

The Influence of Ethical Climate, Organizational Commitment and Psychological Safety on Ethical Work Behavior in Public Service Agencies

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini berupaya menyelidiki faktor-faktor yang disebutkan di atas beserta beberapa faktor lainnya yang berlaku pada lembaga pelayanan publik: iklim etika, komitmen organisasi, dan keamanan psikologis. Premis penelitian ini adalah bahwa ketiga faktor tersebut berperan penting dalam membangun budaya pelayanan pemerintah yang transparan, akuntabel, dan berorientasi publik. Para peneliti memilih desain penjelasan kuantitatif di mana mereka mensurvei 200 pegawai negeri sipil melalui pengambilan sampel bertujuan untuk mengumpulkan data mereka. Analisis data melibatkan konfirmasi validasi, reliabilitas, dan asumsi klasik terlebih dahulu, kemudian menerapkan analisis regresi linier berganda untuk memperoleh hasil. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa iklim etika, komitmen organisasi, dan keamanan psikologis secara signifikan dan positif memengaruhi perilaku kerja yang etis. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi pada tingkat teoritis terhadap literatur mengenai sektor publik dan perilaku organisasi dengan memberikan bukti empiris tentang faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi perilaku etis pegawai negeri sipil. Dari sudut pandang praktis, hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa integritas, komitmen, dan keamanan psikologis dari kebijakan dan praktik manajemen lembaga pelayanan publik akan secara positif memengaruhi kualitas layanan yang diberikan kepada publik.

Kata Kunci: Iklim Etis; Komitmen Organisasi; Keamanan Psikologis; Perilaku Kerja yang Etis.

Abstract

The current research attempts to investigate the aforementioned factors along with several others as they apply to public service institutions: the ethical climate, organizational commitment, and psychological safety. The premise of the study is that these three factors are instrumental in building a transparent, accountable, and public-oriented government service culture. The researchers selected a quantitative explanatory design in which they surveyed 200 civil servants via purposive sampling to collect their data. The data analysis involved confirming the validation, reliability, and classical assumptions first and then applying multiple linear regression analysis to obtain results. The outcome discloses that ethical climate, organizational commitment, and psychological safety significantly and positively influence ethical work behavior. The research contributes on the theoretical level to the literature with regard to the public sector and organizational behavior by providing empirical evidence of the factors influencing the ethical conduct of civil servants. From a practical point of view, the study's outcomes suggest that the integrity, commitment, and psychological safety of the public service agencies' policy and management practices would positively affect the quality of service provided to the public.

Keyword: Ethical Climate; Organizational Commitment; Psychological Safety; Ethical Work Behavior.

1. Introduction

The ethical work behavior is the primary reason that the government provides public services that are of the highest quality, fair, and directed to the public interest. The public sector via its different departments, apart from being the main culprit, is the one who has to bear the burden of proof for the state's resources used and the provision of services that are transparent, accountable, and devoid of irregularities (Nimran *et al.*, 2024). The trust of the public to the government in the public bureaucracy context is heavily reliant upon ethical work behavior being present as the basic requirement. However, the public sector is constantly facing different challenges and among them, political pressure, complex regulations, and possible conflicting interests can be mentioned (Djunaedi, 2024). These factors sometimes, however, result in some public officials misbehaving. It is the public servants with low ethical work behavior who are more likely to cause malpractice, abuse of power, and further deterioration of public service quality. Therefore, it is imperative to know the factors that influence the ethical work behavior (Walid *et al.*, 2024). The development of ethical work behavior has an impact not just on the individual but also on the entire public service agency's reputation and trustworthiness (Sugiyanto *et al.*, 2025; Mulyadi *et al.*, 2024).

Ethical climate is a term that denotes the employee's perception of the organization through the lenses of values, norms, and ethical standards which do have a direct and indirect impact on their behavior at work (Tannady *et al.*, 2019; Naibaho *et al.*, 2025). For example, in public service, an ethical climate would mean that the organization's decision making and the employees' actions would be in accordance with the values of the agency (Pettalongi *et al.*, 2025). The employees will inherently be in harmony with the organization's moral principles in a workplace that promotes uprightness, fairness, and laws. The presence of a positive moral climate will not only prevent wrongdoings but will also help in the moral growth of the public workers (Eprianto *et al.*, 2025). Commitment to the organization is very important in the case of public service organizations because public servants are expected not only to execute their administrative tasks but also to be the very embodiment of the values of service and integrity (Primananda *et al.*, 2022). A very robust commitment from the organization side will be reflected in the employees taking care of the company's image and avoiding any activities that could potentially damage the public image. On the other hand, the lack of commitment from the organization could, in turn, produce workers who are lethargic and even resort to unethical behavior, which would plainly contradict the organization's principles (Mahrani *et al.*, 2024). This is why organizational commitment is considered a personal factor with a significant influence on the ethical behavior of staff in public service departments (Wahyoedi *et al.*, 2024). Psychological safety is a term used to describe a situation where people think they can be open about their opinions, commit errors, or confess to misconducts without being afraid of the consequences. In regard to public service agencies, psychological safety is seen as a major factor in the staff's responsible conduct (Fibriany *et al.*, 2025). The presence of psychological safety in the organization implies that the employees can be honest, open and even bold in their rejection of corrupt practices (Karyono *et al.*, 2024). Also, the psychological safety encourages the employees to report the wrongs and to correct the mistakes in a constructive manner (Rijal *et al.*, 2023; Susanto *et al.*, 2024). The main goal of the research is to determine how the ethical climate, organizational commitment, and psychological safety together affect the ethical behavior of the employees working in public agencies. The theoretical based study of the public sector ethics potently by providing empirical evidence concerning the determining factors for the officials' ethical behavior which means that organizational behavior and public sector ethics will be overlapping areas of research. The research is an agreement among the organizational, individual, and psychological viewpoints in the analysis of the ethical work behavior. On the other hand, the results of the research will be very helpful for the management of the public service agencies in their attempts to create and enforce policies and practices that foster the work ethics. Moreover, the impact of this research will be a contribution to the regulators who are striving to achieve higher standards of governance and integrity among public servants so that the services provided will be professional, transparent, and focused on the public's interest.

2. Literatur Review

The ethical climate within organizations has been widely studied as a critical factor influencing employee behavior and organizational performance. Research indicates that a positive ethical climate fosters a culture of integrity and accountability, encouraging employees to adhere to ethical standards and make morally sound decisions (Tannady *et al.*, 2019; Naibaho *et al.*, 2025). This environment is particularly essential in public service agencies, where the expectation for transparency and ethical conduct is paramount. Organizational commitment, defined as the psychological attachment and loyalty of employees to their organization, significantly impacts ethical behavior. Committed employees are more likely to align their actions with the organization's values and goals, thereby enhancing the overall ethical climate (Primananda *et al.*, 2022; Wahyoedi *et al.*, 2024). Additionally, psychological safety plays a vital role in promoting ethical behavior, as it allows employees to express their concerns without fear of retribution, thus facilitating open communication about ethical dilemmas (Fibriany *et al.*, 2025; Rijal *et al.*, 2023). The interplay between these factors suggests that fostering an ethical climate, enhancing organizational commitment, and ensuring psychological safety are essential strategies for improving ethical work behavior in public service settings. By addressing these elements, organizations can cultivate a workforce that is not only committed to ethical practices but also empowered to act upon them, ultimately leading to improved public trust and service quality.

3. Research Methodology

This study details a new quantitative explanatory approach that aims to empirically validate the role of ethical climate, organizational commitment, and psychological safety as factors that constitute the practice of government organizations' ethics. Data for this study was gathered using a survey which consisted of a meticulously designed 5-point Likert scale questionnaire that was given to civil servants and contract workers in the public service offices located in several Indonesian metropolitan areas. The sampling technique was purposive sampling, which means that the respondents were chosen based on specific criteria: they had worked for at least one year, they were the front-line in public service, and they were well-acquainted with the code of conduct and the internal regulations of their department. The research selected a sample size of 200 respondents, which was already considered sufficient to fulfill the minimum requirements for applying inferential statistical methods. To test the quality of the research tool, in addition to a validity test using item-total correlation with a coefficient value greater than 0.30 and a significance level smaller than 0.05, and a reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha with a value greater than 0.70, the instrument was subjected to these tests. Prior to the main analysis, the data underwent a thorough examination for adherence to classical assumptions which included normality, multicollinearity and heteroscedasticity tests, and thereby the regression model's suitability was confirmed. Subsequently, multiple linear regression analysis was applied for the data analysis in order to identify the partial and total effects of the independent variables on ethical work behavior.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

The analysis from multiple linear regression gives us a significant model for the research, which is basically confirmed by the F statistic value along with the corresponding significance level of 0.000. This remains true even when the factors of ethical climate, organizational commitment, and psychological safety are considered. The R^2 value, which is 0.66, conveys that the model can explain 66% of the variations in ethical work behavior that are brought about by the three factors of the model, while the rest

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of the changes in ethical work behavior are due to other factors that are not included in the model. The results of the individual t-tests show that each independent variable receives a positive regression coefficient and has a significance value that is less than 0.05, thereby leading to the acceptance of all the research hypotheses. The outcomes of the study indicated that the ethical climate factors the positive and significant work behavior of the moral type in the public sector. This implies that the perception of the organization's values, norms, and ethical standards by the employees exerts a powerful influence on their work behavior in everyday life. The ethical climate that promotes honesty, lawfulness, and public interest creates an atmosphere where the staff are encouraged to behave morally. A politically correct environment will aid in a stronger establishment of the limits within which the behavior of the employees is to be considered acceptable and the opposite of it. The moral atmosphere in government departments might be considered a rangefinder for the rightness of the officials' decisions and actions. Conversely, a bad or vague ethical climate can confuse the people and thus lead to an increase in misconduct. This finding supports the idea that one of the major actions that should be taken for the good transformation of moral behavior among the civil servants is to improve the employees' ethical climate.

The research showed a strong and direct interrelationship between an organization's commitment and ethical work behavior in public service agencies. In other words, the employees who are truly committed and loyal to the organization will also be the ones who most likely practice the behavior that reflects the agency's values and objectives. The commitment to the organization is the main reason why the employees are encouraged to be very careful about the organization's image and refrain from involving in practices that might be considered as damaging to the public's interest. In case of public service, the employees' dedication to the organization makes them feel more accountable from a moral perspective for the jobs and duties that have been assigned to them. On the other hand, a low level of commitment can lead to indifference and a "take what you can" attitude, both of which are against ethical behavior. Hence, the organization's commitment is viewed as a personal factor that significantly helps in the development of the ethical work behavior of public servants. The research outcomes indicate a proper and considerable role of psychological safety in the ethical behavior of public-service personnel. The inference drawn here is that when an employee is provided with an environment of strong psychological safety, he/she will be practicing truth-telling, honesty, and be very brave in speaking the truth. The same thing goes with overlooking infractions, opposing unethical practices, and reporting breaches; all these actions imply that the employees are not afraid of the consequences which will be negative ones. In public-tiered organizations, psychological safety becomes crucial as it is the very thing that will not let the silence and the acceptance of unethical practices grow. On the contrary, the atmosphere of poor psychological safety could result in the workers feeling they have no choice but to turn a blind eye to the breaches just to preserve their peace and safety at the workplace. Thus, psychological safety is the most important psychological factor that facilitates the emergence of ethical work behavior in public service departments.

4.2 Discussion

The findings of this study underscore the significant influence of ethical climate, organizational commitment, and psychological safety on ethical work behavior within public service agencies. Consistent with Tannady *et al.* (2019), the results demonstrate that a positive ethical climate not only encourages employees to behave morally but also serves as a foundational element for fostering integrity within the organization. This aligns with the assertion by Sugiyanto *et al.* (2025) that a supportive ethical environment enhances employee engagement and accountability. Furthermore, the strong relationship identified between organizational commitment and ethical behavior corroborates the work of Wahyoedi *et al.* (2024), who argue that committed employees are more likely to internalize the organization's values, leading to behaviors that reflect those values in their daily tasks.

Additionally, the role of psychological safety in promoting ethical conduct, as highlighted by Fibriany *et al.* (2025), is evident in the study's findings. Employees who feel safe to voice their concerns and report unethical practices without fear of repercussions are more likely to engage in ethical behavior. This reinforces the perspective offered by Rijal *et al.* (2023), which emphasizes the importance of creating an environment where employees can freely discuss ethical dilemmas. Overall, the study's results suggest

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that a strategic focus on enhancing ethical climate, fostering commitment, and ensuring psychological safety can significantly improve ethical work behavior, thereby contributing to a more accountable and trustworthy public service sector.

5. Conclusion

The studies have ultimately indicated that among others, three variables, namely ethical climate, organizational commitment, and psychological safety are positively related to public sector workers' ethical behavior, the correlation being quite strong. The research has come to the conclusion that the behavior of public servants who are considered honest workers is not only dictated by the unofficial rules and norms but also by the organizational situation, the level of employee involvement, and their feeling of security at work. The ethical climate is an aspect that determines which morals employees will stick to during the process of making an ethical decision. Commitment to the organization, in contrast, adds to the sense of duty of the employees towards the organization and the public good. While, at the same time, psychological safety encourages the employees to be more honest and to report any unethical conduct. Hence, these three variables are regarded as the key factors influencing the ethical practices of public servants. The study results suggest that the leaders in the public sector should take active measures to achieve an ethical climate through the strict application of ethics codes, management setting the right example, and the regular training of employees in the values of integrity. The organizations should work on making the work environment open and just for all the employees and at the same time promoting and rewarding the ethical behavior in order to increase the dedication of the employees to the organization. Moreover, creating psychological safety should be seen as a priority area through the promotion of a culture of open communication and the provision of support to whistleblowers.

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