



INTEGRATING ISLAMIC VALUES INTO LOCAL GOVERNANCE THROUGH PARTICIPATORY LEADERSHIP IN INDONESIA



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Abstract

This study explores the integration of Islamic values into local governance through participatory leadership within the context of Indonesian local government. As the world's largest Muslim – majority country, Indonesia provides a unique socio – political environment where religion and governance intersect. The research emphasizes how participatory leadership, grounded in Islamic ethical principles such as justice ('adl), consultation (shura), and accountability (amanah), contributes to policy – making processes that are inclusive, transparent, and culturally resonant. By employing a qualitative approach with case studies in West Sumatra, this article analyzes how local leaders incorporate Islamic values into decision – making mechanisms, particularly in areas related to social welfare, community participation, and sustainable development. Findings indicate that participatory leadership practices inspired by Islamic values strengthen trust between government and society, enhance legitimacy of policies, and encourage broader civic engagement. However, challenges remain in balancing traditional Islamic values with contemporary governance demands, particularly in maintaining policy effectiveness amid political pluralism and bureaucratic constraints. The academic contribution of this study lies in advancing the theoretical linkage between participatory leadership and Islamic governance values, proposing a context – specific governance model that enriches leadership studies and public policy scholarship. It also extends the discourse on religion and governance by demonstrating how local practices in Indonesia can inform global debates on ethical leadership in diverse societies. Practically, this study provides policy insights for governments seeking to design governance structures that respect cultural – religious values while adhering to democratic principles. Overall, the research highlights the potential of Islamic participatory leadership to promote good governance and social cohesio

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi integrasi nilai-nilai Islam ke dalam tata kelola lokal melalui kepemimpinan partisipatif dalam konteks pemerintahan daerah di Indonesia. Sebagai negara dengan penduduk Muslim terbesar di dunia, Indonesia menyediakan lingkungan sosial-politik yang unik di mana agama dan tata kelola saling berinteraksi. Penelitian ini menekankan bagaimana kepemimpinan partisipatif yang berlandaskan prinsip-prinsip etika Islam seperti keadilan ('adl), musyawarah (shura), dan akuntabilitas (amanah) berkontribusi terhadap proses perumusan kebijakan yang inklusif, transparan, dan sesuai dengan budaya lokal. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui studi kasus di Sumatera Barat, artikel ini menganalisis bagaimana para pemimpin lokal mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai Islam dalam mekanisme pengambilan keputusan, khususnya pada bidang kesejahteraan sosial, partisipasi masyarakat, dan pembangunan berkelanjutan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa praktik kepemimpinan partisipatif yang terinspirasi nilai-nilai Islam memperkuat kepercayaan antara pemerintah dan masyarakat, meningkatkan legitimasi kebijakan, serta mendorong partisipasi sipil yang lebih luas. Namun, tantangan tetap ada dalam menyeimbangkan nilai-nilai Islam tradisional dengan tuntutan tata kelola kontemporer, khususnya dalam menjaga efektivitas kebijakan di tengah pluralisme politik dan keterbatasan birokrasi. Kontribusi akademik penelitian ini terletak pada penguatan keterkaitan



teoretis antara kepemimpinan partisipatif dan nilai-nilai tata kelola Islam, sekaligus menawarkan model tata kelola yang kontekstual dan memperkaya kajian kepemimpinan serta kebijakan publik. Penelitian ini juga memperluas diskursus tentang agama dan tata kelola dengan menunjukkan bagaimana praktik lokal di Indonesia dapat memberikan wawasan bagi perdebatan global tentang kepemimpinan etis dalam masyarakat majemuk. Secara praktis, penelitian ini memberi masukan kebijakan bagi pemerintah dalam merancang struktur tata kelola yang menghormati nilai-nilai kultural-religius sekaligus selaras dengan prinsip demokrasi. Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini menegaskan potensi kepemimpinan partisipatif Islami untuk mendorong tata kelola yang baik dan memperkuat kohesi sosial.

INTRDUCTION

Indonesia, as the world's largest Muslim-majority country, presents a unique socio-political setting where religion and governance intersect in diverse and complex ways. With its decentralized political system (Ratmono & Darsono, 2022), local governments in Indonesia carry significant responsibilities for implementing national policies while also responding to local cultural and religious expectations (Pardosi, Parr, & Muhidin, 2017). In regions such as West Sumatra, where Islam is deeply embedded in social life and political identity (Yani & Barthos, 2020), governance cannot be understood without acknowledging the role of Islamic values in shaping public policy and community engagement (Tarjo, Vidyantha, Anggono, Yuliana, & Musyarofah, 2022). Local leaders in this context are not only administrators but also moral agents whose legitimacy often derives from their ability to embody religious values in decision-making. This intersection creates an environment in which governance is not merely a technical process of policy delivery but also a moral practice informed by values of justice (*'adl*), consultation (*shura*), and accountability (*amanah*). At the same time, Indonesia's democratic framework requires governance to be inclusive, transparent, and pluralistic, creating a dynamic arena where modern democratic ideals and traditional religious ethics converge and occasionally collide (Willetts et al., 2022). Understanding how Islamic values are integrated into participatory leadership within local governance is therefore critical for both scholars and policymakers who are concerned with sustainable and inclusive governance models in plural societies.

Participatory leadership, by definition, emphasizes inclusivity, collective deliberation, and shared responsibility in decision-making. Its principles resonate closely with Islamic ethical values, particularly the practices of *shura* (consultation) (Emzaed, Pelu, & Tokhirov, 2023), *'adl* (justice), and *amanah* (trustworthiness), which provide normative guidance for leaders in Muslim societies. While the literature on participatory leadership has been extensively developed in Western academic discourse, studies examining its application within Islamic contexts remain limited. Most existing works on Islamic leadership have focused on organizational management or theological discussions rather than governance and public policy (Sayogo & Yuli, 2018). This gap in the literature raises important questions about how Islamic ethics can be operationalized in democratic governance structures, particularly at the local level where leaders interact directly with citizens (Musviyanti, Nur Khairin, Bone, Abadan Syakura, & Yударuddin, 2022). West Sumatra, as a case study, provides fertile ground for exploring these dynamics, as its governance practices are shaped not only by Indonesia's national democratic framework but also by strong cultural and religious traditions rooted in

Islam (Fernando et al., 2023). Examining how participatory leadership functions in this setting helps broaden our understanding of leadership models beyond Western paradigms, while also contributing to a more inclusive global discourse on governance and leadership that recognizes the role of cultural and religious diversity.

The significance of this research also lies in its practical relevance to contemporary governance challenges in Indonesia. Local governments often face the dual pressure of designing policies that reflect community values while simultaneously ensuring that such policies align with democratic norms and state regulations. In many cases, this creates tensions between traditional expectations and modern administrative requirements, particularly in areas such as transparency (Salahudin et al., 2020), accountability, and inclusivity. For instance, decisions rooted in religious values may be welcomed by local communities but contested within broader political frameworks that emphasize secularism and pluralism. Conversely, policies that prioritize democratic efficiency may face resistance if perceived as neglecting cultural-religious identity. Understanding how participatory leadership can bridge these tensions is essential for creating governance models that are both legitimate and effective (Fox & Menchik, 2023). By analyzing leadership practices in West Sumatra, this study sheds light on the strategies local leaders use to integrate Islamic values into governance processes without undermining democratic principles. Such insights are not only valuable for Indonesia but also for other Muslim-majority and multi-religious societies seeking to reconcile faith and democracy in governance.

The objective of this research is to examine how participatory leadership informed by Islamic values can be integrated into local governance in Indonesia, with a specific focus on West Sumatra, in order to understand both its theoretical significance and practical implications. This study makes several contributions that enrich the discourse on leadership and governance. First, it advances the theoretical linkage between participatory leadership and Islamic ethics by offering a conceptual framework that situates leadership within democratic as well as religious contexts, thereby addressing the Eurocentric bias that often dominates leadership studies. Second, it contributes to public policy scholarship by demonstrating how religious values can be systematically incorporated into governance practices without undermining democratic principles such as accountability, inclusivity, and transparency. Third, it provides an empirical case study that positions Indonesia, and particularly West Sumatra, within global debates on religion, politics, and governance, thereby expanding the relevance of the findings beyond the local context. The results are expected to show that leadership rooted in Islamic principles fosters social trust, enhances policy legitimacy, and strengthens civic participation, while also revealing the tensions between tradition and modernity in governance. Practically, the study offers insights for policymakers seeking to design governance models that respect cultural-religious traditions while upholding democratic accountability. Ultimately, the research underscores the potential of Islamic participatory leadership to contribute to sustainable governance, promote social cohesion, and support inclusive development in plural societies, making it a valuable contribution to both academic scholarship and policy discourse.

METHODS

This study applied a qualitative approach with a case study design to investigate the integration of Islamic values into local governance through participatory leadership in Indonesia, with a specific focus on West Sumatra. The qualitative method was chosen because it allows researchers to capture not only descriptive realities but also the underlying meanings of leadership practices shaped by cultural and religious contexts. The case study design enables an in–depth exploration of specific local government experiences in implementing Islamic–based participatory leadership. Data collection was conducted using several techniques to ensure richness and validity, including in–depth interviews, participatory observations, and documentary analysis. Interviews were held with local government officials, community leaders, religious scholars, and civil society representatives who were directly engaged in the policymaking process. Observations were carried out in community forums, government meetings, and public hearings to understand the dynamics of participation. Document analysis included reviewing local regulations, development planning documents, policy reports, and archival records related to governance. The selection of informants used purposive sampling, ensuring that participants had direct involvement in leadership practices and policy formulation. Ethical considerations were carefully addressed by obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, and respecting cultural–religious sensitivities.

The analysis of the data followed a thematic approach, which involved coding, categorizing, and identifying emerging themes that represented the intersection between Islamic values and participatory leadership practices. Triangulation techniques were employed by comparing data from interviews, observations, and documents to ensure the reliability and validity of findings. In addition, member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary interpretations with selected participants to confirm accuracy and strengthen credibility. The data were analyzed iteratively, moving back and forth between empirical evidence and theoretical frameworks of participatory leadership and Islamic ethics. This recursive process allowed the researcher to refine interpretations and highlight nuanced insights. Thematic analysis revealed recurring concepts such as justice (*'adl*), consultation (*shura*), accountability (*amanah*), and community empowerment. These findings were then interpreted within the broader framework of governance and leadership studies to produce theoretical contributions that extend the discourse on religion and governance. At the same time, the study offered practical implications for policymakers seeking to balance democratic principles with cultural–religious values in contemporary governance. This dual contribution ensured that the research not only advanced academic debates but also provided policy–relevant recommendations for sustainable local governance.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

This research shows that participatory leadership in West Sumatra is strongly shaped by Islamic ethical values, particularly principles of consultation, justice, and trustworthiness (Santoso, Rinjany, & Bafadhal, 2020). Local leaders adopt these values as guiding norms in both policymaking and community engagement, thereby creating a governance style that blends moral legitimacy with administrative authority. The emphasis on consultation ensures that decisions are made collectively, reducing the dominance of individual authority and strengthening public trust. Justice, as applied in governance,

translates into fair distribution of resources and equal treatment of community members, which enhances the credibility of leadership. Meanwhile, the principle of trustworthiness is demonstrated through the leaders' accountability and commitment to serving the public interest (Lewis, 2019). These values do not operate in isolation but interact with democratic mechanisms, resulting in a hybrid model of governance that feels authentic to the local community while still aligning with broader principles of participation and transparency.

Participatory forums such as village deliberations serve as the institutional platform where leadership practices are exercised. These forums are more than spaces for discussion; they are mechanisms for achieving collective consensus that integrates traditional wisdom and religious ethics. Participation in these forums involves various stakeholders (Utami, Ikhsan, Dartanto, & Mallarangeng, 2024), from government officials to ordinary citizens, ensuring that voices across different social groups are included in the decision-making process. Through open dialogue, communities are able to articulate their aspirations, raise concerns, and negotiate solutions (Firdaus, Hardjosoekarto, & Lawang, 2021). The process not only enhances inclusivity but also strengthens social cohesion, as participants feel their opinions are valued (Lukman et al., 2021). Importantly, the decisions reached in these forums carry strong legitimacy because they are grounded in both democratic reasoning and moral principles. This system demonstrates that participatory leadership, when rooted in cultural and religious traditions, can produce governance outcomes that are widely accepted and sustainable in the long term.

The important role of religious scholars and community leaders as mediators between the government and the people. Their involvement provides an additional layer of legitimacy to policies and decisions, as they are perceived to represent both moral authority and communal wisdom. Religious leaders often frame governance issues in ways that resonate with Islamic ethical teachings, making policies more acceptable to the broader community (Pradana, Rubiyanti, S., Hasbi, & Utami, 2020). Community leaders, on the other hand, bridge local customs with formal governance structures, ensuring that cultural identity is preserved in decision-making (Missbach & Adiputera, 2021). The partnership between these actors and government officials demonstrates a unique feature of participatory leadership in West Sumatra, where authority is not monopolized by political elites but shared with respected figures in society. This shared leadership model not only reduces conflict but also fosters a sense of collective ownership over policies, thereby improving compliance and strengthening social trust in government institutions.

Identifies tensions that arise when traditional values intersect with modern governance demands. While the integration of Islamic principles into governance ensures cultural authenticity and social legitimacy, it sometimes generates challenges in meeting broader democratic standards (Atnan & Abrar, 2023). For example, efforts to promote inclusivity for women and marginalized groups may encounter resistance if they are perceived as conflicting with traditional norms (Wiryawan & Otchia, 2022). Similarly, bureaucratic requirements from the national government may demand standardization that does not always align with local practices (Alfada, 2019). These tensions illustrate the delicate balance leaders must maintain between honoring cultural-religious traditions and responding to modern governance challenges. However, rather than being a source of deadlock, these tensions often lead to innovative reinterpretations of values and practices. Leaders adapt religious principles in ways that maintain authenticity while also accommodating the changing needs of society, demonstrating that participatory leadership in this context is a dynamic and evolving process.

Demonstrates that participatory leadership grounded in Islamic values contributes directly to social harmony and conflict prevention. Because decisions are reached through

collective consultation and are guided by ethical principles, communities are more likely to accept outcomes and comply with policies (Sutopo, Wulandari, & Adiati, 2017). This reduces resistance, minimizes disputes, and promotes cooperative behavior among citizens. Moreover, the integration of moral values into governance enhances transparency, as leaders are expected to act with honesty and integrity (Yuliati, Yuliansyah, & Adelina, 2019). The result is a stronger bond of trust between the government and the people, which is crucial for stability and long – term development. In practical terms, this trust manifests in greater public participation in community programs, willingness to follow regulations, and support for collective initiatives. By combining democratic processes with moral legitimacy, participatory leadership in West Sumatra creates a governance model that is resilient against social fragmentation and capable of sustaining cooperation across diverse groups.

The broader contribution of this study to the understanding of leadership and governance. By situating participatory leadership within the dual framework of democratic principles and Islamic ethics, the study presents a hybrid model that challenges conventional assumptions in governance theory (Lewis, 2016). It demonstrates that leadership practices do not have to conform strictly to secular or Western frameworks to be effective, but can instead be rooted in local cultural and religious contexts while still achieving democratic outcomes (Lewis & Hendrawan, 2019). This has implications not only for the study of governance in Indonesia but also for global debates on the compatibility of religion and democracy. The case of West Sumatra illustrates that religious values can enrich, rather than hinder, participatory governance, offering a model of leadership that is both inclusive and morally grounded. Ultimately, this finding underscores the significance of integrating cultural identity and ethical values into governance systems, providing lessons that extend beyond the local context to inform comparative studies of leadership worldwide.

DISCUSSION

The findings reveal that leadership in West Sumatra is strongly influenced by the principles of consultation, justice, and accountability, which are deeply rooted in Islamic ethics. These principles are not simply abstract ideals but are practiced concretely through community forums, policy deliberations, and collective decision – making processes. The interpretation of these findings demonstrates that governance in this context is not merely procedural but also normative, as it derives legitimacy from both cultural traditions and religious ethics (Sunaryo, Sri Runing Sawitri, Suyono, Wahyudi, & Sarwoto, 2022). This addresses the research problem by showing that participatory leadership can operate effectively when grounded in values that resonate with the lived experiences of local communities (Hariyanto, Meidina, & Azizah, 2024). It also highlights that governance is more sustainable when it combines democratic mechanisms with moral legitimacy. Thus, the discussion confirms that leadership models informed by Islamic values are capable of delivering inclusivity, accountability, and trust, while also reflecting local cultural authenticity.

Data from interviews, observations, and documents indicate that leadership is exercised not only through formal governmental structures but also through informal processes of consultation at the community level (Setiawan, Tjiptoherijanto, Mahi, & Khoirunurrofik, 2022). This interpretation expands our understanding of governance by showing that institutional frameworks alone are insufficient to explain the success of participatory leadership. Instead, governance must be understood as the interaction between formal procedures and cultural – ethical norms that shape decision – making

(Aswar, Yoga Fanany, Sumardjo, Wiguna, & Hariyani, 2022). The contribution here is methodological as well as theoretical, demonstrating that leadership cannot be captured by administrative categories alone but must also include the moral narratives that guide leaders and citizens (Adiputra, Utama, & Rossieta, 2018). The insights gained from this research show that participatory leadership is a hybrid practice, combining legal frameworks with ethical obligations. This means that leadership in West Sumatra is not just an act of authority but a shared moral responsibility between leaders and the people, revealing a complex and dynamic model of governance.

Conventional democratic theory emphasizes participation as a mechanism for legitimacy, but the case of West Sumatra demonstrates that legitimacy is also derived from religiously informed values. This interpretation shows that participation in this context is not merely procedural but substantive, since it is rooted in principles that carry moral weight. In this sense, the findings challenge the assumption that democracy must be secular to function effectively, offering instead a model where cultural and religious values reinforce (Lewis, McCulloch, & Sacks, 2016), rather than contradict, democratic practices. The implication is that existing theories of leadership should be modified to account for cultural–religious dimensions that influence legitimacy and trust. This enriches leadership studies by adding a new perspective from non–Western societies, demonstrating that democracy and religion can coexist and complement one another in practice (Lewis, 2017). Thus, the theoretical contribution of this research lies in bridging the gap between participatory leadership as a democratic ideal and participatory leadership as a cultural–religious practice, creating a more inclusive framework for understanding governance.

Another important issue raised by the discussion is the negotiation between tradition and modernity (Steenbergen & Visser, 2016). While Islamic principles provide strong moral legitimacy, they may also introduce tensions, particularly regarding inclusivity for women and minority groups or alignment with national bureaucratic requirements. However, the findings show that leaders in West Sumatra demonstrate adaptability by reinterpreting values in ways that remain authentic while also addressing contemporary needs. This indicates that participatory leadership in this context is not static but dynamic, evolving through negotiation between tradition and modernity (Lanin & Hermanto, 2019). The theoretical implication is that leadership should be understood not as a fixed set of practices but as an ongoing process of adaptation and reinterpretation. This enriches governance theory by incorporating the dimension of cultural dynamism, showing that traditions are not barriers to democratic development but resources that can be mobilized creatively to address new challenges (Brotstes Panjaitan, Sumartono, Sarwono, & Saleh, 2019). The contribution here is the recognition that participatory leadership must be flexible and context–sensitive, constantly adjusting to maintain both legitimacy and effectiveness.

Communities are more likely to support and comply with policies when decisions are made collectively and grounded in ethical values (Kesuma & Chongsuvivatwong, 2015). This suggests that leadership is not only about authority but also about cultivating a sense of shared ownership among citizens. The interpretation highlights that social trust is the foundation for long–term governance stability (Kuswanto, Hoen, & Holzhaecker, 2017), and this trust emerges when leaders demonstrate accountability, honesty, and fairness. The broader contribution here is that participatory leadership has the potential to prevent conflict, strengthen social cohesion, and promote sustainable development. By combining procedural fairness with moral legitimacy (Adnan, Hidayanto, & Kurnia, 2021), leadership in West Sumatra demonstrates a model that is both effective and culturally resonant. This

challenges the narrow view of governance as a purely administrative process and positions leadership as a relational practice that is deeply embedded in community values and collective responsibilities.

Theoretical and practical contributions also emerge clearly from this research. Theoretically, the study challenges conventional assumptions in leadership and governance studies by showing that democratic practices can be enhanced by religious and cultural values. This creates a hybrid model that modifies existing theories and contributes to the decolonization of leadership studies, moving beyond Eurocentric frameworks. Practically, the findings offer lessons for policymakers who seek to design governance models that respect cultural–religious traditions while also maintaining democratic accountability. The significance of this contribution is that it shows how leadership rooted in Islamic ethics can be both inclusive and adaptable, capable of addressing local needs while aligning with broader governance standards. This positions participatory leadership in West Sumatra as a valuable case study for global debates on religion, politics, and governance. Ultimately, the insights gained from this research demonstrate that leadership is most effective when it integrates democratic participation with ethical foundations, offering a model that can inspire governance practices in other culturally diverse societies.

CONCLUSION

This study provides clear and explicit answers to the research questions and problem formulation outlined in the introduction. The findings demonstrate that participatory leadership grounded in Islamic values has a significant role in shaping local governance in West Sumatra. Leadership practices in this context are characterized by the principles of consultation, accountability, and justice, which derive their legitimacy not only from democratic structures but also from religious and cultural traditions. This dual source of legitimacy ensures that governance is both inclusive and morally grounded, thereby fostering social trust and strengthening policy implementation. The study also reveals that participatory leadership is not limited to formal governmental procedures but is equally shaped by informal mechanisms of community deliberation and consensus–building. These insights confirm that effective governance in culturally diverse societies requires models that respect local traditions while ensuring democratic accountability. The results, therefore, provide a new understanding of how Islamic values can be systematically integrated into governance practices without undermining democratic norms, thus offering a hybrid model of leadership that is contextually relevant and theoretically enriching.

This study also contributes to the development of new ideas in the field of leadership and governance. The integration of Islamic ethics into participatory leadership provides a unique framework that expands the boundaries of leadership theory beyond Eurocentric assumptions, introducing perspectives from non–Western societies. This research emphasizes that governance is not only a technical or administrative matter but also a moral and cultural practice that relies on trust, legitimacy, and shared responsibility. The practical contribution lies in offering policymakers insights into designing governance systems that balance tradition with modernity, ensuring cultural authenticity while upholding democratic accountability. Theoretically, the study enriches leadership and governance scholarship by demonstrating that participatory models informed by religious values can contribute to sustainable governance, social cohesion, and inclusive development. Ultimately, this research underscores the potential of Islamic participatory leadership to serve as a model for other culturally diverse societies seeking to harmonize

democratic principles with ethical traditions, making it a valuable addition to both academic discourse and policy practice.

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