A Legal Approach Towards The Role of Transformational Leadership In Eradication Strategy of Drug Criminal Acts by The Gayo Lues Resort Police

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Abstract

Gayo Lues Regency in Aceh Province is widely recognized as one of Indonesia's major cannabis-producing regions. The area's geographical isolation, limited infrastructure and resources, and complex socio-cultural dynamics make narcotics eradication efforts particularly challenging. This article examines how transformational leadership exercised by the Gayo Lues Police Chief is implemented within narcotics law-enforcement strategies and how the national legal framework strengthens their effectiveness. This research is a normative juridical approach combined with a case-study method, drawing on in-depth interviews with the Police Chief, senior officers, and community leaders. Data were analyzed qualitatively using thematic analysis to identify key patterns emerging from interviews and legal documents. The analysis focuses on the four core dimensions of transformational leadership idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration and integrates these with the principles of administrative law. Findings reveal that transformational leadership at the Gayo Lues Police is manifested through moral exemplarity and humanistic work ethics, recognition and performance-based motivation, participatory strategic planning across units, and strengthened communication with local leaders and customary institutions. This leadership style has fostered an open, collaborative, and integrity-driven organizational climate, significantly improving the performance of the Narcotics Investigation Unit. The narcotics control strategy rests on four pillars prevention, precision enforcement, rehabilitation, and restorative justice in alignment with Minister of Health Regulation No. 7 of 2025, Police Regulation No. 8 of 2021, and the National Action Plan for Drug Abuse Prevention and Eradication (RAN P4GN) 2025–2029. Moreover, the study highlights an integration between law and leadership in which law functions not merely as a coercive tool but as an educational and moral instrument. The Police Chief's progressive and empathetic interpretation of the law exemplifies ethical law enforcement that balances authority with social compassion. In conclusion, transformational leadership plays a pivotal role in enhancing the legitimacy and effectiveness of narcotics law enforcement in high-risk regions.

I. Introduction

Gayo Lues Regency in Aceh Province is known as a region with high levels of marijuana production in Indonesia. Efforts to eradicate marijuana cultivation in this region face complex structural, geographic, and social challenges. In this context, the Gayo Lues Police Chief implements a leadership approach that is not merely repressive but also transformative, inspiring change through collaboration, innovation, and a humanistic approach. This article analyzes how the Gayo Lues Police Chief's transformational leadership is manifested in his drug law enforcement strategy, as well as its impact on regional security and the protection of the younger generation. Using a qualitative approach and field data, this study demonstrates that transformational leadership plays a crucial role in increasing the effectiveness of drug handling in endemic areas.

The illicit trafficking of narcotics in Indonesia continues to pose a serious threat to social stability, public health, and national security. In Aceh, particularly Gayo Lues Regency, the challenges of drug eradication are exacerbated by mountainous geography, limited infrastructure, and distribution networks that rely on traditional routes. The Gayo Lues Police, as the spearhead of law enforcement in the region, is required not only to possess technical capacity but also visionary and adaptive leadership.

The concept of transformational leadership, first introduced by Burns (1978) and further developed by Bass (1985), provides a relevant theoretical framework for the police context, offering a leadership paradigm capable of inspiring, motivating, and encouraging innovation in law enforcement. This approach is relevant in addressing the complexity of transactional crimes such as narcotics, which require multidimensional collaboration and a strong moral commitment. This study aims to analyze how national legal approaches can support or hinder the implementation of transformational leadership in the Gayo Lues Police's drug eradication strategy.

Transformational leadership is defined as a process in which leaders and followers enhance each other's motivation and morality (Burns, 2022). According to Bass & Riggio (2023), transformational leadership encompasses four main dimensions, therefore, (1) Idealized Influence (Exemplary Leadership) means leaders serve as role models through integrity and ethical commitment, (2) Inspirational Motivation means leaders create a shared vision that inspires enthusiasm, (3) Intellectual Stimulation means leaders encourage innovation and critical problem-solving, and (4) Individualized Consideration means leaders provide personal attention to the needs of team members.

The primary legal basis for Indonesia's drug eradication policy refers to Law Number 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics, which emphasizes a balance between law enforcement and social recovery, emphasizing a balanced approach between law enforcement and recovery. Furthermore, technical police regulations are regulated through Chief of Police Regulation No. 14 of 2018 concerning the management of narcotics and psychotropic drug crimes, which emphasizes the principles of transparency, accountability, and respect for human rights. However, law enforcement is often hampered by bureaucracy, lack of inter-agency coordination, and weak leadership at the operational level. At this point, transformational leadership becomes crucial as a catalyst for connecting legal regulations with real-world conditions.

2. Research Method

This research applies normative juridical methods combined with case studies to obtain an in-depth overview of law enforcement practices. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with the Chief of Police and key officials of the Gayo Lues Police Department, supported by primary data (interviews with Gayo Lues Police officials) and secondary data (statutory regulations, annual reports, and academic

literature). The data were analyzed qualitatively using a thematic approach to identify key patterns based on dimensions of transformational leadership and principles of state administrative law.

3. Results and Discussion

A. Implementation of Transformational Leadership at the Gayo Lues Police

Based on an interview with the Gayo Lues Police Chief, the leadership style implemented in his institution is oriented toward establishing a work culture that is imbued with integrity, adaptive, and responsive to social challenges in drug-prone areas. The Chief emphasized that "the success of drug eradication is not solely determined by repressive measures, but by the ability to build public awareness and trust in the National Police."

The implementation of transformational leadership within the Gayo Lues Police is realized through four main aspects:

1. Exemplary Behavior and the Formation of a Humanistic Work Ethic

   The Chief of Police serves as a role model for his members by demonstrating discipline and empathy, and encouraging a public service attitude based on humanitarian values. This aligns with the theory of moral leadership in transformationalism, which emphasizes values- and moral-based leadership (Denton, 2025). A member of the Narcotics Investigation Unit (Resnarkoba) in an interview stated that "The Chief of Police often goes directly to the field, even to mountainous areas, to motivate us. It makes us feel appreciated and enthusiastic." This approach creates an emotional bond between leaders and subordinates, as emphasized by Choi, Kim & Woo (2025), who found that the presence of leaders in the field increases job satisfaction and organizational commitment.
2. Rewarding and Strengthening Internal Motivation

Interviews with the Head of the Narcotics Unit revealed that a performance-based reward system has become a key strategy for increasing member motivation. Rewards are given in the form of certificates, job promotions, and public recognition. This aligns with the findings of Agazu et al. (2025), who stated that in the context of security institutions, transformational leadership can stimulate members' intrinsic motivation through non-material appreciation and the creation of meaningful work.

3. Involvement of Work Units in the Strategy Formulation Process

   The Chief of Police involves all key officers (PJU) in every operational planning and target prioritization process. "We are invited to discuss in an open forum; there are no barriers between command and execution," said the Head of Operations in an interview. This approach aligns with the concept of shared leadership developed by Modise (2024), where role allocation and collaboration across organizational levels strengthen the effectiveness of decision-making.

4. Strengthening Social Communication and Indigenous Engagement

   The Gayo Lues Police actively collaborate with traditional leaders, religious scholars, and the local government to raise public legal awareness. The "Police and Customary Unite Against Drugs" program serves as a forum for cross-value communication between officers and the community. One traditional leader stated that "The Chief of Police is present not only to enforce the law, but also to listen to our concerns." This participatory approach aligns with research by de Carvalho et al. (2023), which emphasizes the importance of collaborative leadership in the context of policing in critical areas.

Overall, the transformational leadership style at the Gayo Lues Police has succeeded in creating an open, collaborative, and highly moral organizational climate, strengthening the professionalism and effectiveness of the Narcotics Research Unit's performance.

B. Narcotics Eradication Strategy Based on Transformational Leadership

The drug eradication strategy at the Gayo Lues Police Department not only relies on formal legal enforcement but also integrates preventive, collaborative, and rehabilitative aspects, supported by a transformational leadership vision. Based on interviews with the Head of the Narcotics Investigation Unit and the Head of the Planning Division, four main strategies are systematically implemented:

1. Preventive

   The "Police Enter Schools and Islamic Boarding Schools" program serves as an educational tool to raise awareness of the dangers of drugs. Community police officers (Bhabinkamtibmas) employ a personal approach in villages, adapting Gayo cultural values. Interviews with the Head of the Community Policing Unit (Binmas) indicate that preventive activities increase legal awareness among youth and reduce the potential for recruitment by local couriers. This supports the modern community-oriented policing (COP) theory outlined in Navigating Values (2024), which states that police success is largely determined by community collaboration and trust.

2. Represive-progresive

   In its repressive efforts, the Gayo Lues Police Department implemented the concept of "law enforcement by intelligence," which involves digitally mapping vulnerable areas using geospatial technology. Based on Ministerial Regulation No. 7 of 2025, the classification of narcotics was updated to clarify the types of substances that fall under the category of serious violations. An investigator stated: "With the updated Ministerial Regulation, we can ensure the appropriate articles are applied and avoid miscategorization of evidence." This strategy draws on the transformational enforcement framework theory (Bass & Riggio, 2023), which emphasizes the

importance of technological innovation and adaptation in the context of modern legal leadership.

3. Curative

   The Gayo Lues Police are collaborating with the National Narcotics Agency (BNN) to divert light users to rehabilitation. This step aligns with Presidential Instruction No. 2 of 2020 concerning the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Drug Abuse (RAN P4GN) and the BNN's 2025–2029 rehabilitation policy, which emphasizes a restorative and human-centered approach.

4. Restorative

   The implementation of Police Regulation No. 8 of 2021 is for first-time users who meet the legal criteria. The Police Chief stated that "the law must not lose its conscience, because human recovery is at the heart of justice." This approach reinforces the theory of restorative policing (Rypma & Evans, 2024), which combines the principles of ethical leadership and social justice to restore public trust in the police.

The drug eradication strategy at the Gayo Lues Police has transformed from a traditional repressive model to a transformational-integrative model, which prioritizes collaboration, data-driven policing and social rehabilitation.

C. Integration of Legal and Leadership Approaches

The legal approach combined with transformational leadership at the Gayo Lues Police Department illustrates the law humanization model, namely the transformation of law from an instrument of coercion to a means of social learning. Based on an interview with the Head of the Planning and Development Division, the Police Chief defines law as a "middle ground between justice and humanity." In practice, there are three main forms of integration:

1. Progressive Interpretation of Law

Every narcotics operation is conducted with due consideration of legal proportionality and public benefit. The Chief of Police applies the principle of discretion with integrity, namely discretionary policies that adhere to legal principles and moral values. This concept is reinforced by the theory of ethical transformational leadership (Ali et al., 2024), which emphasizes the balance between moral responsibility and legal authority.

2. Moral Leadership and Ethical Exemplars

   The police chief serves as a moral symbol for his members. Interviews with the Head of Public Relations showed that members have more trust in leaders who demonstrate moral consistency than those who rely solely on official authority. This finding aligns with a study by Kouzes & Posner (2023), which found that exemplary behavior is a core element in building leadership legitimacy.

3. Humanization of Law Enforcement

   Polres Gayo Lues mengedepankan pendekatan humanis dalam setiap penindakan, misalnya dengan memastikan hak-hak tersangka terpenuhi dan melibatkan keluarga dalam proses rehabilitasi. Pendekatan ini mendukung prinsip *justice with compassion* dalam hukum *progresif* (Rahardjo, 2023), serta relevan dengan gagasan *procedural justice training* (National Policing Institute, 2023) yang menurunkan tingkat konflik masyarakat dengan polisi.

The results of this integration show that law and leadership are not two separate dimensions, but rather two synergistic forces in realizing substantive justice in drug-prone areas such as Gayo Lues.

4. Conclusion

Transformational leadership has been shown to significantly influence the success of the drug eradication strategy at the Gayo Lues Police Department. Through a humanistic and collaborative legal approach, the Police Department is able to balance

the repressive and rehabilitative roles within the law enforcement system. The leadership model implemented by the Police Chief demonstrates an integration of moral values, innovation, and social empathy. This leadership can strengthen inter-unit synergy and inter-agency coordination, improve operational performance and the effectiveness of enforcement strategies, and foster public trust in the police institution. The combination of transformational leadership, restorative justice, and ethical law enforcement is an ideal model for drug eradication at the Police Department level and can be replicated in other areas with similar social characteristics.

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