Collaborative Leadership in Waste Management: A Case Study of Watampone City, Indonesia

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Abstract: The concept and practice of leadership is continuously evolving. In public administration literature, collaborative leadership is a serious discussion and collaborative leadership is encouraged to be applied at all levels of leadership including the leadership of the Regional Head. Waste management as a very serious public problem is a challenge to modern civilisation and Indonesia is one of the countries with the largest populations in the world, producing more than 19 million tons of waste in 2022, while Watampone is one of the cities in Indonesia that certainly contributes to the waste pile. As a developing city, preventive measures must be taken before following in the footsteps of big cities that are dealing with waste problems because there is no inherent prevention. Therefore, its leadership model can be a key factor. In these terms, it is important to study waste management policy using a collaborative leadership approach. This study aims to look at the characteristics of collaborative leadership in waste management. This research uses descriptive qualitative methods and data collection techniques in interviews with relevant stakeholder leaders as informants combined with documentation studies. The results show that the collaborative leadership model in waste management has a positive impact; this is because the involvement of multiple parties helps manage waste problems and share roles. The characteristics of collaborative leadership expressed by Wilson as a reference in this study show that waste management must involve many parties with the characteristics of awareness of functions, division of authority, cooperation for a common vision, and mutual trust by all operators involved. As a suggestion, waste management using a collaborative leadership approach should be conducted by clearly mapping the roles of all stakeholders involved. Another aspect that supports and strengthens waste management collaboration in Watampone City is the
culture of gotong royong (mutual aid) that has been rooted in the lives of the people of Watampone City.

**Keywords:** collaborative leadership, waste management, Indonesia, gotong royong

### 1. Introduction

All human activities generate solid waste, or what is commonly referred to as garbage (Hapsah, 2022). Human activities are increasing day by day, and the waste generated is also increasing (Halid et al., 2022). If the number of landfills continues to grow without proper waste management efforts, it will have an impact on environmental problems such as unpleasant odours, unpleasant scenery and even irregular waste disposal. Flooding can occur in waterways or rivers. The increasing population growth rate is one of the causes of high waste generation. The activities of people in a city will increase along with the rapid flow of urbanisation in the city (Amelinda & Kriswibowo, 2021).

As one of the districts in South Sulawesi, Watampone City is not immune to the issue of waste, particularly in the three sub-districts of the capital city, Watampone City. In an area of 126.35 square kilometres and a population of 145,394, the Environment Agency only has 267-member cleaning staff, which is clearly inadequate. The data shows that one janitor serves around 396 residents, with waste production of around 69 tons, while only around 55 tons are transported to landfills (BPS Kabupaten Bone, 2023).

This research locus is interesting as Watampone City is not one of the largest cities in Indonesia, but it is important as Watampone City is a developing city that has the potential to become a major city in the future, thus requiring preventive steps in waste management before the waste problem becomes a disaster as the city becomes more developed.

Another interesting aspect is that the tradition of collaboration has been an integral part of the life of the Watampone community long before the concept of collaboration became a part of global discourse. The Watampone community is closely related to the culture of gotong royong (mutual aid) where daily life is embellished with gotong royong (mutual aid) activities. This can be seen from the community’s habit of helping each other (Ridha, 2022).

The amount of waste managed will increase along with population growth, which in turn will increase the quantity of waste that requires sorting to facilitate the processing process, both based on the type of waste such as organic and inorganic waste and its benefits for recycling, composting, etc. (Surjandari et al., 2009).

Therefore, in overcoming the waste problem in Watampone City, the local government created the Bone Bersih Sampah (BBS) program, which is a collaborative waste management program that involves many stakeholders to address the waste problem.

Today’s leaders are working in a new landscape that requires them to collaborate. By collaborating, we mean the process of facilitating and operating in multi-organisational settings to solve problems that cannot be solved or easily solved by a single organisation. Collaborating means working together to achieve a common goal, often working across
boundaries and in multi-sector and multi-actor relationships. Collaboration is usually based on the value of reciprocity and can involve public needs (O’Leary et al., 2010).

Collaborative leaders have a different focus, encouraging and securing the process of cooperation. They rely on the group to work on the content and substance of the problem. Leaders are typically seen as individuals who articulate a vision, inspire people to action and focus on concrete problems and outcomes. Collaborative leadership requires a different type of leader who can maintain the process, facilitate action and patiently navigate high levels of frustration. It can be concluded that all instances of successful collaborative leadership involves strong leadership, and the belief that problems can be solved by working together with relevant stakeholders (Ryan, 2001).

Watampone City is a growing cultural city, and collaborative leadership is needed to effectively manage the area to achieve the set goals, including how to handle solid waste issues. Keeping abreast of leadership concepts includes collaborative leadership. As previous research has shown, leadership plays an important role in creating a sustainable environment with a collaborative approach (Calvert, 2018). Other research also shows that collaborative leadership encourages the emergence of ideas among various stakeholders for the achievement of desired goals (VanVactor, 2012). Studies on waste management using collaborative leadership are still quite limited; therefore, this research...
will try to test the effectiveness of this collaborative leadership model if used in waste management.

Collaborative leadership essentially requires a leader to work together rather than work individually. Leaders should function as catalysts or facilitators, building relationships rather than acting in an authoritarian manner (Wargadinata, 2016). Leadership does not refer to just one person, the leader, but rather the process of getting all members to interact in new ways that capitalise on their strengths (Mandell et al., 2017). Collaborative leadership is a team leadership model that positions leadership as a key factor in the effectiveness of a team that must function well (Isnawati et al., 2021).

2. Method

This research uses descriptive analysis with a qualitative approach. A series of in-depth interviews were conducted with stakeholder leaders involved in waste management through the Bone Bersih Sampah program. A total of six people were interviewed, determined by purposive sampling who are considered relevant in waste management collaboration, namely the government, community, business actors, academics and mass media.

Asking questions related to the characteristics of collaborative leadership in waste management in Watampone City with four main question criteria. Firstly, whether in collaborative leadership-based waste management the task is carried out because of the position held or there is an awareness of the joint function in the problem. Secondly, whether in the management of waste in Watampone City there is a division of tasks for relevant stakeholders. Third, whether collaborative leadership-based waste management has a shared vision. Fourth, whether the stakeholders involved trust each other. All of these questions were asked with the aim of understanding what the characteristics of collaborative leadership are in waste management in Watampone City.

Literature reading using Publish or Perish from google scholar with the keywords “collaborative leadership waste management” and issue mapping with VOSviewer, in addition to being confirmed by conducting observations and documentation studies on how waste management in Watampone City focuses on collaborative leadership.

The results of the interviews and literature review from Publish or Perish were then coded using Nvivo 12 software. The results of this data analysis are used by the researchers to explain the characteristics of collaborative leadership in waste management in Watampone City.

3. Results

Collaborative leadership can create an environment that serves as a platform for successful policy implementation (Edwards & Smit, 2008). Collaborative leadership involves the active participation and engagement of various stakeholders, including leaders, team members and other stakeholders. By involving all relevant parties, collaborative
Collaborative leadership enables the creation of an inclusive, transparent and supportive climate (Jacklin-Jarvis & Potter, 2020).

Collaborative leadership involves team collaboration and active participation of all members in addressing problems, making decisions collectively and running open processes. One of the characteristics of collaborative leadership is the presence of constructive discussion or constructive disagreement. That is, through open and vigorous discussion, including criticism and mild conflict over the leader’s ideas, within a framework of cooperative interdependence, creativity and innovation in problem solving can be fostered (Ardoin et al., 2015).

In this study, to export how the characteristics of Collaborative Leadership are embodied in waste management in Watampone City through the Bone Bersih Sampah program, Edwards and Smit’s (2008) categorisation of the characteristics of Collaborative Leadership are used, namely the importance of function rather than position, the need for division of tasks, cooperation for a shared vision and mutual trust. All of this was accomplished by using both primary and secondary data to describe the results of the study.

3.1. Collaborative Leadership is prioritising functions over positions

Collaborative leadership is a leadership approach in which leadership functions are carried out by several individuals or work groups collectively (Arnum, 2023). This is in contrast to the traditional approach, where one person is considered the sole leader responsible for decision-making and direction.

In collaborative leadership, responsibility and power are shared among the team or work group members (Anfara & Angelle, 2007). Each member contributes equally to decision-making, planning, execution of tasks and achievement of common goals. This means that each stakeholder involved in the “Bone Bersih Sampah” program prioritises their function as a responsible part of waste management without emphasising structural positions.

The result of the interview with Mr AF (Department of Environment) was “there is a fairly good awareness in all stakeholders that the waste problem is not only the task of the government”. The results of the interview show that the problem of waste is a shared task, not only of the government, but all parties have a shared duty in waste management. Meanwhile, in an interview, Mr AM (Secretary of Bone Bersih Sampah Program) said the following: “We have been actively campaigning for zero waste for a long time, including sending a letter to the Regent (Regent is the head of the regency-level government, under the President and Governor) to instruct local government officials to participate in the waste eradication campaign, we are aware that the government cannot do it alone.”

Thus, the role of waste management in Watampone City in the Bone Bersih Sampah program can be understood if the stakeholders involved collaboratively realise that waste management is a collective task, regardless of their position or institution. In line with Mr AK’s (Journalist) statement, “we often have the initiative to conduct creative campaigns through mass media on the importance of sustainable waste management”.
Collaborative Leadership is Prioritizing Functions over Positions – Coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>6.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign</td>
<td>7.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>17.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Tasks</td>
<td>24.11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Interview analysis with NVivo12.

Figure 2.
Coding collaborative leadership is prioritising functions over positions

The results of the interview analysis conducted using the NVivo application clearly show that the understanding of waste management is a shared task, followed by an awareness that waste management is a matter of function for all stakeholders.

Thus, the role of waste management in Watampone City in the Bone Bersih Sampah program can be understood if the stakeholders involved collaboratively realise that waste management is a collective task, regardless of the position or institution they are in. In case of waste management, it is crucial to develop multi-stakeholder cooperation involving NGOs and the private sector at both local and regional levels (Asteria & Heruman, 2016). Integration of waste management between the community, private sector and government brings various benefits (Ernawati et al., 2012). Waste management is not only the responsibility of the government, but one that must be borne jointly by waste generators, whether individuals, households, or corporations (Budi Setianingrum, 2018).

Even though the Watampone community is familiar with the collaboration approach with its gotong royong tradition, the modern governance aspect, particularly the waste management aspect, must still be socialised.

3.2. Collaborative Leadership is the sharing of authority

Collaborative leadership plays a critical role in facilitating effective multi-sector collaboration. Power sharing is one of the key mechanisms that enables leaders in formal partnerships to build a broad leadership foundation (Alexander et al., 2001). One of the
characteristics of Collaborative Leadership is power sharing. In terms of the waste management in Watampone City, it is important to ensure that management is not centralised to only one stakeholder. Instead, power sharing should be implemented to strengthen stakeholder participation.

With shared authority, collaborative leaders share responsibilities and utilise the diverse expertise and perspectives of partnership members (Saleh et al., 2001). This allows them to reach better agreements, it encourages active participation, and builds stronger trust and engagement among all parties involved. Bone Bersih Sampah, as a waste management program in Watampone City, is a collaborative program. In an interview, Mr AF (Department of Environment) stated that: “The waste management program that we implement involves many parties. We delegate waste management tasks to many parties.”

Based on the interview with Mr AF, the government is well aware of the role of cross-sectoral cooperation and the involvement of related parties in addressing the waste problem. Therefore, solving the waste problem requires collaboration from all stakeholders, including the government, civil society organisations and the private sector. With effective and sustainable collaboration, waste management programs can be well implemented by sharing the authority.

Other statements from informants we interviewed further reinforced this. The following is an excerpt from an interview with Mr ASA (Head of Biru Village): “Through the Bone Bersih Sampah program, about 400 stakeholders are involved. Through the decree, stakeholders are authorized to develop various models of waste management policies in
Watampone City.” This is in line with the submission of Mr ASM (Academician) according to which: “On several occasions the campus was asked to conduct studies on how waste is managed properly including involving many academics as a board on the waste management program.”

The results of the analysis of interview data using the NVivo application 12 show that in the waste management program in Watampone City, the division of authority is dominant in the conversation, and this illustrates that the division of authority is quite good in the waste management program, thus fulfilling the criteria of collaborative leadership characteristics with the importance of sharing authority as a condition for the realisation of collaborative leadership.

Sharing power in collaboration requires careful consideration of the division of power and clear guidelines to overcome possible challenges. Effective communication is an important aspect in this context (Ran & Qi, 2018).

3.3. Collaborative Leadership is working for a shared vision

Collaborative leadership is a prerequisite for creating a collaborative culture. The main role played by collaborative leaders is to create an environment of shared vision (Edwards & Smit, 2008). Shared vision and common goals underpin successful collaboration (Williamson et al., 2010). The goal of collaborative leadership is to create a shared vision and collective strategy for issues that go beyond the scope of a particular party (Samriangjit et al., 2016).

The next aspect that characterises Collaborative Leadership is the existence of cooperation to achieve a shared vision, in the context of waste management in Watampone City through the Bone Bersih Sampah Program, based on the mapping of Collaborative Leadership characteristics by Edwards & Smit (2008). Through an interview with Mr AM (Secretary of Bone Bersih Sampah Program), it was stated: “We dialogued with the government to build a shared vision for waste management. At this stage, the results were quite good as the government agreed and was in line with what we proposed. Thus, the Bone Bersih Sampah Team was formed. However, in the next phase, collaboration was not fully achieved, and some stakeholders still worked individually, even though we had the same understanding.”

Based on the results of these interviews, the common vision regarding waste management through the Bone Bersih Sampah Program has only reached the idea and conceptualisation stage, but has not yet reached the action stage. Researchers’ observations at the Tanete Riattang Subdistrict Office and Biru Village Office confirmed the existence of several certificates and trophies related to waste management that are not integrated with the Bone Bersih Sampah Program. Furthermore, to find out more about the aspect of a common vision in waste management, the interview with Mr ESS (Secretary of Tanete Riattang Sub-district) showed that “everyone has the same vision and goals with the Bone Bersih Sampah Program. All stakeholders want a clean environment, with various targets to be achieved.”
Collaborative Leadership in Waste Management

The results of analysing interview data using NVivo12 show that in waste management in Watampone City with a collaborative leadership approach a shared vision or common vision is quite dominant, while the aspect of cooperation in action is still sub-optimal, so it can be said that at this stage, collaborative leadership in waste management remains limited to a common vision that has not been maximally manifested in action in the form of cooperation.

The interesting thing found is the emergence of the phrase “policy intervention” which can be interpreted in a way that in the aspect of waste management the shared vision can be realised in the form of cooperation and actions must be strengthened by policy intervention from the government. This is what will make stakeholders maximally involved in waste management in Watampone City, even though conceptually collaborative leadership prioritises awareness but in the findings of this study a policy intervention is encouraged that is progressive in order to have seriousness in carrying out the task of managing waste collaboratively and sustainably.

Therefore, based on the research findings, it can be said that the aspects of collaborative leadership characteristics in waste management in Watampone City have not been fully met regarding shared vision and cooperation. Ultimately, shared decision-making in collaborative relationships will result in coherence, which in turn will encourage action (Chrislip, 2002).
3.4. Collaborative Leadership is about trust

Collaborative leadership is a leadership approach in which a leader focuses on sharing power, building trust and creating knowledge to achieve a common goal (Jameson, 2007). Collaborative leadership focuses on building trust among team members or within the organisation. By building trust, leaders create an environment where people feel safe to share ideas, take risks and collaborate with others. The most important relationships of trust and collaboration are found within an organisation (Toseef et al., 2022).

Concerning waste management in Watampone City through the Bone Bersih Sampah program, the characteristics of collaborative leadership expressed by Edwards & Smit (2008) include mutual trust between stakeholders. Therefore, the findings related to this factor through an interview with Mr AF are as follows: “Of course we trust each other. It is impossible for the bupati to involve relevant stakeholders if there is no trust. This includes receiving many proposals from the community that became the basic idea for this program.

They are all involved because we believe that they can contribute, and they are given considerable authority because of that trust.” The results of the interview can be understood to show that the government has trust in the stakeholders involved in waste management in Watampone City. This can be seen from the government’s response in listening to the suggestions of community groups that led to the birth of the Bone Bersih Sampah program as a collaborative program.

Transparency has been considered an important attribute of leadership (Milton, 2009). Thus, leaders and stakeholders can work together to achieve zero waste in Watampone City given the findings that all stakeholders have trust in each other. Trust and communication are the two main pillars of collaborative leadership. Trust is key, and to engender trust in others, it must start with trusting them (Herrera-Pastor et al., 2020).

The results of an interview with Mr AM (Secretary of Bone Bersih Sampah program) show that: “The waste issue is not something that causes much debate. Everyone agrees that the waste problem must be handled and managed properly. Therefore, I believe that trust is not the main thing. That is, we all trust each other because we have the same vision.” Based on the results of these interviews, it can be concluded that the trust factor as a characteristic in Collaborative Leadership in the Bone Bersih Sampah program is a manifest character. Mr ASM (Academician) explained: “Actually, the level of trust between the components involved in waste management up to the point that waste is a social problem is still very good; in this economic aspect, this cannot be ascertained.” Of course there are still many things that must be considered to make the program successful, but as an initial basis for the formation of trust between stakeholders it can be a positive foothold in continuing tasks that have not yet been carried out.
Collaborative Leadership is about Trust – Coding

![Collaborative Leadership is about Trust – Coding](source: Interview analysis with NVivo12)

The results of the analysis of interview data using the NVivo application 12 show that mutual trust between stakeholders in the program is very good. Building trust is one of the cornerstones of collaborative leadership. Strong trust among partners enables effective and productive collaboration (Archer & Cameron, 2009). Collaborative leadership is based on the belief that together we can be smarter, more creative and more competent than we are on our own, hence one of its focuses is on building trust (Wilson, 2013).

4. Discussion

Using the description of Edwards and Smit (2008) as a theoretical reference, in the description there are four traits that characterise collaborative leadership itself: first, collaborative leadership maximises function not just position, which means that in waste management, operators prioritise the functions performed rather than just the position they have. Second, collaborative leadership distributes authority, meaning that each stakeholder has the authority in waste management. Third, in collaborative leadership, individuals work together for the same vision, meaning that all stakeholders have the same vision in waste management. Fourth, collaborative leadership brings trust, meaning that all relevant stakeholders trust each other.
Collaborative leadership features characteristics with the indicator “functions performed rather than positions held by a person” (Marshall, 1995). The fact that collaborative leadership is a function that is carried out, not the position of the actor, is shown in the way operators involved in the waste management program have worked on and are involved in various aspects of waste management, such as counselling, encouraging integrated policies and developing a sustainable waste management system. Stakeholders do this because of the awareness that waste problems are not only the liabilities of the government but are rather a shared responsibility.

Many stakeholders can assume a role in waste management in Watampone City as it is said that in collaborative leadership, everyone has the potential to be a leader and a follower. Because different levels of expertise are required, different people can emerge as leaders at different times (Lawrence, 2017).

Collaborative leadership goes beyond traditional boundaries between parties and develops collaborative processes. Multiple parties interact and take the initiative to co-lead and create a dynamic learning environment (Burns & Mooney, 2018). The characteristics of collaborative leadership indicate that collaborative leadership is manifested in the presence of participation and power sharing, and collaborative leadership is contrary to individualist culture (Lawrence, 2017).

Based on the findings of the researchers in this aspect, participation was shown by relevant stakeholders by proposing a waste management program that was well-received by policy makers, and the Bone Bersih Sampah program became a collaborative program that gave considerable authority to other stakeholders based on the text of the objectives of the program, and there was a fairly good distribution of authority. Collaborative Leadership is a participatory and learning process that involves many people in different positions (Kezar, 2005).

![Hierarchical diagram of interview results on collaborative leadership in waste management](image)

*Figure 6. Hierarchical diagram of interview results on collaborative leadership in waste management*

*Source: Interview analysis with NVivo12.*
The characteristics of collaborative leadership indicate that collaborative leadership is cooperation for a shared vision. In this regard, the researchers found that all stakeholders at the stage of ideas and thoughts can be said to have the same vision: if waste is not handled properly, it can become an environmental and health disaster, so it needs serious and sustainable handling. However, this shared vision must be manifested in the form of action, and this has not gone well, and cross-stakeholder collaboration has not gone well in the Bone Bersih Sampah program.

Collaborative leadership is not just about working together and sharing resources. It is also about actively resisting dominant power structures and working to create a new culture that values collective learning and decision-making (Lawrence, 2017).

The characteristics of collaborative leadership indicate that collaborative leadership is a trusting relationship. In this regard, the researchers found that the trust between stakeholders in the Bone Bersih Sampah program is quite good, collaborative leadership offers additional insights, in this case focusing not so much on the differences between leaders, but on highlighting commonalities and common goals, well packaged by the idea of interdependence (Reynolds et al., 2017).

It is a firm argument that the waste issue is not a problem that has the potential to present conflict and suspicion between operators, and waste management is more about social and environmental aspects. This can be seen in the distribution of a great deal of authority to other stakeholders because there is trust, although the most important thing is the matter of implementation in the field, which still needs improvement.

In general, the characteristics of collaborative leadership in waste management in Watampone City, referring to the concepts of Edwards and Smit (2008), can be said to have not been maximised and integrated in the Bone Bersih Sampah program in terms of collaborative leadership as a means of two parties working across boundaries to achieve common goals. In their study, they described three stages of collaborative group formation, with the third stage consisting of openness, which emerges when leaders truly accept their interdependence and are open with each other about their hopes and fears for being together (Archer & Cameron, 2009).

Collaborative leadership is not easy to actualise in practice (Iachini et al., 2019). Some characteristics, such as a shared vision that manifests in action, have not been implemented, although characteristics such as participation and division of authority have been maximised, and there is good level of trust among relevant stakeholders.

The characteristics of collaborative leadership emerge fully, as collaborative leadership is based on the potential for conflict to exist, but there is something greater at stake for leaders to ensure that any conflict is resolved. Trust and working together towards a vision and being ready to share power are aspects that must also be reinforced (Reynolds et al., 2017).

The concepts of collaborative leadership and collaborative culture creation are presented as leadership approaches that are most likely to support and facilitate effective policy implementation. Collaborative leadership creates a climate that serves as a platform for successful policy implementation.
5. Conclusion and recommendation

The characteristics of collaborative leadership in waste management in Watampone City, through the Bone Bersih Sampah program, can be seen from the results of this study. Of the four characteristics of collaborative leadership, namely, prioritising functions over positions, distribution of authority, cooperation for a shared vision and mutual trust between stakeholders, the existence of trust between stakeholders is at a rather acceptable level due to the view that waste is not a sensitive issue that can trigger conflict due to the lack of trust between related stakeholders. The aspect of cooperation for a shared vision can be said to be at a very minimal level, considering that an important qualification in this aspect is in the form of action. Finally, the aspect of a shared vision in ideas in general functions rather well, and only the aspect of cooperative action to achieve the shared vision is still not running optimally, while the other two factors are quite good.

As a suggestion, the researcher encourages the establishment of a waste management pilot project, as a pilot project of the Bone Bersih Sampah program, with the participation of all stakeholders with their respective roles, to realise zero waste where no waste reaches the landfill based on the planned system, as a manifestation of the characteristics of collaborative leadership.

References


