

# The Dominant Indicator in The Model of Strengthening the "Akhlak" Culture Through Servant Leadership: The Case of Indonesian State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs)

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## ABSTRACT

Leadership and organizational culture are essential elements for the success of an organization, both business organizations and public organizations. In addition to knowing how close the relationship between Servant leadership and strengthening the AKHLAK culture is, this study aims to find dominant indicators that reflect the two variables. AKHLAK culture is a corporate culture based on the company's core values. The word AKHLAK is an acronym in Indonesian. The research sample involved 200 permanent employees in the West Java State Electricity Company (SEC)-Indonesia, which is one of the government-owned companies under Indonesian State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), an "inclusion sample" of employees who have worked for at least five years. The study used quantitative methods with descriptive and verificative analysis approaches. The data analysis uses SEM-PLS (Structural Equation Modelling - Partial Least Squares). The results of the descriptive analysis in the study show that the implementation of servant leadership still plays a low role, and the AKHLAK culture is still not optimal. However, the verification analysis results show that Servant leadership's role strongly correlates with strengthening the AKHLAK culture. Moreover, the dominant indicator for Servant leadership is the "Trust" indicator, while the dominant indicator for AKHLAK culture is the "Loyalty" indicator.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Leadership's role in forming organizational culture is dominant (Malik et al., 2023). Organizational culture intermediates leadership and employee performance (Daniel et al., 2013; Jamali et al., 2022). Organizations will have a competitive advantage through the knowledge and skills possessed by their Human Resources (Pasamar et al., 2019). Organizations that focus on organizational culture will move to strengthen corporate capabilities in Entrepreneurship [5]. Entrepreneurship is critical to creating an economy mediated by regional culture (Xinhong et al., 2023). Regional culture is the foundation of survival and a basis for the region's development through modernization and realizing cultural awareness and innovation (Abd-Hamid et al., 2015). Cultural innovation creates ideas through new products and services influenced by cultural elements (Calof, 2018). The relationship between culture and innovation will impact socioeconomic and social growth (Hartono et al., 2019). Employee performance results from implementing a leader's managerial competence, style, and approach (Donkor et al., 2021). An employee is a person who has various skills and expertise to participate in operating the company. Employee performance will improve through new knowledge and skills acquired through training, so they are expected to successfully face new challenges in their daily work (Diamantidis & Chatzoglou, 2019). The leadership of public organizations must be consistent in ethical, constructive action, Trust, and credibility in public service (Wright & Pandey, 2010). Public service is a form of customer satisfaction and satisfaction of public service providers (Tapia & Salvador, 2022). According to Restivo et al. (2022). Leadership Intervenes in Public Service Improvement through a Public Service Culture termed AKHLAK. Servant leadership prioritizes service functions, empathy, and joint development efforts to create conducive organizational sustainability. A sustainable organization will condition managers to conduct decision-making for competitive advantage (Batista & de Francisco, 2018). Servant leadership prioritizes self-integrity to serve employees, customers, or the community (Liden et al., 2008). Organizational culture reinforcement is a dynamic process of maintaining values, norms, and behaviors

that reflect the organization's unique identity. Cultural strengthening, the culture in the organization, is reflected in how intense the leader's sincerity is in implementing the values, beliefs, and behaviors in its application to the organizational culture (El Baz & Iddik, 2022).

## 2. METHOD

This study used a quantitative research approach. The affordable population in this study is employees of the state electricity company (SEC) in West Java with a minimum service period of 3 years. Sampling using a proportionate stratified random sampling technique approach obtained 200 respondents. Data collection in questionnaires using a cross-sectional approach. The research instrument uses questionnaires that are tested for validity and reliability first. The validity test measures the extent to which the indicator measures the construct under study. Reliability testing measures the consistency of indicators in models at similar research sites. Descriptive data analysis using a flagged mean value with a percentage of the Likert scale continuum score and verification analysis using SEM-PLS is a variant-based SEM approach used to analyze the relationship between variables/constructs involved in the research model. The data processing process uses SMART\_PLS software version 4.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study were interpreted with two approaches, namely a descriptive approach to obtain the average value of the two variables compared to the score percentage of the Likert scale continuum, while the verification approach to obtain the correlation value (r) of the relationship between the two variables studied, also to find out the value of the indicator as a reflection of the Servant leadership variable also to know the value of the indicator as a reflection of the AKHLAK cultural variable. The result is as follows:

### Descriptive analysis for Servant leadership variables:

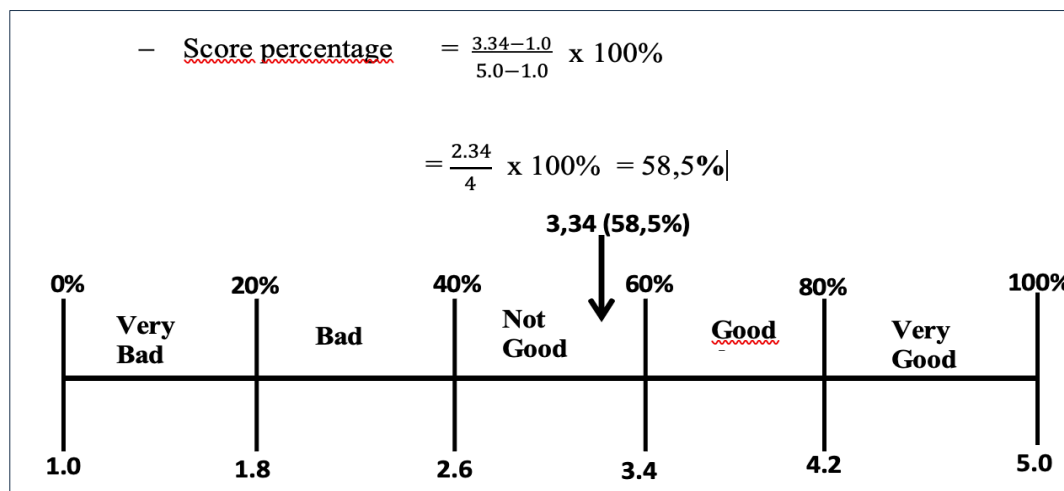
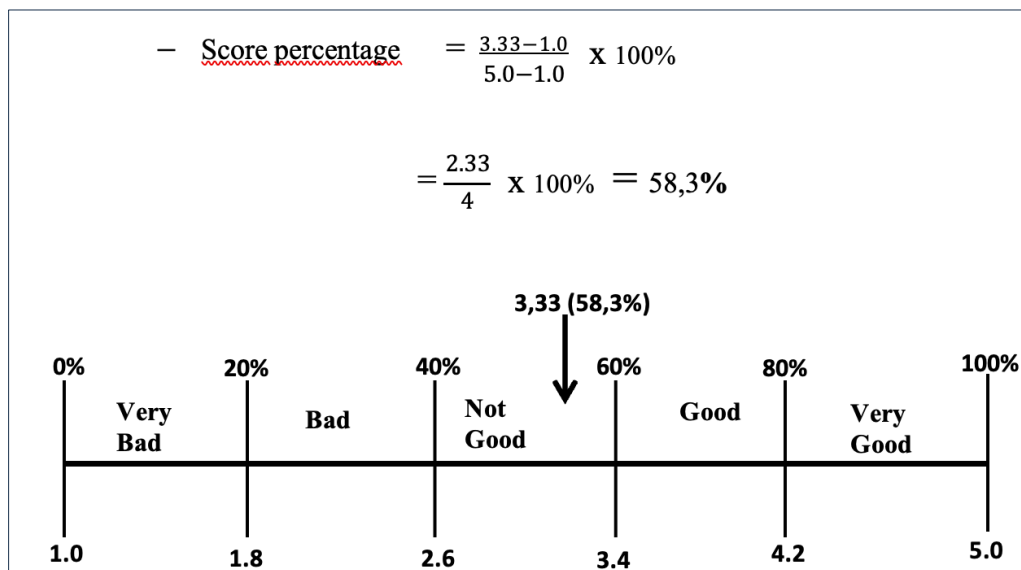


Figure 1: Range Score Percentage for Servant Leadership

Source: author's work.

The average response score = 3.34, and the percentage score is 58.5%, belonging to the "not good" category. The implementation of Servant leadership in the organization is not considered good. Descriptive analysis for the variable AKHLAK Cultural :



**Figure 2:** Range Score Percentage for Servant Leadership AKHLAK Culture  
Source: author’s work.

The average response score = 3.33, and the score percentage is 58.3%, included in the "not good" category. That means that the application of AKHLAK culture in the organization is perceived to be less than optimal.

**Verificative analysis of the relationship or path coefficient between the role of Servant leadership and strengthening the AKHLAK culture:**

**Table 1.** Construct Reliability

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
AKHLAK Culture	0.925	0.937	0.942	0.731
SERVANT_LEADERSHIP	0.942	0.946	0.956	0.815

Source: author’s work.

Based on Table 1, the Cronbach Alpha value for both variables > 0.7 and the composite reliability value >= 0.7, thus indicating that both variables are the measurement reliability of the two variables will be consistent for the other subjects, assuming the conditions are relatively the same. The indicators used in the model are consistent and reliable in similar research on different locations.

**Table 2.** Loading Factor/Construct Validity

	AKHLAK Culture	SERVANT_LEADERSHIP
ADAPTIF_(Adaptive)	0.880	
AMANAH_(Trustworthy)	0.899	
Agape Love		0.946
Empowerment		0.887
HARMONI_(Harmonious)	0.736	
Humality		0.909
KOLABORATIF_(Collaboration)	0.752	
KOMPETEN_(Competent)	0.899	
LOYAL_(Loyalty)	0.941	
Trust		0.964
Vision		0.798

Source: author’s work.

Based on Table 2. All Loading Factor (LF) values for all dimensions of the two variables studied are > 0.7, meaning that all dimensions of the two variables are "valid" to reflect the AKHLAK cultural variable and Servant Leadership, also reinforced by the value (AVE) in Table 1, both variables have AVE values > 0.5. illustrates the convergent validity of the two variables under study well. The indicators used measure Servant leadership and AKHLAK culture.

**Table 3:** Latent Variables Correlation

	AKHLAK Culture	Servant Leadership
AKHLAK Culture	1.000	0.964
Servant Leadership	0.964	1.000

Source: author's work.

Based on Table 3. The correlation value (r) between Servant leadership and AKHLAK Culture is 96.4 %. This value shows a positive relationship with the criteria of closeness of the high correlation relationship (very high).

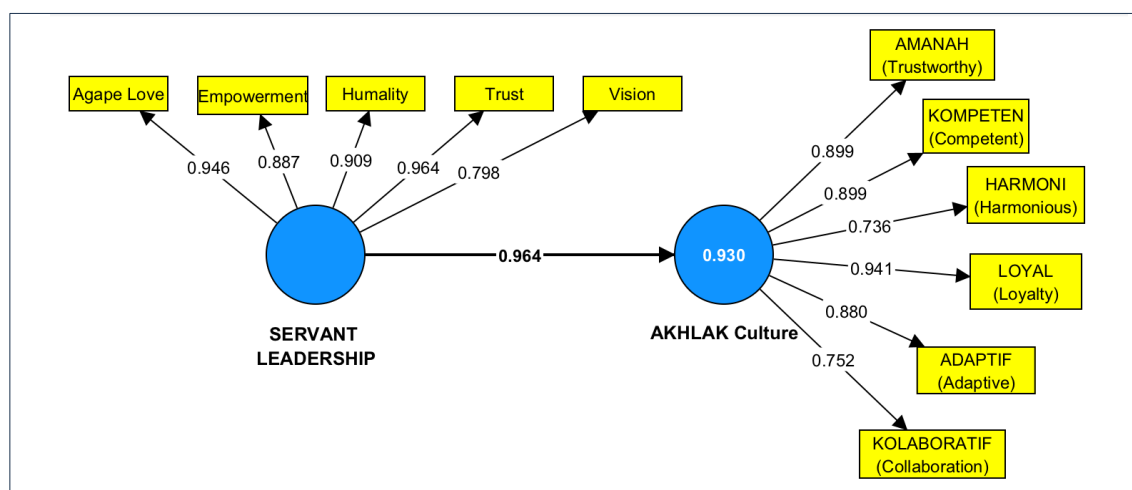
The results of this study show that Servant leadership's role is influential in strengthening the AKHLAK culture. It can be interpreted that the more vital the Servant leadership role is applied in the SEC organization, the stronger the organization's commitment to implementing the AKHLAK culture. The weaker the Servant leadership role is implemented in SEC organizations, the weaker the organization's commitment to implementing the AKHLAK culture.

**Table 4:** Model Fit

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.075	0.075
d_ ULS	0.369	0.369
d_ G	1.754	1.754
Chi-square	1,213.244	1,213.244
NFI	0.670	0.670

Source: author's work.

The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value of 0.075 < 0.10, then the model is declared Fit, also corroborated by the Normal Fit Index (NFI) value of 0.670, between 0 and 1. The closer the NFI value is to 1, the more it shows the goodness of the model (Goodness of Fit). The model is suitable for measuring the relationship between Servant leadership variables and AKHLAK culture.



**Figure 3:** Structural Model of Strengthening AKHLAK Culture through Servant Leadership  
Source: author's work.

Loading Factor (LF) is a value used to measure the Outer Model or measure dimensional construction or indicators against latent variables. As for the provisions, a loading factor above 0.7 can be a significant indicator that measures the construct (latent variable) (Haryono, 2016). Based on Figure 3, we can see that the LF value of all five dimensions of Servant leadership > 0.7, meaning that the dimensions of empowerment, humanity, Trust, Vision, and Love represent significant latent variables (servant leadership), the strongest being the TRUST dimension with LF = 0.964. Likewise, the LF value of the six dimensions of AKHLAK culture is > 0.7, meaning that the dimensions of AMANAH (Trustworthy), Competent, Harmony, loyalty, Adaptive, and collaboration are all significant dimensions that reflect latent variables (AKHLAK Culture), and the strongest being the LOYAL (loyalty) dimension with LF = 0.941.

**Table 5.** R-square

	R-square	R-square adjusted
AKHLAK Culture	0.930	0.930

Source: author's work.

Based on Table 5. The R-square value of 0.930 means that 93% of servant leadership contributes dominantly to strengthening the implementation of AKHLAK Culture, and The effect of other variables is 7%.

The results of this study can be discussed from an analytical descriptive approach. Implementing Servant leadership in the State Electricity Company (SEC) has not been optimal, so more effort needs to be made through training for unit leaders within the SEC. The AKHLAK culture in the SEC organization is relatively unstable, so conditioning efforts are needed to increase philosophical and practical understanding with an exemplary approach. Servant leadership is strongly correlated with strengthening moral culture; this is done by previous research (Srimulyani et al., 2023b). The more fully the leadership servant is implemented, the more it contributes to the strengthening of moral culture, and the less indeed Servant leadership is implemented, the more it weakens the practice of moral culture.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The role of the leader is to develop and disseminate the organization's vision, build awareness of his subordinates, ensure the learning process in his organization is successful, and build the ability of his subordinates to adapt and strengthen and build organizational culture. (Istiqaroh et al., 2022) Leaders play various roles in building organizational resilience, including awareness, adaptability, and organizational culture. The servant leadership style has not been fully implemented in SEC organizations. The verification analysis results show that Trust is the most dominant dimension, and its contribution represents the Servant leadership variable. Trust in leadership is essential for an organization to be effective at all levels. This research provides confidence for SEC organizations to seriously condition their leadership to implement a servant leadership style because it is proven to increase employee trust in their leaders (Burke et al., 2007). Trust is essential to competence, especially regarding high-risk decisions (Sapp et al., 2019). Leadership is considered not effective in strengthening organizational culture. According to Istiqaroh et al. (2022), leaders play a crucial role in helping individuals and teams cope with the complex demands of adaptive behavior. Adaptive behavior is a collection of practical skills and social concepts that are learned to adapt to the environment at all times (Reschly et al., 2002). The social concept is an interdisciplinary field rooted in social theory, but its implementation covers various fields of study. The concept of corporate value-based culture within the SEC is still less adaptive to the needs of society. From the results of the verification analysis, it was found that the Loyalty dimension was the most dominant in its contribution to representing the AKHLAK cultural variable. Support the condition of SEC employees as public servants who serve the country through their companies. Hence, this strengthens the findings in this study that servant Leadership is powerful in influencing the improvement of AKHLAK culture. State servants work for the government or public institutions such as agencies, defense, security, public services, and administration, including civil servants, members of the Army, and police].

The limitation of this research is that it does not provide in-depth information about organizational commitment, especially affective commitment. According to Haque et al. [41], leadership significantly affects employees' affective commitment and intention to quit or turn over. This statement reinforces the role of service leaders in strengthening the AKHLAK culture and emphasizes the need for practical commitment. The theoretical impact of this research reinforces the concept that the role of leadership, especially Servant leadership, contributes to strengthening a mental-based culture that is acronymized by the term AKHLAK. Leadership roles include organizing, mentoring, and managing resources so that the organization can achieve targeted results (Hassanzadeh Mohassel et al., 2023; Lawal & Babalola, 2017). Practical benefits: this study reinforces the importance of Servant leadership implementation for leaders in the SEC environment because Servant leadership significantly strengthens the mental-based culture simulated with AKHLAK. This study also found that the dominant factor in Servant leadership is "trust," so SEC should try to improve Servant leadership competition for leaders.

Employee trust in leadership significantly impacts employee openness and championing behavior and improves employee performance (Men et al., 2020). The organizational learning culture influences the culture of serving to provide extra-role behavior (OCB) for government employees so that they can serve the public faithfully. A harmonious work environment is characterized by open communication, mutual respect, and collaboration between divisions and team members. These conditions are essential for improving employee happiness and increasing employee engagement. (Commission, 2019). Employee engagement is a reflection of employee engagement, contributing to the achievement of goals, as well as the active participation of employees in the decision-making process (Nayak et al., 2020). The performance of public organizations turns out to have something to do with the leadership role of servants and the performance of public sector organizations (Widianto et al., 2021).

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