

# **The relationship between the ethical leadership of school principals and School culture with the innovative work behavior of teachers with mediating role of psychological safety and the moderator of proactive personality**

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## **Abstract**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this research was to investigate the causal relationship between the ethical leadership of school principals and school culture with innovative work behaviors with the mediating role of psychological security and moderating proactive personality in elementary school teachers of Khorram Abad city.

**Method:** This research was applied in terms of purpose and descriptive-correlation in terms of method. The statistical population of the research included all the teachers working in primary education in districts one and two of Khorramabad city in the academic year of 1402-1403. In this research, the sample size was estimated to be 300 people according to the free parameters, who were selected based on the multi-stage random sampling method. In order to collect data, a standard questionnaire was used. In addition to descriptive indices, SPSS version 21 software and structural equation analysis in Amos software were used for data analysis.

**Findings:** Findings show that the relationship between the ethical leadership style of managers and innovative work behaviors of teachers, the relationship between school culture and innovative work behaviors of teachers, the relationship between ethical leadership of managers and psychological security of teachers, the relationship between school culture and psychological security of teachers and the relationship between psychological security and innovative work behaviors of teachers are positive and meaningful. Also, the relationship between the ethical leadership style of managers and the innovative work behaviors of teachers with the mediation of psychological security and the relationship between school culture and the innovative work behaviors of teachers with the mediation of psychological security is also positive and significant. Also, proactive personality plays a moderating role in the relationship between ethical leadership style of managers and innovative work

behaviors of teachers and the relationship between school culture and innovative work behaviors of teachers.

**Conclusion:** Using the appropriate leadership style, such as ethical leadership and creating strong morale in schools, makes employees find common ideas about psychological safety in the workplace, and relying on this positive and constructive atmosphere in the organization without fear of possible mistakes of ideas and express their opinions.

**Keywords:** innovative work behaviors, ethical leadership style, school culture, psychological safety, proactive personality, elementary school teachers

## **Introduction**

One of the factors that makes teachers more effective in the education process is their creativity, or innovative work behavior in the workplace (Ta et al., 2019). Unless teachers are creative and innovative, it is difficult to imagine innovative teaching in this field, and innovative teachers play an important role in creating an innovative workforce for the competitiveness of national economic growth (Huang et al., 2019). Several factors are involved in strengthening or weakening innovation among teachers, the most important of which is the ethical leadership style (Farooqhi-Soha, 2019). Ethical leadership can be described as an effort to promote justice, show respect for the personal characteristics of others, and a combination of the abilities of honesty, reliability, trust, intimacy, mutual relations, democratic decision-making, and support for participation. Ethical leadership includes the ethical values of the leader and the practice of these values (Yilmaz, 2010). Another variable related to innovative work behaviors of teachers and studied in the present study is school culture. School culture consists of the values, beliefs, and norms governing the school environment. A set of mental perceptions that maintain, support, or prohibit teachers' views on reality, teaching, various ideas, and initiatives is called school culture. Culture often appears through symbols and gives the organization an identity (Arleesting, 2008). In the present study, the psychological safety construct mediated the relationships between ethical leadership, school culture, and employees' innovative behavior. Leaders can play a key role in employees' psychological safety (Wang et al., 2018). Psychological safety refers to the feeling that an individual is able to demonstrate and apply their abilities without fear of negative consequences for their image, status, or career (Zhang and Bartol, 2010). Another factor affecting teachers' innovation in the workplace is the dynamic personality construct, which appeared as a moderating variable in this study. Dynamic personality is important for improving creativity and providing useful ideas (Song and Li, 2020). Dynamic personality plays a pivotal role in motivating employees in their workplace.

## **Materials and Methods**

The present study is an applied study in terms of purpose and is classified as a descriptive survey study. In terms of philosophy, this study is a deductive study based on the positivist paradigm. In terms of time index, this study is a cross-sectional study. The data collection tool in the present study was a standard questionnaire; the

statistical population of the present study is all teachers working in education in districts one and two of Khorramabad city in the academic year 1402-1403, which is estimated to be 1450 people based on the announcement of the employment offices of these districts. In this study, the sample size was estimated based on the free parameters. Considering that the number of free parameters in the present study is 30, therefore, considering each parameter as 10 people, the sample size was estimated to be 300 people. Also, the sample was selected using a multi-stage random sampling method. In the first stage, Khorramabad city was divided into regions 1 and 2, then in the next stage, each region was divided into four regions: North, East, West, and South. Then, in the next stage, several schools were selected from each region, and finally several teachers were selected from each school. Also, in this study, the structural equation modeling technique and Amos software were used to examine the hypotheses and test the model.

### **Results and Discussion**

In the present study, confirmatory factor analysis was used to answer the questions. Confirmatory factor analysis was performed using Amos18 software. Thus, in confirmatory factor analysis, the researcher seeks to examine the validity and reliability of the factor structure of a set of observed variables (questions) and latent constructs (factors). In fact, the results of confirmatory factor analysis show a significant relationship between the manifest variables (questions) and latent constructs. Therefore, in general, the relationship between the latent variables (ethical leadership, school culture, innovative work behaviors, psychological safety, and dynamic personality) and the manifest variables (collaborative leadership, teacher participation, professional development, unity of purpose, peer support, participation in learning, idea discovery, idea generation, idea defense, idea implementation) is shown in the table.

**Table 1. Results of confirmatory factor analysis**

<b>Latent variable</b>	<b>Manifest variable</b>	<b>Standardized factor loading</b>
<b>Ethical leadership</b>	Q1	0.65
	Q2	0.72
	Q3	0.53
	Q4	0.62
	Q5	0.71
	Q6	0.79
	Q7	0.71
	Q8	0.77
	Q9	0.82

	Q10	0.67
<b>School culture</b>	Collaborative Leadership	0.81
	Teacher Engagement	0.77
	Professional Development	0.75
	Unity of Purpose	0.76
	Peer Support	0.77
	Participation in Learning	0.69
<b>Innovative work behavior</b>	Idea Discovery	0.85
	Idea Generation	0.85
	Idea Defense	0.76
	Idea Implementation	0.74
<b>psychological Safty</b>	Q1	0.77
	Q2	0.67
	Q3	0.73
	Q4	0.83
	Q5	0.81
<b>Proactive Personality</b>	Q1	0.60
	Q2	0.56
	Q3	0.72
	Q4	0.95
	Q5	0.78

After reviewing and confirming the measurement patterns, two partial indicators of the critical value CR and P have been used to test the significance of the research hypotheses. The critical value based on the significance level of 0.05 should be greater than 1.96, for this reason, the parameter value less than this is not considered important in the model, also values less than 0.05 for the P value indicate a significant difference between the calculated value for the regression weights and the value of zero at the 0.95 level. Therefore, structural equations and Amos18 software have been used to test the hypotheses of the present study.

**Table 2. Summary of research hypothesis testing**

Hypothesis	Regression coefficient	Critical value	Result
There is a relationship between the ethical leadership of principals and the innovative work behaviors of elementary school teachers in Khorramabad city.	0.18	2.190	Disapproval
There is a relationship between school culture and innovative work behaviors of elementary school teachers in Khorramabad city.	0.51	3.002	Confirmation
There is a relationship between the ethical leadership of principals and the psychological safety of elementary school teachers in Khorramabad city.	0.34	4.823	Confirmation
There is a relationship between school culture and psychological safety of elementary school teachers in Khorramabad city.	0.60	8.402	Confirmation
There is a relationship between psychological safety and innovative work behaviors of elementary school teachers in Khorramabad city.	0.96	6.824	Confirmation
There is a relationship between principals' ethical leadership style and teachers' innovative work behaviors mediated by psychological safety.	$0.36*0.96=0.32$	4.034	Confirmation
There is a relationship between school culture and teachers' innovative work behaviors mediated by psychological safety.	$0.60*0.96=0.57$	4.571	Confirmation
There is a relationship between principals' ethical leadership style and teachers' innovative work behaviors with the moderating role of proactive personality.	0.07	2.227	Disapproval
There is a relationship between school culture and teachers' innovative work behaviors with the moderating role of proactive personality.	0.15	2.867	Disapproval

### Conclusions

One of the factors that makes teachers more effective in the education process is their creativity, or innovative work behavior in the workplace. Until teachers are creative and innovative, it is difficult to imagine innovative teaching in this field, and innovative teachers play an important role in creating an innovative workforce for the competitiveness of national economic growth. The existence of vitality and innovative behavior is of particular importance for educational organizations because, on the one hand, all the main activities of these organizations are carried out by human resources, and on the other hand, all individuals are associated with this organization throughout their lives; therefore, one of the most important factors in the long-term success and effectiveness of these organizations is the existence of a suitable atmosphere for innovation and the expression of innovative ideas for teachers. Accordingly, the present study was conducted with the aim of "investigating the

causal relationship between the ethical leadership of school principals, school culture, and innovative work behaviors of elementary school teachers in Khorramabad city with the mediating role of psychological safety and the moderating role of proactive personality." For this purpose, 9 hypotheses were proposed, and after analyzing the data, all 9 hypotheses were confirmed.

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## Conflict of Interest

The authors acknowledge that there are no conflicts of interest in this article.

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