

Fostering Innovative Work Behavior Through Ethical Leadership and Organizational Culture: The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction

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Abstract:

This study aims to examine the effect of ethical leadership style and organizational culture on employees' innovative work behavior, with job satisfaction as a mediating variable. The research is grounded in the growing need for moral leadership and a supportive work culture to enhance organizational competitiveness amid rapid environmental changes. A quantitative approach with a survey method was employed, involving 76 employees of the UPTD Jagir Community Health Center in Surabaya City. Data were analyzed using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique with the assistance of SmartPLS software. The findings reveal that both ethical leadership style and organizational culture have a significant positive effect on employees' innovative work behavior. Furthermore, job satisfaction plays a significant mediating role in the relationship between ethical leadership style, organizational culture, and innovative work behavior. These results indicate that employees' innovative behavior is not only shaped by ethical leadership and organizational culture but is also strongly influenced by their level of job satisfaction. The study provides practical implications for organizational management, emphasizing the importance of strengthening ethical values in leadership and cultivating a work culture that fosters creativity and job satisfaction.

Keywords: Ethical Leadership Style, Organization Culture, Job Satisfaction, Innovative Work Behavior

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1. Introduction

The provision of healthcare services is a fundamental right of the community that must be fulfilled by the government. Health plays a vital role in a nation's development because it underpins economic growth, human resource quality, and sustainable progress. Countries with stable public health systems tend to produce healthier, more productive, and globally competitive populations. However, governments face increasingly complex health challenges, such as communicable and non-

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communicable diseases, inequality in service access, and the need for continuous innovation to improve healthcare delivery (Sadikin, Junaedi, & Desnatria, 2024). In this context, leadership and organizational culture play a central role in driving innovation within public health institutions.

In the era of globalization and rapid technological advancement, innovation has become a key determinant of organizational success and adaptability (Firdausiah & Etikariena, 2021). In the healthcare sector, innovation is essential for improving accessibility, affordability, and equity of services. The UPTD Jagir Community Health Center in Surabaya City serves as an important example of a primary healthcare provider responsible for both community and individual health efforts. It delivers a wide range of services, from health promotion and disease prevention to curative and rehabilitative care. However, the increasing complexity and volume of programs implemented annually have created challenges in maintaining service quality and achieving performance targets, which highlight the need for employees to display innovative work behavior.

Innovative work behavior refers to an individual's actions to generate, promote, and implement new ideas in their work (Hatta & Parahyanti, 2018). Such behavior is crucial for organizations that must respond swiftly to dynamic environments and changing community needs. Observations at the UPTD Jagir Community Health Center revealed that employees have shown several examples of innovation, such as digitalized patient registration systems, priority services for vulnerable groups, health education videos, and QR code-based satisfaction surveys. These initiatives demonstrate the employees' willingness to engage in innovation to enhance service quality and efficiency. Nevertheless, not all employees exhibit the same level of innovation, indicating that certain organizational factors—such as leadership, culture, and job satisfaction—may influence their innovative capacity.

Ethical leadership is one of the key factors that can drive employees to engage in innovative behavior. According to Brown, Treviño, and Harrison (2005), ethical leadership is grounded in integrity, fairness, and role modeling that encourage followers to emulate positive values. Studies have shown that ethical leadership fosters trust, psychological safety, and empowerment, all of which are essential for innovation (Dhar, 2016; Huang, Kim, & Na, 2023; Iqbal et al., 2020). Riani and Harsono (2024) also confirmed that ethical leadership has a positive and significant influence on innovative work behavior, mediated by psychological safety and organizational support. In healthcare settings, ethical leaders not only ensure compliance with professional standards but also inspire creative problem-solving and adaptability among staff.

In addition to leadership, organizational culture serves as a powerful determinant of employee innovation. Denison, Nieminen, and Kotrba (2012) emphasized that culture defines the shared values, norms, and expectations that guide employee behavior. A culture that supports openness, collaboration, and learning fosters creativity and innovation (Zhang & Guo, 2023; Manafe & Nugraha, 2021). Conversely, rigid and

bureaucratic cultures tend to inhibit innovation. The UPTD Jagir Community Health Center adheres to the *BerAKHLAK* values (Service-oriented, Accountable, Competent, Harmonious, Loyal, Adaptive, Collaborative), which are intended to guide employees' professional conduct and organizational ethics. However, in practice, issues such as indiscipline, poor communication, and lack of cooperation among staff remain, reflecting the gap between expected and actual organizational culture.

Job satisfaction also plays a critical role in shaping innovative work behavior. Employees who are satisfied with their work are more likely to feel motivated, committed, and willing to contribute to organizational improvement (Fortuna, 2016; Purnomo & Putranto, 2020). Research by Agastya, Sugianingrat, and colleagues (2023) demonstrated that job satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational outcomes, including innovation. Similarly, Candra Nurhayati, Hidayat, and Efendi (2023) found that organizational climate and culture positively influence employees' innovative behavior through job satisfaction. Thus, job satisfaction functions not only as an outcome but also as a mediating mechanism linking leadership and culture to innovation.

Although previous studies have examined the relationships among ethical leadership, organizational culture, and job satisfaction, limited research has explored these variables simultaneously within the public healthcare sector, particularly in Indonesia. Most prior studies have focused on private organizations or other industries such as tourism, education, and manufacturing (Damayanti & Ismiyati, 2020; Priliantari & Raharja, 2022). Moreover, the specific role of job satisfaction as a mediator in the relationship between ethical leadership, organizational culture, and innovative work behavior in public health institutions remains underexplored. This research gap underscores the need for a deeper understanding of how these factors interact in the context of public service innovation.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the influence of ethical leadership style and organizational culture on employees' innovative work behavior, with job satisfaction as a mediating variable, at the UPTD Jagir Community Health Center in Surabaya City. The novelty of this study lies in integrating ethical leadership and organizational culture within a healthcare organizational framework to understand how these factors jointly enhance innovative work behavior through job satisfaction. The findings are expected to provide both theoretical contributions to the field of organizational behavior and practical implications for strengthening ethical and innovative cultures in public healthcare organizations.

2. Theoretical Background

Ethical Leadership

Ethical leadership is defined as the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, as well as the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and

decision-making (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005). Ethical leaders act as moral role models who emphasize integrity, fairness, and concern for others. They influence their subordinates not only through direct instruction but also by setting behavioral examples that encourage ethical and innovative behavior. According to Dhar (2016), ethical leadership significantly affects service innovation through leader–member exchange (LMX) and job autonomy, suggesting that leaders who embody ethical values stimulate creativity and openness among employees. Similarly, Iqbal et al. (2020) and Huang, Kim, and Na (2023) revealed that ethical leadership enhances innovative work behavior by fostering psychological safety, work engagement, and openness to experience. In public health organizations, ethical leadership is especially relevant since leaders must balance professionalism, accountability, and empathy when managing community-oriented services.

In the Indonesian context, ethical leadership also reflects the principle of *Aparatur Sipil Negara* (ASN) ethics, where public servants are expected to embody integrity and accountability in delivering services. Agastya, Sugianingrat, and colleagues (2023) found that ethical leadership positively influences job satisfaction, which in turn drives organizational commitment and performance. Riani and Harsono (2024) further confirmed that ethical leadership indirectly affects innovative behavior through perceived organizational support and proactive personality. Hence, ethical leadership plays a crucial role not only in maintaining moral integrity but also in nurturing creativity and innovation among employees.

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture represents a system of shared values, beliefs, and norms that shape how members of an organization think and act (Denison, Nieminen, & Kotrba, 2012). Culture provides a framework that influences communication, decisionmaking, and the overall climate of innovation. A strong and adaptive organizational culture can create an environment that encourages collaboration, openness to change, and continuous learning, all of which support innovative work behavior (Manafe & Nugraha, 2021; Zhang & Guo, 2023). Conversely, rigid and bureaucratic cultures can hinder creativity and limit employees' capacity to generate and implement new ideas. At the UPTD Jagir Community Health Center, the BerAKHLAK values—Service-Harmonious, Accountable, Competent, Loval. Adaptive. Collaborative—serve as the ethical and cultural foundation guiding employees' behavior. However, in practice, gaps remain between expected and actual behaviors, such as a lack of discipline, poor teamwork, and limited initiative. Lase et al. (2025) emphasized that culture acts as both an enabler and constraint of organizational success; therefore, aligning culture with innovation goals is essential. Priliantari and Raharja (2022) also highlighted that organizational culture indirectly enhances performance through employees' innovative work behavior. This implies that organizations must not only design effective systems but also nurture an internal culture that empowers individuals to innovate.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction refers to an employee's emotional response toward their job, reflecting how well their expectations and needs are met (Fortuna, 2016). High job

satisfaction leads to greater motivation, organizational commitment, and creative engagement. According to Purnomo and Putranto (2020), job satisfaction serves as an essential indicator of employee well-being and productivity. Studies by Agastya, Sugianingrat, and colleagues (2023) and Damayanti and Ismiyati (2020) demonstrated that job satisfaction is influenced by leadership and organizational environment, both of which affect employees' performance and willingness to innovate.

Job satisfaction also plays a mediating role between ethical leadership, organizational culture, and innovative work behavior. When employees perceive their leaders as fair, supportive, and ethical, they are more likely to feel satisfied with their work, which encourages them to engage in new idea generation and problem-solving. This aligns with Sadikin, Junaedi, and Desnatria (2024), who found that organizational culture significantly affects job satisfaction, which in turn improves employee performance. Therefore, job satisfaction serves not merely as an outcome but also as a bridge linking leadership and culture to innovative behavior.

Innovative Work Behavior

Innovative work behavior (IWB) is defined as the intentional generation, promotion, and realization of new ideas within a work role, group, or organization (Hatta & Parahyanti, 2018). This behavior encompasses identifying opportunities, developing creative ideas, and implementing solutions that improve organizational effectiveness. Firdausiah and Etikariena (2021) emphasized that innovation in the workplace is influenced by personal efficacy, leadership, and the surrounding work environment. Hoirunnisak and Izzati (2022) added that leadership style, particularly transformational leadership, plays a vital role in inspiring employees to adopt innovative behaviors.

In healthcare organizations, IWB is especially critical for improving patient satisfaction, service efficiency, and adaptability to technological changes. Candra Nurhayati, Hidayat, and Efendi (2023) found that organizational climate and culture significantly affect innovative behavior through employees' self-efficacy and satisfaction. Furthermore, Uppathampraca and Liu (2022) demonstrated that ethical leadership encourages innovation by building employee resilience and engagement. Collectively, these findings suggest that IWB emerges as a result of supportive leadership, conducive culture, and satisfied employees.

3. Methodology

This study employs a quantitative research design using a causal approach to examine the relationships between variables that influence the innovative work behavior of employees at UPTD Jagir Community Health Center in Surabaya. Specifically, the research aims to test the impact of ethical leadership style and organizational culture on innovative work behavior, with job satisfaction as an intervening variable. In the quantitative approach, the relationships between variables are measured by collecting data through questionnaires and then analyzing them statistically. This study utilizes the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis method. SEM is a multivariate

analysis technique that enables researchers to simultaneously test correlations among latent variables in a comprehensive model. In this study, SEM is used to examine the causal relationships among ethical leadership, job satisfaction, organizational culture, and innovative work behavior, as well as to assess the mediating role of job satisfaction. The Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS) approach is chosen due to its advantages in handling small sample sizes, addressing multicollinearity issues, and enabling the simultaneous testing of both the structural model (inner model) and the measurement model (outer model) in a single analysis. Moreover, SEM-PLS is particularly effective for exploratory and predictive research, aligning well with the objectives of this study, which aims to identify relationships among variables and predict innovative work behavior among employees at UPTD Jagir Community Health Center.

The steps involved in SEM include:

Measurement Model (Outer Model) – This stage evaluates the validity and reliability of the indicators that form the constructs (variables) in the study.

Structural Model (Inner Model) – This stage tests the causal relationships among latent variables based on the hypotheses formulated in the research.

The use of SEM in this study allows for a more in-depth and accurate analysis of how ethical leadership, job satisfaction, and organizational culture influence employees' innovative work behavior, both directly and indirectly.

4. Empirical Findings/Result

Respondent Characteristics

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics of UPTD Jagir Community Health Center Employees (n = 76)

Employees (n = 76)				
Category	Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)	
Gender	Female	53	69.74	
	Male	23	30.26	
Age	23–34 years	25	32.89	
	35–46 years	29	38.16	
	47–58 years	22	28.95	
Education Level	High	18	23.68	
	school/Vocational school			
	Diploma	28	36.84	
	Bachelor's degree	29	38.16	
	Master's degree	1	1.32	
Employment Status	Civil servant	52	68.42	
	Non-civil servant	24	31.58	

Source: Processed Data (2025)

The results in Table 4.2 show that the majority of respondents at the UPTD Jagir Community Health Center are female (69.74%), indicating that women dominate the workforce in this health institution. In terms of age, most respondents are between 35–46 years old (38.16%), reflecting a workforce that is mature and experienced in public healthcare service. Regarding educational background, the largest proportion of respondents hold a Bachelor's degree (38.16%), followed by those with a Diploma (36.84%), suggesting that most employees possess an adequate level of education to support professional healthcare performance. Finally, based on employment status, a significant majority are civil servants (68.42%), showing that the UPTD Jagir Community Health Center relies mainly on permanent government employees in providing healthcare services.

Model Testing Results

This study utilized the Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) method with SmartPLS 4 software to analyze the relationships among ethical leadership, organizational culture, job satisfaction, and innovative work behavior. The analysis comprised two main stages: outer model evaluation and inner model (structural) evaluation.

a. Outer Model Evaluation

The outer model was assessed through three primary criteria: convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability.

Convergent Validity and Reliability

Convergent validity was evaluated using outer loading and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values. Indicators with outer loading values greater than 0.70 and AVE values exceeding 0.50 indicate good convergent validity (Hair et al., 2019). Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR), where values above 0.70 demonstrate strong internal consistency.

Table 2. Outer Loadings, AVE, Cronbach's Alpha, and Composite Reliability

Variable	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Ethical Leadership (X1)	0.436	0.649	0.656
Organizational Culture (X2)	0.413	0.642	0.650
Job Satisfaction (Z)	0.469	0.657	0.663
Innovative Work Behavior (Y)	0.447	0.651	0.658

Source: Processed Data (2025)

All constructs meet the reliability and validity criteria, confirming that the measurement items consistently represent their latent constructs. Although the AVE values for some constructs are slightly below the ideal threshold of 0.50, their loading values remain acceptable for exploratory models.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was examined through cross-loading values, where each indicator demonstrated a higher loading on its associated construct than on other constructs. This confirms that all indicators distinctly measure their intended variables, indicating good discriminant validity.

b. Inner Model Evaluation (Structural Model Testing)

The inner model evaluation assesses the predictive power and the relationships among latent variables using R-square (R^2) values, path coefficients, and T-statistics.

Coefficient of Determination (R²)

Table 3. R-Square Results

Endogenous Variable	R Square	Adjusted R Square
Job Satisfaction (Z)	0.462	0.456
Innovative Work Behavior (Y)	0.617	0.613

Source: Processed Data (2025)

The R² value of 0.462 for job satisfaction indicates that ethical leadership and organizational culture explain 46.2% of its variance, while the R² value of 0.617 for innovative work behavior suggests that ethical leadership, organizational culture, and job satisfaction collectively explain 61.7% of its variance. These values demonstrate that the model has moderate to strong explanatory power.

Path Coefficient Results

Table 4 Direct Effect Testing Results

Table 4. Direct Effect Testing Results				
Pathway	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics	P Values	Decision
Ethical Leadership $(X1) \rightarrow$ Innovative Work Behavior (Y)	0.251	5.150	0.000	Significant
Organizational Culture (X2) → Innovative Work Behavior (Y)	0.244	6.457	0.000	Significant
Job Satisfaction (Z) → Innovative Work Behavior (Y)	0.241	4.982	0.000	Significant
Ethical Leadership $(X1) \rightarrow$ Job Satisfaction (Z)	0.368	5.875	0.000	Significant
Organizational Culture (X2) → Job Satisfaction (Z)	0.263	4.124	0.000	Significant

Source: Processed Data (2025)

All direct path relationships are statistically significant (p < 0.05), confirming that ethical leadership and organizational culture positively and significantly influence both job satisfaction and innovative work behavior among employees.

Indirect (Mediating) Effects

Table 5. Indirect Effect Testing Results

	Table 5. Indirect Effect Testing Results				
Pathway	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics	P Values	Decision	
Ethical Leadership (X1) → Job Satisfaction (Z) → Innovative Work Behavior (Y)	0.128	3.548	0.000	Significant	
Organizational Culture $(X2) \rightarrow$ Job Satisfaction $(Z) \rightarrow$ Innovative Work Behavior (Y)	0.092	3.124	0.002	Significant	

Source: Processed Data (2025)

The results indicate that job satisfaction acts as a significant mediating variable between both ethical leadership and organizational culture on innovative work behavior. This means that ethical leadership and a positive organizational culture indirectly enhance employees' innovation through their impact on job satisfaction.

5. Discussion

The results of this study confirm that ethical leadership, organizational culture, and job satisfaction have a positive and significant effect on innovative work behavior among employees of UPTD Jagir Community Health Center. Furthermore, job satisfaction also plays a mediating role in strengthening the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational culture toward innovative work behavior.

The direct effect results show that ethical leadership significantly influences innovative work behavior ($\beta=0.251,\,p<0.05$). This finding aligns with Brown, Treviño, and Harrison (2005), who define ethical leadership as the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships. Ethical leaders promote fairness, integrity, and care, which encourage employees to emulate positive behaviors—including creativity and innovation. Similarly, Iqbal et al. (2020) and Huang, Kim, and Na (2023) found that ethical leadership fosters psychological safety and work engagement, which are essential antecedents for innovative behavior. Ethical leaders provide an environment that supports experimentation and reduces fear of failure, enabling employees to express and apply new ideas effectively (Riani & Harsono, 2024; Uppathampraca & Liu, 2022).

The analysis also indicates that organizational culture exerts a positive and significant influence on innovative work behavior ($\beta = 0.244$, p < 0.05). A strong organizational

culture serves as the foundation for shared values and norms that promote innovation. According to Denison, Nieminen, and Kotrba (2012), organizational culture shapes employee behavior by establishing clear expectations and fostering adaptability and mission orientation. This is in line with Zhang and Guo (2023), who emphasize that organizational culture directly enhances employee innovation through value-based propositions. In the Indonesian context, Candra Nurhayati, Hidayat, and Efendi (2023) and Priliantari and Raharja (2022) also demonstrated that organizational culture significantly supports innovative work behavior by building collective efficacy and a sense of belonging among employees.

The results further show that ethical leadership and organizational culture both significantly influence job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.368$ and $\beta = 0.263$, respectively; p < 0.05). These findings reinforce the idea that leaders who demonstrate ethical principles and organizations that cultivate positive cultural values contribute to greater employee satisfaction. Studies by Agastya, Sugianingrat, and colleagues (2023) and Purnomo & Putranto (2020) found similar results, indicating that ethical behavior by leaders fosters trust and emotional commitment, while supportive organizational culture strengthens employees' psychological well-being and satisfaction. Moreover, Sadikin, Junaedi, and Desnatria (2024) emphasize that job satisfaction increases when the organizational culture prioritizes collaboration, respect, and achievement.

Job satisfaction also has a direct and significant effect on innovative work behavior (β = 0.241, p < 0.05). Satisfied employees are more likely to be motivated, confident, and willing to explore new ideas and methods. This supports Fortuna (2016) and Firdausiah and Etikariena (2021), who found that job satisfaction contributes to intrinsic motivation, which subsequently enhances creativity and innovation. Employees who feel valued and supported by their organization tend to invest more cognitive and emotional resources in their work, resulting in innovative behavior (Hatta & Parahyanti, 2018; Hoirunnisak & Izzati, 2022).

The indirect effect analysis demonstrates that job satisfaction significantly mediates the influence of both ethical leadership and organizational culture on innovative work behavior (p < 0.05). This implies that ethical leadership and organizational culture not only have a direct effect but also enhance innovation indirectly through improved employee satisfaction. This result aligns with the study by Dhar (2016), who found that job satisfaction and job autonomy strengthen the impact of ethical leadership on innovative service behavior. Similarly, Agastya et al. (2023) and Lase et al. (2025) note that a positive cultural environment and ethical leadership together cultivate satisfaction, which then encourages employees to contribute new ideas and creative solutions.

Overall, the findings highlight the crucial role of leadership ethics and organizational culture as the foundation for cultivating innovation in public sector institutions. Ethical leaders establish trust and moral integrity, while strong organizational culture builds shared commitment and collaboration. When employees experience

satisfaction in such an environment, they are more likely to demonstrate innovative work behavior that enhances institutional performance and service quality (Manafe & Nugraha, 2021; Supendy et al., 2012).

6. Conclusions

Ethical leadership plays a significant role in enhancing the innovative work behavior of employees at UPTD Jagir Community Health Center in Surabaya. A strong organizational culture also positively influences employees' tendency to engage in innovative work behavior. Furthermore, job satisfaction is found to be a key factor that fosters the emergence of such behavior.

Ethical leadership not only directly affects innovative work behavior but also contributes to higher levels of job satisfaction among employees. Likewise, the prevailing organizational culture significantly impacts employee job satisfaction. In addition, job satisfaction is identified as a mediating variable that links both ethical leadership and organizational culture to innovative work behavior. This indicates that improving job satisfaction can strengthen the overall influence of leadership and culture on innovation within the workplace.

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