

## **CORPORATE CULTURE AS A MEDIATOR IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE AT PT AMTEX INDONESIA IN MALANG**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to analyze the influence of leadership on employee performance at PT. Amtex Indonesia, both directly and through corporate culture. Specifically, this study examines (1) the influence of leadership on employee performance, (2) the influence of leadership on corporate culture, (3) the influence of corporate culture on employee performance, and (4) the role of corporate culture in mediating the relationship between leadership and employee performance.

The method used in this study is Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach using SmartPLS 3.0 software. The results of the analysis show that leadership has a significant influence on Corporate culture, Corporate culture has a significant influence on employee performance, and leadership has a significant influence on employee performance through Corporate culture as a mediating variable.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Corporate culture, Employee performance.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Companies in the current era of globalization and industrial transformation face various strategic challenges, one of which is how to optimally manage human resources to achieve competitive advantage. Human resources are viewed not only as task implementers but also as strategic assets that determine the company's sustainability and progress. Therefore, achieving high employee performance is a primary focus in modern organizational management. (Sihombing, 2019)

Employee performance is a manifestation of the ability, willingness, and support of the work environment received by individuals in carrying out their duties and responsibilities (Fachrezi, H., & Khair, 2020). Optimal performance levels do not only depend on technical abilities but are also greatly influenced by internal and external factors surrounding employees during their work. One crucial internal factor is the leadership style implemented by company leaders or work unit managers. Good leadership can motivate, guide, and inspire employees to achieve organizational goals. Conversely, inappropriate leadership can actually lead to demotivation, conflict, and decreased performance (Cahyadi, 2024).

Leadership in an organizational context is not only about how a superior gives instructions, but also encompasses how to create healthy relationships, build trust, and foster a sense of ownership within the company. An effective leader will be able to apply a situational leadership style, understand employee needs, and adapt their communication approach to the existing work conditions. Effective leadership is leadership that can positively influence individual behavior and performance within the organization. (Putri, 2024)

However, strong leadership will not be enough without the support of a conducive corporate culture. Corporate culture is a system of values, beliefs, norms, and

work practices applied in the daily life of an organization. Corporate culture serves as a guideline for behavior, strengthens employee loyalty, and shapes the organization's identity. A healthy and positive corporate culture will create a harmonious and energetic work environment and encourage collaboration between individuals and teams. Conversely, a weak corporate culture will lead to disorientation, individualism, and decreased work morale.

The phenomenon at PT Amtex Indonesia, a chemical company located in Malang, shows that the relationship between leadership, corporate culture, and employee performance is not optimal. Observations and internal reports indicate a decline in work productivity, delays in completion of work, and a lack of initiative among employees in completing tasks across several divisions. Furthermore, the results of the last semester's performance evaluation showed that only 68% of the annual performance target was achieved, below the company's minimum achievement standard of 80%.

The problem became more complex when several employees complained about the leadership styles of some superiors, who were perceived as lacking communication, tending towards authoritarianism, and being less open to the aspirations of their subordinates. This inflexible leadership style and lack of employee involvement in decision-making led some employees to feel underappreciated and unmotivated. Some employees even expressed reluctance to offer ideas or suggestions due to a perceived lack of support from their superiors.

On the other hand, the company's corporate culture has not been firmly internalized throughout the organization. Corporate values such as integrity, cooperation, and responsibility are still not reflected evenly in employee work behavior. The mismatch between management's desired corporate culture and the reality on the ground has created a significant cultural gap. This is characterized by weak cross-departmental communication, low participation in performance improvement programs, and a lack of individual accountability for collective work results. (Khotimah, 2024)

These issues have impacted the organization's overall performance. According to a report by PT Amtex Indonesia's HR Department at the end of 2024, the number of internal complaints regarding job dissatisfaction increased by 23% compared to the previous year. Furthermore, employee turnover has risen from 12% to 15% over the past two years. This indicates a degradation in human resource management that could jeopardize the company's continued productivity if not addressed promptly.

Various previous studies have shown that corporate culture plays a significant mediating role in strengthening the relationship between leadership and employee performance. Corporate culture serves as a means of internalizing leadership values into employee work behavior. Therefore, leaders who are able to shape and uphold a positive corporate culture will be more successful in improving their team's performance. Therefore, it is important to examine in more depth how the leadership style implemented at PT Amtex Indonesia affects employee performance, with corporate culture as an intervening variable.

This research is crucial to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between leadership, corporate culture, and employee performance. By understanding these relationships, companies can formulate more appropriate leadership development strategies, build a strong corporate culture, and ultimately encourage sustainable employee performance improvement. The results of this study are also expected to serve as a basis for PT Amtex Indonesia's management in designing more

effective human resource development policies oriented toward long-term productivity improvement.

### **Theoretical basis**

#### **Employee performance**

Employee performance (job performance) can be defined as the extent to which an individual carries out their responsibilities and work duties (Singh et al., 2020). Faustino Gomes (2019) states that job performance is a record of the results or outputs (outcomes) generated from a particular job function or activity within a specific time period. Meanwhile, performance measurement is a way to measure the level of an individual's contribution to their organization. Employee performance is generally positioned as a dependent variable in empirical research because it is seen as a consequence or impact of organizational behavior or human resource practices rather than as a cause or determinant.

Faustino Gomes (2019) further explains that there are two criteria for measuring employee performance: results-based performance evaluation and behavior-based performance evaluation. Results-based performance evaluation measures performance based on the achievement of organizational goals, or simply the final results. Organizational goals are set by management or work groups, and employees are then motivated and assessed based on their achievement of these goals. This measurement criterion refers to the concept of management by objectives (MBO). The advantage of this type of employee performance measurement is the existence of clear, quantitatively measurable criteria and performance targets. However, the main drawback is that in organizational practice, many tasks cannot be measured quantitatively, thus ignoring non-quantitative performance dimensions (Faustino Gomes, 2019).

Employee performance in this study was measured based on specific behavioral criteria, considering that this type of measurement, although according to Faustino Gomes (2019) it has actually been around for a long time, has received wider attention in empirical research on organizational behavior and human resources. Behavior-based performance measurement allows for the disclosure of broader aspects of the job, thus obtaining a comprehensive picture of performance.

#### **Leadership**

Leadership has been defined variously by experts, but in general, it describes the relationship between the leader and the followers (Locander et al., 2020). Locander et al. (2020) further explain that leadership implies a leader influencing the followers, but the relationship between the leader and the followers is mutually beneficial for both parties. Lok and Crawford (2019) view leadership as a process of influencing the activities of an organization in an effort to set and achieve goals. In line with the description above, Andrews and Field (2020) conclude that there are three essential elements that must be present in leadership: the leader, the followers, and the interaction between the two. Without these three essential elements, leadership will never exist.

Throughout the history of the development of the concept of leadership, many experts have attempted to describe and measure leadership variables, resulting in diverse conceptualizations of leadership. Initially, leadership studies focused on personality, the defining characteristic of successful leaders. Trait theory assumed that successful leadership was inherently predestined and inherently inherent, distinguishing leaders from non-leaders. However, many criticized this personality theory, citing the

fact that leadership can be trained and developed. Consequently, studies shifted to behavioral and leadership style approaches. The principle of this new approach is that successful leaders are those who adopt a democratic and participatory style or behavior. This leadership style is considered optimal. However, this approach has also been criticized for ignoring situational and contextual factors, with critics arguing that leadership effectiveness depends on the surrounding situation and context (Ogbonna & Harris, 2020).

In the past two decades, the concepts of transactional and transformational leadership have developed and attracted widespread attention from academics and practitioners (Locander et al., 2020; Yammarino et al., 2019). According to Humphreys (2020) and Liu et al. (2021), this is because the concept, popularized by Bass in 1985, is able to accommodate a broad spectrum of leadership concepts, including behavioral, situational, and contingency approaches. Therefore, this study focuses on the concepts of transformational and transactional leadership.

### **Corporate culture**

In general, corporate culture is defined as a set of values, beliefs, and behavioral patterns that shape an organization's identity and the behavior of its members (Deshpande & Farley, 2019). Based on this definition, corporate culture can be categorized into values and behavioral norms. As values, corporate culture refers to everything within an organization that is considered highly valued, while as behavioral norms, corporate culture refers to how elements (members) of an organization should behave (Xenikou & Furnham, 2020).

The above explanation aligns with the thinking of Kotter and Heskett (in Wilson, 2019), who argued that corporate culture consists of two levels. The first level, called the deeper level, refers to shared values held by all elements of the organization and, therefore, difficult to change. Schein (2020) refers to this level as basic assumptions, consisting of shared ideals and awareness that unify the views of organizational members. The second level, called the visible level, refers to the behavioral patterns of organizational members, the social and physical environment, and the grammar used by the organization. These two levels are not independent but interrelated, where behavioral patterns are seen as implications and manifestations of shared values (Hofstede et al., 2019; Schein, 2020; Wilson, 2019).

Hofstede et al. (2019), Lok and Crawford (2019), Palthe and Kossek (2020), and Xenikou and Furnham (2020) argue that shared values at the deeper level are very difficult to observe and measure, so empirical studies focus more on norms or behavioral patterns. Pratt and Beaulieu (2020) even argue that shared values cannot be observed objectively but can only be assessed from the behavioral patterns of organizational members, which are manifestations of shared values. This is because shared values are highly qualitative, and attempts to translate them into measurable (quantitative) forms risk the problem of measurement bias. Based on these considerations, in this study, corporate culture is positioned in the direction of behavioral norms or at the visible level.

According to Wilson (2019), corporate culture, in terms of behavioral norms, describes persistent behavioral patterns where ideas and thoughts are passed down from one generation to the next, or from one group to another. Wilson (2019) further explains that behavioral transfer occurs not genetically (hereditary) but through social interactions between organizational members. These behavioral patterns are stable and

experience relatively slow change. Ideas or thoughts also serve as guidelines for acceptable behavior.

## RESEARCH METHODS

Data analysis is breaking down the whole into smaller components to find out the components.dominant component, comparing one component with another, and comparing one or several components with the whole. Data analysis techniques are used to answer the problem formulation or test the formulated hypothesis. Data management in this study will use Smart PLS software.(Ghozali, 2021).

(Partial Least Square uses the bootstrapping method or random multiplication where the normality assumption will not be a problem for (Partial Least Square) PLS. In addition, (Partial Least Square) PLS does not require a minimum number of samples to be used in research, research that has small samples canstill using (Partial Least Square) PLS. Partial Least Square is classified as a non-parametric type, therefore in PLS modeling, data with a normal distribution is not required.(Ghozali, 2021).

## RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Data analysis

#### PLS Model

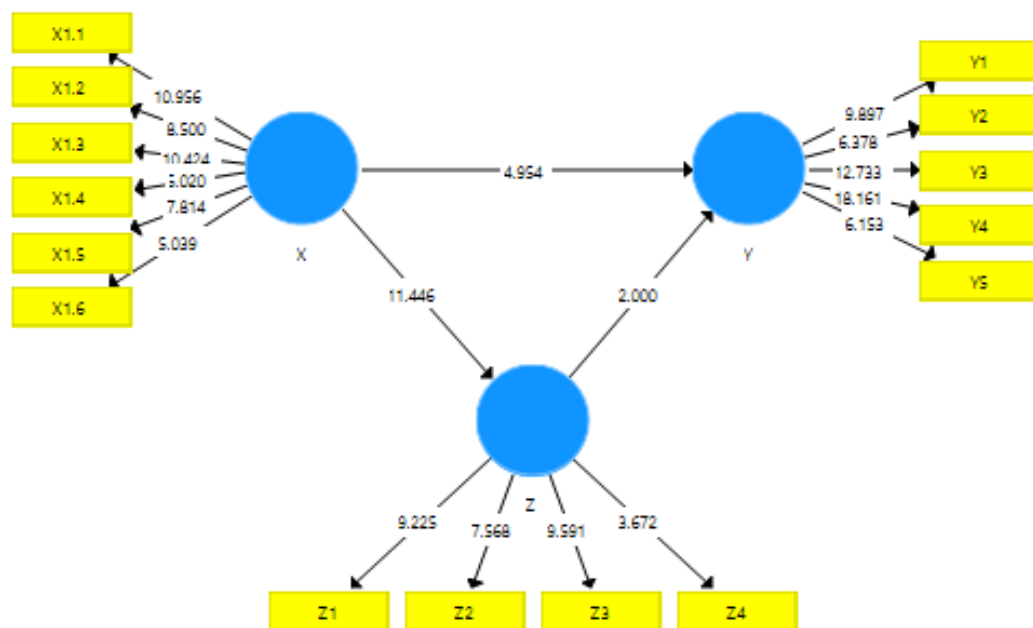


Figure 4.1. PLS Model

From the PLS output image above, we can see the magnitude of the factor loading value for each indicator which is located above the arrow between the variable and the indicator. We can also see the magnitude of the path coefficients which are above the arrow line between the exogenous variable, namely the Employee performance variable, while the mediating variable in this study is Corporate culture and the endogenous variable, namely Leadership.

**Validity Test (Outer Model)****Table 1 Factor Loading Values**

	<b>Original Sample (O)</b>	<b>Sample Mean (M)</b>	<b>Standard Deviation (STDEV)</b>	<b>T Statistics (O/STDEV)</b>	<b>P Values</b>
X.1 <- X	0.650	0.645	0.116	5,620	0,000
X.2 <- X	0.750	0.727	0.142	5,282	0,000
X.3 <- X	0.871	0.862	0.055	15,741	0,000
X.4 <- X	0.823	0.818	0.054	15,278	0,000
X.5 <- X	0.728	0.718	0.080	9,078	0,000
Y.1 <- Y	0.726	0.710	0.143	5,090	0,000
Y.2 <- Y	0.537	0.531	0.247	2,168	0.031
Y.3 <- Y	0.805	0.786	0.122	6,581	0,000
Y.4 <- Y	0.538	0.495	0.236	2,276	0.023
Z.1 <- Z	0.501	0.511	0.211	2,370	0.018
Z.2 <- Z	0.775	0.749	0.131	5,937	0,000
Z.3 <- Z	0.753	0.713	0.168	4,471	0,000
Z.4 <- Z	0.710	0.691	0.168	4,217	0,000

Source: Processed Data (2025)

The estimation results from the Outer Loading Table indicate that all indicators have good validity because they have a loading factor of 0.45 and/or more than 0.45. Because the validity test with outer loadings has been met, the measurement model has the potential for further testing.

The next measurement model is the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value, which indicates the magnitude of the indicator variance contained by the latent variable. Testing with the AVE value is more critical than composite reliability. The recommended minimum AVE value is 0.45.

**Table 2 Average Variance Extracted (AVE)**

	<b>Average Variance Extracted (AVE)</b>
Leadership (X)	0.744
Employee Performance (Y)	0.767
Corporate culture (Z)	0.887

Source: Processed Data (2025)

From Table 2, the test results with AVE values indicate that all constructs have potential validity for further testing. This is because the AVE values for all constructs are greater than 0.5.

**Reliability Test**

*Composite reliability* is an index that indicates the extent to which a measuring instrument can be trusted to be reliable. If an instrument is used twice to measure the

same phenomenon and the measurement results obtained are relatively consistent, then the instrument is reliable. In other words, reliability indicates the consistency of a measuring instrument in the same phenomenon. The complete results can be seen in the following table.

**Table 3 Data Reliability**

	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>rho_A</b>	<b>Composite Reliability</b>
Leadership (X)	0.788	0.799	0.848
Employee Performance (Y)	0.808	0.816	0.867
Corporate culture (Z)	0.771	0.794	0.827

Source: Processed Data, 2025

The construct reliability is measured by the composite reliability value. A construct is reliable if the composite reliability value is above 0.70, meaning the indicator is consistent in measuring its latent variable. The test results show that the research constructs (variables), namely Leadership, Corporate Culture, and Employee Performance, have a composite reliability value greater than 0.7. Therefore, they are reliable.

### **Structural Model Testing (Inner Model)**

Testing *inner model* A structural model is used to examine the relationship between variables, the significance value, and the R-square of the research model. After identifying the significant relationship between variables, a hypothesis for customer satisfaction can be concluded. Hypothesis testing is performed using the bootstrap resampling method. The test statistic used is the t-test (Ghozali, 2008). Structural model testing is performed by examining the R-square value, which is a goodness-of-fit model test. Inner model testing can be seen from the R-square value of the equation between latent variables. As follows:

**Table 4. R-Square**

	<b>R Square</b>
Employee Performance (Y)	0.819
Corporate culture (Z)	0.666

Source: Processed Data, 2025

The R<sup>2</sup> value is 0.819. This can be interpreted as the model being able to explain the phenomenon/problem of Employee Performance by 81.9%. While the remaining 18.1% is explained by other variables (besides Leadership and Corporate Culture) that have not been included in the model and are error-prone. This means that Employee Performance is influenced by Leadership and Corporate Culture by 81.9%, while 18.1% is influenced by variables other than Leadership and Corporate Culture.

R<sup>2</sup> value = 0.666. This can be interpreted that the model is able to explain the phenomenon/problem of Corporate culture by 66.6%. While the remaining (33.4%) is explained by other variables (besides Leadership) that have not been included in the model and error. This means that Corporate culture is influenced by Leadership, by 66.6%, while 33.4% is influenced by variables other than Leadership.

## **Results from Inner Weights**

### **1. Direct Influence**

**Table 5. Inner Weight**

	<b>Original Sample (O)</b>	<b>Sample Mean (M)</b>	<b>Standard Deviation (STDEV)</b>	<b>T Statistics (O/STDEV)</b>	<b>P Values</b>
X -> Y	0.371	0.396	0.180	2,055	0.040
X -> Z	0.583	0.621	0.103	5,690	0,000
Z -> Y	0.381	0.371	0.193	1,975	0.049

Source: Processed Data, 2025

From the table above, it can be concluded that the hypothesis:

1. Leadership has a significant positive influence on employee performance with a T-statistics value of 2.055 where the p-value = 0.040 is smaller than the  $\alpha$  value = 0.05 (5%).
2. Leadership has a significant positive influence on corporate culture with a T Statistics value of 5.690 where the p-value = 0.000 is smaller than the  $\alpha$  value = 0.05 (5%).
3. Corporate culture has a significant positive effect on employee performance with a T-statistics value of 1.975 where the p-value = 0.049 is smaller than the  $\alpha$  value = 0.05 (5%).

## **2. Indirect Influence**

Apart from the direct effect as in the hypothesis testing above, from this modeling we can find out the total effect or indirect effect (through the mediating variable), as in the following total effect table for hypothesis testing with the mediating variable as follows:

**Table 6. Total Effects (Mean, STDEV, T-Values)**

	<b>Original Sample (O)</b>	<b>Sample Mean (M)</b>	<b>Standard Deviation (STDEV)</b>	<b>T Statistics (O/STDEV)</b>	<b>P Values</b>
X -> Z -> Y	0.209	0.204	0.108	2,933	0.004

Source: Processed Data, 2025

From the total effect table above, it can be concluded that the hypothesis:

1. Leadership has a significant influence on employee performance through corporate culture with a T-statistics value of 2,933 where the p-value = 0.004 is smaller than the  $\alpha$  value = 0.05 (5%).

## **Discussion**

### **The Influence of Leadership on Employee Performance**

The results of the study showed that leadership had a positive and significant effect on employee performance with a p-value of 0.040 ( $\alpha$  = 0.05). The highest indicator was "My leader conveys information clearly and easily understood" with a t-statistic of 15.741, and the indicator "My leader is responsible for decisions that have been made" with the highest mean of 4.49.

Effective communication from a leader ensures employees understand their



tasks, avoid mistakes, and work more efficiently. Furthermore, leaders who are accountable for their decisions increase employee trust and loyalty, creating a conducive and productive work environment. A leader who is accountable for the decisions they make will foster trust and loyalty among employees. Employees will feel safer and more comfortable working under leadership that not only provides direction but is also willing to be accountable for every decision and its consequences. This will increase a sense of belonging to the organization, where employees will be more motivated to work hard and give their best contribution to achieve common goals. The combination of good communication and high responsibility in leadership increases employee motivation, efficiency, and job satisfaction. This is in line with research by Nugroho (2024), which emphasizes that leadership plays a role in influencing, motivating, and coordinating employees to achieve organizational goals.

### **The Influence of Leadership on Corporate Culture**

The results of the study show that leadership has a positive and significant effect on corporate culture with a p-value of 0.000 ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). The highest indicator is "My leader conveys information clearly and easily understood" with a t-statistic of 15.741, while the indicator "My leader is responsible for the decisions that have been made" has the highest mean of 4.49. These results indicate that the communication skills of leaders in conveying information clearly and easily understood have a significant influence on corporate culture. Good communication skills from leaders not only clarify the direction and goals of the organization, but also create a more open, transparent, and organized work climate. With clear communication, team members can more easily understand the vision and mission of the organization, as well as how they can contribute optimally. This also increases the trust and engagement of team members, which in turn strengthens a more inclusive and collaborative corporate culture. The ability of leaders to convey information effectively also accelerates the decision-making process based on clear data and facts.

A leader's communication skills in conveying clear information play a significant role in clarifying the organization's direction, creating a transparent work climate, and increasing team engagement. This supports a more inclusive and collaborative corporate culture. However, the indicator "My leader involves team members in the decision-making process" has the lowest t-statistic value (5.620), indicating that team engagement is still limited. As a recommendation, leaders need to be more open in empowering team members to strengthen the corporate culture. This finding aligns with research by Kabacoff (2022), which states that leadership that supports openness and transparency can shape a healthy corporate culture that is adaptive to change.

### **The Influence of Corporate Culture on Employee Performance**

The results of the study indicate that Corporate culture has a positive and significant effect on employee performance with a p-value of 0.049. The highest indicators are "Management strives to achieve targets with aggressive strategies" (mean 4.46) and "The organization emphasizes the importance of accuracy in every task" (T-Statistics 5.937). This indicates that a culture that emphasizes accuracy plays an important role in improving the accuracy, efficiency, and quality of employee work. Employee performance is more influenced by a culture that prioritizes accuracy than a culture that encourages risk-taking for innovation. This indicates that compliance with

procedures is prioritized in certain organizations. However, a balance between accuracy and innovation is still needed for employees to develop.

Implementing a culture of appreciation by rewarding teams that demonstrate good coordination is also important to foster a spirit of collaboration. With these steps, organizations can build a culture that is not only innovative, but also structured in terms of communication, so that employee performance can be optimally improved. The indicator with the lowest T-Statistics value is "Employees are encouraged to take risks in seeking innovative solutions" (2.370), indicating a lack of support for innovation. Organizations need to encourage the courage to innovate by providing training, resources, and rewards for employees who try new approaches.

This finding aligns with research by Putranto (2020) and Enno & Satrio (2019), which showed that corporate culture directly influences individual behavior and employee performance. The better the culture implemented, the higher the level of employee productivity and performance within the organization.

### **The Influence of Leadership on Performance Through Corporate Culture**

The results of the study indicate that leadership influences employee performance through Corporate culture with a p-value of 0.004. The highest indicators are "I always complete work on time" (T-Statistics 6.581) and "Cooperation between employees runs well" (mean 4.47). This indicates that punctuality is a dominant factor in employee performance, which is supported by a Corporate culture that emphasizes accuracy, communication, and effective leadership. Communicative leadership forms a strong Corporate culture, especially in terms of accuracy and team coordination. This culture increases work effectiveness and timely target achievement. However, low employee participation in decision-making can hinder innovation, so that work quality standards are less of a priority than punctuality. Therefore, visionary and communicative leadership is very important in creating a corporate culture that encourages team effectiveness and optimal performance. The indicator with the lowest T-Statistics is "I ensure work results meet company standards" (2.168), which indicates that work quality standards have not been fully internalized. Organizations need to strengthen communication, provide training, and regular feedback to improve employee understanding of quality standards.

This research aligns with the theory that leadership plays a central role in building a strong corporate culture. A study by Enno & Satrio (2019) showed that a corporate culture created by leaders increases employee engagement, loyalty, and work motivation. With a strong corporate culture, employees have a better understanding of work expectations and standards, leading to more effective and efficient work.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **Conclusion**

Based on the test results using PLS analysis, to test the influence of several variables on Employee Performance, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- a. The results of the analysis show that leadership influences corporate culture at PT. Amtex Indonesia, which means that effective leadership can shape the values, norms, and work practices adopted within the organization, thereby creating a strong and conducive corporate culture.
- b. The results of the analysis show that leadership influences employee performance

at PT. Amtex Indonesia, which means that a good leadership style can provide direction, motivation, and support that encourages increased employee productivity and work quality.

- c. The results of the analysis show that the influence of Corporate culture on the performance of PT. Amtex Indonesia employees, which means that a positive Corporate culture can create a comfortable work environment, increase loyalty, and encourage employees to work more optimally.
- d. The results of the analysis show that the influence of leadership on employee performance is through the Corporate culture of PT. Amtex Indonesia, which means that effective leadership forms a good Corporate culture, which in turn plays a role in increasing employee morale, engagement, and productivity.

### **Suggestion**

As an implication of the results of this research, several suggestions can be put forward that can be considered or used as material in decision making, including:

1. Companies need to develop leadership training programs that focus not only on managerial skills but also on building a strong corporate culture. Leaders at all levels must be equipped with the skills to build organizational values that can drive employee motivation and productivity.
2. A positive corporate culture must be continuously strengthened through clear communication, consistent implementation of company values, and rewards for employees who demonstrate work behavior consistent with the corporate culture. Companies also need to periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the corporate culture in supporting employee performance.
3. Employees need to be given the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes and develop corporate culture. With active employee involvement, they will feel a greater sense of ownership of the company and be more motivated to contribute their best.
4. Companies need to create a work environment that encourages innovation, teamwork, and work-life balance. A positive work environment will strengthen corporate culture and help employees achieve optimal performance.

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