

## The Structural Equation Modeling to Strategic Leadership on Service Quality through Performance as an Intervening Variable

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### Abstract

This study aims to analyze in detail the direct influence of strategic leadership on performance. In addition, this research analyzes the influence of strategic leadership directly or indirectly on service quality through performance as an intervening variable. This research was conducted in higher education organizations at the Bone State Islamic Institute to measure and evaluate strategic leadership factors, service quality, and organizational performance. Data were collected through questionnaires to 500 students who were conducted for three months in all departments in the tertiary institution. The study uses Structural Equation Model analysis from Partial Least Square software. From the research results, it is known that strategic leadership has a positive effect on organizational performance, and organizational performance strengthens the positive influence of strategic leadership on service quality.

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## INTRODUCTION

Service is the foremost essential task of the apparatus as servants of the state and the community. This task has been clearly outlined in the fourth paragraph of the 1945 Constitution, which includes 4 (four) aspects of the leading service of the apparatus to society, namely protecting the entire Indonesian nation and all of Indonesia's bloodshed, promoting public welfare, educating the nation's life and implementing world order based on independence. , lasting peace, and social justice. Furthermore, clarified again in the Decree of the Minister of Administrative Reform No. 63 of 2003, which outlines general guidelines for the administration of public services. Service as a process of fulfilling needs through the activities of other people directly is a concept that is always actual in various institutional aspects. It is not only in business organizations but has developed more broadly in government organizational settings (Sinambela & Darmawan, 2021), so it is of interest for researchers to research aspects of public service. Some researchers who have conducted studies on public services include (Hsiao & Lin, 2008; Jonathan et al., 2017; Putra, 2019) who have succeeded in conducting research in the field of public services in relation to community satisfaction.

Quality public services have become the obligation of government organizations, both in quantity and quality. Quality public services can increase trust in the community (Van de Walle, 2003; Yani & Ahmad, 2017). Creating quality public services cannot be done partially but in an integrated manner. The factor that is considered strategic in encouraging the realization of quality public services is the role of leadership. This follows research conducted by (Haq, 2011; Schwarz et al., 2020) that leaders must have the skills to play a role in improving ethics orientated toward improving service quality. The provision of services that meet predetermined standards is a part that needs to be scrutinized because it is found that the services provided are still below the expectations of the community. Some researchers show that there are still problems in the provision of public services, such as corruption (Naher et al., 2020) and common bureaucratic problems (Yusriadi, 2018). Another problem is the need for more public awareness in helping the government improve public services (Maslennikov et al., 2017). Therefore, attention to service performance is a vital requirement in improving service delivery and improving performance depends on the quality of its human resources (Alonso & Lewis, 2001; Ritz et al., 2021). Human resources are one of the elements that play an essential role in the success of achieving the goals of an organization (Mwaniki & Gathenya, 2015). Human resources, as an organizational asset, have control over the progress of an organization and the achievement of the goals set by the organization (Kusumawardani, 2011).

Humans are the essential element in an organization because other elements owned by an organization, such as business capital, raw materials, machines, work methods, time, and other assets, can only benefit the organization if humans use them. As Hariandja, (2002) said, "Human Resources (HR) is the main element of the organization compared to other elements such as capital, technology, and money, because humans themselves control others. Humans choose technology; humans seek capital, and humans use and maintain it, besides humans can be a source of lasting competitive advantage. Therefore, human resource management is essential. Human resources in organizations have a variety of individual characteristics that differ from one another. According to Stephen P. Robbins, (2013, p. 43), these characteristics consist of Biographical characteristics such as age, gender, tenure, and status; abilities such as intellectual abilities and physical abilities and learning. These differences in individual characteristics will affect the attitudes and work behavior of members of the organization, which will also affect each member's performance and job satisfaction. Performance related to work performance is vital for an organization or company to achieve its goals. Performance in the context of developing human resources in an organization is needed to achieve maximum employee work results and organizational success (Mudhofar, 2021; Perry & Vandenabeele, 2015). Performance is a function of motivation and the ability to complete a task or job. Someone should have a certain degree of willingness and level of ability. A person's willingness and skills are only effective enough to do something with a clear understanding of what to do and how to do it. Performance is a fundamental behavior everyone displays as employees perform according to their role in the agency. Performance is significant in an agency's efforts to achieve goals. Performance is the quality and quantity of an individual or group work result (output) in a particular activity caused by natural abilities or abilities obtained from the learning process and the desire to improve. Performance is all actions or behaviors that are controlled by individuals and contribute to the achievement of goals (Sonnentag & Frese, 2002).

Another factor that can affect performance in the organization is how the leader's leadership in the organization. Leadership is also closely related to achieving good performance in an organization. Leadership here is leadership that can anticipate, have a vision, and maintain flexibility, empowering

others to create the necessary strategic changes. Therefore, strategic leadership is very suitable to guide and be implemented in responding to all future challenges for an organization in the current era.

Strategic leadership from several research results shows significant results and an essential role for an organization, business, and public (Crossan et al., 2008; Ding et al., 2014; Jaleha & Machuki, 2018; Pasaribu et al., 2021).

In educational organizations, leadership is a method of influencing and potential, coordinating, and mobilizing all organization members in education. It aims to create efficient and practical activities to achieve educational goals. Every organization in the digitalization era, including educational organizations, needs strategic leadership because the current organizational challenges are so complex; it requires leaders with a strategic and visionary pattern of thinking and acting to make every decision right. Researchers are interested in conducting strategic leadership research implemented in educational organizations (Alalfy, 2014; Kising'u, 2017) because strategic leadership has a role in competitiveness (Kosasih & Tarigan, 2016).

Strategic leadership means anticipating and envisioning the future, maintaining flexibility, thinking strategically, and initiating change. Strategic leaders empirically must be able to realize goals and produce good results for the organization. In addition, strategic leaders can combine plans with management (Karyono, 2020). The organization respects roles and views in making that vision a reality. Strategic leaders identify the right resources and capabilities to compete. When companies do not have it, they try to build it. They also create organizational structures and develop appropriate corporate cultures. Resources and capabilities form core competencies. Therefore, the motivation for this research is that researchers want to know the direct effect of strategic leadership on performance and the indirect effect of strategic leadership on service quality by using performance variables as intervening variables.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Strategic Leadership

Strategic Leadership is the ability to influence other people in the organization you lead to voluntarily make day-to-day decisions that lead to the organization's long-term growth and survival while maintaining the organization's short-term financial health (Rowe & Nejad, 2009). (Ireland & Hoskisson, 2012) defines strategic Leadership as a person's ability to anticipate, envision, maintain flexibility, think strategically, and work with others to initiate changes that will create a better future for the organization. As a basis for measuring strategic Leadership in organizations, six dimensions of strategic Leadership are used, namely determining strategic direction, exploiting and maintaining key capabilities, developing human resources, supporting an influential organizational culture, paying attention to ethical practices, and establishing strategic controls (Ireland & Hoskisson, 2012). Stephen P. Robbins, (2013) states that Leadership is the ability to influence a group toward achieving a set vision or goal. Organizations need strong Leadership and strong management for optimal effectiveness. Building leadership does not just have leadership skills but also challenges them to lead their performance.

Leadership is more than just a set of skills and expertise. Leadership has a fine personal quality that is hard to see but very influential. The influence of Leadership is very significant for the organization (Sonmez Cakir & Adiguzel, 2020) by motivating employees (Marjaya & Pasaribu, 2019; Saputri & Andayani, 2018). In addition, a leader is a person who must be able and have the courage to make decisions on the problems faced by the organization. According to Path-Goal theory, indicators of leader behavior include Directive Leadership, Supportive Leadership, Participative Leadership, and Achievement-Oriented Leadership.

### Performance

Performance is related to the level of productivity (Gielen et al., 2009), which shows the input and output risks in the organization. Performance can even be seen from a performance standpoint by emphasizing the value of efficiency associated with the quality of output produced by employees based on several standards previously set by the organization concerned. Performance, according to (Surya Dharma, 2012), is "performance or work performance is something that is produced or a product or service produced or provided by a person or group of people." To be able to evaluate the effectiveness of Performance of this, Ardiani, Nunuk, (1996, p. 11) states that "The judgments we make are following the achievements of individuals, groups, and organizations, the closer they are to the expected achievements, the more effective we evaluate them."

Ardiani, Nunuk, (1996, p. 6) Argues that a prerequisite for forming high Performance is a positive attitude and behavior change. Some provide an understanding of Performance as the implementation of a function; as stated (Whitmore, 1997, p. 104), "Performance is the implementation of the functions

required of a person. Performance can also be interpreted as results or achievements achieved by individuals, units, or organizations with outputs, namely quality and quantity or The Degree Of Accomplishment. To find out the achievements of an organization, of course, requires a measure or criteria as an indicator of the success to be achieved.

Berman (Keban, 2008, p. 209) defines Performance as the "Utilization of resources efficiently and effectively to achieve results." Pollit and Boukaert (Keban, 2008, p. 209) suggest that performance measurement is developed extensively, intensively, and externally in practice. Extensive performance development implies that more work areas are included in performance measurement. Intensive performance development means that more management functions are included in performance measurement, while external development means more outsiders are considered in performance measurement. Bernardin and Russel (Keban, 2008, p. 210) define Performance as the aspect emphasized as a record of the outcome or final result obtained after a job or activity has been carried out for a certain period. This shows that Performance only refers to a series of results obtained by an employee during a certain period and does not include the personal characteristics of the employee being assessed.

## Service quality

The definition of service quality or service quality is centered on efforts to fulfill customer needs and desires and the accuracy of their delivery to offset customer expectations. The definition of service quality or service quality according to Wyckoff (F. dan G. C. Tjiptono, 2011) is as follows: Service quality is the expected level of excellence and control over that level of excellence to fulfill customer desires. The definition of service quality or service quality according to (Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V., Berry, 1988) is as follows: Service quality is a reflection of the consumer's evaluative perception of the service received at a certain time. Service quality is determined based on the level of importance of the service dimensions. Based on the two definitions of service quality above, two main factors influence service quality: the service expected (expected service) by consumers and services received or perceived (perceived service) by consumers or perceived results.

Many dimensions can be used to measure service quality or service quality. There are at least four service quality measurement concepts: the Nordic Model, the SERVQUAL model, the Three-Component Model, and the Multi-Model (F. Tjiptono, 2008). In their research (Wasi Bagasworo, 2020), Brady and Cronin measure service quality based on the Multi-Model, which includes three dimensions: quality of interaction, quality of the physical environment, and quality of results. The following reviews the service quality dimensions according to Parasuraman, et al., (1988) dan Brady dan Cronin (2001). Parasuraman et al. (1988: 118) arrange the main dimensions which are the main factors determining the quality of services as follows:

1. Reliability. That is the ability to deliver the promised service reliably and accurately.
2. Responsiveness. Namely the willingness to help consumers by providing fast and precise service.
3. Assurance. That includes knowledge, ability, courtesy or personal kindness, and the ability to gain trust and desire.
4. Empathy. That includes maintaining and providing individual or personal attention to consumer needs.
5. Tangibles. That includes physical facilities, tools or equipment, price, personal appearance, and written materials.

These service quality dimensions can be used to measure the service quality of a service company. Measuring service quality means evaluating or comparing the performance of a service with a predetermined set of standards (Fandy, Tjiptono dan Greforius, 2016). For the measurement model, Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V., Berry, (1988) have created a multi-item scale called SERVQUAL. The servqual scale was first published in 1988 and consists of twenty-two question items distributed over the five dimensions of service quality.

The servqual scale is intended to measure customer expectations and perceptions and the gaps that exist in the service quality model. Measurements can be made using the Likert Scale or Differential Semantics. The respondent only has to choose the degree of agreement or disagreement with questions regarding service quality delivery. The quality is good and satisfying if the perceived service is as expected. If the service received exceeds consumer expectations, then service quality is perceived as ideal quality. Conversely, the quality is perceived as bad if the service received is lower

than expected; thus, whether or not the quality of service depends on the service provider's ability to meet consumer expectations consistently.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a management science approach, especially leadership, individual characteristics, work performance, and service performance. This study uses descriptive analysis and verification because the implementation includes data, analysis, and interpretation of the meaning and data obtained. The survey method is a research method used to obtain facts from existing phenomena and seek factual information. The research method used is a survey method. The survey method can dissect, discuss and recognize problems, as well as obtain justification for the state of ongoing

practices. In addition, the survey method can also evaluate and compare things people do in dealing with similar situations or problems. The results can be used in making plans and making decisions in the future. The types and sources of data collected in this study were: (1) primary data: data obtained directly from respondents through questionnaires, interviews, and observations collected by researchers, (2) secondary data: data that supports primary data obtained from documents.

The sampling criteria in this study took into account several conditions; the sample taken must be able to provide a reliable picture of the population as a whole, and be able to determine the precision, namely the level of certainty determined by differences in results obtained from complete records, provided that the circumstances in which both the method is carried out the same, simple so easy to implement, can provide maximum results with minimal cost risk. From the data collection data carried out through the distribution of research questionnaires (google form), as many as 500 students were distributed to the Whats apps group, email, classroom, and other social media carried out by random sampling to assess, measure and evaluate leadership factors (lecturers and structural officials campus), service quality and organizational performance. In this study, the types of data collected are primary and secondary. Primary data is obtained directly from the head of the Tourism and Culture Office and its employees with the question items in the questionnaire. Secondary data is obtained from school institutions or through data researched and collected by other parties related to this research problem. The validity and reliability of a measuring instrument are very important in scientific research, so before a measuring instrument (questionnaire) is used to obtain data, it is necessary to test its validity and reliability first. This is done with the intention that a valid and reliable measurement tool will produce accurate and accountable information.

Based on problem identification, research objectives, and hypotheses, the analytical design used is the structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis method. SEM is a multivariate analysis technique used to build and test statistical models, which are usually in the form of causal models. PLS is an alternative method of analysis with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Variance. Apart from confirming the theory, Partial Least Square (PLS) can also explain whether or not there is a relationship between latent variables. In addition, PLS is also used to confirm a theory, so research based on PLS predictions is more suitable for analyzing data. Partial Least Square (PLS) can also be used to explain whether there is a relationship between latent variables. Partial Least Square (PLS) can simultaneously analyze constructs formed with reflexive and formative indicators. Covariance-based SEM cannot do this because it will be an unidentified model. The choice of the Partial Least Square (PLS) method is based on the consideration that in this study, two latent variables are formed with reflexive indicators, and a reflexive second-order factor approach measures the variable.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The measurement model for validity and reliability tests, the coefficient of determination of the model, and the path coefficient for the equation model can be seen in Figure 4.1 below:

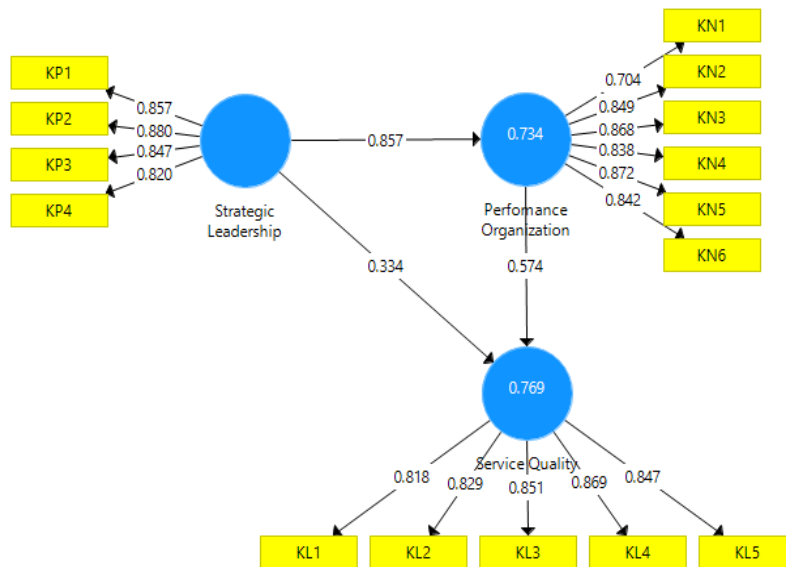


Figure 1 PLS Algorithm Results

Based on Figure 1 above, it can be described that strategic leadership indicators consist of (1) commitment to organizational goals, (2) make-up of the top management team, (3) ability to provide motivation, and (4) Focus on the sequence chosen by strategic initiatives that can bring better organizations (Lear, 2012). Organizational performance in this study focused on six indicators, including (1) organizational commitment, (2) organizational culture, (3) compensation, (4) leadership, (5) job satisfaction, and (6) discipline (Hessel, 2007). While the quality of service in this study focused on aspects of (1) tangible, (2) empathy, (3) reliability, (4) responsiveness, and (5) assurance (Parasuraman, A. Valerie, 2001). The data processing technique in this study using Partial Least Square (PLS) requires two stages to assess the Fit Model of a research model. These stages are:

## 1. Assessment of the Outer Model or Measurement Model

There are three criteria for using data analysis techniques with SmartPLS to assess the outer model: convergent validity, discriminant validity, and composite reliability.

### a. Convergent Validity

Assessment of convergent validity is based on the correlation between the item score/component score estimated by the PLS software. The individual reflexive measure is considered high if it correlates more than 0.70 with the measured construct. However, for research at the initial stage of developing a measurement scale, a loading value of 0.5 to 0.6 is considered sufficient. In this study, a loading factor limit of 0.60 will be used.

**Table 1. Outer Loadings (Measurement Model)**

	Performance Organization	Service Quality	Strategic Leadership
KL1		0.818	
KL2		0.829	
KL3		0.851	
KL4		0.869	
KL5		0.847	
KN1	0.704		
KN2	0.849		
KN3	0.868		
KN4	0.838		
KN5	0.872		
KN6	0.842		
KP1			0.857
KP2			0.880
KP3			0.847
KP4			0.820

The results of processing using SmartPLS can be seen in table 1. The value of the outer model or the correlation between constructs and variables meets convergent Validity because it has a loading factor value of  $> 0.50$ ; in conclusion, the constructs for all variables can be used to test hypotheses.

### b. Discriminant Validity

The Discriminant Validity of a model is considered good if each loading value of each indicator of a latent variable has the largest loading value with other loading values for other latent variables. The results of discriminant validity testing were obtained as follows:

**Table 2. Discriminant Validity (Cross Loading)**

	Performance Organization	Service Quality	Strategic Leadership
KL1	0.736	0.818	0.669
KL2	0.719	0.829	0.682
KL3	0.702	0.851	0.696
KL4	0.736	0.869	0.729
KL5	0.732	0.847	0.703
KN1	0.704	0.574	0.606
KN2	0.849	0.726	0.766
KN3	0.868	0.716	0.738
KN4	0.838	0.718	0.677
KN5	0.872	0.748	0.743
KN6	0.842	0.787	0.729
KP1	0.748	0.732	0.857
KP2	0.753	0.704	0.880
KP3	0.737	0.723	0.847
KP4	0.677	0.649	0.820

Table 2 shows that the loading factor value for indicators of the latent variable has a loading factor value greater than the other latent variable loading values. That is, latent variables have good discriminant validity.

**C.**

**d. Evaluating Reliability and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)**

The validity and reliability criteria can also be seen from the reliability value of a construct and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value of each construct. The construct is highly reliable if the value is 0.70 and the AVE is above 0.50. Table 4.6 will present the Composite Reliability and AVE values for all variables.

Table 3. Composite Reliability dan Average Variance Extracted

	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Performance Organization	0.930	0.690
Service Quality	0.925	0.711
Strategic Leadership	0.913	0.725

Based on table 3, it can be concluded that all constructs meet the reliability criteria; the value of composite reliability indicates this > 0.70 and AVE > 0.50 as the recommended criteria.

**Structural Model Testing (Inner Model)**

The structural Model or inner Model is evaluated by looking at the percentage of variance described, namely by looking at R2 for the dependent latent construct using the Stone-Geisser Q Square test and the structural path coefficients. Estimation stability was tested by t-statistic through the bootstrapping procedure.

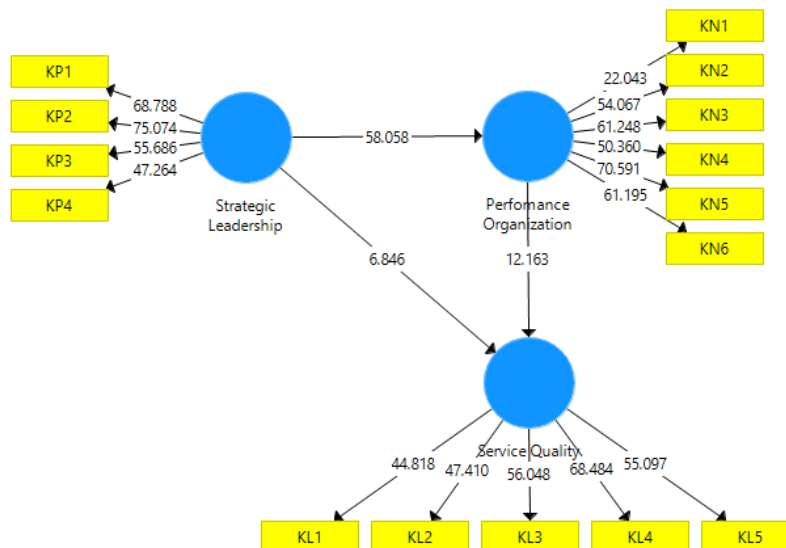


Figure 2 Bootstrapping Model

The results of the PLS R-Squares represent the total variance of the construct described by the Model. The following presents the results of calculating the R-Squares value:

**Table 4. Nilai R-Square**

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Performance Organization	0,734	0,734
Service Quality	0,769	0,768

This study uses two variables that are influenced by other variables, namely the service quality variable (Z), which is influenced by organizational performance (Y) and strategic leadership (X), and organizational performance (Y) is influenced by strategic leadership (X). Table 4 shows that the R-square value for the organizational performance variable (Y) is 0.734, and for the service quality variable (Z), it is 0.769. These results indicate that 73.4% of organizational performance variables (Y) are influenced by strategic leadership (X), and service quality (Z) of 76.9% are influenced by organizational performance and strategic leadership simultaneously. The basis for testing the



hypothesis in this study is the value contained in the output result for inner weight. The estimation output results for testing the structural model can be seen in the following table:

**Table 5. Result For Inner Weights**

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
Performance Organization Service Quality	->0,574	0,577	0,047	12,163	0,000
Strategic Leadership Performance Organization	->0,857	0,857	0,015	58,058	0,000
Strategic Leadership Service Quality	->0,334	0,331	0,049	6,846	0,000

The effect of organizational performance on service quality shows a path coefficient value of 0.574 with a t-count value of 12.163. This value is greater than a t-table (1.980), which means Hypothesis 1 is accepted. Based on these results, organizational performance has a significant positive effect on service quality. According to the first hypothesis, organizational performance can be a driving factor in improving service quality.

The effect of strategic leadership on organizational performance shows a path coefficient value of 0.857 with a t-count value of 58.058. This value is greater than the t-table (1.980), which means Hypothesis 2 is accepted. Based on these results, strategic leadership has a significant positive effect on organizational performance. This means it follows the second hypothesis, where strategic leadership can be a driving factor in improving organizational performance. The effect of strategic leadership on service quality shows a path coefficient value of 0.334 with a t-count value of 6.846. This value is greater than the t-table (1.980), which means Hypothesis 3 is accepted. Based on these results, strategic leadership significantly affects service quality. It follows the third hypothesis, where strategic leadership can be a driving factor in improving service quality.

Based on the results of research that have shown empirically that leadership has a vital role in an organization, it is shown that the influence of leadership factors is proven to have a significant influence on all endogenous variables. Leadership is needed to provide direction for the efforts of all workers in achieving organizational goals. Without leaders or guidance, the relationship between organizational goals may become tenuous. Therefore, leadership is needed if an organization wants to be successful. Moreover, good workers always want to know how they can contribute to achieving organizational goals. At least passionate workers need leadership as a basis for external motivation to keep their goals in harmony with organizational goals. In addition, an organization can run well because it is influenced by the relationships that occur in it, both with fellow employees and their leaders.

The role of leadership is very strategic and important in an organization as one of the determinants of success in achieving the mission, vision, and goals. Leadership on achievement has a significant influence on employee performance. Cooperative leadership will lead to work motivation so that employees work according to organizational expectations. Democratic leadership and accepting constructive suggestions from employees. Capable and democratic leadership helps increase work performance at the Department of Tourism and Culture of Majalengka Regency. Leadership is very influential and has an important role in building employee performance, as research conducted by (Astuti & Prayogi, 2018; Kumala & Agustina, 2018) showed that the role of leadership is very central to influencing performance.

## CONCLUSION

The results of research on the models built in this study indicate that all models empirically show positive and significant results from the hypothesis testing that has been done. Organizational performance has a direct effect on service quality, and this indicates that the implementation of organizational performance will have a positive influence on service quality. Strategic leadership also has a direct effect on organizational performance, which indicates that the application of strategic leadership will positively influence organizational performance. Strategic leadership has a direct effect on service quality, and this indicates that the implementation of strategic leadership will have a positive effect on service quality. Organizational performance as an intervening can strengthen the

influence of strategic leadership on service quality. This is based on the influence test results, which show that organizational performance affects service quality. So, organizational performance can be

used as an intervening variable that strengthens the relationship between strategic leadership and service quality.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

The Authors have no competing interests to declare.

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