



COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP MODEL IN ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE OF PRIVATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze collaborative leadership practices and formulate a leadership model developed within the academic governance of Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Darud Da'wah wal Irsyad (STAI DDI) Pinrang. The study employed a qualitative approach with a single-case study design. Informants were selected purposively and included institutional leaders, academic unit heads, lecturers, administrative staff, and other institutional actors involved in academic decision-making. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations, and document analysis. Data analysis is carried out interactively through the stages of data condensation, data presentation, conclusion drawn, and verification, while data validity is carried out through triangulation of sources and techniques as well as member checking. The findings reveal that the collaborative leadership model at STAI DDI Pinrang is constructed through the integration of four main dimensions: facilitative and relational leadership, participatory academic decision-making, the internalization of prophetic values and ethical role modelling, and strengthened accountability through continuous evaluation and internal quality assurance. The model was not formally or normatively designed but emerged contextually through leadership practices that reduced hierarchical distance, built trust, expanded stakeholder participation, and fostered collective responsibility. The integration of these dimensions resulted in academic governance that was more collaborative, accountable, adaptive, and oriented toward continuous improvement. This study proposes a prophetic value-based collaborative leadership model that may serve as a relevant framework for strengthening academic governance in private Islamic higher education institutions.

Keywords: *Collaborative Leadership, Prophetic Values, Academic Governance.*

INTRODUCTION

Higher education is a strategic institution in the development of science and the formation of human resources with character, integrity, and competitiveness (Areiqat et al., 2020). In the context of higher education, the achievement of these goals is highly determined by the quality of academic governance, which includes planning, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation of academic processes in an ongoing manner (Sa'adah et al., 2025) (Z. Arifin et al., 2024). Effective governance requires a strategic approach that integrates quality management practices (Deni, 2022). Effective academic governance depends not only on the completeness of regulations and formal structures, but also on leadership practices that are able to move all elements of the organization synergistically (Nafal et al., 2024) (Yudiawan & Himmah, 2023).

Perguruan Tinggi Islam Swasta (PTIS), particularly those outside the growth centers of higher education, face relatively complex academic governance challenges (Riana & Hadiwidjaja, 2024). Limited resources, the dynamics of relationships between leaders, lecturers, education staff, foundations, and external stakeholders require a leadership pattern that is not purely hierarchical (Dopson et al., 2019) (Nuraini et al., 2023).

In such conditions, leadership that relies on formal authority is often insufficient to ensure the optimal running of academic functions (Geschwind et al., 2019). In addition, the challenges of managing change and uncertainty in academia require a leadership approach that goes beyond traditional administrative functions (Geschwind et al., 2019), emphasizing the importance of cultivating a leadership philosophy and engaging with the academic community (Montgomery, 2020). Collaborative leadership emerged as a relevant approach in that context (VanVactor, 2012). This leadership model places leaders not only as key decision-makers, but also as facilitators who encourage participation, build trust, and manage relationships between actors within academic organizations (Muhammad, 2014) (Christensen, 2024). Through collaborative practices, leadership is expected to be able to integrate various interests and potentials of institutions into more adaptive and responsive academic governance (Parrish, 2015).

However, in practice, the implementation of collaborative leadership at PTIS is not always ideal (Martono & Wijayanto, 2014). Various internal problems such as fragmentation of organizational interests, weak collaborative academic culture, structural relations between leaders and foundations (Spalanzani & Zouaghi, 2025), and limitations of coordination mechanisms often affect the effectiveness of academic governance (M. A. M. Arifin, 2025). This condition requires empirical studies that do not stop at the normative level, but examine how collaborative leadership is actually practiced in a particular institutional context. STAI DDI Pinrang as one of the PTIS in South Sulawesi represents this context. As a university that is under the auspices of religious organizations and operates within limited resources, STAI DDI Pinrang faces challenges in managing academic processes effectively. Leadership dynamics, patterns of relationships between internal actors, and stakeholder involvement are important factors that affect academic governance practices in institutions.

Based on these conditions, this study is focused on the analysis of collaborative leadership practices in academic governance at STAI DDI Pinrang. This research is important to uncover how collaborative leadership is carried out in the context of PTIS, as well as how the practice shapes academic management patterns at the institutional level. The research findings are expected to make an empirical contribution to the development of leadership and governance studies of private Islamic universities.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design (Creswell John and Creswell David, 2023). The qualitative approach was chosen because the purpose of the research was not directed to test hypotheses or quantitatively measure the relationships between variables, but rather to understand in depth the collaborative leadership model as constructed and implemented in academic governance practice. In Creswell's framework, this approach is relevant when researchers seek to interpret the meanings, patterns,

and social processes that take place in a given institutional context (Creswell John and Creswell David, 2023).

The case study design was used because this study focuses on one bounded system, namely STAI DDI Pinrang, with clear limitations in terms of location, actors, and institutional context. A single case study allows researchers to explore the phenomenon of collaborative leadership in a holistic, contextual, and in-depth way, so that the resulting leadership model is not abstract, but rather rooted in the empirical reality of the institution being studied (Creswell John and Creswell David, 2023).

The research was carried out at STAI DDI Pinrang, South Sulawesi. The selection of the location was based on the consideration that this institution represents a private Islamic university with distinctive leadership characteristics, is in limited resources, and has academic governance dynamics that demand a collaborative leadership pattern. The research subjects were determined purposively, taking into account the direct involvement of informants in the leadership process and academic governance (Miles et al., 2018). Informants include university leaders, academic unit leaders, lecturers, education staff, as well as foundation elements or other internal actors relevant to academic decision-making.

Data collection is carried out through a combination of several techniques to obtain depth and completeness of information (Miles et al., 2018). In-depth interviews are used as the primary technique to explore the views, experiences, and collaborative leadership practices carried out by institutional actors. The interviews are semi-structured so that the researcher has a systematic framework of questions, while providing space for the informants to express their experiences and interpretations freely. In addition, non-participatory observations were made on academic activities and decision-making forums that reflected academic governance practices, such as academic meetings and cross-unit coordination. To complete the field data, the researcher also conducted a documentation study of various institutional documents, including academic policies, organizational structures, academic guidelines, and meeting minutes, which are relevant to leadership practices and academic governance.

Data analysis was carried out interactively and continuously from the beginning of data collection until the end of the study, with reference to the Miles and Huberman analysis model. The data obtained was first reduced through the process of selection, coding, and grouping into thematic categories related to collaborative leadership and academic governance. This reduction process aims to focus the data on aspects relevant to the research objectives. Furthermore, the data that has been reduced is presented in the form of thematic narratives and analytical matrices to make it easier for researchers to identify patterns, interactors, and leadership mechanisms that are formed (Miles et al., 2018). Based on the presentation of the data, the researcher then drew gradual conclusions about the collaborative leadership model that developed at STAI DDI Pinrang, accompanied by a continuous verification process to ensure consistency and accuracy of interpretation.

The validity of the data is maintained through the application of several qualitative validation strategies. Triangulation of sources and techniques is carried out by comparing data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation, as well as from various informants with different positions and roles. In addition, member checking is carried out by confirming the results of provisional findings to key informants to ensure the compatibility between the

researcher's interpretation and the reality intended by the informant (Miles et al., 2018). The measures aim to ensure that the resulting collaborative leadership model truly has a strong empirical foundation and is academically accountable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the research on STAI DDI Pinrang show that developing leadership cannot be understood solely as structural or administrative leadership, but rather as a collaborative leadership model that operates in academic governance. This model is reflected in the way leaders position themselves not as a single center of authority, but as a mover, weaver of relationships, and facilitators of collective work in the institutional environment.

This is clear from the informant's statement that it is not enough for university leaders to function only as decision makers, but must be present personally and relationally. One of the informants stated that "as a leader in higher education, he is actually a motivator, educator, problem solver, and a place of relying on his 'heart' for his subordinates" (Mardia, 2024). This statement indicates a shift in leadership roles from a bureaucratic model to one based on trust and emotional engagement, which is one of the key prerequisites for collaborative leadership.

In Ansell and Gash's perspective, collaborative leadership requires facilitative leadership, which is leadership that is able to build dialogue spaces, reduce hierarchical distances, and maintain the sustainability of collaboration (Ansell & Gash, 2012). This practice is also reflected in STAI DDI Pinrang, when another informant asserts that "a leader in a private Islamic university must intervene, embrace, not keep distance, be an example, and be able to mobilize his subordinates to work" (Mardia, 2024).

This pattern shows that leadership does not stop at instruction, but is manifested through example and direct involvement in academic and institutional processes. Furthermore, collaborative practices at STAI DDI Pinrang appear to be strong in academic decision-making. The involvement of various parties is seen as a necessity, not just a formality. An informant stated that "we always try to invite all parties involved if there is a policy that must be decided, both strategic and tactical" (Mardia, 2024). This approach is in line with Crosby and Bryson's view that collaborative leadership rests on shared decision-making and a collective awareness of institutional responsibility (Bryson & Crosby, 2014). The involvement of internal stakeholders in decision-making forums also shows that there are efforts to build a sense of ownership of academic policies. This was confirmed by another informant who stated that "the more involved the more broad insight and careful consideration of every decision will be" (Mardia, 2024).

In the context of academic governance, this practice is important because policy is not only understood as a product of leadership, but as the result of an institutional consensus that must be held accountable together.

From an educational leadership standpoint, Bush emphasized that the effectiveness of academic leadership is largely determined by the leader's ability to align values, structures, and practices (Bush, 2008). At STAI DDI Pinrang, collaborative leadership is also bound by prophetic values and Islamic ethics. A developing leadership model seeks to reflect honesty, responsibility, and intelligence as the moral foundation of leadership. One of the informants mentioned that the leadership developed on campus departs from these values as the basis of visionary leadership. These ethical values are then translated into

academic governance practices that emphasize accountability and continuous evaluation. The implementation of periodic evaluations, including internal quality audits (AMIs), is understood as a collective instrument to ensure that the direction of the institution remains aligned with the vision and mission. The informant emphasized that "we always conduct periodic evaluations, both at the institutional and unit levels" (Mardia, 2024)

This practice shows that collaborative leadership at STAI DDI Pinrang does not stop at the participation stage, but continues with control mechanisms and continuous improvement in academic governance.

Thus, the findings of this study show that the collaborative leadership model at STAI DDI Pinrang is formed through three main dimensions: facilitative leadership that reduces hierarchical distance, participatory decision-making in academic governance, and strengthening ethical values and institutional accountability. This model is relevant to the theoretical framework of collaborative leadership and educational leadership (Amelia et al., 2025), at the same time shows how the concept works contextually in private Islamic universities.

The results of the study show that collaborative leadership at STAI DDI Pinrang does not emerge as a normative concept that is formally designed, but develops through leadership practices that are relational, participatory, and academic accountability-oriented. Based on the findings of the research, the collaborative leadership model at STAI DDI Pinrang can be described as a causal relationship between facilitative leadership, participatory decision-making, internalization of prophetic values, and strengthening accountability, which together form collaborative academic governance. The model can be seen in the following image:

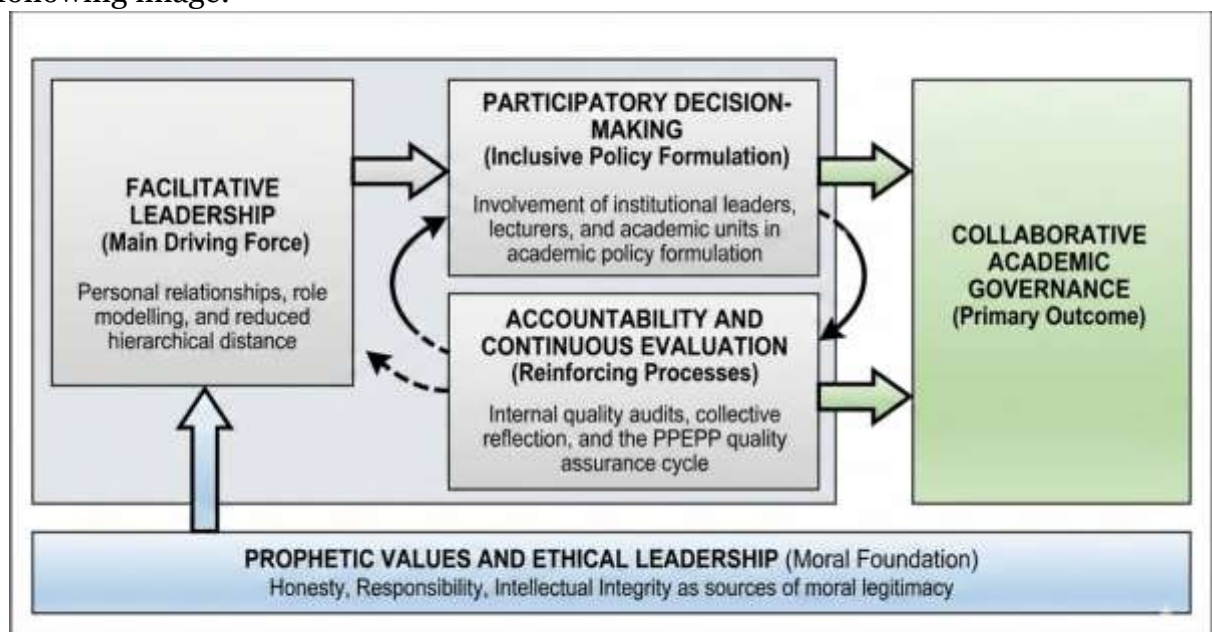


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Collaborative Leadership in Academic Governance at STAI DDI Pinrang

The findings show a pattern of linkages between the role of facilitative leadership, participatory decision-making mechanisms, internalization of ethical values, and the application of continuous evaluation in academic governance. To understand the meaning and implications of these

findings in more depth, the following discussion section examines each of the main dimensions of the collaborative leadership model by linking it to the theoretical framework of collaborative leadership and educational leadership, so that it can be explained how leadership practices at STAI DDI Pinrang form a contextual and adaptive academic governance model.

Facilitative and Relational Leadership as the Foundation of Academic Collaboration

The findings of the study show that the leadership model at STAI DDI Pinrang relies on facilitative leadership that emphasizes personal relationships, emotional closeness, and exemplarity. Leaders do not position themselves as dominant actors in the power structure, but as a driving force who is present with the academic community in the institutional work process. This pattern is reflected in the views of informants who affirm that the ideal leader is a figure who is able to be a motivator, educator, as well as a place of support for his subordinates.

Within the framework of Ansell and Gash, facilitative leadership is a key prerequisite for sustainable collaboration, as it is able to create a sense of security, trust, and openness between actors (Ansell & Gash, 2012). The leadership practice at STAI DDI Pinrang shows this character through the attitude of "not keeping distance", direct involvement of leaders in academic activities, and the ability to build a cohesive work atmosphere. Thus, leadership is not carried out structurally, but as a relational practice that binds academic actors in a common goal.

These findings also answer the research objectives related to how collaborative leadership models are implemented in academic governance, by showing that collaboration cannot grow without leadership that consciously lowers hierarchical barriers.

Collective Participation in Academic Decision-Making

Another key dimension of the collaborative leadership model at STAI DDI Pinrang is the strong participation of the academic community in decision-making. Academic decisions are not produced elitistically, but through the involvement of various relevant parties according to the policy context to be determined. The results show that every strategic and technical policy is always pursued through a joint forum so that all parties understand and are responsible for the decision.

This practice is in line with Crosby and Bryson's view of placing shared power and shared responsibility at the core of collaborative leadership (Bryson & Crosby, 2014). At STAI DDI Pinrang, the involvement of lecturers, education staff, and related units not only enriches policy perspectives, but also builds a sense of ownership of academic governance. Participation is understood not as an administrative procedure, but as a mechanism for the formation of institutional collective commitment.

Thus, these findings answer the research objectives related to how collaborative leadership is manifested in academic governance practices, particularly through inclusive and participatory decision-making.

Ethical Exemplary and Prophetic Values as Adhesives for Academic Governance

This study also found that collaborative leadership at STAI DDI Pinrang does not stand in a neutral value space. The leadership model is built on prophetic values such as honesty, responsibility, and intelligence as the moral basis of leadership. These values are seen as an important foundation in building leadership legitimacy and maintaining institutional cohesion (Hassan et al., 2011).

In Bush's perspective, effective educational leadership demands not only managerial competence, but also clarity of values that are the reference for decision-making (Bush, 2008). These findings show that academic governance at STAI DDI Pinrang is guided by leadership ethics which function as a moral compass in carrying out collaboration. Prophetic values do not stop as religious symbols, but are operationalized in the attitude of fairness, openness, and responsibility of leaders towards the academic community (Faishol, 2020). This aspect strengthens the argument that the collaborative leadership model in private Islamic universities has a distinctive character, namely the integration between structural collaboration and moral legitimacy.

Accountability and Continuous Evaluation in Academic Governance

Another dimension that strengthens the collaborative leadership model at STAI DDI Pinrang is serious attention to institutional accountability through periodic evaluations. The implementation of evaluations at the institutional and unit levels, including internal quality audits, is understood as an integral part of leadership, not just an administrative obligation.

In the context of collaborative leadership, evaluation serves as a space for collective reflection to ensure that academic policy and practice remain on a mutually agreed path (Asyari et al., 2023). The implementation of the PPEPP cycle shows that leadership does not stop at the planning and implementation stages, but also involves continuous control and improvement. This confirms that collaboration at STAI DDI Pinrang is dynamic and reflective. These findings answer the research objectives related to how collaborative leadership supports accountable and sustainable academic governance.

Based on the findings and discussion above, the collaborative leadership model at STAI DDI Pinrang can be understood as an integration between facilitative leadership, participatory decision-making, ethical example, and strengthening academic accountability. This model is not normative-ideal, but grows out of leadership practices that are contextual and adaptive to the realities of private Islamic universities.

Conceptually, these findings enrich the collaborative leadership discourse by showing how the theories of Ansell and Gash and Crosby and Bryson can operate in real life in the academic governance of Islamic colleges (Ansell & Gash, 2012), (Bryson & Crosby, 2014) with a touch of prophetic value as emphasized in the leadership of Islamic education.

CONCLUSION

Research shows that collaborative leadership at STAI DDI Pinrang develops as a contextual leadership model that plays an important role in shaping the academic governance of private Islamic universities. This model is rooted in facilitative leadership that emphasizes personal relationships, exemplarship, and lowering hierarchical distance, thus opening up space for participatory decision-making involving leaders, lecturers, and academic units. Such collective

participation strengthens the legitimacy of academic policies and fosters a sense of shared responsibility in the management of the institution.

In addition, collaborative leadership at STAI DDI Pinrang is strengthened by the internalization of prophetic values and leadership ethics as a moral foundation, as well as by the implementation of accountability and continuous evaluation through internal quality assurance mechanisms. The integration between facilitative leadership, participation, ethical values, and accountability forms collaborative and adaptive academic governance. These findings provide a theoretical contribution by offering a collaborative leadership model based on the context of PTIS, as well as a practical contribution as a reference for strengthening academic governance in private Islamic universities.

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