

# The Essence of Traditional Javanese Leadership Teachings in *Sêrat Nitistruti*


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ABSTRACT	KEYWORDS
<p>This article is a research report on the study of <i>Sêrat Nitistruti</i>, a classic literary work created by Prince Karanggayam during the Pajang kingdom. In <i>Sêrat Nitistruti</i>, there is the content of the concept of power and leadership in Java. This concept tries to be seen concerning its relevance in Islamic education. This study aims to understand traditional Javanese concepts related to power and leadership. These two things are important concepts that are indispensable. The method in this study applies research methods commonly used in the research of literary works, namely the hermeneutic method. The finding of this study is that <i>Kawula</i>, or people who are subordinates, should obey absolutely. Gusti as a leader is a manifestation of God's representative. The relationship between <i>Kawula</i> and <i>Gusti</i> is strong, so communication between the two is always framed in <i>pasemon</i>. The results of this study have significant benefits, which can be a reference for the younger generation to learn about traditional leadership because later, they will also become leaders.</p>	<p>Keyword_1 Keyword_2 Keyword_3 Keyword_4 Keyword_5</p> <p>This is an open access article under the <a href="#">CC-BY-SA</a> license</p> 

## 1. Introduction

The essence of leadership is an effort to lead, influence, rule, guide, and motivate followers or subordinates to do something under common goals. Leadership generally includes a persuasive process towards followers or subordinates to perform according to organizational goals. However, traditional leadership in Java is not limited to organizational issues but to community life and social benefit. Therefore, leadership is always concerned with persuasive attitudes that stimulate the behavior of followers or subordinates to achieve the goals of social life and to improve the group and its culture.

Javanese ancestors have formulated traditional leadership teachings in Java in various literature. An example is the teaching of leadership formulated in the concept of *Hastabrata*. This concept belongs to very old teachings. This concept was introduced through the puppet play *Wahyu Makutha Rama*. *Hasta* means eight, and *Brata* means behavior or act of self-control. *Hastabrata* means leadership, which refers to the eight elements of nature: earth, water, wind, fire, ocean, mountains, moon, and sun. Each element of *Hastabrata* defines the ideal characteristics of a leader [1]. The term *Hastabrata* comes from the Sanskrit book *Manawa Dharma Sastra*. *Hastabrata*, in this book, implies that the leader should act according to the character of the Gods. *Hastabrata* became a measure of leadership at that time [2].

Yasadipura I (1729-1803 A.D.), a poet of the Surakarta court, wrote *Hastabrata* as eight principles of social leadership that imitate the philosophy or nature of nature. It is said that leaders who master the science of *Hastabrata* will be able to internalize themselves (embodiment) into these eight great qualities [3, pp. 211–222], [4, p. 13]. In some literature, it is also mentioned that these eight properties of nature represent symbols of wisdom and greatness of the Creator [5, p. 336], [6, p. 93].

One of the important pieces of literature containing traditional Javanese leadership teachings is *Sêrat Nitistruti*, written by Pangèran (Prince) Karanggayam, Pujangga, during the Pajang era. Pangèran Karanggayam has the original name Tumenggung Sujanapura, the ancestor of the Surakarta Karaton poet R.Ng. Ronggawarsita. The name Karanggayam refers to the area where it lives [12, pp. 53–54]. Regarding the life span of Pangèran Karanggayam, until now, there is no significant record. However,

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if viewed from his brother's lifetime, Ki Ageng Karanglo, who co-founded the Mataram kingdom with Ki Ageng Pamanahan, Pangèran Karanggayam, likely lived around the XVI century.

The study of *Sêrat Nitistruti* has been carried out by several authors including Fahmi, who wrote one thesis and two articles. Fahmi's thesis seeks to (1) identify the *Sêrat Nitistruti* text, and (2) analyze Javanese leadership teachings in *Sêrat Nitistruti* and their relevance to Islamic education. The study was conducted using a philological approach consisting of: (1) manuscript inventory, (2) manuscript description, (3) text editing, (4) text translation, and (5) content analysis. The theories used include (1) hermeneutics, (2) semiotics, and (3) interactionism-symbolic [7]. From the thesis, he tried to extract some of them to develop into other articles, the contents of which are more or less similar [8].

Other writers who are interested in *Sêrat Nitistruti* are Riyadi and Muzakki. Both wrote an article that focused on the discourse of socio-cultural relations that are inclusive and exclusive related to the way of state and religion. In the context of Javanese Islamic history, some Islamic groups put forward the truth of their religion, which encourages exclusivity. This situation occurred in the Kingdom of Pajang in the 16th century A.D. At that time, Islamic groups emerged with the slogan of upholding sharia versus Hindu/Javanese groups who wanted to implement local traditions and culture. It was in this condition that Prince Karanggayam wrote *Sêrat Nitistruti*. This manuscript allegedly provides solutions to the problem of diversity in the Pajang community. Riyadi's article, co-authored with Muzakki, seeks to express the concept of inclusive Islam contained in the text [9, pp. 85–108].

Damayanti also pays attention to *Sêrat Nitistruti*. She focused on the moral ethics contained in the literature. The main thing is that there is a prohibition on gossiping about others. Gossiping is in Islamic teachings called *ghibah*. She tried to elaborate on *ghibah* from the perspective of *Sêrat Nitistruti* and the perspective of Islam. The method used applies a structural approach to functionalism. I don't know why; she considers that this theory can reduce *ghibah*, such as bullying, slander, head speech, and so on [10, pp. 14–30].

Druce has written other literature about traditional leadership perspectives. He saw that a struggle depends on charismatic leaders. The leader he discusses in depth is the leader in South Sulawesi, namely Qahhar Mudzakkar (also spelled "Kahar Muzakkar"). Qahhar led a fifteen-year struggle against Javanese hegemony. Qahhar had developed ideas incompatible with South Sulawesi culture's "traditional" ideas. Druce's articles tend to focus on efforts to examine traditional leadership in South Sulawesi [11, pp. 151–179].

Rosyadi is also not left behind. Although he did not directly discuss traditional leadership, he did try to look at leadership events based on the mystification of political power. Rosyadi sought to understand why the strategy of mystifying power can be an option in political strategy. This study is a case study, showing that the strategy of mystifying power can be chosen by utilizing the social status of traditionally privileged ancestral descendants. The mystification of power was possible because the Javanese understanding of power differed from the discourse of power in Europe. Javanese explanations of power or leadership cannot be separated from traditional societies or communities' social, political, and cultural factors. Therefore, the traditional dimension of leadership will be very visible behind the strategy of mystifying power [12, pp. 498–508].

## 2. Method

This study used hermeneutic methods. The choice of this method is carried out based on custom in research on literature, religion, or law. Given that the material object of the study is a literary work, then the study is established using the hermeneutic method, which focuses on the interpretation of the text.

The main data in this study is the *Sêrat Nitistruti* manuscript. The *Sêrat Nitistruti* manuscript found several copies. First, there are eight manuscripts in the Sonobudoyo Museum, Yogyakarta. Second, there are six manuscripts in Sasana Pustaka Library, Surakarta Karaton.

The data in this study used a book entitled *Kajian Sastra Klasik Sêrat Nitistruti Karya Pangeran Karanggayam dari Pajang*, written by Bambang Khusen Al Marie. The text content presented in this book is complete under the manuscript of *Sêrat Nitistruti* at the Sonobudoyo Museum Yogyakarta and at the Sasana Pustaka Library, Surakarta Karaton. This book also contains eight pupuh, sequentially containing pupuh *dhandhanggula*, *sinom*, *asmaradana*, *mijil*, *durma*, *pocung*, *kinanti*, and *megatruh*.

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The difference between the manuscripts found in the Sonobudoyo Museum Yogyakarta and the Sasana Pustaka Library, Surakarta Karaton, with this book is that each pupuh has been explained interpretively based on certain themes. The text of *Sêrat* is still clear, separated from the explanation and interpretation.

The first step in the hermeneutic method is data collection. In this book, the data has been collected completely. The second step in the hermeneutic method is to perform a detailed description of the text. In the book, the researcher has been helped because the author has made a detailed description. The description includes the structure of the text and conceptual explanations of the words used and their meanings.

The next stage is interpretation, which is to interpret then by considering the historical and social context so that the meaning contained in it will appear. The context in this study plays a very important role. Therefore, efforts to understand the context must be done carefully to complete the resulting understanding.

The final step in the application of research methods is to reflect. This stage is a reconsideration of the interpretation results that were carried out and an evaluation of the results. This allows researchers to reconsider the understanding that has been generated and refine the analysis performed if necessary.

### 3. Power and Leadership in Java

Power, according to Burns, is a relationship between persons [13, p. 5]. In Java, power can be interpreted as a means for leaders to achieve their goals. According to Anderson, there are four formulations of a leader, namely (1) something concrete, (2) having homogeneous properties, (3) constant in full quantity, and (4) without moral implications residing in it [14, pp. 22–23].

Leadership in pre-modern Java was associated with absolute and coercive power [15, p. 269]. The absoluteness of leadership and power in Java is traditional feudalism. This leadership demands absolute obedience from the led party. The striking trait is negating property rights – including life – which in Javanese terms is called “*wenang wisesa ing sanagari*” (authority over the highest power in the entire state) [16, p. 53]. This enormous power requires legitimacy or a foundation of leadership legitimacy. That foundation often comes from the patrimonial system and religious-spiritual doctrines.

#### 3.1. Patrimonial System

The patrimonial system is a system of inheritance according to the ancestral lineage of the male side. In the context of sociology, the reference is to the pattern of impersonal relationships of rulers, namely impersonal relationships of dependence (patron) and those controlled (client) [17, p. 217]. Javanese people refer to people who are controlled or clients as *gusti* and *kawula*. This mention is a metaphor for mystical unity and a model of hierarchical social relations in traditional power [18, p. 141].

The Javanese patrimonial system is a way to legitimize power. This system develops in the concept of “*trah*”, namely genealogical or kinship relationships that reflect ancestral superiority. Descriptions of ancestral superiority often appear in the expressions of *trahing kusuma*, *rembesing madu*, *turuning atapa*, *tedhaking andana warih*. All of these expressions give the meaning that a person called *trahing kusumo* is a person who has a ruler or noble ancestor. The person who called *rembesing madu* seeping indicates that he is the person within him flowing scholar blood. People called *turuning atapa* are people whose ancestors had high spiritual levels and degrees. The person called *tedhaking andana warih* is born into a family of knights or heroes [19, pp. 101–103].

One attempt at its legitimacy is to use the “syncretic genealogy” doctrine. Javanese people try to unite two cultures derived from Hindu and Islamic religious cultures. The effort is to establish the desired continuity, called the “*pangiwa-panengen*” genealogy. The meaning of the term “*pangiwa*” indicates that the ruler’s ancestors were from elements of Hindu mythology (gods), which is drawn from the lineage of the king of Majapahit. While “*panengen*” (right) outlines the path of the ruler’s ancestral relationship, which is drawn from the lineage reaches Javanese saints and Islamic prophets [16, p. 90], [20]. This genealogy was deliberately “created” to strengthen the legitimacy of the XVI-century Mataram rule because it did not have the interrelationship of ties from the previous power (Demak-Pajang).

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### 3.2. Religious-Spiritual

Religious-spiritual doctrines can be traced through two dimensions, namely pre-Islamic and Islamic dimensions. In the pre-Islamic dimensions, the meaning of the power of the leader is “*gung binathara*”, that is, a person who is considered to have great power, like a god. The attribute of this power is “*baudhendha hanyakrawati*”, namely, the keeper of the law and the ruler of the world. Statement of “*gung binathara*” and “*baudhendha hanyakrawati*” are acculturative expressions of ancient Indian thought [19, pp. 77–78], [21, p. 729]. Embedding of expressions for leaders shows recognition that the person who becomes the leader is the owner of power as an embodiment or image of the gods, as a manifestation of spiritual legitimacy.

In the Islamic dimension, the designation is based on a mystical interpretation through the doctrine of the title “*khalifah*” or “*kalipatullah*”, namely the representative of Allah (God) in the world [22, pp. 229–230]. This doctrine increases the legitimacy of power and gains recognition and support from the entire Muslim world. The title “*kalipah*” or “*kalipatullah*”, was first used by Amangkurat IV (1719–1724). At that time, the King of Mataram was named “Prabu Mangku-Rat Senapati Ingalaga Ngabdu'-Rahman Sayidin Panatagama Kalipullah” [23, p. 77]. Prince Diponegoro (1785–1855) in Java War (1825–1830) has also been given the title “*kalipah Rasulullah*” or representative of the Prophet who comes from the “voice of the sky” or God [24, p. 575].

Therefore, leadership in Java is God’s gift expressed through cosmic power in the leader’s personality. The Javanese leader, because of his spiritual superiority, has extraordinary power. This power is called *kasekten*, or supernatural powers and *kawibawan* or authority [25, pp. 16–29]. Javanese leaders are based not only on coercive-bureaucratic power but on how leaders fulfill the ideal image of being strong-spirited and filled with good qualities. Javanese leadership tends to be oriented towards moral leadership, whose authority is based on personal ethical qualities rather than formal leadership [26, p. 10].

## 4. Java Leadership Concept

### 5.1. *Kawula* as Leading Position

The headed party, in Javanese terms, is called *kawula*, meaning collateral person or servant.<sup>44</sup> The word *kawula* is also used as a first-person pronoun of self, “*kula*,” in language level (*krama inggil*), and synonymous with the Javanese word absorbed from Arabic, “*abdi*,” which means “servant.” In the concept of government, the *kawula* or servant or “people” is an inseparable part of the Javanese cosmic system.<sup>45</sup> The party that is being led is also being controlled. They are required to obey absolutely to the leader. *Sêrat Nitistruti* described through the parable the motion of the image in a mirror. The parable is in Sinom's song, stanza 33, as follows:

*Patrapé wong angawula/ ingkang winastan prayogi/ rarasing tyas mung sumarah/ nurut sakarsaning Gusti/ dipun kadi angganing/ angilo paésan agung/ solahing wawayangan/ kang anéng sajroning carmin/ nora siwah lawan kang ngilo ing kaca//* [27, p. 83]

It means:

The attitude of a person who is serving/ who is said to be good/ has a heart that must surrender/ follow the will of the king/ must be considered as himself/ mirroring in a large mirror/ move his image/ what is in the mirror/ is no different from the one currently looking in the mirror//

Metaphoric parables are also found in another pupuh, the 23rd *pupuh* of the *tembang Asmorondono*. The pupuh describes the servant’s obedience to the leader as follows:

*Myang dasih yekti tan bangkit/Sawala karsèng narèndra/Pan muhung kedah andhèrèk/ Lumirig sakarsèng nata/ Upamanya mangkana/kadya wayang kang amuwus/ Sayekti mawa imbalan* [27, p. 106].

It means:

As for the servant does not rise/Rejects the king’s will/ Must always carry out/ Everything the king wants/ If so/ Like a puppet that says/ There really is a reward//

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Total obedience is a form of kawula devotion. Obedience is reinforced by the belief in enacting a destiny "system" that has determined the position of inferiority in the social hierarchy [28, p. 38].

## **.2. *Gusti* as Leader**

The leader or ruler in Java is called *gusti*. However, the word has various meanings, namely (1) master, (2) one in power, or (3) God.<sup>49</sup> The position of leader (king) is the authority over the highest power in the whole country (*wenang wisesa ing sanagari*) [29, p. 25]. Moedjianto referred to it as superiority in leadership in various aspects, especially religious-spiritual [19, p. 83].

In *Sêrat Nitistruti* the superiority of this leader is expressed in the 24th *pupuh*, at the Pucung song. The editorials are as follows:

*Yèku ratu/ têtêp kawawa amêngku/ murba amisésa/ sêsining kang bumi-bumi/ wibawanya  
mrabawani sabawana//* [27, p. 181]

Means:

The king is/still able to maintain/control, and rule/the content which lives on the earth of the country/his influence is evenly distributed throughout the country.

Still in the same poem in the 18th–19th *pupuh* it is explained that the king is also the leader of ethics. Therefore, the king must also love his fellow man:

*Nadyan Ratu/ ya tan ana paènipun/ nanging Sri Naréndra/ iku pangiloning bumi/ ênggonira  
ngimpuni sihing manungsa//*

*Mapan sampun/ panjênêngan Sang apabru/ sinêbut Naréndra/ ratuning kang tata krami/ awit  
dènya aménaki tyasing janma//* [27, p. 178].

Even if the king/ also makes no difference/ the king/ as a reflection of the world/ must be able to gather human mercy//

For you have been/ you are the king/ called the leader of men/ king in terms of manners/ therefore, must please his fellow man//

An ethical leader is a leader who always improves the moral qualities of his community. Such a leader is considered capable of maintaining cosmic harmony. The trick is through good moral qualities and introspection (alertness) to bad qualities to be an example to those he leads [30, p. 209].

## **5.3. Relations between *Kawula* and *Gusti***

In Javanese tradition, the relationship between leader and leader is not impersonal. The relationship between the two is more of a close, respectful, and responsible personal bond. Ideally, this relationship is a manifestation of love as in family ties.<sup>55</sup> The bond relationship between superiors (patrons) and subordinates reflects the nature of the relationship in the family, namely the relationship between father and children (subordinates /clients). These relationships form social networks for generations. The network is strengthened by the legitimacy of the position of ruler-ruler (king), which is the cosmic center that stretches between macrocosm-theocentric reality (big universe) and microcosm-anthropocentric (small universe) [14, p. 47].

This relationship requires a means of interaction and communication. Instructive interaction in Javanese leadership is called “gentle hints.” Power should be exercised by subtle orders rather than by direct orders. Therefore, the effectiveness of power in Java is measured by its ability to hide its instruments. It does not show that power makes him a leader. <sup>57</sup> In Java, the subtle command is called *pasemon*, which comes from the word *semu*. This means the pseudo noun or “metaphorical allusion.” *Pasemon* means a sign that comes in the form of a symbol. So, the meaning of *pasemon* was also interpreted as “countenance” [31, p. 46]. In *Sêrat Nitistruti* the subtle command of the leader is found in the 18th–19th chapters, Asmaradana's verse:

*Yèn anuju amarêngi/ wruh kêdhap kilating Nata/ ulatira dèn asarèh/ nampani dhawuh sasmita/  
dèn cundhuk candhakira/ tindakira kang tinanduk/ nguningakên ing Naréndra//*

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*Dèn asumèh pasmon manis/ ing sêmu kang sumaringah/ samun nanging mrih kongasé/ wit lamun tan kauningan/ iku sami kéwala/ lawan kang tan wruh ing sêmu/ wit wuwusé salah rasa// [27, p. 102]*

If at any time/know the signal from the king/ calm your gaze/ receive the signs of command/ then must be able to grasp its meaning/ act worthily/ must be pleasing to the king's heart/ /

With a face that is always cheerful/ with pleasant movements/ calm but looks happy/ because if it does not look like that/it is the same as not knowing the signs/ and finally only guilt //

Thus, wise leaders in interaction and communication are considered to have personal qualities if they do not clearly express what is meant. Conversely, the led party has self-value if it can grasp the meaning of the marker (*pasemon*) well, so a common intention is achieved between the two. This similarity of will, intent, and purpose between the leader and those being led is the concept of *manunggaling kawula Gusti* [32, p. 12]. This unity is achieved through collective-subjective similarity and positions the Javanese leader as God's representative (*warananing Allah*). In other words, obeying the leader is "equal" to obeying God. This interaction and communication is the highest goal in Javanese thought.

## 5. The Relevance of Javanese Leadership Teachings to Islamic Education

### 6.1. Islamic Education Concept

The entire component of Islamic education is based on Islamic teachings. Islamic education changes individual behavior by teaching as a basic activity [33, p. 339]. This understanding seems to emphasize changes in moral behavior. From the Qur'an and hadith perspective, education aims to realize a level of piety that awakens to *paraning dumadi*, namely awareness of the world and the hereafter. The orientation of education is to form pious people, be responsible, diligent in worship, and aware of their duties as caliphs on earth [34, p. 21]. From this understanding, Islamic education can be interpreted as improving intellectual, emotional, moral, and spiritual capacities, both individually and socially.

### 6.2. Humans as Subjects of Educational Objectives

Man is the subject and purpose of education in Islamic education, both as a "representative of Allah" (*khalifah*) and as a "servant of Allah" (*'abd*). The concept of man as God's representative places man as a leader of himself and a superior creation. This advantage places humans as beings who are guided or placed as servants of the Rulers of Nature. Both are nothing but natural gifts as creatures of the Supernatural. This concept is a divine system in harmony with the universal principles of nature [35, p. 68].

#### 6.2.1. Man as Caliph

Man as the representative of Allah is based on the verse Q.S. al-Baqarah 2:30. Concretely, the verse states, "Remember! when your Lord said to the angels, I will make caliph on earth". One understanding of the word caliph is that it represents Allah in upholding His will and implementing His decrees. This representation is not because God is incapable to make man have the position of God. However, Allah intends to test man and give him honor [36, p. 173]. In this case, man is the representative of God, according to *Sêrat Nitiruti*, stanza 24, in *tembang Pucung*, calling it *murba amisésa* or as a ruler.

None other than the ideal representative leader of God who became a true example was the Prophet Muhammad. In *Sêrat Nitiruti*, the 28<sup>th</sup> stanza, Asmaradana's poem is straightforwardly described that no leader is an example except the Prophet Muhammad:

*Kajaba mung Kanjêng Nabi/ Mukhammad Nayakaningrat/ kang tuhu dutaning Manon/ yèn satêdhak turunira/ praptaning jaman mangkya/ wastu tan ana kang tiru/ yèn tan tapa puruhita/[27, p. 107]*

Means:

Only the Prophet / Muhammad brought guidance to the world/ who is truly the messenger of God/ if with his descendants/ until today/ surely there is nothing else/ if not ascetic and devoted//).

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In the context of Islamic education, the person who inherits prophethood is the ulama. Any Muslim who acquires the requisite knowledge in Arabic, the Quran, Hadith, and Islamic jurisprudence can attain the rank of an Alim [37, p. 113]. Thus, the scholars of Islamic knowledge among Muslims are called scholars. In West Java, they are referred to as *ajengan*. In Central Java and East Java, ulama usually also lead pesantren called *kyai*. Many influential scholars in the community also received the title of *kyai* even though they did not lead the pesantren. In addition to the title of *kyai*, they are also referred to as an alim. It means one with a deep knowledge of Islam [38, p. 55]. The works of scholars are also sources of reference. Muslims, to understand the life of the Prophet, always refer to the works of the ulama. The works of ulama always provide a complete picture of the life of Rasulullah SAW. Their work is very important because Rasulullah is a benchmark in leadership throughout the ages [39, pp. 261–279]. Thus, the ulama is a religious leader who, in Islamic education, is called *murabbi* or educator. In Islamic education, educators are not narrowly defined only as teachers but also as managers and leaders.

### 6.2.2. *Man as Servant of Allah (God)*

As a servant of God, man is inseparable from the purpose of creation itself. It is based on Q.S. al-Dzāriyāt 51:56, which states, “and I did not create jinns and men but that they might serve Me.” The verse implies that it also grants both freedoms of choice. The basis of freedom to choose is the provision of reason and the ability to think [40, p. 391], [41, p. 455]. This creation aimed to form a consciousness of servitude to God. This servitude ensures that the servant and the Lord are in this dimension of life. The servant has to worship (worship), and God has the right to be worshipped.

The concept of creation in the Javanese perspective is referred to *sangkan skan paraning dumadi*. This designation is synonymous with the ontological concept of knowledge about the creation of man. The conceptual denotation includes “from where” and “where the direction and purpose of life.”<sup>72</sup> In *Sêrat Nitisruti*, the 15<sup>th</sup> *pupuh*, in the tembang Kinanthi, the purpose of human creation is to attain true truth (*kasunyatan*) or God:

*Rumeksa santosanipun/ Bangkita sapraja sami/ Mamrih kawruh kasunyatan/ Wruha purwaning dumadi/ Ywa katungkul suka-suka/ Nèng nuswapada tan lami//* [27, p. 201]

Its meaning:

Awake the strength/ Rise the power of the land/ Seek true knowledge/ Know the beginning of life/  
Do not be lulled into rejoicing/ In the world will not be long//

In *pupuh* 38 of tembang Megatruh, the purpose of creation is revealed:

*Ing wekasan kang dipun yektosi muhung/ Pratingkah kang datan yukti/ Wit dèning dahat kalimput/ Mring pakartining dumadi/ babagan nembah Hyang Manon//* [27, p. 235]

Its means:

In the end, what is considered sincerity is only/Unrighteous behavior/ Lured by will/ Towards the behavior (deeds) of creatures/ In terms of worshipping God//.

This concept is relevant to the purpose of Islamic education, which leads to spiritual values (personal religious) and moral formation.<sup>75</sup> Javanese leadership is ultimately the formation of the personality of individuals who are the subject of education, according to the purpose of human creation. On the other hand, in the context of leadership, man’s position as a servant of God (servant) is synonymous with patronage relations, especially the relationship between the party that is led and the one who leads.

### 6.2.3. *Leader Traits*

Javanese leadership is oriented towards moral leadership, whose authority is based on the leader’s personal qualities [26, p. 10]. While on the other hand, leadership studies have various perspectives or approaches, one of which is the trait approach. According to Northouse, the trait approach is related to the traits that leaders exhibit and who possess these traits. The trait approach deals with what traits leaders exhibit and who possess these traits [42, p. 23].

These good qualities in the leader are part of the basic values and morality in Islamic educational leadership.<sup>78</sup> Leadership based on a leader's moral traits or personal ethical qualities can be categorized as a model of ethical leadership [42, p. 341]. Ethical leadership contains natural

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characteristics through the traits displayed by a leader that is different from non-leaders. Asthabrata (eight virtues) teachings in *Sêrat Nitistruti* indicate that a leader must have the characteristics of a “god-king.” The leader represents divinity. These qualities are relevant to the qualities that leaders must have in ethical leadership, including humility, patience, upholding justice, selfless help, firmness, responsible, and cultivating the inner and outer life force. Thus, *Sêrat Nitistruti*, with Javanese leadership teachings, has characteristics relevant to leadership values in Islamic education and, more broadly, following ethical leadership.

## 6. Conclusion

Javanese leadership teachings in *Sêrat Nitistruti* include (1) the position of the led (kawula), demanding absolute obedience from a subordinate/led to the superior/leader; (2) the position of leader (gusti), a person who places himself as God’s representative, with various attributes/leadership traits “borrowed” from divine nature, so that obeying the leader means obeying God; (3) Leader (Gusti) and Led (Kawula) relations, a bond of family relations (patron-client) through the means of “subtle orders” or “pasemon” to achieve commonality/unity of intent, will, or purpose, between the leader and the led (manunggaling kawula Gusti).

There are three relevant Javanese leadership teachings in *Sêrat Nitistruti* to Islamic education. First, the similarity in concept between the position of a leader called gusti, who is considered identical to God’s representative, is a manifestation of the human position as the subject of education to realize oneself as God’s representative (khalifah). Second, the conformity of the concept of the purpose of creation (*sangkan paraning dumadi*) with the purpose of human creation (the purpose of Islamic education), as a “servant of Allah” (‘abd) or “the led-party” (kawula). Ultimately, the leadership traits contained in *Sêrat Nitistruti* can be categorized as ethical leadership models.

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