

Transformational Leadership in Promoting Gender Equality in Village Governance: A Study on the Low Representation of Female Village Heads in Denpasar, Bali

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Abstrak

Kesetaraan gender dalam kepemimpinan publik merupakan agenda global yang menjadi bagian penting dari Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5). Pada tingkat lokal, pemerintah desa dan kelurahan memiliki peran strategis dalam mewujudkan prinsip kesetaraan gender karena kedekatannya dengan masyarakat serta keterlibatannya dalam penyediaan layanan publik dan proses pengambilan keputusan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran kepemimpinan transformasional dalam mendorong kesetaraan gender dalam pemerintahan desa di Kota Denpasar, Bali, dengan fokus pada rendahnya representasi perempuan sebagai perbekel dan kepala desa. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan desain studi kasus yang dilakukan di empat kecamatan di Kota Denpasar melalui studi dokumentasi, wawancara mendalam, dan kajian literatur. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa struktur kepemimpinan pemerintahan desa dan kelurahan di Kota Denpasar masih didominasi oleh laki-laki, dengan hanya tiga perempuan yang menduduki posisi sebagai perbekel atau lurah. Kondisi ini mencerminkan adanya kesenjangan antara kebijakan pengarusutamaan gender dengan implementasinya di tingkat lokal. Faktor struktural, seperti kurangnya kebijakan afirmatif, serta faktor kultural berupa kuatnya budaya patriarki menjadi penyebab utama rendahnya representasi perempuan. Meskipun demikian, perempuan yang berada pada posisi kepemimpinan menunjukkan karakteristik kepemimpinan transformasional yang bersifat partisipatif, inklusif, dan responsif. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa kepemimpinan transformasional memiliki potensi penting dalam mendorong kesetaraan gender, namun memerlukan dukungan kebijakan serta perubahan sosial yang berkelanjutan.

Abstract

Gender equality in public leadership is a global agenda that is an important part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5). At the local level, village and sub-district governments have a strategic role in realizing the principle of gender equality because of their proximity to the community and their involvement in the provision of public services and decision-making. This study aims to analyze the role of transformational leadership in encouraging gender equality in village government in Denpasar City, Bali, with a focus on the low representation of women as perbekel and village head. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design conducted in four sub-districts in Denpasar City through documentation studies, in-depth interviews, and literature review. The results of the study show that the leadership structure of village and sub-district governments in Denpasar City is still dominated by men, with only three women occupying the position of perbekel or lurah. This condition reflects the gap between gender mainstreaming policies and their implementation at the local level. Structural factors, such as the lack of affirmative policies, as well as cultural factors in the form of a strong patriarchal culture are the main causes of low representation of women. Nonetheless, women in leadership positions exhibit the

1. Introduction

Gender equality in public leadership is one of the global agendas that is increasingly receiving serious attention in the discourse of sustainable development. This commitment is explicitly reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 5 which emphasizes the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment in all development sectors, including governance. Inclusive and gender-equal leadership is seen not only as an issue of social justice, but also as a prerequisite for the creation of public policies that are responsive, democratic, and oriented to the needs of society at large. At the local level, village and sub-district governments have a very strategic position in the implementation of gender equality principles. This is due to the closeness of the village government to the community, both in the implementation of public services, participatory development planning, and decision-making that is in direct contact with the social, economic, and cultural lives of residents. Thus, women's representation in strategic positions such as perbekel or village head is an important indicator for the realization of inclusive and gender-equitable local governance.

Regional Regulation Number 3 of 2020 concerning Gender Mainstreaming (PUG). The Denpasar City Government has ratified Denpasar City Regulation No. 3 of 2020 concerning Gender Mainstreaming in Regional Development as a strategic policy umbrella to ensure that all stages of development from planning, budgeting, implementation, to monitoring and evaluation pay attention to gender perspectives. This Regional Regulation aims to ensure that women and men have equal access and participation in the entire development process of the City of Denpasar.

However, the empirical reality in Indonesia shows that village government leadership is still dominated by men. Although various national regulations have encouraged gender mainstreaming in development, their implementation at the local level has not been fully optimal. This phenomenon is also seen in Denpasar City, Bali Province, which is administratively and socio-economically classified as a developed urban area.

Table 1.1 Name of Perbekel / Village Head of Denpasar City

NO	NAME	L/P	PERBEKEL/LURAH
East Denpasar District			
1	I Wayan Eka Apriana, ST. By	L	Sumerta Village
2	I Wayan Swi Putra, ST.,SIP.,MT	L	Dangin Puri Village
3	I Wayan Murda, S.Ag	L	Penatih Village Head
4	I Nyoman Nuada, SH	L	Kesiman Village Head
5	The Lord Is With You May	L	Perbekel Sumerta Kaja Village
6	I Gusti Ketut Anom Suarda	L	Perbekel Sumerta Kelod Village
7	I Wayan Sentana, SH	L	Perbekel Village Sumerta Kauh
8	I Wayan Mariana	L	Perbekel Kesiman Petilan Village

9	I Made Suena, ST	L	Perbekel Kesiman Kertalangu Village
10	I Wayan Room	L	Perbekel Penatih Dangin Puri Village
11	And. I Made Sada	L	Perbekel Dangin Puri Kelod Village
North Denpasar District			
1	He is a great man to be a part of, S.E.	L	Perbekel Village Dangin Puri Kauh
2	The Lord is the Creator	L	Dauh Puri Kaja Village Workshop
3	I Gede Sudi Arcana, S.Sn.M.Si	L	Peguyangan Village
4	I Wayan Sulatra, ST	L	Perbekel Dangin Village Puri Kangin
5	I Made Parmita	L	Perbekel Peguyangan Kaja Village
6	A.A Ngurah Gede Cahyadi, SH	L	Perbekel Dangin Puri Kaja Village
7	The Great Son of Ngurah Arwatha	L	Perbekel Pemecutan Kaja Village
8	Dwi Karyna Paramitha, S.STP,M.AP	P	Ubung Village Head
9	I Wayan Susila	L	Perbekel of Peguyangan Kangin Village
10	I Gede Oka Darmawan, SH	L	Tonja Village Head
11	I Wayan Astika	L	Perbekel Village Ubung Kaja
West Denpasar District			
1	Agus Yudi Kusumajaya, S.STP	L	Pemecutan Village Head
2	I Made Sugiarta, S.STP,MAP	L	Dauh Puri Village Head
3	I Ketut Alit Artika, SAP	L	Padangsambian Village Head
4	Drs. I Gusti Made Suandhi	L	Perbekel Dauh Puri Kauh Village
5	By Ketut Anggreni Wati	P	Perbekel Dauh Puri Kangin Village
6	Nengah Suartha	L	Dauh Puri Kelod Village Workshop
7	I Made Gede Wijaya, S.Pt.,M.Si	L	Padangsambian Kaja Village Workshop
8	I Gede Wijaya Saputra, SH	L	Perbekel Padangsambian Kelod Village
9	I Wayan Tantra, SH	L	Perbekel Pemecutan Kelod Village
10	I Komang Adi Widianara	L	Perbekel Tegal Harum Village
11	I Putu Trisnajaya, SH	L	Perbekel Tegal Kerta Village
South Denpasar District			
1	Putu Wisnu Wardana, SE.,MM	L	Panjer Village
2	I Kadek Ermanto, S.Sos	L	Pedungan Village Head
3	I Gede Sueca, S.Sn.,M.Pd	L	Renon Village Head
4	Ida Bagus Made Windhu Segara, S.Sos	L	Sanur Village
5	By Wayan Sukanami, SE.,MM	P	Serangan Village Head
6	Putu Wisnu Wardana, S.E., M.M.	L	Sesetan Village Head
7	I Made Suwirya, S.H.	L	Pemogan Village Perbekel
8	I Made Sudana	L	Sanur Kaja Village Workshop
9	I Made Ada, S.Sos	L	Perbekel Sanur Kauh Village
10	I Wayan Madrayasa, SH	L	Perbekel Sidakarya Village

(Source: Denpasar City Sub-district Office)

The table above shows that the leadership structure of village and sub-district governments in Denpasar City is still dominated by men. Of the total perbekel and village heads spread across the four districts of East, North, West, and South Denpasar, there are only three women who occupy the position of village head or perbekel, namely in North Denpasar, West Denpasar, and South Denpasar Districts, while East Denpasar District is all led by men. This condition indicates that there is a significant gender representation gap in the leadership of village/sub-district government in Denpasar City, even though this area is an urban area with a relatively advanced level of development and access to education.

This condition is a paradox in itself considering that Denpasar is often perceived as a relatively progressive city, open, and has a better level of education and access to information than rural areas. The low representation of women in perbekel/lurah positions does not only reflect quantitative problems, but also indicates more complex problems, such as structural barriers in the village leadership recruitment system, strong patriarchal culture, and limited affirmative policies that concretely encourage women's leadership at the local level.

In the Balinese context, these dynamics cannot be separated from the influence of traditional values and traditional social structures that are still strong in people's lives. The normative division of gender roles often places women in the domestic sphere or a specific social role, while the formal leadership space in village government tends to be perceived as the domain of men. As a result, women often face double challenges, both in the form of limited access to political power and in the form of social stereotypes that doubt their leadership capacity.

In the midst of these conditions, transformational leadership is a relevant and important approach to study. Transformational leadership emphasizes the leader's ability to build a vision of change, inspire followers, transform values and mindsets, and empower individuals and groups on an ongoing basis. In the context of gender equality, transformational leadership has the potential to be a strategic instrument to challenge patriarchal norms, open up space for women's participation, and create a more inclusive and equitable climate for village organizations and governance. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the role of transformational leadership in encouraging gender equality in village government in Denpasar City, with a special focus on the phenomenon of low representation of perbekel and female village heads. This research is expected not only to make an empirical contribution to leadership and gender studies at the local level, but also to become a policy reference for local governments in formulating strategies to strengthen women's leadership in village and sub-district governments.

2. Literature Review

Transformational Leadership in the Public Sector

Transformational leadership is a leadership concept that emphasizes the ability of leaders to transform the values, attitudes, and behaviors of followers through shared vision, inspiration, and empowerment. Bass and Riggio argue that transformational leadership consists of four main dimensions, namely idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. In the context of the public sector, transformational leadership is seen as effective in dealing with the complexities of governance, driving policy innovation, and increasing public participation and trust.

A number of studies show that transformational leadership has a positive correlation with improved performance of public organizations, strengthening inclusive governance, and changing

bureaucratic culture. This leadership style is relevant in village governance which demands leaders not only as administrators, but also as agents of social change.

Gender Equality and Local Leadership

Gender equality in local leadership refers to the conditions under which women and men have equal opportunities, access, and legitimacy to occupy strategic positions in government. Women's representation in public office is believed to contribute to policies that are more responsive to the social, educational, health, and welfare needs of the community.

However, studies show that women still face structural and cultural barriers in local leadership, including patriarchal norms, limited access to political networks, and gender stereotypes that cast doubt on women's leadership capacity. In the context of Indonesia, especially Bali, traditional social structures and traditional values also affect the low participation of women in formal leadership positions in village government.

Transformational Leadership and Gender Equality

Transformational leadership has strategic potential in driving gender equality because it emphasizes paradigm shifts, individual empowerment, and the creation of an inclusive organizational environment. Transformational leaders are able to challenge discriminatory social norms, open up space for participation for marginalized groups, and internalize the value of gender justice in governance practices.

However, research that specifically examines the relationship between transformational leadership and the low representation of women in village governance in urban areas is limited. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by focusing on the context of Denpasar City.

3. Methodology

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design. This approach was chosen to gain a deep understanding of leadership dynamics and the factors that affect the low representation of women in village government.

Location and Research Subject

The research was conducted in Denpasar City, Bali Province, which includes four sub-districts: East Denpasar, North Denpasar, West Denpasar, and South Denpasar. The subjects of the study include perbekel/lurah, sub-district apparatus, and stakeholders involved in village government policies.

Data collection techniques

Data is collected through:

1. A documentary study on official data on village leadership and gender-related policies.
2. In-depth interviews with key informants.
3. Literature review from journals and policy documents related to transformational leadership and gender equality.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis is carried out thematically through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The validity of the data is maintained through triangulation of sources and theories.

4. Results and Discussion

The results of the study show that the leadership structure of village and sub-district governments in Denpasar City is still dominated by men, with a very limited level of female representation. Based on official data in four sub-districts—East Denpasar, North Denpasar, West Denpasar, and South Denpasar—only three women occupy positions as village heads or perbekel, while the majority of village and sub-district leadership positions are held by men. These findings indicate a significant gender representation gap, even in relatively advanced urban areas in terms of education, economy, and access to information such as Denpasar City.

Structurally, the low representation of women in perbekel and village head positions is influenced by the suboptimal implementation of affirmative policies in the village leadership recruitment and selection system. Although various national and regional policies have mandated gender mainstreaming, their implementation is still normative and has not concretely encouraged the increase in women's participation in strategic village government positions. The village leadership selection process is still highly dependent on local political dynamics and community social support, which in practice favors male candidates.

From a cultural perspective, the results of the study show that the strong patriarchal values and the construction of traditional gender roles are still the dominant factors that limit women's participation in village leadership. In the socio-cultural context of Bali, the formal leadership of village government is often perceived as the domain of men, while women are more associated with domestic and social roles. This perception not only affects women's chances to run for perbekel or lurah, but also affects the level of public acceptance of women's leadership.

However, this study found that women who successfully occupied the position of village head or perbekel tended to show leadership characteristics that were in line with transformational leadership principles. The leadership style displayed is participatory, communicative, and responsive to the needs of the community, especially in the issue of public services and social welfare. Women leaders in this context are able to build more inclusive relationships with society and encourage the participation of groups that were previously less involved in the decision-making process.

Further discussion shows that transformational leadership has strategic potential as an instrument of social change in encouraging gender equality at the village government level. Through an inclusive vision, collective inspiration, and individual empowerment without gender discrimination, transformational leadership can challenge entrenched patriarchal norms and open up leadership space for women. However, this potential has not been fully realized due to the weak institutional support and affirmative policies that specifically target increasing women's representation in perbekel and village head positions.

Thus, the results of this study confirm that transformational leadership cannot stand alone as a single solution to the low representation of women in village government. Transformational leadership needs to be integrated with gender-responsive public policies, strengthening women's leadership capacity, and changing organizational and social culture that is more inclusive. The synergy between transformational leadership and gender equality policies is key in encouraging the creation of fair, participatory, and sustainable village governance in the city of Denpasar.

5. Conclusion

Conclusion

This study aims to analyze the role of transformational leadership in encouraging gender equality in village government in Denpasar City, Bali, with a focus on the low representation of women as perbekel and village head. The results of the study show that although the City of Denpasar has a relatively progressive national and regional policy framework in gender mainstreaming, the implementation of these policies has not been fully reflected in the leadership structure of village and sub-district governments. The fact that there are only three women occupying the position of perbekel or lurah in the entire Denpasar City area indicates that there is a significant gap between normative commitment and empirical reality.

The low representation of women in village leadership is influenced by a combination of structural and cultural factors. From a structural perspective, the affirmative policy has not been optimal and the village leadership selection process which is still dominated by local political dynamics are the main obstacles. Meanwhile, from a cultural perspective, the strong patriarchal values and the construction of traditional gender roles in Balinese society also limit the space for women to appear and be accepted as formal leaders of village government.

In the midst of these conditions, transformational leadership emerged as a relevant and strategic approach. This study found that women who successfully occupy the position of village head or perbekel tend to show transformational leadership characteristics, such as a leadership style that is participatory, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of the community. This confirms that transformational leadership has great potential to promote gender equality and strengthen equitable village governance.

Nevertheless, transformational leadership cannot stand alone without systemic support. Synergy between change-oriented leadership, gender-responsive public policies, and the transformation of social and cultural values is needed so that gender equality in village government leadership can be realized in a sustainable manner in Denpasar City.

Limitation

This study has several limitations that need to be considered in interpreting the results and their implications. First, this study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design that focuses on the city of Denpasar. This approach allows for an in-depth understanding of the local context and dynamics of village leadership, but at the same time limits the generalization of research findings to other regions of Indonesia that have different social, cultural, and political characteristics.

Second, this study focuses on the analysis of transformational leadership and gender representation based on structural data on village and sub-district leadership as well as the perception of key informants. This research has not fully explored the internal dynamics of village government organizations, such as power relations, daily decision-making mechanisms, and interactions between leaders and customary institutions that have the potential to affect the effectiveness of transformational leadership.

Third, this study has not conducted quantitative measurements of the level of transformational leadership or its impact on village government performance and the quality of public policies. Thus, the research findings are more descriptive-analytical and have not been able to explain the causal relationship statistically between transformational leadership and increased gender equality.

Fourth, the limitation of longitudinal data is also a limitation of this study. The research was conducted over a certain period of time so that it was not able to capture the dynamics of leadership change and gender representation in the long term. Policy changes, leadership changes, and gradual socio-cultural transformations have not been fully accommodated in this study.

These limitations open up space for more comprehensive follow-up research, both in terms of method, regional coverage, and analytical approach.

Suggestion

Based on the findings and conclusions of the research, there are several recommendations that can be submitted both in terms of policy, government practice, and further research development. First, the Denpasar City Government needs to strengthen the implementation of gender mainstreaming policies in a more concrete manner, especially in the recruitment and selection process for village and sub-district leadership. Affirmative policies that encourage women's participation as candidates for perbekel or village head need to be designed systematically and sustainably, not just normative.

Second, a program to strengthen women's leadership capacity based on transformational leadership is needed. This program can be in the form of leadership training, mentoring, and the development of political and social networks for women at the village and sub-district levels. Thus, women are not only encouraged to advance as leaders, but also equipped with the ability and confidence to carry out leadership roles effectively.

Third, efforts to encourage gender equality in village leadership need to be accompanied by a strategy for cultural and social change. Local governments, indigenous leaders, and communities need to be involved in the process of dialogue and public education to reduce gender stereotypes and strengthen social acceptance of women's leadership. The synergy between customary values, public policy, and the principle of gender equality is the key to the success of this transformation.

Fourth, for future research, it is recommended to develop a quantitative approach or mixed methods to more objectively measure the influence of transformational leadership on village government performance and the quality of gender-responsive policies. Comparative research between regions is also important to obtain a broader picture of the dynamics of women's leadership in Indonesia.

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