
The Influence of Women's Leadership and Work Culture in Soes on Employee Performance

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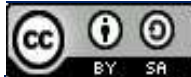
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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of women's leadership and work culture on employee performance in the State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs). The issue of gender equality is a major concern in this context, considering that there are still structural and cultural challenges that hinder women's participation in strategic positions. This study uses a quantitative approach with an associative strategy and multiple linear regression method to measure the influence of two independent variables—women's leadership and work culture—on employee performance as dependent variables. Data is collected through the distribution of questionnaires and tested for validity and reliability to guarantee the reliability of the results. The results of the analysis show that both independent variables have a significant influence on improving employee performance. These findings underscore the importance of strengthening an inclusive work culture and supporting women's strategic roles in leadership to drive organizational productivity and effectiveness. The practical implication of this research is the need to strengthen gender-based policies and transform work culture in SOEs to create a more equal and progressive workspace.

KEYWORDS Women's leadership, Work culture, Employee performance, Gender equality, SOEs



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INTRODUCTION

The problem of gender equality has always been an issue in all areas of life (Ismail, 2020). The official G20 engagement group, Women 20 (W20), has the goal of ensuring that there is a discussion on gender equality issues at the G20 Discussion so that it can be implemented as policies and commitments that encourage gender equality and women's economic empowerment (W20 Indonesia 2022, 2022). One of the 4 (four) priority issues set by the Women 20 Indonesia 2022 Group is about discrimination and equality with the aim of eliminating discrimination that can hinder women in economic activities (Yesidora, 2022).

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At the domestic level, Indonesia ranks 125th when referring to the inclusivity index, which is a holistic measurement of development with one of the focuses on gender equality (Knowledge Sector Initiative, 2022). Gender stereotypes are still an obstacle to women's career advancement and form negative perceptions in the work environment, especially in leadership positions (Tabassum & Nayak, 2021). Leaders can be grouped based on socio-psychological conditions, including leaders of crowd, student leaders, public leaders, and women leaders (Bukit et al., 2017).

Based on data from the Global Gender Gap Report (2023), the portion of women in leadership Senior defined as Director, Vice President (VP) or C-Suite is at 32.2% in 2023 which is lower when compared to the overall representation of the female workforce in 2023 which is 41.9%.

The Chartered Institute for Personnel Development (2015) added that organizations need to foster a work environment where women are not pressured to be able to behave like men, this is because women have a unique way and advantages in carrying out leadership (Dessler, 2013). There are various challenges in achieving gender equality in leadership, traditional reasons such as discrimination by male colleagues and family responsibilities are still widely found (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2017).

According to Nugroho (2008), several issue criteria are on the public policy agenda, including; 1) whether the issue is considered to have reached a critical point so that it cannot be ignored; 2) whether the issue is sensitive and quickly attracts public attention; 3) whether the issue concerns certain aspects of society; 4) whether the issue concerns many parties so that it has a wide impact on society if ignored; 5) whether the issue is related to power and legitimacy; 6) what the issue is related to the trends that are developing in society.



Figure 1. Number of SOEs in Indonesia

Source: Databoks (2020) and Ministry of SOEs

SOEs as state representatives in the business sector have a strategic role not only in encouraging economic growth, but also in being role models for other business worlds, including in terms of gender equality. Based on Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 19 of 2003, SOEs are tasked with contributing to the national economy, pursuing profits, and organizing public benefits. One form of SOE transformation in strengthening human resources is to implement the *Respectful Workplace Policy* policy and encourage female representation of at least 25% on the board of directors (Vania, 2022).

The implementation of this policy can be found in the practice of several SOEs

such as PT Dahana, which is engaged in the defense and mining industry sectors. In practice, the number of female employees is still very small, especially in the field of only 1.5% of the total field workforce (IW, 2023). Challenges faced by female employees also include work facilities that are not yet gender-friendly, as well as stereotypes that women are less suitable to work in harsh field environments (Agriculture, 2022; Johns, 2013; Kulkarni & Mahima, 2022; Kurniawan et al., 2012; Lensufiie, 2010). This inequality not only reflects the problem of representation, but also reflects the condition of the work culture that is not yet fully inclusive.

The increasing participation of women in organizational leadership, including within State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), is one of the important indicators in encouraging gender equality and building a more inclusive work system (Ministry of SOEs, 2023). In the context of complex organizations such as SOEs, women's leadership is not only a symbolic representation, but also plays a strategic role in the decision-making process and human resource management (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Women leaders carry distinctive leadership values, such as empathy, collaboration, and effective communication, which have been shown to have a positive contribution to the work environment and improved team performance (Desvaux, Devillard-Hoellinger, & Baumgarten, 2007). Women's leadership is often *people-centered leadership*, which focuses on building interpersonal relationships and empowering the work team as a whole (Northouse, 2018).

In the midst of the global push for gender inclusivity, Indonesia has also shown progressive steps by implementing various policies that encourage women's representation in strategic positions, including in the board of directors of SOEs (Srikandi BUMN, 2021). However, this representation does not necessarily guarantee that the work environment will automatically support women in carrying out their roles (Groysberg & Bell, 2013; Hadi et al., 2022; Hermayanti & Rahmawati, 2015; Irwansyah, 2021; Ismail, 2020). Work culture in an organization plays an important role in shaping work behaviors, values, and practices, which ultimately affects the effectiveness of leadership as well as employee performance (Schein, 2010). In the context of SOEs that have a bureaucratic and formalistic character, the challenge of a work culture that tends to be rigid and hierarchical can be an obstacle to a more participatory and collaborative female leadership style (Hofstede, 2001).

The complexity of the relationship between work culture and women's leadership is increasingly interesting to study, especially in the service sector that prioritizes service quality, punctuality, and interpersonal relationships (Zeithaml, Bitner, & Gremler, 2018). This is where the role of organizations such as PT Surveyor Indonesia as part of the IDSurvey subholding becomes important to be further analyzed. With the characteristics of services as a labor-intensive industry and highly dependent on human resources, the leadership practices and work culture in it greatly determine the company's performance (Ercetin, 2016; Fijratullah, 2023; Fitriani, 2015). Moreover, based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the service sector has become one of the fields of work with the highest participation of women, making gender issues in service organizations even more relevant to be researched (BPS, 2022).

Work culture is a set of values, norms, beliefs, and habits that are lived and practiced by individuals in an organization as a guideline in carrying out daily tasks. Work culture is formed from the process of internalizing organizational values that are used as collective behavior, thus affecting work attitudes and productivity (Sedarmayanti & Rahadian, 2018). Work culture is not just a formal rule, but reflects the way of thinking and behaving in completing work that is believed to be shared (Perkasa, 2023). Robbins & Mukerji (1994) emphasized that shared values and beliefs are the foundation for the formation of organizational culture, which is then manifested in the work culture of individuals and groups.

Supriyadi and Triguno (2013) added that work culture is a driving force that shapes work ethic and behavior that reflects responsibility, honesty, and commitment to duty. A strong work culture creates an adaptive work environment, is open to change, and upholds collaboration and innovation (Denison in Sedarmayanti & Rahadian, 2018). Therefore, work culture is an important element in shaping organizational effectiveness and the quality of human resources.

Women's leadership refers to women's ability to influence and direct others towards achieving organizational goals. This leadership includes not only strategic decision-making skills, but also an inclusive, collaborative, and empathetic approach (Robbins & Judge, 2013). Women leaders tend to emphasize relational values such as open communication, trust, and subordinate empowerment (Dubrin, 2005). In the context of modern organizations, women's leadership is crucial because the transformative leadership style that women generally possess is considered to be able to create a participatory and innovative work environment (Hermayanti & Rahmawati, 2015). In addition, women's leadership also enriches the decision-making process through a more diverse and sensitive perspective on social, emotional, and ethical issues.

As leaders, women are not only expected to be able to navigate these structural and cultural challenges, but also play a role in creating a safe, fair, and productive work environment. Therefore, it is important to examine more deeply how women's leadership and a supportive work culture can contribute to employee performance in the SOE environment (Li et al., 2022). This study will seek to answer how the variables of women's leadership and work culture influence employee performance, given the importance of improving the competitiveness of human resources and the organization as a whole.

Despite ongoing national efforts to promote gender equality, the representation of women in leadership roles within Indonesia's State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) remains limited, especially in male-dominated sectors. Structural and cultural barriers continue to hinder women's advancement into strategic leadership positions, and many workplaces still fail to support an inclusive and gender-sensitive environment. These conditions raise a crucial question: how do women's leadership styles and organizational work culture influence employee performance in SOEs?

Gender equality is one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and a priority for global and national policy agendas. Indonesia's commitment to increasing female representation in strategic positions—such as the 25% target for women on SOE boards—is a vital step forward. However, symbolic inclusion without a corresponding

transformation in organizational culture may fail to yield meaningful impact on employee engagement and performance. Women in leadership roles often face stereotypes, unequal facilities, and traditional expectations that reduce their effectiveness.

Given that SOEs hold a pivotal role in the national economy and public service delivery, improving the inclusivity and effectiveness of their leadership structures becomes not only a gender issue but also a matter of organizational performance. Especially in service-oriented sectors, where interpersonal skills, empathy, and collaboration—traits often associated with female leadership—are critical, the alignment between leadership style and work culture has direct implications for workforce productivity and morale.

Research by Desvaux et al. (2007) found that female leadership, characterized by relational and people-oriented qualities, positively influences team cohesion and overall workplace climate. This aligns with Northouse (2018), who argued that transformational leadership—which women frequently exhibit—tends to foster innovation, trust, and high performance.

Meanwhile, Schein (2010) emphasized that organizational culture significantly affects the behavior, motivation, and performance of employees. In rigid and bureaucratic settings, traditional cultural values may suppress open communication and collaboration, limiting the potential impact of progressive leadership styles. Hofstede (2001) further identified hierarchical cultures as a barrier to participatory management, especially when female leaders adopt inclusive approaches.

Hermayanti and Rahmawati (2015) highlighted the positive impact of inclusive work culture on employee commitment, suggesting that gender-sensitive environments tend to foster stronger organizational loyalty and performance. However, most of these studies were conducted in general organizational settings and have not deeply examined the intersection between women's leadership and culture in SOEs, particularly within the Indonesian context.

Although previous studies have independently explored women's leadership and work culture as predictors of employee performance, limited research has examined their combined influence in the context of Indonesian SOEs. Moreover, empirical evidence that incorporates gender-specific leadership traits and the moderating role of work culture in influencing performance is scarce, especially in public sector organizations with bureaucratic norms and masculine leadership archetypes.

This study uniquely investigates the dual impact of women's leadership and organizational work culture on employee performance using a quantitative, inferential approach within SOEs. It contributes novel empirical insight by analyzing these factors simultaneously in a real-world context where gender policy initiatives are underway. The study highlights how gender-based leadership attributes and supportive cultural environments jointly shape performance outcomes—an angle rarely addressed in SOE-specific performance research.

The objective of this study is to determine the influence of women's leadership and work culture on employee performance within Indonesian State-Owned Enterprises. By using multiple linear regression analysis, the research aims to assess both the individual and combined effects of these variables and to evaluate the strength and significance of their relationships.

This research provides actionable insights for SOE leaders and policymakers seeking to foster inclusive, performance-driven workplaces. The findings can guide gender-responsive leadership development, culture-building strategies, and human

resource reforms. Additionally, this study adds to academic discourse by offering evidence-based recommendations for enhancing organizational effectiveness through inclusive leadership and culture in emerging economies.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a quantitative analytical approach with an inferential statistical orientation, aiming to test the relationships between variables in an objective and measurable manner. The research is grounded in a positivistic paradigm, which assumes that social realities can be quantified and explained through statistically validated cause-and-effect relationships. An associative strategy is employed to explore the interaction between two independent variables—women’s leadership and work culture—and a dependent variable, namely employee performance. This strategy not only allows for a descriptive understanding of each variable but also enables the identification of significant causal relationships between them.

To analyze the data, multiple linear regression analysis is used as the primary analytical tool. This technique is suitable for determining the simultaneous effect of two or more independent variables on a single dependent variable. The regression model evaluates whether women’s leadership and work culture individually and jointly influence employee performance, and also identifies the strength and direction of these relationships. Regression coefficients (b_1 and b_2) indicate whether the relationships are positive or negative, while statistical tests such as the t-test and F-test assess the significance of these effects based on p-values.

To ensure the accuracy and reliability of the data, all questionnaire items undergo validity and reliability testing. The validity test is conducted using the Pearson Product Moment correlation method, where an item is deemed valid if its calculated r-value exceeds the critical value in the r-table at a 5% significance level. The reliability test is carried out by computing Cronbach’s Alpha, with a threshold of 0.6 indicating sufficient internal consistency. These validation procedures are crucial to ensure that the data truly reflect the measured variables and maintain consistency across different conditions and times of administration.

Information:

\check{Y}	$\check{Y} = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + e$		
Y	Performance	Employee	(Variable dependen)
X_1	Women's Leadership		
X_2	Work Culture		
a	Constant (Y value when X_1 and $X_2 = 0$)		
b_1, b_2	The regression coefficient of each X variable		
e	Error (error level or error term)		

This model allows researchers to find out:

1. Does female leadership have a significant influence on employee performance.

2. Does work culture play a role in determining employee performance.
3. The extent of the combined contribution of the two independent variables in explaining the variation in performance variables.

In addition, the multiple linear regression approach is also used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between variables. The regression coefficient values (b_1 and b_2) provide information about whether the relationship between the variables is positive (unidirectional) or negative (in the opposite direction), and whether the relationship is statistically significant based on the significance value (p-value) obtained from the t-test and the F-test.

To support the accuracy of the analysis results, the data that has been collected through the questionnaire is first tested for validity and reliability. The validity test aims to find out to what extent the measurement instrument actually measures what it should be measured. In this study, the validity test was carried out using the Pearson Product Moment correlation technique, with the criterion that an item is considered valid if *the value of r* is calculated $> r$ of the table at a certain level of significance (e.g. 5%).

Meanwhile, the reliability test was carried out by calculating Cronbach's Alpha value. If Cronbach's Alpha value > 0.6 then the instrument is considered quite reliable and consistent. This reliability test is important to ensure that the data collected is trustworthy and reflects the actual situation consistently across different times and conditions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Women's Leadership in SOEs

The results indicate that women's leadership in State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) plays a pivotal role in enhancing employee performance. Previous studies highlight that female leaders often exhibit transformational leadership styles, characterized by empathy and collaboration (Eagly et al., 2003; Northouse, 2018; Desvaux et al., 2007). This leadership approach fosters a positive workplace environment, which is essential for motivating employees.

Moreover, the presence of women in leadership positions contributes to the diversity of thought and decision-making processes (Robbins & Judge, 2013; Hermayanti & Rahmawati, 2015; Yukl, 1994). The findings support the notion that gender-diverse leadership teams can address various organizational challenges more effectively. For instance, women leaders bring unique perspectives that can enhance problem-solving skills and innovation (Schein, 2010; Hofstede, 2001; Tabassum & Nayak, 2021).

Despite these advantages, challenges remain in promoting women's leadership in SOEs. Structural barriers, such as gender stereotypes and organizational culture, continue to hinder women's advancement (Davis, 2002; Ismail, 2020; Hennig & Jardim, 1977). Addressing these challenges is crucial for fostering a more inclusive work environment (Aminah & Saksono, 2021).

Impact of Work Culture on Employee Performance

The study found that work culture significantly influences employee performance in SOEs. A positive work culture characterized by inclusivity and collaboration enhances job satisfaction and productivity (Sedarmayanti & Rahadian, 2018; Robbins & Mukerji,

1994; Grönroos, 2007). Employees thrive in environments where their contributions are valued, leading to higher engagement levels.

Furthermore, a strong work culture promotes open communication and trust among team members, which are essential for effective teamwork (Denison, 1990; Schein, 2010; Sjahruddin et al., 2023). The findings align with previous research indicating that organizations with a supportive culture experience lower turnover rates and higher employee morale (Fitriani, 2015; Mathis & Jackson, 2011; (Alvado & Anzari, 2021).

However, many SOEs still exhibit rigid and hierarchical cultures that suppress creativity and innovation (Hofstede, 2001; Hermayanti & Rahmawati, 2015; Kurniawan et al., 2012). Transforming the work culture to embrace inclusivity can significantly enhance employee performance and organizational effectiveness (Abdullah & Arisanti, 2010).

Gender Equality and Organizational Performance

The findings underscore the critical link between gender equality and organizational performance. Gender equality initiatives contribute to improved employee outcomes, as diverse teams are more innovative and better at problem-solving (Devillard et al. (2012); Ercetin, 2016; Kulkarni & Mahima, 2022). Emphasizing gender equality within SOEs aligns with global sustainability goals and enhances corporate reputation (Alwi, 2011; Andre & Hermanto, 2021; Bayot et al., 2021; *Breaking the Boardroom: A Guide for Business on How to Support the Female Leaders of the Future*, 2015).

Moreover, organizations that prioritize gender equality tend to attract top talent and retain employees longer, leading to lower hiring costs and enhanced productivity (Dihni, 2022; W20 Indonesia, 2022; Yesidora, 2022). The results suggest that fostering gender equality not only benefits employees but also drives organizational success.

Despite progress, significant gaps remain in achieving gender parity in leadership roles within SOEs (Bappenas (2020); Knowledge Sector Initiative, 2022; Nizomi, 2019). Addressing these disparities is vital for creating a more equitable and productive workplace.

Quantitative Analysis of Leadership and Performance

The quantitative analysis utilized multiple linear regression to assess the relationship between women's leadership and employee performance. The results indicate a significant positive correlation, suggesting that effective women's leadership contributes to enhanced performance outcomes (Hidayat et al., 2022; Mathis & Jackson, 2010; Rivai, 2014). The regression coefficients reveal that the influence of women's leadership on performance is substantial.

Furthermore, the analysis highlights the combined effect of leadership and work culture on employee performance. A supportive work culture amplifies the positive impact of women's leadership, creating a synergistic effect that benefits organizational performance (Sutrisno, 2013; Sugijono, 2015; Triguno, 2018).

The findings emphasize the importance of developing gender-responsive leadership practices and cultivating a conducive work culture as strategies to enhance employee performance in SOEs (Dewi, 2023; Rivai & Sagala, 2013; Wulandari et al., 2021).

Challenges Faced by Women in Leadership Roles

Despite the positive contributions of women's leadership, various challenges persist. Gender stereotypes and biases in the workplace often limit women's opportunities

for advancement (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2017; Tabassum & Nayak, 2021; Moeljono, 2005). Many women face additional pressures to conform to traditional gender roles, which can hinder their effectiveness as leaders.

Moreover, structural barriers within organizations, such as lack of mentorship and support networks, further complicate women's career progression (Johns, 2013; Nugroho, 2008; Wahab, 2008). The findings stress the need for targeted interventions to address these barriers and promote women's leadership in SOEs.

Creating an inclusive environment where women are empowered to lead requires commitment at all organizational levels (Fitriani, 2015; Hadi et al., 2022; Yulianti & Takanjanji, 2018). By dismantling negative stereotypes and fostering supportive networks, SOEs can enhance female representation in leadership roles.

Recommendations for Enhancing Women's Leadership

Based on the findings, several recommendations emerge for enhancing women's leadership in SOEs. First, organizations should implement training and mentorship programs that focus on developing leadership skills among women (Dewi, 2023; Kencana, 2022; Wahab, 2002). These initiatives can help build confidence and competencies necessary for leadership roles.

Second, promoting policies that encourage work-life balance can alleviate the pressures women face in balancing career and family responsibilities (Dwiastuti et al. (2022); Hidayat et al., 2022; Mufid et al., 2022). Flexible work arrangements and parental leave policies can support women's participation in leadership (Durbin, 2010).

Lastly, fostering a culture of inclusivity and respect is essential for empowering women in the workplace (Sutrisno, 2016; Triana et al., 2024; Zaky, 2021). By prioritizing gender-sensitive practices, SOEs can create an environment where women can thrive as leaders.

Future Research Directions

The study opens several avenues for future research on women's leadership and work culture in SOEs. Investigating the long-term effects of gender equality initiatives on organizational performance can provide valuable insights for policymakers (Devillard et al., 2012; Fijratullah, 2023; Groysberg & Bell, 2013). Additionally, exploring the impact of specific leadership styles on employee engagement may yield important findings.

Future studies could also examine the role of male allies in promoting gender equality within organizations (Anderson, 2021; Hidayat et al., 2022; Mulyadi, 2015). Understanding how men can support women's leadership can contribute to more effective gender equality strategies.

Finally, comparative studies across different sectors or countries can provide a broader understanding of the dynamics of women's leadership and work culture (Johns, 2013; Nugroho, 2008; Putranto & Perdhana, 2018). These insights can help tailor interventions that address the unique challenges faced by women leaders in various contexts.

CONCLUSION

The study highlights the significant influence of women's leadership and work culture on employee performance within Indonesian State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs). It reveals that female leaders often employ transformational leadership styles that foster a collaborative and inclusive work environment, which is vital for enhancing employee

engagement and productivity. Despite the positive contributions of women's leadership, the research also identifies persistent challenges, such as gender stereotypes and structural barriers that hinder women's advancement in leadership roles. Consequently, it is essential for organizations to implement policies that promote gender equality and supportive work cultures. For future research, it is recommended to explore the long-term impacts of gender equality initiatives on organizational performance and to examine the role of male allies in supporting women leaders, which could provide deeper insights into effective strategies for fostering inclusivity in the workplace.

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