

The Void in Local Governance for Rural Development: Understanding Public Leadership in Village Transformation in Indonesia

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Abstract: *This research aims to analyze the public leadership of a village head in development. This study posits that this discrepancy is mainly due to the difference in leadership competence in the various regions. Sekapuk Village, Ujungpangkah Sub-district, Gresik Regency, East Java Province, succeeded in achieving first place in Brilian Village in 2020. This accomplishment is inseparable from the visionary leadership role of the Sekapuk Village Head in managing village governance. The practical significance and the lessons of the findings of this study can be a reference for the public leadership of the village heads in the administration of other villages's governance. This study analyzes the public leadership competence in development by utilizing the principles of good local governance for regional development. The methodology of this study involves a qualitative approach with a case study strategy. The researchers interviewed nine informants, consisting of village officials and heads as well as the community. The key research findings underline the ways in which public leaders are able to communicate constructively even with the opposition within the village governance structure and end up with the advancement of development in the region. The study, therefore, concludes that transformative public leadership is recommended for regional village development.*

Keywords: *Public Leadership; Good Local Governance; Rural Development.*

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Introduction

Village head as the formal leader in the village plays an essential role in facilitating, motivating, mediating, and mobilizing the community in village development activity that has been planned (Lamangida et al., 2017; Mahayana, 2013). The village head is responsible for carrying out village development in accordance with the provisions of applicable laws and regulations (Sumeru, 2016). In addition, the village head also determines the participation of the village community in the village development process (Mambo, 2014). However, according to the research result by Mohabbat Khan & Shahriar Islam (2014b); Prima Nirwana & Tua (2017); and Raharja & Suaedi (2017), the majority of the existing village officials have a relatively low level of education, and formal education factors greatly influence the village head's competence in carrying out village development. Village head is a political position elected directly by the community. Hence, the government cannot elect the village head; they can only suggest the candidates qualified with the applicable provision.

A public leader can be one of the obstacles to infrastructure development due to corruption, collusion, and nepotism (Gqaji et al., 2016). Because the village head has broad authority as a budget user, they are very vulnerable to irregularities in the use of village finance (Wujarso et al., 2022). Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW), published by CNN Indonesia (2019), reported that Village Fund corruption during 2015-2018 reached 252 cases. Among the 252 cases, 214 village heads were involved in corruption cases during that period. The details of the cases are: in 2015, there were 15 village heads who were involved; in 2016, there were 61

village heads involved; in 2017, there were 66 cases, and the remaining 89 were caught in 2018.

This village budget corruption case caused total state loss of IDR 107.7 billion. The village budget corruption case involved fictitious reports, budget inflation, abuse of authority, and so on.

Leadership is widely seen as an important factor in achieving policy goals, and the success of a policy is often associated with local leadership (Mathias, 2017). Leadership and public sector reform are two concepts that are interrelated and inseparable because leadership is largely considered an internal force and is the main impetus for reform (Brillantes & Perante-Calina, 2018). Leader is an essential aspect of a bureaucratic reform because the leader can be the most important factor in organizational success.

As happened in Sekapuk Village, Ujungpangkah District, Gresik Regency, East Java Province, which won first place in the Brilliant Village in Indonesia in 2020. Sekapuk Village was able to achieve the title of brilliant village in Indonesia after going through a selection of 531 resilient and innovative village proposals. That is inseparable from the visionary leadership role of Sekapuk Village Head. Abdul Halim, as Sekapuk Village Head, stated that it took them a year to transform the village into a tourism village. One proof that the development of Sekapuk Village has been successful is the increase in Original Village Income (PADes) from 2018-2020. In 2018, Sekapuk Village could generate PADes of around IDR 575.7 million. Then in 2019 it increased to IDR 929 million, and in October 2020 it reached IDR 1.4 billion. PADes contributed 68 percent of the village finance.

Leadership is a factor that the institution must pay attention to because it is one of the success factors of an organization. Indonesia is a multicultural country; it naturally has different public leadership models in each region. Therefore, a study about public leadership is needed, especially in local leaders or village heads. The researchers analyzed the village head leadership in village government governance in village development programs that have been implemented.

Public Leadership

Leadership is considered important for modernization and improvement but is often used without definition (Hartley & Allison, 2000). The person who can best help or facilitate the group in achieving a good state is most likely to be considered the leader (Bavelas, 1960). The term leadership is a word taken from general vocabulary and inserted into the technical vocabulary of a scientific discipline without being redefined precisely (Yukl, 2013). Until now, experts have had different definitions of leadership.

Experts define different leadership concepts. Brookes (2011) defined the words 'leading' and 'leadership' as originated from Old German, which is 'lidan' that means 'to go' and the Old English word 'lithan' that means 'to travel'. In this definition, leadership means 'lead the way' through one's own action. Scott (2014) defined leadership as a leader's capability to influence others with personal charisma, knowledge, skills, experience, or a positional role in an organization. A similar thing is also stated by Yukl (2013a), that leadership is a process of influencing others to understand and agree on what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of

facilitating individual and collective efforts to achieve shared goals.

Several experts have defined public leadership differently. Public leadership can be defined as a public executive leader, a public administration leader, and also a political leader who occupies a public leadership position. As stated by Hart & Uhr (2008), the government leader is also the leader of the political party. In most cases, they were party leaders long before they were government leaders. Basically, public leadership is not far from the political environment because top-level management of government comes from the political process.

Berman et al. (2013) defined public executive leadership as (a) owning strategic vision and initiating relevant programs and policies; (b) raising support for implementing institutions among political officials, community groups, and agency/service staff; and (c) observing, implementing, and producing results/output that are oriented towards public value, integrity, and purpose. Meanwhile, Brookes et al. (2010) explained a form of collective leadership in which public agencies and institutions collaborate in achieving a shared vision based on shared goals and values and distribute them through each organization in a way that promotes, influences, and delivers increased public value as evidenced through social, environmental, and an economy that is in a complex and changing situation. As we can see, the definition of public leadership from a system perspective is input, process, and output. Input consists of vision and mission, support, and government resources (state apparatus, state finance, etc.) that can be used by the public leader. Furthermore, process consists of decision-making, leader characteristics, structure,

and others. Output consists of goods and services for public service.

Good Local Governance

To date, there have been several texts that define good local governance decisively. However, the recent decade has seen a series of major initiatives around the world to reform and modernize local government (Bovaird & Löffler, 2002). Bonfiglioli (2003) defined that good local governance is good governance at the local level. Therefore, before we discuss good local governance, we shall learn about the concept of good governance. According to Kauzya (2003), the word 'government' originated from Greek and refers to controlling. Good governance as an action to direct societal development involves full participation, including transparency, accountability, and equality. Meanwhile, the World Bank (1994) defined governance as follows:

"Governance is the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development."

Later, good governance is defined as follows:

"Good governance is epitomized by, among other things, predictable, open, and enlightened policymaking."

Furthermore, Hokayem & Kairouz (2014a) argued that if governance is defined as the art of managing state, natural, and human resources, then good governance is the art of managing the general welfare of the state or nation as a unified whole. From several definitions of "good governance," it can be concluded that good governance is a procedure for

managing government (resources) well for development. As previously explained, good local governance is good governance at the local government level (local governance).

UNDP (2009) defined local government in general as a government institution at the regional level that consists of a representative body, administrative organ, and central government branch in the region.

Municipality and local or district council are general terms used to refer to local government. Meanwhile, Bovaird & Löffler (2002) defined local government as a set of formal and informal rules, structures, and processes that determine the way in which individuals and organizations can exercise power over decisions that affect their welfare at the local level. Furthermore, good local governance is a procedure for measuring local government performance that focuses on:

1. Governance issues that are not handled well in government, such as transparency, honesty, accountability, citizen involvement, level of trust in society, level of respect for democratic processes, and the equality agenda (in relation to gender, race, religion, age, disadvantage, etc.),
2. Implementation of a multi-stakeholder framework and transcending organizational boundaries.
3. Involvement of all important local stakeholders in the assessment, taking into account their perceptions of how well these governance issues are being addressed in their local area.

Table 1. Good Local Governance Indicator

International IDEA Democracy at the Local Level	Good Governance for Local Development – GOFORGOLD	Local Governance Barometer (LGB)	UN-HABITAT Urban Governance Index
1. Representative Democracy (equality, equity)	1. Representation 2. Participation 3. Accountability	1. Effectiveness 2. Transparency and Rule of Law	1. Effectiveness 2. Equity 3. Participation
2. Participatory Democracy (openness, fairness, transparency, responsiveness, accountability)	4. Transparency 5 Effectiveness 6. Security 7. Equity	3. Accountability 4. Participation and civic engagement 5. Equity	4. Accountability

Source: Wilde et al. (2015)

UNDP (2009) also explained that good local governance includes human rights, inclusive participation, capacity and efficiency of administration and bureaucracy, as well as accountable and responsive government institutions. Good local governance must be the main mechanism for achieving social inclusion, reducing inequality, and sustainable human development at the local level because good local governance is a set of organizations and a set of mechanisms/procedures intended to manage local public affairs (Bonfiglioli, 2003).

Then Wilde et al. (2015) argued that local government is expected to provide public service that is previously done by the national organization (central government), representative or participative democratic process, transparency, accountability, and so on are the characteristics of good local governance. Furthermore, he described the guidelines and principles that became the basis for selecting an assessment framework in good local governance.

Method

This study used a qualitative method with a case study strategy in which the researchers closely analyzed a program, event, activity, process, or group of individuals (Creswell, 2014). This study focused on the special case of the unique public leadership of the village head in Sekapuk Village, Gresik Regency. The selection of this research locus was based on the performance of Sekapuk Village, which was considered successful in its village development. Therefore, the public leadership can be an example for the other village heads.

The primary data collection was carried out by conducting in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) by interviewing 9 informants consisting of the village head, village secretary, village staff, village consultative body, Family Welfare Movement (PKK), village-owned enterprises (BUMDes), and the community. The interview was carried out according to the interview guidelines and developed according to research data needs. The interview lasted for around 30 to 60 minutes. Apart from primary data, researchers also used relevant secondary

data, such as regulation, village profile, village government performance report, etc. Then for the data analysis, this study took 6 stages of analysis approach, which are data management and preparation, entire data reading, in-detail analysis by coding the data, coding process application, then showed how the descriptions and themes will be presented again in a narrative or qualitative report, and interpreted or made meaning of the data (Creswell, 2014).

**Result and Discussion
Representation**

Representation in good governance for local development (GOFORGOLD) can be seen from several aspects. The following is the summary table of researchers' results to measure aspects of the representation of the Sekapuk village community in development.

Table 2. Representation Analysis

No.	Variable	Description
1.	Elected Councils	Appropriate with the community representation.
2.	Voting Behaviour	Development policy decision through deliberation.

3.	Women Representatives	Women's representation in development policy involves PKK (Family Welfare Movement, female members of the BPD (village consultative body) and youth organizations.
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Source: Processed by the author, 2023

Based on Table 2 above, it is described that the role of the village head in implementing the principle of representation is appropriate with community representation. This can be seen from the involvement of the community representatives in setting the development policy, such as BPD (village consultative body), BUMDes (village-owned enterprise), RT (neighbourhood unit), RW (community unit), Karang Taruna (youth organization), POKDARWIS (Tourism Awareness Group), and certainly women representatives such as PKK (Family Welfare Movement). The new form of interactive political leadership can offer solutions by soliciting valuable input from the community affected by government policy (Sorensen & Epps, 1996). Interactive political leadership can facilitate and support the creation of a joint solution. Involving various community representative elements in formulating public policy can contribute to the increase of community participation in development, such as social welfare increase as a result of joint efforts to improve the lives of young people, social development of disadvantaged

environments, and the creation of advanced cultural life.

Participation

Participation in good governance for local development (GOFORGOLD) can be seen from several aspects. The following is the summary table of researchers' results to measure aspects of the representation of Sekapuk Village community in development.

Table 3. Participation Analysis

No.	Variable	Description
1.	Public Forum	Public forums involvement on development policy.
2.	Existence of Civil Society Organizations	Community organization involvement in development participation.
3.	Mechanism for Citizen Participation	Community participation mechanism is carried out by mutual cooperation with the leader as a role model or example of a good participant

Source: Processed by the author, 2023

Based on Table 3 above, it is described that the role of the village head in implementing the principle of representation is appropriate with community representation. This can be seen from the involvement of the community representatives in setting the development policy, such as BPD (village consultative body), BUMDes (village-

owned enterprise), RT (neighbourhood unit), RW (community unit), Karang Taruna (youth organization), POKDARWIS (Tourism Awareness Group), and Gakpotan (farmer association) on development policy in Sekapuk Village. The implementation of community participation includes mutual cooperation, community service, and involvement in every development program.

Village heads must have competence in community participation involvement (Saiful Hadi, Miftah, & Kusnadi, 2018). Community participation in development planning is very important so that all community issues can be studied and resolved; this form of involvement is the best comparison with the government in formulating development priorities that are more targeted and oriented towards the public interest (Utami, 2022). Another research result showed that the participative leadership style of the village head positively and significantly affects the implementation of village government (Putri, 2020).

Apart from that, an example of good leader behavior is needed to increase community participation. Leaders are seen as innovative from a territorial perspective in most rural areas pedesaan (Esparcia et al., 2015). Leader becomes an essential reference from the start, both in places and without the presence of other institutional structures of territorial cooperation. Although the leader cannot create a movement, they can “make a difference in turning potential conditions for mobilization into actual social movement” (Özen & Özen, 2022).

Leadership plays an important role in the mobilization of the local community to participate in the development policy by providing a discursive framework, connecting local residents to wider activist

networks, and coordinating collective action. Because local mobilization sustainability can be held accountable by the leadership stability, collectivity, inclusivity, and proactivity. Then it involves the youth in organizational leadership and offers opportunities for them to contribute, make a positive difference, and benefit the youth and their organization (Hornyak et al., 2022).

Accountability

Accountability in good governance for local development (GOFORGOLD) can be seen from several aspects. The following is the summary table of researchers' results to measure the aspect of responsibility in development.

Table 4. Accountability

No.	Variable	Description
1.	Anti-Corruption Policy	Implementation of anti-corruption policies in development with transparency, free of extortion and proven by an integrity pact.
2.	Code of Conduct	Implementation of code of conduct in development accountability,

Source: Processed by the author, 2023

Based on the table 4 above, it is described that the role of the village head in implementing the accountability principle is considered good. This can be seen from the commitment of the village in implementing an anti-corruption policy and an accountability code of conduct in development. The policies are transparent, free of extortion, and proven by an

integrity pact. Accountability is determined by good service quality, while transparency is driven by good accountability (Pradana, 2021; Sofyani et al., 2020). This result can be important and meaningful feedback for all regional governments and regulators in Indonesia as well as in developing countries, especially in e-government development.

Leadership attributes show a relatively strong relationship with audit quality at headquarters (Lennox et al., 2023). In addition, audit quality is higher when the organization has a leader who plays a role in the audit process. This showed that the public leader must step in directly to implement the principle of accountability in development. The importance of changing the mindset about information technology by local government top management as well as staff even at the lowest level. This change is related to the perspective that information technology investment from “tools” turns into “strategy”.

Accountability in public sector organizations is very important. Therefore, public leaders must be able to apply good accountability principles in implementing development programs. Public leaders can provide examples of good accountability to subordinates and the community.

Transparency

Transparency in good governance for local development (GOFORGOLD) can be seen from several aspects. The following is the summary table of researchers' results to measure the aspects of information clarity and openness in development.

Table 5. Transparency Analysis

No.	Variable	Description
1.	Mechanism for Complaints and Grievances	Complaints and grievances are handled by the RT (neighbourhood unit) or directly to the village head with mediation and deliberation to provide solutions.
2.	Right to Public Information	Development information is broadcasted through banners, social media, and meetings.
3.	Public Review of Budget	Budget disclosure through banners, social media, and submitted to RT (neighbourhood unit).
4.	Openness of Procurement Process	Procurement transparency through the Village Development Planning Conference (musrenbangdes) is conveyed and coordinated with the community.

Source: Processed by the author, 2023

Based on the table 5 above, it is described that the village head has implemented the principle of transparency. The implementation indicators are openness of information, budget, and procurement to the community. This was conveyed through a meeting on the first of the day, a banner or

billboard installed at the village hall and several development locations, as well as broadcast via social media. Ethical leadership practice in public relations can be adapted to context and influence organizational effectiveness (Meng & Neill, 2022). Therefore, all development activities must be ethically transparent. This is intended to maintain the trust of the community and its organizations. There are several dimensions to society's demand for transparency, including fiscal, security, and government concerns (Piotrowski & Van Ryzin, 2007). The society's demand for transparency will affect the level of public trust in leaders. Besides that, the village head's slightly closed leadership style will have an impact on a lack of work professionalism (Sunarsi & Winata, 2020). Therefore, transparency in development is very important because it will influence the success of development in the region. Furthermore, openness in public leadership has the power to boost community and subordinate trust. To serve as an inspiration to their subordinates and the community, public leaders must humble themselves.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness in good governance for local development (GOFORGOLD) can be seen from several aspects. The following is the summary table of researchers' results to measure the aspects of effectiveness in development.

Table 6. Transparency Analysis

No.	Variable	Description
1.	Predictability of Budget for Province	Budget planning is carried out through meeting with the budget team.

2.	Funds for Public Service Delivery	Budget for public service is designed by TPK (Activity Implementation Team).
3.	Total Number of Civil Servants	Public service human resources work according to their main duties and functions.
4.	Service Delivery Performance Delivery Standards	Public service standards are quick and free.

Source: Processed by the author, 2023

Based on the table 6 above, it is described that the role of the village head in implementing the principle of effectivity is considered good. The implementation indicator is the development budget planning that was carried out with the budget team. Then, TPK (Activity Implementation Team) is authorized to prepare the budget for the public service. Furthermore, the public service human resources are regulated in accordance with the main task and function, and the human resources in Sekapuk Village are good. In a democratic society, leaders are needed with analytical skills and the ability to motivate and communicate with their members. Therefore, the development programs can run well.

The last indicator is the public service standard in Sekapuk Village: quick and free service. The role of public leadership makes a significant contribution to the success of development projects (Zada et al., 2023). A public leader can acknowledge, register, and promote the organization's core competencies, identify, correct, and

control the implementation of development policy, clarify key development goals, and continuously align procedures with the main goals of the development program.

Effective leadership is one of the key development competencies. In public institutions, public leaders need to be competent to manage limited resources. Public leaders can then respond to society's high expectations.

Security

Security in good governance for local development (GOFORGOLD) can be seen from several aspects. The following is the summary table of researchers' results to measure the aspects of security in development.

Table 7. Security Analysis

No.	Variable	Description
1.	Conflict Resolution	Conflict resolution is done by communication and providing solutions.

Source: Processed by the author, 2023

Based on Table 7 above, it is described that the role of the village head in implementing the principle of security is considered good. This can be seen from the village head's intelligence to resolve the conflict. There are several ways to resolve conflict, such as communication, approach, and if the conflict cannot be resolved, it is handed over to the authority and mediation. If the conflict cannot be resolved, it is handed over to the authority. Leaders can be involved in many tasks, one of which is conflict management (Sorensen & Epps, 1996). There is a strong interaction between governance and leadership in which the leader sometimes takes an oppositional role to the

government and, in other cases, serves to mediate relationships across organizations (Beer, 2014). In the process of formulating development policies, there are several interests between stakeholders. Hence, the role of leaders in conflict management is very necessary. Regional leaders strive to achieve outcomes that they believe will advance their region's interests. One key marker of this significance is the way local government chooses to interact with selected individuals.

Compared to private organizations, the environment of public organizations is more complex. Public leaders must therefore possess strong security analytical skills, particularly in relation to conflict resolution. Because opposition groups will arise throughout the implementation of development projects. Stakeholder conflict management proficiency is essential to public leadership security analysis.

Equity

Equity in good governance for local development (GOFORGOLD). The following is the summary table of researchers' results to measure the aspects of equity in development.

Table 8. Equity Analysis

No.	Variable	Description
1.	Affirmative Action for the Poor	Has an affirmative policy in the form of poor families, house renovations, compensation and scholarships for orphans and tahfidz.

2.	Affirmative Action for Women	Has an affirmative policy for women in the form of SME empowerment.
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Source: Processed by the author, 2023

Based on the table 8 above, it is described that the village head has a good equity principle; the implementation indicator is reflected in the Gakin (poor families) program, house renovations, compensation, and scholarships for orphans and tahfidz. Beside that, there is an SME empowerment program for women, such as Mbok Inggih's kitchen. The benefit of this program can be felt by underprivileged families because it helps improve their economy. Public leadership is critical to social change and essential in changing social and institutional norms related to gender inequality beyond equal representation (Munive et al., 2023). Furthermore, Public Leadership for Gender Equality promotes six key leadership practices, such as (1) defining the goals and articulating the vision, (2) creating public value, (3) empowering the society, (4) encouraging strategic partnership, (5) directing power and realizing personal commitment, and (6) guiding public leaders through a journey of developing capacity for change, facilitating them to identify and activate opportunities for gender transformative change in their work.

Justice as a principle is a crucial issue in leadership. This examines how a leader might create laws that are equitable for the whole community. The concept of justice presents unique difficulties for those in public leadership, such as how a leader should implement policies for those who did not elect him.

Implementation of Public Leadership in Good Local Governance

Good local governance involves evolution, sustainable change, and reform for the better. This is the responsibility for the leader to promote and implement the change and reform (Hokayem & Kairouz, 2014b). A public leader needs to develop support from the community so that they do not struggle alone in creating good local governance. This is also stated by Muhammad (2014) and Nambalirwa & Sindane (2012) that it needs effective public leadership and good local governance in the process of development and providing public service. Naidoo (2012) also claimed that ethical leadership can help prevent corruption, thereby encouraging the realization of good governance. Therefore, public leadership and good local governance competence have a correlation in the development process. Good local governance can be a basis and principle for public leaders in development.

Public Leadership Model for Regional Development

It needs effective public leadership and good local governance in the development process and providing public service (Muhammad, 2014; Nambalirwa & Sindane, 2012; Raharja et al., 2019). Good local governance values can be internalized by the local public leader that later become the basis for the leader to make policy. Transparent, committed, and transformational leadership is needed for good governance and sustainable development in developing countries (Lawal & Owolabi, 2012). In addition, good governance shows the positive effects of government efficiency at the individual level (Cárcaba et al., 2022; Wicaksono et al., 2022).

Transformational leadership is an important variable to improve good governance through more cooperative, humanistic, and charismatic leader behavior that leads to valuable characteristics possessed by employees (Nambalirwa & Sindane, 2012). Because leadership greatly influences local economic governance in the independent development of the region (Yates et al., 2021). In addition, to improve the development at the regional level, it needs a leader who is able to accommodate community participation (Kübler et al., 2020). Therefore, political leadership greatly influences the success of good governance (Salman Khan & Syrett, 2022).

Therefore, a local public leadership competency model can be developed using the tenets of good local governance as its foundation.

Programs for developing local leadership competency must be taken into consideration by pertinent institutions. There are currently around 83,000 village heads in Indonesia, ranging from independent villages to extremely impoverished communities. As a result, village chiefs' levels of leadership varied. Village chiefs are also elected public officials chosen by their fellow residents. The community favors the elected village head without taking into account their level of education or their capacity to oversee development.

Conclusion

Based on the research result, it can be concluded that public leadership needs to implement Good Local Governance for Development (GOFORGOLD) principles. This can be seen from Sekapuk Village, which has been successful in development. They implemented GOFORGOLD principles such as community

representation involvement; the development involved the community to aim to formulate development priorities that are more targeted and oriented towards the public interest, making the village development run well. The village head has committed to implementing an anti-corruption policy and code of ethics for accountability in development. Apart from that, procurement of goods and budget planning are open. The role of the village head in effectiveness has run well in the process of budget planning and service via TPK (Activity Implementation Team). The village head was able to manage human resources for services well. Apart from that, he was also capable of resolving conflicts of interest between stakeholders in development. The village head has also implemented the equity principle well; this is reflected in the Gakin (poor families) program, house renovations, compensation, and scholarships for orphans and tahfidz.

There are several things that need to be underlined regarding how the village head acts as a public leader, which is the communication with the village government opposition. The village head was able to maintain government opposition to the progress of development in the region. Positive criticism and suggestions from the opposition are used as policy input to achieve development goals. A transformational public leadership model is recommended in regional development.

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