

The Function of Servant Leadership and Organizational Culture in Enhancing the Performance of Educational Institutions

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Abstract: Improving institutional performance has become a critical challenge for Universitas Winaya Mukti in responding to the increasing demands for higher education quality, organizational governance, and the achievement of institutional performance indicators. Specifically, Universitas Winaya Mukti is ranked 366th among 562 universities in Indonesia, and its employee attendance rate stood at only 75.2%, indicating that leadership effectiveness and organizational culture remain the two aspects most in need of improvement. This study aims to analyze the effect of servant leadership on institutional performance and examine the mediating role of organizational culture. The research employed a quantitative method with descriptive and verification approaches. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to respondents within Universitas Winaya Mukti. The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The results indicate that servant leadership has a positive and significant effect on organizational culture and institutional performance. Furthermore, organizational culture positively influences institutional performance and mediates the relationship between servant leadership and institutional performance. These findings suggest that strengthening service-oriented leadership practices and fostering a supportive organizational culture can significantly enhance the institutional performance of Universitas Winaya Mukti.

Article History:

Submitted: July 15, 2026

Revised: August 3, 2026

Accepted: August 12, 2026

Published: August 29, 2026

Keywords:

Performance of Educational institutions

Higher Education Institution

Human Resource Development

Satriawan, B., Arifin, F., & Hasanah, U. (2026). The function of servant leadership and organizational culture in enhancing the performance of educational institutions. *Almana : Jurnal Manajemen dan Bisnis*. 10(2), 415-428. <https://doi.org/10.36555/almana.v10i2.3047>

INTRODUCTION

The performance of higher education institutions has become an increasingly important issue as universities compete to improve academic quality, institutional reputation, and stakeholder satisfaction. In an increasingly competitive educational environment, institutional performance is not only reflected in the quality of graduates but also in research productivity, governance effectiveness, public trust, and institutional visibility at national and international levels (Riza et al., 2025). Consequently, universities are required to continuously strengthen their internal capabilities to achieve sustainable organizational performance.

In Indonesia, private universities face greater challenges in maintaining competitiveness due to limited resources, increasing stakeholder expectations, and rapid changes in higher education policies. As one of the private universities in West Java,



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Universitas Winaya Mukti (Unwim) is also confronted with these challenges. Institutional performance indicators suggest that improvement remains necessary. According to EduRank (2025), Unwim is ranked 366th among 562 universities in Indonesia, 2,502nd in Asia, and 6,892nd globally. These rankings indicate relatively low institutional visibility and competitiveness compared to other universities. In addition, a previous study by Lukman (2019) reported that the employee attendance rate at Unwim was only 75.2%, suggesting that organizational performance has not yet reached an optimal level.

The performance of higher education institutions is commonly evaluated using several measurement frameworks. One widely adopted approach is the Balanced Scorecard (BSC), which assesses organizational performance from financial, customer, internal business process, and learning and growth perspectives (Shidiq, 2023). In higher education, institutional performance is also reflected through academic productivity, Performance of Educational institutions, service quality, student satisfaction, research outputs, and institutional reputation (Saputri et al., 2023). These indicators collectively demonstrate that improving institutional performance requires effective organizational management supported by appropriate leadership and a conducive organizational environment.

Previous studies have identified leadership as one of the key determinants of organizational performance. However, empirical findings regarding the effectiveness of different leadership approaches remain inconsistent, particularly in the context of higher education institutions. Furthermore, although organizational culture has frequently been associated with organizational effectiveness, limited empirical studies have simultaneously examined its mediating role in explaining how leadership influences institutional performance in Indonesian private universities. This gap indicates the need for further investigation into the mechanisms through which leadership contributes to institutional performance.

Considering these conditions, Universitas Winaya Mukti provides an appropriate context for examining factors that may improve institutional performance. Understanding how leadership practices contribute to organizational effectiveness and how organizational culture supports this relationship is expected to provide practical implications for university management in strengthening institutional competitiveness. Therefore, this study aims to examine the influence of servant leadership on institutional performance at Universitas Winaya Mukti, both directly and indirectly through organizational culture as a mediating variable. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of organizational behavior literature in higher education and provide recommendations for improving university performance through effective leadership and organizational culture.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Servant Leadership

Servant leadership is a leadership philosophy in which the leader prioritizes serving followers ahead of self-interest, emphasizing empathy, stewardship, and the development of others (Vasilev et al., 2024). Identifies ten core characteristics of servant leaders, including listening, empathy, healing, awareness, and persuasion, which collectively foster trust, empowerment, and a supportive work environment. Harmin et al. (2021) show that servant leadership consistently predicts positive follower attitudes and improved organizational outcomes, often operating through intervening mechanisms such as organizational culture. In the context of higher education, servant leadership is particularly relevant because it aligns with the collegial and service-oriented nature of academic institutions, where leaders are expected to support the professional growth of lecturers and staff rather than rely solely on positional authority (Asih et al., 2023).

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture refers to the shared values, beliefs, and norms that shape how members of an organization perceive, think, and behave (Robbins & Judge, 2022). It functions as a form of social control that guides employees' decisions and interactions, and strong cultures are associated with greater consistency, coordination, and predictability in organizational behavior. Olayiwola and Akeke (2022) identify several dimensions of organizational culture relevant to performance, including innovation, risk-taking, attention to detail, outcome orientation, and stability, dimensions that are also adopted as measurement indicators in this study. Assoratgoon and Kantabutra (2023) further argue that a sustainability-oriented culture provides a foundation for long-term organizational performance, while Mikušová et al. (2023) demonstrate that organizational culture is a significant determinant of employee behavior and work outcomes. Within educational institutions, a supportive and disciplined culture is expected to reinforce the effects of leadership on institutional performance (Alipio et al., 2023).

Institutional Performance

Institutional performance in higher education encompasses the achievement of strategic goals, the quality of academic and administrative services, research productivity, curriculum development, and organizational responsiveness to external change (Urighuen Aguirre & Avolio Alecchi, 2023). Beyond internal outputs, institutional performance is also reflected in reputation, stakeholder satisfaction, and public legitimacy, dimensions captured in multidimensional frameworks such as the Balanced Scorecard (Shidiq, 2023). Saputri et al. (2023) emphasize that lecturer performance has direct implications for student satisfaction, underscoring the link between human resource effectiveness and broader institutional outcomes. In private universities such as Universitas Winaya Mukti, institutional performance is further shaped by competitiveness pressures, limited resources, and the need to strengthen internal governance (Setiawan & Purba, 2021).

Previous Research

Several empirical studies support the relationships examined in this study. Harmin et al. (2021) find that servant leadership significantly improves organizational performance through its effect on organizational culture, indicating a mediating pathway consistent with the model proposed here. Similarly, Mikušová et al. (2023) confirm that organizational culture plays a determining role in linking leadership behavior to employee performance outcomes. Mu'ah et al. (2023) demonstrate that servant leadership contributes to improved human resource performance, while Amora (2021) finds that leadership models, including servant leadership, are significant predictors of organizational outcomes in a PLS-SEM framework. Riza et al. (2025) further confirm that institutional performance in educational settings is shaped by a combination of leadership effectiveness and organizational climate factors. Collectively, these studies provide empirical grounding for examining servant leadership and organizational culture as joint predictors of institutional performance, while also pointing to a research gap regarding their simultaneous, mediated relationship in the context of Indonesian private universities.

Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis Development

Based on the theoretical review and previous empirical findings, this study proposes a conceptual framework in which servant leadership influences institutional performance both directly and indirectly through organizational culture as a mediating variable. Servant leadership behaviors such as listening, empathy, and empowerment are expected to strengthen organizational culture by reinforcing shared values of

collaboration, discipline, and service orientation (Mu'ah et al., 2023). A stronger organizational culture, in turn, is expected to enhance institutional performance by improving consistency, coordination, and employee commitment (Robbins & Judge, 2022). Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1: Servant leadership has a positive and significant effect on organizational culture.
- H2: Servant leadership has a positive and significant effect on institutional performance.
- H3: Organizational culture has a positive and significant effect on institutional performance.
- H4: Servant leadership has a positive and significant effect on institutional performance through organizational culture as a mediating variable.

METHODS

This research employs a quantitative method with a descriptive and verificative approach and a causal design to empirically test the relationships between servant leadership, organizational culture, and institutional performance at Universitas Winaya Mukti. The descriptive approach is used to portray the characteristics of each variable, while the verificative approach is used to test the hypothesized causal relationships among variables through statistical analysis. The analysis method used is Structural Equation Modeling - Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS), which was chosen due to its ability to handle complex models with latent variables, relatively small sample sizes, and non-normally distributed data (Hair et al., 2022). This study is explanatory and uses a cross-sectional approach, where data are collected at one point in time to examine the relationships between constructs. According to Memon et al. (2021), SEM-PLS is chosen because it is predictive and exploratory, and capable of handling models with multiple indicators and constructs, including mediation and moderation relationships.

Data sources are essential for examining causal relationships between dependent and independent variables. According to Singarimbun and Effendi (2011), data sources refer to the subjects from which data are obtained. This study uses two types of data: primary and secondary. Primary data are collected directly from respondents or informants in the field without intermediaries, while secondary data are obtained from existing materials such as books, scientific journals, official documents, and previous research. To collect these data, several techniques are employed, including observation, interviews, and questionnaires. Observation involves directly examining field conditions, while interviews are conducted in depth to gather detailed information from key informants. Questionnaires are used as an efficient method to collect data from respondents, based on predetermined variables and measurement scales.

The constructs in this study consist of Servant Leadership, Organizational Culture, and Institutional Performance, each measured through specific indicators adapted from relevant literature. Servant Leadership is assessed through five items, including the leader's willingness to support learning and development, employee empowerment in decision-making, sincerity and honesty in work relationships, concern for others' well-being, and commitment to service values, as referenced by Asih et al. (2023) and Alipio et al. (2023). Organizational Culture is measured using eight items, such as support for innovation and experimentation, tolerance for failure, emphasis on data accuracy, focus on quality achievement, development of competency-driven climates, setting realistic targets, teamwork support, and the creation of a safe and harmonious environment, based on Olayiwola and Akeke (2022) and Alipio et al. (2023). Meanwhile, Institutional Performance is evaluated through five indicators, including institutional effectiveness, quality of academic and administrative services, research productivity, curriculum development, and organizational responsiveness to external changes, drawing on Uriguen Aguirre & Avolio Alecchi (2023) and Alipio et al. (2023).

According to Sugiyono (2018), population refers to the area of generalization, consisting of objects/subjects with specific qualities and characteristics set by the researcher for study and conclusion. The research population consists of all lecturers and educational staff at Universitas Winaya Mukti Bandung, totaling 279 people. Sample size determination is done using Slovin's formula, which is a practical method to calculate sample size when there is limited information about the population. Slovin's formula is widely used in social research due to its simplicity and ability to provide accurate sample size estimates under limited information. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling, with inclusion criteria being respondents who have worked for at least one year at the institution.

The minimum sample size required for this study is 100 respondents. Where n is the sample size, N is the total population (279), and e is the margin of error tolerance set at 8% (0.08). With a population of 279 and a margin of error of 8% (0.08), the minimum sample size obtained is 100. SEM-PLS consists of three main stages: testing the outer model, testing the inner model, and model evaluation. Each stage has a specific function to ensure that the research model has good validity, reliability, and predictive ability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Objective Condition of the Study

The performance of educational institutions is a fundamental component in achieving organizational strategic goals, encompassing graduate quality, academic reputation, and stakeholder satisfaction. In the increasingly competitive higher education landscape in Indonesia, private universities like Universitas Winaya Mukti (UNWIM) face significant challenges in improving competitiveness through the optimization of human resources and internal governance. The phenomenon of institutional performance is often linked to the effectiveness of leadership style and the strength of the surrounding organizational culture.

The philosophical foundation of this research is rooted in the belief that a servant leader prioritizes the needs of the organization's members, which subsequently fosters a collaborative work culture and, ultimately, improves overall institutional performance. The real challenges faced are reflected in its external ranking, where the institution is ranked 366 out of 562 universities in Indonesia, according to EduRank 2025, and its global ranking still requires broader visibility. Moreover, the internal operational efficiency, marked by an employee attendance rate of 75.2% in 2019, serves as a crucial indicator that there is untapped potential for performance improvement. Demographic characteristics provide essential context in understanding how individuals' perceptions are shaped within the work environment. Differences in age, gender, and years of service often influence emotional maturity, career orientation, and adaptability to organizational values. In this study, data were collected from 147 respondents, representing lecturers and educational staff at Universitas Winaya Mukti. The gender composition in an educational institution often reflects the dynamics of social interactions and the evolving communication style within it. Based on data from 147 respondents, the majority of staff at Universitas Winaya Mukti are male.

Table 1. Gender Composition of Respondent

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	98	66.67%
Female	49	33.33%
Total	147	100%

Source: Data that has been processed by the author (2026)

Table 1 shows that the male dominance, at 66.67%, suggests that the male staff have a greater perception of leadership and organizational culture at Unwim, especially regarding leadership style. However, 33.33% of female respondents provided diverse perspectives, particularly in assessing dimensions related to support and commitment, which are key aspects of Servant Leadership. This imbalance indicates that there are significant challenges in fostering a more inclusive organizational culture at Unwim.

Age is an indicator of professional maturity and often correlates with work experience. The age group composition at Unwim reflects varying degrees of professional maturity, which is influenced by changing career goals. The age groups with the most respondents are as follows:

Table 2. Age Composition of Respondent

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
20 - 30 Years	22	14.97%
31 - 40 Years	61	41.19%
41 - 50 Years	43	29.25%
51 Years & Over	21	14.29%
Total	147	100%

Source: Data that has been processed by the author (2026)

Data in Table 2 shows that the human resource pillars at Unwim are spread across a range of productive age groups, with the 31-40 years group representing the largest segment (41.19%), followed by 41-50 years (29.25%). These age groups are in their most productive phases, balancing career stability with innovation. The group aged 20-30 years, making up 14.97%, has shown less stability, but it is essential for this group to be involved in higher-level responsibilities, ensuring sustainability and progress. The older group (51 years and over), although representing only 14.29%, plays a significant role in safeguarding institutional stability and tradition. This demographic analysis helps understand how individual perceptions are shaped in the work environment, and the findings show the importance of leadership in fostering a more inclusive and collaborative culture at Unwim. The length of service reflects the level of individual socialization with the organizational culture and the degree of loyalty to the institution. Employees with longer work experience tend to have a deeper understanding of the prevailing norms and values.

Table 3. Work Experience of Respondent

Length of Service	Frequency	Percentage
1 – 5 Years	44	29.93%
6 – 15 Years	79	53.60%
16 Years & Above	25	17.01%
Total	148	100%

Source: Data that has been processed by the author (2026)

In Table 3, as many as 53.60% of the respondents have worked for 6 to 15 years, indicating that Unwim has a stable base of teaching staff with solid teaching experience and alignment with the academic program's goals. Meanwhile, 29.93% of the respondents have been employed for 5 years or less, and they bring new ideas and potentially more dynamic energy, helping to intensify the development of organizational culture. Respondents with more than 16 years of service (17.01%) tend to have longer tenure and are more likely to serve as role models for younger staff.

To ensure the accuracy of the descriptive analysis, the study adopts a five-point Likert scale, which is then transformed into interval data. The determination of category

scores is based on the class interval calculation formula according to Swarjana (2023). Based on this calculation, the interval length is above 0.80. The criteria in this study remain consistent in evaluating each indicator for Servant Leadership, Organizational Culture, and Institutional Performance.

Descriptive Analysis Results

Servant Leadership is described as a leadership style that prioritizes the well-being and growth of individuals within the organization. It fosters collaboration, empowerment, and the development of those it leads. Data from 147 respondents show significant variation in perceptions of leadership styles at Unwim. Key indicators of Servant Leadership include the results of the descriptive analysis show that the Servant Leadership variable overall is categorized as Adequate, with a grand mean of 2.89. This indicates that leadership behavior focused on serving others is applied but has not yet reached an optimal level to drive large-scale transformation within the organization.

Table 4. Descriptive Analysis Results

Indicator	Mean Score	Category
SL1 Listening	2.96	Adequate
SL2 Empathy	3.02	Adequate
SL3 Healing	2.74	Adequate
SL4 Awareness	2.84	Adequate
SL5 Persuasion	2.84	Adequate
Grand Mean	2.89	Adequate

Source: Data that has been processed by the author (2026)

Indicator SL2 (Empathy) in Table 4 recorded the highest score of 3.02, indicating that Unwim's leadership is perceived as having a strong ability to understand the emotional needs and perspectives of faculty members, which contributes positively to fostering harmonious work relationships. In contrast, indicator SL3 (Healing) showed the lowest score of 2.74, suggesting a limited capacity of leadership to resolve personal conflicts or provide emotional support, potentially leading to staff burnout. Meanwhile, indicator SL5 (Persuasion) scored 2.84, reflecting a relatively adequate but still improvable ability of leadership to influence staff, as it tends to rely on a more top-down approach rather than actively engaging employees.

The organizational culture at Unwim is also assessed, with the overall grand mean being **3.11**, which is categorized as "Adequate". This indicates that the organizational culture exhibits higher scores than the leadership variables, suggesting that the organization's norms and values are more entrenched compared to the leadership style.

Table 5. Mean Score of Organizational Culture

Indicator	Mean Score	Category
BO6 Innovation	3.14	Adequate
BO7 Risk Taking	3.11	Adequate
BO8 Time Orientation	3.01	Adequate
BO9 People Orientation	3.16	Adequate
BO10 Outcome Orientation	3.12	Adequate
BO11 Aggressiveness	3.13	Adequate
BO12 Stability	3.17	Adequate
BO13 Attention to Detail	2.99	Adequate
Grand Mean	3.11	Adequate

Source: Data that has been processed by the author (2026)

Indicator BO12 (Stability) in Table 5 recorded the highest score of 3.17, indicating that the university is perceived as a stable and secure workplace; however, relying solely on stability without being supported by factors such as aggression (3.13) and innovation (3.14) may risk organizational stagnation, particularly in responding to the challenges of disruption in the digital era of education.

Performance is seen as the output of actions that are measured using predetermined standards, including quantity, quality, time, and commitment. Staff perceptions of collective performance are critical to achieving strategic targets.

Table 6. Mean Score of Performance

Indicator	Mean Score	Category
K14 Quantity	3.02	Adequate
K15 Quality	3.11	Adequate
K16 Timeliness	2.98	Adequate
K17 Attendance	2.96	Adequate
K18 Cooperation	3.03	Adequate
Grand Mean	3.03	Adequate

Source: Data that has been processed by the author (2026)

The performance scores indicate that the university is performing adequately in terms of quantity, quality, and cooperation, but attendance and timeliness need further improvement.

Structural Model Analysis

Inner model or structural model testing is conducted to evaluate the relationships among constructs, including the magnitude and significance of the effects between variables. In PLS-SEM, the structural model is primarily assessed using several key indicators, such as the R-square value, which reflects the ability of independent constructs to explain the variance of the dependent construct, as well as the t-statistic and path coefficient significance to determine whether the relationships between variables are statistically meaningful. According to Hair et al. (2022), structural model evaluation involves examining both the significance of path coefficients and the explanatory power of the model in predicting endogenous constructs.

In addition, the assessment of the structural model also involves evaluating the relevance and robustness of relationships between constructs using the bootstrapping procedure. This method is essential in PLS-SEM as it provides statistical evidence for the significance of path coefficients by generating t-values and confidence intervals. Through bootstrapping, researchers can ensure that the observed relationships are not due to random variation but are supported by strong statistical justification, thereby confirming the validity and reliability of the structural relationships within the research model.

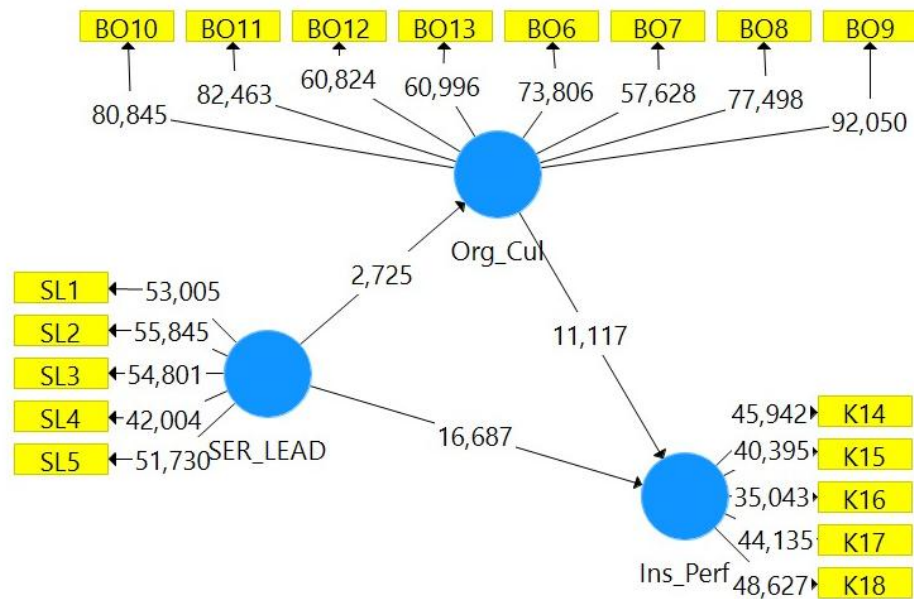


Figure 1. Results of Structural Model Analysis

Source: Data that has been processed by the author (2026)

The results of the PLS-SEM analysis in Figure 1 indicate that the indicators for each construct (Servant Leadership, Organizational Culture, and Institutional Performance) exhibit very high t-statistic values, suggesting that all indicators are statistically significant in reflecting their respective constructs. Furthermore, the structural model (inner model) demonstrates that the relationships among constructs are also significant, as shown by the t-statistic values for each path: Servant Leadership to Organizational Culture ($t = 2.725$), Organizational Culture to Institutional Performance ($t = 11.117$), and Servant Leadership to Institutional Performance ($t = 16.687$). These findings imply that Servant Leadership significantly influences Organizational Culture, and both variables directly contribute to enhancing Institutional Performance, with the strongest effect observed in the direct relationship between Servant Leadership and performance. The evaluation of the significance and strength of these relationships through bootstrapping procedures constitutes a key component in assessing the robustness of the structural model in PLS-SEM.

Hypothesis Test

The significance of estimated parameters in the structural model provides essential information regarding the strength and direction of relationships among research variables. Through this analysis, researchers can determine whether an exogenous variable has a meaningful effect on an endogenous variable, allowing hypotheses to be accepted or rejected statistically. In PLS-SEM, hypothesis testing is conducted by examining the t-statistic and p-value obtained through the bootstrapping procedure, as these indicators reflect the statistical significance of the estimated path coefficients. According to Hair et al. (2022), structural model evaluation emphasizes the importance of ensuring that path coefficients are statistically significant based on bootstrapping results, which serve as the basis for confirming whether relationships between constructs are empirically supported.

Table 7. Mean Score of Performance

	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Std. Deviation	T Statistics	P Values
Organizational Culture → Performance of Educational Institutions	,486	,485	,044	11,136	,000
Servant Leadership → Performance of Educational Institutions	,653	,654	,039	16,860	,000
Servant Leadership → Organizational Culture	,195	,198	,071	2,740	,006
Servant Leadership → Organizational Culture → Performance of Educational institutions	,094	,095	,034	2,784	,005

Source: Data that has been processed by the author (2026)

Based on the analysis results in Table 7, the direct effect of Organizational Culture on the Performance of Educational Institutions shows a coefficient value (β) of 0.486, with a t-statistic of 11.136 and a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.001$). The positive β value indicates a direct and positive relationship, meaning that stronger Organizational Culture leads to higher Performance of Educational Institutions. Given that the t-value far exceeds the critical threshold ($t > 1.96$ at a 5% significance level) and the p-value is below 0.05, this effect is statistically significant. Therefore, the hypothesis stating that Organizational Culture influences the performance of Educational institutions is accepted.

Furthermore, the direct effect of Servant Leadership on Performance of Educational institutions yields a coefficient value of $\beta = 0.653$, with a t-statistic of 16.860 and a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.001$). This result indicates a strong, positive, and highly significant relationship. Notably, this coefficient is the largest among the paths leading to Performance of Educational institutions, suggesting that Servant Leadership is the most dominant predictor in explaining performance improvements compared to Organizational Culture. Thus, the hypothesis proposing that Servant Leadership affects the performance of Educational institutions is also supported.

In addition, the relationship between Servant Leadership and Organizational Culture shows a coefficient value of $\beta = 0.195$, with a t-statistic of 2.740 and a p-value of 0.006. Although the effect size is smaller compared to other relationships, the positive coefficient indicates that Servant Leadership contributes to strengthening Organizational Culture. Since the t-value exceeds 1.96 and the p-value is below 0.05, this relationship is statistically significant, meaning the corresponding hypothesis is accepted.

The analysis also reveals a significant indirect effect of Servant Leadership on Performance of Educational Institutions through Organizational Culture, with a coefficient of 0.094, a t-statistic of 2.784, and a p-value of 0.005. This finding suggests that Servant Leadership enhances Organizational Culture, which in turn contributes to improving the performance of Educational institutions. The consistency between the estimated coefficient and sample mean, along with the relatively small standard deviation, indicates that this mediating effect is stable and reliable. Overall, these results confirm that the performance of Educational institutions is significantly influenced by both Servant Leadership and Organizational Culture, with Servant Leadership exerting the strongest direct effect and Organizational Culture acting as an important mediating mechanism.

The discussion of this study is situated within the increasingly competitive higher education landscape, where institutional performance is no longer assessed solely in terms of internal outputs but also through strategic outcomes such as reputation, scientific visibility, and public legitimacy. Institutional performance encompasses the achievement of strategic goals, quality of services to students and stakeholders,

research productivity, curriculum innovation, organizational responsiveness, and external reputation, as emphasized by multidimensional frameworks like the Balanced Scorecard, which integrates customer, internal process, learning and growth, and financial perspectives. In the context of Universitas Winaya Mukti, there is a clear need to strengthen institutional performance, particularly in improving reputation indicators and addressing internal challenges such as suboptimal attendance discipline. To address these issues, this study examines a causal model that positions servant leadership as a leadership approach focused on service, empowerment, and the development of trust, alongside organizational culture as a system of shared values and norms that guide collective behavior. Servant leadership, as highlighted by Eva et al. (2019), is closely linked to outcomes such as performance, satisfaction, commitment, and extra-role behavior, often operating through mediating factors like organizational culture, while organizational culture itself shapes daily work practices and behavioral standards, thereby either strengthening or weakening the influence of leadership on institutional performance.

The Effect of Servant Leadership on Performance of Educational Institutions

The results of the SEM-PLS analysis indicate that servant leadership has a positive and highly significant effect on the performance of Educational institutions, with $\beta = 0.653$, $t = 16.860$, and $p = 0.000$. This finding confirms that the stronger the perception of servant leadership behaviors such as service orientation, empowerment, and individual development, the higher the level of Performance of Educational institutions achieved. Leaders who provide emotional support, promote fair and supportive work relationships, and encourage professional growth are able to enhance employee commitment, loyalty, and productivity. This result aligns with previous studies demonstrating that servant leadership consistently contributes to improved performance across various organizational contexts.

These findings are consistent with prior research by Alipio et al. (2023), which found that servant leadership significantly improves organizational outcomes, as well as the comprehensive review by Eva et al. (2019), which highlights the robust and consistent positive relationship between servant leadership and the performance of Educational institutions, satisfaction, and commitment. Their work emphasizes that servant leadership operates through trust-building, empowerment, and the development of employees' capabilities. Therefore, strengthening servant leadership, particularly weaker dimensions such as healing and persuasion, can further enhance the performance of Educational institutions by fostering a more supportive and development-oriented work environment.

The Effect of Organizational Culture on Performance of Educational Institutions

Organizational culture is also found to have a positive and significant effect on the performance of Educational institutions, as indicated by $\beta = 0.486$, $t = 11.136$, and $p = 0.000$. This result suggests that shared values, norms, and collective work practices within the organization play a critical role in shaping disciplined, effective, and high-quality work behaviors. Organizational culture serves as a form of social control that guides how employees perform tasks, make decisions, and interact within the workplace. Therefore, a stronger organizational culture contributes directly to improved Performance of Educational institutions.

This finding is supported by previous research, including Alipio et al. (2023), which demonstrates that organizational culture significantly influences the performance of Educational institutions by shaping behavioral norms and expectations within the organization. Additionally, broader organizational behavior literature emphasizes that strong cultures enhance coordination, reduce uncertainty, and promote consistent performance outcomes. In this study, the relatively weaker aspect of attention to detail

aligns with lower scores in punctuality and attendance, reinforcing the importance of strengthening discipline-oriented cultural elements to improve performance consistency and effectiveness.

The Effect of Servant Leadership on Performance of Educational Institutions with Organizational Culture as a Mediating Variable

Theoretically, servant leadership is a leadership approach that places the leader as a servant first, focusing on meeting the needs and fostering the development of followers. This approach has been empirically proven to create supportive, fair, and growth-oriented work relationships, which ultimately drive the performance of Educational institutions. Numerous studies show that servant leadership is positively associated with key organizational outcomes such as performance, job satisfaction, and commitment, often operating through mediating or contextual variables like organizational culture.

These findings are in line with prior research, particularly Eva et al. (2019), who emphasize that servant leadership often exerts its influence through intermediary mechanisms such as organizational climate and culture. Research in organizational culture also indicates that cultural dimensions such as shared values, internal relationships, leadership style, and human orientation play a significant role in enhancing the performance of Educational institutions by reinforcing behavioral patterns and expectations. When organizational culture aligns with servant leadership values such as collaboration, care, and service orientation, servant leadership is more effectively translated into stronger organizational norms, which in turn drive higher institutional performance. Conversely, a rigid or hierarchical culture weakens this transmission process. Therefore, consistent with previous studies and with the SEM-PLS structural results of this study, this research confirms that organizational culture acts as a mediating (intervening) mechanism that channels part of the effect of servant leadership on the performance of Educational institutions, rather than merely strengthening or weakening it as a moderating variable would.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that improving the performance of educational institutions, particularly in the context of Universitas Winaya Mukti, is inseparable from the role of service-oriented leadership and the strengthening of a supportive organizational culture. Servant leadership has been found to exert a positive influence on both organizational culture and institutional performance directly, while organizational culture also serves as a mediating factor that strengthens the relationship between such leadership and institutional performance. These findings underscore the importance of leaders who are able to listen, empower, and prioritize the needs of organizational members in order to foster a collaborative, disciplined, and service-oriented work environment. At the same time, a strong organizational culture must be supported by values of innovation, attention to detail, stability, cooperation, and discipline in attendance and punctuality to avoid stagnation and to enable adaptation to the challenges of the digital era. Therefore, efforts to enhance institutional performance should be carried out in an integrated manner through the development of servant leadership practices and the reinforcement of an innovative, collaborative, and accountable organizational culture. Operational measures such as the implementation of standard operating procedures, attendance and punctuality monitoring systems, and mentoring programs to cultivate careful and disciplined work habits are essential to support the achievement of sustainable institutional performance, improve reputation, and strengthen the competitiveness of higher education institutions amidst the increasingly high demands for educational quality.

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