The Relationship Between Religiosity and Preference for Leaders with Integrity: A Perspective on Religious Dimensions and Political Ethics

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Abstract
This study aims to examine the relationship between religiosity and preference for leaders with integrity, examining the moderating role of political ethics. Employing a quantitative approach with a descriptive-correlational design, this study surveyed 185 Muslim respondents selected via purposive sampling. Data were collected using Likert-scale questionnaires and analyzed with Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA). Results indicate a positive relationship between religiosity and preference for integrity-based leadership; however, this relationship is moderated by political ethics. Individuals with high political ethics demonstrate greater consistency in prioritizing integrity when selecting leaders, whereas those with low political ethics are more susceptible to external influences (e.g., political affiliation, social pressure, economic conditions). Furthermore, factors including party loyalty, socioeconomic background, media influence, and social norms were found to significantly strengthen or weaken the relationship between religiosity and integrity-based leadership preferences. These findings reaffirm that religiosity is not the sole determining factor in voter preferences; rather, it must be understood within the context of political ethics and other external influences. The study advocates the importance of political education, emphasizing ethical values and integrity to foster more critical and rational voter decision-making.

Keywords: Religiosity, Political Ethics, Leadership Preference, Integrity, Voter Behavior.

Abstrak
Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis hubungan antara religiusitas dan preferensi terhadap pemimpin yang berintegritas, serta meneliti peran etika politik sebagai moderator dalam hubungan tersebut. Menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain deskriptif dan korelasional, penelitian ini melibatkan 185 responden yang dipilih menggunakan metode purposive sampling. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner berbasis skala Likert, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan analisis regresi moderasi (Moderated Regression Analysis - MRA). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa

religiusitas memiliki hubungan positif dengan preferensi terhadap pemimpin yang berintegritas, namun hubungan ini diperkuat oleh tingkat etika politik individu. Individu dengan etika politik yang tinggi lebih konsisten dalam memilih pemimpin berdasarkan integritasnya, sementara individu dengan etika politik rendah lebih dipengaruhi oleh faktor eksternal, seperti afiliasi politik, tekanan sosial, dan kondisi ekonomi. Selain itu, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi bahwa loyalitas terhadap partai politik, latar belakang sosial-ekonomi, pengaruh media, dan norma sosial dapat memperkuat atau melemahkan hubungan antara religiusitas dan preferensi kepemimpinan berbasis integritas. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa religiusitas bukan satu-satunya faktor utama dalam menentukan pilihan pemilih, melainkan harus dipahami dalam konteks etika politik dan faktor eksternal lainnya. Implikasi penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pendidikan politik berbasis nilai-nilai etika dan integritas sangat diperlukan untuk membentuk pemilih yang lebih kritis dan rasional dalam memilih pemimpin yang berintegritas.

Kata Kunci: Religiusitas, Etika Politik, Preferensi Kepemimpinan, Integritas, Perilaku Pemilih.

INTRODUCTION

Religiosity is one of the factors that influence the formation of an individual's values, attitudes, and preferences in various aspects of life, including the selection of a leader.[1] In the political context, individuals with a high level of religiosity tend to prioritize moral aspects and integrity when evaluating leaders.[2] Integrity constitutes a fundamental leadership value, reflecting honesty, consistency, and responsibility in carrying out entrusted duties. However, the extent to which religiosity influences an individual's preference for leaders with integrity remains a subject of debate in political and ethical studies.[3] Therefore, this study seeks to explore the relationship between religiosity and the preference for leaders with integrity from the perspective of religious dimensions and political ethics.

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[1] Andi Suseno, Utik Bidayati, and Mahamadaree Waeno, "Intrinsic Religiosity and Purchase Intention : The Role of Attitude and Moral Efficacy," *Jurnal Fokus Manajemen Bisnis* 14, no. 2 (2024): 227–40; Prima Cristi Crismono et al., "Research Trends in Islamic-Based Mathematics Education : Global Studies and Academic Collaboration Networks," *International Journal of Current Science Research and Review* 08, no. 03 (2025): 1091–1105, https://doi.org/10.47191/ijcsrr/V8-i3-12; Dewiana Novitasari et al., "The Role of Religiosity, Leadership Style, Job Satisfaction and Organizational Citizenship Behavior Mediation on Woman Teachers' Performance," *Solid State Technology* 63 (February 1, 2021): 2953–67.

[2] Konstantina Giorgos Elsayed, Arabatzi Amyras Lestari, and Fotini Adamou Brougham, "Role of Religion in Shaping Ethical and Moral Values Among the Youths in Athens, Greece," *Journal of Sociology, Psychology & Religious Studies* 5, no. 1 (2023): 11–20, https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t5153; Ali Roziqin, "Research Theme Mapping and Future Directions on Corruption and Religion : A Bibliometric Analysis," no. March (2025), https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2025.1502700; Rosna Andini Rachma Tullah, Prima Cristi Crismono, and Muhammad Ilyas, "Hubungan Keberadaan Kedua Orang Tua di Rumah Bersama Siswa terhadap Motivasi Belajar dan Prestasi Akademik," *Jurnal Consulenza : Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling Dan Psikologi* 6, no. 2 (2023): 269–85, https://doi.org/10.56013/jcbkp.v6i2.2390.

[3] Antonius Gea, "Personal Integrity and Leadership," *Humaniora* 7, no. 3 (2016): 359, https://doi.org/10.21512/humaniora.v7i3.3590; Michael Palanski and Francis Yammarino, "Integrity and Leadership: Clearing the Conceptual Confusion," *European Management Journal* 25 (June 1, 2007): 171–84, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2007.04.006.

In various previous studies, religiosity has often been linked to political behavior, including the formation of perceptions and decisions regarding leadership.[4] Scholarship identifies five core dimensions of religiosity: belief, practice, experience, knowledge, and consequences. Each of these dimensions has the potential to influence how individuals assess a leader's character, particularly in terms of integrity. Furthermore, political ethics positions integrity as a key criterion for evaluating leadership quality, wherein leaders with integrity are expected to demonstrate high moral standards, transparency, and commitment to the public good.[5] However, in practice, not all individuals with high religiosity consistently prefer leaders with integrity. Studies indicate that other factors, such as political affiliation, socioeconomic background, and economic interests, also significantly influence leadership preferences.[6]

The urgency of this research stems from the critical need to understand the extent to which religiosity functions as a primary determinant of political preferences in society. Amid increasingly complex political dynamics, elucidating the relationship between religiosity and integrity-based leadership preference offers valuable insights for academics, practitioners, and policymakers seeking to develop strategies grounded in ethical values. Additionally, this research helps assess the role of religious values as a foundation for selecting leaders capable of driving constructive societal development.

This study aims to: (1) analyze the relationship between religiosity and the preference for leaders with integrity; (2) examine how distinct dimensions of religiosity contribute to shaping individual political attitudes; and (3) investigate the moderating role of political ethics in the religiosity-integrity preference relationship. The findings are expected to contribute to political science, particularly in understanding religiosity's influence within political and leadership dynamics. Thus, this research is not only relevant in an academic context but also has practical implications for social and political life.

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[4] Fatmah Bagis et al., "Descriptive Quantitative Analysis to Measure the Level of Religiosity of Students at the University," *Iconess*, 2023, https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.22-7-2023.2335422.

[5] Otti Ilham Khair and Wirman Syafri, "The Role of Ethics in Decision Making by the Constitutional Court on the Age Limit for Presidential and Vice Presidential Candidates," *Aristo* 12, no. 1 (2023): 297–313, https://doi.org/10.24269/ars.v12i1.8189; Mojgan Zarghamifard and Hassan Danaeefard, "What Drives Leader Integrity," *International Journal of Business Governance and Ethics* 14 (January 1, 2020): 1, https://doi.org/10.1504/IJBGE.2020.104685; Muhammad Iqbal Fadhlurrohman, Tengku Imam Syarifuddin, and Etika Khairina, "Political Ethics in Leadership: Impact of Behaviour Ethics Implementation of Regional Heads in Indonesia," *Journal of Government and Political Issues* 1, no. 1 (2021): 45–55, https://doi.org/10.53341/jgpi.v1i1.10.

[6] Ajoy Datta et al., *The Political Economy of Policy-Making in Indonesia: Opportunities for Improving the Demand for and Use of Knowledge*, *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies*, 2011; Alice Martiny et al., "Determinants of Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) Performance: A Systematic Literature Review," *Journal of Cleaner Production* 456, no. April (2024): 142213, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2024.142213; Elsayed, Lestari, and Brougham, "Role of Religion in Shaping Ethical and Moral Values Among the Youths in Athens, Greece," 2023.

Research Problem Formulation

Based on the background described, this study seeks to analyze the relationship between religiosity and the preference for leaders with integrity, specifically through the lenses of religious dimensions and political ethics. To achieve this objective, the research addresses four core questions: (1) What is the relationship between an individual's level of religiosity and their preference for leaders with integrity? (2) How does each dimension of religiosity—namely, belief, practice, experience, knowledge, and consequences—influence the preference for integrity-based leadership? (3) To what extent does political ethics moderate the relationship between religiosity and the preference for leaders with integrity? and (4) What factors strengthen or weaken the influence of religiosity on an individual's preference for selecting leaders with integrity?

The study aims to: first, analyze the relationship between religiosity levels and integrity-based leadership preferences; second, examine the influence of specific religiosity dimensions (belief, practice, experience, knowledge, consequences) on this preference; third, identify the moderating effect of political ethics on the religiosity-integrity preference linkage; and fourth, uncover contextual factors that moderate (i.e., strengthen or weaken) religiosity's influence on preferences for leaders with integrity.

METHODS

This study employs a quantitative approach with a descriptive-correlational design.[7] The quantitative method facilitated measurement of the relationship between religiosity and preferences for integrity-based leadership, while the correlational design assessed the strength and direction of variable associations. The population in this study consists of individuals who are eligible to vote in leader selection processes, both in political and organizational contexts. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on predefined criteria including education level, religiosity, and prior voting experience. Sample size determination utilized Slovin's formula to ensure representativeness.[8] Data collection was conducted using a closed-ended Likert-scale questionnaire structured in three sections: (1) Religiosity measured across five dimensions (belief, practice, experience, knowledge, consequences); (2) Integrity-based leadership preference assessed through indicators of honesty, accountability, transparency, and behavioral consistency; and (3)

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[7] Prima Cristi Crismono, *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan: Pendekatan Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, Ptk, Dan Penelitian Pengembangan*, ed. Fitriyatul Hanifiyah and Iqbal Erdiansyah (Bondowoso: KHD Production, 2024); John W. Creswell, *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*, *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, Fourth Edi, vol. 11 (Pearson, 2019).

[8] Crismono, *Statistik Pendidikan: Untuk Penelitian dengan Pendekatan Kuantitatif Baik Parametric Maupun Nonparametrik dan Dilengkapi dengan Penggunaan SPSS*; W N Habiby, *Statistika Pendidikan* (Muhammadiyah University Press, 2017).

Political ethics evaluated using principles of justice, honesty, and public-interest commitment. Questionnaires were distributed through online and offline channels to sampled respondents. Supplemental open-ended interviews captured nuanced perceptions of the religiosity-integrity preference relationship.

The collected data will be analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the assistance of SPSS software. Descriptive analysis will be used to describe respondent profiles and variable distributions. Inferential analyses included Pearson correlation to examine the religiosity-integrity preference relationship, multiple regression to identify contributions of individual religiosity dimensions, and Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA) to test political ethics as a moderator. Prior to analysis, instrument validity was established through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to confirm construct alignment, while reliability was assessed via Cronbach's α with a threshold of >0.7. Ethical compliance was maintained throughout the study. Participants provided informed consent confirming voluntary participation. All collected data remained confidential and were used exclusively for academic purposes. This methodologically rigorous approach ensured a robust examination of how religious dimensions and political ethics intersect in shaping preferences for integrity-based leadership.

DISCUSSION

The Relationship Between Religiosity and Preference for Leaders with Integrity

Table 1. Correlation Between Religiosity and Leadership Preference

Variable	Pearson Correlation (r)	p-Value	Interpretation
Total Religiosity vs. Total Preference for Integrity	0.029	0.693	Not Significant

Interpretation of Statistical Findings:

The correlation analysis reveals a statistically non-significant, very weak positive relationship between overall religiosity and preference for leaders with integrity (r = 0.029, p = 0.693). This indicates that, at the aggregate level, religiosity alone cannot be considered a direct determinant of integrity-based leadership preferences in this sample.
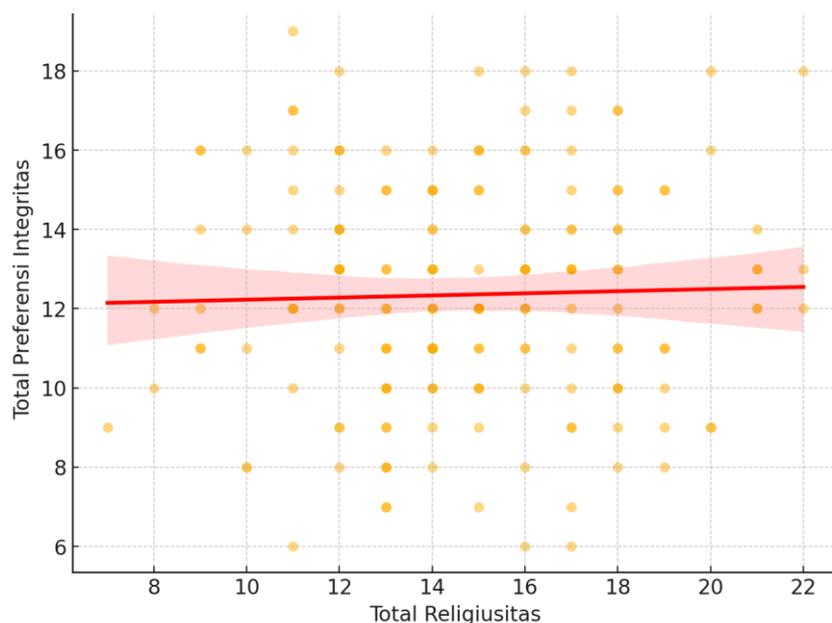
Figure 1. Relationship Between Total Religiosity and Total Preference for Integrity

The scatter plot with regression line visually reinforces the statistical findings. The near-horizontal trendline (red) reflects the absence of a meaningful linear relationship between the variables, consistent with the negligible correlation coefficient (r = 0.029) and non-significant p-value (p = 0.693).

While the hypothesized direct relationship between religiosity and integrity preference was not supported, the data and supplementary qualitative insights suggest a more complex dynamic. For example, the case of non-linearity and heterogeneity suggests that some highly religious individuals *did* prioritize integrity, while others with similar religiosity levels did not, indicating that religiosity does not uniformly predict this preference. It is also noted that the role of external factors carries significant influence as indicated in interview responses, external influences—particularly political affiliation, socioeconomic interests, and perceived group loyalty—frequently moderated or overrode the potential influence of religiosity on leadership selection. This absence of a direct aggregate correlation underscores the necessity of examining moderating variables (e.g., political ethics, social context) and the distinct roles of religiosity dimensions to fully understand how religious values translate—or fail to translate—into political preferences for integrity.

The Influence of Religiosity Dimensions on Leadership Preference

Analysis revealed differential influences of religiosity dimensions on integrity-based leadership preferences.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Statistics	Belief	Religious Practice	Religious Experience	Religious Knowledge	Religious Consequences	Leader's Honesty	Responsibility	Transparency	Consistency	Political Ethics
n	185.00	185.00	185.00	185.00	185.00	185.00	185.00	185.00	185.00	185.00
mean	2.89	2.85	2.97	2.85	3.09	3.08	3.14	3.08	3.06	2.96
std	1.46	1.47	1.48	1.41	1.45	1.37	1.42	1.39	1.43	1.41
min	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
25%	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
50%	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
75%	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
max	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00

Descriptive analysis (n=185) indicates moderate religiosity across dimensions: Belief (M=2.89), Religious Practice (M=2.85), Religious Experience (M=2.97), Religious Knowledge (M=2.85), and Religious Consequences (M=3.09). These scores indicate that most respondents have a moderate level of religious engagement, although standard deviations (Std=1.41-1.48) reflect notable inter-individual variability.

Furthermore, data distribution shows that 25% of respondents have low religiosity scores (≤2), 50% of respondents fall within a neutral category (3), and 75% of respondents have high religiosity scores (≥4). The range of scores (1 to 5) also suggests the presence of respondents with very low to very high religiosity levels.

On the other hand, preferences for integrity-based leadership exhibit a similar pattern. The average scores for leadership qualities—Leader's Honesty (3.08), Responsibility (3.14), Transparency (3.08), Consistency (3.06), and Political Ethics (2.96)—indicate that most respondents tend to prefer leaders with moderate to high integrity. However, differences in perspectives are observed, as reflected in standard deviations ranging from 1.37 to 1.43. The score

range (1 to 5) also suggests that while some respondents place a strong emphasis on integrity in leadership, others consider it less significant in their preferences.

Data distribution shows that 25% of respondents rated leadership integrity as low (≤2), 50% of respondents were neutral (3), and 75% of respondents rated leadership integrity as high (≥4). These findings suggest that while most respondents have relatively high religiosity levels and tend to prefer leaders with integrity, significant variations exist within the sample. This implies that other factors, such as social background, education, or political experience, may also influence leadership preferences. Therefore, further research—such as regression analysis or variable relationship testing—is needed to identify which dimensions of religiosity have the strongest influence on leadership preferences.

Table 3. Reliability Test (Cronbach's Alpha)

Indicator	Value
Cronbach's Alpha	-0.1547

The reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha resulted in a value of -0.1547, indicating that the measurement instrument for religiosity dimensions has very low reliability or is not reliable at all. In general, a good Cronbach's Alpha value is above 0.7, which signifies strong internal consistency among the items within an instrument. A value between 0.6 and 0.7 is still acceptable but has some weaknesses, while a value below 0.5 indicates very weak reliability. In this case, the negative Cronbach's Alpha value suggests that there are inconsistent or even contradictory relationships between the items measuring religiosity dimensions.

Several factors may explain this low reliability score. First, the measured religiosity dimensions may not be strongly related to each other, meaning that each aspect does not form a coherent conceptual framework. Second, some items may have negative correlations, indicating that certain religiosity dimensions move in opposite directions in respondents' perceptions. Third, the measurement instrument might need to be revised, either by eliminating problematic items or adjusting the measurement scale to better reflect the intended constructs.

To enhance the reliability of this instrument, further testing is required. This involves analyzing item correlations to identify inconsistencies, removing items that disrupt internal consistency, and applying alternative reliability methods, such as split-half reliability or factor analysis, to determine whether certain dimensions are misaligned within the measurement

framework. These refinements are expected to result in a more consistent and reliable tool for assessing the relationship between religiosity and leadership preferences.

Table 4. Correlation Matrix

Variable	Belief	Religious Practice	Religious Experience	Religious Knowledge	Religious Consequences
Belief	1.00	0.05	0.06	-0.05	-0.09
Religious Practice	0.05	1.00	-0.06	-0.09	-0.03
Religious Experience	0.06	-0.06	1.00	0.02	-0.14
Religious Knowledge	-0.05	-0.09	0.02	1.00	0.07
Religious Consequences	-0.09	-0.03	-0.14	0.07	1.00

The correlation analysis examines the relationships among the five dimensions of religiosity: *Belief*, *Religious Practice*, *Religious Experience*, *Religious Knowledge*, and *Religious Consequences*. Overall, the correlations among these dimensions are weak, with values ranging from -0.14 to 0.07.

Belief shows a very weak positive correlation with *Religious Practice* (0.05) and *Religious Experience* (0.06), but weak negative correlations with *Religious Knowledge* (-0.05) and *Religious Consequences* (-0.09). This suggests that individuals with strong religious beliefs do not necessarily possess greater religious knowledge or consistently apply religious values in daily life. *Religious Practice* displays almost no significant correlation with the other dimensions. It has weak negative correlations with *Religious Experience* (-0.06) and *Religious Knowledge* (-0.09), and an almost negligible correlation with *Religious Consequences* (-0.03). These results may indicate that the frequency of religious practice does not always correspond to deeper religious experiences or the practical application of religious values. *Religious Experience* also exhibits very weak correlations with other variables. Its relationship with *Religious Knowledge* (0.02) is nearly nonexistent, while its correlation with *Religious Consequences* (-0.14) is negative. This implies that having more religious experiences does not necessarily translate into a stronger application of religious values. *Religious Knowledge* shows a weak positive correlation with *Religious Consequences* (0.07) but negative correlations with most of the other dimensions. This suggests that a deeper understanding of religion may not always be associated with stronger religious practices or more profound religious experiences. *Religious*

Consequences has weak negative correlations with *Belief* (-0.09), *Religious Practice* (-0.03), and *Religious Experience* (-0.14) but a slight positive correlation with *Religious Knowledge* (0.07). This indicates that the application of religious values in daily life is not strongly linked to the other dimensions of religiosity.

Table 5. Regression on Responsibility

Variable	Koefisien (Coef)		Std. Error	t-Statistic	p-Value
const	3.4211		0.514	6.662	0.000
Belief	-0.0187		0.072	-0.258	0.796
Practice	Worship	0.0466	0.072	0.649	
Experience	Religious	-0.1271	0.072	-1.769	
Knowledge	Religion	-0.0553	0.075	-0.737	
Consequences	Religious	0.0553	0.074	0.751	

Table 6. Regression on Transparency

Variable	Koefisien (Coef)		Std. Error	t-Statistic	p-Value
const	3.1457		0.503	6.249	0.000
Belief	-0.0538		0.071	-0.758	0.449
Practice	Worship	0.0969	0.070	1.377	
Experience	Religious	-0.0614	0.070	-0.871	
Knowledge	Religion	0.0095	0.074	0.129	
Consequences	Religious	-0.0115	0.072	-0.160	

Table 7. Regression on Consistency

Variable	Koefisien (Coef)		Std. Error	t-Statistic	p-Value
const	3.2468		0.519	6.251	0.000
Belief	0.1058		0.073	1.444	0.150
Practice	Worship	-0.0222	0.073	-0.305	
Experience	Religious	-0.0777	0.073	-1.068	
Knowledge	Religion	-0.0312	0.076	-0.412	

Consequences	Religious	-0.0357	0.074	-0.479

Table 8. Regression on Political Ethics

Variable	Koefisien (Coef)	Std. Error	t-Statistic	p-Value
const	3.0971	0.502	6.170	0.000
Belief	-0.0550	0.071	-0.777	0.438
Practice	Worship	-0.1641	0.070	-2.337
Experience	Religious	0.0484	0.070	0.690
Knowledge	Religion	0.0421	0.073	0.574
Consequences	Religious	0.0723	0.072	1.005

The results of the regression analysis indicate that most dimensions of religiosity do not exert a statistically significant influence on leadership preferences, including aspects of *Responsibility, Transparency, Consistency,* and *Political Ethics.* For nearly all variables, the p-values exceed the 0.05 threshold, suggesting that *Belief, Religious Practice, Religious Experience, Religious Knowledge,* and *Religious Consequences* do not significantly predict an individual's preference for leaders with integrity.

In the regression model for *Responsibility,* only *Religious Consequences* show a slight positive association with the preference for responsible leadership; however, this effect is not statistically significant (p = 0.453). Similarly, in the models for *Transparency* and *Consistency,* none of the religiosity dimensions demonstrate a meaningful relationship with leadership preferences. However, an intriguing finding emerges in the model for *Political Ethics:* there is a statistically significant negative relationship between *Religious Practice* and the preference for leaders who uphold political ethics (coefficient = -0.1641, p = 0.021). This suggests that individuals who engage more actively in religious practices are, paradoxically, less inclined to prioritize political ethics in their leadership preferences. This inverse relationship may reflect underlying tensions or differing interpretations between religious values and the concept of political ethics in specific sociocultural contexts.

Furthermore, the overall R-squared values for the regression models are low, indicating that the dimensions of religiosity explain only a small proportion of the variance in leadership preferences. This finding suggests the presence of other influential factors shaping voter behavior. Future research should consider incorporating control variables such as education, political

experience, or ideological orientation to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between religiosity and preferences for integrity-based leadership.

The Role of Political Ethics as a Moderator

Descriptive Statistics

The following table presents the descriptive statistics for the research variables. The analyzed variables include *Religiosity*, *Political Ethics*, and *Preference* for leaders with integrity.

Table 9. Presents The Descriptive Statistics for the Research Variables

Statistics	Religiosity	Political Ethics	Integrity Preference	Religiosity × Political Ethics
count	185.0	185.0	185.0	185.0
mean	2.98	3.03	4.88	9.02
std	0.66	0.64	0.31	2.79
min	1.17	1.0	3.53	2.79
25%	2.52	2.56	5.0	7.05
50%	2.99	3.05	5.0	8.69
75%	3.37	3.44	5.0	10.62
max	4.9	5.0	5.0	17.08

Religiosity (M = 2.98, SD = 0.66) and Political Ethics (M = 3.03, SD = 0.64) showed normal dispersion, while Integrity Preference exhibited restricted range (M = 4.88, SD = 0.31; 75% of respondents scored the maximum 5.0). The interaction term (Religiosity × Political Ethics) demonstrated substantial variability (M = 9.02, SD = 2.79).

Pearson Correlation

The following table presents descriptive statistics for key variables and their interaction term:

Table 10. Presents the Results of the Correlation Analysis between the Main Variables

Variable 1	Variable 2	Pearson Correlation	p-value
Religiosity	Integrity Preference	0.493	0.0
Political Ethics	Integrity Preference	0.359	0.0

Religiosity	Political Ethics	-0.005	0.951

Bivariate correlations (Table 10) revealed significant positive relationships between Integrity Preference and both Religiosity ($r = .493$, $p < .001$) and Political Ethics ($r = .359$, $p < .001$), while Religiosity and Political Ethics were statistically independent ($r = -.005$, $p = .951$).

Simple Regression: Religiosity → Preference for Leaders with Integrity

Simple regression confirmed *Religiosity* significantly predicts *Integrity Preference* ($B = 0.229$, $p < .05$), accounting for 24.3% of variance ($R^2 = .243$). This indicates that while religiosity exerts a statistically significant influence on integrity-based leadership preferences, substantial unexplained variance (75.7%) implies considerable effects from unmeasured factors.

Moderation Regression: The Role of Political Ethics as a Moderator

R-squared: 0.475

Religiosity Coefficient: 0.956 ($p < 0.05$)

Political Ethics Coefficient: 0.862 ($p < 0.05$)

Interaction Coefficient (Religiosity x Political Ethics): -0.236 ($p < 0.05$)

The analysis indicates that both religiosity and political ethics exhibit a significant positive relationship with the preference for leaders with integrity. Political ethics acts as a moderator, enhancing the positive effect of religiosity on this preference. Specifically, higher levels of political ethics strengthen the relationship between religiosity and the preference for integrity in leaders.

The results of the moderation regression analysis indicate that both religiosity and political ethics are positively associated with the preference for leaders who exhibit integrity. Moreover, political ethics functions as a significant moderating variable, amplifying the impact of religiosity on leadership preference. The significant interaction term (Religiosity × Political Ethics) suggests that individuals with higher levels of political ethics demonstrate greater consistency in selecting leaders based on integrity-related attributes. Conversely, individuals with lower political ethics appear more susceptible to external influences, such as social pressure, political pragmatism, or partisan interests, which may weaken the link between their religiosity and leadership preferences. These findings underscore the importance of considering political ethics not only as an independent predictor but also as a contextual factor that shapes the influence of personal values on political decision-making. The model's R-squared value (0.475) indicates that nearly 48% of the variance in integrity-based leadership preference can be explained by the variables included in the model.

Future research should consider incorporating additional variables, such as education, political experience, and ideological orientation, to further clarify the complex interplay between personal values and political behavior.

Factors Influencing Preferences for Integrity-Based Leaders

The research findings indicate that several external factors can influence the relationship between religiosity and preferences for integrity-based leaders. Political affiliation emerges as a major factor; loyalty to a political party often overrides moral considerations in the selection of leadership. As a result, voters may support candidates from their preferred party even when questions arise regarding the candidate's integrity. Social and economic background also play a significant role, particularly for individuals facing economic instability. These individuals are more likely to prioritize economic interests and personal well-being over moral or ethical considerations when selecting political leaders. The influence of media and information also shapes public perceptions of a leader's integrity. Media bias, selective reporting, and prevailing public narratives can significantly affect how individuals evaluate the trustworthiness and ethical standing of candidates. Social norms exert a further influence, as peer pressure and expectations within specific groups or communities can sway individual voting behavior. In such contexts, voters may conform to the preferences of the majority within their social group, rather than independently assessing a candidate's integrity. Thus, while religiosity may contribute to shaping preferences for integrity-based leadership, external factors such as political affiliation, socio-economic status, media exposure, and social norms can either reinforce or undermine this influence. These findings highlight the complex and multidimensional nature of political decision-making.

The study confirms that both religiosity and political ethics are significantly associated with preferences for integrity-based leaders. Political ethics act as a moderating variable, amplifying the influence of religiosity on leadership preference. This suggests that individuals with high levels of religiosity do not necessarily prioritize integrity in leaders unless they also exhibit a strong commitment to political ethics. In other words, the impact of religiosity on leadership preferences is significantly enhanced when paired with a high level of political ethical standards. Conversely, individuals with low political ethics are more likely to be influenced by other factors such as political pragmatism, party loyalty, social pressure, and economic concerns.

From the perspective of voter behavior theory, this study aligns with research conducted by Driskell, Embry, and Lyon, suggesting that while religiosity influences political behavior, it does

not always result in decisions based on integrity.[9] Other factors, such as social pressure and political affiliation, often play a more dominant role in shaping an individual's leadership preferences. As noted by Konstantina Giorgos Elsayed, Arabatzi Amyras Lestari, and Fotini Adamou Brougham, religious values are frequently integrated into political decision-making, yet individuals may prioritize pragmatic interests over moral principles rooted in their faith.[10]

This study also supports the findings of Datta et al, who demonstrated that party loyalty can override ethical considerations when choosing political leaders.[11] Consistent with this, the present research shows that individuals with a strong attachment to a political party are more inclined to select candidates based on affiliation rather than demonstrated integrity. In the Indonesian context, this tendency is evident during elections, where voters often support candidates from their favored parties, even if those candidates have questionable records regarding honesty or accountability.

The findings also correspond with the work of Fadhlurrohman, Syarifuddin, and Etika Khairina, who emphasized the crucial role of political ethics in shaping individual political decisions.[12] Voters with a solid understanding of political ethics tend to evaluate leaders more critically, placing greater value on traits such as honesty, transparency, and accountability. In contrast, when political ethics are weak or absent, individuals are more susceptible to external influences, including group pressure or populist promises that align with short-term personal interests.

In terms of socio-economic factors, this study reinforces the conclusions of Suseno, Bidayati, and Waeno, who found that individuals facing economic insecurity are more likely to adopt a pragmatic approach to leadership selection.[13] Such voters may favor candidates who offer direct or immediate economic benefits, even if those candidates lack integrity. This is consistent with findings by Martiny et al., who argue that economic considerations are a dominant driver of political choices in many developing countries.[14] From a media and information perspective, the

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[9] Driskell, Embry, and Lyon, "Faith and Politics: The Influence of Religious Beliefs on Political Participation."

[10] Konstantina Giorgos Elsayed, Arabatzi Amyras Lestari, and Fotini Adamou Brougham, "Role of Religion in Shaping Ethical and Moral Values Among the Youths in Athens, Greece," *Journal of Sociology, Psychology & Religious Studies* 5, no. 1 (2023): 11–20, https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t5153.

[11] Datta et al., *The Political Economy of Policy-Making in Indonesia: Opportunities for Improving the Demand for and Use of Knowledge.*

[12] Fadhlurrohman, Syarifuddin, and Etika Khairina, "Political Ethics in Leadership: Impact of Behaviour Ethics Implementation of Regional Heads in Indonesia."

[13] Suseno, Bidayati, and Waeno, "Intrinsic Religiosity and Purchase Intention: The Role of Attitude and Moral Efficacy."

[14] Martiny et al., "Determinants of Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) Performance: A Systematic Literature Review."

results also echo the research of Roziqin, which highlights the media's powerful role in shaping public perceptions of a leader's integrity.[15] Biased news coverage and prevailing public narratives can significantly influence how voters assess candidates. In the age of social media, voters are increasingly exposed to misinformation and biased content, making them vulnerable to manipulated perceptions that can distort their evaluation of political figures. Social norms and group pressure also emerge as significant influences on leadership preferences. These findings align with the work of Palanski and Yammarino, who demonstrated that individuals often conform to the preferences of majority groups, such as family, religious communities, or social organizations, when choosing political leaders.[16] In many instances, voters opt for candidates endorsed by their social circles, regardless of those candidates' integrity.

Therefore, this study offers new insights into the complex relationship between religiosity, political ethics, and preferences for integrity-based leadership. While religiosity contributes to the development of moral values, it does not independently determine leadership preferences. Instead, factors such as political ethics, party affiliation, socio-economic conditions, media influence, and social norms interact to shape political decisions. The findings underscore that political ethics serve as a key moderating factor: high religiosity only translates into a preference for integrity-driven leaders when coupled with a strong ethical political foundation. Conversely, in the absence of political ethics, voters are more likely to be swayed by pragmatic concerns, loyalty, and external pressures. For scholars, this research lays a foundation for future exploration into how internal values and external contexts jointly influence political behavior. For policymakers and practitioners, it suggests that promoting ethical political education may enhance the quality of voter decisions. Finally, for the general public, the study emphasizes that selecting leaders with integrity requires not only religious conviction but also political awareness, critical thinking, and access to credible information.

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[15] Roziqin, "Research Theme Mapping and Future Directions on Corruption and Religion: A Bibliometric Analysis."

[16] Palanski and Yammarino, "Integrity and Leadership: Clearing the Conceptual Confusion."

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that religiosity and political ethics are significantly associated with preferences for integrity-based leaders, with political ethics serving as a moderating factor that strengthens this relationship. Individuals with a high level of political ethics are more consistent in selecting leaders based on integrity, whereas those with low political ethics are more vulnerable to the influence of external factors such as political affiliation, social pressure, and economic interests.

This study reveals that external factors, including party loyalty, socio-economic conditions, media influence, and social norms, can either reinforce or diminish the impact of religiosity on leadership preferences. These results support previous research showing that political pragmatism and partisan loyalty often take precedence over moral considerations in political decision-making. They also underscore how media framing and social pressures can shape public perceptions of leadership integrity, emphasizing the importance of political awareness in voter behavior. To foster more critical and rational voters who prioritize integrity in leadership, it is essential to promote political education grounded in ethical values and to ensure access to objective and reliable information. Such efforts can contribute to strengthening democratic processes by encouraging informed decision-making and enhancing the public's capacity to hold leaders accountable.

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