Indonesian Educational Administration and Leadership Journal
Volume 07 Number 01 (2025)
https://online-journal.unja.ac.id/index.php/IDEAL
DOI : 10.22437/ideal.v7i1.40069

e-ISSN 2686-3596

1-19

The Influence of Ethics, Leadership as a Driver of Educational Innovation and its Impact on Student Performance

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Article Info

Article history:
Received 21, 12, 2025
Revised 10, 03, 2025
Accepted 25, 05, 2025

Keywords:
word; ethic, leadership, innovation, performance, educational

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of ethical leadership on educational innovation and its impact on student achievement in secondary schools. By applying the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method, this study involved 61 teachers and 160 students as participants in the study. The findings of the study indicate that ethical leadership can create a collaborative and inclusive learning environment, which also encourages innovation in education. A high level of teacher ethics has a positive impact on the formation of student character, increasing their motivation, and better academic performance. This study emphasizes the importance of combining ethical leadership with educational innovation to create a learning environment that can adapt to changing times. The theoretical and managerial impacts of this study provide guidance in the development of effective education policies, especially in improving the quality of education in developing countries.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is essential for developing competitive human resources in a globalized world, with student performance serving as a key indicator of success. Factors such as educational ethics, effective leadership, and innovation in learning significantly influence this performance (Schein, 2010). Educational ethics, which encompass moral values and behaviors, enhance student discipline and motivation, while fostering positive relationships among teachers, students, and parents (Strike & Soltis, 2004; Nucci, 2001; Wubbels et al., 2014).

Leaders who promote creativity and collaboration can drive educational innovation, meeting the needs of 21st-century learners (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004). In the digital era, educational innovation, including technology use and student-centered approaches, is essential for enhancing engagement and critical thinking (Mishra & Koehler, 2006; Hmelo-Silver, 2004). The interplay of ethics, leadership, and innovation is vital for optimizing student performance. Ethical leadership fosters socially responsible innovation, while unethical practices can lead to negative outcomes (Selwyn, 2021).

Optimizing student outcomes requires a combination of ethical approaches, visionary leadership, and relevant innovation. In the context of Indonesian education, these three elements also need to be adjusted to local values and community needs (Moore et al., 2011). On the other hand, transformational leadership that focuses on collaboration and innovation has a significant impact on student learning outcomes. Leaders who can empower teachers and build a culture of adaptive learning can increase teacher motivation and performance and create lasting systemic change (Robinson et al., 2008; Leithwood & Sun, 2012).

Innovation in education, especially the use of technology such as online learning and flipped classes, allows students to learn more flexibly and deeply, thereby increasing engagement and learning outcomes (Kim et al., 2014). In addition, the success of innovation is also influenced by policy support that considers the local context, especially in areas with limited access to technology (Harris & Jones, 2017). Therefore, the combination of educational ethics, transformational leadership, and innovation based on local needs is the key to building an effective and sustainable education system (Zhao, 2012).

This study analyzes the influence of ethics, leadership, and educational innovation on student performance across various education levels. Using quantitative methods, it aims to provide insights into these relationships and their implications for educational policy, based on data collected from 61 teachers and 160 students in Jambi province. The article is structured to review literature, present results, describe methodology, discuss implications, and conclude with findings. In the realm of modern education, ethics and ladership are key factors that can influence the quality of learning & student performance. Teacher ethics build a learning environment that respects moral values and strengthens the school community and optimizes interactions between teachers and students. Meanwhile, effective leadership can motivate and empower teachers to implement relevant and innovative learning approaches. This study is important because it identifies the interaction between these variables, and their impact on student academic achievement in secondary schools.

Literature Review and Hypothesis

In the learning process, teachers are the main figures in the process that must have an impact on changes in student behavior that lead to an improvement in character to realize student ethics at school. Because this aspect is increasingly eroding along with the times. The ethical value of teachers in teaching is the main value that can be an example for students in communicating and behaving (Zubaidah,2022). The higher the professional behavior and ethics of teacher educators, the higher the academic performance of students. Education and teaching are both professionally and morally important. This shows that taking a professional and moral stance in education and teaching is inseparable (Jan., & Iqbal. 2021).

Maximizing teacher performance can be done by paying attention to two things, namely improving the leadership of the principal and school culture. (Prayoga. 2020). Transformational leadership of school principals and organizational culture have a positive and significant effect on teacher professionalism in realizing student behavior and learning achievements. The principal's leadership, school committee participation, and teacher competence have proven to have a fairly sinister influence on student learning performance. (Sutaryono., & Rahmawati. 2024).

Education is inseparable from an innovation, the two are interrelated. Educational innovation is expected to have a good impact on society to develop skills in economic, social, and other fields. The results of the study show that innovation is a process of renewal and change. Innovation is needed so that the use of digital technology can be carried out

optimally and comprehensively (Ambarwati, et al, 2021). The more innovative a teacher is, the more productive things the teacher does. Teachers must be able to face and undergo education in the current era that follows the times and globalization gradually (Yanti. 2021).

Student performance reflects the ability to complete tasks assigned by teachers and is measured against specific criteria. This study employs a weak experimental design with a one-shot case study approach, using Student Worksheets and a performance assessment rubric. The average student performance increased from 66.52 in the first meeting to 82.68 in the third, with a paired t-test significance value of 0.000. The highest performance was in asking questions, while the lowest was in planning experiments. (Salsabila., & Puspitasari. 2020).

Teacher ethics as the primary foundation in shaping students' religion & school environment, building a positive learning climate that encourages students to learn more effectively (Wahyuni, 2020). School leaders' transformational leadership has an exclusive impact on learning discovery, using school leaders who inspire teachers to innovate builds a positive impact on student performance (Yusron, 2021). Technology-based innovation is crucial to keep up with the times, increasing student engagement in the learning process through digital media & innovative sensory aids (Haryanto & Nugraha, 2022). Teachers who uphold ethics can set concrete models for students, build character, and increase learning motivation (Murtiningsih, 2019). A good school leader's leadership influences teachers' performance in implementing innovative learning, which has an impact on student learning output (Rosidah, 2020). Educational innovation based on student needs has a more significant output in improving academic performance compared to conventional approaches (Ambarwati, et al., 2021). Ethical communication between teachers, students, & school leaders strengthens mutual trust, increasing student participation in learning (Setiawan, 2018).

Principals who encourage a culture of discovery in schools contribute greatly to teachers' success in new learning tactics (Nurdin, 2013). Education must keep up with the demands of globalization through technology-based inventions, new methodologies, & personalized approaches (Yanti, 2021). Effective school leader leadership affects student achievement in cognitive, affective, & psychomotor aspects (Sutaryono & Rahmawati, 2024). Schools that apply ethical principles to management tend to have more disciplined & accomplished students (Rahmatullah, 2016). Ethics & discovery-based teaching has a great impact on students' character development & critical thinking (Salsabila & Puspitasari, 2020).

Teacher ethics and educational innovation

Organizations that have an ethical culture are often more open to change, which is an important foundation for driving innovation (Treviño & Nelson 2004). In the world of education, the application of ethical values by leaders can increase the courage of teachers to develop more creative and innovative learning methods (Hidayat et al, 2023).Ethics in educational organizations creates a safe atmosphere for teachers to experiment and develop innovations that support learning achievement (Sagala 2022).Solid organizational ethics create a foundation for better collaboration among members, which in turn directly drives innovation (Ananda (2017).Ethical leaders build trust within the organization, which is key to achieving successful innovation that is accepted by all parties (Syam (2012).In schools, the ethics implemented by principals encourage teachers to utilize technology and adopt new teaching methods with enthusiasm (Rusdiana (2020).

Hypothesis 1: Ethics in leadership has a positive effect on innovation in education.

Teacher Ethics and Student Performance Improvement

Teachers must prioritize key issues such as information quality, effective communication, and customer satisfaction to enhance educational outcomes (Tweve. 2019). Ethics is crucial for fostering healthy teacher-student interactions, influenced by factors like psychology and home environment (Bahrudin. 2024). Optimal teacher performance is essential for good student learning outcomes (Sahroni. 2021). Teachers believe they adhere to professional ethics based on conscience, and improving ethical standards can enhance teaching effectiveness Daniel 2020; Ayeni. 2018). A harmonious integration of classroom management, learning media, and teacher ethics is vital for achieving educational goals (HD. 2024).

The relationship between ethical behavior and teaching quality is complex, with ethical principles shaping educators' identities and interactions (Mandal. 2022). Ethical teachers show emotional commitment, and professional ethics should be included in pre-service education (Halder. 2020). Effective management of educational operations is essential for maintaining quality and ethical practices (Paschal, 2023). Despite the expectations set by professionalism laws, the quality of education in Indonesia remains low (Indriawati. 2023). Teacher professional ethics significantly influence student performance, making it worthwhile to explore this impact (Vitharana. 2020). Thus, Hypothesis 1 (H1) is proposed.

Hypothesis 2: Teacher ethics has a positive influence on improving student performance.

Educational Innovation and Student Performance.

Educational innovation focuses on individuals within the social system, highlighting the need for understanding individual-oriented processes (Sanjaya. 2024). Promoting technology literacy is crucial in the 21st century, as ICT becomes integral to education (Helaluddin, 2019). Teachers must be proficient in digital tools to help students meet academic standards (Safitri, et al. 2023) as the absence of digital technology limits educational development (Aulia. 2023).

Implementing educational innovations, such as e-learning, aims to enhance the quality of student achievement and the overall educational system (Santika. 2023; Silahudin, 2015). Organizational innovation, encompassing administrative, technological, and strategic dimensions, positively impacts performance (Sartika. 2015). There is a strong link between innovation, creativity, and the performance of teachers and students (Mettatirtha, et al. 2023). Children's learning styles and quality learning facilities significantly influence outcomes (Marpaung. 2015; Febriani. 2017). The role of teachers is vital, with collaborative skills and pedagogical competence being essential for 21st-century educators (Suwardi. 2018). Effective learning, parental involvement, and teacher competence are critical for student success (Dakhi. 2020).

Exploring the impact of ethics on student performance is also important (Pannen, 2016). Technology enhances efficiency and engagement in education, with tools like Learning Management Systems (LMS) supporting diverse learning styles. Hidayat, (2021) emphasizes that teachers' professional and pedagogical competencies significantly affect student outcomes, underscoring the need for social and emotional skills in fostering a supportive learning environment. Based on this, Hypothesis 3 (H3) is proposed.

Hypothesis 3: Innovation in Education has a significant positive impact on student performance.

Teacher leadership and ethics

Effective leaders with high integrity foster a culture of trust and ethics, which is essential for moral decision-making (Kouzes & Posner 2003). They shape organizational

ethics by setting behavioral boundaries and ensuring adherence to agreed-upon moral principles (Terry L. Price 2006). Ethical leadership in education creates a work atmosphere that encourages teachers to embody moral values in their daily duties (Hidayat et al. 2023). and promotes a harmonious environment with high moral standards (Rusdiana 2020). Such leadership effectively addresses ethical challenges through collaboration and exemplary behavior (Syam 2012).
Hypothesis 4 : Leadership has a positive effect on the application of ethical values in educational organizations.

Educational leadership and innovation

Indicators of teacher professionalism have commitment or competence, responsibility, openness, reward or punishment orientation, and have high ability and creativity (Zahroh. 2015). Teacher professionalism is a benchmark for the success of the learning process towards a better direction, value, and quality of education and teaching. Creative teachers will encourage the realization of educational innovation. Innovation applied by teachers is basically only to realize learning that achieves success. Where innovation is the main key to change. Educational innovation will be successful if carried out by teachers who are already professional. Innovation will be realized if teachers are always creative in presenting new innovations (Zahroh. 2015).

Innovative leadership is essential for the transformation of educational systems and practices (Swenson & Tinsley-Kim, 2017). It challenges the status quo, promotes forward-thinking, and fosters an innovative culture (Khan et al., 2020). Educational leaders have the potential to revolutionize teaching and learning, improve student outcomes, and create educational environments that prepare students for the demands of the 21st century if they embrace innovative leadership (Morris & Kozuch, 2024; Şen & Eren, 2012).
Hipotesis 5: Leadership has a positive influence on educational innovation.

Innovative Leadership and Student Performance Improvement.

The principal's leadership is crucial for innovation and problem-solving in schools, directly impacting student satisfaction and learning achievement (Saripudin. 2014). Principals must motivate and support teachers through supervision and rewards to foster a positive climate that enhances teacher performance and student outcomes (Wahyunu. 2019). Effective leadership strategies improve the teaching and learning process, creating a proactive and creative school culture (Sari, et al. 2021). Instructional leadership guides curriculum development and encourages active participation from educational staff, linking teacher performance to student learning outcomes (Supriatna, et al. 2024; Yulianingsih. 2017).

Innovative principal leadership and high teacher performance lead to better student achievement, while ineffective leadership and low teacher performance result in poor outcomes (Rahim, et al. 2019). The principal's leadership indirectly influences student achievement through teacher performance, with school committee participation also playing a role (Norawati. 2024). The principal should instill values such as creativity and achievement, considering stakeholder input to align the school's mission with its resources (Anangsya. 2024). Ultimately, high student learning outcomes reflect the quality of education and human resources in schools, contributing to improved teaching abilities and performance (Rahmatullah. 2016) On this basis Hypothesis 2 (H2) is suggested:
Hypothesis 6. Innovative Leadership Significantly Contributes Positively to Student Performance.

The influence of leadership on innovation through ethics

Leadership ethics play a central role in driving educational innovation and improving student performance. Leaders with integrity and fairness create an environment conducive

to the development of creativity and collaboration among teachers, encouraging the creation of innovative and adaptive learning strategies to modern educational challenges. (Armiyanti et al., 2023; Fatimah et al., 2021; Zahro et al., 2018). Ethics-based transformational leadership is proven to improve teacher competence, support innovative curriculum development and strengthen organizational culture that supports positive change in the education system. (Putri et al., 2021; Rashid et al., 2021).

Educational innovation is an important mediator in this relationship, where the implementation of new methods and the utilization of technology guided by ethical leadership can improve the quality of educational services. Ultimately, ethically led environments improve the quality of learning, motivate teachers to adapt to student needs and result in better student performance. (Widodo, 2020; Yenti & Darmiyanti, 2023; Zahro et al., 2018). Thus, the synergy between ethics, leadership and innovation is the foundation for the success of educational institutions.

Hipotesis 7: Ethics in leadership influence educational innovation, which in turn has a positive effect on student performance.

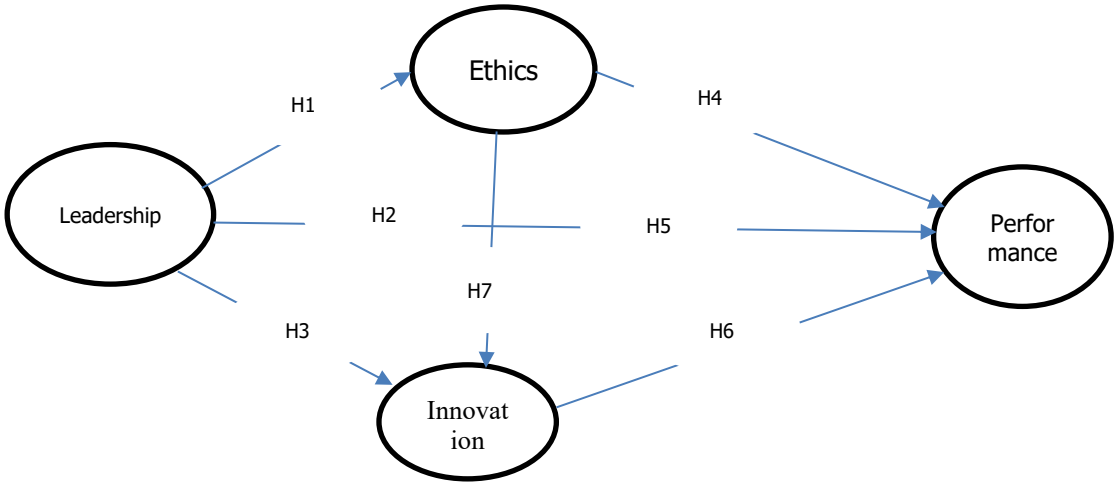

Figure 1. Research Model of Leadership Ethics and Educational Performance Innovation

METHODS

Sample and Procedures

This research method adopts a conceptual research model. The sample was taken by considering the size of the high school population in Jambi City, using the sample size calculation method to obtain a sample of 221. Testing was carried out on a sample of 221 respondents, consisting of teachers and secondary school students. The sample was selected to assess the influence of leadership ethics as a driver of educational innovation and its impact on student performance.

Samples are obtained through two main channels. First, the survey is carried out through the school's online platform which functions as a communication portal for all teachers and students. The survey was used to identify teachers who have been involved in innovative initiatives in the field of education as well as the students involved in the project. Second, after identifying relevant teachers, an examination is carried out on the track record of teachers who have applied leadership ethics in classroom management or student guidance. Students who are involved in classes or activities led by these teachers are then included in the sample. Thus, the final sample consisted of 221 respondents, which was considered adequate for the study.

Table 1. Participant's Profile N(221)

Demografis	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender (student)		
Man	67	30,3
woman	154	69,7
Gender (teacher)		
Man	34	44,2
Woman	43	55,8
School		
State high school	142	64,3
Private high school	79	35,7
Age (student)		
<17	51	23,1
17-18	147	66,5
>18	23	10,4
Age (teacher)		
<30	12	15,6
30-40	37	48,1
>40	28	36,3

Measurements.

Self-administered online questionnaires were developed to measure the relationship between ethics, innovation, leadership, and student performance. This questionnaire is adapted from previous research such as Bahrudin . (2024), Santika (2023), Saripudin (2014), Dakhi . (2020). This survey consists of two stages. The first step focuses on the constructed being analyzed, and the second step aims to identify the respondent's profile. Table 2 describes the items used to measure various constructs (ethics, innovation, leadership, performance). Each construct is measured using a 5-point Likert scale. The use of the Likert scale in this study is justified because it is easy to understand and accessible to many participants. The Likert scale provides more accurate measurements than other large and small scales because it provides sufficient response to capture the nuances and variations of participant opinions, and also facilitates statistical analysis and interpretation of survey results.

Table 2. Definition of Constructs

Construct	Information	Reference
Ethics (XE)	Refers to teacher ethics that have an influence on student performance.	(Bahrudin, A. R. 2024)
Innovation (XN)	Referring to educational innovations on student performance.	(Santika, A. 2023)
Leadership (XK)	Referring to the influence of Leadership on student performance.	(Saripudin. 2014)
Performance (Y)	In the results of the achievement of student academic performance which is influenced by factors of ethics, innovation, and leadership in education.	(Dakhi, A. S. 2020)

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Measurement Model Test

The purpose of the measurement model is to evaluate the quality of the latent variable measurements used to test the hypothesis set for this study. Thus, the Relativity, Convergent Validity, and Discriminatory Validity of each construct are evaluated.

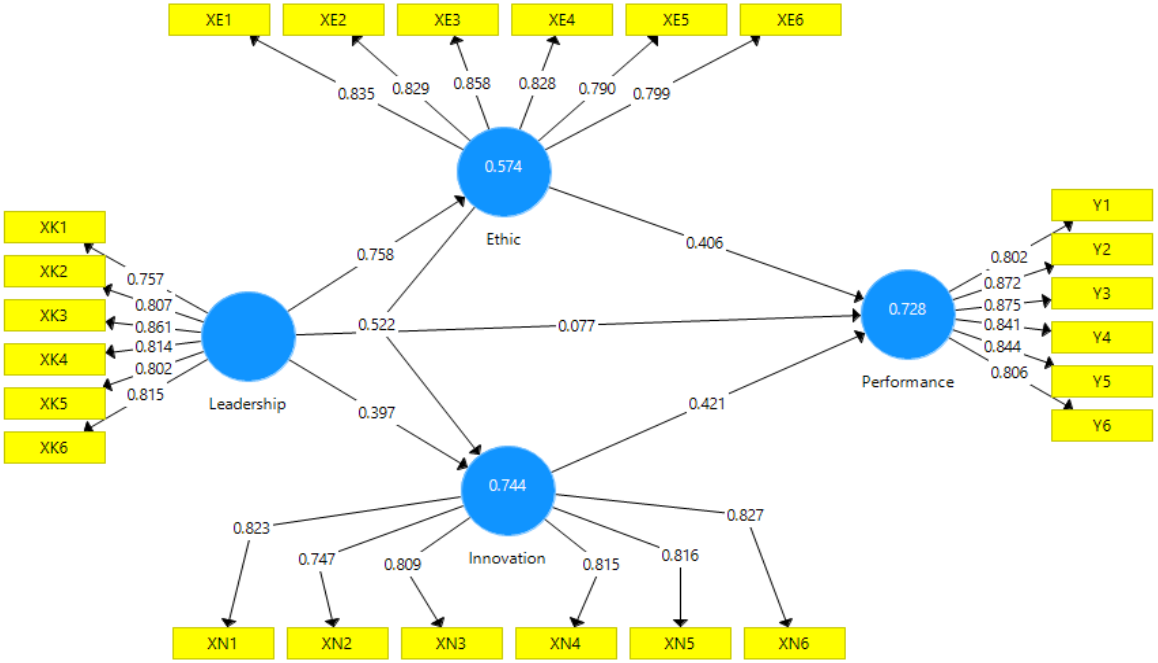

Figure 2. Measurement Model Test

The figure shows a path analysis model that describes the relationship between variables in the study. There are several latent variables represented by the blue circle, namely "Leadership," "Ethics," "Innovation," and "Performance." Each of these variables has indicators represented by yellow boxes, such as Leadership 1 to Leadership 6 for the "Leadership" variable, Ethics 1 to Ethics 6 for "Ethics," Innovation 1 to Innovation 6 for "Innovation," and Performance 1 to Performance 6 for "Performance." Each indicator has a load factor value that describes how strongly the indicator relates to the latent variable it represents. This value ranges from 0.747 to 0.858. In addition, there are arrows that connect latent variables, indicating the direction of the causal relationship between the variables. For example, "Leadership" has an influence on "Ethics," "Innovation," and "Performance." In this figure, Cronbach's Alpha values are also presented to measure the reliability of the construct, which ranges from 0.892 to 0.917, as well as structural coefficients from 0.077 to 0.758. This shows that the model has a good level of reliability and significant structural relationships between variables in this path analysis model.

This study assesses the reliability and validity of the constructs: Ethics (XE), Innovation (XN), Leadership (XK), and Performance (Y). For reliability, Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) values should exceed 0.7 (Hair et al., 2017). Table 1 indicates that all constructs demonstrate strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha and CR values above the 0.7 threshold. Most indicators have factor loadings over 0.7, confirming their reliability. A few indicators, such as Ethics 5 (0.790), Ethics 6 (0.799), Innovation 2 (0.747), and Leadership 7 (0.7), fall below 0.7 but remain acceptable. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs exceed 0.5, indicating they explain most of the variance in the indicators. Overall, the results confirm that each construct in the research model is both valid and reliable.

Table 3. Loas, Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and AVE

Construct	Items	Loads	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	Composite Reliability (rho_c)	AVE
Ethics (XE)	XE1	0.835				
	XE2	0.829				
	XE3	0.858	0.905	0.905	0.927	0.678
	XE4	0.828				
	XE5	0.790				
	XE6	0.799				
Innovation (XN)	XN1	0.823				
	XN2	0.747				
	XN3	0.809	0.892	0.895	0.918	0.651
	XN4	0.815				
	XN5	0.816				
	XN6	0.827				
Leadership (XK)	XK1	0.757				
	XK2	0.807				
	XK3	0.861	0.895	0.896	0.920	0.656
	XK4	0.814				
	XK5	0.802				
	XK6	0.815				
Performance (Y)	Y1	0.802				
	Y2	0.872				
	Y3	0.875	0.917	0.918	0.935	0.706
	Y4	0.841				
	Y5	0.844				
	Y6	0.806				

For validity, three criteria were analyzed: (1) Fornell-Larcker, (2) cross-loading, and (3) HTMT (Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio). Fornell-Larcker suggests that latent constructs should have more variance with their defined indicators than with other latent constructs in the model. The AVE of any latent construct must exceed the highest squared correlation between that construct and other latent constructs (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2017).

In Table 3, the total external loading of each indicator on its respective construct is higher than its cross-loading on other constructs, confirming good discriminant validity. The HTMT ratio, which compares correlations of indicators between different constructs (heterotrait correlation) with those measuring the same construct (monotrait correlation), must be less than 0.90 for valid discrimination (Henseler et al., 2015).

Table 4. Discriminated Validity Tast (Fornell – Larcker Criterion).

	Ethics	Innovation	Leadership	Performance
Ethics	0.824			
Innovation	0.823	0.809		
Leadership	0.758	0.792	0.810	
Performance	0.810	0.816	0.718	0.840

XE= Ethics; XK= Leadership; XN= Innovation; Y= Performance

Based on Table 4, all HTMT values meet this criterion, with none exceeding 0.90. This indicates that the validity of discrimination between constructs is good. Using the Fornell-Larcker criteria, cross-loading, and HTMT, it can be concluded that all constructs have sufficient discriminant validity, meaning they measure distinct concepts without overlap.

Table 5. Discriminated Validity Test (Cross Loadings)

	Ethics	Innovation	Leadership	Performance
XE1	0.835	0.666	0.621	0.669
XE2	0.829	0.664	0.636	0.641
XE3	0.858	0.692	0.639	0.703
XE4	0.828	0.663	0.643	0.673
XE5	0.790	0.711	0.563	0.635
XE6	0.799	0.668	0.639	0.682
XK1	0.562	0.635	0.757	0.549
XK2	0.584	0.631	0.807	0.584
XK3	0.623	0.667	0.861	0.633
XK4	0.606	0.656	0.814	0.583
XK5	0.673	0.633	0.802	0.586
XK6	0.630	0.627	0.815	0.552
XN1	0.680	0.823	0.650	0.687
XN2	0.559	0.747	0.574	0.578
XN3	0.625	0.809	0.639	0.623
XN4	0.714	0.815	0.677	0.672
XN5	0.705	0.816	0.626	0.698
XN6	0.685	0.827	0.664	0.680
Y1	0.598	0.619	0.560	0.802
Y2	0.669	0.667	0.591	0.872
Y3	0.676	0.678	0.591	0.875
Y4	0.724	0.720	0.619	0.841
Y5	0.680	0.699	0.601	0.844
Y6	0.724	0.718	0.651	0.806

XE= Ethics; XK= Leadership; XN= Innovation; Y= Performance

The model is tested to ensure that collinearity is not an issue; To ensure this, the variance inflation factor (VIF) must be less than 3.3 (Kock 2015). Table 5 shows that all inflation factor variance values (VIFs) for each configuration are below the conservative threshold of 3.3. The minimum VIF value displayed is 1.375 and the maximum VIF value is 1.740. This shows that there is no serious multicollinearity problem in this research model. Multicollinearity is a condition in which independent variables in a regression model have a high correlation. Multicollinearity makes it difficult to separate the individual influence of each independent variable on the dependent variable

Table 6. Discriminated Validity Test (Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio-HTMT).

	Ethics	Innovation	Leadership	Performance
Ethics				
Innovation	0.913			
Leadership	0.841	0.886		
Performance	0.887	0.897	0.791	

Table 7. Collinearity statistics (VIF)—Inner model.

	Ethics	Innovation	Leadership	Performance
Ethics		2,348		3,412
Innovation				3,902
Leadership	1,000	2,348		2,961

Structural Model Test

The next step involves evaluating the structural model results and testing the proposed hypotheses. The model's quality is assessed using two indicators: the explanatory power,

measured by R^2 and the effect size f^2, and the predictive ability, evaluated through the significance of path coefficients, prediction correlation Q, and effect value q^2.

R^2 indicates the proportion of variance in endogenous constructs explained by exogenous constructs (Hair et al. 2017). According to Table 7, the R^2 value for the ethical component is 0.574, with an adjusted R^2 of 0.572, indicating that the constructs of innovation, leadership, and performance explain 57.2% of the variance in ethics. The innovation component has an R^2 of 0.744 and an adjusted R^2 of 0.741, meaning it explains 74.1% of its variance. The leadership structure shows an R^2 of 1.348 and an adjusted R^2 of 0.261, explaining 26.1% of its variance. Finally, the performance component has an R^2 of 0.728 and an adjusted R^2 of 0.724, explaining 72.4% of its variance.

Statistical significance was analyzed using a sample size of 221 at a 0.05 significance level (Hair et al. 2017). Initially, smaller sub-samples were randomly selected for quicker processing, but the final results were based on the larger sample to ensure stability. This approach was chosen due to positive assumptions in the research hypothesis (Kock, 2015).Table 6 shows that the leadership construct has an f^2 value of 1.348, indicating a large effect, while the ethics construct has an f^2 value of 0.453, showing a significant effect. The f^2 values for innovation and performance are 0.167 and 0.007, respectively, indicating minor effects. This suggests that the leadership construct has a more substantial impact on explaining the variance in endogenous constructs compared to ethics, innovation, and performance. Overall, these findings indicate that all external factors in the structural model significantly contribute to explaining the variation in internal factors, though the degree of influence varies according to Cohen's assessment.

Table 8. Model's explanatory capacity (R^2, R^2 adjusted, f^2)

	R^2	R^2 adjusted
Ethics	0.574	0.572
Innovation	0.744	0.741
Performance	0.728	0.724

Through the sample size procedure, we identified that the path coefficients Leadership —> Performance, Ethics —> Performance, and Innovation —> Performance were significant (p < 0.01), as shown in Figure 3. In addition, a predictive correlation was analyzed (Q from Stone-Geisser) that represented the evaluation criteria for the predictive relevance of the cross-validity of the PLS pathway model and aimed to evaluate the accuracy of the installed model and should not be equal to zero (Hair et al. 2017).

According to table 9, the Q^2 (predictive relevance) value for all endogenous constructs exceeds 0. Ethics reached 0.386, Innovation reached 0.480. Leadership reached 0.451, and Performance reached 0.505. This shows that the structural model has a good level of predictive relevance to all endogenous constructs. When viewed in effect size q^2, it appears that Leadership produces a q^2 value of 1.348, which is included in the large effect category. While the Ethics, Innovation, and Performance constructs have q^2 values of 0.453, 0.167, and 0.007 respectively, which are classified in the category of medium to small securities. This shows that the relative contribution or impact of the Leadership construct in shaping the predictive relevance (Q^2) of the endogenous construct is greater than the Ethics, Innovation, and Performance construct. The Leadership Construct has a stronger impact on the Q^2value of the endogenous construct.

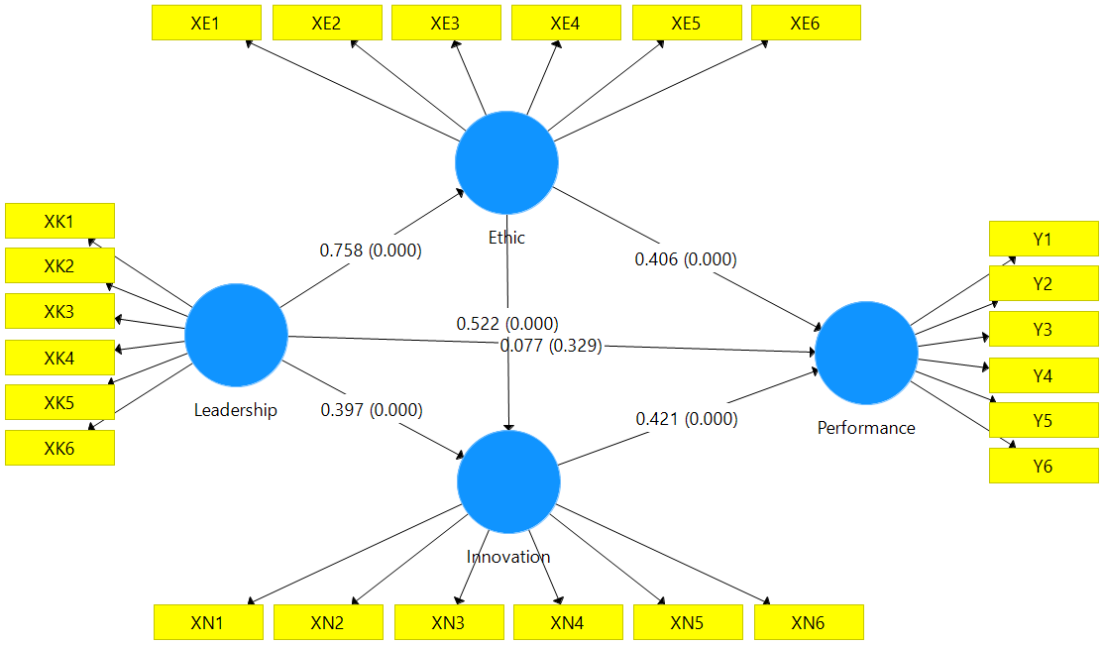

Figure 3. Structural Model Test

Table 9. Model's Predictive Capacity (Q^2 and effect size q^2)

	RMSE	**MAE**	**Q^2 predict**
Ethic	0.662	0.448	0.569
Innovation	0.622	0.413	0.622
Performance	0.710	0.482	0.509

Based on Table 9 presented in the figure, the results of hypothesis testing show that the structural model confirms a positive and significant relationship between Ethics and Innovation (β = 0.522, p < 0.001) as well as between Innovation and Performance (β = 0.421, p < 0.001). This supports the H2 and H3 hypotheses proposed. However, the relationship between Leadership and Performance was not significant (β = 0.077, p = 0.316), so the H1 hypothesis was not supported. The exogenous construct of Leadership exerts a stronger effect on the endogenous construct Performance than that of Ethics and Innovation, based on the values of the path coefficients and the statistics presented. Overall, the structural model supports two of the three hypotheses tested.

Table 10. Hypothesis testing results.

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	p Values
Ethics −>Innovation	0.522	0.524	0.094	5,531	0.000
Ethics −>Performance	0.406	0.403	0.109	3,715	0.000
Innovation −>Performance	0.421	0.425	0.113	3,717	0.000
Leadership −> Ethics	0.758	0.757	0.049	15,474	0.000
Leadership −>Innovation	0.397	0.396	0.095	4,190	0.000
Leadership −>Performance	0.077	0.079	0.077	1,004	0.316

Table 10 presents the mean, median, minimum, maximum, and standard deviation for each item. Generally, most items have an average value around 0.000, indicating neutral

performance, with similar median values close to 0. However, some items, like Innovation 2, show significant variation, with a minimum of -5.812 and a maximum of 1.340. The standard deviation also varies, with Ethics 5 having a high standard deviation of 0.613, indicating diverse responses.

Table 11 shows that the mean for all components—Ethics, Innovation, Leadership, and Performance—is 0.000, suggesting a neutral tendency. The median values indicate that Ethics has the highest median at 0.428, followed by Performance (0.479), Leadership (0.463), and Innovation (0.382). While still neutral, these medians suggest a slightly positive rating from respondents. Overall, the data indicate a balanced pattern, with all components remaining within a neutral range.

Table 11. Descriptive statistics of items for each construct.

	Mean	Median	Min	Max	Standard Deviation
XE1	0.000	0.032	-1,666	1,438	0.550
XE2	0.000	-0.020	-3,056	1,058	0.559
XE3	0.000	-0.002	-1,377	1,443	0.514
XE4	0.000	-0.019	-1,758	1,375	0.561
XE5	0.000	0.034	-1,762	2,366	0.613
XE6	0.000	-0.024	-2,921	1,656	0.601
XK1	0.000	0.086	-1,682	1,697	0.653
XK2	0.000	-0.017	-1,797	1,700	0.591
XK3	0.000	-0.058	-1,434	1,754	0.509
XK4	0.000	0.013	-1,727	1,746	0.581
XK5	0.000	0.025	-2,275	1,740	0.597
XK6	0.000	-0.044	-2,404	1,361	0.580
XN1	0.000	0.001	-1,718	1,443	0.569
XN2	0.000	0.030	-5,812	1,340	0.665
XN3	0.000	0.017	-2,866	1,425	0.588
XN4	0.000	-0.001	-2,769	2,682	0.579
XN5	0.000	-0.002	-1,773	1,570	0.577
XN6	0.000	-0.039	-1,785	1,554	0.562
Y1	0.000	0.088	-2,710	1,432	0.598
Y2	0.000	0.026	-1,356	1,423	0.489
Y3	0.000	-0.045	-1,711	2,013	0.484
Y4	0.000	-0.054	-2,287	2,236	0.542
Y5	0.000	-0.002	-1,795	2,297	0.536
Y6	0.000	0.000	-2,065	2,588	0.592

Table 12. Descriptive statistics of the constructs.

	Mean	Median
Ethics	0.000	0.428
Innovation	0.000	0.382
Leadership	0.000	0.463
Performance	0.000	0.479

3.3 Data Analysis

This study aims to analyze and validate the proposed research model For this reason, the partial least squares structural equation modeling technique (PLS-SEM) is used using SmartPLS 3 software. PLS-SEM is a statistical method used primarily for the development of theories in exploratory research and to expand existing research by taking into account the variance of dependent variables when examining relationship models This method has

been widely applied in social science research and is very useful for analyzing relationships between factors that cannot be observed directly (Hair et al., 2017).

Therefore, PLS-SEM is considered suitable for this research which aims at prediction and theory development. PLS-SEM has an advantage over CB-SEM (SEM based on covariance) because it can handle different sample sizes, more complex models, and allows for more flexible data assumptions, resulting in fewer estimation problems PLS-SEM facilitates simultaneous estimation of multiple causal relationships between one or more independent variables and one or more dependent variables, allowing data exploration to find relevant patterns and relationships. This analysis was carried out in two steps. First, a measurement model test was carried out that aimed to measure the construct using a set of indicators. This step assesses the extent to which this set of indicator variables represents the constructed being analyzed (Hair et al., 2017). Testing of the structural model is then carried out to test the relationships between constructs (paths) and verify the research hypothesis.

4. Implications, Limitations, and Future Research Directions.

4.1 Theoretical implications

This study explores education leaders' perceptions of ethical values in leadership as a crucial driver of innovation within schools. It contributes to educational leadership and innovation theory by demonstrating how ethical leadership fosters an organizational culture that encourages creativity and collaborative learning, ultimately enhancing student achievement. The findings indicate that leaders who uphold ethical principles create a supportive work environment that motivates teachers and staff to innovate in teaching and school operations.

Additionally, the study emphasizes the role of ethical leadership in tackling educational challenges, such as adapting to current technological advancements. It enriches the literature on leadership strategies focused on educational innovation and student success by providing insights into leadership ethics. The study also underscores the necessity for educational institutions to invest in developing ethical leaders to improve student performance.

These findings are significant for education administrators aiming to create an inclusive environment where all teachers can engage in learning innovation. Overall, the study highlights ethical leadership as a vital component of successful educational innovation, particularly in developing countries seeking to enhance educational outcomes.

4.2 Limitations and Directions of Future Research

This study examines the role of ethical leadership in driving educational innovation and its effects on student achievement, but it has some limitations. First, the research is conducted in a specific context, which may limit the applicability of the results to other educational settings. While the findings indicate a positive relationship between ethical leadership and educational innovation, the study does not explore potential mediating or moderating factors, such as peer support, organizational climate, and workplace rewards.

To enhance understanding of this topic, future research should consider additional variables like self-efficacy, trust, and knowledge sharing among teachers as mediators. Further studies could also explore how ethical leadership influences innovation in schools with varying organizational cultures or bureaucratic challenges. Additionally, an in-depth analysis of how ethical leadership can be transformed into strategies that foster a culture of innovation would be beneficial. These future research directions aim to broaden the applicability of our findings and provide deeper insights to inform effective and innovative educational policies.

Discussion

This study explores the impact of ethical leadership on educational innovation and student achievement in high schools. The findings indicate that ethical leadership practices foster an inclusive learning environment, positively influencing student performance. The interconnection between ethical leadership, innovation, and student achievement creates a sustainable cycle, emphasizing the need for school leaders to consistently apply ethical values to avoid hindering innovation and academic success (HD, & Darmawan. 2024).

The research confirms that teacher ethics (XE) significantly enhance student performance (Y), supporting the first hypothesis and aligning with previous studies that highlight the importance of ethical teaching in achieving educational goals (Norawati, 2024). Additionally, principals indirectly boost student achievement by improving teacher performance, while school committee involvement also contributes to better learning outcomes (Norawati 2024). Other research confirms that educational innovations must be adopted and implemented by schools and teachers to improve the quality of education and student learning outcomes (Rizal, 2023). The article underscores the necessity of strong ethical leadership in promoting a collaborative environment that encourages innovative teaching methods. Conversely, a lack of teacher ethics can impede educational progress and student engagement (Maharani et al., 2024). Effective leadership not only supports teachers but also fosters relationships that motivate them to innovate.

The study finds that leadership positively influences student achievement, aligning with research that highlights the crucial role of school leaders in improving teacher quality and educational outcomes (Aslam et al., 2022). Effective principals create a conducive work environment, help teachers develop their potential, and encourage innovative teaching methods. Leadership is not only about supervision but also about building strong relationships and motivating teachers to become more engaged in their teaching. In this context, school leaders can act as transformational leaders who develop strategies to overcome barriers and enhance the quality of learning (Fajri et al., 2019). Research also shows a positive relationship between principal leadership and student learning outcomes, with guidance, support, and inspiration from principals essential to achieving optimal academic performance (Fajri et al., 2019).

Innovation directly impacts student learning, with technology reshaping educational approaches and enhancing student motivation (Ritonga et al., 2022). Teachers who embody ethical values create supportive environments that promote holistic student development, leading to increased enthusiasm and participation in learning (Bahrudin, 2024.; HD et al., 2024). With effective leadership, teachers are given direction, inspiration, and support to create quality learning. Creative and wise leaders foster a school environment that encourages collaboration and learning development in line with student needs. The role of principals in guiding teachers to develop learning methods that meet the demands of modern education is crucial for improving student performance (Sari, et al., 2021). By providing support and supervision to students, leaders ensure the learning process is effective, directly impacting student achievement (Yan Liu et al., 2020). Overall, the study highlights the critical roles of ethical leadership and teacher ethics in driving educational innovation and improving student outcomes, emphasizing the need for schools to embrace innovative practices for optimal learning results.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that ethical leadership in secondary education is crucial for promoting innovation and improving student achievement. School leaders who emphasize

ethics can create an inclusive and collaborative environment that supports innovation. Ethical leadership empowers teachers to develop creative and adaptive teaching methods, while teacher ethics significantly improve student motivation and performance. Innovations, especially those integrating technology, enhance student engagement and academic success. Ethical leadership and pedagogical innovation synergistically improve both academic performance and character development, which are essential for the holistic development of modern students.

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