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ETHICAL LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF INTRINSIC MOTIVATION AMONG HEALTH WORKERS

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ABSTRACT: Employee performance often declines when leadership lacks moral integrity and fails to inspire internal motivation. This study examines the influence of ethical leadership on employee motivation and performance. It contributes to leadership and organizational behavior literature by clarifying the mediating role of intrinsic motivation in the ethical leadership–performance relationship. Using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS, the results show that ethical leadership significantly enhances intrinsic motivation, which subsequently improves performance, while its direct effect on performance is insignificant. These findings advance understanding of how ethical leadership operates through internal psychological mechanisms rather than direct behavioral influence. Strengthening ethical leadership practices and nurturing intrinsic motivation can enhance organizational performance and sustain a positive work climate.

Keywords: Ethical Leadership; Intrinsic Motivation; Employee Performance; Health Workers; Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

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INTRODUCTION

The performance of health workers in Purwodadi is a major concern due to the increasing public demand for quality health services. Although health facilities such as hospitals and health centers play an important role, several problems such as declining service quality, delays in patient care, and lack of empathy and good communication between health workers and patients, affect patient satisfaction and overall service quality. One factor that affects the performance of health workers is leadership style. A leadership style that is not supportive or motivating can reduce the enthusiasm of health workers and impact the quality of service (Edú-valsania et al., 2022). Another challenge in Purwodadi is the high workload of health workers amidst limited resources and an increase in the number of patients due to urbanization. This condition often causes work fatigue (burnout) which reduces the effectiveness of services. Therefore, there needs to be a more ethical leadership approach, which can create a supportive work environment and increase the intrinsic motivation of health workers. Ethical leadership, which prioritizes integrity, fairness, and respect for workers' rights, can create a more collaborative and fair work environment, thereby improving the performance of health workers (Shareef & Atan, 2019).

This study was conducted to understand the factors that influence the performance of health workers in Purwodadi, Central Java, considering the increasing number of patients that is not balanced with adequate service quality. Factors such as high workload, long working hours, and lack of management support lead to a decline in service quality. This study aims to explore the role of ethical leadership in improving intrinsic motivation and performance of health workers in Purwodadi, which is a developing area with increasing health service needs (Al Harbi et al., 2019). Most previous studies have focused on the direct influence of leadership on performance, but this study also highlights how intrinsic motivation as a mediating variable strengthens the relationship. According to the theory of intrinsic motivation by Deci and Ryan (1985), individuals who are intrinsically motivated tend to perform better. In the context of health workers, intrinsic motivation comes from the desire to provide the best service to patients and contribute to public health. This study also aims to contribute to the development of ethical leadership theory, especially in the health sector in areas such as Purwodadi, which is still limited compared to research in the commercial or urban sectors (Sarwar et al., 2020).

The concept of performance refers to the success achieved by workers through values and numbers when carrying out work appropriately based on existing tasks (Tjahjono et al., 2018). Job satisfaction is a factor that influences employee performance (Pratama & Wardani, 2018), and to increase productivity, employees' physical and psychological needs must be met so that they feel valued and recognized. Job satisfaction arises when leaders pay attention to these needs, which gives the impression that employees' abilities and presence are valued by the company (Ivana Ariyani, 2016). Ethical leadership is rooted in high moral values such as integrity, honesty, fairness, and responsibility. Norgaard (2022) defines ethical leadership as a leader's effort to set a moral example through ethical actions and transparent communication. In the health sector, ethical leadership creates a conducive work environment that can reduce stress, increase motivation, and increase professional responsibility. Intrinsic motivation theory is also the basis for this study. Fishbach and

Woolley (Fishbach & Woolley, 2022) explain that intrinsic motivation comes from an individual's internal drive to perform tasks that are personally satisfying or meaningful, which has a positive effect on performance and resilience to stress. In the health sector, intrinsic motivation can come from satisfaction in helping patients and contributing to society, which encourages health workers to provide quality services despite challenges.

Empirical research supports the relationship between ethical leadership, intrinsic motivation, and employee performance. Kleshinski et al. (Kleshinski et al., 2021) found that ethical leadership increases employee job satisfaction and intrinsic motivation. In the healthcare sector, Franczukowska et al. (Franczukowska et al., 2021) showed that ethical leadership reduces burnout and increases the motivation of healthcare workers to provide high-quality care, as it creates a sense of self-confidence and autonomy in the work. Research shows that intrinsic motivation plays an important role as a mediator between ethical leadership and performance. Shin and Grant (J. Shin & Grant, 2019) found that intrinsically motivated employees tend to be more innovative and perform better. In the healthcare sector, intrinsic motivation triggered by ethical leadership can help healthcare workers face job challenges, increase their resilience to stress, and provide quality services.

Although many studies have explored the relationship between ethical leadership and employee performance, there are several research gaps that have not been fully answered. First, research on ethical leadership in the healthcare sector in areas such as Purwodadi is still limited, even though this area has different work challenges, such as heavy workloads and minimal medical facilities. Second, although ethical leadership is associated with employee performance, few studies have explored the role of intrinsic motivation as a mediator, even though intrinsic motivation plays an important role in interactions with work (Al Harbi et al., 2019). Third, most studies on ethical leadership and intrinsic motivation have been conducted in developed countries, such as Europe or North America, so it is important to examine the context in developing countries such as Indonesia. Fourth, many studies focus on quantitative outcomes, such as productivity, while the quality of health services influenced by motivation and ethics is still minimally discussed (Figueroa et al., 2019). This study aims to fill this gap by focusing on health workers in Purwodadi and understanding the dynamics of ethical leadership, intrinsic motivation, and health worker performance in local and specific contexts, and their impact on service quality.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory distinguishes the elements that shape job satisfaction into motivator and hygiene factors. Motivators—achievement, recognition, and responsibility—arise from the nature of the work itself and generate genuine satisfaction. Hygiene factors—organizational policy, supervision, and working conditions—concern the work environment; when poorly managed, they breed dissatisfaction but, when adequate, merely sustain neutrality. Herzberg argued that eliminating dissatisfaction does not automatically create motivation: a well-ordered workplace may calm discontent, yet only meaningful work nurtures commitment. Together, both factors determine performance, with the work environment serving as the essential condition while motivation remains the true

engine of excellence (Andjarwati, 2015). The preceding theoretical discussion provides the conceptual foundation for examining how ethical leadership influences employee performance through intrinsic motivation. Building on insights from self-determination theory, Herzberg's two-factor theory, and prior empirical findings, the following subsection develops the study's hypotheses. Each hypothesis is formulated to clarify the direct and indirect relationships among ethical leadership, intrinsic motivation, and employee performance within organizational settings that rely heavily on professional integrity and service quality.

The Ethical Leadership and Employee Performance

Ethical leadership emphasizes moral integrity, fairness, and accountability in organizational decision-making and interpersonal relations. Ethical leaders act as moral exemplars who promote justice, transparency, and concern for employee well-being (Alshammari et al., 2015). Such leadership cultivates a sense of meaning and responsibility among employees, reinforcing their commitment and proactive behavior (Shahzadi et al., 2014; Boxall et al., 2014). Trust is another key outcome, as leaders who communicate honestly and act with integrity foster confidence, participation, and innovation (Gidion Bernad Lubis & Ferryal Abadi, 2022; Krog & Govender, 2015). Empirical findings confirm a strong positive association between ethical leadership and employee performance (Shin et al., 2015; Maudul et al., 2018), particularly in settings where service quality depends on professionalism and ethical conduct (Franczukowska et al., 2021).
H1: Ethical leadership has a positive and significant influence on employee performance.

The Ethical Leadership and Intrinsic Motivation

Ethical leadership—anchored in integrity, fairness, and moral commitment—creates a psychologically safe and motivating work environment (Engelbrecht et al., 2017). By fostering trust and demonstrating genuine care, ethical leaders enhance employees' internal drive to find meaning and satisfaction in their tasks (Feng et al., 2018; Putra et al., 2017). Through value internalization and ethical modeling, leaders inspire deeper engagement and commitment (Feng et al., 2018), while cultivating an atmosphere that encourages creativity and openness without fear of reprisal (Tu et al., 2019). Prior research supports this linkage, revealing that ethical leadership significantly elevates intrinsic motivation (Shareef & Atan, 2019) and even enhances creativity through cognitive and motivational mechanisms (Yidong & Xinxin, 2013).
H2: Ethical leadership has a positive and significant influence on intrinsic motivation.

The Intrinsic Motivation and Employee Performance

Intrinsic motivation—defined as the internal desire to perform work for its inherent satisfaction—serves as a crucial driver of performance and creativity (Fishbach & Woolley, 2022). Employees with high intrinsic motivation demonstrate greater persistence, commitment, and innovation, which directly enhance performance (Fischer et al., 2019). This form of motivation fosters psychological resilience, enabling employees to manage pressure with optimism and focus (Fishbach & Woolley, 2022). Empirical evidence affirms its importance: intrinsic motivation strengthens employee engagement (Putra et al., 2017) and significantly improves performance outcomes (Prahiawan & Simbolon, 2014).

H3: Intrinsic motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

The Mediating Role of Intrinsic Motivation in the Relationship Between Ethical Leadership and Employee Performance

Ethical leadership builds trust, fairness, and respect—conditions that enhance employees' intrinsic motivation and shape their attitudes toward work (Hur et al., 2018; Yasir & Mohamad, 2016). Motivated employees internalize organizational values and align their goals with those of ethical leaders, resulting in stronger commitment, creativity, and performance (Feng et al., 2018; Gerhart & Fang, 2015). Empirical studies confirm that intrinsic motivation mediates this relationship: ethical leadership influences motivation, which subsequently drives performance (Shareef & Atan, 2019; Nugroho et al., 2022; Umrani & Afsar, 2019). When leaders act with integrity and genuine concern, employees reciprocate through higher effort and innovation (Kumar & Dhiman, 2020). As hypothesized, all paths are presented in Figure 1.

H4: Intrinsic motivation mediates the influence of ethical leadership on employee performance.

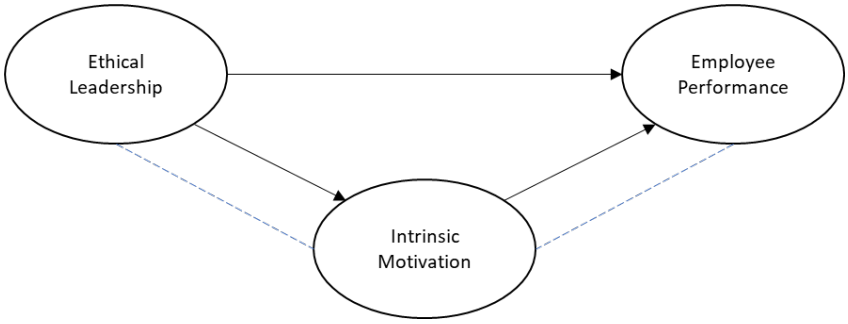

Figure 1. Research Model

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative survey design to test the relationships among ethical leadership, intrinsic motivation, and employee performance. The quantitative approach was chosen to allow statistical testing and ensure measurable, generalizable findings (Sekaran & Bougie, 2017). The research was conducted among health workers in Purwodadi, a regional center facing growing healthcare demand and workforce strain. This context was selected because frequent issues of high workload, limited managerial support, and uneven resource allocation make ethical leadership and intrinsic motivation vital for sustaining service quality.

The study focused on non-physician health workers, as they form the operational backbone of healthcare delivery and interact most closely with leadership structures. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling, limited to those with at least one year of work experience to ensure familiarity with their leaders' behavior. A total of 150 valid responses were analyzed, which meets the recommended range for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis (Tjahjono, 2021).

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed both online and in person. The instrument measured ethical leadership, intrinsic motivation, and employee performance, adapted from validated scales, using a five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Instrument testing

included Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to ensure each indicator accurately reflected its construct, retaining items with a Critical Ratio (CR) above 1.96 and a probability value below 0.05. Reliability was tested through construct reliability, with coefficients above 0.70 considered acceptable and 0.60–0.70 tolerated for exploratory constructs (Akbar et al., 2023).

Data analysis used AMOS software with descriptive statistics for respondent profiles and variable characteristics. SEM was applied to test hypotheses through model specification, diagram construction, parameter estimation, and model evaluation. Model fit was assessed using multiple indices—Chi-square (χ^2), RMSEA, GFI, AGFI, CMIN/DF, TLI, and CFI—following established SEM standards (Ghozali, 2017). Hypotheses were accepted when path coefficients met statistical significance and supported theoretical expectations.

RESULTS

The results of this study present the outcomes of data processing, instrument testing, and model analysis conducted to examine the relationships among ethical leadership, intrinsic motivation, and employee performance. All collected responses were entered into AMOS for analysis, where the software automatically converted the raw data into a covariance matrix for estimation. The Maximum Likelihood (ML) method was used because it provides efficient and unbiased parameter estimates when multivariate normality assumptions are met (Ghozali, 2017), as in Table 1.

Table 1. Normality Test

Variable	Min	Max	Skew	C.R.	Kurtosis	C.R.
MI1	3.000	5.000	-0.242	-1.079	-0.633	-1.409
MI2	3.000	5.000	-0.106	-0.471	-0.583	-1.297
MI3	3.000	5.000	-0.446	-1.988	-0.718	-1.599
MI4	2.000	5.000	-0.451	-2.011	0.552	1.230
MI5	2.000	5.000	-0.529	-2.355	0.318	0.707
MI6	1.000	5.000	-0.671	-2.990	0.403	0.898
KK6	3.000	5.000	-0.159	-0.707	-0.529	-1.178
KK5	3.000	5.000	-0.112	-0.500	-0.468	-1.041
KK4	3.000	5.000	-0.099	-0.439	-0.422	-0.939
KK3	3.000	5.000	-0.119	-0.529	-0.460	-1.024
KK2	2.000	5.000	-0.551	-2.452	0.116	0.259
KK1	2.000	5.000	-0.337	-1.500	-0.489	-1.089
KE10	2.000	5.000	-0.294	-1.309	0.076	0.169
KE9	2.000	5.000	-0.319	-1.421	-0.147	-0.328
KE8	2.000	5.000	-0.275	-1.227	0.654	1.457
KE7	2.000	5.000	-0.330	-1.469	0.245	0.547
KE6	2.000	5.000	-0.327	-1.458	-0.062	-0.139
KE5	2.000	5.000	-0.274	-1.219	-0.719	-1.602
KE4	2.000	5.000	-0.328	-1.459	0.168	0.375
KE3	2.000	5.000	-0.394	-1.752	-0.178	-0.397
KE2	3.000	5.000	-0.099	-0.439	-0.422	-0.939
KE1	3.000	5.000	0.009	0.041	-0.166	-0.369
Multivariate					105.009	17.625

Note: Normality is assessed at the 0.001 significance level. Data are considered normal when the C.R. values fall within ±2.58 (Ghozali, 2017).

This estimation technique also fits the study's sample size of 150 respondents, which satisfies the minimum requirement for SEM analysis. Prior to hypothesis testing, data normality was examined using the Critical Ratio (CR) values generated by AMOS. A dataset is considered normally distributed when CR values fall within ±2.58 at the 0.001 significance level. Any variable exceeding this range indicates univariate non-normality, while the last CR row reflects multivariate normality. Normality testing was conducted because SEM is highly sensitive to deviations from normal distribution, and confirming this assumption ensures that the model estimates remain valid and interpretable. The results indicated that the data were within acceptable normality limits, allowing further SEM analysis to proceed confidently.

Table 2 presents the results of the Bollen–Stine bootstrap analysis, applied to address the non-normality identified in Table 1. Since several indicators in the normality test exceeded the ±2.58 cutoff and the multivariate C.R. value reached 17.625, bootstrapping was performed to obtain more reliable model estimates. This procedure repeatedly resamples the original dataset to adjust standard errors and significance levels, ensuring that hypothesis testing remains valid despite violations of normality. The output of the Bollen–Stine bootstrap confirms the robustness of the structural equation model under non-normal data conditions, as summarized in the following table.

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The model fit better	472 bootstrap samples
It fit about equally well	0 bootstrap samples
It fit worse or failed to fit	28 bootstrap samples
Bollen-Stine bootstrap	p = ,058

Multivariate outliers were evaluated using the Mahalanobis Distance output in AMOS, which identifies observations that deviate significantly from the overall data distribution. The cut-off value was determined at a significance level of $p < 0.001$, with the degrees of freedom corresponding to the number of observed indicators. In this study, the number of observed variables was fifty, resulting in a critical chi-square value of 48.267. Any observation with a Mahalanobis d-squared value exceeding this threshold was classified as a multivariate outlier. The results presented in Table 3 show that one case, corresponding to observation number 63 with a Mahalanobis distance of 53.894, exceeded the cutoff value. This observation was identified as an outlier and subsequently removed, reducing the dataset from 119 to 118 valid responses for further analysis.

Following the first removal, a second round of evaluation was performed to ensure that no other extreme values remained. The results, summarized in Table 4, show that observation number 50 still exceeded the chi-square threshold, indicating another multivariate outlier. After removing this observation, the total valid dataset was reduced to 117 cases. A final assessment confirmed that no remaining observations had Mahalanobis d-squared values greater than 48.267, confirming that the data were free from multivariate outliers and suitable for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis. The outlier screening process is crucial for maintaining the accuracy and validity of SEM results, as outliers can distort parameter estimates and model fit. The refined dataset provided a stable basis for subsequent testing of the measurement and structural models.

Table 3 presents the results of the model identification output generated by AMOS. The output provides essential information on the structural equation model's specification, including the number of distinct sample moments, the parameters estimated, and the model's degrees of freedom. The degrees of freedom are obtained by subtracting the number of estimated parameters from the total number of distinct sample moments, indicating whether the model is statistically over-identified and thus testable. In this study, the model produced 253 distinct sample moments and 47 estimated parameters, resulting in 206 degrees of freedom, which confirms that the model is over-identified and appropriate for further estimation and hypothesis testing. The detailed output is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. AMOS Estimation

Number of distinct sample moments:	253
Number of distinct parameters to be estimated:	47
Degrees of freedom (253 - 47):	206

The results shown in Table 3 indicate that the model meets the requirements for further analysis. With 206 degrees of freedom, the model is over-identified, meaning there are more known data points than parameters to be estimated. This condition confirms that the model has sufficient information for parameter estimation and statistical testing, ensuring the reliability of the subsequent structural analysis. This study then proceeds with the goodness of fit findings, with moderate fit findings, as in Figure 2.

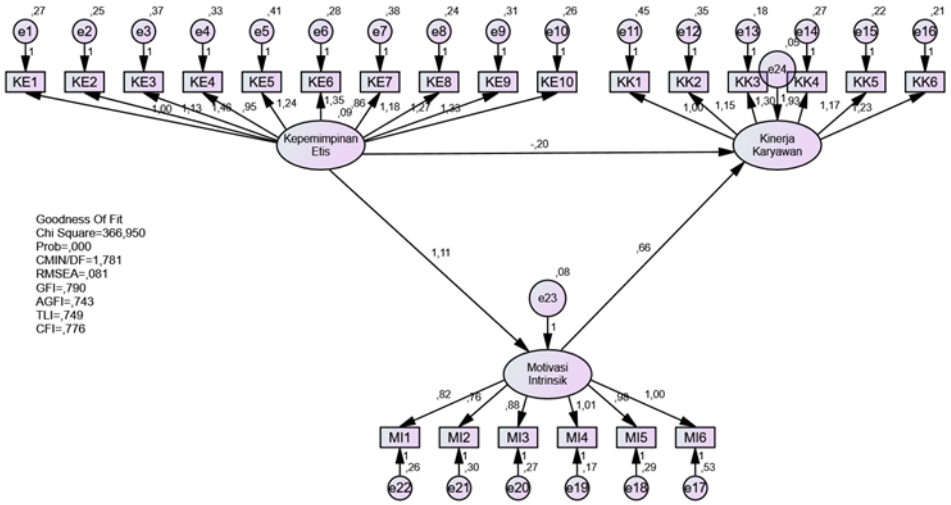

Figure 2. Goodness of Fit Measurement

The model illustrates the relationship among ethical leadership, intrinsic motivation, and employee performance, showing that ethical leadership directly and indirectly improves performance through motivation. All indicators load well on their respective constructs, confirming reliable measurement. The fit indices—CMIN/DF of 1.781 and RMSEA of 0.081—fall within acceptable limits, indicating that the model fits the data adequately. The results confirm that the proposed structural model is statistically sound and appropriate for further interpretation. Table 4 presents the results of hypothesis testing using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The analysis

evaluates the direct and indirect effects among ethical leadership, intrinsic motivation, and employee performance. Each path coefficient, along with its standard error (S.E.), critical ratio (C.R.), and significance level (p-value), determines whether the hypothesized relationships are supported.

Table 4. Hypothesis Findings

Path (Exogenous → Endogenous)	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	p-value	Standardized Estimate
Ethical Leadership → Intrinsic Motivation	1.111	0.308	3.606	0.000	0.745
Ethical Leadership → Employee Performance	-0.199	0.233	-0.854	0.393	-0.176
Intrinsic Motivation → Employee Performance	0.658	0.226	2.916	0.004	0.868
Ethical Leadership → Employee Performance (Indirect via Intrinsic Motivation)	–	–	–	–	0.647

Note: Significance determined at $p < 0.05$. The standardized estimates show the strength and direction of relationships, confirming that intrinsic motivation mediates the effect of ethical leadership on employee performance.

The results indicate that ethical leadership has a positive and significant effect on intrinsic motivation (Estimate = 1.111, $p < 0.001$), confirming that leaders with integrity and fairness enhance employees' internal drive. However, the direct path from ethical leadership to employee performance is negative and not significant ($p = 0.393$), suggesting that ethical leadership influences performance primarily through psychological mechanisms rather than direct behavioral control. Meanwhile, intrinsic motivation shows a positive and significant impact on employee performance (Estimate = 0.658, $p = 0.004$), validating its mediating role. These findings collectively strengthen the conclusion that intrinsic motivation serves as a key pathway linking ethical leadership to improved performance.

DISCUSSION

Ethical leadership emerged as a central determinant of employees' internal drive, shaping the psychological environment through moral integrity and fairness rather than control or coercion. Leaders who embody honesty, transparency, and empathy cultivate a sense of belonging that transcends transactional incentives, inspiring employees to find purpose and satisfaction in their work (Sharma et al., 2019; Ouakouak et al., 2020). This study supports the view that the ethical dimension of leadership functions as a motivational force, strengthening self-determination and fostering trust within the workplace. In line with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, such leadership operates as a motivator factor—stimulating intrinsic satisfaction through recognition and responsibility (Andjarwati, 2015)—and contrasts sharply with mere hygiene interventions that only prevent dissatisfaction. The data suggest that the leader's moral example establishes both emotional safety and cognitive clarity, enabling employees to interpret their roles as meaningful contributions rather than imposed obligations.

Intrinsic motivation in turn proved to be a crucial engine of sustained performance. Employees driven by internal satisfaction display creativity, persistence, and resilience—qualities indispensable to service-oriented professions such as healthcare (Al Harbi et al., 2019; Malek et al., 2020). Theoretically, this finding affirms Deci and Ryan's proposition that intrinsic motivation produces self-regulated behavior and enduring commitment. It also parallels Herzberg's view that genuine satisfaction stems from achievement and recognition rather than external rewards. Prior work by Rybnicek et al. (2019) emphasizes that such motivation nurtures

psychological endurance, especially under pressure, leading to consistency and compassion in professional service. The convergence of these theories within this study indicates that intrinsic motivation is not simply an individual trait but a relational and cultural phenomenon—sustained when leaders affirm employees' moral worth and autonomy.

The absence of a direct link between ethical leadership and performance, however, introduces a necessary complexity to the discussion. Ethical conduct alone, while vital for moral legitimacy, may not immediately translate into measurable productivity (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020; Sarwar et al., 2020). Leadership ethics must operate within enabling systems that include organizational support, fair workload distribution, and adequate resources. Without these, even principled leaders may find their influence diluted by structural inefficiencies. Yet, to interpret this as evidence of ethical leadership's weakness would be misguided. Rather, its potency lies in the indirect pathways it activates—enhancing intrinsic motivation, shaping trust, and elevating shared purpose (Dey et al., 2022). The interplay between ethical culture and motivational psychology thus redefines performance not as output maximization but as the moral and psychological alignment of people with organizational goals.

The mediation of intrinsic motivation strengthens the theoretical coherence of these findings. Ethical leadership stimulates motivation through fairness, empowerment, and respect, and motivated employees convert that sense of meaning into tangible performance outcomes (Rianasta & Yuniawan, 2023; Rani et al., 2021). This synergy underscores the humanistic logic of leadership: performance excellence arises not from surveillance or extrinsic pressure but from inner conviction cultivated by ethical stewardship. The results harmonize with contemporary leadership scholarship that privileges authenticity, psychological empowerment, and moral agency over transactional authority. For healthcare organizations, the implication is profound—leadership development should emphasize ethical sensitivity and the capacity to elicit intrinsic motivation, not merely procedural compliance. In contexts marked by emotional strain and public accountability, the fusion of ethical leadership and intrinsic motivation provides a resilient framework for sustaining both professional integrity and organizational effectiveness.

FURTHER STUDY

This study reinforces the theoretical and empirical understanding that ethical leadership operates not as a direct engine of performance but as a catalyst that activates employees' intrinsic motivation—the internal psychological mechanism through which meaningful and sustainable performance arises. Ethical leadership cultivates trust, fairness, and moral clarity, which in turn nurture a sense of purpose and self-determination among employees. The findings demonstrate that when leadership behavior embodies integrity and respect, employees respond with genuine motivation and commitment, translating internal satisfaction into improved performance outcomes. Although the direct path between ethical leadership and performance proved insignificant, the mediating role of intrinsic motivation revealed a more sophisticated causal structure that better reflects human behavior in organizations. This suggests that the influence of leadership on performance is not mechanical but moral and psychological. Leaders shape the inner climate of work;

their ethics set the tone for motivation, engagement, and ultimately the quality of organizational service.

The study, however, remains limited by its focus on a single occupational group and its reliance on self-reported measures. Future research should test the model across multiple sectors and employ longitudinal or mixed-method designs to observe how ethical climates evolve and influence motivation over time. Expanding the framework to include variables such as psychological empowerment, organizational justice, or job satisfaction could refine the explanatory power of the model. Practically, the implications are direct and urgent: organizations must invest in ethical leadership development that emphasizes fairness, transparency, and care as strategic assets rather than moral adornments. Simultaneously, human resource systems should design motivational architectures—recognition programs, autonomy-supportive policies, and mentorship models—that transform ethical intention into daily engagement. In essence, performance improvement in contemporary organizations requires not more control, but more conscience: a leadership that inspires employees to work not only efficiently but meaningfully.

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