

PATERNALISTIC LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF INNOVATIVE WORK BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT: This study investigates employee performance among police officers. It scrutinizes the influence of paternalistic leadership on employee performance and assesses the mediating role of innovative work behavior. A quantitative design was implemented, and data were collected employing a questionnaire circulated to 180 employees. Then, the accumulated data was investigated using the Smart PLS 4. The study highlights that paternalistic leadership affects employee performance. Innovative work behavior mediates the paternalistic leadership and employee performance. The study expands the existing literature concerning the role of paternalistic leadership and innovative work behavior in reinforcing employee performance. This type of study is infrequently due to its significant focus on performance. Thus, innovative work behavior can be maintained which has an impact on employee performance. This research was conducted at a police institution. Further developments are needed so that they can be applied to various sectors.

Keywords: Paternalistic Leadership; Innovative Work Behavior; Performance; Police Officer; Indonesia

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INTRODUCTION

Enhancing police performance is a key priority for law enforcement agencies globally, as it significantly affects community safety and confidence in policing. Leadership style is a critical factor in determining police effectiveness, shaping officer motivation, job satisfaction, and operational success. Numerous studies emphasize the importance of strong leadership in driving performance improvements through different strategies. Recent research explores how police organizations adapt through innovative methods, innovative structures, and innovative processes that foster progress and reform (Alosani, Yusoff, and Al-Dhaafri 2020; Ayu et al. 2018; Farr-wharton, Brunetto, and Xerri 2021).

Despite the growing body of research on leadership and employee performance, limited attention has been given to paternalistic leadership within police organizations, particularly in developing countries such as Indonesia. Most previous studies have focused on private-sector organizations or general public institutions, leaving the unique organizational dynamics of police institutions underexplored (Gyamerah et al., 2022; Jia et al., 2026). Police organizations are characterized by hierarchical structures, high power distance, strict discipline, and strong collectivist values, making paternalistic leadership particularly relevant in this context. Understanding how paternalistic leadership influences police officer performance is therefore important, especially through mechanisms that encourage innovative work behavior in highly structured institutions.

Paternalistic leadership, defined by a blend of benevolent, authoritarian, and moral elements, has been shown to significantly affect employee performance in different industries. This leadership approach is particularly prevalent in collectivist cultures, fostering a supportive atmosphere that enhances employee engagement and productivity. Studies indicate that paternalistic leadership improves workforce performance through multiple pathways. For example, (Chen et al. 2023) highlight that psychological capital is the link between paternalistic leadership and employee engagement in the pharmaceutical distribution industry. The study shows that benevolent leadership directly increases employee engagement, signaling that the attention given by paternalistic leaders can lead to better performance. These findings are in line with (Bektaş 2021) which reported that paternalistic leadership behavior is associated with increased organizational trust, which in turn improves job satisfaction and overall employee performance.

Moreover, while paternalistic leadership can produce positive results, it is not without its drawbacks. Concerns have been raised regarding potential negative aspects, such as nepotism and discrimination, which can arise when leaders prioritize personal relationships over merit-based evaluations (Erden and Otken 2019). Therefore, while paternalistic leadership can be effective in fostering a supportive work environment, it is important for leaders to balance their authoritative roles with ethical and fair considerations to avoid potential pitfalls. Police organizations have adopted innovations to improve the services provided to the community and their users to improve their quality of life. Public organizations must continue to innovate to improve performance. Innovative work behavior (IWB) is seen as an important tool that will lead organizations to achieve competitive advantage

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Paternalistic Leadership

Paternalistic leadership style is a leadership that "combines strong discipline and authority with benevolent and moral integrity" (Dedahanov, Bozorov, and Sung 2019). Authoritarianism refers to the control and decision-making authority of leaders, Benevolence emphasizes attention and support for employees, and morality involves ethical considerations in leadership practices (Cheng et al. 2004; Duan et al. 2023). In Indonesia, the principle of paternalistic leadership can be seen from the national culture, namely the philosophy of "consensus deliberation" which has been embedded in Indonesian society since childhood, making kinship a culture that is embedded in every Indonesian individual. Studies in different countries view the paternalistic leadership styles differently. Studies from Asia argue that paternalism is a father-like leadership style that includes authority with consideration and concern (Karakitapoglu-Aygun, Gumusluoglu, and Scandura

2020). Research from India, Pakistan, and Turkey shows that paternalism does not mean "authoritarianism" but rather a form of leadership that shows care and protection (Aycan 2006). Then, Irawanto and Ramsey (2011) proposed a leadership model rooted in local culture that if applied properly will lead to organizational effectiveness, namely the Paternalistic leadership model.

Research shows that paternalistic leadership can foster a supportive organizational environment, increasing employee commitment and performance (Irawanto and Novianti 2022; Ugurluoglu et al. 2018). For example, studies have shown that leaders who exhibit paternalistic behavior can positively influence employee voice behavior, which refers to employees' willingness to express their opinions and suggestions (Chen 2017; Jia et al. 2020). This is especially important in settings where open communication is essential to the success of the organization. Additionally, the benevolent aspect of paternalistic leadership encourages loyalty and a sense of belonging among employees, which can lead to improved job performance and reduced turnover intentions (Saygili, Özer, and Karakaya 2020).

However, the effectiveness of paternalistic leadership can vary significantly across cultural contexts. In Western societies, paternalistic leadership is often seen as less advantageous than in eastern cultures, where it is more closely aligned with traditional values and social norms (Nal and Tarim 2021; Sürücü, Yıldız, and Sağbaş 2024). For example, in countries such as Turkey and China, paternalistic leadership is seen as a desirable trait that promotes organizational harmony and employee engagement (Abas, Sawitri, and Puspawati 2019; Chen and Lin 2023; Irawanto 2012). In contrast, in a more individualistic culture, such a leadership style may be perceived as overcontrolling or restraining employee autonomy (Irawanto, Ramsey, and Ryan 2011; Januar and Santoso 2022).

H1: Paternalistic leadership has a significant positive effect on performance.

Innovative Work Behavior

Innovative work behavior refers to the intentional development, enhancement, and execution of new ideas within an individual's role, team, or organization with the goal of improving performance (West & Farr, 1990). It is closely linked to the creativity of organizational members, which includes the generation of novel ideas that positively impact processes and procedures, as well as the execution of these creative concepts (Anderson & West, 1998).

Innovative work behavior involves proactively suggesting constructive ideas for improving performance rather than merely offering criticism, and supporting changes that serve long-term interests. In today's competitive and technologically driven environment, innovation plays a crucial role. Paternalistic leadership may stimulate innovative work behavior by creating psychological safety, trust, and emotional support among employees (Dedahanov et al., 2019). When leaders demonstrate benevolence and moral integrity, employees tend to feel valued and protected, which increases their willingness to express new ideas and engage in innovative activities. In highly disciplined organizations such as police institutions, psychological safety becomes particularly important because employees often operate within rigid hierarchical structures. Therefore, paternalistic leadership can reduce fear of failure and encourage officers to contribute innovative solutions to organizational challenges. The innovation driven by members is considered one of the best ways to foster both innovation and success within an organization. Given the importance of knowledge-based work, the role of leadership has been increasingly emphasized in motivating members to innovate, attracting attention from both researchers and practitioners.

H2: Paternalistic leadership has a significant positive effect on Innovative Work Behavior.

Employee Performance

Performance refers to the outcome of work in terms of both quality and quantity that members achieve while fulfilling their responsibilities (Damayanti et al., 2018). It represents a state of overall change over a specific period, influenced by the company's operational activities in utilizing available resources (Hustia, 2020). According to Fachreza et al. (2018), member performance is the result of achievements made by individuals or groups in an organization, aimed at accomplishing organizational goals in line with their responsibilities and authorities.

Mangkunegara (2017) defines performance as the quality and quantity of work outcomes achieved by an employee in performing tasks in accordance with assigned responsibilities.

Simanjuntak (2015) suggests that performance is the level of achievement attained from completing certain tasks. Prabu (2017) defines employee performance as the work results—measured in both quality and quantity—that individuals achieve within a given period while fulfilling their job responsibilities. In relation to the organizational sector, Yasa (2017) points out that the relationship between various dimensions of paternalistic leadership is more prominent in law enforcement employees, followed by those in hospitality and manufacturing sectors (Bedi, 2020). It is possible that leaders with an authoritarian yet principled and caring approach are more effective in law enforcement, where they are dedicated to serving and protecting others. At the same time, the positive emotional connection and sense of security fostered by a paternalistic leader's caring attitude can help activate the psychological resources of employees, leading to improved innovative output. Furthermore, paternalistic leadership supports the adaptation and idea-sharing process within a safe and secure work environment, which in turn can enhance employee performance.

H3: Innovative work behavior has a significant positive effect on performance.

Moussa et al. (2018) reported that the culture of innovation within agencies faces numerous challenges. Many bureaucratic institutions rely on outdated organizational structures that focus on one-way communication, control, and transactions, instead of fostering environments that promote creativity and communication among all members. As a result, this bureaucratic model hinders the success of innovative development. According to De Jong and Kemp (2003), innovative behavior refers to actions by individuals that benefit the company, where employees introduce and implement new ideas to provide advantages for the organization. Performance, on the other hand, is the outcome of the quality and quantity of work carried out by members while fulfilling their responsibilities (Damayanti et al., 2018).

Paternalistic leadership is characterized by a leader who adopts a fatherly approach, aiming to protect, nurture, and assist members of the organization they lead. This type of leadership is often seen in traditional societies, particularly in agrarian communities. The appeal of paternalistic leaders in these settings is influenced by strong primordial ties, extensive family networks, communal lifestyles, the deep influence of customs, and the close personal relationships between community members. According to Farh and Cheng (2000), the positive traits of paternalistic leadership encourage employees to contribute their ideas in decision-making processes and support innovation. Furthermore, the caring attitude of a paternalistic leader fosters positive emotions and a sense of security among employees, which can stimulate their psychological resources, resulting in improved innovative outcomes. All paths are also presented in Figure 1.

H4: Innovative work behaviors mediate paternalistic leadership against innovative work behaviors.

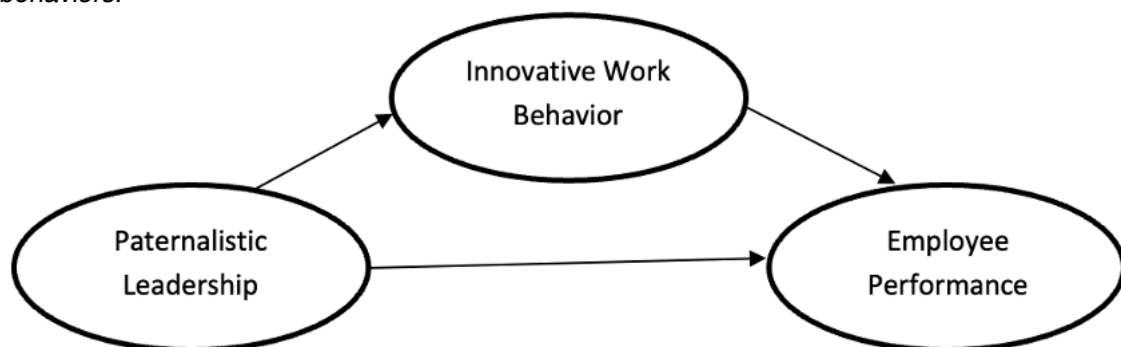


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative explanatory design to examine the causal relationship between paternalistic leadership, innovative work behavior, and employee performance among police officers. The explanatory approach was selected because this study tested predetermined

hypotheses and clarified how paternalistic leadership contributes to employee performance, both directly and indirectly through innovative work behavior. The research model placed paternalistic leadership as the independent variable, innovative work behavior as the mediating variable, and employee performance as the dependent variable. This design was appropriate because the study did not only describe leadership practices in a police institution, but also tested whether leadership behavior could strengthen performance through employees' willingness to generate, promote, and implement new ideas within a disciplined organizational setting. The police institution context was relevant because police organizations operate within hierarchical, rule-based, and collectivist structures, making paternalistic leadership a meaningful leadership pattern to examine.

The study was conducted at the Malang City Police. The population consisted of police employees who had direct experience working under formal leadership structures in the institution. A purposive sampling technique was applied because the respondents needed to meet specific criteria aligned with the research objective. The main criterion was that respondents had worked or interacted with their direct leaders for at least one year. This criterion ensured that respondents had sufficient experience to evaluate the leadership style of their superiors, their own innovative work behavior, and their performance in the organization. Primary data were collected from 180 respondents through a structured questionnaire with the detail as in Table 1. The questionnaire method was considered suitable because the constructs in this study involved perceptions, attitudes, and behavioral tendencies that could be captured directly from the respondents. Data collection was administered through an online survey to facilitate access to respondents and improve response efficiency within the institutional setting.

Table 1. Respondent Demographics

Demographic variable	Category	Frequency	(%)
Gender	Male	72	90
	Female	8	10
Age	<20th	4	5
	21-25	17	21
	26-30	3	4
	31-35	4	5
	36-40	10	13
	41-45	14	18
	46-50	13	16
	>50	15	19
Experience	1-5	21	26
	6-10	2	3
	11-15	6	8
	>15	51	64

The research instrument was designed to measure three main constructs: paternalistic leadership, innovative work behavior, and employee performance. Paternalistic leadership referred to a leadership style that combines authority, benevolence, and moral integrity. Innovative work behavior referred to employees' intentional efforts to introduce, develop, and implement new ideas in their work roles. Employee performance referred to the quality and quantity of work outcomes achieved by employees in fulfilling their assigned responsibilities. The questionnaire items were arranged to reflect these conceptual definitions and to support hypothesis testing in the structural model. Before analysis, the collected responses were screened to ensure that the data were complete and usable. The final dataset consisted of 80 valid responses from police employees.

Data were analyzed using SmartPLS 4 with the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling approach. PLS-SEM was selected because the study involved a predictive model with a mediating relationship and a relatively limited sample size. The analysis was conducted in two main stages. First, the measurement model was evaluated to assess the adequacy of the constructs and indicators. This stage examined indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Second, the structural model was tested to evaluate the hypothesized relationships among the variables. This stage assessed the direct effect of

paternalistic leadership on employee performance, the direct effect of paternalistic leadership on innovative work behavior, the direct effect of innovative work behavior on employee performance, and the mediating role of innovative work behavior in the relationship between paternalistic leadership and employee performance. Bootstrapping was used to determine the significance of the path coefficients and the indirect effect. This analytical procedure allowed the study to determine whether paternalistic leadership improves police officer performance directly or whether its influence operates through the development of innovative work behavior.

RESULTS

We analyzed the data using partial least squares - structural equality modeling (PLS-SEM) (Henseler et al., 2015) using the most widely used two step approach. First, under the assessment of the measurement model, we determine the reliability of the indicator and maintain items with a payload of 0.50 or more (Hair, 2021.). We checked the validity of the convergence by calculating the average variance extracted (AVE) with which we ensured that the AVE score for each latent variable was 0.50 or more (Chin, 2010). And finally, we checked the reliability of the internal consistency by checking the reliability of the composite (threshold >0.70) and Cronbach Alpha (threshold >0.70) and found that all values were below the threshold above (see Table 2 for more details).

Table 2. Convergnace Validity

Constructs	Items	Loading	alpha	CR	AVE
Paternalistic Leadership	PL1	0.833	0.970	0.972	0.648
	PL2	0.815			
	PL3	0.859			
	PL4	0.867			
	PL5	0.800			
	PL6	0.750			
	PL7	0.833			
	PL8	0.732			
	PL9	0.759			
	PL10	0.806			
	PL11	0.815			
	PL12	0.808			
	PL13	0.829			
	PL14	0.740			
	PL15	0.833			
	PL16	0.782			
	PL17	0.801			
	PL18	0.871			
	PL19	0.741			
Innovative Work Behavior	IWB1	0.878	0.977	0.979	0.846
	IWB2	0.910			
	IWB3	0.931			
	IWB4	0.937			
	IWB5	0.941			
	IWB6	0.85			
	IWB7	0.943			
	IWB8	0.946			
	IWB9	0.940			
Employee Performance	EP1	0.944	0.978	0.978	0.90
	EP2	0.925			
	EP3	0.946			
	EP4	0.959			
	EP5	0.962			
	EP6	0.957			

The results of the validity of our discrimination can be accepted based on the next validity test is the Fornell-Larcker Criterion which shows the validity of a variable when a variable has a greater correlation compared to the correlation between different variables (see Table 3). The outer model is tested to verify the validity and reliability of the measurement items, which includes assessing convergent validity and construct reliability. Convergent validity was assessed to examine the strength of association between questionnaire items and their corresponding latent variables. An item is considered valid if its outer loading coefficient (loading factor) exceeds the threshold of 0.5. Composite reliability is an indicator to measure a construct based on the coefficient of latent variables. Composite reliability was evaluated by examining internal consistency and Cronbach's alpha. A variable is said to be reliable if Cronbach's alpha is equal to or greater than 0.70.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity

Constructs	Employee Performance	Innovative Work Behavior	Paternalistic Leadership
Employee Performance	0.960		
Innovative Work Behavior	0.870	0.953	
Paternalistic Leadership	0.887	0.857	0.797

Inner Model

The inner model illustrates the connections between latent variables according to the underlying theoretical framework. The assessment was conducted with the result as in Table 4.

Table 4. Coefficient Determination

H	Path	Path Coefficient	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	Paternalistic Leadership → Employee Performance	0.323	4.234	0.000	Significant
H2	Paternalistic Leadership → Innovative Work Behavior	0.799	30.788	0.000	Significant
H3	Innovative Work Behavior → Employee Performance	0.598	8.214	0.000	Significant
H4	Paternalistic Leadership → Innovative Work Behavior	0.478	8.162	0.000	Significant
R ²	Employee Performance	0.770	—	—	Strong explanatory power
R ²	Innovative Work Behavior	0.639	—	—	Moderate to strong explanatory power

Based on the results of the model fit test using the determination coefficient (R-square) presented in Table 9, the variables of Innovative Work Behavior and Employee Performance have values of 0.639 and 0.770, respectively, which can be explained as follows: 1) The R-square for Innovative Work Behavior is 0.639, indicating that 63.9% of the variation in Innovative Work Behavior is explained by the Paternalistic Leadership variable, while the remaining 36.1% is influenced by other factors. Therefore, Paternalistic Leadership plays a significant role, contributing 63.9% to the improvement of Innovative Work Behavior. 2) The R-square for Employee Performance is 0.770, meaning that 77% of Employee Performance is explained by the Paternalistic Leadership variables, with the remaining 23% attributed to other factors. Thus, Paternalistic Leadership is highly influential, contributing 77% to enhancing Employee Performance.

DISCUSSION

This study highlights that when paternalistic leadership is effectively implemented across various organizational sectors, it leads to improved performance. The results indicate that paternalistic leadership enhances both employee task performance and contextual performance. Attributes such as benevolence, moral integrity, and assertiveness are key in task completion. Paternalistic leadership enables employees to view their leaders as role models, meaning that a caring and considerate leadership style is often mirrored in interactions with colleagues, fostering higher levels of contextual performance. Trust in leadership plays a significant role in explaining how paternalistic leadership behavior influences employee contextual performance. Consistent with affective event theory, performance is seen as a positive behavior shaped by positive stimuli from paternalistic leadership, which in turn stems from pre-existing beliefs and attitudes.

Previous studies and meta-analytical findings have consistently shown that paternalistic leadership positively influences employee attitudes and innovative outcomes. For example, Pellegrini and Scandura (2008) argued that paternalistic leadership strengthens trust and loyalty, which subsequently improves employee engagement and performance. More recent studies also suggest that paternalistic leadership promotes innovation through supportive leader-member relationships and psychological empowerment (Chen et al., 2024). These findings support the assumption that paternalistic leadership can enhance innovative work behavior and employee performance within police institutions.

The findings of this study are generally consistent with previous studies conducted in collectivist and high-power-distance cultures, where paternalistic leadership tends to positively influence employee behavior and performance. However, studies conducted in more individualistic or non-paramilitary settings have produced mixed findings. For example, Farh et al. (2022) and Park and Kim (2023) found that excessive paternalistic control may reduce employee autonomy and creativity in Western organizational contexts. These differences suggest that cultural values and organizational structures play an important role in shaping the effectiveness of paternalistic leadership.

This study contributes to both theoretical and practical literature by exploring how paternalistic leadership and innovative work behavior impact police organizational performance. Theoretically, the study establishes the relevance of this theory by explaining the interaction between paternalistic leadership, innovative work behavior, and organizational performance in a unified model. It also offers a fresh perspective in research on organizational performance predictors within the context of police institutions. Paternalistic leadership not only improves performance directly but also enhances innovative behavior, which in turn strengthens employee confidence in their leaders (Dedahanov et al., 2019). Furthermore, fostering employee innovative behavior can boost employees' confidence to take on tasks beyond their core duties. We suggest that the relationship between paternalistic leadership and creativity is nurtured by leadership behaviors, serving as an initial step toward fostering innovative actions. When employees are encouraged to voice their opinions on work-related matters, they feel heard and valued by the organization. Over time, by exploring new technologies, processes, products, and services, such individuals are more likely to succeed. Leaders aiming to inspire innovative behavior in employees should avoid authoritarian leadership styles. This can be achieved by refraining from autocratic decision-making and actively soliciting individual ideas and feedback, which enhances employees' sense of importance and their engagement with the organization (Zhang et al., 2015).

CONCLUSION AND FURTHER STUDY

Understanding the impact of paternalistic leadership and innovative work behaviors on police performance offers valuable insights for researchers. While police agencies have often been overlooked in studies on these topics, they are, in fact, crucial to such institutions. Rapid changes place immense pressure on organizational resources and systems, shaping the behavior of both leaders and employees. Exploring the connection between these areas can generate new knowledge to enhance policing efforts. Additionally, this study aims to address a gap in existing research by analyzing this relationship specifically within police organizations. The findings could benefit not only law enforcement leaders but also practitioners and decision-makers across public and private sectors. A key limitation, however, is the reliance on perceptual data, which may not

always align with objective reality. Police organizations operate within a high-power-distance culture, emphasizing strict hierarchies, a structure that aligns with their mission to protect the public while maintaining strong discipline.

This study provides valuable insights for police agency leaders on optimizing organizational resources and enhancing performance. Since innovation plays a vital role in driving performance and maintaining a competitive edge, fostering innovative work behaviors should be a priority. Additionally, management should recognize the impact of paternalistic leadership, as it can significantly improve organizational effectiveness. For such a culture to thrive, these leadership practices must be actively implemented. Decision-makers in police institutions must understand how paternalistic and behavioral leadership strategies can add value to their organizations. The empirical findings from this research can serve as a catalyst for police agency leaders to refine their management approaches.

ETHICAL DISCLOSURE

All participants provided written informed consent prior to participation. They were informed about the study's purpose, their voluntary participation, the right to withdraw at any time, and the confidentiality of their responses.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

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