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Perception of justice, citizens' trust and participation in a democratic Islamic society

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Justice has a high status in Islamic societies, and as one of the most important human ideals, has long been the focus of thinkers and researchers. In fact, when the citizens do not understand the presence of justice in the behaviour of the officials of their society, their trust in the current procedures, and consequently the public participation will be affected. Considering the importance of the subject, the present study has been conducted with the aim of investigating the effect of perception of justice on citizens' trust and participation in the creation of a democratic Islamic society. The statistical population of this research included 3578 Indonesian Muslim citizens in 2022, and the research questionnaires were distributed among them. Data analyses were done using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Linear Structural Relations (LISREL) statistical software. The results of statistical analyses indicated that the perception of Islamic justice does not have a significant effect on the participation of Muslims in creating a democratic Islamic society. In addition, the perception of Islamic justice has a positive effect on the trust in officials of the Islamic society. Moreover, trust in the officials of the Islamic society positively affects the citizens' participation in creating a democratic Islamic society.

Contribution: According to the results of this research, it is necessary for the officials of the Islamic society to use all their efforts in creating a justice-oriented Islamic society in order to create trust among the citizens, and to involve Muslims in development decisions and to establish democratic Islamic society.

Keywords: justice; Islamic justice; trust; participation; Islamic society; democratic society.

Introduction

One of the important topics in sociology studies is investigating justice in society, which has a considerable impact on citizens' behaviour and determines their judgement of the environment and community in which they work, study and live. Perception of justice or injustice in society results in behaviours that could be beneficial or corruptive by affecting people's attitudes (Colquitt et al. 2006). Therefore, it is best to pay attention to justice and relevant factors by those in charge of these issues to benefit from its positive outcomes.

Moreover, building trust is recognised as one of the most important factors for a community's success. Today, it is generally believed that trust-building in the community is one of the major potential factors that can improve people's performance and increase their productivity (Fagan & Tyler 2005). Generally, trust leads to successful socialisation, collaboration and effective teamwork and it helps to minimise risks and reduce extra expenses (Shapiro & Kirkman 2002). Moreover, today's communities are constantly dealing with the pressure of progress-making, which becomes more complicated every day.

Under such circumstances, it is vital to use all of society's capacities, especially people's participation, to achieve this important goal. Researchers have concluded that a community's success and survival cannot be guaranteed without the participation of citizens in its process of advancement (Beierle & Konisky 2000). Democracy is a form of government and some of its salient features include respecting the majority vote, individual autonomy and civil liberties. Even though there is no proportionality between the majority and the truth, the majority can be the actualiser or its acceptance can lay the foundation for the realisation of the government. From Islam's viewpoint, there are practically no grounds for the realisation of the government if it is not accepted by the majority of people.

According to Islam, people have the right to determine their own destinies and enjoy individual and social freedoms in the light of the Islamic government. However, Islam rejects some of the components of democracy that emerged from the West. In Islam, the majority vote is not valid and has no legitimacy if it conflicts with human dignity. In other words, religion and democracy are not completely different or completely alike. In fact, Islam only accepts religious democracy. Given the importance of this matter, the present study aimed to evaluate the effect of the perception of justice on citizens' trust and participation in the creation of a democratic Islamic society in Indonesia in 2022.

Justice in Islamic society

Justice is one of the factors that play a crucial role in human societies. This concept has been extensively studied in the fields of management, psychology and sociology. According to researches, justice can affect the beliefs, emotions, attitudes and behaviour of people. Overall, several studies have focused on the subject of justice. Components such as distributive justice, procedural justice, interactional justice, fairness and social justice have been considered in the justice-related literature (Ibraheem Shelash Al-Hawary et al., 2022).

According to the equity theory by Adams (1965), distributive justice refers to people's perception of the fairness of the amount and quality of allocation of benefits. Adams mostly focused on people's perception of fairness of received items and evaluation of their performance. According to this scholar, people are not that concerned about what they have received and are mostly concerned about its fairness of it. To determine justice, he suggested that people's ratio of inputs such as literacy, intelligence and experience to what they receive be compared with the same ratio in other people. When recommending the equality law, Adams expressed that the comparison made by people is subjective instead of objective. In other words, people's assessment of distributive justice is based on their perception. Procedural justice refers to the perception of fairness in processes and procedures used to allocate rewards (Fields, Pang & Chiu 2000). In order to ensure fairness of processes and decisions made by people, communities must focus on their values and norms to determine what is important to them. Because various people have different values, the mentioned task is a burden shouldered by decision-makers (Wong, Ngo & Wong 2006). Moreover, Leventhal (1980) mentioned six points for designing fair procedures: (1) it must be implemented the same for all people, (2) it must be prejudice-free, (3) it must ensure the accumulation of correct information that will be used for decision-making, (4) it must have a correctable mechanism, (5) it must be based on ethical principles and (6) it must ensure that the opinion of all of those affected by decisions is taken into account.

Introduced by Bies and Maog (1986), the concept of interactional justice is defined as the quality of interpersonal relationships that people expect and refers to the importance of integrity, respect and alignment of people in interpersonal relationships. Therefore, interactional justice implies human relations and social activities and refers to justice, politeness, honesty and respect between people (Pillay 2022; Sousa & Vala 2002). It is suggested that justice is not determined only through official procedures of the community. In fact, decision-makers and leaders of the community are also considered important sources of justice for subordinates. Interactional justice is also important in the sense that it affects people's emotions, perceptions and behaviour. Moreover, previous studies have indicated the positive impacts of interactional justice, especially interpersonal justice, on people's level of trust and attention of people to the group (Colquitt et al. 2001). Even though societies often aim to treat citizens fairly, people often perceive interpersonal relationships as unfair. Furthermore, it has been stated that interpersonal relationships are related to various feelings and emotions of people in relation to the decisions that are made within the structure of society (Viswesvaran & Ones 2002). As inferred from what was mentioned before, interactional justice is related to relationships in societies, especially the relationships between leaders and subordinates.

Trust

Trust is a multi-dimensional concept and has various aspects. In addition, different meanings have been offered for the concept in various texts. Trust also involves various meanings such as reliability, predictability, capability, competence, expertise, benevolence, open management, interest, acceptance and reality. Because trust is rooted in Aristotle's literature, there is little consensus regarding its actual meaning and method of achievement (Farhang et al. 2011). In general, trust means having confidence in the intentions and actions of others and is regarded as a key factor in interactions. Trust in leaders is important for achieving the community's goals, and effective cooperation in various parts of society is maintained only when communications are clear at all levels. This, however, occurs when there is mutual trust and confidence. In addition, trust is a wide knowledge that involves important concepts for study because it is able to coordinate human behaviours. Trust is the key to interpersonal relations in various areas (Barczak, Lassk & Mulki 2010). Three components are considered for trust in the literature:

- **Ability:** It is defined as a set of skills, competencies and features, through which a sector is able to affect other sectors in certain domains. The ability has a specific domain because the trustee may be highly competent in some of the skills that would increase their reliability. In any case, the trustee might have a little bit of talent, ability and work experience in areas that are not included in a certain domain.
- **Benevolence:** It is the domain in which the trustee believes that they are going to do right by the trustor. In this domain, the trustee has no profit motive. Benevolence indicates that the trustee will make certain achievements for the trustor. In this regard, an example would be establishing communication between the trustor and the trustee. The trustee seeks to help the trustor even though

they have no obligations and receive no external reward for this action.

- **Integrity:** Whether there is a relationship between honesty and trust or not depends on the trustor's perception of the trustee's integrity. It also depends on whether the trustee adheres to a series of principles accepted by the trustor or not.

Based on a review of the literature, three factors of 'ability, benevolence, and integrity' were identified as the main factors affecting trust (Mayer & Davis 1999).

Participation in the creation of a democratic Islamic society

Participation means involving citizens in the decision-making processes. Signs that related participation to change first appeared in a work by Lewin (1948) on group dynamics. In this area, he suggested that the opinions of others be used by managers when setting change programmes. He also believed that participation would be effective in walking this path (Müller-Rommel & Geißel 2020). Participation is the effective partaking of all people in collective affairs through the mobilisation of all potential facilities in order to use them in the process of decision-making, planning, implementation, evaluation and exploitation. Therefore, from a general viewpoint, participation is creating a sense of solidarity, belonging and collective effort among the people of a society in order to achieve a just social system (Alikhani 1998). In another definition, participation is considered as the physical and mental involvement of people in achieving group goals and having a sense of accountability towards them. The major principle of participative management is that all people have a clearly defined, mutual goal that is accurately comprehended by each one of them. There are three important concepts in this definition: being involved, aiding and feeling accountable. Several components have been considered for participation in the literature (Hwang 2009). Nevertheless, because it has been suggested that four main areas be considered in this area, the following indices were introduced:

- Participation in goal setting: People can participate in determining the community's goals.
- Participation in decision-making: People can participate in decision-making processes, meaning that they choose one of the alternatives.
- Participation in problem-solving: People can participate in problem-solving, which is a process that includes defining the problem, proposing solutions and choosing the suggestions.
- Participation in change: Participation can be effective in changing society (Choupani 2010). Citizen participation is an effective factor in creating a democratic society.

Nowadays, in political terms, democracy means the superiority of the power of the national ideal and the administration of the government by the people (Cohen 1971). However, there is no consensus about democracy, especially as an operational and executive system, among political scientists (Taremi 1983). A government of the people by the people has the following characteristics: respect for basic freedoms, especially respect for freedom of opinion, freedom of the press, and freedom of gathering; having popular support, and not resorting to violence to make reforms. Democracy is a way of organising society such that all necessary changes are accepted without resorting to violent revolutions (Cohen 1971). In other words, democracy is a theory for managing a community and is an effective method for turning revolutions into reforms. It is also a tool for solving the problem of power and preventing autocracy. The features mentioned for democracy so far have been reasonable and interesting ones that apparently have no conflicts with Islam's views on socio-political issues. Another feature of democracy accepted by Western countries today, which has been manoeuvred with the term 'human rights', is unconditional acceptance of people's wishes even if they are against human dignity. An example would be acknowledging the right to same-sex marriages, which is definitely not accepted by Islam. Essentially, the philosophy of sending the prophet of Islam has been to fight such demands and move them toward human dignity. These are especially the majority who are condemned by the Quran (The Holy Quran, Surah Al-Ma'idah, Ayat 103). The majority saw the call of the Prophets, which was a call to happiness, guidance and perfection, to be against their own desires, and opposed it without reason and thought.

Democracy in Islam

There are different types of democracies, including non-religious, anti-religious and religious. Among these, religious democracy is accepted by Islam. It is notable that the nature of this type of democracy is not different from other types of democracy. The only feature of this type of democracy is its religious nature. In this regard, Imam Khomeini as a religious authority who himself was the founder of a religious democratic system in the form of the 'Islamic Republic', proved that Islam and democracy have no differences and contradictions and can be brought together by founding an Islamic system. He also showed that Islam has the most democratic way to run society by relying on the people. If democracy were to be defined as a method based on which the free will of people is involved in choosing their rulers or on their side and determining their own destiny, and if the government was based on the majority vote, it would not contradict the Imam's principles. In this regard, Imam Khomeini expressed:

> [T]he votes of the people rule here. It is the nation that holds the government [...] and violation of the ruling of the nation is not allowed and is not possible for any of us. (Imam Khomeini, Sahifa Noor, Volume 14, p. 109; C 9, p. 304)

Imam Khomeini's emphasis on the pivotal role of the people in determining their own destiny is clear in his reminders to the government and representatives. Imam Khomeini somewhere advises the members of parliament not to go against the path of the nation and says:

[*I*]f you want to act according to your desire, democracy is that the votes of the majority are valid. Whatever the majority said, their votes are valid, even if it is to their own detriment. You are not their parents to say that this is bad for you, and we will not do it. You are their lawyer. (Imam Khomeini, Sahifa Noor, Volume 8, p. 247)

These words clearly show that the Imam believed in determining the fate of the people of every society and nation by their own hands and votes. Imam Khomeini believed that 'in Islam, democracy is included, and people are free both in expressing their opinions and in their actions, as long as there is no conspiracy involved' (Imam Khomeini, Sahifa Noor, Volume 4, p. 234).

Furthermore, in the Quran, God orders the prophet of Islam: 'and take counsel with them in the affair' (The Holy Quran, Surah Al Imran, Ayat 159). In another ayat, God equates taking counsel with keeping up prayers (The Holy Quran, Surah Ash-Shura, Ayat 38). Regarding freedom of opinion, the Quran says: 'therefore do remind, for you are only a reminder. You are not a watcher over them' (The Holy Quran, Surah Al-Ghashiyah, Ayat 21–22). Therefore, from Islam's viewpoint, people have the right to determine their own destiny and enjoy individual and social freedoms in the light of the Islamic government. Therefore, not only there is no conflict between religion and democracy, but also the most progressive type of democracy exists in the text of Islam (Hadavi Tehrani 2010).

Research hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Perception of justice in Islamic society significantly affects citizens' participation in the creation of a democratic Islamic society.

Hypothesis 2: Perception of justice in Islamic society significantly affects trust in authorities.

Hypothesis 3: Trust in authorities significantly affects citizens' participation in the creation of a democratic Islamic society.

Hypothesis 4: Perception of justice in Islamic society through trust in authorities significantly affects citizens' participation in the creation of a democratic Islamic society.

Methodology

The statistical population includes 3578 Indonesian Muslims in Jakarta in 2022. In this study, the variables of justice, trust and participation in the creation of a democratic Islamic society were assessed using instruments by Niehoff and Moorman (1993), Mayer and Davis (1999), and Choupani (2010), respectively. The reliability of the instruments was approved using Cronbach's alpha method in Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Table 1 presents Cronbach's alpha values of the questionnaires.

As observed in Table 1, all values were above 0.7, which indicated the appropriate reliability of the tools. In addition, the instrument's content validity and confirmatory factor analysis were assessed. In this regard, the content validity of

TABLE 1: Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the questionnaires.

Variable	Number of questions	Cronbach's alpha
Justice	20	0.82
Trust	17	0.81
Participation in the creation of a democratic Islamic society	16	0.78

TABLE 2: Goodness-of-fit of the measurement questionnaires.

The goodness of fit test	Value	Acceptable range
Chi-square/df	2.5918	< 3.0
P-value	0.0000	< 0.05
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	0.086	< 0.1
The Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	0.92	> 0.9
Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI)	0.91	> 0.9

the tool was confirmed by providing it to 10 faculty members in the areas of theology, social sciences, psychology and management. Considering the features and uses of confirmatory factor analysis, it was applied in the current research to evaluate the construct validity of the measurement tool. This was carried out by exploiting relevant measurement models in Linear Structural Relations (LISREL) software. In addition, the relationships between the latent variables of justice, trust and participation were measured with their measurement scales. Table 2 demonstrates that the scales used in the present study were suitable for assessing its variables. It is worth noting that according to Joreskog and Sorbom (1989), chi-square/df < 3, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) < 0.1 and Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) and Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) > 9, all of which showed the appropriateness of the scales.

Ethical considerations

This article followed all ethical standards for research without direct contact with human or animal subjects.

Results

In this study, the current status of each of the variables was assessed by using the one-sample *t*-test, in which the mean society is assessed at a 95% significance level. In this test, mean values above the contractual value 3 (moderate value) are favourable, and the test was implemented in SPSS.

Moreover, Figure 1 and Table 4 show the results of hypothesis testing by structural equation modelling in LISREL software.

The standard coefficient of the existing relationship would be significant at the 95% significance level if the significant number was >1.96 or ≤ 1.96. Table 4 presents the relationship between research variables based on the model of causal relationships and significant numbers, based on which the hypothesis was confirmed or rejected.

Discussion

The present study aimed to evaluate the effect of the perception of justice in Islamic society on citizens' trust and
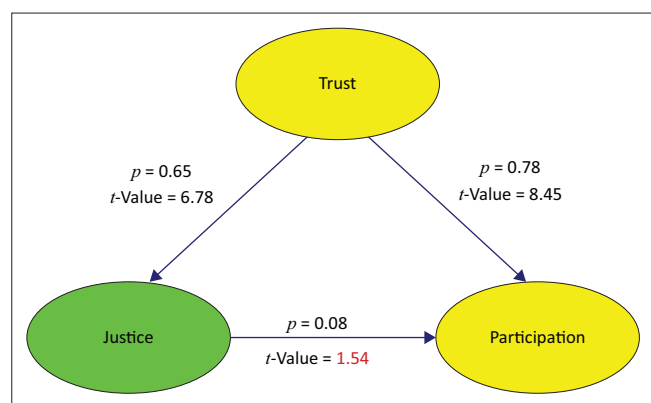
FIGURE 1: Structural model of the research in Linear Structural Relations.

TABLE 3: One sample *t*-test results.

Indices/ dimensions	Mean	Standard deviation	T statistic	Degree of freedom	Significance	Results
Justice	4.2113	0.221	38.720	3577	0.0000	Appropriate
Trust	3.8456	0.467	28.179	3577	0.0000	Appropriate
Participation in the creation of a democratic Islamic society	3.5261	0.485	24.652	3577	0.0000	Appropriate

TABLE 4: Hypothesis testing results.

No.	Hypothesis	Standard coefficient (*R*)	Significance (t)	Hypothesis testing result
1	**Justice →** Participation in the creation of a democratic Islamic society	0.08	1.54	Rejected
2	**Justice → trust**	0.65	6.78	Confirmed
3	**Trust →** Participation in the creation of a democratic Islamic society	0.78	8.45	Confirmed
4	**Justice → trust →** Participation in the creation of a democratic Islamic society	0.50	4.81	Confirmed

participation in forming an Islamic democratic community. Given the positive effects of the participation of citizens on the acceleration and improvement of productivity of services provided by the authorities, the identification of factors that play a role in the emergence and improvement of the phenomenon in the governing space of the community has attracted the attention of urban managers and academic researchers, which was also a reason for conducting the present study. In addition, there is no comprehensive research that simultaneously evaluates the three mentioned variables in Islamic communities. Therefore, assessing the relationship between the three variables was another important goal of the present research. According to the study's findings, the evaluated citizens had the appropriate perception of the presence of general justice in the society's atmosphere (mean: 4.2114). In addition, the results were indicative of the proper participation of Indonesian Muslims in various urban affairs (mean: 3.8456). Moreover, citizens fairly trusted the community's authorities (but not so much) (mean: 3.5261) (Table 3). Nevertheless, their trust was not at the ideal level. Accordingly, the country's authorities must be diligent in creating an honest atmosphere between officials and citizens (more than before) in addition to strengthening one's ability and expertise in doing things and creating a sense of benevolence towards people in order to increase citizens' trust in them. Citizens' perception of honesty in authorities' decisions, allocations and procedures creates a positive space, from which the whole community can benefit.

According to the results of the present study, there was no significant relationship between the perception of justice in an Islamic society and citizens' participation (path coefficient: 0.08, significance number: 1.54). The results of assessing this hypothesis further highlighted the importance of identifying and involving other variables in the relationship between justice in an Islamic society and participation. The results of assessing the second hypothesis revealed the positive and significant impact of the perception of justice in an Islamic society on citizens' trust (path coefficient: 0.65, significance number: 6.78). Moreover, a positive, significant relationship was observed between citizens' trust and their participation in urban affairs (path

coefficient: 0.78, significance number: 8.45). It is worth mentioning that the investigation of the indirect relationships of the research variables by LISREL software confirmed that citizens' trust in the authorities had a positive and significant effect on the relationship between the perception of justice in an Islamic society and citizens' participation. This concept made the relationship between the perception of justice in Islamic society and the participation of Indonesian Muslim citizens significant as a mediating factor. Confirming the mediating role of trust means that by strengthening citizens' trust in officials (through increasing trust in the ability of officials, increasing trust in the benevolence of officials, and finally increasing trust in the honesty of officials), the role of other variables such as the perception of justice, which in the present study it had a positive effect on the participation of citizens. According to the study findings, the perception of justice in Islamic society is the foundation stone of citizens' trust and participation, and it is clear that the existence of justice increases public trust and citizens' participation in the decision-making processes of the authorities. In this regard, the following recommendations are made. The authorities must play the role of a coordinator between the public and the city's management units. Instead of ruling the people, governments must prioritise citizen orientation. Council members should increase their participation in city affairs with face-to-face interactions and follow up on people's demands and reduce the feeling of powerlessness. Community officials should strengthen the sense of brotherhood and equality by participating in citizens' gatherings, such as attending mosques and cultural and religious activities. This fosters friendly relations and love between the authorities and citizens, which in turn helps the authorities to gain the trust of citizens. In addition, the authorities should not seek any selfish interests in their decision-making processes and should humbly answer and

explain the reasons for their actions. This reduces the ambiguities and worries citizens might have, and they can have a better understanding of the authorities' actions and thus feel less injustice. In city management, it is possible to create a kind of public trust and a sense of collective satisfaction and trust among people by eliminating discriminations and inequalities and creating justice in service delivery.

Furthermore, participation in decision-making in the form of consultation should be one of the main points of the plans and policies of the officials in the administration of Islamic society. This means that people can play a role in their own destinies and means participating in decision-making processes. Therefore, even though in some cases the vote of the majority may not be legitimate, the majority can actualise or become the basis for the realisation of a democratic Islamic society with its acceptance. Accordingly, from the perspective of Islam, people have the right to determine their own destinies and benefit from individual and social liberties under the light of an Islamic government.

Conclusion

Although Islam does not accept some components of democracy in the western sense, and it is where the majority vote is in conflict with human dignity, it includes other components of democracy (far better and more appealing in Islam). Therefore, not only is there no conflict between religion and democracy, but also the most progressive type of government is a democracy based on religious teachings. Religious democracy is a form of governance in Islamic countries where religious citizens have active participation in political life within the framework of Sharia teachings and avoid any individual tyranny in public decision-making. The divinity of the nature of sovereignty and the transfer of sovereignty from God to the people have been considered the two main elements of this type of government. In addition, this type of government has features such as dual divine-popular legitimacy, rule of law, permanent public supervision over the behaviour of government officials and administration of government affairs based on people's votes.

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Data availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the authors.

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