

ARTICLE

Initiation of Agile State Civil Apparatus through *BerAKHLAK* and Agile Bureaucracy for Sustainable Innovation in Sukabumi

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How to cite: Purnomo, Dwi., Riyani, Erni A., Wardhani, Nina., Dante, Puntigavere., & Ramdani, Rivaldi Rizki. (2026). Initiation of Agile State Civil Apparatus through *BerAKHLAK* and Agile Bureaucracy for Sustainable Innovation in Sukabumi. *Jurnal Borneo Administrator*, 22(1), 53-68. <https://doi.org/10.24258/jba.v22i1.1726>

Article History

Received: 28 April 2025

Accepted: 6 March 2026

Keywords:

Agile Bureaucracy;

BerAKHLAK;

Organizational Innovation;

Bureaucratic Reform;

Innovative Leadership.

ABSTRACT

This study addresses the challenge of accelerating bureaucratic innovation in local governments amid rigid organisational cultures and limited intergenerational synergy. Focusing on the City of Sukabumi, the research explores how the internalisation of *BerAKHLAK* values intersects with the implementation of Agile Bureaucracy to shape adaptive and innovative public service behaviour. While both frameworks have been promoted in Indonesia's civil service reform agenda, few studies have analysed their combined effect at the municipal level. Employing a mixed-methods approach—quantitative surveys ($n = 35$) and focus group discussions with OPD stakeholders—this study finds a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.551$; $p < 0.05$) between value internalisation and organisational innovation capacity. Key enabling factors include leadership, cross-sector collaboration, and flexible structures, while hierarchical rigidity and generational divides act as barriers. The study contributes to public administration literature by offering an integrated framework that links values-based governance and agile organisational practices. Practically, it provides reform insights for mid-sized city governments seeking to foster more responsive, collaborative, and innovative bureaucracies. Sukabumi's experience offers a relevant model for other second-tier cities facing similar governance and innovation challenges in decentralised public administration systems.

A. INTRODUCTION

Entering 2024, Indonesia's new government emphasises policy efficiency, streamlining programs, and strengthening impactful public services. Therefore, the bureaucratic paradigm must shift from a rule-based to a value-based approach and become increasingly crucial (Pandey et al., 2016). As a result, there is an urgent need for a governance framework that prioritises flexibility, responsiveness, and innovation. This framework would ensure the delivery of high-quality public services that can effectively meet citizens' diverse and evolving needs (Teece et al., 2016).

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Responding to these challenges, Sukabumi City has great potential for economic development and community welfare. However, despite this potential, Sukabumi City still faces cultural challenges in bureaucratic governance that can hinder innovation and organisational transformation. Structurally, the bureaucracy in Sukabumi remains conservative, characterised by a work culture that tends to be bureaucratic and hierarchical. The dominant top-down system limits the space for experimentation for the State Civil Apparatus (later referred to as ASN) in developing innovative solutions (Gunawan et al., 2019). As a result, the pace of innovation and the adoption of agile bureaucratic concepts (agile bureaucracy) is slow. Implementing this approach is needed to create a bureaucracy that is more adaptive, collaborative, and responsive to the challenges of the times. Therefore, an organisational transformation strategy is required in order to bridge the cultural gap and encourage change towards a more dynamic bureaucracy in Sukabumi City.

To achieve this, the Indonesian Government has launched the values of *BerAKHLAK* (Service-Oriented, Accountable, Competent, Harmonious, Loyal, Adaptive, and Collaborative) as the main guidelines to strengthen the ASN work culture (Herwanto & Hutasoit, 2023; Martogi & Dwiputrianti, 2023; Rohmah et al., 2023). However, internalising these values still faces challenges in practice, often becoming a formality in training rather than being implemented in the work environment. Besides, Agile Bureaucracy, which emphasises empathy, flexibility, collaboration, and rapid iteration, is not entirely compatible with the bureaucratic system, which remains hierarchical and rigid in many OPDs. As a result, changes to a more dynamic and innovative work system have not run optimally, hampering the effectiveness of public services and the creation of solutions based on community needs (Aripin et al., 2021; Marsikin & Budanto, 2023; Rong & Kleiman-Weiner, 2024; Tomažević et al., 2023).

The relationship between the internalisation of the value *BerAKHLAK* and Agile Bureaucracy lies in their shared goals. This is mainly related to Adaptability in Morals, which aligns with Agile Bureaucracy and encourages flexibility and acceptance of societal changes. In this case, the governance process and public services will become more adaptable to technological developments and more efficient in their implementation. This is reinforced by the findings of Kandathil (2015), which underscore the importance of aligning individual behaviour through the internalisation of values, which is crucial for a more successful agile culture transformation (Kantadhil, 2015). Thus, applying the core values of "Be AKHLAK" and Agile Bureaucracy is necessary within the Sukabumi City Government to realise sustainable organisational innovation.

However, academic studies on the relationship between AKHLAK values and Agile Bureaucracy remain limited, especially in the context of regional government. The value of *AKHLAK*, especially Adaptability, aligns with the Agile Bureaucracy principle, which encourages flexibility and readiness to face changes in public services. However, previous research shows that internalising these values is not yet fully effective, often being only a formality in training without a real impact on ASN work culture (Martogi & Dwiputrianti, 2023). Apart from that, the implementation of Agile Bureaucracy still faces various obstacles, including weak collaboration between OPDs and a lack of coordination in decision-making. (Mutiarin et al., 2024).

This study contributes to the discourse on public sector reform by offering a contextual framework that bridges value internalisation (*BerAKHLAK*) with the principles of Agile Bureaucracy. Unlike previous research that examines these concepts separately, this study explores how their integration can foster adaptive, innovative, and collaborative bureaucratic behaviour at the municipal level. By focusing on Sukabumi City—a representative case of second-tier urban bureaucracy in Indonesia—this research also provides practical insights into the dynamics of reform in mid-sized governments, which are often overlooked in national-level

studies. However, this study is not without limitations. As it relies on cross-sectional data and a single case setting, the findings may not fully capture long-term behavioural change or reflect conditions in larger, more complex bureaucracies. Therefore, future research is needed to test the applicability of these findings across diverse regional contexts and over more extended periods of bureaucratic transformation.

Building on the background and previous research presented, this study aims to address a significant gap by considering the following main problem statement: "How is the relationship between the value of BerAKHLAK and the Agile Bureaucracy approach in creating sustainable innovation in the Sukabumi City government?" Furthermore, this research addresses the following secondary problem statements: (1) To what extent does the internalisation of AKHLAK values contribute to the development of Agile ASN in Sukabumi City? (2) What factors facilitate or hinder the formation of agile civil servants in Sukabumi City? (3) What is the relationship between the internalisation of the values of AKHLAK and Agile Bureaucracy in advancing the organisational innovation framework?

This study makes a significant contribution to the field of public administration in two key ways. First, at the scientific level, it advances theoretical discourse by integrating the concept of value-based governance (Berakhlak) with Agile Bureaucracy—two frameworks that are rarely examined in conjunction. This integrated perspective offers a new lens for analysing how bureaucratic values and adaptive structures interact to influence public-sector innovation. Second, at the practical level, the study provides contextualised strategies for bureaucratic reform in mid-sized municipalities, a segment that is often underrepresented in the existing literature. By highlighting the case of Sukabumi City, the research provides policymakers with actionable insights into cultivating agile, value-driven governance models in structurally rigid environments. These contributions are relevant not only for Indonesia's ongoing civil service transformation but also for other developing countries facing similar challenges in balancing tradition and innovation in public administration.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Agile Bureaucracy

Agile Bureaucracy is a concept that aims to increase the flexibility and responsiveness of public organisations in meeting community needs. This approach bridges the gap between traditional, rigid bureaucracy and demands for more adaptive, high-quality public services. One of the main principles in *Agile bureaucracy* is accountability, which focuses on results and emphasises the importance of sharing, explaining, and justifying decisions and actions. Thus, this approach encourages a more responsible work culture at all levels of the organisation (Aripin et al., 2021). In its application, strong leadership and effective communication are key to driving a successful Agile Bureaucracy. Leaders play a role in creating an environment that supports employee autonomy while providing clear direction (Brusov, 2022; Moalagh et al., 2023).

Various global and local studies demonstrate that *Agile Bureaucracy* can be effectively applied in public policy development. For example, in Indonesia, this approach is used in the policy for managing street vendors, thereby making the policy process more adaptive and participatory (Aripin et al., 2021). In a global context, research shows that transformation towards an Agile Bureaucracy requires significant changes in organisational culture, including eliminating rigid bureaucratic structures, increasing transparency, and empowering employees to play a more active role in decision-making. With these changes, Agile Bureaucracy can enhance governance effectiveness and deliver higher-quality public services (Kasianiuk, 2016; Kurnia et al., 2022).

Values of AKHLAK as a Cultural Framework for ASN

BerAKHLAK was created as a cultural framework for the State Civil Apparatus (ASN) in Indonesia to develop superior, professional human resources. These values consist of Service Oriented, Accountable, Competent, Harmonious, Loyal, Adaptive, and Collaborative, which are expected to become the foundation of a uniform ASN work culture throughout Indonesia (Martogi & Dwiputrianti, 2023). Implementing these values aims to improve ASN performance by fostering a positive work culture and supporting improvements in the government bureaucracy, which has been a hindrance to performance (Marsikin & Budanto, 2023).

Although implementing these values does not always run smoothly, as seen in Batununggal District, where work culture inconsistencies persist, several employees have successfully applied them with self-awareness (Martogi & Dwiputrianti, 2023). In Banjar City, efforts to improve employee performance are carried out through policies that support the implementation of an organisational culture based on AKHLAK values, which emphasise the importance of a harmonious relationship between the organisation and its employees to enhance performance (Rohmah et al., 2023). Apart from that, the internalization of these values also has a positive effect on the mental revolution of ASN, which is essential in facing the challenges of external changes such as the industrial revolution 4.0 (Martogi & Dwiputrianti, 2023). Thus, AKHLAK's value functions not only as a guide to ethics and behavior but also as a strategy to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of public services and prepare ASN to face future challenges.

Organizational Innovation

Organisational innovation is the application of new ideas, technology or structures to increase effectiveness and performance. In the public sector, innovation is crucial for enhancing institutional capacity to respond to community needs more adaptively and efficiently (Wijaya et al., 2023). However, the innovation process in government bureaucracy faces unique challenges compared to the private sector. Strict regulations, resistance to change, and limited resources often hinder the implementation of organisational innovation. In contrast, factors driving innovation in the public sector include visionary leadership, employee incentives, and a work environment that supports creativity and experimentation (Romanescu, 2016).

A supportive organisational structure and work culture that encourages creativity play a crucial role in the success of organisational innovation. Organisations with a flexible structure and an openness to change are more likely to adopt innovation sustainably. In addition, work values oriented towards learning and collaboration strengthen the organisation's capacity to develop and implement new ideas. Research indicates that the combination of organisational innovation, learning culture, and structural support significantly influences innovation performance in the public sector (Wijaya et al., 2023). Therefore, a strategy that integrates continuous learning, effective change management, and leadership capable of inspiring organisational transformation is needed to create a more innovative bureaucracy.

New Institutionalism on Cultural Transformation in Bureaucracy

In the New Institutionalism perspective, institutional change occurs when perceptions of institutions shift, as these changes influence public preferences and the way policymakers execute their mandates. Exogenous changes, like crises that create uncertainty and spur the adoption of novel concepts to rectify policy failures, or isomorphism, in which institutions replicate long-standing practices, can both result in transformations. Leaders play a critical role in influencing public opinion through priming (shifting attention) and framing (guiding issue

evaluation). Their efficacy is contingent upon conformity to generally recognised norms. Moreover, endogenous change can be brought about by learning and puzzling processes, in which actors adjust institutional practices in light of accumulated experience, or by rule implementation, in which frontline implementers deviate from formal instructions because they believe them to be impractical, thereby transforming the operational culture over time (Koning, 2016).

In most cases in Indonesia, Cultural barriers in bureaucratic organisations present a considerable obstacle to agile transformation. These barriers to change stem from deeply entrenched traditional structures and norms that have been established over time. This rigid framework often results in well-defined processes and procedures that maintain order and consistency. However, such structured environments can foster significant resistance to change. This resistance is often rooted in deeply entrenched organisational norms and a collective mindset that prefers maintaining the status quo over experimenting and innovating. Employees may become accustomed to familiar routines, leading to reluctance to adopt new methodologies or practices, including agile methodologies, which emphasise flexibility, collaboration, and rapid adaptation to change (Danar et al., 2024).

As a result, when attempts to introduce new ways of working are made through exogenous change, they can be met by endogenous factors such as scepticism and resistance from staff who may fear disruption to established workflows or be unsure about the benefits of adopting more dynamic practices. This cultural transformation can create substantial obstacles in the transition to a more adaptive and responsive organisational model (Turner et al., 2022). Through this synthesis, various factors contributed to this cultural transformation by examining leadership styles, employee attitudes, and organisational climate. As a practical step to overcome these cultural challenges, it is necessary to foster a culture of openness, collaboration, and continuous improvement (Wijaya et al., 2024).

In a bureaucratic environment, transformation can be realised in two ways: psychologically and cognitively. On a psychological level, employees may experience anxiety when faced with the prospect of learning new technology, which can lead to resistance to change. Cognitively, these transformations are often rooted in established cultural norms that support traditional work routines, which create a sense of comfort and familiarity that makes innovation seem intimidating. These interlocking forms of transformation reinforce existing practices, effectively inhibiting the implementation of transformative approaches, such as agile methodologies (Brusov, 2022).

C. METHOD

This research uses a descriptive quantitative approach to analyse the relationship between Agile Bureaucracy and organisational innovation in the Sukabumi City government environment. This method was chosen to obtain an empirical picture regarding the implementation of the Agile ASN concept and the level of innovation produced by regional apparatus organisations (OPD).

Population and Sample

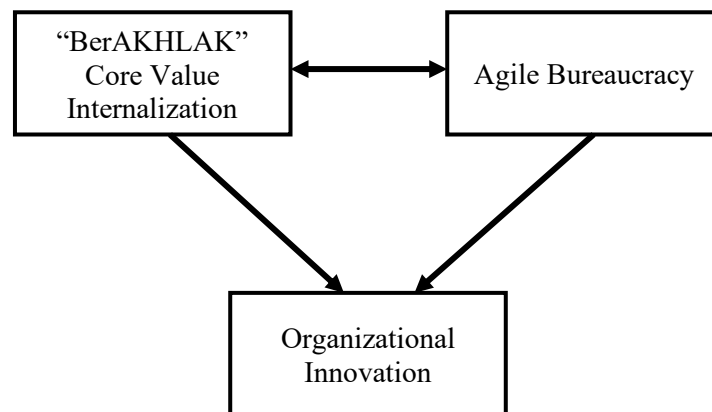
The population in this research is all Regional Apparatus Organisations (OPD) in Sukabumi City. The research sample consisted of 18 OPD representatives, who were chosen as the unit of analysis to evaluate the relationship between the implementation of Agile Bureaucracy and organisational innovation in the government environment.

Measurement Instruments

Data collection was carried out through distributing a 6-point Likert-scale-based questionnaire, which was designed to measure two main variables:

- a. BerAKHLAK & Agile Bureaucracy – Measured through 5 statements related to the Internalisation of Moral Values and 10 Questions related to Agile Bureaucracy, which reflect flexibility, responsiveness, and collaboration in bureaucratic processes. Organisational Innovation – Measured through 18 statements that assess the organisation's ability to create, adopt, and implement sustainable innovation.

Respondents were given answer choices on a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree) to assess the level of implementation of Agile Bureaucracy and organisational innovation in their respective OPDs.



(Source: Processed by authors (2025))

Figure 1. Variable Framework

Table 1. Question Instrument

No	Question	Variable	Reference
1	I know and understand the fundamental values of "BerAKHLAK" and how to apply them in the workplace.	Internalisation of BerAKHLAK	Martogi, A., & Dwiputrianti, S. (2023). Strategi Penerapan Budaya "Asn Berakhlak" Untuk Mendukung Kinerja Pegawai Di Kecamatan Batununggal Kota Bandung. Konferensi Nasional Ilmu Administrasi 7.0, STIA LAN.
2	The training or socialisation I participated in helped me understand the ASN values, "Having morals".		
3	The place I work encourages the application of "moral" values in daily activities.		
4	The slogan "Proud to Serve the Nation" makes me more enthusiastic about my work.		
5	In my workplace, behaviour that aligns with the value of "BerAKHLAK" is rewarded or recognised.		
6	I am often invited to join teams consisting of various fields to complete tasks together.	Agile Bureaucracy	Aripin, S., Rulinawaty, & Samboteng, L. (2021). Agile Bureaucracy for Public Policy Accountability: Implementation of the Street Vendor Policy in Indonesia: Agile Bureaucracy. 2nd
7	I am allowed to convey new ideas or suggestions in my work.		

8	I have worked with outside parties, such as communities or the private sector, to solve public service problems.		International Conference on Administration Science 2020 (ICAS 2020), Bandung, Indonesia. https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.210629.021
9	The cross-sector collaboration I participate in helps produce better, more creative solutions.		
10	The leader (superior) at my workplace often provides direction and guidance for my career development.		
11	In my workplace, people who provide new ideas or innovations are appreciated (through awards, capacity building, and workshop participation) to help perfect their ideas or innovations.		
12	I feel that my work targets are clear and support the creation of new ideas.		
13	My work was assessed openly, and I received constructive feedback.		
14	We master digital tools or technology (Artificial Intelligence (AI)) that help my work.		
15	The technological devices at my workplace have enabled me to work efficiently and quickly.		
1	We have innovative leaders	Organisational Innovation (Human Resources)	Wijaya et al (2023) . The Influence Of Human Resource Management Practices, Organizational Innovation, and Learning Organization Culture On Innovation Work Performance. <i>Jurnal Manajemen</i> , 14(1), 57. https://doi.org/10.32832/jm-uika.v14i1.9779
2	The decision makers in our organisation are innovative.		
3	We have an innovative program team leader.		
4	We promote and develop innovative people.		
5	Our employees are innovative.		
6	We recruit new people based on their innovation skills.		
7	We are given the freedom to take risks & the opportunity to fail	Organisational Innovation (Work Culture)	
8	We have the time & freedom to innovate		
9	Our agency has a culture of collaborative innovation.		
10	Our agency has high creative abilities.		
11	We have a burning passion!		
12	We have a strong ability to change.		
13	We work and learn with partners and other stakeholders seriously	Organisational Innovation (Innovation Process)	
14	We have insight into society's deep needs.		
15	An easily accessible budget is available for new, innovative programs.		

- 16 Our employees have measurement tools and an innovation infrastructure.
- 17 All employees have undergone innovation training.
- 18 We have a clear and well-known innovation strategy.

Data Analysis

Data obtained from the questionnaire results will be analysed using Pearson's correlation analysis. Descriptive findings will be presented in graphical form to determine how implementing Agile Bureaucracy principles in the government bureaucracy affects increasing organisational innovation in the Sukabumi City OPD. The graphic results will then be interpreted in a narrative context. The results of this data analysis can provide a deeper understanding of the role of Agile Bureaucracy in fostering sustainable innovation within the Sukabumi City government, and offer policy recommendations that support a more flexible, adaptive, and innovative bureaucratic transformation.

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Table 2. Pearson Correlation Test Results
Correlations

		ValueInternalization	OrganizationalMap
ValueInternalization	Pearson Correlation	1	.551*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.022
	N	17	17
OrganizationalMap	Pearson Correlation	.551*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.022	
	N	17	18

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
Source: Processed by authors (2025)

The correlation analysis results show a positive relationship between internalisation of values and organisational mapping, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.551. This value indicates a moderate level of relationship, which means that the higher the value of internalisation, the better the organisational mapping, or vice versa. In addition, the significance value of 0.022 is smaller than the limit of 0.05, indicating that this relationship is statistically significant. This means that the relationship between these two variables is highly likely not a coincidence but a genuine connection. However, because this analysis is only correlational, it cannot be concluded that there is a cause-and-effect relationship. Therefore, further research is needed to understand whether value internalisation influences organisational mapping or whether other factors play a role in this relationship.

Sukabumi "BerAKHLAK" Internalization Measurement



(Source: Processed by authors, 2024)

Figure 2. Spider Web Results Mapping the Values of BerAKHLAK and Agile Bureaucracy

From the findings above, respondents demonstrated varying levels of understanding of the fundamental values applicable to their roles. While some individuals have a solid understanding of these concepts, others need additional reinforcement. Findings from numbers 1-5, which relate to the internalisation of BerAKHLAK, and from numbers 6-15, which relate to Agile Bureaucracy, show that there are differences in respondents' understanding of the values of BerAKHLAK and Agile Bureaucracy. Although most participants understood these concepts, the extent to which they had integrated them into their work practices varied widely.

Based on questions 1-5 regarding the internalisation of values, it is clear that the participants have significantly internalised the basic principle of "BerAKHLAK". First, their understanding of these values, as reflected in statements one to three, shows a high level of application, averaging between four and five. This shows their strong understanding of core ethical principles. Furthermore, regarding the motivation to work under the slogan "Proud to Serve the Nation," the participants showed extraordinary enthusiasm, obtaining an impressive average of five. However, although some recognition of behaviour is consistent with "Berakhlak" as discussed in statement five, it is clear that additional reward mechanisms are needed to further increase participants' motivation.

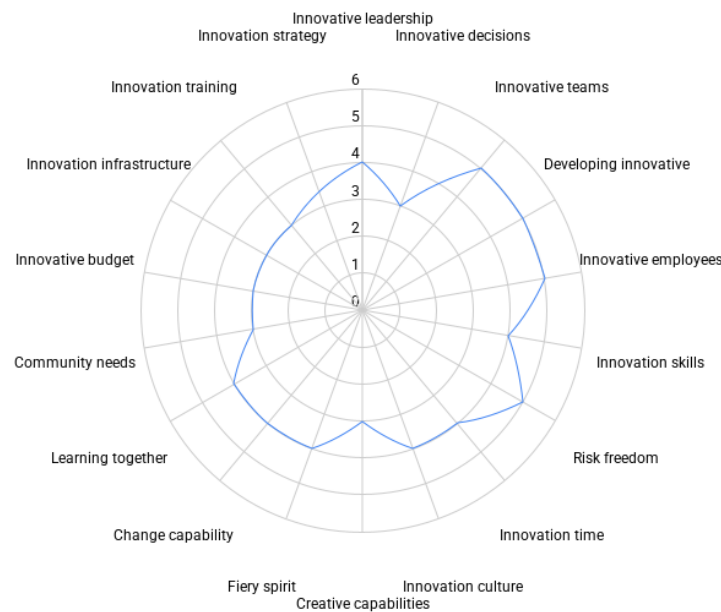
The Agile Bureaucracy indicators in questions 6-15 include various dimensions that reflect the state of the organisation. Firstly, regarding goals and strategy, work targets are commendably clear, as evidenced by a mean rating of 5 for Statement 12. This clarity effectively encourages the development of new ideas. However, the support leaders provide for career direction, as indicated by Statement 10, could still be improved, with a mean score of 4. Turning to organisational structure, cross-functional collaboration is an important point; Statements 6 and 9 demonstrate this through a mean rating of 5, highlighting the organisation's commitment to supporting collaborative efforts across multiple sectors.

Regarding culture and behaviour, there is genuine enthusiasm for innovation and new ideas, which is reflected in Statements 7 and 11. However, appreciation for innovation, with a

mean score of 4, indicates a need for improvement through more effective reward mechanisms. Regarding process, cross-sector collaborative efforts—illustrated in Statements 8 and 9—resulted in creative solutions, with a solid average score of 5. This demonstrates flexible, inclusive processes within the organisation. Finally, regarding technological support, the mastery of digital technology among the participants, as indicated by Statements 14 and 15, suggests that they possess the necessary technological skills to perform their work efficiently, with a mean score of 5.

Organisational Innovation Mapping

Sukabumi Organizational Inovation Map



(Source: Processed by authors, 2024))

Figure 3. Spider Web Results of Organisational Innovation Mapping

Based on the findings in Figure 3, the Human Resources Performance section, numbered 1-6, indicates an optimal level of results. However, there is a critical need to strengthen innovative leadership attributes. Today, the organisation excels in cultivating an innovation-oriented workforce, particularly in promoting individuals with creative potential and implementing a skills-based hiring process, which received a commendable score of 5. However, there are significant opportunities for improvement in areas such as innovative leadership and decision-making, which are currently rated between 3 and 4, indicating that although progress has been made, further development is needed to fully realise the workforce's potential.

Regarding the Work Culture section shown in numbers 7-12, the environment fosters innovation by providing sufficient freedom and time for employees to experiment and think creatively, earning a high score of 5. Despite this, the collective spirit required to drive innovative efforts forward remains underdeveloped, as reflected in a score of 3. This suggests the need for initiatives that foster teamwork and collaborative problem-solving to promote a more integrated and innovative approach among staff.

Discussion

The Relationship between Organisational Values and Innovation

The correlation analysis results showing a significant positive relationship ($r = 0.551$; $p < 0.05$) between AKHLAK value internalisation and organisational innovation capacity align with Teece et al.'s (2016) theory of dynamic capabilities, which posits that adaptive values and practices enhance an organisation's ability to innovate under uncertainty. Furthermore, the emphasis on Adaptability, Collaboration, and Competence as drivers of innovation resonates with Aripin et al. (2021) and Kasianiuk (2016), who argue that Agile Bureaucracy requires value alignment to facilitate responsiveness and experimentation within public organisations. When these values are well internalised, ASN becomes more open to new approaches, able to work synergistically with various stakeholders, and strives to improve its professional capacity. This condition creates a conducive foundation for innovation in public services.

However, this positive relationship has not been fully supported by the institutional structure's readiness to implement it optimally. In many work units, decision-making processes remain rigid and bureaucratic, hindering responses to new ideas or initiatives. Besides that, budget limitations and the absence of a comprehensive innovation strategy mean that the internalisation of values stops at the attitudinal level and has not yet been fully transformed into systemic, sustainable innovative behaviour. In other words, even though core values have begun to be embedded, the space for implementation remains constrained by various structural and cultural obstacles.

Therefore, a more strategic and systematic approach is needed to bridge the internalised values with institutional reality. Organisations need to create conditions that allow these values to develop into concrete, innovative practices. In this case, one crucial step is to develop an innovation strategy aligned with the organisation's long-term vision. This strategy must not only be technocratic but also address aspects of work culture, relationship patterns, and leadership style.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of Agile ASN Transformative Leadership

Leadership is crucial to transforming bureaucratic culture, especially by encouraging a shift from a rigid hierarchical system to an adaptive, innovative organisation. Within the Sukabumi City Government, the main challenge that has emerged is the uneven role model of OPD leaders in adopting progressive values, such as those contained in the core values BerAKHLAK. The absence of a leadership figure who consistently exemplifies these values has resulted in a gap between the spirit of reform proclaimed by top-level management and the actual acceptance and understanding of these values at the implementation level.

This situation is exacerbated by an organisational culture that remains conservative. ASNs who have long worked within traditional bureaucratic patterns generally resist new approaches, especially when they involve technology or more flexible work principles such as Agile Bureaucracy. The lack of leaders who actively voice and practice the values of change makes it difficult for ASN to make the value of AKHLAK the basis for work behaviour. As a result, the internalisation of values is limited to a symbolic level and does not develop into a living organisational culture that supports innovation.

Thus, the success of bureaucratic reform depends heavily on leadership capacity and commitment. When leaders can become real examples of the values they want to internalise and actively build a culture of innovation, then change is possible. However, they will also gain legitimacy and support from the entire organisational ecosystem. Leaders also must act as facilitators, not just administrators. They must create a psychologically safe environment where ASNs feel valued for their contributions and dare to propose innovations without fear of criticism or blame.

Leaders' training needs to focus on strengthening innovative and adaptive leadership skills to make this happen. This includes managing change, building cross-disciplinary teams, and managing complex and rapidly changing organisational dynamics. Training should be technical-administrative and hone social leadership dimensions, such as empathy, role modelling, and communication that encourages involvement.

Organisational Communication Patterns

The level of cross-sector collaboration within the Sukabumi City Government has shown significant progress, as reflected in the assessment score, which has reached 5. This indicates that horizontal communication between units has begun to develop, creating opportunities for greater synergy among regional apparatus organisations (OPD). However, vertical communication patterns still show a one-way tendency—from leaders to subordinates—without sufficient space for upward feedback. This lack of two-way dialogue is a serious obstacle in creating a fast, responsive, and adaptive decision-making process, which should be the main characteristic of an agile organisation.

Organisations need to actively foster an open, participatory communication culture to address these challenges. The first step is to strengthen the organisation's collective identity and clarify the institutional vision of innovation. This vision must be communicated consistently at all levels so that every employee understands the direction of change and feels they have a role in making it happen. Embedding this vision in regular activities, such as workshops, cross-unit projects, and joint reflection forums, will encourage deeper involvement from all ASNs.

In addition to clarifying the vision, strengthening internal communication must also be achieved through activities that foster a collective spirit. Activities such as internal innovation competitions, challenge-based work teams (innovation sprints), or good-practice sharing sessions (knowledge-sharing sessions) can strengthen organisational cohesion and foster employee courage in conveying ideas and constructive criticism. This kind of culture will strengthen informal networks, which are often the driving force behind innovation in bureaucracy.

Furthermore, the involvement of external stakeholders is essential to enriching the innovation ecosystem. Partners from academic circles, local communities, civil society organisations, and the private sector can become strategic collaborators in designing solutions and experimentally implementing policies. Thus, open, participatory, and multidirectional communication not only supports a culture of internal innovation but also strengthens public legitimacy toward the bureaucracy.

Work Structure: Flexible vs Hierarchical

Hierarchical and rigid bureaucratic structures remain the dominant norm in the government system, including at the regional level, such as in Sukabumi City. Rigidity in bureaucracy slows down the response to change and makes ASNs passive towards new ideas. When the system is too centralised, the space for initiative at the executive level narrows. This leads to the slow adoption of innovative policies, even when there is an urgent societal need. The transformation process towards a more agile bureaucracy is hampered because ASN is not empowered to act flexibly and responsively. Therefore, systemic interventions are needed, including new skills training, transformation of work culture, and establishing an incentive system that encourages innovative behaviour.

These findings also reflect the perspective of New Institutionalism (Koning, 2016), which argues that institutional transformation requires not only structural adjustments but also shifts in norms and cognitive frameworks within organisations. The resistance found among senior ASN despite formal training indicates a disconnect between symbolic value internalisation and

behavioural change, underscoring the importance of discursive and sociological institutional mechanisms for genuine cultural transformation.

Apart from structure, the decision-making process is also a crucial point that needs to be addressed. Many innovative ideas and initiatives fail to be implemented because slow, hierarchical processes and minimal participation hinder their progress. Evaluation of current decision-making mechanisms is necessary to encourage the emergence of more open, collaborative patterns. Agile principles emphasise rapid iteration, continuous learning, and feedback as the basis for decision-making, values often lost in traditional bureaucratic systems.

Organisations must also establish internal forums to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experience. This forum can serve as a platform for ASN to share best practices, discuss successes, and reflect on failures as part of a collective learning process. This culture of mutual learning is crucial so that bureaucratic transformation is not only top-down but also emerges from grassroots initiatives and collaboration. In this way, the bureaucracy will become a more agile, innovative, and humane institution in its service.

The Courage of Young Apparatus and Intergenerational Dynamics

Young ASNs are a strategic asset in bureaucratic transformation, especially because they bring new enthusiasm, digital skills, and the courage to experiment with more adaptive work approaches. In the context of bureaucratic reform towards agile and innovative organisations, the existence of young ASN is a key element that can accelerate the change process. However, reality shows this potential has not been fully recognised or utilised optimally. The gap between generations remains substantial, particularly in decision-making, role division, and knowledge transfer. Young ASNs are often positioned as technical implementers, while the senior generation still dominates the strategic space.

This condition creates an imbalance in contributions, which can hamper organisational synergy. The integration between the experience of senior ASN and the spirit of change from the younger generation can be an ideal combination for encouraging sustainable innovation. To overcome this, it is necessary to build a collaborative, inclusive, cross-generational space. Some strategies that can be implemented include intergenerational mentoring programs, cross-age collaborative projects, and open dialogue forums that facilitate the equal exchange of ideas and experiences. With this approach, organisations build more solid working relationships and create a collective learning ecosystem.

One crucial aspect that can encourage this synergy is a fair and transformative incentive system—awarding both young and senior ASNs who demonstrate behaviour aligned with organisational values and make innovative contributions will strengthen intrinsic motivation. This system also signals that the organisation values change efforts from all lines, not just the top structure. If implemented consistently, these value- and performance-based incentives will foster the development of a professional, progressive, and responsive work culture.

Employer Branding Practices and ASN Perceptions of Their Role as Servants of the Nation

Most ASNs, especially those from the younger generation, exhibit a strong emotional attachment to public service values, as evidenced by their positive response to the slogan "Proud to Serve the Nation." This slogan symbolises moral commitment and reflects ASNs' aspirations to make a real contribution to society and the country. However, a targeted institutional communication strategy has not fully supported this enthusiasm. Currently, there is no structured and strategic employer branding approach to institutionally strengthening the institutional identity of the ASN profession.

Without a strong and consistent collective narrative, it is challenging for the bureaucracy to foster long-term loyalty among ASN, especially in competition with the private sector, which offers more attractive career paths and incentives. When government agencies fail to project an image of a meaningful, growing, and impactful workplace, attracting and retaining top talent will be difficult, especially among younger generations seeking work with social value and meaning.

For this reason, strengthening employer branding is crucial to establishing ASN's identity as a proud and impactful profession. This practice can be developed through internal campaigns that highlight ASN success stories, recognise innovative contributions, and reward dedication to service. Thus, employer branding is not just a marketing effort, but rather part of a bureaucratic reform strategy to create a work ecosystem oriented towards value, performance, and sustainability.

E. CONCLUSION

This research indicates that internalising AKHLAK values cannot be achieved only through formal socialisation or symbolic campaigns. For these values to truly become part of the ASN work culture, integration into daily practices, work systems, and reward and evaluation mechanisms is needed. Values such as Adaptability, Collaboration, and Competence will only be meaningful if they are reflected in real work patterns and supported by enabling organisational systems.

In this context, Agile Bureaucracy emerges as a relevant approach to answering the bureaucratic challenges of the 21st century. By emphasising flexibility, cross-functional collaboration, rapid iteration, and responsiveness to community needs, this approach provides a new direction for ASN to work more impactfully and adaptively. However, the transformation towards an agile bureaucracy will not be successful without integrating core values, a supportive organisational structure, and transformative leadership, which serves as an example of change.

Sukabumi City, with its potential in young human resources, commitment to values, and collaborative initiatives among OPDs, is well-positioned to serve as a laboratory for bureaucratic reform at the medium-sized city level. If managed in a structured and consistent manner, Sukabumi has an excellent opportunity to become a model for agile and innovative ASN development that can be replicated by other regions in Indonesia.

Form an Agile ASN Task Force in each OPD. This unit oversees, assists, and facilitates the application of agile principles in daily work processes within each OPD environment. Apply *peer coaching* and *intergenerational assistance*; Facilitate the exchange of knowledge and values between senior and junior ASN to build a work ecosystem that learns from each other and supports value transformation horizontally and across generations. Integrate the value of AKHLAK into the ASN evaluation and reward system. Apparatus performance assessment is based not only on administrative output but also on the extent to which work values are implemented consistently and have an impact. Create an experiment zone in each OPD. This zone is a safe space for ASNs to test ideas, try new working methods, and develop small-scale but sustainable innovations. Launch a cross-OPD collaboration program based on public innovation challenges. For example, policy hackathons or service innovations based on real problems, to encourage synergy between units while fostering innovative solutions. Use digital platforms to network with *the* public. Community assessments of value-based services can be used as material for evaluation, service improvement, and strengthening ASN's legitimacy as public servants.

Suggestions for further research include a longitudinal study of the impact of value transformation on ASN performance and innovation. Long-term research is needed to assess how value internalisation affects work effectiveness and the quality of public service

innovation. Additionally, a comparative analysis of the implementation of Agile Bureaucracy between cities/districts is recommended. This comparison can reveal good practices and contexts of success in implementing agile bureaucratic principles across various regions, including training experiments, BerAKHLAK-based simulations, and learning from *experience*. A training approach grounded in real experience is more effective at internalising values than conventional lecture-based methods. Qualitative study of the dynamics of young Apparatus and shifts in work values. This research is essential for understanding how the new generation of Apparatus interprets public service work, its challenges, and its potential as agents of bureaucratic change.

Contributorship

The first author was responsible for conceptualising the research design, developing the questionnaire framework, and preparing the scientific manuscript. The second and third authors contributed to refining the research design and validating the research objectives. The fourth and fifth authors assisted the first author in data collection and analysis and contributed to integrating the questionnaire results into the scientific manuscript.

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