

**Ethical Leadership as a Catalyst for Ethical Synergy between Ethics and Performance of Civil Servant : A Study of the Gunungkidul Regency Government**



**Kepemimpinan Etis sebagai Katalisator untuk Sinergi antara etika dan Kinerja Pegawai Negeri Sipil: Studi tentang Pemerintahan Kabupaten Gunungkidul**

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ARTICLE INFORMATION

**Keywords**

*Ethics;  
 Governance;  
 Gunungkidul;  
 Leadership Performance;*

**ABSTRACT**

This research aims to analyse how ethical leadership as a catalyst for synergy between ethics and performance of the state apparatus in Gunungkidul district government and the factors that cause it. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with ethnographic method. The ethnographic method aims to deeply understand the culture, values, practices and perspectives of factors in a specific government context. Data collection involved secondary data obtained through review and analysis of previous studies and primary data obtained through observation. The theory used in this research is ethical leadership theory, which includes integrity, honesty and moral responsibility toward others. Ethical theory consists of values. Principles, standards and norms of behaviour and government performance theory measured by input, output, outcome and impact indicators. The result indicate that the Gunungkidul district government has great potential to make ethical leadership a driver of ethics and performance synergy. Although its implementation has not been uniform at all levels. This unevenness is influenced by several factors such as different interpretations of the code of ethics, inconsistent supervision, different leadership examples and resistance from different organisational cultures. For future research, it is highly recommended that primary data is enriched through in depth interviews with individuals at different levels of the state apparatus and through the analysis of relevant documents. The context and process of observation should also be described in detail. Furthermore, exploring inhibiting factors in more depth, such as the reasons behind differences in interpretation and the roots of a resistant organizational culture, would strengthen the findings.

**Kata Kunci**

*Etika;  
 Gunungkidul;  
 Kepemimpinan;  
 Kinerja Pemerintahan;*

**ABSTRAK**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana kepemimpinan etis sebagai katalisator sinergi antara etika dan kinerja aparatur negara di Pemerintahan Kabupaten Gunungkidul dan faktor-faktor penyebabnya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan metode etnografi. Metode etnografi bertujuan untuk memahami secara mendalam budaya, nilai, praktik dan perspektif aktor-aktor dalam konteks pemerintahan yang spesifik. Pengumpulan data melibatkan data sekunder yang diperoleh melalui penelaahan dan analisis studi-studi sebelumnya serta data primer yang diperoleh dari observasi. Teori yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini yaitu teori kepemimpinan etis yang meliputi integritas, kejujuran dan tanggungjawab moral terhadap orang lain, teori etika terdiri dari nilai, prinsip, standar dan norma perilaku serta teori kinerja pemerintahan diukur dengan indikator input, output, outcome dan indikator dampak. Hasil penelitian mengindikasikan

	<p>bahwa Pemerintahan Kabupaten Gunungkidul memiliki potensi besar dalam menjadikan kepemimpinan etis sebagai pendorong sinergi etika dan kinerja, meskipun implementasinya belum seragam disemua tingkatan. Ketidamerataan ini dipengaruhi oleh beberapa faktor, seperti perbedaan interpretasi kode etik, pengawasan yang belum konsisten, variasi dalam contoh kepemimpinan dan adanya resistensi budaya organisasi yang beragam. Untuk penelitian di masa depan, sangat disarankan untuk memperkaya data primer melalui wawancara mendalam dengan individu-individu di berbagai tingkatan aparatur negara dan melalui analisis dokumen-dokumen yang relevan. Konteks dan proses observasi juga harus dijelaskan secara rinci. Selain itu, mengeksplorasi faktor-faktor penghambat secara lebih mendalam, seperti alasan di balik perbedaan penafsiran dan akar budaya organisasi yang resisten, akan memperkuat temuan.</p>
<p><b>Article History</b>                  Send 11<sup>th</sup> June 2025                  Review 5<sup>th</sup> July 2025                  Accepted 23<sup>th</sup> July 2025</p>	<p>Copyright ©2026 <a href="#">Jurnal Aristo (Social, Politic, Humaniora)</a>                  This is an open access article under the <a href="#">CC-BY-NC-SA</a> license.                  Akses artikel terbuka dengan model <a href="#">CC-BY-NC-SA</a> sebagai lisensinya.</p>



## Introduction

Bureaucratic reform in Indonesia envisions a fundamental transformation of governance that encompasses structural and procedural aspects, as well as the integration of values and an integrity-based work culture. A solid work ethic is essential to realizing an accountable government that serves its people. However, the implementation of ethics in practice is often affected by leadership quality. Leaders who embody integrity, honesty, fairness, and responsibility are believed to play a crucial role in shaping ethical behavior and improving the performance of public sector organizations. Recognizing the importance of the synergy between ethics and performance in achieving good governance, this study examines the Gunungkidul Regency Government as a case study to explore how ethical leadership can foster this synergy within the state apparatus.

Ethical leadership is defined as a leadership style based on moral principles and noble values. In this style, a leader demonstrates integrity, honesty, justice, and responsibility in every action and decision, and inspires and guides subordinates to do the same (Na'im, 2022). A catalyst is an agent or factor that accelerates a process or change without undergoing permanent change itself (Ramadhani et al., 2023). In this context, ethical leadership is the main driver that accelerates the realization of a mutually reinforcing relationship between ethics and performance. The synergy between the ethics and performance of the state apparatus is defined as an ideal condition in which the ethical values embraced and practiced by the state apparatus run in harmony with the implementation of duties and responsibilities, reinforcing each other and resulting in increased efficiency, effectiveness, and the overall quality of public services.

According to the book *Leadership Models and Styles* by (Suiraoaka et al., 2023) the core difference between ethical and conventional leadership lies in the underlying value base. An ethical leader prioritizes moral and ethical principles in decision-making. Conventional leadership, on the other hand, sometimes prioritizes achieving organizational targets without considering the ethical implications. Additionally, integrity and honesty form the foundation of ethical leadership, whereas conventional leadership may justify unethical tactics to achieve profit. Ethical leadership fosters an atmosphere of respect and appreciation for each team member, in contrast to conventional leadership styles, which tend to be more authoritarian and less concerned with the well-being of their team.

Bureaucratic reform in Indonesia requires structural and procedural changes, as well as a transformation of the state apparatus's values and work culture (Andani, 2024). A strong work ethic is essential for realizing good, accountable governance (Prabowo & Hermawati,

2024). However, leadership factors often influence the implementation of ethics in practice (Anggleni, 2024). Leaders who demonstrate integrity, honesty, fairness, and concern for the public interest are believed to play a crucial role in shaping ethical behavior and improving organizational performance (Ami & Anshori, 2023)

The professionalism and effectiveness of the state apparatus are essential to realizing good governance and sustainable development (Afrijal et al., 2023). A competent, high-performing state apparatus provides quality public services, formulates targeted policies, and implements development programs efficiently and accountably (Yasa et al., 2021). However, technical capability and expertise alone are insufficient; moral integrity and adherence to ethics are also crucial for optimal performance and building public trust (Muhaimin et al., 2023). Without strong ethics, the potential for abuse of authority, corruption, and other disgraceful practices undermines performance effectiveness and damages the image of state institutions (Said, 2021). Therefore, harmonizing ethics and performance in every aspect of governance is imperative to creating a state apparatus that is professional, committed to carrying out its duties, and committed to the noble values of the nation and state (Timbuleng et al., 2023).

The era of globalization and the complexity of current development challenges require the state apparatus to adhere to applicable ethical standards, adapt, innovate, and collaborate (Rahmaniyah, 2024). In this era, effective performance is not just about completing routine tasks; it's about thinking strategically, making the right decisions in dynamic situations, and building synergies with various stakeholders. Ethical values such as honesty, responsibility, and excellent service are essential to realizing adaptive and responsive performance that meets community needs (Hidayatullah, 2024). Thus, internalizing strong ethical values encourages state apparatuses to work professionally and with integrity, making significant contributions to the progress of the nation and state.

In light of the connection between ethics and performance, there must be systematic and sustained efforts to incorporate ethical values into every facet of state apparatus management. This includes transparent recruitment processes, integrity-based education and training, effective monitoring and accountability systems, and fair rewards and sanctions. The synergy between ethics and performance is the responsibility not only of individual state apparatuses but also of all elements of the bureaucracy and related stakeholders. Investing in the ethics and performance of the state apparatus is a long-term investment in realizing a clean, authoritative government that can provide optimal public services to all Indonesian citizens.

In their research entitled "Implementation of Public Administration Ethics: The Main Step in Creating Good Governance in Indonesia," states that public administration plays a central role in nation building. Public services are a crucial element in achieving community welfare and satisfaction. Therefore, ethics are fundamental values that every public administrator must uphold when carrying out their duties and responsibilities. Public administration ethics are important guidelines for the government due to their broad impact. Public administrators must understand and apply ethics according to the rules for good governance. Implementation focuses on ethical leadership, ethical systems, commitment to office ethics, and integration of value-based professional ethics. This strengthens Indonesian public administration ethics towards good governance. The novelty of the current research is its focus on interconnections. Rather than viewing ethics and performance as two separate variables, this research deeply explores how values affect various dimensions of state officials' performance, such as efficiency, effectiveness, innovation, and service quality.

According to research conducted by Santi et al. (2023), the State Civil Apparatus Commission (KASN), in accordance with Law Number 5 of 2024, Article 30, plays a crucial role in supervising the implementation of basic norms, the code of ethics, the code of ASN behavior, and the merit system in ASN management within government agencies. KASN enforces the ASN code of ethics, as stipulated in Article 31(1), which also outlines KASN's duties in maintaining ASN neutrality, overseeing professional development, and reporting the results of supervising and evaluating ASN management policies to the president. Violations of the ASN code of ethics and discipline are influenced by internal factors, such as a lack of work motivation and consumptive lifestyles, as well as a lack of understanding of religious values, and external factors, such as environmental influences outside the individual. While KASN plays a vital role in supervising and recommending sanctions for code of ethics violations, administrative sanctions may be imposed in accordance with applicable regulations.

The research emphasized the role of the KASN in overseeing the ethics of the ASN and the causes of violations. However, upcoming research titled Ethical Leadership as a Catalyst for the Synergy of Ethics and Performance of the State Apparatus: A Study of the Gunungkidul Regency Government offers a more in-depth and integrated perspective. This research is novel in that it focuses on exploring the reciprocal relationship and synergy effect between ethics and performance. Previous research tends to discuss ethics as a supervisory aspect and violations, as well as performance, as a result of ASN management supervision.

This research will build on that by investigating how internalizing ethical values can actively improve the performance of the state apparatus beyond just preventing violations.

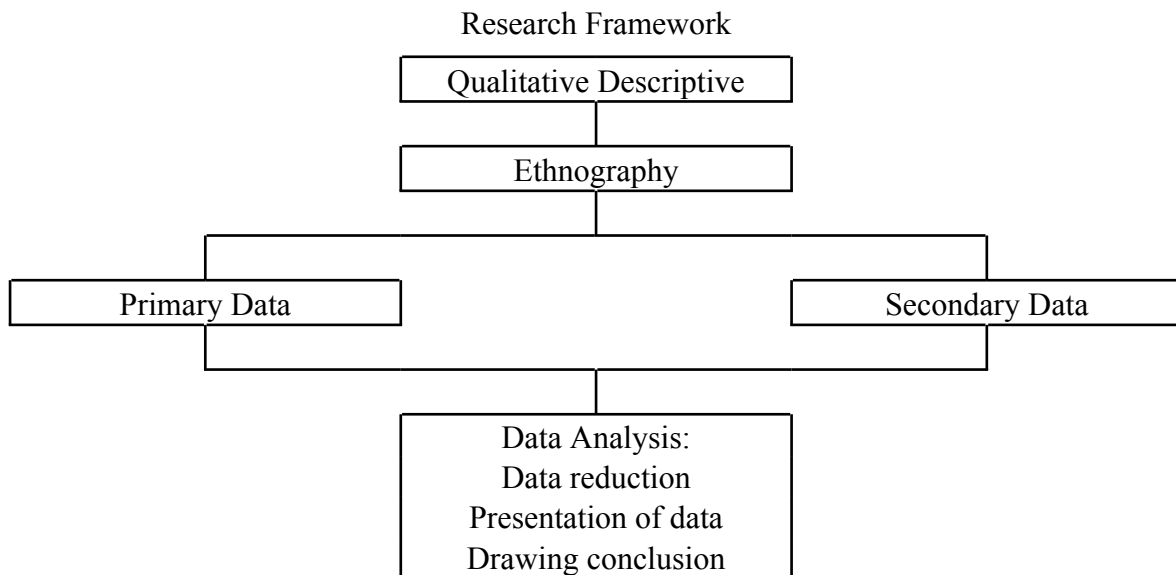
This research is motivated by problems related to the synergy of ethics and performance within the state apparatus. There are indications of disparities in the understanding and implementation of ethical values at different bureaucratic levels that could hinder the development of an ethical organizational culture. Additionally, there is a lack of in-depth, measurable understanding of how ethical values affect various dimensions of state apparatus performance. There is a need for effective management strategies to address potential conflicts or misalignments between ethical implementation and performance demands. There is a need for a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which ethical leadership creates positive synergy between ethics and performance. Identifying these issues underscores the need for more comprehensive research to achieve a professional and effective state apparatus in Indonesia.

Previous studies have laid the foundation for understanding the role of ethics in public administration and efforts to improve state apparatus performance, often focusing on supervision or the impact of violations. However, this research is significant and urgent because it will explicitly explore and analyze the synergies and interdependencies between ethics and performance when realizing a professional and effective state apparatus. Unlike previous studies, which treat ethics and performance as distinct variables, this research will examine how internalizing ethical values can improve various aspects of state apparatus performance, including efficiency, effectiveness, innovation, and the quality of public services. This approach will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms by which ethics prevent negative outcomes and actively promote positive performance. The results of this research are expected to provide policymakers, agency leaders, and ASN management practitioners in Indonesia with practical new insights to help them design a more holistic and integrated strategy for building a state apparatus that is both ethical and high-performing. Therefore, this research is important for advancing governance in Indonesia, especially in the Gunungkidul district.

## **Method**

This research uses a descriptive, qualitative approach with ethnographic methods to gain a deep understanding of the phenomenon being studied. The types of data used include both secondary and primary data. Secondary data were obtained through the synthesis and in-depth analysis of previous studies relevant to the topic. Meanwhile, primary data was

obtained through participant observation in the field, enabling researchers to directly observe the social context and interactions that occurred. The collected data were analyzed qualitatively using techniques such as data reduction, presentation, and drawing conclusions. During the reduction stage, field notes were summarized and focused based on the previously determined key indicators of ethical leadership, ethics, and government performance. Quotations from the literature review were selected and synthesized to identify emerging patterns and themes. During the data presentation stage, the reduced findings were presented descriptively. The aim of this presentation is to provide a systematic and easy-to-understand picture of the relationship between ethical leadership, ethics, performance, and their causal factors. In the conclusion stage, the presented data was interpreted. The conclusion summarizes the descriptive findings and identifies the broader meaning. It explains how ethical leadership acts as a catalyst for the synergy of ethics and performance in Gunungkidul Regency, as well as the contributing factors. These conclusions answer the research questions and form the basis for relevant recommendations. Due to the nature of descriptive qualitative research with ethnographic methods, this study does not employ variable measurement in the quantitative sense; rather, it focuses on gaining an in-depth understanding of and providing a detailed description of the observed phenomena.



### Literatur Review

In their research study entitled “The Role of Ethics in Building Public Trust in Government,” Latifah & Wardani (2025) state that public trust in government is deeply rooted in the ethics upheld in state administration. Government ethics are not merely a set of regulations; they are an essential foundation that sustains public confidence. When ethical

values are truly committed to in every government action, people feel protected and valued, and they have confidence that their interests are prioritized. Applying ethics is key to reforming and improving the quality of public services and overcoming problems such as conflicts of interest, corruption, and bureaucratic inefficiencies. This issue concerns not only individual morality, but also improving systems that do not support ethical practices.

This literature review emphasizes the importance of ethics as a foundation for building and maintaining public trust in the government. Existing research underscores that government ethics extends beyond mere compliance with formal regulations and becomes an essential moral foundation for establishing a sense of security, respect, and confidence that the government prioritizes the public's interests. The analysis reveals that the problem's roots lie not only in individuals' integrity, but also in a system that does not yet fully support ethical practices. Findings consistently show that positive perceptions of government character and performance are strongly correlated with high levels of public trust. Conversely, negative perceptions have the potential to undermine that trust. Thus, this literature review confirms that ethics is a fundamental prerequisite for solid public trust in government, not just an ideal value.

This literature review is relevant to the title *Ethical Leadership as a Catalyst for the Synergy of Ethics and State Apparatus Performance: A Study of the Gunungkidul Regency Government* because it emphasizes the fundamental basis for the argument that ethical leadership plays a pivotal role in achieving the synergy between ethics and bureaucratic performance. When leaders demonstrate a strong commitment to ethical values, they set an example and foster an ethical culture throughout the state apparatus. Ethical leadership acts as a catalyst that bridges system and moral quality improvements to provide good public services.

In her research titled "Strengthening Apparatus Ethics and Integrity in Preventing Bureaucratic Diseases," Henriyani (2021) states that building an advanced and competitive nation requires an ideal bureaucracy supported by professional human resources that are free from corruption, collusion, and nepotism (KKN) and have authority. A code of ethics should guide every state agency in carrying out its duties, prioritizing honesty, responsibility, and integrity. However, developing countries like Indonesia face the serious challenge of bureaucratic pathology. The large number of regional heads involved in corruption cases, as documented by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) over the past 15 years, clearly illustrates this issue. Therefore, strengthening the ethics and integrity of the state apparatus is crucial; moral responsibility must be prioritized in every task.

This study is relevant to the title, “Ethical Leadership as a Catalyst for Ethical Synergy and State Apparatus Performance: A Study of the Gunungkidul Regency Government.” The literature finding strengthens the argument that ethical leadership plays an important role in overcoming bureaucratic problems that hinder performance. Leaders can encourage the creation of synergies between compliance with the code of ethics and improved performance by exemplifying ethical behavior. Thus, this literature review provides a strong theoretical foundation for investigating the role of ethical leadership in creating an ethical, high-performing bureaucracy in Gunungkidul Regency.

The results of (Rodzi, 2024)) research, titled “Leadership Ethics of Regional Heads in Indonesia in Good Governance,” show that regional heads’ leadership determines the direction of regional development and good governance progress and success. The ethical character and norms adopted by regional heads when managing government organizations significantly impact the state of the regions they lead. Regional heads often face challenges in their leadership roles, particularly regarding abuse of authority, including corruption, bribery, and gratuities related to development projects and regional licensing. These issues are often triggered by the high political costs incurred, which has the potential to undermine leadership ethics.

This study is highly relevant to the topic of ethical leadership as a catalyst for ethical synergy and state apparatus performance in the Gunungkidul Regency government. Previous studies have confirmed that leadership quality, particularly its ethical aspects, is a determining factor in development and good governance success. The ethical leadership of regional heads can accelerate the creation of synergies between the ethical values embraced by the state apparatus and improve their performance.

In their research titled “The Impact of Ethical Leaders on Government Employee Creativity: The Role of Creative Self-Efficacy and Autonomy in Work,” states that ethical leadership directly influences creative behavior and employee confidence in their creative abilities. Employees’ creative self-efficacy influences their creative behavior and mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and creativity in the government sector. Interestingly, job autonomy was found to strengthen the positive impact of ethical leadership on creative self-efficacy. In other words, when leaders act ethically, employees tend to be more confident in their creative abilities, encouraging them to be more innovative, especially in work environments that provide greater freedom in task execution.

The connection to the research title, “Ethical Leadership as a Catalyst for the Synergy of Ethics and Performance of the State Apparatus: A Study of the Gunungkidul Regency

Government,” lies in the potential of ethical leadership within the context of a local government. If previous research shows that ethical leadership positively influences employees’ creativity and self-efficacy, then in Gunungkidul Regency, ethical leaders could be a catalyst for synergy between work ethics and government officials’ performance. Employees who feel valued and supported by ethical leaders are more likely to be motivated to act in accordance with high ethical standards and contribute creatively to improving organizational performance.

This research is novel in that it focuses on examining the role of ethical leadership in creating synergy between the ethics and performance of the Gunungkidul Regency Government, a topic supported by recent findings from previous research. Previous studies (Rodzi, 2024; Latifah & Wardani, 2025; Henriyani, 2021) have consistently emphasized the importance of ethics and integrity in public administration, as well as the significant influence of regional leaders on governance. However, research on how ethical leadership specifically acts as a catalyst to encourage synergy between work ethics and the improved performance of the local government apparatus is lacking, especially in contexts such as the Gunungkidul Regency. Furthermore, the research study titled "The Impact of Ethical Leaders on Government Employees' Creativity: The Role of Creative Self-Efficacy and Autonomy at Work" (Latifah & Wardani, 2025) provides a significant novel dimension. This study was not specifically mentioned by the author in the prompt. The study shows that ethical leadership directly influences employees' creative behavior and confidence in their abilities. Employees' creative self-efficacy influences their creative behavior and mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and creativity in the government sector. Interestingly, job autonomy strengthens the positive impact of ethical leadership on creative self-efficacy. In other words, when leaders act ethically, employees tend to be more confident in their creative abilities, encouraging innovation, particularly in work environments that allow greater freedom in task execution.

Integrating these findings into research on Gunungkidul Regency indicates that ethical leadership shapes ethical culture and has the potential to improve organizational performance by increasing creativity and self-efficacy. Employees who feel valued and supported by ethical leaders are more likely to be motivated to act in accordance with high ethical standards and contribute creatively to improve organizational performance. The role of ethical leadership in triggering creativity and self-efficacy as a bridge to better performance in the context of local government is one of the theoretical novelties that this research promotes. Methodologically, the study will use a case study approach with the Gunungkidul Regency

government to allow for an in-depth analysis of ethical leadership dynamics and their impact on state apparatus ethics and performance in a specific local context. This approach provides a richer, more contextualized understanding than broad-scale studies, which may miss the unique nuances of local government. Thus, this study will reaffirm the importance of ethics in public administration and the vital role of ethical leadership. It will also analyze how ethical leadership fosters synergy between ethics and performance and its effect on the creativity and self-efficacy of the Gunungkidul Regency Government apparatus. This study will contribute novel insights to the literature on good governance by integrating the concepts of creative self-efficacy and work autonomy within the framework of ethical leadership and bureaucratic performance. Additionally, the study will employ in-depth case studies to provide a significant methodological contribution.

### **Result and Discussion**

Based on participatory observation and a thorough analysis of literature, this ethnographic study reveals the complexity of ethical leadership's role in fostering synergy between ethics and performance within Gunungkidul Regency's state apparatus. In Singapore, the public service values; integrity, service, excellence are operationalized through rigorous performance appraisals, compulsory ethic training and senior leadership accountability. For instance, the code of conduct for public officers is enforced not just by top-down monitoring but through embedded reporting mechanisms such as whistleblower hotlines and mandatory declarations. The success of such ethical frameworks is reflected in Singapore's consistently high Corruption Perception Index scores and public trust ratings. This case illustrates how the synergy between ethical leadership and bureaucratic performance is not only shaped by individual leaders but institutional ecosystems that standardize and reward ethical behavior.

The synergy of ethics and sustainable performance is expected to significantly impact overall regional development positively, including increased investment, reduced poverty, and improved quality of life. However, observations also highlighted challenges in implementing ethics uniformly across all levels of government. Some work units have suboptimal transparency and accountability practices, indicating the need for sustained efforts to strengthen the internalization of ethical values. Nevertheless, ethical leadership has great potential as a catalyst, and a deep understanding of this dynamic is crucial for effective bureaucratic reform efforts in Gunungkidul Regency. The uneven implementation of ethics at various levels of government in Gunungkidul Regency may be caused by several related

factors, such as differing understandings and interpretations of the code of ethics and organizational values between work units and structural levels. These variations result in inconsistent implementation. Inconsistencies in the detection and handling of unethical behavior can result from ethics monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that have not been thoroughly standardized. Leaders' roles and examples also contribute; leaders who are less proactive in modeling ethical behavior tend to create less conducive work environments. Pre-established organizational cultures may be resistant to change or adjustment to new ethical values. Together, these factors create challenges in achieving consistent and equitable ethics implementation throughout Gunungkidul Regency's government.

Key indicators of ethical leadership—integrity, honesty, and moral responsibility toward others—are evident in many forms. For instance, during the budget planning process, leaders with integrity ensure that resources are allocated transparently and in line with regional development priorities, thereby avoiding corrupt or nepotistic practices. Honesty is evident in internal and external communication when information is conveyed accurately and without misleading elements, thereby building trust between state officials and the public. Leaders demonstrate moral responsibility by paying attention to staff capacity building, creating a supportive work environment, and being responsive to community complaints or needs.

This manifestation of ethical leadership interacts dynamically with organizational ethics indicators. Honesty is not only a leader's attribute, but also a value internalized in performance reporting and financial management processes. The principle of professionalism motivates the state apparatus to operate according to competency standards and a professional code of ethics. The principle of accountability guarantees that every action and decision is accountable. The standards of behavior contained in employee disciplinary regulations serve as a concrete guide for daily interactions. Behavioral norms, such as mutual respect and cooperation, foster a collaborative work environment conducive to task implementation. For instance, reminding each other to comply with working hours or service procedures demonstrates the internalization of positive behavioral norms.

The synergy between ethical leadership and organizational ethics has implications for government performance. At the input level, ethical leadership results in more efficient and accountable management of resources, which minimizes budget waste and abuse. For instance, transparent procurement of goods and services, free from bribery, results in quality, targeted public services. The outcome of this synergy is increased public satisfaction with government services and trust in state institutions. For instance, the community satisfaction

index (IKM) for the second semester of 2024 was 78.67, based on the results of the community satisfaction survey (SKM) conducted by DPUPRKP. This value falls within the range of 62.51-81.25, meaning it is considered good.

According to (Suiraoaka et al., 2023), ethical leadership indicators include integrity, honesty, and moral responsibility towards others. Ethical indicators consist of values, principles, standards, and norms of behavior (Sari et al., 2025). Government performance is measured by indicators of input, output, outcome, and impact (Mayasari, 2022). The literature enriches our understanding of this concept by highlighting the positive correlation between strong ethical leadership and ethical organizational culture, as well as superior performance in various public organizational contexts. According to social learning theory, leaders' exemplary displays of integrity and honesty can shape organizational behavior norms (Hidayatullah, 2024). According to the literature on ethical climate, a work environment in which ethical values are clearly communicated, fairly enforced, and valued encourages ethical behavior and reduces unethical behavior (Sultan, 2023).

Studies on public service motivation demonstrate that a state apparatus with a strong motivation for public service will be more responsive to ethical leadership that emphasizes moral responsibility to the community (Widyastuti et al., 2024). Thus, the research findings in Gunungkidul Regency align with the existing theoretical framework, confirming that ethical leadership significantly impacts the promotion of ethical values within organizations, ultimately improving public service performance and regional development. However, the literature reminds us that ethical leadership's effectiveness depends on leaders' consistency, authenticity, and ability to articulate and internalize ethical values throughout the organization.

## **Conclusion**

Based on observations and literature studies, as well as the objectives to be achieved, it can be concluded that the Gunungkidul Regency government shows significant potential in making ethical leadership a catalyst for synergy between ethics and performance, despite the fact that its implementation has not been equitable at all levels. The uneven implementation of ethics at various levels of government may be influenced by differences in understanding the code of ethics, inconsistent supervision, variations in leadership examples, and resistance to different organizational cultures. The following recommendations are offered: standardize and socialize an effective and sustainable code of ethics at all levels of government; strengthen integrated, accountable ethics monitoring and

evaluation mechanisms; develop leaders who internalize ethical values and can provide examples and guidance to subordinates; and proactively build an organizational culture that upholds ethical values through effective communication and the involvement of all organizational members.

This research contributes to our understanding of how ethical leadership indicators interact with ethical elements and impact various dimensions of local government performance. The findings enrich the body of knowledge by offering an empirical case study of ethical leadership dynamics in Indonesia. This study complements more theoretical studies and studies focusing on different organizations. This research opens up opportunities for future studies, such as comparative studies between districts with diverse sociocultural characteristics and longitudinal analyses to observe changes over time. Thus, this research provides a descriptive picture and a foundation for further theoretical and empirical development to realize ethical, high-performance governance.

This study has several limitations that present opportunities for future research. First, since it is a single case study of Gunungkidul Regency, the generalizability of the findings is limited. Future research could conduct comparative studies in different regions. Second, the primary focus on ethical leadership may overlook other factors, such as organizational structure or culture. Future research could expand the conceptual model to include these factors. Third, potential subjective biases in ethics and performance measurement must be addressed. Future research could employ stronger data triangulation, incorporating objective data and multi-party interviews. Finally, measuring complex "synergies" requires developing specific indicators. Future research could explore how ethics and performance reinforce each other through in-depth case studies.

### **Acknowledgent**

Thank you to the Gunungkidul Regency Government for participating in this being research study. Thank you to the Sekolah Tinggi Pembangunan Masyarakat Desa "APMD" lecturers for guiding us through the research process.

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