

## Public Value and Social Impact in Faith-Based Organizations: Toward Evidence-Based Religious Policy

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### Abstract

Faith-based organizations (FBOs) contribute to welfare provision, public health, humanitarian assistance, and community development, yet their social contributions cannot be inferred from religious identity or service outputs alone. Existing research has examined FBO governance, service delivery, state-FBO relations, and sector-specific outcomes, but remains insufficiently integrated for explaining how social impact acquires broader public value and becomes relevant to evidence-based religious policy. This study examines how FBOs generate public value and social impact, identifies the contextual and institutional conditions shaping their emergence, distribution, and sustainability, and considers how such evidence can inform religious policy. A qualitative integrative review and conceptual synthesis, informed by realist reasoning, was employed. Peer-reviewed theoretical, empirical, and evaluative literature addressing FBOs, public value, social impact, governance, program evaluation, and evidence-based policymaking was selected according to its relevance to organizational practices, contextual conditions, outcomes, stakeholder experiences, equity, accountability, and legitimacy. The literature was analyzed through combined deductive and inductive thematic analysis and iterative cross-source comparison. The synthesis indicates that faith-informed resources generate social impact through mechanisms including moral commitment, volunteer mobilization, relational accessibility, solidarity, and community trust, whose operation varies across institutional and socio-religious contexts. Social impact acquires public value when outcomes are accessible, equitably distributed, accountable, inclusive, and publicly legitimate. These findings provide an analytical basis for evidence-based religious policy that evaluates FBO involvement through demonstrated outcomes, contextual conditions, stakeholder experiences, distributional consequences, and governance arrangements rather than organizational identity alone.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Research Background

Faith-based organizations (FBOs) have become increasingly visible actors in contemporary systems of social welfare, public health, humanitarian assistance, poverty alleviation, and community development ([Maes et al., 2024](#); [Nicol et al., 2022](#); [Song et al., 2024](#)). Their significance derives not only from their capacity to deliver services but also from their embeddedness in religious communities, local networks, moral traditions, and relationships of trust that may enable them to reach populations that formal public institutions do not always serve effectively. Their scale is considerable. In Indonesia, for example, more than 42,000 *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) are registered with the Ministry of Religious Affairs ([Bisnis.com, 2025](#)), and the national zakat body reported collecting about Rp33 trillion in zakat, infaq, and alms in 2023 ([ANTARA, 2024](#)), resources channelled through the national body and licensed zakat institutions, many of which are affiliated with mass Islamic organizations.

Evidence from Indonesia, for example, demonstrates that Islamic FBOs mobilized extensive organizational networks, philanthropic resources, volunteers, and community-level structures in responding to the COVID-19 crisis ([Prianto et al., 2023](#); [Rachmawati et al., 2022](#)), while comparable research in Brazil shows that religion and spirituality can shape organizational services, communication, networking, and governance capacity ([Jacinto et al., 2023](#)).

Research in health and social welfare similarly indicates that FBOs may contribute to maternal and child health provision, health promotion, vaccination initiatives, poverty alleviation, and other forms of social support ([Maes et al., 2024](#); [Nicol et al., 2022](#); [Song et al., 2024](#)). Their role is therefore increasingly situated at the intersection of religious action, civil society, and public governance rather than being confined to private charity or congregational activity.

The growing public role of FBOs, however, creates a more complex policy problem than simply determining whether religious organizations provide socially beneficial services. FBOs differ considerably in organizational form, religious orientation, institutional capacity, relationships with government, target populations, and the extent to which religious commitments shape service provision; consequently, treating them as a homogeneous category can obscure important differences in how social value is produced and experienced ([Maes et al., 2023, 2024](#)).

State–FBO collaboration can expand service capacity and connect public programs with communities, but it can also generate tensions involving organizational autonomy, professionalization, hybridization, accountability, and the appropriate role of religious values in publicly relevant services ([Lotta et al., 2024](#); [Mettang & Euchner, 2023](#)). Public

perceptions also cannot be assumed to be uniformly favorable simply because services are delivered by nonprofit or religious actors; recent experimental evidence suggests that judgments about faith-based providers can differ from judgments about secular nonprofit providers (Johnson et al., 2025). These findings make effectiveness alone an insufficient basis for assessing FBO involvement in public policy. Questions of accessibility, fairness, beneficiary choice, transparency, inclusion, legitimacy, and accountability are equally important when religious organizations operate within or alongside public-service systems.

Recent scholarship has consequently moved toward more systematic examination of how FBOs operate, how their distinctive organizational characteristics affect implementation, and under what conditions their activities generate observable social outcomes. Scoping reviews have demonstrated both the diversity of FBOs and continuing conceptual disagreement over how such organizations should be defined and classified (Maes et al., 2023, 2024).

Empirical studies have examined religious organizations as partners in public-service implementation, disaster governance, health interventions, anti-trafficking policy, and community-based programs, showing that outcomes depend on organizational capacity, institutional relationships, implementation conditions, and the characteristics of the populations served (Hounmenou, 2023; Lotta et al., 2024; Prianto et al., 2023; Wilcox et al., 2024). Public-health research further demonstrates the value of examining implementation processes rather than assuming that religious embeddedness automatically produces positive outcomes; for example, evidence on vaccination partnerships shows considerable activity and reported benefits but also identifies weaknesses in outcome measurement and evaluation reporting (Song et al., 2024).

Likewise, evidence synthesis on maternal and child health illustrates the importance of combining effectiveness evidence with the experiences and perceptions of service users and providers (Nicol et al., 2022). Taken together, this state of the art suggests a shift from asking whether FBOs matter toward examining how, for whom, under what institutional conditions, and according to which dimensions of value their contributions should be assessed.

Despite these advances, the literature remains fragmented across sector-specific studies and does not yet provide a sufficiently integrated account of how the activities of FBOs translate into public value and social impact that can inform evidence-based religious policy. Existing studies commonly concentrate on particular sectors, interventions, organizational types, or immediate service outcomes, while less attention is given to connecting material outcomes with relational and institutional dimensions such as trust, dignity, belonging, participation, equity, accountability, and public legitimacy (Hounmenou, 2023; Jacinto et al., 2023; Song et al., 2024). Moreover, implementation research indicates that organizational and contextual conditions can substantially shape whether faith-based interventions are adopted and sustained, reinforcing the need to avoid attributing outcomes to religious identity alone (Day et al., 2024; Wilcox et al., 2024).

This study addresses that gap by repositioning the assessment of FBOs from a narrow concern with service outputs toward an integrated analysis of public value and social impact, while explicitly considering the contexts, mechanisms, governance conditions, stakeholder experiences, and potential risks through which those outcomes emerge. Its novelty lies in connecting these dimensions to the development of evidence-based religious policy, thereby treating faith not as an assumed source of effectiveness but as a contextual and organizational resource whose public significance must be demonstrated through evidence, interpreted through stakeholder experience, and evaluated against principles of inclusion, equity, accountability, and legitimacy.

In this study, evidence-based religious policy refers to public decisions about how the state partners with, funds, registers, regulates, and accredits faith-based organizations—for example partnership agreements, public grants and subsidies, registration and licensing rules, and the accreditation of faith-based schools and services—when these decisions are informed by systematic evidence on outcomes, their distribution, and governance. Such policies are made by ministries of religious affairs, social and health ministries, and local governments; in Indonesia, for instance, the Ministry of Religious Affairs supports and oversees pesantren ([Law No. 18 of 2019](#)), and zakat collection and distribution are regulated by the state ([Law No. 23 of 2011](#)). The term draws on the evidence-based policy tradition but adopts its critiques: because evidence use is political and selective ([Cairney, 2016](#)) and because programmes work through mechanisms in particular contexts rather than uniformly ([Pawson, 2006](#)), it is understood here in an evidence-informed rather than evidence-determined sense.

Existing work already links nonprofit and civil-society activity with public value and social impact: [Wæraas et al. \(2024\)](#) identify forms of added value of civil-society organizations in welfare services, [Benjamin et al. \(2023\)](#) set out a research programme on nonprofit social-impact evaluation, and [Piatak and Jensen \(2024\)](#) show how public values shape preferences about which sector should deliver services. This study does not merely apply these frameworks to FBOs. It adds an explicit distinction between social impact as change and public value as the interpretation of that change against equity, accessibility, accountability, and legitimacy criteria; it incorporates faith-specific risks such as proselytization and exclusion; and it links the assessment to concrete religious-policy instruments.

## **Problem Identification**

Despite the growing involvement of faith-based organizations (FBOs) in welfare provision, public health, humanitarian assistance, and community development, their contribution to public policy remains difficult to assess systematically and contextually. Existing studies provide evidence on service delivery, organizational characteristics, implementation processes, and sector-specific outcomes, but these findings remain insufficiently connected to broader dimensions of public value and social impact ([Maes et al., 2023, 2024](#); [Song et al., 2024](#)).

Moreover, religious identity alone cannot explain beneficial outcomes, as faith-informed resources such as moral motivation, volunteer networks, religious leadership, and community trust may operate differently across organizational and socio-religious contexts and may coexist with risks related to exclusion, unequal access, or accountability (Jacinto et al., 2023; Lotta et al., 2024; Wilcox et al., 2024).

The central problem is therefore not simply whether FBOs produce positive outcomes, but how public value and social impact are generated, for whom, under what conditions, and with what potential risks. Addressing this problem requires an integrated perspective that connects organizational practices, contextual conditions, observable outcomes, stakeholder experiences, equity, and public legitimacy as a basis for more evidence-informed religious policy.

The policy problem is also concrete. Public support for faith-based institutions is substantial, but it is not clear that funding and partnership arrangements require evidence on social outcomes and their distribution. In Indonesia, the Pesantren Law recognizes the education, preaching, and community-empowerment functions of pesantren and enables public support (Law No. 18 of 2019), and the Zakat Management Law places zakat collection and distribution under state regulation (Law No. 23 of 2011); these frameworks focus mainly on recognition, financing, and administrative compliance rather than on systematic reporting of social outcomes and equity. Internationally, publicly funded faith-based services, such as those enabled by the Charitable Choice provisions in the United States, have prompted debate about the separation of religion and state and about discrimination and capacity (Chaves, 1999), while humanitarian scholarship documents persistent problems of proselytization in faith-based assistance (Lynch & Schwarz, 2016).

## Research Questions

1. What mechanisms does the literature suggest through which the resources and practices of faith-based organizations generate social impact and public value?
2. What contextual and institutional conditions does the literature suggest shape the emergence, distribution, and sustainability of public value and social impact in faith-based organizations?
3. Normatively, how should evidence concerning outcomes, stakeholder experiences, equity, accountability, and legitimacy inform evidence-based religious policy?

RQ1 and RQ2 are answered as propositions suggested by the literature rather than as established causal relationships, and the answer to RQ3 is explicitly normative.

## Research Objectives and Significance

This study aims to examine how faith-based organizations generate public value and social impact and to identify the contextual and institutional conditions that shape the emergence, distribution, and sustainability of these outcomes. Specifically, it investigates

the relationships among faith-informed organizational resources, implementation practices, stakeholder experiences, governance arrangements, and socially relevant outcomes, while considering how trust, dignity, participation, equity, accountability, and legitimacy contribute to the interpretation of public value. It further examines how these forms of evidence can inform more systematic and context-sensitive religious policy without assuming that religious identity inherently produces beneficial outcomes.

The study is significant at theoretical, analytical, and policy levels. Theoretically, it connects scholarship on faith-based organizations with public value and social impact perspectives, extending assessment beyond conventional measures of service output. Analytically, it integrates observable outcomes with stakeholder experiences, contextual conditions, distributional effects, unintended consequences, and governance safeguards.

From a policy perspective, it provides a basis for assessing faith-based involvement according to demonstrated social contribution, equitable access, accountability, beneficiary choice, and public legitimacy rather than organizational identity alone. In doing so, the study strengthens the evidence base for determining when, how, and under what conditions faith-based involvement can contribute to publicly valuable and socially legitimate outcomes.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Public value provides a conceptual basis for assessing organizational contributions beyond service volume, efficiency, or immediate program outputs. In contemporary public-service scholarship, value is increasingly understood through multiple dimensions, including effectiveness, equity, responsiveness, stakeholder preferences, and the broader social significance attached to service provision (Piatak & Jensen, 2024; Wæraas et al., 2024). The concept originates in Moore's (1995) argument that public managers create value by aligning public purposes with an authorizing environment and operational capacity. Bozeman (2007) shifted attention to the public values that societies hold and by which public action is judged, and Benington and Moore (2011) brought together the theory and practice of public value. These traditions are used for different purposes in this study. Bozeman's (2007) public values—normative consensus about rights, obligations, and principles—supply the evaluative criteria applied to FBO outcomes (equity, accessibility, accountability, beneficiary choice, inclusion, and legitimacy), whereas Moore's (1995) strategic triangle is used to analyze the authorizing environment: whether governments, communities, and religious authorities confer legitimacy and support on FBO involvement, and whether operational capacity is sufficient. Recent work on strategic public value(s) governance links the two traditions (Thabit et al., 2025).

Civil society organizations may generate functional, altruistic, emotional, and social forms of added value, demonstrating that organizational contribution cannot be adequately represented by performance indicators alone (Wæraas et al., 2024). Within faith-based organizations (FBOs), religion and spirituality may also shape organizational services, communication, networking, and governance, making the processes through which value is produced analytically relevant alongside the outcomes themselves (Jacinto et al., 2023).

Public value in this context therefore encompasses both substantive benefits and the qualities through which those benefits acquire wider public significance, including accessibility, fairness, accountability, responsiveness, and legitimacy (Jacinto et al., 2023; Piatak & Jensen, 2024). Accordingly, public value is understood here as a multidimensional assessment of what socially meaningful value is generated, who experiences that value, and whether the processes through which it is produced are consistent with broader expectations of equitable and legitimate public action.

Social impact complements public value by focusing on changes associated with organizational activities rather than on the value attributed to those activities. Contemporary impact scholarship distinguishes activities and outputs from outcomes and longer-term changes, emphasizing that meaningful evaluation requires attention to causal pathways, stakeholder perspectives, and multiple forms of evidence (Benjamin et al., 2023; Feor et al., 2023).

Social impact measurement consequently benefits from combining quantitative indicators with qualitative evidence capable of capturing experiences and forms of change that are difficult to represent numerically (Feor et al., 2023; Handley, 2025). This distinction is especially useful for FBOs because some organizational effects may emerge through relational processes, communication, social networks, and locally embedded interactions rather than through formal service outputs alone (Jacinto et al., 2023; Prianto et al., 2023).

Impact can therefore be examined across individual, relational, community, and institutional levels, while also considering differences in how outcomes are experienced and distributed among stakeholders (Benjamin et al., 2023). In this study, social impact is consequently understood as multidimensional and context-dependent change identified through observable outcomes, stakeholder experiences, distributional consequences, and the conditions through which those changes emerge.

The policy relevance of public value and social impact depends on how evidence is selected, interpreted, and incorporated into decision-making. Evidence-based policymaking extends beyond the availability of research findings because evidence use is shaped by institutional settings, decision processes, and sociocultural conditions; in Indonesia, for example, religion–science compatibility beliefs have been associated with government officials' beliefs about and implementation of evidence-based policy (Lionardo et al., 2024). More broadly, the evidence-based policy literature shows that policymaking is not a linear application of research: policymakers combine evidence with values, interests, and institutional constraints, so that evidence use is inherently political (Cairney, 2016). From a realist perspective, Pawson (2006) argues that evidence-based policy should synthesize knowledge about how programmes work, for whom, and in what circumstances rather than aggregate average effects, an argument that underpins the realist orientation of this study.

For the assessment of FBO involvement, a sufficiently broad evidence base therefore requires quantitative information concerning access, participation, continuity, distribution, and outcomes alongside qualitative evidence concerning stakeholder experience, perceived fairness, trust, accountability, and legitimacy (Feor et al., 2023).

Evidence must also be interpreted in relation to governance arrangements because interactions between public institutions and faith-based providers can influence organizational practices and the implementation of public services ([Lotta et al., 2024](#)).

The literature also documents risks and limits of FBO involvement. Humanitarian scholarship identifies proselytization as a persistent problem in faith-based assistance, including disputes about what counts as proselytism ([Lynch & Schwarz, 2016](#)). In the United States, the Charitable Choice provisions expanded public funding of religious providers and prompted debate about religion–state separation, discrimination in hiring and beneficiary selection, and the capacity of congregations to participate ([Chaves, 1999](#)). Experimental evidence shows that citizens may judge faith-based providers differently from secular nonprofits ([Johnson et al., 2025](#)), and studies of state–FBO collaboration document tensions over autonomy, professionalization, and the role of religious values in public services ([Lotta et al., 2024](#); [Mettang & Euchner, 2023](#)). These risks are therefore treated as part of the evidence base rather than only as the authors' propositions.

From this perspective, evidence-based religious policy entails evaluating faith-based involvement according to demonstrated outcomes, distributional consequences, stakeholder experience, contextual conditions, accountability, and public legitimacy rather than relying on organizational identity as the principal basis for policy judgment. This formulation connects the assessment of public value and social impact with decisions concerning partnership, support, regulation, and evaluation while providing the conceptual foundation for examining how evidence about FBOs can inform religious policy.

## THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### Theoretical Framework

This study integrates public value theory and realist reasoning to explain how the activities of faith-based organizations (FBOs) acquire broader social and policy significance. Public value theory provides the normative lens by directing attention to value creation beyond organizational performance and toward the interaction of substantive outcomes, societal values, institutional capacity, and legitimacy ([Benington & Moore, 2011](#); [Bozeman, 2007](#); [Moore, 1995](#)). Contemporary developments in public value scholarship emphasize that value creation increasingly occurs through multi-actor arrangements in which public institutions, civil society organizations, communities, and other stakeholders contribute different resources and capacities ([Thabit et al., 2025](#)).

This perspective is particularly relevant when public purposes are pursued through organizational relationships that extend beyond government boundaries and require attention to both value creation and the conditions that authorize and sustain it ([Thabit et al., 2025](#)). Realist reasoning complements this perspective by explaining outcomes as products of mechanisms operating within particular contexts rather than as automatic consequences of organizational activities ([Nielsen et al., 2022](#); [Roodbari et al., 2023](#)). The context–mechanism–outcome logic follows [Pawson and Tilley's \(1997\)](#) realistic

evaluation. Together, these perspectives provide two complementary analytical functions: realist reasoning explains how and under what conditions outcomes emerge, whereas public value theory supports interpretation of when those outcomes acquire broader public significance. In realist evaluation, a mechanism is not an organizational activity or attribute but the reasoning and responses of actors—beneficiaries, volunteers, or officials—to the resources that an intervention offers (Dalkin et al., 2015; Pawson & Tilley, 1997). Following this definition, volunteer networks, leadership, and religious authority are treated here as resources, and the mechanisms of interest are responses such as beneficiaries' trust and willingness to seek help, volunteers' sense of moral obligation, and officials' confidence in FBO partners.

### Conceptual Framework

Building on these theoretical foundations, the conceptual framework treats FBO activity as a conditional process in which organizational resources and practices interact with contextual conditions to activate mechanisms that generate multidimensional social outcomes. Organizational resources may include material capacity, volunteer networks, leadership, institutional relationships, local knowledge, and faith-informed practices, while relevant contexts include governance arrangements, regulatory environments, community characteristics, and relationships with public institutions. This conditional process is represented in Figure 1 as a sequence of analytical stages with feedback loops: FBO resources and practices operate within contextual conditions and through specific mechanisms to produce social outcomes, which are interpreted in terms of public value and translated into policy-relevant evidence. Figure 1 presents this initial framework, which served as the starting point of the synthesis; the refined pathway produced by the analysis, which adds stakeholders, risks and exclusion, and the distinction between evidence of activities, outputs, and outcomes, is presented in Figure 2.

Research on state–FBO interactions demonstrates that institutional relationships can reshape organizational practices and service implementation, reinforcing the importance of examining organizational action within its governance setting rather than in isolation (Lotta et al., 2024). Likewise, religion and spirituality may influence organizational services, communication, networks, and governance processes, suggesting that faith-related characteristics are analytically relevant through the ways in which they operate within organizational practice (Jacinto et al., 2023). The sequence of stages shown in Figure 1 is analytical rather than strictly linear, allowing feedback, variation across stakeholders, uneven distribution of outcomes, and unintended consequences to be incorporated into the interpretation of organizational effects (Benjamin et al., 2023; Handley, 2025).

The framework ultimately connects these organizational and social processes with evidence-based religious policy by treating policy relevance as an interpretive stage rather than an automatic consequence of demonstrated outcomes. Evidence concerning FBO activity must therefore be considered not only in terms of whether change occurs, but also according to how benefits and risks are distributed, how stakeholders experience

those changes, and whether the processes producing them satisfy expectations of equity, accountability, and public legitimacy.

This orientation is consistent with evidence-based policymaking research showing that the use of evidence is shaped by institutional and sociocultural environments rather than by research availability alone ([Lionardo et al., 2024](#)). It also recognizes that collaboration between state institutions and FBOs can affect organizational autonomy, implementation practices, and the character of public-service provision, making governance arrangements themselves relevant to policy interpretation ([Lotta et al., 2024](#)).

This framework provides a systematic basis for examining how FBO-related outcomes emerge, whose interests they serve, the conditions under which they acquire public significance, and how the resulting evidence can inform decisions concerning partnership, support, regulation, and evaluation. Risks, exclusion, and unintended consequences enter the pathway at two points: as contextual conditions that can block or distort mechanisms (for example, religious boundaries that discourage some groups from seeking help), and as negative outcomes assessed alongside benefits when social impact is interpreted in terms of public value.

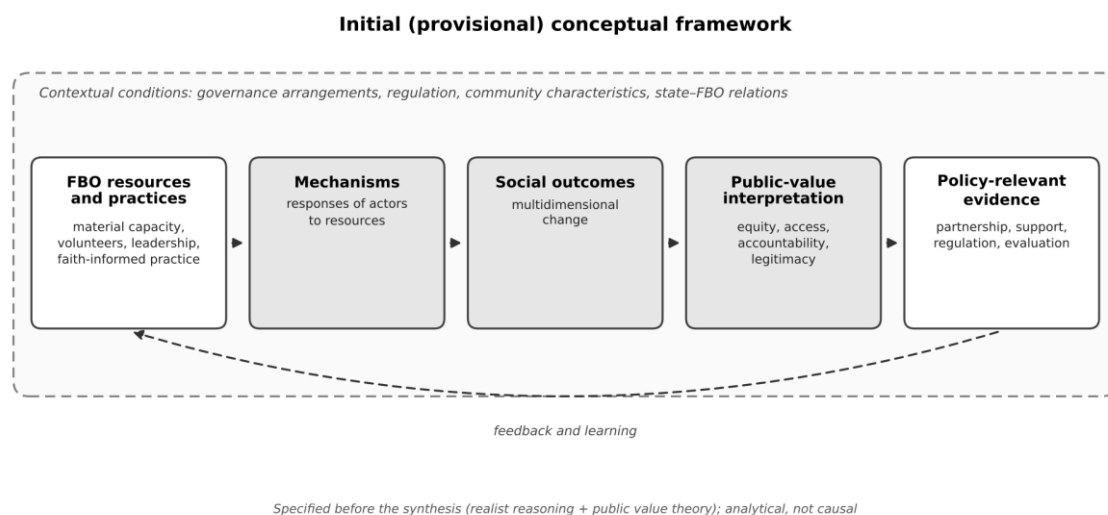


**Figure 1.** Initial (provisional) conceptual framework

Note: The framework was specified before the synthesis and served as its starting point; the refined pathway is presented in Figure 2. Source: Authors' elaboration.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative integrative review and conceptual synthesis to examine public value and social impact in faith-based organizations (FBOs) and their implications for evidence-based religious policy. This approach was appropriate for integrating theoretical and empirical literature from related fields while enabling conceptual relationships to be developed across diverse forms of evidence ([Snyder, 2019](#); [Torraco, 2016](#)). Realist reasoning was used as an analytical orientation to examine how outcomes may emerge through mechanisms operating under particular contextual conditions rather than as an empirical realist evaluation design ([Nielsen et al., 2022](#)). Realist terminology is used in a moderated sense. The study draws on, but does not fully

implement, the RAMESES publication standards for realist syntheses (Wong et al., 2013): it states an initial programme theory (Figure 1), reports the search, and appraises sources for relevance and rigour for each context–mechanism–outcome configuration (Table 2), but it does not involve iterative, theory-driven searching to saturation. Its configurations are therefore presented as propositions consistent with the literature rather than as tested programme theories.

Relevant peer-reviewed literature was selected from scholarship addressing FBOs, public value, social impact, governance, program evaluation, and evidence-based policymaking. Sources were included when they provided theoretical, empirical, or evaluative evidence concerning organizational practices, contextual conditions, social outcomes, stakeholder experiences, equity, accountability, or public legitimacy. Studies focusing exclusively on theological doctrine or religious practice without clear organizational, social, or policy relevance were excluded. Priority was given to recent international peer-reviewed literature, while foundational studies were retained where necessary to establish theoretical or methodological grounding. English-language peer-reviewed sources published between (2016 and 2025 were considered. After screening [n] titles and abstracts and assessing [n] full texts, 19 evidence sources were retained. The 29 references therefore do not form a single corpus: they comprise 13 FBO-specific evidence sources and 6 sources on nonprofit public value, social-impact evaluation, and evidence use that were analyzed in the synthesis, together with 7 theoretical works used to build the framework and 3 methodological references (Appendix Table A1).

The selected literature was analyzed using a combined deductive and inductive thematic process (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Deductive analysis was guided by categories derived from the theoretical and conceptual framework, including organizational resources and practices, contextual conditions, mechanisms, social outcomes, public-value implications, and policy-relevant evidence, while inductive analysis identified additional patterns, variations, risks, and unintended consequences emerging across the literature. Because the material consists of published findings rather than primary qualitative data, the procedure followed thematic synthesis principles (Thomas & Harden, 2008) rather than reflexive thematic analysis in the strict sense. Each evidence source was entered into an extraction template recording country, sector, design, the type of evidence reported (activities, outputs, or outcomes), resources, actor responses interpreted as mechanisms, contextual conditions, and risks; candidate context–mechanism–outcome configurations were then formulated and compared across sources. Coding was conducted by the first and second authors, the third author reviewed the configurations, and disagreements were resolved through discussion. Each source was appraised for relevance (how directly it addresses a configuration) and rigour (design and transparency of outcome reporting), and this appraisal informs the evidence column of Table 2.

Analytical rigor was supported through iterative cross-source comparison, with convergent findings examined alongside divergent evidence and contextual variation. The resulting synthesis was organized around relationships among FBO resources and practices, contextual conditions and mechanisms, multidimensional social impact, public-value interpretation, and policy-relevant evidence, which subsequently structured the presentation of the Results. Credibility was strengthened by an audit trail of the

extraction template and peer debriefing among the authors. Two authors work in the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which regulates and partners with FBOs; to limit the influence of this position, interpretations favourable to FBOs were checked against contrary evidence on risks and exclusion, and no internal ministry documents were used. Evidence from very different contexts (Indonesia, Brazil, the United States, Africa, and Germany) was not pooled: each configuration records the context of its supporting studies, and claims are limited to the settings and sectors in which evidence exists, predominantly health and COVID-19 responses.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Findings

The integrative synthesis indicates that the public value and social impact associated with faith-based organizations (FBOs) emerge from interactions among organizational resources and practices, the mechanisms through which these resources operate, and the institutional and socio-religious contexts in which organizations are embedded. Across the reviewed literature, faith-informed values, volunteer capacity, community networks, leadership, local knowledge, and organizational relationships constitute recurrent resources through which FBOs respond to social needs (Jacinto et al., 2023; Lotta et al., 2024; Prianto et al., 2023). Much of this supporting evidence comes from a small set of studies (Jacinto et al., 2023; Lotta et al., 2024; Prianto et al., 2023; Rachmawati et al., 2022; Song et al., 2024), mainly concerning health and COVID-19 responses, whereas evidence on education, welfare, and poverty alleviation is thinner; the claims that follow are therefore presented as analytical propositions whose scope should be read accordingly. The findings are organized around the three research questions: RQ1 (how public value and social impact are generated) is addressed through the discussion of resources, mechanisms, and social impact; RQ2 (the conditions that shape them) through the analysis of context; and RQ3 (how evidence can inform policy) through the public-value interpretation, the pathway in Figure 2, and the discussion of policy. Claims are therefore restricted to health and emergency responses; for education, welfare, and poverty alleviation they are offered as hypotheses for future research.

Religion and spirituality can influence organizational services, communication, networking, and governance, while relationships between FBOs and public institutions can reshape organizational practices and service implementation (Jacinto et al., 2023; Lotta et al., 2024). These findings position FBOs not simply as religious service providers but as organizational actors whose resources acquire social significance through their interaction with institutional arrangements and community environments. The overall pattern therefore directs attention from organizational identity toward the processes through which organizational capacities are translated into socially relevant outcomes.

In response to RQ1, faith-informed resources become consequential when they activate mechanisms such as moral commitment, volunteer mobilization, solidarity, relational accessibility, and community trust. These mechanisms can strengthen the capacity of organizations to identify local needs, mobilize assistance, sustain participation, and

connect communities with services and institutional actors. Studies conducted in humanitarian and public-health settings illustrate how FBOs can mobilize organizational structures, community networks, local resources, and trusted relationships in responding to collective needs ([Prianto et al., 2023](#); [Rachmawati et al., 2022](#); [Song et al., 2024](#)). The cited studies mainly document activities (mobilization, communication, service provision) and, to a lesser extent, outputs (people reached, vaccination events held); measured outcomes are rare, and [Song et al. \(2024\)](#) explicitly report weaknesses in outcome measurement. The social impact discussed below is therefore largely inferred from activity and output evidence.

Mapped to the evidence, the five items have different statuses. Community trust—beneficiaries' willingness to engage with services offered by trusted religious actors—is the mechanism most directly reflected in the vaccination and pandemic studies ([Prianto et al., 2023](#); [Rachmawati et al., 2022](#); [Song et al., 2024](#)). Moral commitment and solidarity—members' and volunteers' sense of religious obligation toward others—are suggested by the Indonesian and Brazilian studies ([Jacinto et al., 2023](#); [Prianto et al., 2023](#)). Relational accessibility is the authors' term for beneficiaries' perception that help from a familiar, community-embedded organization is easier and less stigmatizing to seek than help from formal agencies; it is an inference from these studies rather than a finding reported in them. Volunteer mobilization, by contrast, is an activity enabled by these mechanisms rather than a mechanism in the realist sense.

The contribution of these resources therefore extends beyond material service provision to the relational processes through which assistance becomes accessible and socially meaningful. Their analytical significance lies in what they enable organizations to do mobilize, connect, communicate, support, and respond rather than in their religious character alone. This mechanism-oriented interpretation provides a more precise explanation of how organizational resources may contribute to social impact.

With regard to RQ2, whether these mechanisms generate socially beneficial outcomes depends substantially on contextual conditions. Governance arrangements, leadership practices, regulatory environments, organizational accountability, community characteristics, and state–FBO relationships can enable or constrain the operation of organizational mechanisms. Research on interactions between public institutions and FBOs demonstrates that cooperation can reshape both organizational practices and public-service implementation, while comparative research on religious participation in social welfare indicates that relationships with the state are influenced by the degree of congruence between organizational and policy goals ([Lotta et al., 2024](#); [Mettang & Euchner, 2023](#)). These Brazilian and German settings differ from Indonesia, where mass-based Islamic organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah run extensive education, health, and social-service networks and maintain a close, partly cooperative relationship with the state ([Menchik, 2016](#)). The Indonesian COVID-19 studies suggest that these organizations combined their own networks with government coordination, acting both as partners of public authorities and as independent providers ([Prianto et al., 2023](#); [Rachmawati et al., 2022](#)), which indicates a relatively high congruence between organizational and state goals—the condition highlighted by [Mettang and Euchner \(2023\)](#).

Internal governance is equally consequential because religious values and spirituality may interact with managerial practices and organizational decision-making rather than functioning separately from them (Jacinto et al., 2023). Context therefore explains why similar organizational resources can operate differently across settings: community trust may facilitate participation where relationships are inclusive, whereas organizational boundaries or weak accountability may restrict the reach of the same relational resources. These examples are propositions derived by the authors and are not directly documented in the reviewed studies. This contextual variation supports a realist-informed interpretation in which mechanisms acquire explanatory meaning only in relation to the conditions under which they operate.

The synthesis further identifies social impact as multidimensional, extending from immediate service-related outcomes to relational, community, and institutional changes. This multilevel typology is drawn from the social-impact literature (Benjamin et al., 2023) rather than identified by the synthesis; in the reviewed FBO studies, individual and community levels are evidenced, mainly through access to health services and collective mobilization, whereas relational and institutional outcomes have little direct evidence. At the individual level, relevant outcomes include access to health, welfare, humanitarian assistance, education, or other forms of support. Relational outcomes involve changes in trust, mutual support, social connection, and stakeholder relationships, while community-level effects may include participation, collective mobilization, and strengthened capacity to respond to shared problems.

Evidence from public-health partnerships demonstrates the relevance of FBO relationships and community engagement in supporting vaccination initiatives among minoritized communities, while studies of humanitarian and pandemic responses illustrate the mobilization capacity of religious organizations during periods of collective risk (Prianto et al., 2023; Rachmawati et al., 2022; Song et al., 2024). Institutional outcomes may additionally arise through coordination, referral relationships, and interaction with public agencies. Social impact should therefore be assessed across levels of change rather than reduced to service volume or beneficiary counts.

Public value requires a further interpretive step because observable social impact does not by itself establish that benefits are fairly distributed, publicly legitimate, or produced through acceptable institutional practices. The synthesis identifies equity, accessibility, accountability, beneficiary choice, inclusion, and legitimacy as central criteria for interpreting the wider significance of FBO-related outcomes. These criteria are especially important in plural settings because community embeddedness can improve accessibility for some constituencies while organizational boundaries may affect how other groups experience participation or service provision.

Public-value research similarly demonstrates that citizens' preferences concerning service provision are shaped by values such as equity and effectiveness rather than by efficiency considerations alone (Piatak & Jensen, 2024). Assessment must consequently distinguish between the existence of positive outcomes and their broader public significance. A public-value perspective asks not only whether change occurred but also who experienced the benefits, how those benefits were distributed, whether participation

remained voluntary and accessible, and whether organizational practices were accountable to affected stakeholders.

A worked example illustrates how the criteria can be applied. In public-health partnerships with FBOs to support vaccination among minoritized communities ([Song et al., 2024](#)), accessibility is supported by evidence that trusted religious actors and venues brought vaccination closer to communities; equity is partly supported, because the partnerships targeted minoritized groups, but the distribution of uptake across groups was rarely measured; accountability and beneficiary choice are weakly evidenced because outcome measurement and evaluation reporting were limited; inclusion depends on whether people outside the congregations were reached, which is seldom reported; and legitimacy is suggested by the involvement of public-health authorities but not assessed from beneficiaries' perspective. The same partnership can thus be valuable in terms of accessibility while remaining unassessed in terms of equity, choice, and accountability—precisely the gaps that evidence-based religious policy should address.

The relationships identified through the synthesis can be expressed as a set of context–mechanism–outcome configurations. Table 1 summarizes how different contextual conditions may enable organizational mechanisms to generate social outcomes and broader public-value implications while also identifying conditions that can constrain those effects. Because Table 1 is a conceptual synthesis rather than a set of empirical findings, each row is marked as consistent with cited studies or as proposed by the authors, and the rows apply across sectors to different degrees.

**Table 1.** Conceptual Synthesis of Contexts, Mechanisms, Social Outcomes, and Public-Value Implications

| Context                                                                                                                                                                                        | Mechanism                                                                         | Social Outcome                                            | Public-Value Implication                                          | Key Condition or Risk                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Limited, inaccessible, or distrusted public services<br>[Consistent with: <a href="#">Prianto et al., 2023</a> ; <a href="#">Rachmawati et al., 2022</a> ; <a href="#">Song et al., 2024</a> ] | Community networks mobilize volunteers, resources, referrals, and local knowledge | Improved access and responsive assistance                 | Reduced institutional distance and strengthened social protection | Informal provision may be inconsistent or duplicate existing services |
| Strong community relationships and shared moral commitments<br>[Consistent with: <a href="#">Jacinto et al., 2023</a> ; <a href="#">Prianto et al., 2023</a> ]                                 | Solidarity, reciprocity, and sustained participation                              | Cooperation, relational support, and community engagement | Greater social connection and resilience                          | Trust and benefits may remain concentrated among insiders             |
| Formal state–FBO partnerships<br>[Consistent with: <a href="#">Lotta et al., 2024</a> ; <a href="#">Mettang &amp; Euchner, 2023</a> ]                                                          | Coordination, referral, monitoring, and professional standards                    | More reliable service delivery and institutional linkage  | Greater accountability and institutional legitimacy               | Administrative demands may constrain organizational flexibility       |

|                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                |                                                              |                                                        |                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Inclusive and accountable leadership [Partly consistent with: <a href="#">Jacinto et al., 2023</a> ; otherwise proposed by the authors]                                              | Moral or religious authority is translated into stewardship and responsiveness | Greater stakeholder confidence and organizational acceptance | More durable and broadly recognized public value       | Concentrated authority may reduce scrutiny                                 |
| Religious identity influences access or participation [Proposed by the authors; related evidence: <a href="#">Lynch &amp; Schwarz, 2016</a> ; <a href="#">Johnson et al., 2025</a> ] | Organizational boundaries shape beneficiary experience                         | Unequal uptake, discomfort, or exclusion                     | Reduced legitimacy and uneven distribution of benefits | Nondiscrimination, voluntary participation, and safeguarding are essential |
| Stakeholders participate in defining relevant outcomes [Consistent with: <a href="#">Benjamin et al., 2023</a> ; <a href="#">Handley, 2025</a> ]                                     | Local knowledge and lived experience inform interpretation                     | More contextually meaningful assessment                      | More credible and equitable policy learning            | Participation must include marginalized and nonreligious voices            |

Table 2 reports the number and type of studies behind each configuration in Table 1. Because none of these studies was designed to test the configurations, they are described as consistent with them rather than as supporting them.

**Table 2.** Number, type, and strength of evidence for each configuration in Table 1

| Table 1 Row (Context)                                       | Studies (n)      | Type of Evidence                                                                                    | Strength     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Limited, inaccessible, or distrusted public services        | 3                | Qualitative and review evidence of activities and outputs; outcomes rarely measured                 | Low–moderate |
| Strong community relationships and shared moral commitments | 2                | Qualitative descriptions of activities                                                              | Low          |
| Formal state–FBO partnerships                               | 2                | Qualitative studies of interactions and involvement                                                 | Low–moderate |
| Inclusive and accountable leadership                        | 1                | One qualitative study; otherwise proposition                                                        | Very low     |
| Religious identity influences access or participation       | 0 (FBO-specific) | Related evidence on proselytization and public perceptions (not designed to test the configuration) | Proposition  |
| Stakeholders participate in defining relevant outcomes      | 2                | Conceptual programme and one single-organization case; not FBO-specific                             | Low          |

Source: Authors' appraisal of the reviewed studies.

Table 1 illustrates that similar organizational resources may produce different social and public-value implications depending on the mechanisms activated and the contexts in

which they operate. It also distinguishes social impact from public value: observable change constitutes evidence of impact, whereas its public value depends on how that change is distributed, experienced, and governed. This distinction prevents positive aggregate outcomes from being interpreted automatically as evidence of equitable or legitimate public benefit. The synthesis therefore requires both evidence of outcomes and assessment of the conditions under which those outcomes acquire broader public significance. These relationships are integrated in Figure 2, which summarizes the analytical pathway from FBO resources and practices to evidence-based religious policy while recognizing the continuing influence of contextual conditions, feedback, and learning.

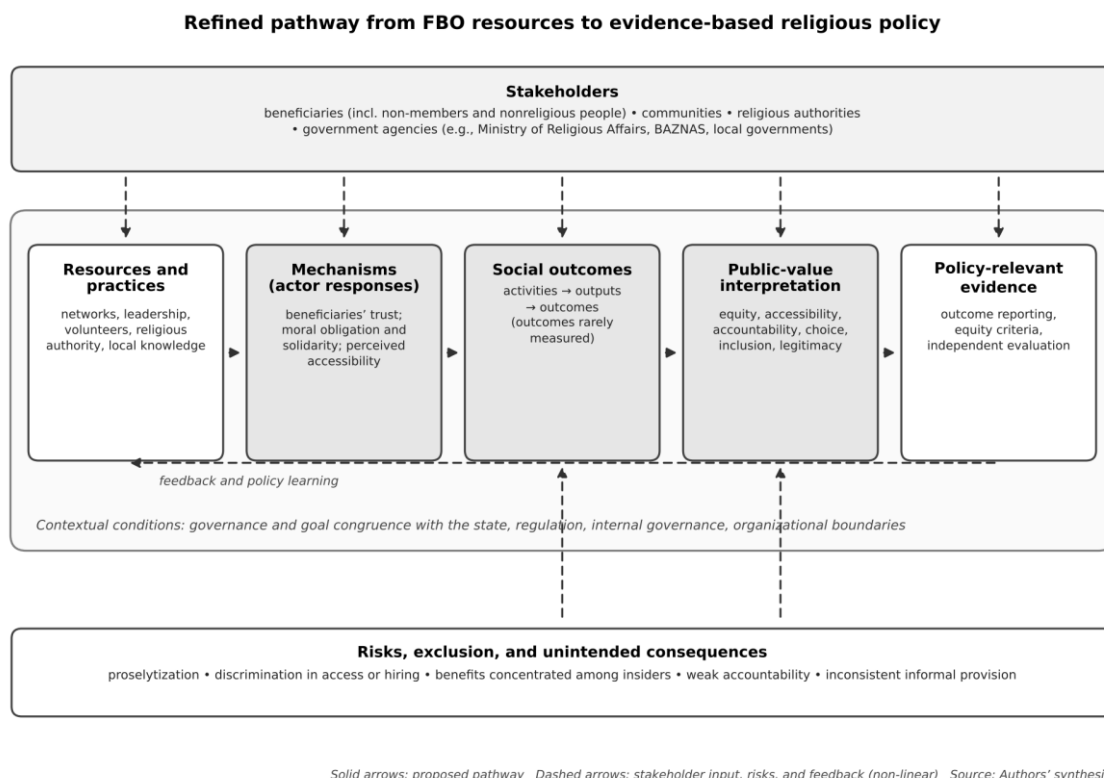


**Figure 2.** Integrated Pathway from Faith-Based Organizational Resources to Evidence-Based Religious Policy

Note: The refined pathway adds stakeholders, risks and exclusion, the distinction between activities, outputs, and outcomes, and non-linear feedback to the initial framework (Figure 1). Source: Authors' synthesis.

## Discussion

The pathway in Figure 2 indicates that policy-relevant evidence must connect observable outcomes with the mechanisms and contextual conditions through which they emerge and with the public-value criteria through which their wider significance is interpreted. Quantitative evidence can document dimensions such as service reach, participation, access, continuity, and distribution of outcomes, whereas qualitative evidence can illuminate stakeholder experiences, relational effects, perceptions of fairness, trust, accountability, and legitimacy.

This combination is consistent with social-impact evaluation scholarship emphasizing that nonprofit contributions involve diverse forms of social change and require deliberate choices concerning what should be evaluated, according to which criteria, and with what forms of evidence ([Benjamin et al., 2023](#)). Recent research on social-impact evaluation further demonstrates that some forms of organizational value are difficult to quantify and that stakeholder relationships, trust, and accountability can themselves become important components of impact assessment ([Handley, 2025](#)). Combining quantitative and qualitative evidence therefore provides a stronger basis for distinguishing immediate service outputs from broader social effects while revealing distributional differences and unintended consequences that aggregate indicators may obscure.

In relation to RQ3, the synthesis indicates that evidence-based religious policy requires evidence concerning both demonstrated outcomes and the institutional and social conditions under which those outcomes are generated, experienced, and distributed. Policy assessment should consequently connect organizational resources and practices with mechanisms, contextual conditions, multidimensional social impact, public-value criteria, and stakeholder evidence rather than treating evidence as a single performance measure. In practice, evidence-based religious policy would include outcome-reporting requirements in state–FBO partnership agreements, funding criteria that incorporate equity and nondiscrimination safeguards, independent evaluation of publicly funded FBO programmes, and indicators defined with stakeholders, including beneficiaries outside the organizations' own communities. In Indonesia, such requirements could be attached to state support for pesantren ([Law No. 18 of 2019](#)), to the governance of zakat by the national zakat body and licensed zakat institutions ([Law No. 23 of 2011](#)), and to the Ministry of Religious Affairs' partnerships with mass organizations.

This interpretation is consistent with research showing that evidence-based policymaking is influenced by institutional and sociocultural conditions and that, in the Indonesian context, beliefs concerning religion–science compatibility are associated with officials' beliefs about and implementation of evidence-based policy ([Lionardo et al., 2024](#)). Such an approach provides an analytical basis for decisions concerning partnership, support, regulation, and evaluation by identifying where FBO resources contribute to publicly relevant outcomes and where safeguards, accountability, or institutional adjustment may be necessary. Evidence-based religious policy is therefore conceptualized here as resting on proposed relationships among organizational practice, context, social outcomes, equitable distribution, stakeholder experience, and public legitimacy. For evidence-based religious policy, this finding implies that the use of evidence about FBOs may itself be shaped by officials' religious beliefs: officials who see religion and science as compatible may be more willing to require and use outcome evidence about faith-based programmes, whereas others may rely on religious identity as a proxy for value. Building evaluation capacity and clear evidence standards within ministries of religious affairs may therefore be as important as producing the evidence.

## Novelty and Contribution

The novelty of this study lies in integrating social impact, public value, and context-sensitive explanatory reasoning into a unified analytical perspective for examining faith-based organizations (FBOs) and their relevance to evidence-based religious policy. Existing scholarship has provided important insights into FBO governance, state–FBO interaction, and sector-specific forms of service provision and social intervention ([Jacinto et al., 2023](#); [Lotta et al., 2024](#); [Song et al., 2024](#)), but these strands have rarely been connected through an analytical pathway that distinguishes the production of social outcomes from their broader public significance.

This study addresses that conceptual separation by treating social impact as multidimensional change associated with organizational activity and public value as the interpretation of that change in relation to equity, accessibility, accountability, beneficiary choice, and legitimacy. Its contribution is therefore not a new performance-measurement instrument, but an analytical architecture linking FBO resources and practices, context-sensitive mechanisms, social impact, public-value interpretation, and policy-relevant evidence.

Positioned against existing work, the contribution is specific. [Benjamin et al. \(2023\)](#) provide a research programme for evaluating nonprofit social impact and [Wæraas et al. \(2024\)](#) identify forms of added value of civil-society organizations, while realist evaluation research increasingly unpacks context in organizational and public programmes ([Nielsen et al., 2022](#); [Roodbari et al., 2023](#)). The clearest contribution of this study is the sharp distinction between social impact as change and public value as the interpretation of that change against equity, accessibility, accountability, beneficiary choice, and legitimacy, applied to FBOs and linked to religious-policy instruments.

By doing so, the study provides a basis for evaluating FBO involvement according to demonstrated outcomes, stakeholder experience, distributional consequences, and governance conditions rather than religious identity alone, while extending public-value analysis toward a more systematic foundation for decisions concerning partnership, support, regulation, and evaluation.

## Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

This study is limited by its qualitative integrative-review and conceptual-synthesis design, meaning that the relationships identified among FBO resources and practices, contextual mechanisms, social impact, public value, and policy-relevant evidence should be interpreted as analytical propositions rather than an empirically validated causal model. Although drawing on literature from different policy sectors and socio-religious settings broadens the conceptual scope of the synthesis, such diversity also limits the extent to which particular mechanisms and outcomes can be generalized uniformly across organizations and contexts. Further limitations are the small evidence base and its concentration in health and COVID-19 responses; the predominance of evidence on activities and outputs over measured outcomes; the absence of any analysis of religious-policy documents or evaluation reports; the lack of a formal, standardized quality

appraisal beyond the relevance and rigour judgements reported in Table 2; and the limited Indonesian evidence despite the study's policy aims.

Published studies may additionally provide uneven evidence concerning unsuccessful interventions, unintended consequences, marginalized stakeholder experiences, and organizational practices that receive limited attention in formal evaluations. Further research should therefore empirically examine and refine the proposed framework through comparative case studies, longitudinal designs, and mixed-methods research across different religious traditions, institutional arrangements, stakeholder groups, and policy domains.

Particular attention should be given to testing how contextual conditions alter the operation of mechanisms, how benefits and risks are distributed among different groups, and whether immediate social outcomes develop into sustained public value. Future studies may also operationalize the framework into context-sensitive indicators, allowing its explanatory and practical utility for evidence-based religious policy to be assessed systematically.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study argues that the public value and social impact of faith-based organizations (FBOs) are best understood as context-dependent outcomes arising from the interaction of organizational resources, practices, mechanisms, and institutional conditions rather than from religious identity alone. Faith-informed resources, including moral commitment, volunteer networks, community relationships, leadership, and local knowledge, may contribute to multidimensional social outcomes when they are translated into accessible, responsive, and inclusive organizational practices. In answer to RQ1, the literature suggests that FBO resources generate social impact mainly through beneficiaries' trust and members' moral commitment and solidarity, with volunteer mobilization as an activity these mechanisms enable. In answer to RQ2, these mechanisms depend on governance arrangements, goal congruence with the state, internal governance, and organizational boundaries that can include or exclude. In answer to RQ3, the study argues normatively that religious policy should assess FBO involvement by distinguishing evidence of activities, outputs, and outcomes and by interpreting outcomes against public-value criteria. These propositions rest on a small evidence base dominated by health and COVID-19 studies.

However, social impact acquires broader public value only when its benefits are equitably distributed and supported by accountability, beneficiary choice, inclusion, and public legitimacy. Accordingly, evidence-based religious policy requires more than evidence of service delivery or positive outcomes; it requires integrated consideration of how outcomes are generated, who experiences them, under what conditions they occur, and how they are distributed and governed. By connecting social impact with public-value interpretation and policy-relevant evidence, this study provides a preliminary basis for assessing FBO involvement in public policy and for informing decisions concerning partnership, support, regulation, and evaluation in diverse socio-religious contexts.

Three implications follow for policymakers. First, publicly supported FBO programmes should report minimum outcome and equity indicators—who is reached, with what results, and with what distribution across groups. Second, beneficiary feedback and complaint mechanisms should be built into partnership agreements. Third, safeguards should guarantee voluntary participation in religious activities and nondiscrimination in access to services. In Indonesia, these implications concern the Ministry of Religious Affairs (for pesantren support and partnerships with mass organizations), the national zakat body (BAZNAS) and licensed zakat institutions (for zakat-funded programmes), and local governments (for locally funded partnerships).

### AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

**Hasyim Asy'ari** contributed to the conceptualization, methodology development, and drafting of the manuscript; **Eko Prasetyo** and **Nuniek Amin Abdullah** contributed to data synthesis, analysis, and critical revision; and **Moh. Ahmed Ubaidallah** contributed to the construction of the policy framework, interpretation of the findings, and final review and approval of the manuscript.

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors disclose no competing interests that could reasonably be perceived as affecting the analysis, interpretation, or conclusions presented in this study.

### DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI USE

During manuscript preparation, generative artificial intelligence tools were used in a limited supporting capacity to assist with language editing, organization of arguments, and preparation of visual presentation. The tools were not treated as sources of evidence, and they did not replace the authors' responsibility for the research design, interpretation of the literature, verification of references, or final conclusions. All AI-assisted content was reviewed and edited by the authors, who take full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of the manuscript.

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## APPENDIX

**Table A1.** Evidence sources analyzed in the synthesis (n = 19)

| No. | Source                                       | Country/<br>Context | Sector                                               | Design                           | Evidence<br>Reported                             |
|-----|----------------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | <a href="#">Day et al. (2024)</a>            | United States       | Health (faith-based physical activity and nutrition) | Qualitative implementation study | Implementation outcomes (maintenance)            |
| 2   | <a href="#">Hounmenou (2023)</a>             | Not specified       | Anti-trafficking policy                              | Qualitative study                | Activities                                       |
| 3   | <a href="#">Jacinto et al. (2023)</a>        | Brazil              | Social and health services (COVID-19)                | Qualitative case study           | Activities                                       |
| 4   | <a href="#">Johnson et al. (2025)</a>        | United States       | Public services                                      | Survey experiment                | Citizen perceptions                              |
| 5   | <a href="#">Lotta et al. (2024)</a>          | Brazil              | Service implementation                               | Qualitative study                | Activities and interactions                      |
| 6   | <a href="#">Maes et al. (2023)</a>           | Global              | FBO typologies                                       | Scoping review                   | Conceptual                                       |
| 7   | <a href="#">Maes et al. (2024)</a>           | Global              | Poverty alleviation                                  | Scoping review                   | Conceptual                                       |
| 8   | <a href="#">Mettang &amp; Euchner (2023)</a> | Germany             | Social welfare                                       | Comparative qualitative study    | Involvement (activities)                         |
| 9   | <a href="#">Nicol et al. (2022)</a>          | Africa              | Maternal and child health                            | Evidence synthesis               | Outcomes and experiences                         |
| 10  | <a href="#">Prianto et al. (2023)</a>        | Indonesia           | Humanitarian response (COVID-19)                     | Qualitative study                | Activities                                       |
| 11  | <a href="#">Rachmawati et al. (2022)</a>     | Indonesia           | Health (COVID-19)                                    | Qualitative study                | Activities                                       |
| 12  | <a href="#">Song et al. (2024)</a>           | Multiple countries  | Vaccination                                          | Scoping review                   | Activities and outputs; weak outcome measurement |
| 13  | <a href="#">Wilcox et al. (2024)</a>         | United States       | Health (church-based intervention)                   | Implementation study             | Adoption (implementation outcomes)               |
| 14  | <a href="#">Benjamin et al. (2023)</a>       | General             | Nonprofit social-impact evaluation                   | Conceptual research programme    | Conceptual                                       |
| 15  | <a href="#">Feor et al. (2023)</a>           | General             | Social-impact measurement                            | Systematic review                | Conceptual                                       |
| 16  | <a href="#">Handley (2025)</a>               | Single NPO case     | Social-impact evaluation and accountability          | Qualitative case study           | Evaluation practices                             |
| 17  | <a href="#">Lionardo et al. (2024)</a>       | Indonesia           | Evidence-based policy                                | Survey                           | Officials' beliefs                               |
| 18  | <a href="#">Piatak &amp; Jensen (2024)</a>   | United States       | Human-service contracting                            | Survey experiment                | Public preferences                               |
| 19  | <a href="#">Wæraas et al. (2024)</a>         | Norway              | Welfare services (civil society)                     | Qualitative study                | Perceived added value                            |

Note: Rows 1–13 are FBO-specific evidence sources; rows 14–19 are sources on nonprofit public value, social-impact evaluation, and evidence use. Theoretical works ([Benington & Moore, 2011](#); [Bozeman, 2007](#); [Moore, 1995](#); [Nielsen et al., 2022](#); [Pawson & Tilley, 1997](#); [Roodbari et al., 2023](#); [Thabit et al., 2025](#)) and methodological references ([Braun & Clarke, 2021](#); [Snyder, 2019](#); [Torraco, 2016](#)) are not part of the evidence base. Country information should be checked against the original studies.

Source: Authors' compilation.