

Ethical Leadership, Psychological Safety, Knowledge Sharing, Employee Creativity, and Organizational Innovation Performance: A Structural Equation Modeling Analysis


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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the paragraph discussing ethical leadership, the sentence “Despite growing evidence supporting the importance of ethical leadership, the mechanisms through which it influences organizational innovation performance remain insufficiently understood” identifies a research gap, but the novelty of the current study relative to prior mediation models is not sufficiently specified. The authors should explain more explicitly how their sequential mediation framework advances beyond existing leadership–innovation research.

Regarding Table 3, the measurement model fit indices indicate excellent fit (CFI = 0.958, TLI = 0.953, RMSEA = 0.050), yet the manuscript does not report the CFA factor loadings, cross-loadings, or modification indices. Including a measurement model table would substantially strengthen the transparency and replicability of the study.

Figure 1 presents the structural model, but the manuscript does not indicate whether alternative competing models were tested. Given the complexity of the mediation framework, comparing the proposed model with alternative nested or rival models would provide stronger evidence that the selected structure offers the best representation of the data.

In Table 4, the authors report that “Employee Creativity → Organizational Innovation Performance ($\beta = 0.68$)” is the strongest relationship in the model. However, no discussion is provided regarding the relative magnitude of effects. A comparative interpretation of standardized coefficients and their practical implications would enhance the contribution of the findings section.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the new document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the section introducing psychological safety, the manuscript states that “psychological safety may represent a critical mechanism linking ethical leadership to organizational innovation performance.” However, no formal hypothesis development section is provided. Each proposed path should be theoretically justified and formulated as a testable hypothesis before the Methods section to improve conceptual clarity and alignment with SEM best practices.

The paragraph beginning “Knowledge sharing represents another essential factor in organizational innovation” contains a strong conceptual argument, yet the distinction between knowledge sharing as a mediator and as an antecedent of creativity remains underdeveloped. The authors should provide a more detailed explanation of why knowledge sharing precedes creativity in the proposed causal sequence rather than operating in parallel.

In the final introductory paragraph, the sentence “there is a need for empirical research that simultaneously examines these constructs within a unified theoretical model” is persuasive, but the manuscript does not provide a conceptual figure illustrating the proposed relationships before data collection. Including a theoretical model at the end of the Introduction would improve readability and help readers understand the hypothesized mediation structure.

In the Methods section, the statement “Participants were selected using a stratified convenience sampling approach” requires additional methodological detail. The authors should specify how strata were defined, how participants were allocated across strata, and how convenience recruitment was integrated with stratification. Without this information, it is difficult to evaluate sampling representativeness and potential selection bias.

The paragraph reporting that “A total of 620 questionnaires were distributed electronically through organizational contacts and professional networks” should provide more information regarding organizational participation. Specifically, the number of organizations involved, the distribution across industries, and whether multiple respondents came from the same organization should be reported because clustering effects may influence SEM estimates.

In the measurement section, the Ethical Leadership Scale is described as having “excellent psychometric properties in numerous organizational studies.” However, the manuscript does not report whether any adaptation, translation, contextual modification, or pilot refinement of the items was conducted for the Canadian sample. Such information is necessary to assess construct validity in the current context.

The paragraph beginning “All instruments were administered in a single online questionnaire” raises concerns regarding common method variance because all variables were collected from the same source at the same time. The manuscript should report procedural and statistical remedies, such as Harman’s single-factor test, marker-variable analysis, or a common latent factor approach.

In the Data Analysis section, the authors indicate that “discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion.” Given recent methodological recommendations, the authors should additionally report the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) to provide a more rigorous assessment of discriminant validity.

In Table 1, all Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability values are very high, ranging from 0.88 to 0.93. While these results are satisfactory, the manuscript does not report item-level factor loadings or corrected item-total correlations. Providing these statistics would allow readers to evaluate indicator quality and measurement robustness more comprehensively.

In Table 2, the correlation between employee creativity and organizational innovation performance is reported as $r = 0.72$. Such a strong association raises the possibility of conceptual overlap between constructs. The authors should discuss how

discriminant validity was ensured beyond the Fornell-Larcker criterion and whether multicollinearity diagnostics were examined.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the new document.

2. Revised

Editor's decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.