



THE IMPACT OF ETHICAL LEADERSHIP, INNOVATION ADOPTION, AND CREATIVITY ON COMPANY PERFORMANCE IN FAST FASHION INDUSTRY

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of ethical leadership, innovation adoption, and creativity on company performance within Indonesia's fast-fashion industry. As the industry faces increasing scrutiny regarding sustainability and social responsibility, understanding the relationships between these organizational capabilities becomes crucial for competitive advantage. Using a quantitative methodology, this research employed saturated sampling of 87 managers from fast-fashion companies across major Indonesian cities including Jakarta, Bandung, Surabaya, and Medan. Data were analyzed using SmartPLS 4.0 through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The measurement model demonstrated strong reliability and validity, with all constructs exceeding recommended thresholds for Cronbach's Alpha (0.832-0.873), Composite Reliability (0.883-0.911), and Average Variance Extracted (0.603-0.671). Discriminant validity was confirmed through Fornell-Larcker criterion and HTMT ratios below 0.85. The findings reveal that ethical leadership, innovation adoption, and creativity function as complementary organizational resources that collectively enhance company performance rather than operating in isolation. These results provide empirical evidence for the synergistic effects of leadership behavior, technological orientation, and creative capacity in driving organizational success. The study contributes to management literature by demonstrating the integrated nature of these capabilities and offers practical guidance for fast-fashion companies seeking sustainable competitive advantage through ethical practices, systematic innovation, and creative organizational cultures.

Keywords : Ethical Leadership, Innovation Adoption, Creativity, Company Performance, Fast-Fashion Industry

1. INTRODUCTION

The fast-fashion industry in Indonesia has experienced unprecedented growth over the past decade, characterized by rapid production cycles, affordable pricing strategies, and aggressive market expansion that fundamentally challenges traditional business paradigms. Contemporary business environments demand leadership approaches that balance profitability with ethical considerations, particularly as consumer awareness regarding sustainable practices and corporate social responsibility continues to intensify across global markets. The Indonesian fast-fashion sector faces increasing scrutiny from stakeholders who demand transparency in



supply chain management, fair labor practices, and environmental stewardship while maintaining competitive pricing and rapid product turnover. According to Hartono et al. (2024), ethical leadership significantly influences corporate performance through corporate entrepreneur competency mediation in Indonesian finance companies, demonstrating the critical role of ethical practices in organizational success. The complexity of modern business operations requires leaders who can navigate ethical dilemmas while driving organizational performance through innovative strategies and creative problem-solving approaches. Purnama and Purnama & Warsindah (2022) established that ethical leadership positively affects employee task performance through organizational identification mechanisms, highlighting the importance of ethical practices in enhancing workforce productivity. The fast-fashion industry's rapid evolution necessitates continuous adaptation to changing consumer preferences, technological advancements, and regulatory requirements that collectively shape organizational effectiveness. This dynamic environment creates unique challenges where traditional management approaches may prove insufficient for sustaining competitive advantage and long-term organizational viability.

The proliferation of fast-fashion businesses in major Indonesian cities has created intensely competitive market conditions that demand sophisticated approaches to organizational management and strategic decision-making. Market saturation in urban centers such as Jakarta, Surabaya, and Bandung has forced companies to differentiate themselves through superior operational efficiency, innovative product offerings, and exceptional customer experiences that transcend traditional price-based competition. The emergence of digital commerce platforms and social media marketing has transformed consumer behavior patterns, creating opportunities for companies that can effectively leverage technology while maintaining authentic brand connections with target audiences. Tanoto dan Tangkawarow (2023) demonstrated that ethical leadership influences employee performance through organizational citizenship behavior and intrinsic motivation mechanisms, suggesting that ethical practices serve as foundational elements for building high-performing organizations. Contemporary consumers, particularly millennials and Generation Z demographics, increasingly prioritize brand authenticity, social responsibility, and environmental consciousness in their purchasing decisions, creating pressure for fast-fashion companies to align their practices with evolving social expectations. The Indonesian government's emphasis on sustainable development goals and corporate responsibility frameworks further amplifies the importance of ethical leadership in business operations. Additionally, the rapid pace of technological change requires organizations to continuously innovate their products, processes, and business models to remain relevant in increasingly sophisticated markets. These converging pressures create complex operational environments where ethical leadership, innovation adoption, and creativity become critical determinants of organizational success and sustainability.

The Indonesian fast-fashion industry operates within a broader context of economic development initiatives that prioritize creative industries as drivers of national competitiveness and economic growth. Government policies supporting creative economy development have created favorable conditions for fashion enterprises, while simultaneously establishing expectations for responsible business practices and sustainable development contributions. The sector's contribution to employment generation and export revenues positions it as a strategically important industry that requires careful balance between commercial success and social responsibility considerations. Haryani et al. (2022) emphasized that digital marketing effectiveness in Indonesian MSMEs significantly influences consumer attention, interest, desire, and action, demonstrating the importance of innovative approaches in contemporary business



environments. The integration of traditional Indonesian cultural elements with modern fashion trends creates unique value propositions that can differentiate local brands in global markets, provided companies can effectively manage the tension between cultural authenticity and commercial viability. Rising consumer sophistication and international competition require Indonesian fast-fashion companies to develop capabilities that extend beyond basic manufacturing and distribution, encompassing design innovation, brand management, and sustainable business practices. The industry's labor-intensive nature creates significant employment opportunities while simultaneously raising concerns about working conditions, fair wages, and employee development that ethical leadership must address. These multifaceted challenges underscore the critical importance of understanding how ethical leadership, innovation adoption, and creativity collectively influence organizational performance in this dynamic industry context.

Research in the fast-fashion industry becomes increasingly important as companies navigate complex stakeholder expectations while maintaining profitability and market competitiveness in rapidly evolving business environments. The sector's significant environmental and social impacts have attracted regulatory attention and consumer activism that can substantially affect business operations and brand reputation, making ethical leadership practices essential for long-term sustainability. Companies that fail to adopt ethical practices risk facing consumer boycotts, regulatory sanctions, and talent retention challenges that can severely impact organizational performance and market position. The accelerating pace of fashion cycles driven by social media and digital marketing requires continuous innovation in product development, supply chain management, and customer engagement strategies that test organizational adaptability and creative capabilities. Pithaloka et al. (2024) found that compatibility and trialability significantly influence fashion entrepreneur decisions regarding sustainability adoption, indicating the importance of innovation diffusion processes in industry transformation. Understanding the relationships between ethical leadership, innovation adoption, and creativity provides valuable insights for developing management strategies that can effectively address these multifaceted challenges while achieving superior organizational performance. The knowledge generated from this research can inform policy development, educational programs, and industry best practices that support sustainable growth in Indonesia's creative economy sector. Furthermore, the findings can contribute to broader understanding of how organizations in developing economies can successfully balance ethical considerations with commercial objectives in highly competitive industries.

The urgency of this research is amplified by the fast-fashion industry's role as a significant contributor to environmental degradation and social inequality issues that require immediate attention from business leaders and policymakers. Consumer behavior shifts toward conscious consumption and brand authenticity create both challenges and opportunities for fast-fashion companies that must balance accessibility with responsibility in their value propositions. Judijanto et al. (2024) demonstrated that employee development policy, work environment, and transformational leadership significantly influence employee creativity in Indonesia's creative industries, emphasizing the interconnected nature of leadership practices and organizational outcomes. The research findings can provide practical guidance for managers seeking to implement ethical leadership practices while fostering innovation and creativity in their organizations. Additionally, the study can contribute to academic literature by examining these relationships within the specific context of Indonesian fast-fashion industry, providing insights that may not be available from studies conducted in different cultural or industrial contexts.

Ethical leadership research has gained significant momentum in Indonesian academic



literature, with scholars increasingly recognizing its fundamental role in shaping organizational culture and performance outcomes across various industry sectors. Contemporary ethical leadership theory emphasizes the importance of moral decision-making, stakeholder consideration, and transparent communication in creating sustainable organizational advantages that extend beyond short-term financial metrics. Indonesian researchers have consistently found that ethical leadership practices positively influence employee engagement, organizational commitment, and performance outcomes, though the specific mechanisms through which these effects occur vary across different industry contexts and organizational structures. Hartono et al. (2024) established that ethical leadership directly influences both good corporate governance and contextual performance, with corporate governance serving as a mediating factor in the leadership-performance relationship within Indonesian organizations. The theoretical foundation suggests that ethical leaders create environments where employees feel valued, trusted, and motivated to contribute their best efforts toward organizational objectives, resulting in enhanced individual and collective performance outcomes. Research conducted across various Indonesian industries demonstrates that ethical leadership practices contribute to reduced employee turnover, increased job satisfaction, and improved organizational citizenship behaviors that collectively enhance operational effectiveness. The cultural context of Indonesian society, with its emphasis on collective responsibility and social harmony, provides a particularly conducive environment for ethical leadership practices to flourish and generate positive organizational outcomes. However, the specific application of ethical leadership principles within the fast-fashion industry's unique operational challenges and competitive pressures remains relatively unexplored in existing literature.

Innovation adoption research within Indonesian contexts has revealed complex relationships between organizational characteristics, external pressures, and technology acceptance that influence how companies successfully integrate new technologies, processes, and business models. The theoretical framework of innovation diffusion suggests that organizations progress through distinct stages of adoption, from initial awareness through implementation and institutionalization, with each stage presenting unique challenges and opportunities for organizational development. Indonesian fashion industry research indicates that innovation adoption decisions are influenced by factors including organizational culture, leadership support, resource availability, and perceived compatibility with existing systems and practices. Zahra et al. (2021) found that small and medium enterprises in Indonesia's fashion industry face multiple challenges in adopting emerging technologies, with success dependent on effective technology management strategies and stakeholder support systems. The research demonstrates that innovation adoption requires not only technological capabilities but also organizational readiness, including appropriate human resources, financial resources, and management commitment to change processes. Studies examining innovation adoption in Indonesian manufacturing sectors reveal that companies achieving successful technology integration typically exhibit strong leadership commitment, employee training programs, and systematic approaches to change management that facilitate smooth transition processes. The fast-fashion industry's emphasis on speed and efficiency creates unique requirements for innovation adoption that may differ from traditional manufacturing or service industries, necessitating specialized understanding of how innovation processes operate within this specific context. Contemporary research suggests that successful innovation adoption in fashion industries requires balancing technological capabilities with creative design processes and market responsiveness considerations.

Creativity research in Indonesian organizational contexts has evolved significantly, with



scholars recognizing creativity as a critical capability for achieving competitive advantage in knowledge-intensive and design-oriented industries such as fashion and creative services. The theoretical foundation of organizational creativity emphasizes the importance of individual creative abilities, group dynamics, and organizational culture in fostering environments where innovative ideas can emerge, develop, and contribute to organizational success. Indonesian research has consistently demonstrated that creativity is influenced by multiple factors including leadership styles, work environment characteristics, individual motivation, and organizational support systems that collectively determine how effectively organizations can harness creative potential. Nilasari et al. (2022) found that transformational leadership significantly affects employee creativity through perceived organizational support mediation, indicating the critical role of leadership practices in fostering creative organizational environments. Contemporary creativity research emphasizes the importance of intrinsic motivation, psychological safety, and resource availability in enabling employees to engage in creative problem-solving and innovative thinking that can contribute to organizational performance improvements. Studies conducted within Indonesian creative industries reveal that creativity is enhanced through diverse team compositions, open communication channels, and organizational cultures that encourage experimentation and learning from failure rather than punishing unsuccessful attempts. Sidharta (2023) demonstrated that affective commitment, employee engagement, and creativity significantly influence task and quality performance within Indonesian fashion industry contexts, highlighting the interconnected nature of organizational factors and creative outcomes. The fashion industry's reliance on continuous design innovation and trend responsiveness makes creativity particularly important for organizational success, though the specific mechanisms through which creativity translates into performance outcomes require further investigation.

Performance measurement research in Indonesian fast-fashion contexts has revealed the complexity of defining and measuring organizational success in industries characterized by rapid change, multiple stakeholder demands, and varying performance criteria. Traditional financial performance indicators such as revenue growth, profitability, and market share remain important, but contemporary research emphasizes the need for balanced approaches that incorporate customer satisfaction, employee engagement, innovation outcomes, and sustainability metrics. Indonesian organizational research demonstrates that performance measurement systems must align with organizational strategies and stakeholder expectations while providing actionable insights for management decision-making and continuous improvement processes. Recent studies in Indonesian manufacturing and service industries indicate that companies achieving superior performance typically employ multiple performance measurement approaches that capture both quantitative and qualitative aspects of organizational effectiveness. The fast-fashion industry's unique characteristics, including seasonal demand variations, trend sensitivity, and supply chain complexity, create specific performance measurement challenges that require specialized metrics and analytical approaches. Research examining Indonesian fashion companies suggests that performance outcomes are influenced by both internal capabilities and external market conditions, with successful companies demonstrating ability to adapt their strategies and operations in response to changing environmental conditions. Contemporary performance research emphasizes the importance of stakeholder value creation rather than purely shareholder-focused metrics, reflecting growing recognition that sustainable organizational success requires balancing multiple stakeholder interests and expectations. The integration of ethical considerations, innovation outcomes, and creative achievements into performance measurement systems represents an emerging area of research that can provide valuable insights for fast-fashion industry management.



Integrated research examining the combined effects of ethical leadership, innovation adoption, and creativity on organizational performance represents a relatively new area of investigation that addresses the complexity of contemporary business environments. Theoretical frameworks suggest that these variables operate synergistically, with ethical leadership creating foundations for trust and collaboration that facilitate innovation adoption and creative expression, while innovation and creativity contribute to organizational adaptability and competitive advantage. Indonesian research examining these relationships remains limited, particularly within the fast-fashion industry context where operational pressures and competitive dynamics may create unique interaction patterns between leadership practices, innovation processes, and creative outcomes. The integrated approach recognizes that organizational performance in complex industries results from multiple interacting factors rather than single variables operating in isolation, requiring sophisticated analytical approaches and comprehensive measurement systems. Contemporary organizational theory emphasizes the importance of understanding how different organizational capabilities and practices complement each other to create sustainable competitive advantages that resist imitation by competitors. Research conducted in similar industries suggests that the relationships between ethical leadership, innovation adoption, creativity, and performance may be moderated by factors such as organizational size, market conditions, and cultural contexts that influence how these practices are implemented and experienced by organizational members. The novelty of this research lies in examining these relationships within the specific context of Indonesian fast-fashion industry, where unique cultural, economic, and competitive factors may influence how these variables interact to influence organizational outcomes.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a quantitative research methodology to investigate the relationships between ethical leadership, innovation adoption, and creativity on company performance within Indonesia's fast-fashion industry. The quantitative approach was selected due to its ability to provide systematic measurement, statistical validation, and generalizability of findings across broader populations (Creswell, 2014). According to Sugiyono (2019), quantitative research enables researchers to examine causal relationships between variables through statistical analysis while maintaining objectivity in data collection and interpretation processes. The research design follows an explanatory approach that seeks to establish causal relationships between the independent variables (ethical leadership, innovation adoption, and creativity) and the dependent variable (company performance) through hypothesis testing procedures.

The study population comprises managers, supervisors, and decision-makers employed in fast-fashion companies operating within Indonesia's major commercial centers, including Jakarta, Bandung, Surabaya, and Medan. These locations were selected based on their strategic importance as primary hubs for Indonesia's fashion industry, featuring high concentrations of fast-fashion retailers, manufacturers, and design companies. The target population includes individuals holding managerial positions with direct involvement in strategic planning, innovation implementation, creative processes, and performance evaluation within their respective organizations.

This research employs saturated sampling technique, utilizing all 87 identified fast-fashion companies that meet the predetermined selection criteria as research participants. According to Sugiyono (2019), saturated sampling represents a comprehensive approach where the entire population serves as the sample, particularly appropriate when dealing with relatively



small and manageable population sizes. Hair et al. (2019) recommend minimum sample sizes of 80-100 respondents for PLS-SEM analysis, while also suggesting that sample adequacy should consider model complexity and measurement reliability requirements. The saturated sampling approach ensures complete population coverage while eliminating potential sampling bias and enhancing result representativeness, particularly important given the specialized nature of fast-fashion industry management roles.

Data collection will be conducted through structured questionnaires employing validated measurement instruments adapted from established scales. The ethical leadership construct utilizes the Ethical Leadership Scale developed by Brown et al. (2005) and validated in Indonesian contexts by Saifudin (2024), measuring dimensions including moral person characteristics, moral manager behaviors, and ethical decision-making processes. Innovation adoption measurement follows Rogers (2003) Diffusion of Innovation framework, incorporating relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability dimensions as validated in Indonesian technology adoption studies by Wangsa et al. (2025). Employee creativity assessment employs the Creative Behavior Inventory adapted from Zhou and George (2001), measuring originality, usefulness, and implementation of creative ideas within organizational contexts. Company performance evaluation combines financial indicators (revenue growth, profitability, market share) and non-financial measures (customer satisfaction, employee engagement, brand recognition) following balanced scorecard principles.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The empirical analysis began with an assessment of the measurement model to ensure that all latent constructs, Ethical Leadership (EL), Innovation Adoption (IA), Creativity (CR), and Company Performance (CP) were measured with acceptable reliability and validity before the structural relationships were tested. Because the study integrates leadership behaviour, technological orientation, and creative capability within a single explanatory framework, rigorous confirmation of indicator quality is essential for drawing trustworthy conclusions. Following Hair et al. (2019), the evaluation proceeded in three stages: (1) internal consistency reliability, (2) convergent validity, and (3) discriminant validity. Only after these psychometric properties were satisfied could the structural model be meaningfully interpreted. The data, drawn from 87 managers of Indonesian fast-fashion firms, were analysed with SmartPLS 4.0. As anticipated in saturated sampling, a high response rate minimised sampling bias and improved representativeness. All indicators were reflective and specified to load on their theorised constructs.

Table 1. Reliability Test Results

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	rho_A
Ethical Leadership	0.847	0.894	0.881
Innovation Adoption	0.832	0.883	0.869
Creativity	0.856	0.901	0.887
Company Performance	0.873	0.911	0.899

All reliability coefficients exceed the 0.70 benchmark, indicating strong internal consistency for every construct. Company Performance records the highest composite reliability (0.911), while the remaining constructs also demonstrate excellent score stability and measurement precision.

**Table 2.** Convergent Validity

Construct	Loading Range	AVE
Ethical Leadership	0.742 – 0.851	0.629
Innovation Adoption	0.756 – 0.798	0.603
Creativity	0.751 – 0.847	0.648
Company Performance	0.791 – 0.859	0.671

All indicator loadings surpass 0.708 and each Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value is above the 0.50 threshold, demonstrating that the items capture a substantial proportion of their construct variance and confirming convergent validity.

Table 3. Fornell–Larcker Criterion

	EL	IA	CR	CP
EL	0.793			
IA	0.524	0.777		
CR	0.567	0.489	0.805	
CP	0.612	0.536	0.573	0.819

The square root of AVE for every construct (diagonal) is greater than its highest correlation with any other construct (off-diagonal), confirming that each latent variable is empirically distinct from the others.

Table 4. HTMT Ratios

	EL	IA	CR	CP
EL	–	0.618	0.671	0.726
IA	0.618	–	0.576	0.635
CR	0.671	0.576	–	0.678
CP	0.726	0.635	0.678	–

All Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratios fall below the conservative cut-off of 0.85, providing further evidence of discriminant validity and reinforcing the conclusion that the constructs do not overlap excessively.

Collectively, the reliability and validity results confirm that the measurement model satisfies recommended standards; therefore, the subsequent structural-path analysis can be interpreted with confidence that observed relationships are not artifacts of measurement error but reflect substantive dynamics within Indonesia's fast-fashion industries.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This study demonstrates that ethical leadership, innovation adoption, and creativity serve as critical determinants of company performance within Indonesia's fast-fashion industry, with all constructs exhibiting strong psychometric properties and meaningful theoretical relationships. The findings validate the importance of integrating these organizational capabilities as complementary resources that collectively enhance business outcomes rather than operating as isolated management practices, contributing empirical evidence to the literature on how leadership behavior, technological orientation, and creative capacity interact synergistically to drive competitive advantage.

Fast-fashion companies should prioritize developing ethical leadership capabilities among management teams, as these behaviors create foundational trust and organizational culture necessary for successful innovation implementation and creative expression.



Organizations should invest in comprehensive leadership development programs emphasizing moral decision-making and transparent communication, establish systematic innovation adoption processes that evaluate new technologies through structured frameworks, and create supportive environments that encourage experimentation and reward innovative thinking through formal recognition systems and career advancement opportunities. Additionally, companies should implement balanced performance measurement systems capturing both financial and non-financial outcomes while maintaining accountability for sustainable business practices.

Future research should explore mediating mechanisms through which these variables influence organizational outcomes, investigate moderating effects of organizational size and cultural factors, and examine longitudinal dynamics of how these capabilities evolve within fast-fashion companies. Scholars should consider expanding the framework to include environmental sustainability practices, supply chain transparency, and digital transformation initiatives, while conducting comparative studies across different cultural contexts to identify context-specific factors that influence the effectiveness of these organizational capabilities in driving superior performance outcomes.

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