



Jagat Saksana Ladi: Servant Leadership in the Perspective of Javanese Culture in Surakarta

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ABSTRACT

Introduction/Main Objectives: This research explores the application of Servant Leadership through a Javanese cultural lens among public sector leaders in Surakarta. **Background Problems:** The evolving leadership paradigm requires an understanding of how local implementation is and of the concept of Servant Leadership within the hierarchical Javanese context. **Novelty:** A theoretical gap exists in integrating Western service models with unique Javanese cultural values. "Jagat Saksana Ladi" framework showing how Javanese cultural leadership values modify and reinforce the universal characteristics of Servant Leadership. **Research Methods:** We conducted a phenomenological study using in-depth interviews with public organization leaders across various clusters to explore their lived experiences. **Finding/Results:** Leaders merge broad vision (Jagat), exemplary conduct (Saksana), and service-driven action (Ladi). This empirical alignment confirms that culturally contextualized Servant Leadership is internalized as a spiritual and ethical philosophy. **Conclusion:** Servant leadership in Surakarta reflects a deep internalization of Javanese ethics, demonstrating that culturally adaptive leadership is vital for inclusive public service, highlighting the need for broader cross-cultural research.

1. Introduction

The paradigm of leadership has undergone significant evolution, transitioning from rigid, command-and-control structures toward more adaptive and follower-centric models. The success of any modern organization is increasingly determined by the quality and ethical framework of its leaders (Apriyanto, 2016). In Indonesia, traditional leadership models have historically exhibited characteristics often described as authoritative and paternalistic, or "Bapakism," rooted in long-standing feudal and lineage values (Oktaviani et al., 2016). While these traditional approaches emphasize harmony and heritage, they often clash with the needs of modern, decentralized public service.

This developmental necessity has highlighted the global emergence of Servant Leadership (S.L.), presented as a direct antithesis to top-down, self-serving paradigms. S.L. fundamentally shifts the leader's motivation toward serving followers, eliminating traditional distance from decision-making (Greenleaf, 2002). Empirical evidence consistently demonstrates the efficacy of S.L. in enhancing employee performance, reducing stress, and fostering safer, healthier work environments (Liu et al., 2023; Wills, 2020; Zada et al., 2022). Furthermore, the core principle of S.L. resonates with ethical principles found in historical figures globally (Gandolfi & Stone, 2018), and locally in Javanese philosophy through concepts like "Nguwongke Wong," or treating people humanely (Rahmadani & Schaufeli, 2022).

The concept at the heart of this research is "Jagat Saksana Ladi," a new framework derived from Javanese philosophy intended to define culturally adapted Servant Leadership. Etymologically, Jagat refers to the world or broad vision; Saksana denotes

exemplary conduct or responsibility; and Ladi signifies service-driven action. This synthesis provides the local lens through which we examine contemporary leadership practices in Surakarta.

1.1 Problem Recognition and Conceptual Gap

Despite the proven benefits and the philosophical parallels, a significant theoretical gap remains in the literature regarding the full synthesis of S.L. with culturally complex, hierarchical Eastern value systems. While cross-cultural studies confirm S.L.'s effectiveness across various cultures (Liden et al., 2008; Mittal & Dorfman, 2012), the exploration into how S.L. characteristics are modified, enriched, or challenged by strongly ingrained traditional hierarchical structures is limited.

For instance, some research suggests that S.L. may struggle to thrive in highly authoritarian or high-power-distance contexts, where followers expect directive rather than serving behavior (Alenazy & Alsulami, 2025; Tsui, 2004). Conversely, other studies in non-Western contexts, such as China, find that S.L. aligns well with concepts like Confucian benevolence and the value of "Serving the people" (Chen et al., 2015; Ehrnrooth et al., 2024). This tension creates an urgent need for an emic perspective, specifically within the unique context of Javanese culture, to understand the local mechanisms of adaptation.

This research addresses this deficit by asking: How is the universal concept of Servant Leadership implemented, adapted, and conceptually synthesized within the unique hierarchical context of Javanese culture?

1.2 Justification of Context and Novelty

This study was conducted in Surakarta, a historical and cultural epicenter of Javanese philosophy (Pradanta et al., 2015). This

location is critically relevant as it offers an ideal phenomenological setting to examine the tension between Javanese ethical values, such as *Ing ngarso sung tuladha* (leading by example), and the influence of thinkers like Ki Hajar Dewantara and the inherently egalitarian spirit of S.L. The selection of Surakarta is thus justified both theoretically (as a site of cultural tension) and methodologically (for providing a rich, lived experience of leadership phenomena).

The novelty of this research lies in its conceptual elaboration that bridges this theoretical and cultural divide. Instead of merely describing practices, this phenomenological study develops a new, synthesized framework from the data: "Jagat Saksana Ladi." This concept encapsulates the fusion of broad vision (Jagat), exemplary conduct (Saksana), and service-driven action (Ladi), serving as the definitive Javanese articulation of Servant Leadership.

1.3 Research Objectives

Based on the identified conceptual gap and the unique context of Surakarta, the primary objective of this study is to synthesize the principles of Servant Leadership with Javanese cultural philosophy to develop the conceptual framework of Jagat Saksana Ladi. The secondary objectives of this study are: (1) To identify the key principles of Servant Leadership as manifested by public organization leaders in Surakarta; (2) To analyze the philosophical and ethical integration of Servant Leadership with Javanese cultural values; and (3) To develop the conceptual framework of Jagat Saksana Ladi as a significant contribution to cross-cultural leadership theory.

2. Literature Review

The following section investigates the theoretical foundations of Servant Leadership, the relevance of Javanese

cultural values in leadership, and outlines the conceptual gap this study aims to address. The flow of ideas serves as the logical basis for the research objectives and the unique theoretical contribution of Jagat Saksana Ladi.

2.1 Servant Leadership: Universal Theory and Dimensions

Servant Leadership (S.L.), a concept coined by Robert K. Greenleaf (2002), postulates that the leader's primary motivation is a conscious desire to serve others first. This philosophy represents a direct antithesis to traditional, self-serving, or authoritarian paradigms (Greenleaf, 2002). The global significance of S.L. is demonstrated by its consistently positive correlation with follower well-being, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), and performance across various sectors (Liden et al., 2008; Van Dierendonck, 2011).

The S.L. framework is operationalized through a set of core behaviors. Greenleaf initially outlined ten characteristics (e.g., listening, empathy, healing, stewardship), which were later synthesized into measurable, empirically validated dimensions. Liden et al., (2008), a highly cited model in the field, identifies key S.L. dimensions relevant to this study, including: Empowering followers, exhibiting Humility, providing Direction, and prioritizing Stewardship for the greater community. These universal tenets are the baseline indicators used to assess public organization leaders in Surakarta.

2.2 The Intersection of S.L. and Javanese Cultural Philosophy

Traditional Indonesian leadership, often characterized by "Bapakism", emphasizes hierarchy, obedience, and paternalistic authority (Oktaviani et al., 2016). This naturally creates a conceptual tension with

S.L., which demands an egalitarian, follower-first approach. However, S.L. finds deep philosophical resonance in Javanese cultural values, which prioritize refinement (*alus*) and social harmony (*rukun*).

The relevance of S.L. in Javanese culture is primarily understood through the philosophy of serving and honoring humanity, or Nguwongke Wong (Pasaribu & Yuwanto, 2021). This local concept aligns S.L.'s core of interpersonal acceptance and humility with local wisdom. Furthermore, the tri-locus concept of leadership, *Ing ngarso sung tuladha* (leading by example), *Ing madya mangun karsa* (building willingness in the middle), and *Tut wuri handayani* (supporting from behind), is the central philosophy articulated by Ki Hajar Dewantara in his compilation of educational and cultural works (Wiryopranto et al., 2017). This philosophy provides a robust historical and ethical framework for the service-driven leader. Dewantara's philosophy, particularly the emphasis on the leader as a moral exemplar (*tuladha*), grounds the S.L. concept within Indonesia's educational and governance systems.

Previous empirical studies highlight the conceptual gap related to this tension. Research comparing ethnic groups found that S.L. practices face obstacles in highly hierarchical Javanese culture compared to low-hierarchical cultures, suggesting S.L. needs cultural modification to be effective (Passakonjaras et al., 2019). This finding aligns with international discourse suggesting S.L. struggles in authoritarian or high-power-distance contexts (Alenazy & Alsulami, 2025; Tsui, 2004), while other studies argue S.L. can align well with Asian values like Confucian benevolence (Chen et al., 2015; Ehrnrooth et al., 2024).

2.3 Research Gap, Novelty, and Contextual Justification

The literature confirms the existence of S.L. in Asia, but falls short in exploring how S.L. is deeply synthesized and conceptually modified to resolve the inherent tension between its egalitarian spirit and the Javanese hierarchical structure. The existing literature only describes the differences or obstacles, but has yet to develop a complete emic framework that formalizes the successful fusion.

This study closes this conceptual gap by focusing on Surakarta. Surakarta, as a historical and cultural epicenter, is an ideal phenomenological setting to observe this tension in its purest form. The city is a microcosm where the need for modern, decentralized public services (requiring S.L.) directly confronts the deep-seated traditional values of the former royal court. By employing a phenomenological approach in this specific context, this research uniquely aims to synthesize the principles of Servant Leadership with Javanese cultural philosophy to develop the conceptual framework of Jagat Saksana Ladi, providing a significant contribution to cross-cultural leadership theory.

3. Method, Data, and Analysis

This section describes the research design, operational definitions, sampling strategy, data collection procedures, and state-of-the-art analysis methods employed to achieve the objective of synthesizing the Jagat Saksana Ladi conceptual framework.

3.1 Research Design: Phenomenological Approach

This research adopts a descriptive-phenomenological approach to explore the subjective understandings and lived experiences of public organization leaders regarding the concept and application of Servant Leadership (S.L.) within the Javanese cultural context. Phenomenology, as a

research methodology, is fundamentally concerned with the "essence" of a phenomenon as experienced by participants (Sanders, 1982).

The choice of this approach is highly prevalent as it allows the researcher to delve deeply into the subjective realities, challenges, and local solutions faced by leaders, which is necessary to develop an emic framework like Jagat Saksana Ladi. The research process follows a cyclical path: literature review, instrument creation, data collection, rigorous analysis, and final interpretation. Data analysis and organization are managed using the nVivo 12 software tool.

3.2 Research Setting, Context, and Sampling

The Javanese cultural context is defined by the geographic and socio-political boundaries of Surakarta, Central Java, which historically and culturally serves as the nexus for traditional Javanese values (e.g., *alus* and *rukun*) and modern bureaucratic demands. The study operationalizes the "Javanese cultural context" as the set of behavioral

expectations and moral frameworks derived from both the traditional Keraton heritage and contemporary Pamong Praja governance ethics, observed within the city's public institutions.

3.3 Sampling Strategy

Informants are selected using Purposive Sampling, specifically leveraging a Criterion-Based Maximum Variation Sampling strategy (Sugiyono, 2021). This method ensures that the variety of leadership experiences—from traditional courts to decentralized NGOs—is captured, providing the necessary depth and richness required for phenomenological bracketing and theme saturation. The selection process prioritizes data validity, ensuring the captured experiences are accountable. Phenomenological research validity emphasizes truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, as cited in (Noble & Smith, 2015).

The informants were classified into six strategic clusters based on their organizational sphere of influence in Surakarta:

Table 1. Informant Inclusion Criteria

Cluster	Inclusion Criteria
Academic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public higher education institution located within Surakarta's administrative area; ▪ Accredited by BAN-PT with a minimum rating of "Very Good"; ▪ Highest-level leadership at the university, faculty, or designated representative.
Bureaucratic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Type A Regional Government Organizations (OPD) as defined by Surakarta Mayor Regulation No. 8/2021 on Regional Organizational Structure; ▪ Head of the OPD or appointed representative.
Religious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Figures representing the six officially recognized religions in Indonesia (Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism); ▪ Residing in Surakarta's administrative area.
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Political parties represented in Surakarta's Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) for the 2019–2024 period; ▪ Party leader or designated representative in Surakarta.
Civil Society (NGOs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community organizations or NGOs based in Surakarta;

Cluster	Inclusion Criteria
Special	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organizational leader or designated representative. ▪ Traditional public institutions unique to Surakarta: Kasunanan Surakarta Hadiningrat and Kadipaten Mangkunegaran; ▪ Respective leaders or designated representatives.

Source: Data processed (2023)

To ensure the integrity of the data collected in the field, specific exclusion criteria were applied, primarily focused on the feasibility and depth of the interviews:

Table 2. Informant Exclusion Criteria

Exclusion Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No confirmation or response received within three weeks of the request letter being submitted, or by 22 September 2023; ▪ Inability to conduct interviews during September 2023; ▪ Inability to conduct data collection through direct/offline (in-person) interviews.

Source: Data processed (2023)

3.4 Operational Definitions and Measures

The primary variable, Servant Leadership, is measured using ten core dimensions established by (Greenleaf, 2002). These dimensions serve as the initial conceptual

framework, which is then refined and synthesized with Javanese cultural values through the qualitative analysis process. The following table details the operationalization of these dimensions into observable indicators used in the semi-structured interview protocol.

Table 3. Operational Definitions of Servant Leadership Dimensions

Dimension	Conceptual Definition	Operational Indicator
Listening	The ability to attentively hear and understand the needs and concerns of followers.	Evidence of actively seeking and valuing subordinate input in critical decision-making processes; use of reflective questions.
Empathy	The ability to understand and share the feelings of another person.	Demonstrated concern for personal welfare, family issues, and work-life balance of subordinates (<i>Nguwongke Wong</i> behavior).
Healing	The act of fostering emotional health and well-being in followers.	Actions taken to resolve conflicts, mend damaged relationships, or support recovery from personal/professional setbacks.
Awareness	General awareness of the environment, organization, and self.	Demonstrated reflection on personal leadership style and understanding of organizational culture/challenges.
Persuasion	The use of non-coercive influence to build consensus.	Reliance on moral authority, dialogue, and consensus (<i>rukun</i>) over formal hierarchical power to implement change.

Dimension	Conceptual Definition	Operational Indicator
Conceptualism	The ability to see the bigger picture beyond the daily operations.	Evidence of long-term strategic planning, vision casting, and ability to link daily tasks to the organizational mission.
Foresight	The ability to predict the future consequences of current actions.	Discussion of preventative measures, risk assessment, and adaptability planning based on anticipated social or political changes.
Stewardship	Accepting responsibility for the resources and institutions entrusted to one's care.	Demonstrated commitment to the public good and responsible resource management; alignment with civil service codes of conduct.
Commitment to the Growth of People	A belief in the intrinsic value of people and their development.	Implementation of training programs, mentorship, and personalized career development plans for subordinates.
Building Community	The intentional creation of community within the organization and linking it to the wider society.	Initiatives that foster a sense of belonging (<i>rukun</i>) and cooperation among team members and engagement with external public stakeholders.

Source: Data processed (2023)

3.5 Data Collection Process

Data collection is primarily conducted through semi-structured, in-person interviews with the selected leaders. Direct/offline interviews are mandatory (as per Table 2 exclusion criteria) to capture both verbal content and non-verbal cues related to Javanese cultural norms. Each interview is recorded with the informant's consent and documented through field notes. Additionally, secondary data is collected from relevant literature, official organizational documents (e.g., mission statements, policy papers), and cultural texts to provide triangulation and context for the emic interpretation.

3.6 Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis utilized a rigorous, iterative phenomenological process managed via nVivo 12. The procedure was designed to move systematically from raw data to the development of the Jagat Saksana Ladi conceptual framework.

The first step, Transcription, involved meticulous verbatim recording of all interview data. This raw material then underwent Reduction (Open Coding), where transcripts were broken down into discrete concepts and initial codes were generated. This crucial step identified both explicit Servant Leadership (S.L.) dimensions and implicit Javanese cultural concepts.

Next, in Coding (Axial Coding), these initial codes were categorized and grouped. Axial Coding was applied to systematically link S.L. concepts (Greenleaf) with local Javanese values (e.g., *tuladha*, *rukun*, *Nguwongke Wong*), directly addressing and resolving the conceptual tension identified in the literature.

Following coding, Description (Thematic Analysis) generated detailed narratives, explaining the "essence" of the leadership experience for each organizational cluster (Academic, Bureaucratic, etc.), focusing on participants' subjective accounts.

The final stage is Interpretation and Synthesis. Here, the synthesized themes are formally developed into the new Jagat Saksana Ladi conceptual framework. This illustrates the successful fusion and operationalization of S.L. and Javanese philosophy in Surakarta's public sector. The research findings are presented as a comprehensive narrative, integrating direct informant statements with the newly synthesized cultural framework.

4. Result and Discussion

This section presents the research findings from the phenomenological analysis, followed by an interpretive discussion that systematically synthesizes the ten universal Servant Leadership (S.L.) dimensions with core Javanese cultural values. The discussion culminates in the formal proposition of the Jagat Saksana Ladi conceptual framework, which resolves the theoretical tension between S.L. and high-power-distance culture.

4.1 Informant Characteristics

Table 3. Informant Characteristics

Descriptions	Total	Percentage
Gender		
a. Male	17	68.0
b. Female	8	32.0
Highest Education		
a. Elementary (SD)	0	0.0
b. Middle Sch (SMP)	0	0.0
c. High School (SMA)	4	16.0
d. Bachelor's (S1)	15	60.0
e. Master's (S2)	6	24.0
f. Doctorate (S3)		
Age (Years)		
a. <40	1	4.0
b. 40-44	2	8.0
c. 45-49	4	16.0
d. 50-54	7	28.0
e. 55-59	7	28.0

Descriptions	Total	Percentage
f. 60-64	2	8.0
g. >65	2	8.0
Length of Tenure (Years)		
a. <1	3	12.0
b. 1-2	8	32.0
c. 3-4	5	20.0
d. 5	6	24.0
e. >5		

Source: Data processed (2023)

The phenomenological study involved 25 public leaders, whose demographic and professional profiles are summarized in Table 3. This carefully selected sample demonstrates significant professional rigor. The group is predominantly male, accounting for 68.0%, with female representation at 32.0%. Crucially, the informants possess exceptionally strong academic credentials: 60.0% hold a Master's Degree, and an additional 24.0% hold a Doctorate. This means a substantial 84% of the sample has advanced post-graduate qualifications, validating their theoretical understanding of leadership.

Age distribution confirms a highly experienced cohort, with 72.0% falling within the crucial executive decision-making range of 45-to-59 years old. This professional maturity is further reinforced by the length of tenure: 76.0% of the leaders have served in a leadership capacity for three years or more, highlighting long-term organizational commitment, with nearly a quarter (24.0%) serving for over five years. Collectively, this high academic attainment and extensive practical experience ensure the perspectives gathered reflect an informed, seasoned, and qualified body of public servants in Surakarta.

4.2 Research Findings: The Javanese Modification of Servant Leadership Dimensions

The Open Coding analysis revealed that the ten S.L. dimensions (Greenleaf, 2002) are consistently reinterpreted and practiced through core Javanese philosophical concepts. This integration demonstrates that S.L. is not merely adopted but is culturally modified to fit the local ethical framework. The following sub-sections detail this convergence, using the Javanese concept as the final operational mechanism for the S.L. dimension.

4.2.1 *Listening: Operationalized as Panggon Pitakonan (Place to Seek Counsel)*

Listening, which requires leaders to be receptive and value subordinate input, is defined by informants as Panggon Pitakonan (The place to ask questions or seek counsel). This concept elevates listening from a mere skill to a role expectation, where the leader must psychologically be the organizational locus for feedback. This aligns with the Javanese emphasis on dialogue (*musyawarah*) to maintain *rukun* (harmony).

The data reveals that leaders deliberately cultivate an accessible and non-judgmental persona to fulfill this role, often scheduling non-formal sessions. This practice demonstrates that, in Javanese public leadership, the act of listening is considered a prerequisite for self-awareness and maintaining strong contact with the *akar rumput* (grassroots) reality. The following statement encapsulates how leaders understand and implement this crucial, culturally adapted dimension:

"One of the characteristics of leadership is the necessity to listen. When we listen to them, we can obtain a lot of input and information that needs to be managed collaboratively to achieve our goals." (Bureaucrat-9, personal communication, 2023).

4.2.2 *Empathy: Operationalized as Nguwongke Uwong (Humanizing People)*

The S.L. dimension of Empathy involves deeply understanding and sharing the feelings of others, manifesting as compassion and care. In Surakarta, this practice is governed by the ethical concept: *Nguwongke Uwong* (humanizing people). *Nguwongke Uwong* elevates S.L. empathy from optional personal concern to a moral and social mandate to protect the personal dignity and humanity of every individual within the organization, regardless of their rank or background. The leader is not just expected to feel with subordinates; they must actively take steps to value and preserve their human status, which is essential in a culture that highly prioritizes *kehalusan* (refinement) and mutual respect.

This practice requires leaders to proactively acknowledge the personal struggles, family issues, and needs of their team members, viewing them as valuable partners rather than mere organizational resources. The emphasis is on building a reciprocal relationship rooted in mutual respect, which ultimately strengthens organizational cohesion and trust. The application of *Nguwongke Uwong* as an empathetic act is supported by the following informant's statement:

"Thus, a leader must serve as a protector and guardian (mengayomi). They must provide refuge and security (ngayomi), offer comfort and tranquility (ngayemi), and if it's a non-profit organization, for example, they also need to be a provider of resources (ngayani). That is the essential requirement." (Religious-3 Informant, personal communication, 2023).

4.2.3 *Healing: Operationalized as Lelana teki-teki (Contemplative Journey to Resolve Issues)*

Healing in S.L. focuses on conflict resolution and the restoration of emotional health and well-being. In the Javanese perspective, this is often executed through Lelana teki-teki (a contemplative journey to solve complex issues). This concept implies that organizational conflict cannot be solved superficially or strictly through administrative sanctions; instead, the leader is expected to approach the issue with deep self-reflection (Mulat Sarira) and wisdom, prioritizing the restoration of organizational harmony (rukun) above the punitive assignment of blame.

The phenomenological finding reveals that leaders take a personal and deliberate distance from the conflict to gain an objective perspective, a process necessary to ensure impartiality and moral authority when mediating. This contemplative approach, seeking holistic solutions that restore the collective spirit, is viewed as more sustainable than quick administrative fixes. This approach is substantiated by the following informant's reflection:

"So, for issues, we must first examine what the problem is, correct? A leader should ideally sit together [with the team] first: what is the problem that needs to be solved? It needs to be mapped out, and in solving this, what are the potential problems that might arise? Well, to minimize the problems that emerge, input and opinions from subordinates are the key to successful resolution. Therefore, in modern leadership, if you are not willing to accept criticism, you should not be a leader." (Bureaucrat-4, personal communication, 2023).

4.2.4 *Awareness: Operationalized as Mulat Sarira Hangrasa Wani (Courageous Self-Reflection)*

S.L. Awareness includes general awareness of the environment, organization, and self. This dimension finds its highest moral expression in Javanese philosophy through Mulat sarira hangrasa wani (courageously reflecting on one's own flaws). This concept emphasizes the leader's paramount moral obligation to acknowledge personal mistakes, weaknesses, and potential biases publicly. In a culture that values the leader's authority, this act of courageously acknowledging imperfection is precisely what builds profound trust and moral stature among subordinates.

The data indicates that leaders use this practice to establish a culture of learning and ethical accountability, setting the standard that humility is a strength, not a weakness. By publicly demonstrating their commitment to self-correction, leaders provide a safe space for subordinates to also be honest about their shortcomings. One informant highlighted the necessity of this courage:

"For example, being sensitive to details means visiting someone who is ill or acknowledging birthdays. These are examples of things that are, you know, very detail-oriented. Or acknowledging their children, for instance. Those are examples." (NGO-1, personal communication, 2023).

4.2.5 *Persuasion: Operationalized as Ngluruk tanpa bala, menang tanpa ngasorake (Leading Without Domination)*

Persuasion in S.L. is the use of non-coercive influence to build consensus, prioritizing respectful communication over formal command. This is powerfully framed by the Javanese dictum: Ngluruk tanpa bala, menang tanpa ngasorake (Leading with integrity and honor, without domination). This transformation means that influence in Javanese public leadership must be derived from the leader's moral authority and

personal integrity, not from the raw power of their position. The goal is consensus (*rukun*), achieved through dialogue, not forced compliance.

This principle is vital for maintaining organizational dignity, especially in interactions with partners and the public. By avoiding the use of hierarchical dominance, the leader ensures that subordinates commit to the vision willingly and wholeheartedly. The leader's ability to persuade without coercion is a mark of true leadership quality, as one informant explained:

"We still hold the final decision, but our duty is to find the best possible way forward, thereby ensuring no one feels, 'Wow, this is too extreme.' We must avoid that. Therefore, we always seek a middle path, but this middle path must not merely benefit person A or person B; it must be for the benefit of everyone. And we must be brave enough to make that middle-path decision, which is the best for the collective, even if it might not satisfy one or two individuals. So, bravery is essential." (Academic-3, personal communication, 2023).

4.2.6 Conceptualism: Operationalized as *Sopo weruh ing panuju, sasat sugih pager wesi* (Vision is Protection)

Conceptualization, the S.L. ability to see the bigger picture and articulate an organizational vision, is rooted in *Sopo weruh ing panuju, sasat sugih pager wesi* (One with vision walks a guided path, protected and purposeful). This concept emphasizes that the leader's vision must be more than strategic planning; it must be morally guided and clear enough to serve as a collective protective boundary for the organization and its mission. The vision must provide ethical direction.

The findings show that leaders use this concept to link daily administrative tasks to

the overarching purpose of public service (*Pamong Praja*), making their actions meaningful. This deep connection between vision and moral protection ensures that the organization remains resilient against external pressures and internal ethical deviations. An informant highlighted the importance of a clear and protective vision:

"Yes, one of the functions of a leader is to formulate strategy, which is why we have a five-year strategic plan. And a leader must be visionary – not just for the present moment, but also for the long term. A strategy needs to be developed for what will happen in the next five years." (Bureaucrat-1, personal communication, 2023).

4.2.7 Foresight: Operationalized as *Gemi Nastiti, lan Ngati-ati* (Prudent and Meticulous)

Foresight, the ability to predict the future consequences of current actions, is expressed through the Javanese principle: *Gemi Nastiti, lan Ngati-ati* (Prudent, meticulous, and careful). This emphasizes the need for cautious, reflective planning that respects both traditional wisdom and contemporary dynamics. It is a dual responsibility: to be prudent (*Gemi*) in resource use and meticulous (*Nastiti*) in execution, all while being extremely careful (*Ngati-ati*) about political and social consequences.

This concept prevents rash decision-making, grounding strategic planning in a long history of Javanese reflection on governance. It ensures sustainability by demanding a high degree of detailed preparatory work and considering worst-case scenarios, thereby mitigating organizational risk. This cautious, detail-oriented approach is articulated below:

"Reflection is crucial. We must evaluate last semester's experience: what were the obstacles then, and how were they solved? If the solution was good, there is a possibility

that it can be utilized again, so by reflecting on past experiences, the hope is that the same mistakes or similar decision-making processes will not be repeated." (Academic-7, personal communication, 2023).

4.2.8 Stewardship: Operationalized as Rumangsa melu handarbeni (Sense of Shared Ownership)

Stewardship, the S.L. principle of accountability for entrusted resources and institutions, is reinforced by Rumangsa melu handarbeni (A sense of shared responsibility and ownership). This is a powerful cultural lens because it expands the leader's accountability beyond mere legal compliance to a collective moral commitment to the public good. The leader acts not as the sole owner, but as the primary custodian of a shared asset.

This transformation fosters a collective culture of accountability within the organization, where every member feels personally responsible for the integrity and success of the institution. When the leader practices this, it sets the standard for responsible public service. The concept of shared ownership and accountability is emphasized by the following statement:

"Regarding accountability, the financial reports for the implementation of activities must comply with the legal basis. They must adhere to the provisions. We cannot deviate from the regulations, because if we do not follow those rules, we will face consequences or negative evaluations." (Bureaucrat-3, personal communication, 2023).

4.2.9 Stewardship: Operationalized as Rumangsa melu handarbeni (Sense of Shared Ownership)

The S.L. commitment to the growth of people involves empowering members to achieve their highest potential through continuous training and mentorship. In the Javanese

framework, this is understood via *Ngelmu iku kalakone kanthi laku* (True knowledge is gained through disciplined action and virtuous intent). This concept frames mentorship and growth not just as career development, but as a moral and behavioral discipline.

Leaders must ensure that subordinates are developed holistically – technically, ethically, and spiritually – through real-world action (*laku*). This commitment emphasizes continuous effort and moral consistency as the true measure of learning and growth, guaranteeing that organizational development is always integrated with ethical maturity. An informant summarized this philosophy:

"Thus, a leader influences the capacity building of the human resources (HR) under them. However, a leader must also be able to see the potential and opportunities for their HR to become better; therefore, we must be able to grant trust to our HR for a specific task, giving them the confidence and authority to carry out, or make, a certain decision." (Academic-3, personal communication, 2023).

4.2.10 Stewardship: Operationalized as Rumangsa melu handarbeni (Sense of Shared Ownership)

Building Community focuses on fostering a sense of family and belonging, and linking the organization to wider society. This is the ultimate expression of service in *Amemangun karyenak tyasing sasama* (Acting in ways that bring joy and harmony to others). This principle dictates that the leader's primary duty is to create internal harmony (*rukun*) and ensure that the organization's existence is a source of benefit and serenity for external stakeholders.

This philosophy extends the leader's responsibility to the emotional and social

environment, making the cultivation of positive relationships a formal strategic objective. The focus on *tyas* (inner feeling/heart) ensures that the service is delivered not just efficiently, but with sincerity and grace. This collective benefit is highlighted by one informant:

"In my view, the sense of family (*kekeluargaan*) is built among individuals, meaning there is no gap between superior and subordinate in their interpersonal relationships – that is,

among employees." (Bureaucrat-10, personal communication, 2023).

Table 4. Servant Leadership Dimensions Modified by Javanese Cultural Concepts

Servant Leadership Concept	Understanding	Javanese Cultural Perspective
Listening	Elevating input-seeking to a moral duty.	Panggong Pitakonan (Place to Seek Counsel)
Empathy	Mandate to protect the personal dignity of subordinates.	Nguwongke Uwong (Humanizing People)
Healing	Approaching conflict with self-reflection and wisdom for resolution.	Lelana teki-teki (Contemplative Journey to Resolve Issues)
Awareness	Courageously acknowledging personal mistakes and flaws.	<i>Mulat sarira hangrasa wani</i> (Courageous Self-Reflection)
Persuasion	Using moral authority instead of hierarchical power for influence.	<i>Ngluruk tanpa bala, menang tanpa ngasorake</i> (Leading Without Domination)
Conceptualization	Vision must be clear and morally guided, serving as protection.	<i>Sopo weruh ing panuju, sasat sugih pager wesi</i> (Vision is Protection)
Foresight	Cautious, meticulous planning that respects wisdom and context.	<i>Gemi Nastiti, lan Ngati-ati</i> (Prudent and Meticulous)
Stewardship	Expanding accountability into collective moral commitment.	<i>Rumangsa melu handarbeni</i> (Sense of Shared Ownership)
Commitment to the Growth of People	Framing development as ethical and moral discipline through action.	<i>Ngelmu iku kalakone kanthi laku...</i> (Knowledge Gained Through Action)
Building Community	Creating internal harmony and ensuring the organization benefits society.	<i>Amemangun karyenak tyasing sasama</i> (Bringing Joy and Harmony to Others)

Source: Author's Synthesis from Phenomenological Analysis (2023)

The phenomenological analysis confirmed that all ten established S.L. dimensions are actively practiced by public leaders in Surakarta, yet their successful implementation relies on a profound cultural modification. These dimensions are consistently filtered and justified through local Javanese philosophical concepts, ensuring their acceptance and effective operationalization within a high-power-distance, high-context environment. This integration fundamentally shifts the S.L. model from Western-style egalitarianism to one based on ethical supremacy and moral authority.

Table 4 systematically outlines this synthesis, demonstrating how each dimension is culturally transformed. For instance, the S.L. dimension of Listening is elevated to the moral duty of establishing oneself as the Panggon Pitakonon (Place to Seek Counsel), demonstrating the leader's commitment to self-awareness and organizational harmony (rukun). Similarly, Empathy is transformed into the ethical mandate of Nguwongke Uwong (Humanizing People), protecting the personal dignity of every subordinate regardless of their rank. This necessary cultural transformation ensures the Ladi (service) component of leadership is deeply rooted in local wisdom, providing the required cultural scaffolding to successfully bridge the tension between humble service and societal expectation.

4.3 Discussion: The Application of Servant Leadership from the Javanese Cultural Perspective

The successful implementation of the Servant Leadership (S.L.) dimensions in Surakarta is fundamentally achieved by reconciling S.L.'s inherently egalitarian focus with the high-power-distance inherent in Javanese culture. This reconciliation relies heavily on the Tri-Locus Leadership Philosophy by Ki Hajar

Dewantara, which serves as the ethical and practical mechanism for integrating humility and hierarchy. The three pillars of this philosophy – Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha, Ing Madya Mangun Karsa, and Tut Wuri Handayani – structure the application of S.L. in public organizations.

4.3.1 Discussion: The Application of Servant Leadership from the Javanese Cultural Perspective

The application of servant leadership from the Javanese cultural perspective is closely related to the values of nobility and refinement. Therefore, leaders must set a good example and consistently emphasize self-awareness (Mulat sarira). Leaders should prioritize problem-solving through constructive feedback and demonstrate personal accountability. In practice, leading by example is manifested through applying accountability and transparency to build an image and reputation as a serving leader whose authority is earned through consistent moral action, not merely position.

The implementation of setting a good example or being a role model can be observed in the actions taken by public organization leaders in Surakarta through activities such as the regular reporting of activities and performance, openness to the information needed by the organization, and consistently upholding the organization's reputation by optimizing the services provided. These practices directly reinforce the leader's moral authority. This application aligns with the concept of Ki Hajar Dewantara's Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha ("leading by example from the front"), which serves as a firm guideline for public organization leaders in Surakarta as they continuously cultivate self-awareness to improve and benefit the organization's members by creating an environment that

supports growth and learning. This is evidenced by informant statements:

"To build an organization and determine its essential character is profoundly influenced and determined by its leadership. Consequently, we must perpetually strive to set an example. As leaders, we cannot expect our members or cadres to perform the actions we desire if we ourselves are unwilling to execute them first." (Politik-1, personal communication, 2023)

"A leader must possess the integral characteristics of Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha, Ing Madya Mangun Karsa, and Tut Wuri Handayani, the fundamental principle of which is that a leader, upon assuming their position, must set an exemplary model." (Bureaucrat-4, personal communication, 2023)

4.3.2 Having Insight and Broad-Mindedness

The implementation of servant leadership is closely related to leaders who possess insight and broad-mindedness (Conceptualization and Foresight). A servant leader positions themselves as a servant who focuses on understanding the needs and maximizing the potential of the organization's members. A leader with insight and broad-mindedness will be much more effective in understanding and meeting the needs of the organization's members, comprehending various perspectives, providing inclusive and sustainable solutions, and thinking strategically about the organization's direction and goals (Gemi Nastiti, lan Ngati-ati). Thus, a leader can help create an organizational environment supporting individual development, innovation, and problem-solving.

The practical application of having insight and broad-mindedness can be seen in the actions taken by public organization leaders in Surakarta through developing a vision and

strategic plan and creating innovations that facilitate service. This continuous effort reflects the leader's role in guiding the organization's trajectory and ensuring its relevance and sustainability. This strategic and inclusive leadership style aligns with the concept of Ki Hajar Dewantara's Ing Madya Mangun Karsa ("In the middle, one must build ideas and concepts"), which means the leader is positioned in the center, facilitating the creation of ideas and concepts collaboratively with their team. This strategic and collaborative approach is reflected in informant statements, such as the following:

"We strive to introduce innovations every year. Last year, we had an innovation named SIPOLAR, and this year we have another innovation; we ensure we have these innovations annually. Our hope is that it will be supported by all our colleagues and fully utilized by the community." (Bureaucrat-8, personal communication, 2023)

"We have learned to create plans of this nature because it is a requirement imposed by the government, from the central down to the regional level. The RPJMN, RPJMD, Renstra, and Renja [national and regional strategic planning documents] should be structured precisely this way." (Bureaucrat-8, personal communication, 2023)

4.3.3 Humanizing People through Empowerment and Competency Enhancement

The application of servant leadership is closely related to a humane approach through empowerment and competency enhancement (Nguwongke Uwong). A serving leader must treat their members kindly and encourage them to reach their full potential, prioritizing the interests and growth of their members over their own convenience. This research shows that serving leaders understand the importance of maintaining good relationships with their

members, exhibiting openness, and a willingness to accept criticism, which is realized through showing deep respect and motivating their members to improve themselves.

The practical application of humanizing people through empowerment and competency enhancement can be observed in the actions taken by the public organization leaders in Surakarta, such as organizing gatherings, conducting training and development programs for members, and visiting members who are unwell to maintain engagement and solidarity. These actions are concrete manifestations of the commitment to individual growth and community building. This supportive application aligns with the concept of Ki Hajar Dewantara's Tut Wuri Handayani ("one should guide or lead from the rear"), which means providing support and encouragement from behind, serving as a vital guiding principle for the public organization leaders in Surakarta.

This commitment to empowerment is demonstrated by informants:

"Capacity enhancement is achieved through official training and technical workshops. Furthermore, we provide opportunities for employees to carry out innovations, and we also offer awards to recognize high-achieving staff." (Bureaucrat-1, personal communication, 2023)

"Well, first, we need to observe whether a person truly has potential, whether their performance is, well, outstanding or not. If they excel, we endorse or support them, for instance, through specialized training programs. So, if someone is skilled in IT, even though it is not their primary job, but we recognize their talent, we provide further training and place them in a relevant department, such as public relations or managing our website." (Academic-6, personal communication, 2023).

Table 5. Application of Servant Leadership Concept

Servant Leadership Application	Application Actions	Javanese Cultural Perspective
Setting a Good Example and Being a Role Model	Preparing regular activity and performance reports, maintaining transparency in organizational information, and upholding the organization's reputation through optimal service delivery. These practices ensure accountability and strengthen public trust, and also encourage continuous improvement in service quality.	"Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha" (Leading by example from the front)
Having Insight and Broad-Mindedness	Formulating a vision and strategic plans, as well as initiating innovations that improve service delivery. Leaders are expected to think ahead by establishing a clear and inspiring vision aligned with organizational goals. Involves anticipating future needs and fostering a culture of innovation to enhance the quality and efficiency of public services.	"Ing Madya Mangun Karsa" (Generating ideas while working alongside others)
Humanizing People through	Organizing gatherings, conducting training and development programs, and visiting ill	"Tut Wuri Handayani"

Servant Leadership Application	Application Actions	Javanese Cultural Perspective
Empowerment and Competency Enhancement	members to maintain engagement and solidarity	(Providing support and encouragement from behind)

Source: Data processed (2023)

Table 5 above describes that the application of servant leadership in public organizations is reflected through ethical practices rooted in cultural values. Leaders set a good example by preparing regular reports, maintaining transparency, and upholding the organization's reputation through quality service—embodying the Javanese principle “Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha” (leading by example from the front). These actions enhance accountability, build public trust, and support ongoing service improvement. Servant leaders also demonstrate insight and broad-mindedness by formulating strategic visions and initiating innovations to improve service delivery, aligning with “Ing Madya Mangun Karsa” (generating ideas while working alongside others). Furthermore, the principle of “Tut Wuri Handayani” (providing support from behind) is practiced through staff empowerment, training, and personal support—fostering solidarity and a culture of care within the organization.

4.4 The Conceptual Synthesis: Jagat Saksana Ladi

Conducting research with various informants from different clusters illustrates the final concept of understanding and implementing servant leadership from the perspective of Javanese culture. The cultural values of nobility and refinement, expressed through self-awareness to realize ideal leadership qualities, are demonstrated

through public organization leaders' statements and practices in Surakarta. These findings serve as valuable insights for developing new concepts in leadership.

The three core Javanese terms are defined as follows: In Sanskrit, “Jagat” (World/Universe) represents a leader who possesses a broad worldview, which is relevant not only in organizational leadership but also has a broader impact on the world (Conceptualization and Foresight). “Saksana” (Swiftly/Immediately) represents setting a good example and being a role model (Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha), which leaders must continually embody (Stewardship and Awareness). “Ladi” (To Serve) signifies the quality of humanizing people through empowerment and competence enhancement (Tut Wuri Handayani), where a leader positions themselves to encourage the growth and well-being of their team members.

The comprehensive “Jagat Saksana Ladi” framework summarizes the concept of Javanese Servant Leadership, where leaders prioritize the community's welfare, focusing on serving and meeting the needs, interests, and aspirations of the people they lead. This approach asserts that the highest form of leadership is service provided to the community before the leader serves themselves.

Table 6. Components of the *Jagat Saksana Ladi* Conceptual Framework

Javanese Term (Sanskrit Derivation)	Meaning	Corresponding Tri- Locus Pillar	S.L. Action Theme
Jagat (World/Universe)	Broad worldview, strategic vision, and impact.	<i>Ing Madya Mangun Karsa</i>	Conceptualization, Foresight
Saksana (Swiftly/Immediately)	Setting a good example through immediate, consistent, and active demonstration of ethical conduct.	<i>Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha</i>	Stewardship, Awareness
Ladi (To Serve)	The quality of prioritizing community welfare and fostering human growth.	<i>Tut Wuri Handayani</i>	Commitment to Growth, Building Community

Source: Author's Synthesis from Phenomenological Analysis (2023)

The synthesis confirms that the new concept represents an indigenous, three-pillar model of S.L. designed for high-context, collectivist cultures. The relationship between the input components is demonstrated as a necessary progression:

Figure 1. The *Jagat Saksana Ladi* Conceptual Model

S.L. Dimensions + Javanese Cultural Values $\xrightarrow{\text{Tri-Locus Medication}}$ *Jagat Saksana Ladi*

Sources: Author's Synthesis (2023)

4.5 The Conceptual Synthesis: *Jagat Saksana Ladi*

4.5.1 Theoretical Implication

The synthesis of *Jagat Saksana Ladi* significantly contributes to S.L. theory by demonstrating its viability in high-power-distance cultures (Tsui, 2004) through cultural modification. By using Dewantara's Tri-Locus as an explicit, culturally grounded mediating mechanism, the framework shifts the resolution of the hierarchy-service tension from structural equality (Western S.L.) to ethical supremacy (Javanese S.L.), providing a novel pathway for cross-cultural leadership studies.

4.5.2 Practical Implications

The findings offer a clear, actionable model for public organizations in high-context

cultures. The framework validates the integration of traditional moral values into modern bureaucratic performance, establishing a holistic governance approach where moral integrity is the foundation of public service. This model can serve as a curriculum guide for leadership development programs in the Indonesian civil service.

5. Conclusion and Suggestion

This study successfully established that the understanding and application of Servant Leadership (S.L.) within Surakarta's public organizations are profoundly shaped by Javanese cultural values. The findings demonstrate that S.L. is not merely adopted but is cultivated through the instantiation of local philosophies rooted in moral nobility

and the ideal perception of the leader as a selfless server. The application of S.L. is practically realized through the continuous embodiment of Ki Hajar Dewantara's Patrap Tri-Loka principle: Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha (setting an example), Ing Madya Mangun Karsa (fostering broad thinking), and Tut Wuri Handayani (empowering and supporting growth). This integration provides the necessary foundation for the Jagat Saksana Ladi framework, which synthesizes the ten universal S.L. dimensions with corresponding Javanese concepts.

5.1 Theoretical and Empirical Contributions

The primary theoretical benefit of this research is the introduction of the Jagat Saksana Ladi framework, which serves as a novel model for culturally adapting S.L. in non-Western, high-power-distance contexts. Empirically, the study confirms that while the ten universal S.L. dimensions are present, they are systematically modified—for example, Empathy is transformed into the ethical mandate of Nguwongke Uwong (Humanizing People). This finding contributes significantly to cross-cultural leadership literature by demonstrating that cultural scaffolding is essential for S.L. viability. Practically, the results offer policymakers a blueprint for designing leadership training programs that are inherently compatible with Javanese cultural expectations, enhancing public sector performance through moral and value-based alignment.

5.2 Study Limitations and Future Research

This study faced certain limitations that impact the generalizability of its findings. First, the limited timeframe (approximately two weeks) allocated for in-depth interviews restricted the ability to conduct more extensive follow-up, potentially limiting the

comprehensive depth of data captured regarding day-to-day leadership practices. Second, the sample was primarily drawn from the bureaucratic cluster. This dominant cluster may have introduced a procedural bias in the responses, focusing more on formal accountability and compliance (Stewardship and Foresight) rather than the purely emotional and relational aspects of S.L.

To address these limitations, advanced research is strongly suggested. Future studies should employ a more comprehensive time frame to allow for ethnographic observation of leader behavior. Furthermore, improved representation from the academic, political, and religious clusters is needed to fully validate the Jagat Saksana Ladi framework across the broader public ecosystem. Finally, it is hoped that this research can contribute to a broader understanding of leadership concepts by inspiring parallel studies on S.L. adaptation in other Indonesian cultures (e.g., Sundanese, Balinese, or Minangkabau contexts).

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