

# THE INFLUENCE OF LOCAL WISDOM “RAMBU SOLO”, CULTURAL IDENTITY, AND POWER DISTANCE ON THE LEADERSHIP STYLE OF THE HEAD OF LEMBANG BUNTU DATU, MENGENDEK SUBDISTRICT, TANA TORAJA

Rasnawati<sup>1</sup>, Andi Jam'an<sup>2</sup>, Muchriana Muchran<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup> Master of Management Study Program, Muhammadiyah University of Makassar, Makassar, Indonesia

[rastirasnawati96@gmail.com](mailto:rastirasnawati96@gmail.com)\*

\* corresponding author

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of local wisdom Rambu Solo', cultural identity, and power distance on the leadership style of the Head of Lembang in Lembang Buntu Datu, Tana Toraja. The problem discussed in this study is the tension between efforts to implement a participatory-modern leadership style and the strong influence of the hierarchical social structure rooted in Lembang Buntu Datu. This study is based on leadership theory, cultural identity theory, and Hofstede's cultural dimensions, especially the concept of power distance. The study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design involving 85 respondents through purposive sampling. Data were analyzed using multiple linear regression with the help of SPSS. The results showed that Rambu Solo' had a positive and significant effect ( $p = 0.009 < 0.05$ ) and power distance had a significant positive effect ( $p = 0.004 < 0.05$ ) on leadership style. However, cultural identity did not have a significant effect ( $p = 0.195 > 0.05$ ). The regression model was declared feasible through the F-test, with a coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) of 25.6%. Meanwhile, 74.4% is a variation that cannot be explained by this research model. This study provides a theoretical contribution to the development of culture-based leadership by integrating local wisdom and power distance dimensions. Practically, the results of this study can serve as a basis for local governments in designing contextual leadership models based on the community's cultural values.

## INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, local wisdom remains a vital element in preserving cultural identity and social stability within communities. The accelerating pace of modernization has the potential to displace deeply rooted cultural values, making local wisdom serve as both a mechanism for social protection and a guiding principle in community life. This wisdom serves as a cultural symbol that defines the community's identity and influences its way of thinking and leadership style.

Leaders who draw on local wisdom tend to involve the community, prioritize discussion, and uphold local cultural values Askodrina (2021). Local wisdom reflects a



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value system formed through the community's historical experiences and passed down through generations. These values shape the patterns of interaction between leaders and the community and serve as a source of social legitimacy.

Leaders who can internalize these values tend to be more readily accepted and trusted by the community. This wisdom serves as a cultural symbol and a defining characteristic of the community, influencing ways of thinking and leadership styles. Leaders grounded in local wisdom tend to involve the community, prioritize discussion, and uphold local cultural values. Leadership style is influenced not only by power structures but also by cultural values and social systems.

In the realm of government, local wisdom plays a significant role in shaping ethical leadership models Hermawan et al (2024). According to Fahril et al. (2020) the stronger the internalization of local cultural values by leaders, the greater the application of transformational leadership, such as inspiration, motivation, role modeling, and individual attention. Transformational leadership based on local values has been proven to create harmony within institutions Muhaimin (2023). However, the effectiveness of this leadership often intersects with hierarchical social structures. Based on cultural dimension theory, power distance significantly influences the relationship between leaders and subordinates.

Effective leadership today is required to integrate cultural values with modern management practices Northouse (2021). Although the socio-cultural dimensions of Rambu Solo' have been extensively studied, there remains a gap in understanding how these values transform into local government leadership Merina & Muhaimin (2023). In Lembang Buntu Datu, this dynamic is evident in how cultural identity influences organizational members' trust in their leaders.

A leader's legitimacy is largely determined by social stratification, indicating that leadership is also shaped by local wisdom that emphasizes care, solidarity, and social responsibility Lepir & Ismanto (2024). These findings align with those of Rizal et al. (2022), who noted that the Rambu Solo' ritual embodies social values such as mutual aid, solidarity, kinship, reciprocity, and self-respect (*longko'/siri'*), which influence the leadership style of the Toraja people. These values shape a leadership style that is collective, participatory, and oriented toward togetherness and social harmony.

Thus, leadership cannot be separated from the cultural context in which it operates. In addition to local wisdom, cultural identity is also a key factor in shaping public perceptions of leadership. Thus, leadership cannot be separated from its surrounding cultural context. In addition to local wisdom, cultural identity is also a key factor in shaping public perceptions of leadership. The preservation of regional languages is essential for maintaining cultural identity and shaping the character of the younger generation, as well as fostering a leadership style that is more relevant, open, and close to the community (Tawasako et al., 2024).

From a theoretical perspective, leadership effectiveness is influenced by the alignment between leadership styles and the socio-cultural context. Power distance influences leadership styles; a highpower distance index leads to hierarchical and transactional leadership focused on rules and control, while a low index fosters transformational leadership that is more democratic, participatory, and innovative, tailored to the organization's needs Nawaz et al. (2020). In societies with high power distance, leaders possess greater legitimacy in decision-making.



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In the context of Toraja society, the hierarchical social structure indicates a relatively high level of power distance, thereby shaping a leadership style that is firm yet maintains social harmony. However, there are several issues with previous research, namely: (1) The research remains fragmented, examining culture or leadership in isolation; (2) There remains a scarcity of quantitative research within the context of Toraja's local customs; (3) There is no integration of local wisdom, cultural identity, and power distance within a single empirical model; and (4) The influence of cultural identity on leadership styles has not been empirically tested.

Given these conditions, a research gap exists: the dominance of modern leadership studies that fail to adequately consider local contexts, the lack of comprehensive integration of cultural variables, and the limited use of explanatory quantitative approaches in examining culture-based leadership. Therefore, this study presents a state-of-the-art approach by integrating three main variables: local wisdom, cultural identity, and power distance into a single research model, focusing on local (lembang) leadership and testing culture as an operational variable, not merely a symbolic concept.

This study aims to analyze the influence of Rambu Solo' local wisdom, cultural identity, and power distance on the leadership style of village heads, both partially and simultaneously. The benefits of this study are as follows. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of a leadership theory based on local culture by integrating the concepts of local wisdom, cultural identity, and Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Practically, this study is expected to serve as a basis for local governments in developing leadership models aligned with the cultural values of the community.

This study is grounded in several key theories, namely Leadership Theory (Northouse; Yukl), Local Wisdom Theory, Cultural Identity Theory, and Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory, specifically the power distance dimension which are used to explain the relationship between culture and leadership practices within local communities.

## METHOD

### Research Type and Approach

This study employs a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design. The quantitative method was chosen because this study aims to test the relationships and influences among variables using statistical analysis. An explanatory design was used to explain the causal relationship between the independent variables—namely, the local wisdom of Rambu Solo' ( $X_1$ ), cultural identity ( $X_2$ ), and power distance ( $X_3$ )—and the dependent variable, which is the leadership style of the village head ( $Y$ ). This approach is relevant for measuring the extent to which local cultural values influence leadership practices within the Lembang Buntu Datu community.

### Research Location and Time

This study was conducted in Lembang Buntu Datu, Mengkendek Subdistrict, Tana Toraja Regency, South Sulawesi Province. The location was selected for a specific purpose because this area strongly preserves traditional values, particularly through the Rambu Solo' ritual, making it an appropriate context for studying leadership rooted in local culture.



The research was conducted over a three-month period, encompassing the preparation phase, data collection, and data analysis, to ensure the acquisition of accurate and representative data without disrupting the community's social activities.

### Population and Sample

The population in this study consists of the residents of Lembang Buntu Datu who understand traditional values, culture, and local leadership, with a target population of 108 people. The sample was determined using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error, resulting in a sample size of 85 respondents. Sampling was conducted proportionally, ensuring that each community group had an equal opportunity to be selected as a respondent.

### Research Variables

The variables in this study consist of:

1. Independent Variables (X):
  - a. Local Wisdom of Rambu Solo' (X1)  
Social values, mutual aid, social solidarity, customary norms
  - b. Cultural Identity (X2)  
Language, symbols and traditions, belief systems, collective values
  - c. Power Distance (X3)  
Level of power centralization, hierarchical relationships, obedience to leaders, community dependence
2. Dependent Variables (Y), namely:  
Leadership style of the village head  
Participation, communication, decision-making, community empowerment

The primary research instrument is a questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) to quantitatively measure respondents' perceptions.

### Data Collection Methods

Data collection was conducted using the following methods:

1. Questionnaire  
Used as the primary tool to measure the research variables (X<sub>1</sub>, X<sub>2</sub>, X<sub>3</sub>, and Y) using a 5-point Likert scale.
2. Observation  
Conducted to directly observe the practice of traditional values and social interactions within the community, particularly during the Rambu Solo' ceremony.
3. Interviews  
Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants such as village heads, traditional leaders, and village officials. Interview data were used as supporting data (triangulation) to strengthen the quantitative results.
4. Documentation  
Utilized secondary data such as traditional documents, community social structures, and relevant archives.

Thus, this study employed primary data (questionnaires) and secondary data (documents and archives).



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## Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was performed using multiple linear regression with IBM SPSS software. The analysis steps consisted of:

1. Classical Assumptions Test

Conducted to ensure the regression model meets statistical assumptions:

- a. Normality Test: using a P-P plot
- b. Multicollinearity Test: Tolerance value  $> 0.10$  and VIF  $< 10$
- c. Heteroscedasticity Test: Glejser test or scatterplot

2. Hypothesis Testing

- a. t-Test (partial)

Tests the effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable. The model is significant if  $p < 0.05$ .

- b. F-Test (model fit test)

Tests the overall validity of the regression model. The model is considered valid if the significance level is  $< 0.05$ .

3. Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ )

Used to measure the model's ability to explain the variation in the dependent variable, namely the leadership style of village heads.

## Research Procedures

This study was conducted through the following systematic steps:

1. Preparation Phase

Defining the research problem, reviewing the literature, and developing research instruments.

2. Data Collection Phase

Distributing questionnaires and collecting data through interviews and documents.

3. Data Processing and Analysis Phase

Conducting validity and reliability tests, followed by multiple linear regression analysis.

4. Result Interpretation Phase

Interpreting the analysis results by referring to theory and real-world conditions.

5. Report Preparation Phase

Compiling the research results into a scientific article in accordance with journal standards.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Results

1. Respondent Characteristics

Based on data from 85 respondents, the majority were male, totaling 50 individuals (58.82%), while females numbered 35 (41.18%). In terms of education, respondents were predominantly bachelor's degree holders (37 people, 43.53%), followed by high school graduates (33 people, 38.82%), while the remainder held vocational high school, associate's, and master's degrees. In terms of age, the majority of respondents were in the productive age range of 30–39 years (45.9%), followed by the 20–29 and 40–49 age groups (22.35% each). Thus, the characteristics of the respondents indicate that the research data were obtained from a fairly productive segment of the



population with a good level of education, thereby supporting the validity and accuracy of the research results.

## 2. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis is used to test the effects of Rambu Solo' local wisdom ( $X_1$ ), cultural identity ( $X_2$ ), and power distance ( $X_3$ ) on the leadership style of village heads ( $Y$ ).

### a. Classical assumption tests

Classical assumption tests were conducted to ensure that the regression model used in the study met statistical requirements, so that the analysis results are reliable and unbiased.

### b. Normality test

Figures 1 and 2 show that the normality test results indicate the residual distribution forms a normal curve (bell shape) in the histogram, and the points on the Normal P-P Plot follow the diagonal line. The mean of the residuals is close to zero and the standard deviation is close to one. Thus, the data satisfy the normality assumption.

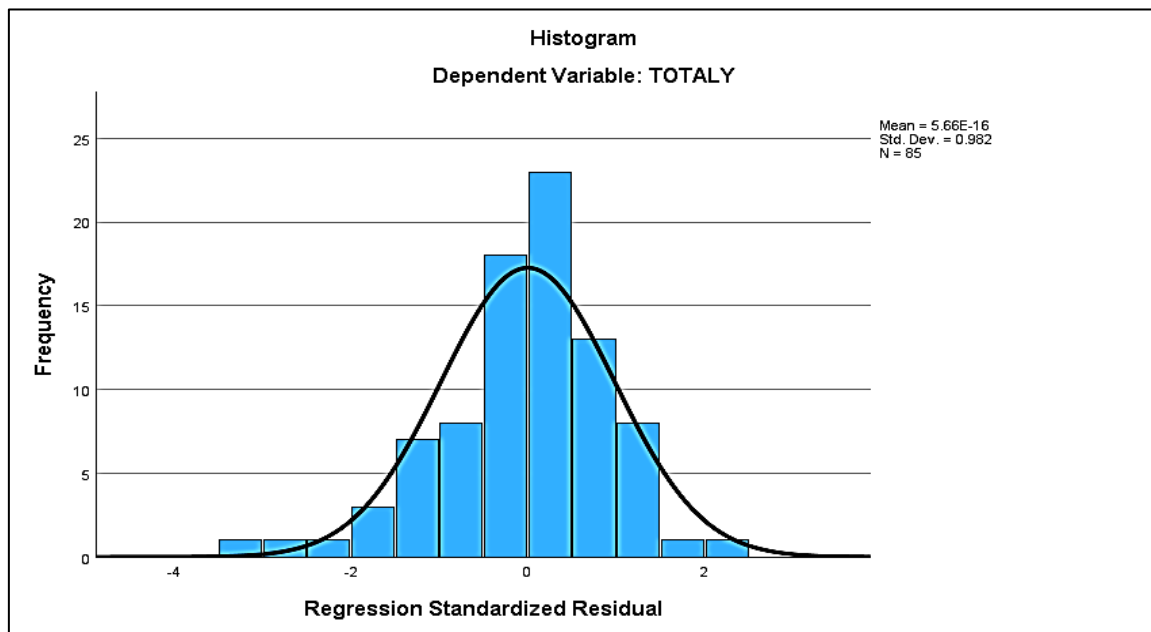
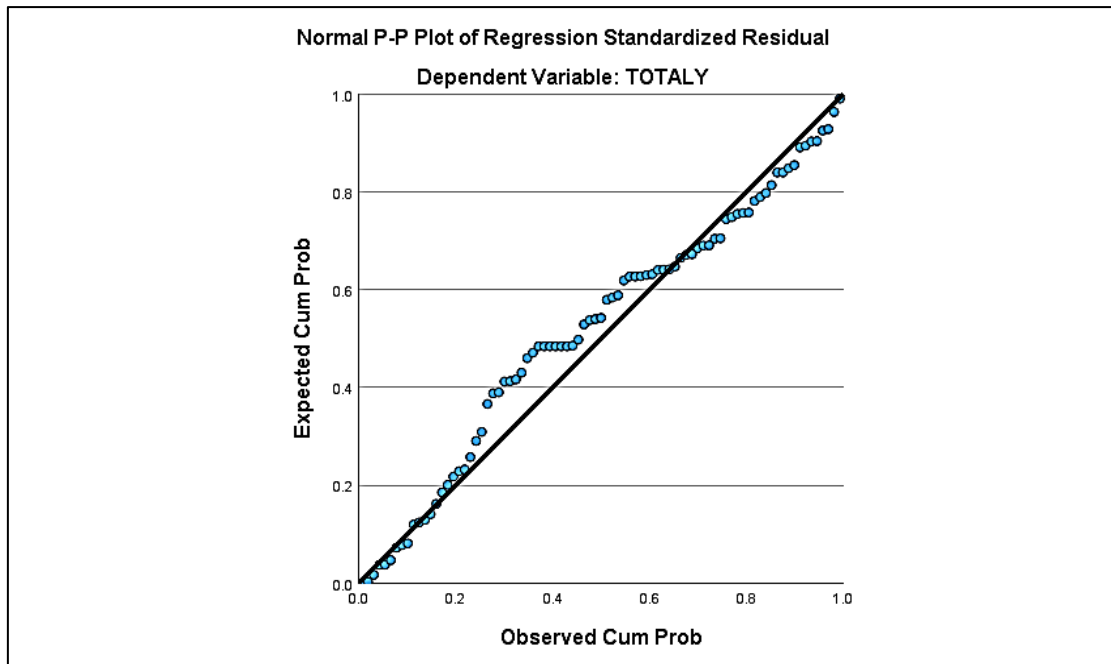


Figure 1. Results of the 2026 Normality Test Histogram



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**Figure 2. Normality Test Results for 2026**

c. Multicollinearity test

From Table 1, it is evident that all independent variables have Tolerance values > 0.10 and VIF < 10; therefore, it can be concluded that there is no multicollinearity among the variables.

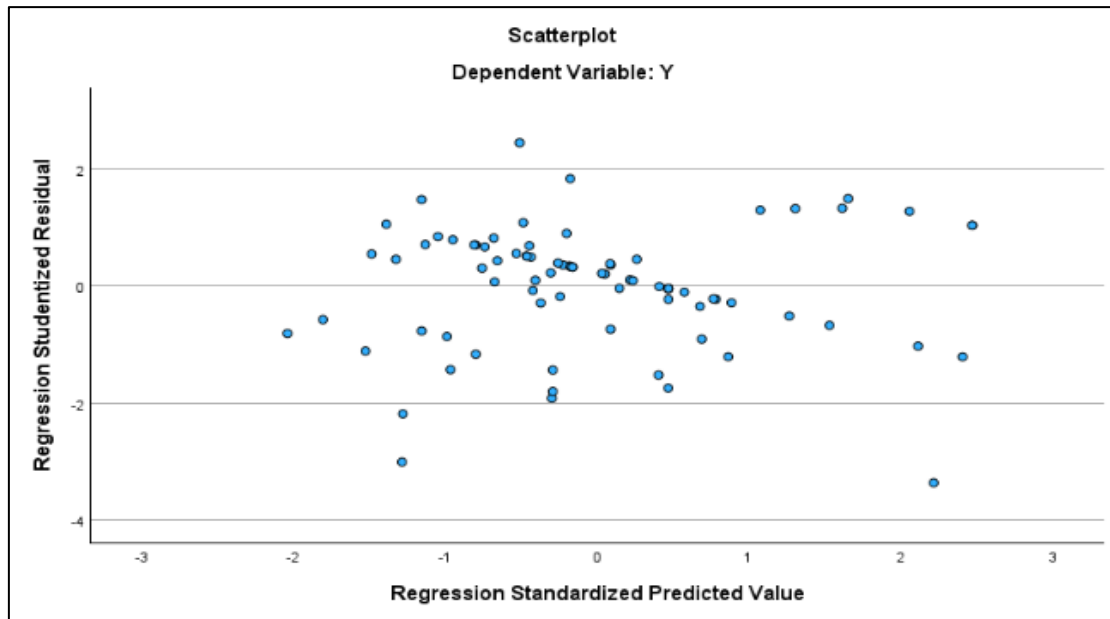
**Table 1. Multicollinearity Test Results for 2026**

Variable	Tolerance	VIF	Description
X1	0.822	1.217	There is no multicollinearity
X2	0.796	1.256	There is no multicollinearity
X3	0.951	1.052	There is no multicollinearity

d. Heteroscedasticity test

From Figure 2, it can be seen that the scatterplot shows the data points are randomly distributed and do not form a specific pattern. This indicates that there is no heteroscedasticity, so the regression model satisfies the classical assumptions.





**Figure 3. Results of the Heteroscedasticity Test for 2026**

e. Hypothesis testing (t-test, f-test, and coefficient of determination)

The regression equation obtained is:

$$Y = 18.902 + 0.263X_1 + 0.131X_2 + 0.201X_3 + e$$

From Table 2, it can be seen that the value of  $R = 0.506$  indicates a moderate relationship between the independent and dependent variables, while  $R^2 = 0.256$  indicates that 25.6% of the variation in leadership style can be explained by the model. The results of the hypothesis testing show:

1. Local wisdom of Rambu Solo' ( $X_1$ ) has a positive and significant effect ( $p = 0.009$ )
2. Cultural identity ( $X_2$ ) has no significant effect ( $p = 0.195$ )
3. Power distance ( $X_3$ ) has a positive and significant effect ( $p = 0.004$ )
4. The F-test indicates the model is significant ( $p < 0.001$ ), so the model is valid for use

**Table 2. Hypothesis Testing Table**

Hyp	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	B	Beta	t-value	Sig	Description
H1	Local Wisdom of Rambu Solo' ( $X_1$ )	Y	0.263	0.283	2.673	0.009	Significant
H2	Cultural Identity ( $X_2$ )	Y	0.131	0.140	1.307	0.195	Not Significant
H3	Power Distance ( $X_3$ )	Y	0.201	0.290	2.952	0.004	Significant
Regression Equation: $Y = 18.902 + 0.263X_1 + 0.131X_2 + 0.201X_3 + e$							
$R = 0.506$							
$R\text{-Square} = 0.256$							
$F = 9.287$							
$\text{Sig. } F < 0.001$							



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f. F-test (model fit test)

The results of the F-test show a significance level of  $< 0.05$ , indicating that the regression model is a good fit for explaining the relationship between the variables of local wisdom, cultural identity, and power distance and leadership style.

g. Coefficient of determination test

An  $R^2$  value of 0.256 indicates that the model explains 25.6% of the variation in the leadership styles of Lembang Heads, while the remaining 74.4% is influenced by other variables outside the model. This suggests that the model has explanatory power in the low to moderate range, so the inclusion of additional variables is necessary in future research.

### Analysis Based on Research Objectives

a. The influence of Rambu Solo' local wisdom on leadership style

The analysis results indicate that the local wisdom of Rambu Solo' has a positive and significant effect on the leadership style of the Lembang Head, as evidenced by a significance value of 0.009 (less than 0.05) and a  $\beta$  coefficient of 0.263. This finding indicates that the stronger the application of local wisdom values in community life, the better the leadership style demonstrated by the Village Head. In other words, leadership is not isolated but is influenced by the cultural values that are alive and evolving within the community. This influence is evident through the following key indicators. *First*, social values (Gotong Royong) reflect collective participation. This is evident in the involvement of the entire community in every stage of the Rambu Solo' implementation process. This means that the Lembang Head's leadership is collaborative rather than individualistic.



**Figure 4. The Ma'kata Process (Steaming of the Deceased)**

*Second*, strong social solidarity, evident in the mutual assistance among residents in supporting traditional activities, as revealed in interviews with traditional leaders. This is because harmonious and mutually supportive social relationships can strengthen the community's trust in its leaders.





**Figure 5. The Mantaa Duku' Process (Meat Distribution)**

*Third*, customary norms guide the conduct of activities to ensure they remain in accordance with traditional rules and are coordinated with the lembang as the local governing body. This means that the village head serves as the guardian of social values and norms, so that leadership is not merely administrative but also cultural. *Fourth*, respect for ancestors is evident in the village head's active participation in traditional rituals, which strengthens the social and cultural legitimacy of their leadership. In other words, the village head's involvement in traditional rituals provides cultural legitimacy to the leadership they exercise.



**Figure 6. The Rambu Solo' Procession**

Thus, it can be concluded that local wisdom is not merely a cultural symbol but is also tangibly evident in the social practices of the community and shapes relevant leadership patterns. These cultural values serve as a crucial foundation for building leadership that is accepted, respected, and effective within the community.

b. The influence of cultural identity on leadership style

The research results indicate that cultural identity does not have a significant influence on the leadership style of village heads, as evidenced by a significance value of 0.195 (greater than 0.05). This means that, statistically speaking, the presence of cultural identity does not have a direct impact on how leadership styles are exercised. However, this does not mean that cultural identity is unimportant; rather, its influence is not strong enough or does not directly determine variations in leadership style within the context of this study.



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From the perspective of Cultural Identity Theory, cultural identity remains empirically evident in community life. This finding can be explained through the following key indicators. First, local languages, which remain dominant in social interactions, serve as symbols of social identity but do not directly alter leadership patterns. In other words, the use of local languages in everyday conversation. *Second*, symbols and traditions such as the Rambu Solo' ceremony are viewed more as collective customs carried out routinely, so their influence on leadership is indirect. This means that the Rambu Solo' tradition is still carried out routinely.



**Figure 7. Ma'tinggoro Tedong Procession**

*Third*, the strong belief system in ancestors plays a greater role in social life and traditional rituals than in formal leadership practices. This means that the continuity of traditional beliefs is maintained through various rituals.



**Figure 8. Ma'pasonglo Activity**

*Fourth*, collective values such as togetherness and solidarity are indeed highly valued by the community, but because these values apply generally to all community members, they do not serve as distinguishing factors in determining leadership styles. This means that the strength of collective values is manifested in social togetherness and solidarity. However, these values function more as the socio-cultural backdrop of community life rather than as factors that directly influence the leadership patterns or styles of the Lembang Chief.

Thus, it can be concluded that cultural identity remains present and preserved within society, but does not have a significant direct influence on leadership style. It is



possible that the influence of cultural identity is indirect or mediated by other factors, such as local wisdom or social structures that are more operational in leadership practice.

c. The influence of power distance on leadership style

The research results indicate that power distance has a positive and significant influence on the leadership style of the Lembang Head, as evidenced by a significance value of 0.004 (less than 0.05) and a  $\beta$  coefficient of 0.201. This finding indicates that the higher the level of public acceptance of power or authority differences, the stronger its influence on the development of the leadership style applied by the Lembang Head. In other words, a power structure that is recognized and accepted by the community is a key factor in supporting leadership effectiveness. This is reflected in the following key indicators. *First*, acceptance of authority is evident from interview results indicating that the community tends to follow the guidance of the village head and the decisions of leaders as a sign of trust and legitimacy. This reinforces the legitimacy of leadership, both formal and cultural.



**Figure 9. Interview with Traditional Leaders**

*Second*, the social hierarchy reflected in the traditional structure indicates a clear relationship between leaders and the community, which ultimately supports the formation of a more centralized leadership. In other words, a clear social hierarchy indicates that positions and roles within the community structure are understood and respected, thereby creating order in decision-making.



**Figure 10. Lakkian (A Place for Storing Coffins)**

*Third*, compliance with decisions is evident in the practice of deliberation, where the community is still given space to voice their opinions, yet the final decision is respected and implemented collectively. This indicates a combination of hierarchical and participatory leadership. In other words, compliance with decisions reached through



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deliberation demonstrates that, despite the participatory process, the final outcome is respected and carried out by the community.

Thus, it can be concluded that there is strong acceptance of the power structure within the community, which contributes to the formation of a structured, respected, and effective leadership style. Power distance in this context is not always negative but serves as a social mechanism that reinforces stability and coordination in local leadership. Overall, the research findings indicate that operational cultural factors (local wisdom and power distance) have a significant influence on leadership style, whereas symbolic culture (cultural identity) has no direct impact. This confirms that local leadership is more influenced by practiced cultural values (lived culture) than by merely symbolic cultural values.

## Discussion

### The Influence of Rambu Solo' Local Wisdom on Leadership Style

Research findings indicate that local wisdom significantly influences leadership style, meaning that cultural values genuinely practiced in daily life (lived culture) play a crucial role in shaping a leader's behavior. Values such as mutual cooperation and social solidarity foster participatory leadership, where leaders not only issue instructions but also involve the community in every process. Meanwhile, customary norms and respect for ancestors provide a foundation of cultural legitimacy, ensuring that leadership is not only officially recognized but also socially and culturally respected by the community.

These findings are consistent with the research by Rizal et al. (2022), which shows that the Rambu Solo' ritual serves not only as a religious ceremony but also embodies social values such as mutual aid, solidarity, kinship (*kasiuluran*), as well as the principles of reciprocity and self-respect (*longko'/siri'*). These local wisdom values influence leadership styles within Toraja society, where leaders tend to prioritize togetherness, social responsibility, and maintaining honor and harmonious relationships among members. Thus, the resulting leadership style is not individualistic but rather collective, participatory, and focused on the cultural values and social norms present in the community.

Research by Aulia & Nawas (2021) shows that the Rambu Solo' ceremony serves as a venue for interfaith interaction that fosters tolerance through mutual respect, non-discrimination, and freedom of worship. This underscores that local culture not only strengthens identity but also fosters balance within a diverse society. Similarly, the findings of Allolinggi et al. (2022) regarding the cultural values of the Toraja people in the performance of the Rambu Solo' ceremony indicate that the Rambu Solo' ceremony consists of planning, preparation, and execution stages that serve as a means of internalizing cultural values such as solidarity, mutual cooperation, and respect for ancestors.

These values form the Toraja people's strong and collective cultural identity. In relation to leadership styles, this cultural identity fosters leadership focused on protection, participation, and social responsibility, so that leaders not only perform structural functions but also serve as representatives of cultural values in community life. In line with the findings of Lepir & Ismanto (2024), leadership based on the local wisdom of East Sumba, as embodied in the "Ina Rendi, Ama Manu" model, emphasizes the leader's role as a protector, guardian, and self-sacrificing figure, supported by the principle of "Mbeni Mbuhangu –Hangga Opang" and its connection to customary practices such as



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Marapu, Puru Ngandi, and Taning. In comparison with research in Tana Toraja, these findings confirm that leadership styles are influenced not only by power structures but also by cultural values and social systems; however, in East Sumba, a leader's legitimacy is more heavily influenced by social stratification, thereby enriching the analysis that leadership is also shaped by local wisdom that fosters care, solidarity, and social responsibility.

### **The Influence of Cultural Identity on Leadership Style**

Unlike local wisdom, the study's results indicate that cultural identity does not significantly influence the leadership style of village heads. This finding suggests that cultural identity, while important as a shared sense of identity within the community, does not directly determine how leadership is exercised in the context of local government. Based on indicators of cultural identity theory, the local language still used in social interactions functions as a symbol of identity but does not have a direct influence on leadership patterns.

The same is true for symbols and traditions such as Rambu Solo', which are viewed more as collective customs performed routinely, so their influence on leadership is indirect. Regarding the belief system indicator, the community still firmly upholds ancestral values, but their influence is more dominant in social life and rituals than in formal leadership practices. Meanwhile, collective values such as togetherness and solidarity apply universally to the entire community, so they do not serve as distinguishing factors in determining leadership styles.

In contrast to the findings of Tawasako et al. (2024), which indicate that preserving regional languages is crucial for maintaining cultural identity and shaping the character of the younger generation. This relates to leadership styles, as the use of local languages fosters leadership that is more context-appropriate, inclusive, and closely connected to the community. Similarly, research by Maulina et al. (2016) found that an understanding of cultural differences has a significant influence on leadership style; that is, the better a leader understands different cultures, the better they can adapt their leadership style effectively and adaptively. This relates to cultural identity, as this understanding helps leaders manage diversity, build effective communication, and foster inclusive leadership that aligns with existing cultural values.

### **The Influence of Power Distance on Leadership Style**

The significant influence of power distance indicates that the degree to which a society accepts social hierarchy plays a crucial role in reinforcing the legitimacy of leadership. In this context, people tend to accept a leader's authority as natural and legitimate, making the leader's decisions easier to accept and follow. However, this acceptance does not eliminate local values such as deliberation, which remains highly valued in the decision-making process. Consequently, a unique combination emerges between hierarchical leadership (based on structure and authority) and participatory leadership (involving the community in discussions and mutual agreements).

These findings align with those of Lumbaa et al. (2023), who demonstrated that the Rambu Solo' ritual not only holds spiritual significance as a rite of passage for the deceased but also reflects social stratification (tana'), which reinforces differences in status and honour within the community. This condition is closely related to the concept



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of power distance, where the level of acceptance of power and social status inequalities influences leadership styles. In the Toraja context, a hierarchical social structure tends to produce a leadership style that is more respectful of authority, top-down in nature, and positions the leader as a central figure who is respected based on existing social and cultural status.

This study also confirms that economic factors play a more dominant role in financing, whereas in your research, Rambu Solo' contributes to the formation of cultural values and social structures that influence leadership styles, meaning the two complement each other. Meanwhile, Pabisangan Tahirs et al. (2024) found that while economic aspects are more dominant in financing, Rambu Solo' plays a role in shaping cultural values and social structures that influence leadership styles, so that the two complement each other. This study indicates that only knowledge regarding costs and challenges has a significant influence on the financing of the Rambu Solo' ceremony, whereas general knowledge and ritual stages do not have a significant influence.

The findings of Picauly & Lainsamputty (2020) indicate that incorporating local wisdom into regional policies is closely linked to power distance and leadership styles, as it can influence patterns of power relations and strengthen leaders' legitimacy in accordance with community values and norms. In this context, local wisdom fosters more flexible and appropriate leadership, both by reinforcing paternalistic leadership in high-power-distance settings and by encouraging participation in more egalitarian structures, thereby serving as a bridge between power structures and leadership effectiveness.

Similarly, findings indicate that the level of power distance significantly influences leadership style. In high power distance cultures, leadership tends to be hierarchical and authoritarian, with decision-making centralized in the leader, resulting in a transactional style based on rules and control. Conversely, in low power distance cultures, relationships are more equal and participatory, supporting a transformational leadership style that is democratic, collaborative, and fosters innovation, although its effectiveness still depends on the organization's needs Nawaz et al. (2020).

Scaffidi Abbate et al. (2025) note that power distance influences not only organizational structure but also the social behaviors that shape leadership styles. Research indicates that power distance tends to reduce prosocial behavior, particularly among individuals with low altruism, while its influence weakens among those with high altruism. This suggests that cultures with high power distance place greater emphasis on hierarchy, compliance, and authority, thereby limiting participatory interactions.

In the context of Lembang Buntu Datu, Tana Toraja, this condition is significant because leadership styles are influenced not only by power structures but also by cultural values such as Rambu Solo' and cultural identity. Therefore, power distance is hypothesized to influence whether leadership styles tend to be authoritative or participatory.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of culture-based leadership theory by integrating Local Wisdom Theory, Cultural Identity Theory, and Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory into a single contextual analytical framework. The main findings indicate that the local wisdom of Rambu Solo' has a significant impact on leadership styles because the cultural values embedded in everyday practices (lived culture) shape participatory, collective, and socially solidarity-based leadership behaviours. This reinforces the view that culture is not merely a normative symbol but a value system that tangibly guides leadership practices within society (Rizal et al. (2022)).



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Furthermore, this study confirms that power distance plays a crucial role in shaping leadership legitimacy within hierarchical social structures, where acceptance of social status differences also influences the patterns of relationships between leaders and the community Nawaz et al. (2020). Another significant contribution of this study is that it presents new (state-of-the-art) findings indicating that cultural identity does not always have a direct impact on leadership styles in the context of local government. Cultural identity that has been internalized as part of everyday social practices tends to be taken for granted, and thus does not directly influence formal leadership decisions or patterns.

This finding expands the perspective that the influence of culture on leadership is contextual, selective, and highly dependent on the extent to which those cultural values are applied in social life. In practical terms, the findings of this study have important implications for local governments and leaders in designing culturally grounded and context-specific leadership models. Village heads are expected to internalize local wisdom values such as mutual cooperation, deliberation, social solidarity, and respect for customary norms as the foundation of leadership legitimacy.

Meanwhile, an understanding of power distance can be used as a strategy in managing the relationship between leaders and the community, thereby creating a balance between structural authority and social participation. Thus, the resulting leadership model is not only administratively effective but also possesses strong cultural legitimacy and is socially accepted by the community. Based on the research findings, several recommendations can be proposed to strengthen both theoretical and practical contributions.

For local governments, it is recommended to develop a leadership model rooted in local culture by integrating local wisdom values such as mutual cooperation, consensus-building, and social solidarity into governance practices. This integration is crucial so that policies and governance are not merely administrative but also aligned with the social values embedded in the community, thereby enhancing the legitimacy and effectiveness of leadership at the local level. For leadership practices at the village level, village heads are expected to maintain a balance between formal authority and local cultural values.

Leadership that is not only based on bureaucratic structures but also takes into account cultural values such as solidarity and respect for customs will be more readily accepted by the community. Thus, such leadership is not only effective in decision-making but also socially robust because it is supported by community trust and participation. Meanwhile, for future researchers, it is recommended to develop a research model by adding other variables such as community trust, leadership communication, and social legitimacy to enhance the model's explanatory power.

Additionally, employing an explanatory research design is recommended so that researchers can explain the causal relationships between variables more comprehensively. This design allows researchers not only to identify relationships among variables but also to understand the underlying mechanisms of the phenomena under study. Furthermore, testing the model in different cultural contexts is also important to enhance the generalizability of the results and enrich the study of culture-based leadership across various social settings.

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. First, in terms of variables, this study used only three independent variables—namely, the local wisdom of Rambu Solo', cultural identity, and power distance—and thus



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was unable to fully account for various other factors that may influence leadership style. Second, the study's geographical limitation being conducted solely in Lembang Buntu Datu means the findings are contextual and cannot yet be broadly generalized to other regions or cultures with different characteristics.

Additionally, the use of an explanatory research approach poses a limitation, as the resulting analysis focuses primarily on relationships between variables based on numerical data and respondents' perceptions. This approach has not been able to delve deeply into the meaning, values, and cultural practices embedded in society from a qualitative perspective. Finally, the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) value of 25.6% indicates that this research model still has relatively limited explanatory power, as the majority of the variation in leadership styles (74.4%) is influenced by other factors outside the model that have not yet been investigated. Therefore, the development of a more comprehensive research model is needed, taking into account additional variables and a more varied methodological approach.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research objectives, the results indicate that the local wisdom of Rambu Solo' and power distance have a positive and significant influence on the leadership style of village heads, whereas cultural identity does not have a significant influence. These findings suggest that operational cultural values and social practices play a more tangible role in shaping leadership compared to symbolic cultural identity. Based on the research questions, it can be concluded that leadership styles at the village level are not only influenced by cultural values in general but are more determined by the extent to which those values are implemented in the social life of the community.

Local wisdom and power structures accepted by the community have proven to be key factors in shaping the legitimacy and effectiveness of leadership. This study recommends that the Lembang government integrate local wisdom values—particularly operational ones such as mutual cooperation and deliberation—into leadership practices to strengthen social legitimacy. Furthermore, future research is advised to incorporate additional variables beyond this study's model, such as organizational factors, government policies, or individual leader characteristics, to enhance the model's ability to explain leadership styles. This study has several limitations, including a relatively low coefficient of determination, meaning the variables used are not yet fully capable of explaining variations in leadership styles. Furthermore, this study is limited to a single research location, so the results cannot yet be widely generalized. Another limitation lies in the use of a questionnaire instrument that relies on respondents' perceptions, which still allows for potential subjective bias in data collection.

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