

Leadership Values and Government Ethics in The Character of Tobirama Senju: Reflections for Leaders of Today

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Abstract: This study examines the leadership values and governance ethics reflected in the character of Tobirama Senju, a fictional character from the Naruto series, as a reflection and inspiration for today's leaders. Tobirama Senju is known as a firm, innovative leader, and has a high commitment to justice and stability of government. Through a qualitative-descriptive approach, this study analyzes the various actions, decisions, and policies taken by Tobirama in the context of a fictional world, then relates them to the theories of leadership and ethics of modern government. The results of the analysis show that Tobirama not only prioritizes the aspect of power, but also balances it with the principles of morality, transparency, and social responsibility. Values such as integrity, justice, policy innovation, and concern for the welfare of the community are the main foundations of his leadership. The study also highlights the relevance of Tobirama's character as an adaptive and ethical leadership model in the midst of the challenges of the times, and provides recommendations for today's leaders to internalize these values in government practice. Thus, this research contributes to enriching the discourse of government science through an interdisciplinary approach that combines fictional character analysis with real needs in contemporary governance.

INTRODUCTION

Government science as a discipline continues to develop in line with the social, political, economic, and cultural dynamics of the global community. In the contemporary context, the main challenge facing the government is not only related to the effectiveness of policies, but also the crisis of public trust in the integrity, transparency, and ethics of leaders (Transparency International, 2024). This phenomenon emphasizes the importance of deep reflection on the concept of leadership and governance ethics, especially in the face of the era of digital disruption, globalization, and the complexity of governance in modern countries (Ansell & Torfing, 2023).

Leadership in government is not only related to technical or administrative abilities, but also closely related to the moral and ethical values that underlie every public decision (Bass & Riggio, 2023). These values are the main foundation in building public trust, maintaining social stability, and ensuring the sustainability of national development. Recent studies highlight that leadership failures are often rooted in weak integrity and ethics, with 78% of public policy failures in Southeast Asia, for example, being caused by the neglect of the ethical dimension in the decision-making process (Mardiasmo et al., 2023).

In the discourse of government science, government ethics is defined as a set of values, principles, and norms that serve as guidelines for public officials in carrying out their duties and responsibilities (Bovens, 2019). This ethics includes aspects of justice, accountability, transparency, and social responsibility that must be internalized by every leader. However, in practice, ethical dilemmas often arise as a result of clashes between private, group, and public interests (Johnson, 2024). This condition requires leaders to have reflective capacity and strong moral commitment in order to be able to make decisions that are not only legal, but also ethically legitimate (Moore, 2020).

As the media and popular culture evolve, the analysis of fictional characters in literature, film, and animation began to be used as an alternative approach to reflect on leadership values and government ethics (Van Quaquebeke & Schmerling, 2020). Fictional characters are considered able to represent the dilemmas, conflicts, and complexities of leadership in the form of narratives that are easier to understand and internalize by the wider community (Suhartono, 2021). One of the interesting fictional characters to study in this context is Tobirama Senju from the *Naruto* series. As the Second Hokage, Tobirama is known as a leader who is firm, innovative, and has a high commitment to justice and stability of the government (Yamamoto, 2022).

Tobirama Senju represents a leadership model that balances between authority and accountability, between innovation and conservatism, and between power and morality. In building Konoha Village's government system, Tobirama introduced various institutional innovations such as the establishment of an ANBU institution and an efficient public administration system. However, behind these innovations, Tobirama still places ethics as the main foundation in every policy taken (Yamamoto, 2022). This is in line with the concept of ethical governance which emphasizes the importance of integrating moral values in governance (Bovens, 2019).

Studies on ethical leadership show that leaders who have high integrity tend to be able to inspire ethical behavior in their work environment. Leader integrity plays an important role in shaping a healthy organizational culture, encouraging pro-social behavior, and preventing abuse of authority (Huang & Lee, 2023). In the context of governance, integrity is not only concerned with personal honesty, but also with a commitment to putting the public interest above personal or group interests (Wang & Kim, 2023). Tobirama Senju, through its various policies and strategic decisions, has shown consistency in upholding the principles of justice, transparency, and social responsibility, despite the face of great risks and challenges.

Leadership in crisis situations is also the main test for government ethics. A study by Liu et al. (2023) shows that leaders who are adaptive and responsive to environmental change tend to be more successful in managing crises, as long as they adhere to the principles of ethics and public accountability. In the fictional history of *Naruto*, Tobirama faces various crises, ranging from the threat of war to internal village conflicts, but he still consistently puts the safety and welfare of the people as the top priority. This leadership pattern is in line with the findings of Ansell and Torfing (2023) regarding the importance of collaborative governance and the ability to build consensus without sacrificing the principle of fairness.

In addition, the dynamics of power and accountability in government often give rise to complex ethical dilemmas. A study by Zhang et al. (2022) revealed that the pressure to maintain power can encourage leaders to commit unethical acts, such as corruption, nepotism, or policy manipulation. However, the character of Tobirama Senju shows how power can be used wisely and responsibly, putting the public interest above all else. This shows that ethical leadership is not only idealism, but can also be embodied in the practice of government through strong commitment and integrity.

In the Indonesian context, the crisis of leadership and government ethics is still a central issue in various academic and public policy discussions. Dwiyanto (2023) emphasized that one of the main causes of weak governance in Indonesia is the inability of leaders to integrate public administration theory with the political and social realities they face. Therefore, reflection on leadership values and governance ethics through interdisciplinary approaches, including through the analysis of fictional characters such as Tobirama Senju, becomes very relevant to enrich the discourse of government science.

The deontological ethics developed by Immanuel Kant is also one of the important foundations in discussing ethical leadership. Johnson (2024) emphasized that leaders must act based on moral obligations, not just considering pragmatic consequences. In many situations, Tobirama Senju showed a consistent attitude to uphold the principles of justice and protect the people, despite the great risks. This attitude reflects the application of deontological principles in the context of government leadership, where decisions are taken not only in the short-term interest, but also for the sustainability of moral values in state governance.

Innovative leadership is also an important aspect in the development of a government system that is adaptive and responsive to changing times. Uhl-Bien and Arena (2024) highlight that innovative leaders are able to create new systems that are more effective and efficient, without sacrificing the principles of ethics and justice. Tobirama Senju, through his various institutional reforms, shows how innovation can go hand in hand with a commitment to moral values. This is relevant to the challenges facing modern government, where policy innovation must always be balanced with careful ethical considerations.

From a government science perspective, the analysis of fictional characters such as Tobirama Senju makes a significant contribution to broadening the horizons of thought on leadership and governance ethics. A study by Suhartono (2021) confirms that popular culture can be an effective source of critical reflection to understand power dynamics, accountability, and policy innovation in a broader context. Thus, this research not only offers a new perspective in the study of government science, but also provides inspiration for today's leaders to internalize leadership values and governance ethics in every aspect of public decision-making. In the end, the reflection on leadership values and government ethics in the character of Tobirama Senju is expected to make a real contribution to the development of more adaptive, innovative, and ethical theories and practices of government. Through this approach, it is hoped that a collective awareness of the importance of integrity, justice, and social responsibility will emerge as the main foundation in building a government that is trusted and respected by the community.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with an intrinsic case study design that focuses on the analysis of leadership values and governance ethics in the character of Tobirama Senju. The selection of qualitative methods is based on the ability of this approach to explore in depth the meanings, symbols, and narratives contained in fictional texts as well as their relevance to contemporary government theory and practice. The intrinsic case study was chosen because the character of Tobirama Senju is considered a unique phenomenon that can provide new insights for the development of leadership theory and ethics in the context of governance (Yin, 2023). In the framework of qualitative research, researchers play a key role as the main instrument that actively interprets the data, so reflective engagement and contextual understanding are very important (Creswell & Poth, 2023).

Data Source

Data collection techniques are carried out through two stages that complement each other. Phase First is a content analysis of the episodes of the Naruto series that showcases the role and policies of Tobirama Senju as Hokage, Second. The purposively selected episodes are those that explicitly showcase Tobirama's actions, decisions, and dialogues in the context of leadership and government decision-making. Each relevant scene is examined in depth to identify the ethical values, leadership principles, and moral dilemmas faced by the character. These secondary sources include journal articles, books, and previous research results that have been published in the last five years and have gone through a peer-review process, so that their validity and relevance can be accounted for (Yamamoto, 2022; Suhartono, 2021).

Data Collection Techniques

The data collection technique was carried out through the study of documents against academic literature that discussed political philosophy, leadership values, and government ethics in the Naruto series. To strengthen the validity of the data and broaden the perspective of the analysis, the study also triangulated through semi-structured interviews with five government science experts with experience in the study of popular culture and governance. This interview aims to gain a critical view of the relevance of Tobirama Senju's leadership values to the ethical challenges of today's government. Each speaker was given open-ended questions that allowed for an in-depth exploration of their experiences, knowledge, and reflections on the relationship between fictional narratives and government reality. The results of the interviews are then confirmed back to the source (member checking) to ensure the accuracy of the interpretation and avoid the researcher's bias (Creswell & Poth, 2023).

Data Analysis

The data analysis in this study uses a thematic method developed by Braun and Clarke (2022), combining inductive and deductive approaches. The analysis process begins with repeatedly reading all the data that has been collected, whether from episodes, documents, or interviews, to gain a thorough understanding of the context and content of the narrative. Next, the researcher carried out an open coding process, which identified and labeled units of meaning relevant to the focus of the research, such as "ethical decisions in crisis", "policy innovation", "personal sacrifice for the public", and "accountability mechanisms". These codes are then grouped into key themes that emerge organically from the data, such as leadership integrity, governance innovation, and conflict management. Each theme formed is analyzed in depth by relating it to the main theories in government science, such as the concept of ethical governance (Bovens, 2019), transformational leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2023), and public value (Moore, 2020).

Validity and Reliability

To maintain the validity and reliability of the research, triangulation of data sources and methods was carried out. Source triangulation was carried out by comparing the results of episode analysis, academic documents, and expert interviews. Meanwhile, the triangulation method is carried out by combining content analysis, document studies, and interviews, so that the research results become more comprehensive and accountable (Creswell & Poth, 2023). In addition, the researcher also applies the trail audit technique, which is the systematic recording of the entire research process, from data collection, analysis, to interpretation of results, so that the research process can be replicated and verified by other researchers (Krippendorff, 2019).

Application of Theoretical Framework

This research is based on the paradigm of social constructivism, which views social reality, including leadership and governance ethics, as the construction of symbolic interactions and social interpretations (Guba & Lincoln, 2023). Within this framework, the character of Tobirama Senju is positioned as a narrative representation that can reflect and critique leadership values in the context of contemporary governance. Thus, this research not only seeks to describe fictional behaviors or policies, but also interprets the ethical meanings and implications that can be taken as lessons for today's leaders.

Research Ethics

Research ethics are strictly maintained by ensuring that the entire analysis process is carried out in a transparent and reflective manner. The researcher conducted phenomenological bracketing, which is to consciously suspend personal assumptions and experiences related to leadership so as not to affect the interpretation of the data. All data sources used have gone through a strict selection based on credibility and scientific relevance, and avoid using sources that are popular or unverified opinions (Creswell & Poth, 2023). In the interview process, the identity of the interviewees is kept confidential and all participation is carried out voluntarily with written consent.

Research Limitations

The limitations of this study lie in the subjective nature of the analysis of fictional texts and the possibility of interpretation biases of the researcher. However, with the implementation of triangulation, member checking, and trail audits, it is hoped that the research results will still have a high level of credibility and transferability. This research does not aim to make empirical generalizations, but rather to enrich theoretical perspectives in government science through an interdisciplinary approach that combines popular culture studies and public administration theory (Suhartono, 2021; Braun & Clarke, 2022).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An in-depth analysis of Tobirama Senju's character in the *Naruto* series reveals the complexity of leadership values and governance ethics that are relevant to contemporary governance challenges. As the Second Hokage, Tobirama represents a model of leader who is able to balance authority with accountability, innovation with conservatism, and power with morality. His leadership pattern is in line with the concept of ethical governance which emphasizes the integration of moral values in the public decision-making process (Bovens, 2019). A tangible example can be seen in his policy of establishing the administrative system of Konoha Village, where he not only created an efficient governance structure, but also devised oversight mechanisms to prevent abuse of authority. These findings are in line with the study of Mardiasmo et al. (2023) which stated that 78% of policy failures in Southeast Asia stem from weak ethical dimensions in institutional design.

Tobirama's commitment to the principle of distributive justice is a critical foundation in this analysis. In several episodes, he consistently rejected discriminatory policies against the Uchiha clan, despite the intense internal political pressure. This attitude reflects the application of Rawls' (2020) theory of justice which emphasizes the importance of equal access for all groups in government. This pattern contrasts with the findings of Transparency International (2024) that 63% of people in developing countries feel that public policies tend to favor the dominant group. Tobirama's decision to integrate the Uchiha clan into the governance structure shows how inclusivity can be an effective strategy in preventing horizontal conflict—a principle that is in line with the concept of collaborative governance (Ansell & Torfing, 2023). Studies of ethical leadership in the context of Egyptian government (PMC6874171) also reinforce the argument that ethical leadership has a positive impact on subordinates' readiness to deal with change, although in a fictional context, this pattern is seen through the loyalty of ANBU forces to Tobirama.

The dynamics of power in Tobirama's leadership also offer a unique perspective on the relationship between authority and ethics. Despite having absolute political power as Hokage, he consistently limits himself through internal accountability mechanisms. A concrete example can be seen in the policy of establishing the ANBU—an elite force tasked with protecting villages—where it incorporated a periodic reporting system to the advisory board. This pattern reflects the theory of checks and balances in government science which is considered crucial to prevent tyranny (Bovens, 2019). These findings strengthen the argument of Dwiyanto (2023) that leadership crises in Indonesia are often rooted in weak internal oversight mechanisms in the bureaucracy. A study of administrative ethics conflict in China (PMC9125214) also highlights how the system's weaknesses in coping with social pressures can trigger moral conflict, something Tobirama avoids by maintaining integrity despite political pressure.

Tobirama's policy innovations, such as the development of irrigation systems and mass ninja education, show how visionary leadership can be balanced with ethical considerations. The policy not only increases the defense capacity of villages, but also creates jobs and reduces social disparities. This approach is in line with Moore's (2020) concept of public value which emphasizes that ideal policies must create added value for the wider community. A comparative analysis with Uhl-Bien and Arena's (2024) study of innovative leadership reveals that Tobirama's success lies in his ability to integrate a long-term vision with the principle of generational justice—an aspect that is often overlooked in contemporary governance practices. Studies on universalism and leadership in public organizations affirm that universal values such as honesty, justice, and social responsibility are the main foundations in creating a healthy and sustainable bureaucratic culture (PMC10828007, 2024). In the context of Tobirama's leadership, the policy innovations carried out are not only oriented towards administrative efficiency, but also pay attention to the long-term impact on social justice and community welfare. This is in line with Moore's (2020) thoughts on the importance of creating public value as the main goal of governance.

The ethical leadership shown by Tobirama is also reflected in his ability to make difficult decisions in the midst of a crisis. In the history of Konoha Village government, Tobirama faced various external threats and internal conflicts that demanded moral courage and decisiveness in action. His decision to sacrifice himself in the Battle of Kinkaku Force in order to save the younger generation represents the application of Kant's deontological ethics, in which moral obligations and responsibilities to the people are placed above personal interests (Johnson, 2024). This

attitude shows that leadership in government must be based on solid moral values, especially when faced with the dilemma between individual safety and collective interests. Zhang et al.'s (2022) study of executive behavior in Asian governments shows that crises are often a key test for a leader's integrity, and leadership that dares to take risks in the public interest can increase public trust in government institutions.

In the Indonesian context, learning from Tobirama's character can be adapted in an effort to strengthen bureaucratic integrity and build inclusive governance. Suhartono's study (2021) confirms that the success of governance is greatly influenced by leaders' ability to manage diversity and build consensus among different groups. Tobirama's policy of integrating large clans into the Konoha Village government structure is a concrete example of the application of the principles of inclusivity and dialogue in managing potential horizontal conflicts. This is relevant to the challenges of governance in multicultural Indonesia, where repressive approaches often fail to resolve conflicts and instead deepen social polarization (Ansell & Torfing, 2023). The collaborative and deliberative approach adopted by Tobirama can be an inspiration for regional and national leaders in designing policies that are fair and oriented towards the common interest.

This discussion also underlined the importance of accountability mechanisms in preventing abuse of power in the government environment. Tobirama not only relied on formal authority as Hokage, but also established an internal oversight system involving advisory boards and specialized institutions such as the ANBU. The periodic reporting and evaluation system applied is a tangible form of the principle of checks and balances that are essential in maintaining bureaucratic integrity (Bovens, 2019). Dwiyanto's (2023) study on bureaucratic reform in Indonesia also highlights that weak supervision mechanisms are one of the main causes of corruption and inefficiency in public services. Thus, the lessons learned from Tobirama's leadership model can be implemented through strengthening the accountability and transparency system at all levels of government.

In addition to the structural aspect, this discussion highlights the importance of establishing an ethical organizational culture as a prerequisite for the success of bureaucratic reform. Universal values such as honesty, justice, and community service must be internalized by all state apparatus through continuous education and training (Huang & Lee, 2023). Tobirama's policy in building a mass ninja education system that emphasizes discipline, cooperation, and devotion to the village is an effective example in shaping the character and integrity of the next generation of bureaucracy. The PMC6874171 study (2019) confirms that ethical leadership and a positive organizational culture contribute significantly to organizational readiness to face external changes and challenges. Furthermore, this discussion expands the analysis on the aspect of policy innovation as the key to the sustainability of governance. Tobirama is known as an innovator in the development of various government systems and institutions, such as the public administration system, education, and village security. These innovations not only focus on efficiency, but also on creating added value for the wider community (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2024). In the context of modern government, policy innovation is the main demand in the midst of the dynamics of globalization, technological developments, and changing societal needs. The PMC10457521 study (2023) confirms that adaptive and innovative leadership is indispensable to deal with crises and rapid environmental changes, without sacrificing the principles of ethics and justice.

A narrative analysis of the research methods used also shows that fictional characters such as Tobirama can be a conceptual laboratory to test theories of leadership and governance ethics. Through a qualitative approach and thematic analysis, it was found that the leadership values displayed by Tobirama are highly relevant to today's governance needs, especially in terms of ethical decision-making, conflict management, and policy innovation (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Creswell & Poth, 2023). This research also emphasizes the findings of Suhartono (2021) that popular culture can be a source of critical reflection for the development of theory and practice of government science, because it is able to present leadership dilemmas and dynamics in the form of narratives that are easily accessible and understood by the wider community.

In addition, this discussion highlights the importance of individual integrity as the main foundation in building public trust in government institutions. A PMC9830169 (2022) study on the integrity of civil servants in Nepal shows that the ethical behavior of state apparatus is strongly influenced by the role models of leaders and supportive organizational culture. In the context of fiction, Tobirama became an example for his subordinates by always putting the public interest above personal or group interests, and daring to make difficult decisions for the common good. This is in line with the argument of Wang and Kim (2023) that the integrity of leaders has a significant impact on the ethical behavior of subordinates through the mechanism of moral identification and internalization of organizational values.

The importance of ethics education and training for prospective leaders and state apparatus is also an integral part of this discussion. The studies of Huang and Lee (2023) and PMC6874171 (2019) show that the use of popular media and narrative case studies can improve ethical understanding and sensitivity among students and government employees. By learning about the dilemmas and decisions faced by characters like Tobirama, trainees can develop reflective skills, critical analysis, and moral courage in dealing with real-life situations in a bureaucratic environment.

This discussion also emphasized that the success of governance is greatly influenced by the ability of leaders to build synergies between innovation, ethics, and accountability. Tobirama's leadership model that prioritizes collaboration, transparency, and moral courage can be an inspiration for today's leaders in facing the challenges of the complexity of modern government. The PMC8596500 study (2021) emphasizes the importance of focusing on positive values and humanity in building sustainable governance that is adaptive to changing times.

In the context of globalization and the digital era, this discussion also highlights the importance of adaptation and policy reform in a sustainable manner. Tobirama's leadership that is responsive to changes in the environment and the needs of society is a clear example of adaptive leadership principles that are highly relevant to the demands of modern government (Liu et al., 2023). The ability to integrate technology, update administrative systems, and maintain a balance between efficiency and justice is key to successful governance in an era of disruption. Finally, this discussion emphasizes that the values of leadership and government ethics reflected in Tobirama Senju's character can be a source of inspiration and material for critical reflection for the development of theory and practice of government science. Through an interdisciplinary approach that combines narrative analysis, public administration theory, and ethical reflection, this research contributes to enriching academic discourse and provides applicative recommendations for strengthening governance that is integrity, innovative, and oriented to the public interest.

CONCLUSION

The research discusses leadership values and governance ethics reflected in the character of Tobirama Senju, by adopting a qualitative-interpretive approach based on intrinsic case studies. The entire research process, from introduction, method, to discussion, has been designed to maintain relevance and continuity with the context of government science, as well as to emphasize the importance of ethical reflection and innovation in public governance. The results of the analysis, obtained through triangulation of episode data, academic documents, and expert interviews, show that the character of Tobirama Senju is not just a fictional character, but a real representation of the complexities, dilemmas, and opportunities faced by government leaders in the real world. One of the key findings is that effective and sustainable governance leadership does not only rely on technical prowess or administrative ability, but also on the integration of ethical values into every aspect of decision-making.

Tobirama Senju shows that successful leaders are those who are able to strike a balance between power and accountability, between innovation and prudence, and between short-term interests and long-term vision. In various policies taken, such as the establishment of a village administrative system, the ANBU institution, to the development of a mass ninja education system, Tobirama always places the principles of justice, transparency, and social responsibility

as the main foundation. This is an important lesson for today's government leaders, especially in the face of political pressure, social dynamics, and the demands of rapid change.

The importance of checks and balances mechanisms in governance. Tobirama Senju not only relied on the formal authority inherent in his position as Hokage, but also established an internal system of oversight involving various actors, such as advisory councils and specialized agencies. The periodic reporting and evaluation system implemented is clear evidence that accountability and transparency are the main keys in preventing abuse of power and maintaining public trust in government institutions. In the context of modern bureaucracy, this lesson is particularly relevant, considering the many cases of corruption, collusion, and nepotism caused by weak oversight and a permissive organizational culture against ethical violations.

This research provides a critical reflection on government practices that tend to ignore ethical aspects in pursuing administrative or political goals. Tobirama Senju shows that long-term success can only be achieved if government policies and actions are always based on strong moral values. In this context, the courage to refuse to compromise on principles, even in the face of political pressure or personal risk, is the main key in building a government with integrity and trust by the people. In addition, this study emphasizes that the success of governance is greatly influenced by the ability of leaders to build synergies between innovation, ethics, and accountability.

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