

Islamic Political Ethics in Student Organizations: Actualization of Al-Mawardi's Leadership Values in the Muhammadiyah Student Association of Central Kalimantan

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Article Info

Article History

Submitted 15-04-2026

Revised 19-05-2026

Accepted 19-06-2026

Published 30-07-2026

Keywords:

Al-Mawardi,
Islamic Political Ethics,
Ethical Leadership,
Student Organizations,
Organizational
Governance

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Abstract

Contemporary Islamic student organizations increasingly face challenges of political pragmatism, ethical decline and internal organizational conflict, highlighting the need for value-based leadership. Although Islamic political ethics have been widely discussed from normative and conceptual perspectives, empirical evidence on the implementation of Al-Mawardi's leadership values within Islamic student organizations remains limited. This study aims to analyze the actualization of Al-Mawardi's political ethics in the Regional Executive Board of the Muhammadiyah Student Association (DPD IMM) of Central Kalimantan. A qualitative case study was conducted using participant observation, semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and thematic content analysis. The findings demonstrate that the principles of *amanah* (trustworthiness), *'ada* (justice), *shūrā* (consultation), and *mas'ūliyyah* (accountability) are embedded in OG, PD, cadre development, and CR. Rather than functioning solely as normative ideals, these values shape ELP practices that strengthen organizational integrity, collective responsibility and participatory governance. This study confirms the relevance of Al-Mawardi's political thought in addressing contemporary leadership challenges within Islamic student organizations. Its principal contribution lies in providing empirical evidence that bridges classical Islamic political ethics with contemporary organizational leadership, thereby extending the application of Al-Mawardi's framework into organizational practice in the Indonesian context beyond normative discourse.

Organisasi mahasiswa Islam kontemporer semakin menghadapi tantangan berupa pragmatisme politik, penurunan etika, dan konflik internal, sehingga kepemimpinan yang berlandaskan nilai-nilai Islam menjadi semakin penting. Meskipun etika politik Islam telah banyak dikaji secara normatif dan konseptual, bukti empiris mengenai implementasi nilai-nilai kepemimpinan Al-Mawardi dalam organisasi mahasiswa Islam masih terbatas. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis aktualisasi etika politik Al-Mawardi pada Dewan Pimpinan Daerah Ikatan Mahasiswa Muhammadiyah Kalimantan Tengah. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara semi-terstruktur, analisis dokumen, dan analisis isi tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa prinsip amanah, keadilan ('adl), musyawarah (shūrā), dan tanggung jawab (mas'ūliyyah) terimplementasi dalam tata kelola organisasi, pengambilan keputusan secara partisipatif, kaderisasi, dan penyelesaian konflik. Nilai-nilai tersebut

tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai norma ideal, tetapi juga menjadi landasan praktik kepemimpinan etis yang memperkuat integritas organisasi, tanggung jawab kolektif, dan tata kelola yang partisipatif. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa pemikiran politik Al-Mawardi tetap relevan dalam menjawab tantangan kepemimpinan organisasi mahasiswa Islam kontemporer. Kontribusi utama penelitian ini terletak pada penyediaan bukti empiris yang menjembatani etika politik Islam klasik dengan praktik kepemimpinan organisasi kontemporer, sehingga memperluas penerapan pemikiran Al-Mawardi dari ranah normatif ke praktik organisasi dalam konteks Indonesia.

A. INTRODUCTION

Islamic political ethics provide a normative foundation linking power, morality, and public welfare. In Islam, political leadership is regarded as an amanah (trust) that must be exercised through justice, responsibility, and commitment to the common good (maslahah), reflecting the inseparable relationship between ethics and religion (Al-Attas, 1993). However, contemporary political practice is increasingly characterized by pragmatism and transactional interests, creating an urgent need to reconnect political authority with ethical and religious principles rather than merely institutional power. These challenges are equally relevant to Islamic student organizations, which are expected to cultivate ethical Muslim leadership (Setyawan et al., 2024; Hasan et al., 2024).

Ethical leadership is increasingly recognized as a critical determinant of organizational trust, accountability and institutional legitimacy. Ethical leaders promote integrity, transparency, and responsible decision-making, whereas weak moral leadership contributes to organizational conflict, declining member commitment and ineffective governance (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Shahab et al., 2021; Dodamgoda et al., 2024). In particular, Shahab et al. (2021) argue that spirituality, collective welfare, altruism, and moral responsibility characterize ethical leadership in Asian societies, while Dodamgoda et al. (2024) demonstrate that Eastern perspectives place greater emphasis on accountability, long-term sustainability, and ethical responsibility than conventional Western leadership models. These findings indicate that ethics function not only as personal virtues but also as strategic foundations for sustainable OL. Such an understanding is consistent with the Islamic intellectual tradition, which regards ethics as an integral component of social and political life rather than merely individual morality and political thought (Nasr, 2004; Saeed, 2006).

Within the classical tradition of Islamic political thought, the relationship between ethics and political authority received considerable attention from Muslim scholars, particularly Al-Mawardi. In *Al-Aḥkām al-Sultāniyyah*, Al-Mawardi argues that political legitimacy depends not only on administrative competence but also on the moral integrity of the leader in fulfilling amanah, establishing justice, practicing shūrā, and safeguarding public welfare. Therefore, an ideal leader should possess integrity, intellectual competence, communication skills, and commitment to society's interests (Sakhi et al., 2024). Accordingly, leadership in Islam is understood as both a structural authority and a moral responsibility before society and God.

Recent empirical evidence also reveals contrasting realities within student organizations. Dewanti et al. (2025) found that active participation in student organizations significantly improves leadership competence, integrity, communication, responsibility, and problem-solving skills.

Studies on Islamic political ethics have predominantly examined political leadership from normative and governance perspectives. Hasan et al. (2024) emphasized that Islamic political ethics provide the moral foundation of leadership through integrity, justice, competence, and wisdom. Likewise, Setyawan et al. (2024) argued that integrating Islamic ethical values into contemporary political systems is essential for strengthening integrity and promoting good governance. From the perspective of classical Islamic political thought, Sakhi et al. (2024) concluded that Al-Mawardi's principles of justice, responsibility, and administrative efficiency remain relevant for contemporary governance. Collectively, these studies establish Islamic political ethics as an important normative framework for ethical leadership. However, they remain largely conceptual and have rarely been tested in organizational settings.

Nevertheless, previous studies have primarily focused on state governance, public administration, and conceptual analyses using normative or library research approaches. Limited attention has been devoted to examining how Al-Mawardi's leadership values are implemented within Islamic student organizations, particularly cadre-based organizations responsible for developing future Muslim leaders. Empirical evidence regarding the practical implementation of Islamic political ethics at the organizational level remains limited.

This study addresses this gap by investigating the implementation of Al-Mawardi's leadership values within the Regional Executive Board (DPD) of the Muhammadiyah Student Association (IMM) of Central Kalimantan. As a cadre-based

Islamic student organization, DPD IMM Central Kalimantan provides an appropriate setting for examining how Islamic political ethics are translated into leadership practices, organizational governance, decision-making, conflict resolution and cadre development.

This study's novelty lies in providing empirical evidence on the actualization of Al-Mawardi's political ethics within a contemporary Islamic student organization, thereby bridging classical Islamic political thought with modern organizational leadership practices.

This study focuses on five ethical dimensions derived from Al-Mawardi's political thought, namely, amanah (trustworthiness), justice ('adl), shūrā (deliberation), accountability (mas'ūliyyah), and social responsibility, as reflected in the DPD IMM Central Kalimantan's organizational practices.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the actualization of Al-Mawardi's leadership values within DPD IMM Central Kalimantan by examining the implementation of amanah, justice, shūrā, accountability and social responsibility in organizational governance, decision-making, conflict resolution and cadre development. The findings of this study are expected to enrich the literature on Islamic political ethics while providing practical guidance for strengthening ethical leadership within Islamic student organizations.

B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative case study design with a descriptive-analytical approach to examine the actualization of Al-Mawardi's leadership values within the Muhammadiyah Student Association (IMM) Regional Executive Board (DPD) of Central Kalimantan. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate for exploring the interpretation and practice of Islamic political ethics in organizational governance, leadership, decision-making, conflict resolution and cadre development (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Aspers & Corte, 2019).

The DPD IMM Central Kalimantan was selected because of its strategic role as a cadre-based Islamic student organization. Participants included the Chairperson, Secretary, Executive Board members, and selected cadres actively involved in leadership and organizational decision-making. Purposive sampling was used to select informants based on their organizational roles and relevance to the research objectives (Campbell et al., 2020).

The researcher served as the primary research instrument, supported by semi-structured interview guides, observation sheets, and documentation checklists based on Al-Mawardi's leadership values: amanah, justice, shūrā, accountability, and social responsibility.

Data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis, including organizational statutes, meeting minutes, activity reports, and other organizational records (Kallio et al., 2016). Qualitative content analysis through coding, categorization, interpretation, and conclusion drawing was used to identify the implementation of Al-Mawardi's political ethics in organizational practices (Krippendorff, 2018).

The trustworthiness of the findings was ensured through source and method triangulation and member checking. Information obtained from leaders, administrators, and cadres was compared across interviews, observations, and documents, and the accuracy of the researchers' interpretations was verified by member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

1. Islamic Political Ethics as the Foundation of Leadership in Central Kalimantan DPD IMM

The findings indicate that Islamic political ethics constitute the primary foundation of leadership within the DPD IMM Central Kalimantan. The values of alanaḥ (trustworthiness), justice, responsibility, and shūrā (deliberation) are reflected in organizational governance, leadership practices, decision-making processes, and cadre development. These ethical principles function not only as organizational ideals but also as practical guidelines that shape leadership behavior and organizational culture.

Field observations further reveal that leaders and members' relationships are characterized by open communication, collective participation, and mutual respect. Cadres are encouraged to express ideas, criticism, and suggestions through organizational forums without excessive structural domination. This participatory atmosphere strengthens organizational cohesion and reinforces collective responsibility.

In addition, cadre development extends beyond intellectual capacity building to include Islamic leadership character formation. Programs such as Darul Arqam, ideological discussions, Islamic studies and community service activities foster moral integrity, organizational discipline and social responsibility among members.

2. Amanah Implementation in Organizational Governance

The findings show that *amanah* serves as the central ethical principle in the governance of DPD IMM Central Kalimantan. Leadership is primarily understood as a moral responsibility rather than a position of authority, encouraging transparency, accountability, and commitment in organizational management.

Organizational practices demonstrate that each division is required to prepare work programs, implement planned activities, and report their achievements through regular evaluation meetings. These procedures promote transparency and collective accountability while strengthening the organization's integrity.

Furthermore, organizational positions are viewed as opportunities for service and community empowerment rather than personal status. This orientation is reflected in members' active involvement in the organization's social, educational, humanitarian and religious programs.

3. Shūrā as a Mechanism of Organizational Decision-Making

The findings demonstrate that *shūrā* functions as the primary mechanism for organizational decision-making within the DPD IMM Central Kalimantan. Strategic policies and organizational programs are created through deliberative meetings involving leaders and organizational members.

Observations indicate that organizational discussions provide participants with opportunities to express differing opinions, offer constructive criticism and propose alternative solutions. Decision-making is generally achieved through consensus while maintaining organizational ethics and mutual respect. The findings also reveal that deliberative forums function as leadership learning spaces where cadres develop communication skills, critical thinking, and the ability to collectively resolve organizational issues.

4. Justice Actualization in Organizational Leadership

The findings reveal that the principle of justice is reflected in organizational relationships, leadership practices, and responsibility distribution. Members are provided with relatively equal opportunities to participate in organizational activities

regardless of their regional background, seniority, or personal relationships with organizational leaders.

Responsibilities are generally assigned according to members' competencies, organizational experience, and capacity to perform assigned tasks. This practice encourages broader participation while maintaining organizational effectiveness. Justice is also evident in organizational communication, where members have equal opportunities to express aspirations, provide feedback and participate in both formal and informal organizational forums.

5. The Relevance of Islamic Political Ethics to Contemporary Student Organizations

The findings indicate that Islamic political ethics remain highly relevant to the governance of contemporary Islamic student organizations. The implementation of ethical values contributes to organizational cohesion, strengthens members' commitment and supports PLP.

Ethical principles encourage democratic organizational processes, strengthen collective responsibility and reduce the potential for domination by particular individuals or groups. These values also reinforce members' awareness that leadership is inseparable from moral responsibility and service to the organization and society.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Islamic political ethics are not merely normative concepts but are reflected in organizational governance, leadership behavior, decision-making processes, and cadre development within the DPD IMM Central Kalimantan.

Table 1. Key Findings of Implementation of Islamic Political Ethics in DPD IMM Central Kalimantan

No	Main Finding Category	Key empirical findings
1	Islamic Political Ethics as a Foundation for Leadership	Islamic political ethics (<i>amanah, justice, responsibility, shūrā</i>) function as core principles in organizational leadership, decision-making, cadre development and communication patterns within the DPD IMM Central Kalimantan.
2	Implementation of <i>the Amanah</i> in Governance	Organizational governance is characterized by transparency, collective accountability, program reporting and evaluation mechanisms. Leadership is understood as moral responsibility rather than personal authority.

3	<i>Shūrā</i> as Decision-Making Mechanism	All strategic decisions are made through collective deliberation involving leaders and cadres. Conflicts are resolved through dialogue, consensus-building, and Islamic principles of reconciliation (<i>islāh</i>).
4	Implementation of Justice (' <i>Adl</i> ')	Equal opportunities are provided to cadres regardless of background or hierarchy; task distribution is based on competence, promoting inclusivity and fairness in organizational participation.
5	Ethical Leadership Model in an Organization	Leadership reflects participatory and servant-leadership values; authority is decentralized, communication is open and organizational culture is based on moral and spiritual values.
6	The Relevance of Al-Mawardi's Political Ethics	Classical Islamic political ethics remain relevant in addressing modern leadership crises, such as pragmatism, conflict, and moral decline, in student organizations, strengthening organizational integrity and solidarity.

Discussion

1. Islamic Political Ethics as the Moral Basis of Organizational Leadership

The findings indicate that Islamic political ethics constitute the primary foundation of leadership in DPD IMM Central Kalimantan. Values such as amanah, justice, responsibility, and brotherhood are reflected in organizational communication, cadre development and decision-making, demonstrating that leadership remains rooted in moral and spiritual values despite contemporary organizational pragmatism (Hasan et al., 2024; Setyawan et al., 2024).

From an Islamic perspective, leadership is an *alanah* that must be exercised with justice and responsibility, as affirmed in the Qur'an:

"Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due, and when you judge between people, judge with justice." (Al-Nisā': 58)

This verse indicates that leadership legitimacy is grounded in moral integrity rather than merely formal authority (Al-Tabari; Al-Qurtubi). Likewise, Al-Mawardi (2006), supported by Sakhi et al. (2024), argues that *imamah* aims to preserve religion and administer public affairs through justice and moral responsibility.

The organizational culture of DPD IMM Central Kalimantan promotes participatory communication, collective relationships, and ethical leadership rather than authority-based domination, consistent with servant leadership and ethical

leadership theories (Greenleaf, 1977; Brown & Treviño, 2006). These findings are supported by recent studies showing that ethical leadership strengthens organizational governance, accountability and academic citizenship through honesty, justice and moral responsibility (Asmawi, 2025; Rosyid et al., 2025; Ahmad Ahmad et al., 2024). Similarly, Shahab et al. (2021) emphasized that ethical leadership in Asian contexts integrates spirituality, collective welfare, and moral responsibility, closely reflecting Al-Mawardi's leadership conception.

This interpretation also aligns with the Islamic tradition in which the Prophetic teachings function as moral guidance for social and public life, shaping the values of justice, responsibility, and service that remain relevant to contemporary leadership (Rafli et al., 2025). Ibn Khaldun warned that political authority detached from moral values leads to social decline, while Hallaq (2013) argued that the separation of ethics from politics has contributed to contemporary leadership crises. Consistent with these classical perspectives, recent international studies have concluded that ELF enhances organizational trust, commitment, social responsibility and inclusive governance within Islamic institutions (Ezzani et al., 2023).

2. actualization of the Concept of Shūrā in Student Organization Dynamics

The findings show that shūrā (deliberation) serves as the primary decision-making mechanism within the DPD IMM Central Kalimantan. Strategic organizational decisions are collectively discussed through meetings involving leaders and cadres, reflecting a participatory organizational culture grounded in Islamic values (Esposito & Voll, 2001).

The principle of shūrā is firmly rooted in the Qur'an:

"Consult them in the matter." (Qur'an, Āli 'Imrān: 159)

"And their affairs are conducted through consultation among them." (Qur'an, Al-Shūrā: 38)

According to Ibn Kathir, shūrā minimizes individual error in governance, while Al-Mawardi regards it as an essential mechanism for preventing authoritarian leadership. Likewise, Ibn Taymiyyah emphasized that consultation is indispensable for achieving justice and preventing tyranny. In line with these principles, organizational conflicts within DPD IMM Central Kalimantan are resolved through dialogue and reconciliation (islāḥ), reflecting Al-Ghazali's ethical perspective and Habermas' (1996) theory of deliberative democracy, which views rational communication as the basis of legitimate decision-making.

Recent studies have shown that ethical communication grounded in Islamic values strengthens organizational trust, collective responsibility and harmonious organizational relationships, thereby creating a conducive environment for participatory decision-making (Saleh, 2024; Abu Bakar & Connaughton, 2022). Participative decision-making enhances organizational effectiveness, ethical leadership, and institutional performance (Nazaruddin, I., Sofyani, H., & Saleh, Z., 2021). Furthermore, studies on Islamic educational leadership conclude that deliberative governance, shared responsibility, and social justice promote inclusive participation and organizational legitimacy, reinforcing the continuing relevance of *shūrā* as an ethical governance mechanism in contemporary Islamic organizations (Brooks & Ezzani, 2022; Ezzani et al., 2023).

3. Amanah and Accountability as the Pillars of Islamic Organizational Governance

The findings indicate that *amanah* (trustworthiness) and accountability constitute the core principles of OG in DPD IMM Central Kalimantan. Transparent program planning, reporting, and evaluation mechanisms are used to implement organizational activities, reflecting accountability in practice (Kamali, 2013).

From an Islamic perspective, *amanah* extends beyond personal honesty to include institutional responsibility and public accountability. The Qur'an commands to fulfill trusts and uphold justice (Al-Nisā': 58), while Al-Mawardi (2006) and Ibn Taymiyyah emphasize that leadership is a moral trust that is accountable to society and God. This perspective is reflected in IMM's collective-collegial leadership model, where authority is exercised through transparency, responsibility, and service rather than personal power (An-Na'im, 2008).

These findings are supported by recent studies showing that ELP strengthens organizational accountability, transparency, and institutional trust. Ethical leadership has been found to improve organizational performance through psychological empowerment and Islamic work ethics (Mubarak et al., 2022), while honesty, responsibility, and accountability remain fundamental elements of governance in Islamic higher education (Asmawi, 2025). Likewise, ethical communication reinforces organizational trust and collective responsibility (Abu Bakar & Connaughton, 2022), and ethical leadership in Eastern contexts is characterized by integrity, fairness, accountability and long-term organizational sustainability (Dodamgoda et al., 2024).

Similarly, Islamic political ethics regard accountability and transparency as essential manifestations of amanah in organizational governance, strengthening public trust and institutional integrity (Al Fai'q et al., 2024). These findings reinforce that amanah functions not only as an individual moral value but also as a governance principle that strengthens ethical leadership, organizational sustainability and organizational commitment based on Islamic work ethics (Widyastuti & Budiharto, 2023; Dodamgoda et al., 2024).

4. Relevance of Al-Mawardi's Political Ethics to the Crisis of Contemporary Leadership

The findings demonstrate that Al-Mawardi's political ethics remain highly relevant for addressing contemporary leadership challenges within Islamic student organizations, particularly political pragmatism, declining moral commitment and weakened organizational solidarity (Hallaq, 2013). Values such as amanah, justice, and shūrā strengthen organizational cohesion through ethical leadership, participatory governance, and collective responsibility, consistent with ethical leadership theory (Brown & Treviño, 2006).

Al-Mawardi (2006) and Ibn Khaldun regarded leadership as a moral responsibility aimed at preserving justice and public welfare from the perspective of classical Islamic political thought. These principles remain relevant for contemporary student organizations seeking to balance organizational authority with ethical responsibility.

Recent international studies further reinforce these findings. Islamic leadership grounded in justice, accountability, and spiritual values promote inclusive and sustainable OG (Arar et al., 2022; Ezzani et al., 2023). Similarly, ethical leadership in Asian contexts emphasizes spirituality, collective welfare, and moral responsibility (Shahab et al., 2021). Leadership based on amanah, akhlāq, and maṣlaḥah also strengthens social cohesion and public trust (Thoha et al., 2025), whereas ethical leadership encourages prosocial behavior and organizational citizenship among university students (Rosyid et al., 2025). Collectively, these findings demonstrate that Al-Mawardi's political ethics continue to provide a relevant framework for strengthening ethical leadership in contemporary Islamic student organizations.

Table 2. Mapping of Al-Mawardi's Concepts and Empirical Findings in Central Kalimantan DPD IMM

No	Al-Mawardi's Ethical Principle	Empirical Findings	Implementation in the DPD IMM	Leadership Implication
1	Amanah	Leadership viewed as moral trust	Transparent reporting and evaluation of the program	Strengthens ethical leadership
2	'Adl	Equal participation	Task allocation based on competence	Promotes organizational fairness
3	Shūrā	Collective decision-making	Deliberative meetings and conflict resolution	Supports participatory governance
4	Mas'ūliyyah	Accountability for organizational programs	Reporting and evaluation	Reinforcing Islamic governance
5	Islāḥ & Ukhuwwah	Conflict resolution through dialog	Mediation and the collective culture	Enhances organizational cohesion

D. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Al-Mawardi's Islamic political ethics remain highly relevant and are practically actualized within the leadership practices of the DPD IMM Central Kalimantan. The findings demonstrate that the values of amanah, justice ('adl), shūrā, accountability (mas'ūliyyah), and social responsibility are embedded in OG, PD, CR, and cadre development. These findings answer the research objective by showing how classical Islamic political ethics are translated into contemporary organizational practices within an Islamic student organization.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature by bridging Al-Mawardi's classical political thought with contemporary organizational leadership, demonstrating that Islamic political ethics remain relevant as a framework for ethical, participatory and value-based leadership. The findings provide practical guidance for Islamic student organizations, higher education institutions, and Muhammadiyah-affiliated organizations in strengthening cadre development, participatory governance, organizational accountability, and ethical decision-making.

This study is limited to a single qualitative case involving the Regional Executive Board of IMM Central Kalimantan. Therefore, future studies are encouraged to conduct comparative research across different Islamic student organizations or universities and employ mixed-method or quantitative approaches to examine the relationship between Islamic political ethics, leadership effectiveness, organizational commitment, member participation and organizational performance. Such research would further strengthen the development of Islamic political ethics in contemporary organizational contexts.

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