 35$; 8.4%). Most respondents were Muslims ($n = 274$; 65.6%), while 74 were Catholics (17.7%) and 70 were Christians (16.7%). Monthly personal expenditure clustered in the IDR 5–10 million band ($n = 181$; 43.3%), with 120 reporting < IDR 5 million (28.7%), 85 reporting IDR 10–15 million (20.3%), and 32 reporting > IDR 15 million (7.7%). Most had worked 3–6 years ($n = 234$; 56.0%), 110 had 1–3 years (26.3%), and 74 had > 6 years (17.7%). Frequencies and percentages for every demographic variable are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondent demographic profiles

Items	Number	Percentage
Gender		
Female	225	53.8%
Male	193	46.2%
Age		
21–30	126	30.1%
31–40	163	39.0%
41–50	94	22.4%
>51	35	8.5%
Religion		
Islam	274	65.6%
Catholic	74	17.7%
Christian	70	16.7%
Monthly spending		
< IDR 5 million	120	28.7%
IDR 5–10 million	181	43.3%
IDR 10–15 million	85	20.3%
>IDR 15 million	32	7.7%
Duration of employment		
1-3 years	110	26.3%
3-6 years	234	56.0%
> 6 years	74	17.7%
Total	418	100%

3. RESULTS

Sampling diagnostics confirmed data adequacy for factor analysis. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin statistic was 0.806, comfortably above the 0.50 threshold (Field, 2000). Bartlett’s test of sphericity produced $\chi^2 = 2\,877.40$ ($df = 351, p < 0.001$), rejecting the null hypothesis of an identity matrix (Kock, 2015). Harman’s single-factor test (principal-component extraction, varimax rotation) indicated that the general factor accounted for 34.5% of the total variance, well below the 50% cutoff, so common-method bias was not evident (Kock, 2015). Variance-inflation factors ranged from 1.16 to 2.16 (tolerance 0.46–0.86), ruling out multicollinearity (Kock, 2015). Confirmatory factor analysis was then conducted by evaluating indicator loadings, Cronbach’s alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE). All indicator loadings (0.62–0.91) are above the recommended 0.50 threshold. Cronbach’s alpha values lie between 0.72 and 0.89, composite reliability between 0.80 and 0.92, and average variance extracted between 0.54 and 0.78, exceeding the minimum criteria of 0.60, 0.70, and 0.50, respectively (Hair et al., 2019). Table 2 displays the confirmatory factor analysis.

Table 2. Confirmatory factor analysis

Variables	Indicators	Loadings	Cronbach’s alpha	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted
Religious training and development (RTD)	RTD1	0.967	0.958	0.973	0.922
	RTD2	0.944			
	RTD3	0.970			
Religious recruitment and selection (RRS)	RRS1	0.858	0.847	0.904	0.759
	RRS2	0.824			
	RRS3	0.929			
Religious remuneration and compensation (RRC)	RRC1	0.864	0.904	0.932	0.774
	RRC2	0.864			
	RRC3	0.891			
	RRC4	0.901			
Religious performance appraisal (RPA)	RPA1	0.818	0.680	0.813	0.535
	RPA2	0.827			
	RPA3	0.821			
	RPA4	0.781			
Religious work ethics (RWE)	RWE1	0.852	0.835	0.899	0.749
	RWE2	0.847			
	RWE3	0.896			
Religious organizational image (ROI)	ROI1	0.851	0.896	0.928	0.762
	ROI2	0.892			
	ROI3	0.873			
	ROI4	0.874			

Table 3 presents the square roots of the AVE for every construct together with the inter-construct correlations; each diagonal AVE value is higher than any correlation in its row or column, satisfying the Fornell–Larcker requirement (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The loading and cross-loading matrix in Table 4 supports this result: indicator loadings range from 0.62 to 0.91 and consistently exceed their highest cross-loadings (0.14–0.46). A third diagnostic based on heterotrait–monotrait (HTMT) ratios shows values between 0.38 and 0.79, all below the 0.85 threshold (Table 5) (Roemer et al., 2021). Taken together, these three empirical checks confirm that the measurement model exhibits adequate discriminant validity.

Table 3. Fornell and Larcker criterion

	ROI	RPA	RRC	RRS	RTD	RWE
ROI	0.873					
RPA	0.325	0.732				
RRC	0.207	0.287	0.88			
RRS	0.183	0.056	0.046	0.871		
RTD	0.321	0.18	0.052	0.278	0.96	
RWE	0.282	0.175	0.109	0.078	0.174	0.865

Note: The square root of AVE is italicized. RTD = Religious training and development; RRS = Religious recruitment and selection; RRC = Religious remuneration and compensation; RPA = Religious performance appraisal; RWE = Religious work ethics; ROI = Religious organizational image.

Table 4. Loading and cross-loadings

	ROI	RPA	RRC	RRS	RTD	RWE
ROI1	0.851	0.295	0.155	0.145	0.285	0.259
ROI2	0.892	0.337	0.174	0.186	0.28	0.296
ROI3	0.873	0.25	0.21	0.15	0.279	0.222
ROI4	0.874	0.245	0.188	0.156	0.276	0.202
RPA1	0.2	0.818	0.622	0.0009	0.011	0.112
RPA2	0.249	0.827	0.139	0.032	0.213	0.686
RPA3	0.283	0.821	0.062	0.048	0.148	0.702
RPA4	0.184	0.781	0.08	0.095	0.124	0.672
RRC1	0.143	0.229	0.864	0.039	0.041	0.07
RRC2	0.141	0.209	0.864	0.038	0.016	0.084
RRC3	0.199	0.236	0.891	0.012	0.066	0.088
RRC4	0.222	0.313	0.901	0.07	0.05	0.13
RRS1	0.119	0.01	0.077	0.858	0.193	0.011
RRS2	0.123	0.073	0.029	0.824	0.194	0.104
RRS3	0.208	0.058	0.027	0.929	0.305	0.08
RTD1	0.328	0.18	0.061	0.264	0.967	0.172
RTD2	0.29	0.142	0.032	0.264	0.944	0.14
RTD3	0.304	0.196	0.055	0.274	0.97	0.186
RWE1	0.22	0.696	0.151	0.074	0.155	0.852
RWE2	0.198	0.653	0.028	0.086	0.141	0.847
RWE3	0.296	0.67	0.098	0.051	0.155	0.896

Note: The loadings of each indicator are italicized. RTD = Religious training and development; RRS = Religious recruitment and selection; RRC = Religious remuneration and compensation; RPA = Religious performance appraisal; RWE = Religious work ethics; ROI = Religious organizational image.

Table 5. Heterotrait–monotrait

Relationship	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	5.00%	95.00%
RPA → ROI	0.409	0.406	0.315	0.493
RRC → ROI	0.223	0.222	0.133	0.314
RRC → RPA	0.393	0.403	0.336	0.48
RRS → ROI	0.196	0.196	0.107	0.289
RRS → RPA	0.099	0.126	0.072	0.197
RRS → RRC	0.061	0.082	0.041	0.144
RTD → ROI	0.345	0.346	0.263	0.423
RTD → RPA	0.214	0.227	0.141	0.308
RTD → RRC	0.052	0.071	0.028	0.136
RTD → RRS	0.293	0.293	0.199	0.378
RTDxRWE → ROI	0.109	0.112	0.041	0.191
RTDxRWE → RPA	0.117	0.123	0.056	0.2
RTDxRWE → RRC	0.07	0.08	0.024	0.154
RTDxRWE → RRS	0.113	0.114	0.037	0.197
RTDxRWE → RTD	0.079	0.08	0.017	0.143
RWE → ROI	0.315	0.315	0.22	0.405
RWE → RPA	0.011	0.012	0.664	0.155
RWE → RRC	0.12	0.131	0.068	0.211
RWE → RRS	0.095	0.111	0.051	0.184
RWE → RTD	0.193	0.191	0.109	0.276
RWE → RTDxRWE	0.027	0.047	0.014	0.098

Note: RTD = Religious training and development; RRS = Religious recruitment and selection; RRC = Religious remuneration and compensation; RPA = Religious performance appraisal; RWE = Religious work ethics; ROI = Religious organizational image.

Subsequently, the regression analyses were performed to examine the proposed hypotheses. Table 6 displays the structural model estimates obtained in this study. All four paths from the dimensions of religious HR practices to religious organizational image are positive and statistically significant. Religious training and development positively influence religious organizational image ($\beta = 0.249, t = 5.37, p < 0.000$), religious recruitment and selection positively influence religious organizational image ($\beta = 0.103, t = 2.374, p = 0.018$), religious remuneration and compensation positively influence religious organizational image ($\beta = 0.129, t = 3.22, p < 0.000$), and religious performance appraisal positively influences religious organizational image ($\beta = 0.153, t = 2.09, p = 0.037$). Therefore, H1, H2, H3, and H4 were accepted.

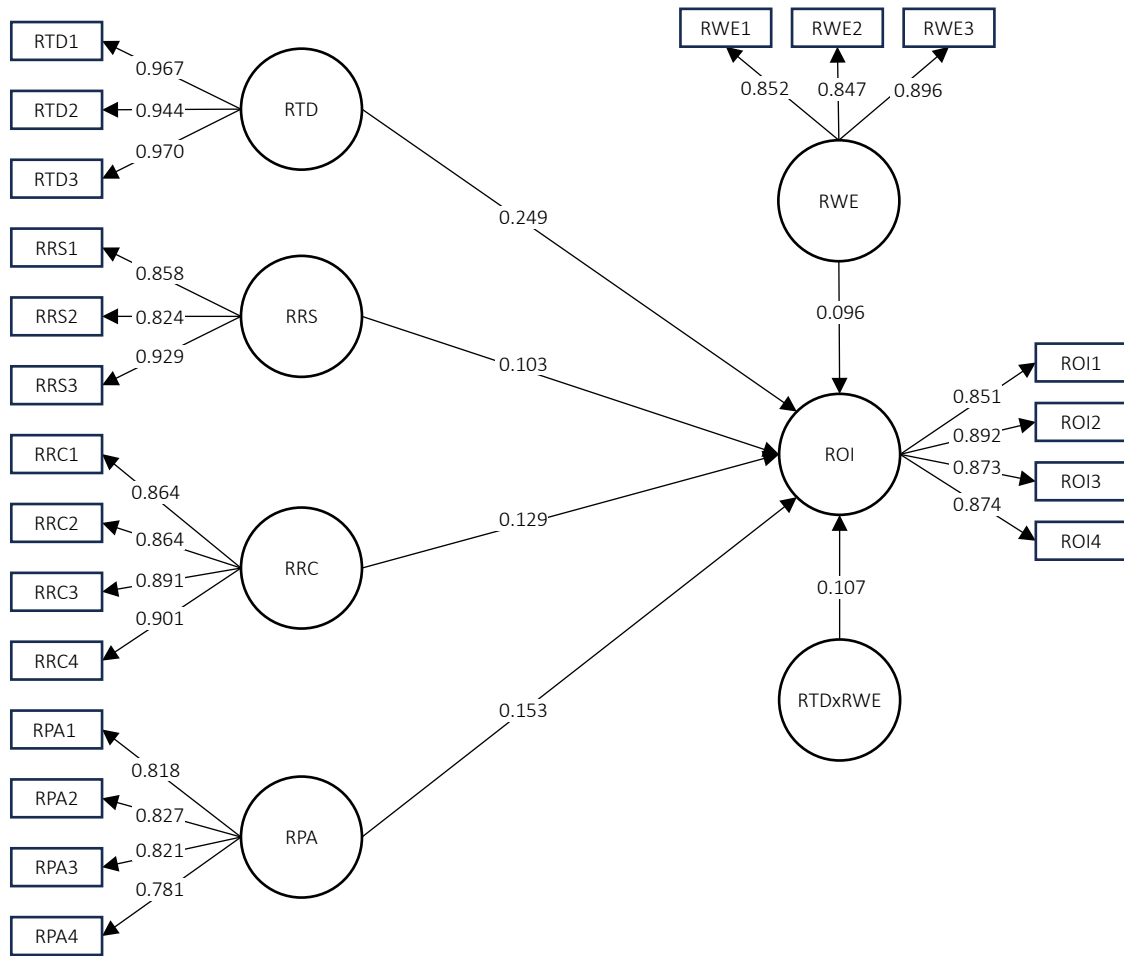
Next, the moderation effect of religious work ethics on the relationship between religious training and development and religious organizational image was assessed. The results show that religious work ethics moderate (strengthen) the positive influence of religious training and development on the religious organizational image ($\beta = 0.107, t = 2.355, p = 0.019$). The model-fit statistics satisfy the recommended cut-offs: Standardized root mean-square residual (SRMR) = 0.086 and normed fit index (NFI) = 0.843 (McNeish & Wolf, 2024). Figure 1 displays the regression power of the structural model.

The simple slope analysis, presented in Figure 2, reveals that at high levels of religious work ethics (+1 SD), the slope of the religious training and development–religious organizational image relationship is noticeably steeper than at the mean or -1 SD, indicating a greater incremental gain in organizational image. Therefore, H5 was accepted.

Table 6. Regression results

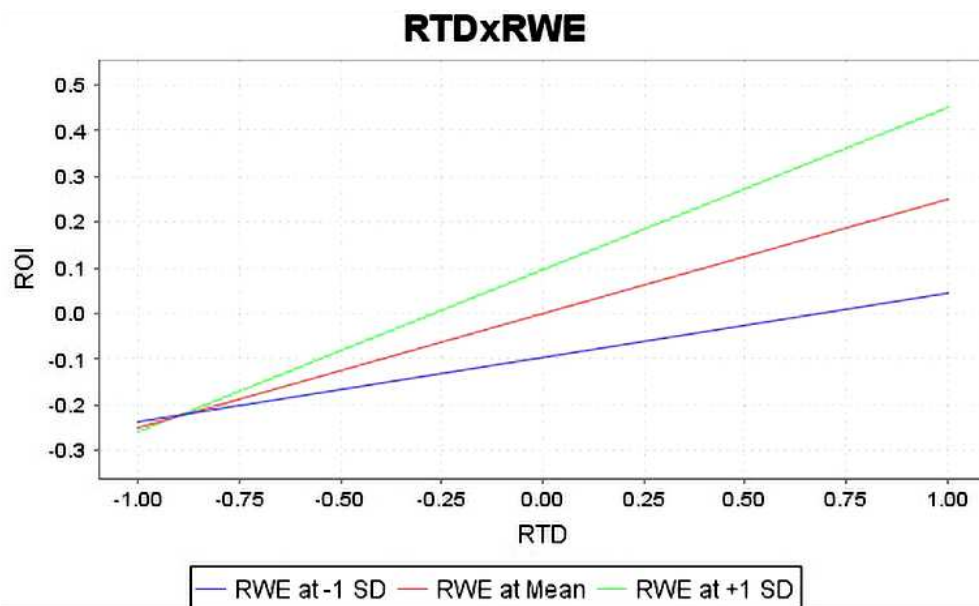
Hypothesis	Relationship	β	t	p	Decision
H1	RTD → ROI	0.249	5.37	0.000*	Supported
H2	RRS → ROI	0.103	2.374	0.018**	Supported
H3	RRC → ROI	0.129	3.22	0.000*	Supported
H4	RPA → ROI	0.153	2.09	0.037**	Supported
H5	RTDxRWE → ROI	0.107	2.355	0.019**	Supported

Note: *significant at $p < 0.001$ (one-tailed), **significant at $p < 0.05$ (one-tailed). RTD = Religious training and development; RRS = Religious recruitment and selection; RRC = Religious remuneration and compensation; RPA = Religious performance appraisal; RWE = Religious work ethics; ROI = Religious organizational image.



Note: RTD = Religious training and development; RRS = Religious recruitment and selection; RRC = Religious remuneration and compensation; RPA = Religious performance appraisal; RWE = Religious work ethics; ROI = Religious organizational image.

Figure 1. Regression power on the structural model



Note: RTD = Religious training and development; RWE = Religious work ethics; ROI = Religious organizational image.

Figure 2. Simple slope analysis

Table 7. Regression results across religious groups

Relationship	Islam			Catholicism			Christianity		
	β	p	r2	β	p	r2	β	p	r2
RTD → ROI	0.238	0.000*	0.252	0.346	0.002*	0.30	0.19	0.019**	0.136
RRS → ROI	0.149	0.006*		0.094	0.516***		0.039	0.56***	
RRC → ROI	0.137	0.015**		0.120	0.300***		0.104	0.371***	
RPA → ROI	0.134	0.159***		0.163	0.334***		0.029	0.404***	
RTDxRWE → ROI	0.095	0.505***		0.240	0.027**		0.201	0.037**	

Note: *significant at $p < 0.001$ (one-tailed), **significant at $p < 0.05$ (one-tailed), ***not significant. RTD = Religious training and development; RRS = Religious recruitment and selection; RRC = Religious remuneration and compensation; RPA = Religious performance appraisal; RWE = Religious work ethics; ROI = Religious organizational image.

Table 8. Difference test between religious groups

Relationships	p-value Catholic vs Christian	p-value Catholic vs Islam	p-value Christian vs Islam
RTD → ROI	0.123	0.698	0.131
RRS → ROI	0.831	0.145	0.410
RRC → ROI	0.998	0.968	0.996
RPA → ROI	0.448	0.879	0.467
RTD*RWE → ROI	0.315	0.224	0.920

Note: All p-values are not significant at $p < 0.1$ (two-tailed). RTD = Religious training and development; RRS = Religious recruitment and selection; RRC = Religious remuneration and compensation; RPA = Religious performance appraisal; RWE = Religious work ethics; ROI = Religious organizational image.

Subsequently, we conducted a multigroup analysis by categorizing respondents into Muslim, Catholic, and Christian groups. The regression results based on religious affiliation revealed that the explained variance of the dependent variable was highest among the Catholic group ($r^2 = 0.30$), followed by the Muslim group ($r^2 = 0.252$), and the Christian group ($r^2 = 0.136$). The effects of each variable also showed different levels of significance across the three religious groups (Table 7). To examine whether there were significant differences between the groups, we performed a difference test by comparing the overall effects of the independent variables on each religious group. Table 8 shows that there were no significant differences in the overall effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable ($p > 0.1$, two-tailed). Therefore, it can be concluded that the dimensions of religious HR practices have a significant influence on religious organizational image across all religious groups, although the significance levels of each individual dimension vary among the groups.

4. DISCUSSION

The first dimension, religious training and development, was found to have a positive influence on the religious organizational image. This result is consistent with the findings of Walter (2024) and Mayhew and Rockenbach (2021), who emphasize

that employee training and development function as effective mechanisms for embedding religious organizational image into employees. In aggregate, such employee behaviors serve as a reflection of the institution's religious organizational image as perceived by external stakeholders. In this study, all selected respondents had participated in at least one internally organized training session on organizational values. Through this training, they gained an understanding of how their faith-based institutions are governed in accordance with religious principles. Moreover, all respondents had been employed for a minimum of one year, during which they likely engaged in sustained and meaningful interactions with their colleagues. This finding also supports the notion put forward by Al-Tit et al. (2022), emphasizing that such interpersonal engagement between employees naturally facilitates the reinforcement of organizational values in daily work practices through informal, peer-based control mechanisms.

Religious recruitment and selection were found to have a positive influence on religious organizational image. Consistent with the findings of Ferdousi and Abedin (2023), recruitment practices based on religious principles help ensure that selected candidates share the organization's core religious values. In the context of this study, the items presented to the respondents emphasized

how religious values are integrated into recruitment and selection processes. As such, these processes function as a filtering mechanism to attract and select individuals whose values align with those of the institution. This finding is further supported by Hallin et al. (2022), who suggest that religious recruitment and selection facilitate employees' adaptation to the internal organizational culture. Ultimately, this accelerated adaptation contributes to the development of a coherent religious organizational image as perceived by external stakeholders.

Next, religious remuneration and compensation were found to positively influence religious organizational image. This finding supports the work of Yasmeen (2023), who highlighted that a well-structured remuneration scheme can shape employee behavior in alignment with the religious organizational image. In the context of this study, employees were asked to assess whether the compensation they received reflected religious values such as fairness, proportionality to workload, and timely payment. Positive perceptions of these practices encouraged employees to behave in ways consistent with the institution's religious image. Furthermore, our findings are consistent with those of Aman-Ullah et al. (2025), who emphasized that compensation policies grounded in religious values contribute to higher levels of employee retention. Such retention enables faith-based higher education institutions to continuously reinforce their religious organizational image through the sustained delivery of religiously grounded services to stakeholders.

Next, the findings revealed that religious performance appraisal positively influences religious organizational image. This aligns with Yasmeen

(2023), who emphasized that performance evaluations based on religious values motivate employees by making them feel fairly treated. As a result, employees are more likely to behave in ways consistent with the organization's values. In this study, all respondents had undergone at least one performance appraisal, allowing them to assess whether the process genuinely incorporated religious values such as fairness and impartiality. Thus, their satisfaction with the evaluation's fairness encouraged voluntary alignment with organizational values, ultimately enhancing the religious organizational image.

A moderated regression analysis was then conducted, and the results indicated that religious work ethics significantly strengthened the positive relationship between religious training and development and religious organizational image. This suggests that employees who uphold strong religious work ethics are more likely to internalize training materials and apply them in their daily routines, thereby reinforcing the religious organizational image. This finding is consistent with Rubbab et al. (2024), who noted that an individual's religious work ethics enhances the effectiveness of embedding organizational values through targeted training and development initiatives. In the context of this study, participants were asked to reflect on their personal beliefs about work and its connection to religious teachings. They believed that work carries not only economic significance but also spiritual meaning, serving as an expression of their commitment to religious teachings. As a result, they viewed religious training and development as aligned with their personal beliefs, making it easier for them to implement in their daily work practices, thus strengthening the religious organizational image.

CONCLUSION

This present study revealed that all dimensions of religious HR practices positively influenced religious organizational image. Moreover, a religious work ethic strengthens the positive impact of religious training and development on the religious organizational image. Therefore, all dimensions of religious HR practices, ranging from recruitment and training to performance appraisal, contribute to strengthening the religious image of the organization. Furthermore, employees with work ethics grounded in religious values are more likely to align with the types of training and development implemented by the company. Thus, training and development initiatives become more effective in fostering the intended religious organizational image.

Building on these results, this study contributes to HR management by examining individual HR practice dimensions within religious-based organizations, offering a faith-oriented perspective that distinguishes them from conventional practices. This study offers practical guidance for top management to develop HR practices aligned with religious values, ensuring consistency across the HR cycle within faith-based higher education institutions. Moreover, training and development programs should be strategically designed to reflect the institution's religious positioning, especially for teaching staff who interact directly with students and play a crucial role in transmitting religious values during daily academic activities.

In faith-based organizations, top management must ensure all HR practices, covering recruitment, training, appraisal, and compensation, align with core religious values to maintain value congruence and cultural coherence. Continuous, data-driven evaluation helps identify gaps and guide improvements. A well-integrated religious HR framework not only enhances efficiency but also transforms human capital into a strategic asset that strengthens the institution's faith-based identity and competitive advantage.

Nonetheless, this present study has several limitations that future studies could address. First, it employed a cross-sectional approach, while religious work ethics, which are based on individual beliefs, may change over time. Further studies could investigate the effects of religious work ethics using a longitudinal approach to examine the influence of an individual's tenure within an organization. Second, only one moderating variable is included in the model. In fact, other factors may serve as intervening variables that may lead to different outcomes in religious organizational image building. Further studies could investigate other factors that may come into play in determining the effectiveness of HR practices in shaping organizational image. Third, only four dimensions of religious HR practices were considered as antecedents. Further studies could explore other dimensions to provide a more comprehensive insight into the human resource factors that shape a religious organization's image.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization: Sahat Silalahi, Adi Hutomo.

Data curation: Sahat Silalahi, Adi Hutomo, Agung Sutoto, Slamet Susilo, Lisa Yuniarti, Mohammad Mulyadi, Hotnier Sipahutar.

Formal analysis: Sahat Silalahi, Mohammad Mulyadi.

Investigation: Adi Hutomo.

Methodology: Sahat Silalahi, Adi Hutomo, Agung Sutoto.

Project administration: Agung Sutoto, Slamet Susilo, Lisa Yuniarti.

Resources: Slamet Susilo, Lisa Yuniarti, Mohammad Mulyadi, Hotnier Sipahutar.

Software: Agung Sutoto.

Supervision: Sahat Silalahi, Slamet Susilo, Lisa Yuniarti, Mohammad Mulyadi.

Validation: Agung Sutoto, Slamet Susilo, Lisa Yuniarti, Hotnier Sipahutar.

Writing – original draft: Sahat Silalahi, Adi Hutomo, Agung Sutoto.

Writing – review & editing: Sahat Silalahi, Adi Hutomo, Agung Sutoto, Slamet Susilo, Lisa Yuniarti, Mohammad Mulyadi, Hotnier Sipahutar.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors gratefully acknowledge the support of the Research Organization for Governance, Economy, and Community Welfare, Indonesian National Research and Innovation Agency, which provided funding under Decree No. 6/III.12/HK/2024.

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APPENDIX A

Table A1. Questionnaire items for measuring religious HR practices, religious work ethics, and religious organizational image

Variables	Scales	Statements
Religious training and development (RTD)	RTD1	The organization holds skill workshops for employees based on religious values
	RTD2	The organization emphasizes improving employees' knowledge of religious values
	RTD3	The organization provides religious teachings to the employees
Religious recruitment and selection (RRS)	RRS1	The organization provides equal employment opportunities
	RRS2	The organization selects honest people for the job
	RRS3	Trustworthiness is one of the main criteria for employing
Religious remuneration and compensation (RRC)	RRC1	Salary is paid on time
	RRC2	Salary is paid no less than the agreed amount
	RRC3	Rewards are proportional to the quality and quantity of the job
	RRC4	Extra efforts are rewarded, while not enough efforts are penalized
Religious performance appraisal (RPA)	RPA1	The organization evaluates employees' performance continuously
	RPA2	Performance criteria are equal for all employees
	RPA3	The appraisal process is not biased or prejudiced
	RPA4	Customer satisfaction is included as a key aspect of the evaluation
Religious work ethics (RWE)	RWE1	Work is a form of worship
	RWE2	Earthly effort should be aimed at higher rewards
	RWE3	Work is without detriment to religious obligations
Religious organizational image (ROI)	ROI1	This organization is managed according to religious values
	ROI2	This organization is a respectable religious organization
	ROI3	This organization prioritizes consumer services that align with religious values
	ROI4	Being an employee in this organization is well respected by the religious community