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ADVICE AS AN ETHICAL PILLAR IN GOVERNANCE: A STUDY OF THE PRINCIPLES OF ADVICE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses the importance of the principle of *nasihah* (sincere advice) in governance as a moral value in realizing good governance from an Islamic perspective. In modern governance, *nasihah* does not merely mean giving advice, but also represents a moral responsibility to uphold justice, trustworthiness (*amanah*), and the welfare of society. This research employs a descriptive qualitative method with a library research approach, collecting data from the Qur'an, Hadith, classical Islamic scholarly works, as well as contemporary journals and relevant books. The findings indicate that the values of *nasihah* in Islam such as *amanah* (trustworthiness), *'adl* (justice), and *shura* (consultation) are highly consistent with the principles of good governance, including transparency, accountability, and public participation. *Nasihah* functions as an ethical safeguard for leaders to prevent the abuse of power and encourages citizens to actively participate in governance. However, challenges remain, such as the persistence of a closed bureaucratic culture and the low public awareness of the importance of providing input to the government. Therefore, the implementation of *nasihah* values can serve as a bridge between Islamic teachings and modern governance systems, fostering a government that is trustworthy, just, and oriented toward the common good.

Keywords: Nasihah; Islamic governance; good governance; Amanah; justice; shura.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the era of modern governance, the demand for good governance has continued to increase. An ideal government is not only measured by the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies but also by the moral values that underpin it. One important value that is often overlooked in this context is *nasihah* (advice). In Islam, *nasihah* is not merely about offering suggestions; it represents a form of care, moral responsibility, and a sincere effort to uphold justice in social and political life.The concept of *nasihah* has a strong theological foundation in Islamic teachings. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "Religion is *nasihah* (sincere advice)." (Narrated by Muslim). This hadith emphasizes that all dimensions of life, including governance, must be based on the spirit of mutual counsel in goodness and truth. A leader who accepts advice with an

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open heart demonstrates humility and a willingness to improve, while citizens who offer advice respectfully show their concern for justice and collective well-being.

The principles of governance in Islam are founded upon the values of *amanah* (trustworthiness), *'adl* (justice), and *shura* (consultation). These three values are consistent with the fundamental principles of good governance — transparency, accountability, and public participation. This demonstrates that *nasihah* in governance is not merely an individual moral act but also an integral part of an ethical and responsible governance system.

The implementation of Islamic governance principles can strengthen the practice of good governance in Indonesia. The application of values such as justice, openness, and accountability serves as the actualization of *nasihah* within modern governmental contexts. In other words, *nasihah* functions as an "ethical regulator" that prevents the abuse of power and ensures that governance remains aligned with the interests of the people.

By integrating the principle of *nasihah* into modern governance systems, Islamic values such as *amanah*, justice, and *shura* can be translated into more equitable public policies. A government that is open to receiving advice from its citizens will be more adaptive to societal needs, while citizens who actively provide constructive input help to strengthen governmental legitimacy. Therefore, *nasihah* can be understood as an ethical pillar in building a trustworthy, just, and welfare-oriented government.

A modern government infused with the values of *nasihah* from an Islamic perspective will be capable of creating a more humanistic and just system. Leaders who are willing to accept input from the people will make wiser policy decisions, while citizens who provide advice in a respectful manner contribute to building a healthy political culture. Hence, *nasihah* can be viewed as a bridge between religious ethics and democratic governance — a vital pillar in establishing a government that is trustworthy, just, and oriented toward the common good.

2. METHODS

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, which focuses on understanding the meaning and value of a concept rather than numerical or statistical data. This approach was chosen because the discussion on *nasihah* (advice) in modern governance from an Islamic perspective emphasizes the study of values, principles, and religious thought rather than empirical measurement.

The type of research used is library research, meaning that data were collected from various literature sources such as books, scholarly journals, articles, and documents relevant to the theme of *nasihah* in Islamic governance. The researcher gathered and examined these sources to understand the concept of *nasihah* according to the Qur'an, the Hadith, classical scholars' views, and its application in modern governance.

The data sources used in this study consist of two types:

Primary sources, including verses from the Qur'an, the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and classical works of Islamic scholars such as *Nasihat al-Muluk* by Imam al-Ghazali and *Al-Siyasah al-Syar'iyyah* by Ibn Taymiyyah.

Secondary sources, including books, journals, and contemporary research discussing Islamic governance, good governance, and leadership ethics.

The data analysis technique applied is content analysis, a method used to interpret the content of texts or documents to obtain a deep understanding of the values of *nasihah* in the context of governance. In this process, the researcher interprets the meaning of the texts thematically and then connects these interpretations to the realities of modern governance.

3. RESULTS

Based on the literature review, it was found that the principle of *nasihah* (advice) in Islamic governance is highly relevant to the concept of modern governance. The principle of *amanah* emphasizes the importance of public trust in leadership; *'adl* (justice) serves as the foundation for decision-making that prioritizes the welfare of society; and *shura* (consultation) ensures participation in the policymaking process.[1]

In the practice of modern governance, the principle of *nasihah* can be translated into mechanisms of public participation, information transparency, and openness to criticism. A study published in *Jurnal Raden Fatah* indicates that the implementation of good governance principles becomes more effective when accompanied by ethical values such as trustworthiness (*amanah*) and honesty.[2] However, the study also identifies several challenges in applying the values of *nasihah* within Indonesian governance. These include a bureaucratic culture that discourages openness, low levels of public participation, and weak ethical awareness among public officials.[3]

To overcome these issues, several steps are needed, such as establishing government ethics education based on Islamic values, enhancing public transparency, and strengthening consultative mechanisms. In this way, *nasihah* is not merely a moral expression but becomes a living principle within a governance system that upholds justice and trustworthiness.[4]

4. DISCUSSION

1. The Principle of *Nasihah* in Islamic Governance

In Islamic thought, *nasihah* (sincere advice) is not merely a verbal expression or ordinary suggestion but a part of every Muslim's moral responsibility toward others. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

This hadith demonstrates that *nasihah* encompasses all aspects of life, including the relationship between rulers and the people. In the context of governance, *nasihah* means providing guidance, direction, or constructive criticism aimed at improving policies to align with the principles of justice and public welfare.

Throughout Islamic history, many leaders have been known for their openness to advice. Caliph ʿUmar ibn al-Khattab, for instance, was renowned for valuing criticism from his people. He once said: *"There is no good in you if you do not dare to advise me, and there is no good in me if I do

[1] Basri, St. Risnawati, ibid.

[2] Kamarasyid, Aloi, "Peranan Kepemimpinan dalam Menerapkan Prinsip-Prinsip Good Governance," Mawa'izh, Vol. 10 No. 2, 2019.

[3] Aryansa, ibid.

[4] Amir, Ahmad Nabil, op.cit

not accept your advice."*[5] This statement illustrates the essential role of *nasihah* in maintaining a balance between power and justice.

Nasihah in Islam is also related to the concept of *amr maʿruf nahy munkar* — enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong.[6] This moral principle encourages citizens to actively remind their leaders, not out of opposition, but as a means to preserve the integrity of governance so that it remains aligned with Islamic values.

2. The Ethical Values of *Nasihah*: Trustworthiness (*Amanah*), Justice (*'Adl*), and Consultation (*Shura*)

The principle of *nasihah* in Islamic governance stands upon three main ethical values: *amanah* (trustworthiness), *'adl* (justice), and *shura* (consultation).

First, *amanah* refers to the trust granted by the people to their leaders. In the Qur'an, Surah An-Nisa (4:58) commands that trust should be delivered to those who deserve it and that every decision should be made with justice.[7] A leader who upholds *amanah* bears full responsibility for the trust placed in him, including the willingness to accept advice from his people.

Second, *'adl* (justice) is the core foundation of every governmental policy. Without justice, *nasihah* loses its meaning, as advice and decisions would inevitably become biased. According to Aryansa's research in *ELQONUN Journal*, justice is the spirit of the ideal Islamic governance system, because only through justice can public trust be preserved and governmental stability achieved.[8]

Third, *shura* (consultation) represents the practical application of *nasihah* in governance. The Qur'an in Surah Ash-Shura (42:38) mentions that "their affairs are decided by mutual consultation among them."[9] This verse shows that Islam promotes a participatory and morally democratic system of governance. *Shura* also serves as a social control mechanism that prevents tyranny and the misuse of power.

If these three values are properly implemented, they will produce a government that is open, just, and accountable. Thus, *nasihah* is not merely a means of communication between leaders and citizens but a moral foundation for building a system of good governance.

3. The Relationship between *Nasihah* and Modern Governance Principles

In modern governance systems, the concept of good governance emphasizes transparency, accountability, public participation, and social justice.[10] These values are inherently compatible with the Islamic principle of *nasihah*. For example, transparency involves governmental openness in sharing information with the public — a value consistent with *amanah* in Islam, which demands honesty and trust.

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[5] *Al-Khulafa' ar-Rasyidun: Sirah Umar bin Khattab*, trans. M. Quraish Shihab (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2018), p. 115.

[6] Qur'an, Surah Ali Imran [3]: 104.

[7] Qur'an, Surah An-Nisa [4]: 58.

[8] Aryansa, "Implementasi Prinsip-Prinsip Good Governance dalam Sistem Pemerintahan di Indonesia Ditinjau dari Fiqh Siyasah," ELQONUN, Vol. 1 No. 1, 2023.

[9] Qur'an, Surah Ash-Shura [42]: 38.

[10] Basri, St. Risnawati, "Urgensi Pemerintahan dalam Kitab Tafsir Al-Wasith li Al-Qur'an Al-Karim," Al-Tadabbur, Vol. 9 No. 2, 2024.

Meanwhile, accountability relates closely to justice and integrity. Responsible leaders are those who recognize that power is not a personal possession but a trust (*amanah*) from the people, which must be exercised responsibly before Allah.[11] Public participation likewise reflects the value of *shura*. In modern administration, citizens are given space to engage in policymaking processes through consultation forums, village councils, or public oversight mechanisms — all of which mirror the Islamic concept of *shura*, where decisions are reached through dialogue and mutual consideration.[9]

Hence, although the term *good governance* originates from Western administrative theory, its core values do not conflict with Islamic teachings. In fact, Islam had already established these moral foundations long before — forming the ethical and just basis for modern governance.[10]

4. Challenges and Opportunities in Implementing the Principle of *Nasihah*

Despite its noble values, the practical implementation of *nasihah* still faces several challenges. Research in various regional governments shows that the application of participation and transparency principles remains limited. For instance, in Kamarasyid's (2019) study, many officials were found reluctant to accept criticism from the public and preferred to remain closed off.[12]

Furthermore, a hierarchical bureaucratic culture often prevents citizens from directly offering input to leaders. Low levels of political literacy and civic ethics also contribute to citizens' reluctance to engage in governance processes.[13]

However, there are significant opportunities to revitalize the value of *nasihah* in modern governance. One promising avenue is the use of digital technology. Through social media and e-government systems, citizens can now express their aspirations and criticisms more openly.[13]

Additionally, character and public ethics education in universities can serve as an essential means of instilling a constructive spirit of *nasihah*. Students, as the younger generation, should be equipped with the understanding that offering suggestions, criticism, and advice to the government is part of their moral responsibility as citizens.[14]

If the principles of *nasihah* — such as *amanah*, justice, and *shura* — can be integrated into modern governance systems, a government will emerge that is not only administratively effective but also morally grounded and guided by Islamic values.[15]

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the discussion presented above, it can be concluded that nasihah (sincere advice) in modern governance from an Islamic perspective plays a crucial role in preserving the morality and integrity of leadership. Nasihah is not merely an expression or suggestion, but a form of social and moral responsibility that every leader must uphold.

Core values such as amanah (trustworthiness), 'adl (justice), shura (consultation),

[11] Amir, Ahmad Nabil, "Prinsip Pemerintahan dalam Islam menurut Muhammad Asad," PAPPASANG, Vol. 6 No. 1, 2024.
[12] Mistam & Maujud, "Prinsip-prinsip Pengawasan dalam Al-Qur'an dan Hadith," Paedagogie, Vol. 6 No. 2, 2025.
[13] Aryansa, *ibid*.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Basri, op. cit.

transparency, and accountability demonstrate that Islam offers a governance concept consistent with the principles of good governance. By applying these values, governmental systems can function in a cleaner, fairer, and more people-oriented manner.

However, in practice, the implementation of nasihah principles still faces challenges such as low ethical awareness among public officials and weak public participation in policy oversight. Therefore, nasihah in Islam should serve not only as a moral guide but also as an administrative reference in every governmental decision-making process.

Recommendations

For the Government:
It is recommended to create more opportunities for the public to provide advice or input on public policies, in order to establish a participatory and transparent governance system.
For State Officials:
It is essential to strengthen moral and spiritual awareness so that every policy decision is guided not merely by political interests but also by the values of justice and public welfare.
For Academics and Students:
Further research is needed to explore how Islamic principles of nasihah can be applied in modern governance, particularly in the areas of bureaucratic ethics and public leadership.
For the General Public:
Citizens are encouraged to fulfill their social role as constructive advisors (muraqibun wa nasihun), in line with the Islamic principle of amr ma'ruf nahi munkar — enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong.
Through a synergy between leaders and citizens who mutually advise one another, it is hoped that a form of governance can be realized that is not only administratively efficient but also morally and spiritually dignified — in accordance with Islamic values that embody rahmatan lil 'alamin (a mercy to all creation).

CRediT Authorship Contribution Statement

Andi Mustaqfira Aminuddin: Conceptualization, Research Design, Writing of Abstract and Introduction, Review and Editing, Finalization of Manuscript. Maulida Nurhilaly: Writing of the Results and Conclusion sections. Nur Abrar Masri: Writing of the Discussion section. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript and are accountable for all aspects of the work, ensuring the integrity and accuracy of every part of the stu

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this manuscript.

Data Availability

All data generated or analyzed during this study are included in this published article and its supplementary information. No additional datasets were used.

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