Journal of Management Archive
(2026). *3*(2), 67-82.
Conceptual article

e-ISSN: 3062-0511
URL: jomajournal.org
DOI: 10.70877/joma.51

A Proposed Model of the Relationship between Artificial Intelligence Acceptance and Innovative Work Behavior: The Moderating Role of Ethical Climate

Yavuz Selim ÖZYER[a]

A Proposed Model of the Relationship between Artificial Intelligence Acceptance and Innovative Work Behavior: The Moderating Role of Ethical Climate

Abstract

Background. Increasing integration of artificial intelligence into organizational processes has made employee acceptance an important research area. Although AI offers opportunities for efficiency and innovation, organizational outcomes depend on employees' technology use and workplace ethical guidance.

Aim. This study develops a conceptual model explaining the relationship between employees' AI acceptance and innovative work behavior and the moderating role of ethical climate.

Method. A proposition-based theoretical approach integrates the Technology Acceptance Model, Job Demands–Resources Model, and Social Information Processing Theory. AI acceptance is proposed to support innovative work behavior by making employees more willing to explore the technology's potential for developing new ideas and solutions, with ethical climate moderating the relationship between AI acceptance and innovative work behavior.

Findings. AI acceptance is proposed to positively influence innovative work behavior, with an organizational climate that upholds ethical principles strengthening this positive relationship.

Conclusion. Integrating the Technology Acceptance Model, Job Demands–Resources Model, and Social Information Processing Theory, the study contributes to organizational behavior literature and provides a theoretical foundation for empirical research testing the relationship between AI acceptance and innovative work behavior, alongside the moderating role of ethical climate, across organizational contexts.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence acceptance, innovative work behavior, ethical climate, Technology Acceptance Model, Job Demands–Resources Model.

Yapay Zeka Kabulü ve Yenilikçi İş Davranışı Arasındaki İlişkiye Yönelik Bir Model Önerisi: Etik İklimin Düzenleyici Rolü

Öz

Arka plan. Yapay zekanın örgütsel süreçlere giderek artan uyumu, çalışanların bu teknolojiyi benimsemesini önemli bir araştırma alanı haline getirmiştir. Yapay zeka, verimlilik ve yenilik açısından fırsatlar sunsa da örgütsel sonuçlar, çalışanların teknolojiyi kullanımına ve iş yerindeki etik rehberliğe bağlıdır.

Amaç. Bu çalışma, çalışanların yapay zeka kabulü ile yenilikçi iş davranışı arasındaki ilişkiyi ve etik iklimin bu ilişkideki düzenleyici rolünü açıklayan kavramsal bir model geliştirmektedir.

Yöntem. Önerme geliştirmeye dayalı kuramsal yaklaşım kapsamında Teknoloji Kabul Modeli, İş Talepleri–Kaynakları Modeli ve Sosyal Bilgi İşleme Kuramı bütünleştirilmiştir. Yapay zeka kabulünün, çalışanları bu teknolojinin yeni fikir ve çözümler geliştirme potansiyelini keşfetmeye daha istekli hale getirerek yenilikçi iş davranışını destekleyebileceği; etik iklimin ise yapay zeka kabulü ile yenilikçi iş davranışı arasındaki ilişkiyi düzenleyebileceği ileri sürülmektedir.

Bulgular. Yapay zeka kabulünün yenilikçi iş davranışını pozitif yönde etkileyeceği ve etik ilkeleri gözeten bir örgütsel iklimin bu pozitif ilişkiyi güçlendireceği öne sürülmektedir.

Sonuç. Teknoloji Kabul Modeli, İş Talepleri–Kaynakları Modeli ve Sosyal Bilgi İşleme Kuramı'nı bütünleştiren çalışma, örgütsel davranış literatürüne katkı sunmakta ve yapay zeka kabulü ile yenilikçi iş davranışı arasındaki ilişkinin farklı örgütsel bağlamlarda etik iklimin düzenleyici rolüyle birlikte sınanmasına yönelik görgül araştırmalara kuramsal bir temel oluşturmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yapay zeka kabulü, yenilikçi iş davranışı, etik iklim, Teknoloji Kabul Modeli, İş Talepleri-Kaynakları Modeli.

Özyer, Y. S. (2026). A proposed model of the relationship between artificial intelligence acceptance and innovative work behavior: The moderating role of ethical climate. *Journal of Management Archive, 3*(2), 67-82. https://doi.org/10.70877/joma.51

[a] Corresponding author, PhD Student, Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University, Graduate Education Institute, Department of Management and Organization, ORCID: 0009-0002-1050-8484, e-Mail: yavuzselimozyer@gmail.com

Submission [Başvuru]: 31.08.2026 Revised [Düzeltme]: 11.10.2026 Acceptance [Kabul]: 15.10.2026

1. Introduction

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies into organizational decision-making and information-processing processes is transforming how employees perform their tasks and make decisions. AI systems can rapidly analyze large volumes of data and support employees facing complex problems by providing comprehensive data analyses to inform their decisions (Jarrahi, 2018). However, the benefits these systems offer organizations depend not only on their technical capabilities but also on employees' ability to understand, accept, and effectively use them in work processes. Assessing the organizational role of AI therefore requires consideration of human–AI collaboration and how AI generates value in conjunction with human capabilities. In this context, employees' acceptance of AI and their ability to collaborate with it are important considerations in realizing organizational benefits from technological investments (Makarius et al., 2020).

The Technology Acceptance Model provides an important theoretical foundation for understanding employees' acceptance of AI systems, conceptualized in this study as their willingness to use these technologies. The model posits that individuals' willingness to accept a technology is primarily shaped by perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Davis, 1989). When employees believe that AI will improve their job performance and that using it will not require excessive effort, they become more willing to integrate the technology into their work processes. From this perspective, *AI acceptance* encompasses not only the intention to use a new technology but also the extent to which employees perceive technological systems as meaningful and useful tools for performing their tasks (Choi, 2021). In workplace settings, this acceptance concerns employees' willingness and intention to incorporate AI into their work (Nguyen et al., 2026). As employees' perceptions of AI's usefulness and ease of use become more favorable, they are expected to use these systems more effectively, explore alternative applications, and make fuller use of the opportunities the technology offers (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000).

One potential organizational outcome of AI acceptance is the enhancement of employees' innovative work behavior. *Innovative work behavior* refers to a multidimensional process encompassing the generation and promotion of new ideas, the mobilization of support, and efforts to translate these ideas into everyday work practices (Scott & Bruce, 1994; Qian et al., 2025). From the perspective of the Job Demands–Resources Model, AI can be conceptualized as a potential technological job resource that may facilitate time-consuming tasks such as data classification, reporting, information search, summarization, and routine problem-solving. This perspective provides a basis for understanding the resource-related benefits employees may anticipate from AI (Demerouti et al., 2001). In the present study, the proposed link with innovative work behavior centers on employees' willingness to explore the technology's potential for developing new ideas and solutions. Employees who accept AI may be more open to considering alternative approaches to work and proposing improvements that draw on its perceived capabilities. Research on AI use and innovation provides related evidence concerning the technology's potential contribution to innovative activities (Zhang et al., 2025); however, the present model focuses on acceptance as willingness to use AI and does not equate it with actual use or realized resource gains.

However, innovations arising from AI acceptance cannot be assumed to automatically yield positive and organizationally desirable outcomes. AI-supported innovation initiatives may entail various ethical risks, including the unauthorized use of personal data, the reproduction of algorithmic

biases, reduced transparency in decision-making, and ambiguity regarding responsibility (Mittelstadt et al., 2016). If employees disregard ethical boundaries to obtain faster results or meet performance targets, the technology's potential for innovation may become a source of organizational and societal harm. Accordingly, innovative work behavior concerns the generation, promotion, and implementation of new ideas, whereas principles of fairness, transparency, privacy, accountability, and nonmaleficence provide ethical guidance for the pursuit of such initiatives (Floridi et al., 2018; Hagendorff, 2020; Jobin et al., 2019).

In this context, ethical climate becomes important as an organizational mechanism that defines the boundaries within which the relationship between AI acceptance and innovative work behavior unfolds. *Ethical climate* refers to employees' shared perceptions of appropriate conduct and the criteria for addressing ethical issues, as reflected in organizational values, practices, and procedures (Victor & Cullen, 1988; Alimov et al., 2026). According to Social Information Processing Theory, employees shape their attitudes and behaviors not only through individual preferences but also by interpreting social cues from their work environment (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). Organizational messages concerning fairness, accountability, transparency, and nonmaleficence may therefore clarify which innovative initiatives are considered acceptable, helping employees who are willing to use AI evaluate potential new ideas and solutions. A strong ethical climate may thus serve as a guide that directs innovation toward safe practices aligned with organizational values, rather than as a rigid control mechanism that suppresses innovative work behavior (Lythreatis et al., 2024).

The existing literature has predominantly examined AI acceptance in terms of behavioral intention and individual perceptions of usefulness, whereas the relationship between AI and innovative work behavior has generally been addressed in terms of the cognitive and work-related resources the technology provides. Research on ethical climate has extensively examined outcomes such as ethical behavior, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and workplace deviance (Parboteeah et al., 2024). Taken together, these research streams indicate a need for an integrated theoretical approach that explains how AI acceptance translates into innovative work behavior and how ethical climate shapes this process. This study addresses that theoretical need by proposing that an ethical climate emphasizing shared ethical principles may strengthen the relationship between AI acceptance and innovative work behavior by clarifying acceptable conduct and reducing uncertainty surrounding AI-supported initiatives.

This study aims to develop an original conceptual model explaining the relationship between employees' AI acceptance and innovative work behavior and the moderating role of ethical climate. The model integrates the Technology Acceptance Model, the Job Demands–Resources Model, and Social Information Processing Theory within a single explanatory framework. The Technology Acceptance Model explains how perceived usefulness and ease of use shape employees' willingness to use AI. The Job Demands–Resources Model complements this perspective by providing a basis for understanding AI as a potential technological job resource that may support task performance and innovative activities. Drawing on these perspectives, this study proposes that employees who are willing to use AI may be more open to exploring its potential for addressing work-related problems and considering new ideas and solutions. The proposed relationship therefore concerns employees' acceptance of AI without assuming that this willingness necessarily entails actual use or realized resource gains. Social Information Processing Theory explains how shared cues from the work environment may shape employees' responses to these possibilities. Ethical climate provides

guidance about acceptable conduct, helping employees assess which initiatives would be appropriate to develop, promote, and implement. By clarifying ethical expectations and reducing uncertainty surrounding potential initiatives, an organizational climate that emphasizes shared ethical principles and stakeholder well-being may strengthen the relationship between AI acceptance and innovative work behavior. Together, these perspectives provide the theoretical rationale for the proposed positive relationship and the moderating role of ethical climate.

The following sections first examine the theoretical foundations of AI acceptance, innovative work behavior, and ethical climate. The relationships among these constructs are then elaborated, followed by the research propositions and conceptual model. Finally, the study's theoretical contributions, practical implications, limitations, and directions for future empirical research are discussed.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1. Artificial Intelligence Acceptance

Artificial intelligence (AI) encompasses technologies designed to perform functions associated with human cognition, such as learning, perception, decision-making, and problem-solving, through computer systems (Lieto et al., 2018). Through their capacity to process information and generate solutions to diverse problems, these technologies augment existing human capabilities and can transform how tasks are performed. The influence of AI extends beyond the automation of specific operations to the reshaping of individuals' roles in everyday life and work settings. Accordingly, the development of AI is significant not only in terms of advances in technical capabilities but also in terms of how people can benefit from these capabilities and adapt to changing circumstances (Tegmark, 2018).

AI acceptance can be understood as individuals' willingness to engage with AI-based systems and embrace their use (Gursoy et al., 2019). This willingness extends beyond awareness of the technology or knowledge of its capabilities, reflecting an individual orientation toward making use of it. In organizational settings, AI acceptance can be assessed in terms of employees' openness to using AI tools in their work tasks and benefiting from the opportunities they offer. However, acceptance is distinct from actual use behavior: willingness to use a technology does not, in itself, indicate that it is used regularly and effectively. The construct therefore draws attention to pre-use evaluations and behavioral orientations as a basis for understanding individuals' prospective engagement with the technology (Batuk et al., 2025).

The anticipated benefits of AI and the potential difficulties associated with its use play an important role in shaping acceptance. Perceiving AI as useful and easy to use can foster favorable attitudes toward these systems and strengthen intentions to use them (Choung et al., 2023). For employees, these evaluations concern the extent to which the technology facilitates task performance, supports access to work-related information, and fits existing work practices. However, high expectations of the technology's contribution do not imply that all concerns about its use have been resolved. Alongside potential gains, users also assess the problems they may encounter and the resources available to address them. Indeed, research on managers' use of AI indicates that perceived benefits, personal concerns, and organizational conditions that support use should be considered jointly (Cao et al., 2021).

The AI acceptance process is also associated with emotional responses and trust, alongside functional evaluations. The association of positive attitudes toward AI with personal and societal benefits, and of negative attitudes with concerns, suggests that users may simultaneously hold differing evaluations of the technology (Schepman & Rodway, 2020). An employee may therefore believe that AI will facilitate their work while remaining concerned about the reliability of its outputs or the potential consequences of its use. This suggests that acceptance cannot be explained solely by emphasizing the technology's benefits. Users' ability to understand how the system works and to trust the consistency of its outputs is also important (Glikson & Woolley, 2020).

Overall, AI acceptance represents the link between the capabilities offered by the technology and individuals' willingness to make use of them. How this willingness translates into work processes should be considered alongside the way human–AI interaction is structured (Duan et al., 2019). Evidence that AI assistance can enhance employee creativity under certain conditions draws attention to the connection between the use of the technology and the generation of new ideas. This connection provides a starting point for extending the discussion of AI acceptance to innovative work behavior (Jia et al., 2024).

2.2. Innovative Work Behavior

Innovative work behavior refers to employees' generation of new ideas, introduction of these ideas into the organization, and actions toward their implementation to improve their work and organizational processes. The construct encompasses individual behaviors directed toward developing, promoting, or applying innovations that may benefit different levels of the organization (Kleysen & Street, 2001). In this context, employees act as active agents who question existing practices, assess opportunities for improvement, and contribute to change. Innovation may concern not only a product but also a work method, service delivery, or a managerial process. Whereas creativity focuses on developing novel and useful ideas, innovation also encompasses putting those ideas into practice. It is therefore important to distinguish conceptually between idea generation and innovation implementation (Rank et al., 2004).

The organizational significance of innovative work behavior becomes evident in how employees engage with everyday work problems and the extent to which they participate in finding solutions. Job design that enables employees to engage in a variety of tasks, together with their perceptions of human resource practices, is associated with involvement in innovative activities through their ownership of work-related problems (Dorenbosch et al., 2005). However, the emergence of a suggestion does not necessarily mean that it will be implemented within the organization. Sharing, evaluating, and implementing an idea require support from the work environment as well as individual effort. Indeed, idea suggestion has been found to be more strongly associated with individual characteristics and job attributes, whereas group- and organizational-level conditions are stronger predictors of idea implementation. This distinction suggests that different stages of innovative work behavior may be supported by different conditions (Axtell et al., 2000).

Employees' assessments of the potential consequences of their suggestions play an important role in their engagement in innovative work behavior. Expectations that innovation will improve job performance, along with beliefs that it may enhance or undermine their image within the organization, are associated with innovative work behavior (Yuan & Woodman, 2010). Accordingly, this behavior involves not only identifying a technically useful solution but also evaluating the personal and social

consequences of putting it forward. Whether employees view innovation as part of their responsibilities is also relevant in this regard. What matters is not merely their capacity to innovate but also their perceived obligation to contribute to improvements in their work. The association between felt obligation to innovate and innovative work behavior supports the relevance of employees' sense of responsibility toward their work in explaining this behavior (Ramamoorthy et al., 2005).

The work environment in which innovative work behavior occurs shapes employees' latitude for action and their access to opportunities to develop their ideas. Job autonomy is positively associated with innovative work behavior, both directly and indirectly through work engagement, whereas the corresponding associations for job insecurity are negative (De Spiegelaere et al., 2014). These findings suggest that innovative contributions cannot be assessed independently of how employees experience their work. When employees are expected to develop new solutions, the work arrangements that enable them to do so must also be considered. A systematic review of human resource practices identifies training and development, feedback, autonomy, job security, and task arrangements among the practices that can support innovative work behavior. This highlights the importance of considering individual initiative alongside organizational opportunities (Bos-Nehles et al., 2017).

Overall, innovative work behavior represents a form of contribution in which individual initiative intersects with workplace relationships and the conditions for implementation. The association of trust with innovative work behavior through interpersonal connectivity and *thriving at work*—employees' joint experience of vitality and learning—highlights the social dimension of this behavior (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009). Nevertheless, innovative initiatives cannot always be expected to yield unproblematic outcomes for employees. New suggestions may be accompanied by conflict with coworkers, making the way contributions and rewards are evaluated relevant as well. The finding that perceived distributive justice weakens the positive relationship between innovative work behavior and conflict with coworkers supports the consideration of fairness when assessing the social consequences of innovation and provides a basis for discussing the organization's ethical environment (Shih & Susanto, 2011).

2.3. Ethical Climate

Ethical climate refers to employees' shared perceptions of how right and wrong conduct is evaluated within an organization and the criteria used to address ethical issues. These perceptions reflect how organizational practices and decisions are interpreted from an ethical standpoint, providing employees with a frame of reference for their behavior (Simha & Cullen, 2012). The construct therefore extends beyond individuals' personal moral preferences to encompass the behavioral standards accepted within the work environment. In this regard, the justifications employees consider legitimate when making decisions and their perceptions of what the organization expects of them become particularly relevant. Although ethical climate is closely related to ethical culture, the two are not synonymous; they represent interconnected yet distinguishable aspects of an organization's ethical environment (Treviño et al., 1998).

The content of ethical climate can be understood in terms of how employees recognize ethical issues, evaluate them, and incorporate these evaluations into their behavior. Collective moral sensitivity, moral judgment, moral motivation, and moral character are among the dimensions used

to assess the ethical work environment (Arnaud, 2010). From this perspective, recognizing a decision's effects on others and prioritizing conduct regarded as morally right are complementary attributes. The behaviors employees encounter in their everyday interactions are also important for understanding the ethical environment. For example, taking responsibility, coworkers' ethical conduct, and the consequences of misconduct provide concrete indications of how ethical expectations are perceived within the organization. Research involving marketing employees has examined trust and responsibility, the ethicality of coworkers' behavior, and the perceived consequences of ethical violations in this context (Babin et al., 2000).

The development of ethical climate depends in part on whether an organization's stated principles are reflected in everyday practices. The enforcement of codes of ethics and the discussion of ethical issues in the workplace are positively associated with employees' internalization of these codes, which, in turn, is positively associated with perceptions of ethical climate (Schwepker & Hartline, 2005). Accordingly, attention should be given not only to the existence of a written code of ethics but also to how it is used in the workplace. Managers' decisions, their treatment of employees, and their responses to misconduct help employees understand the behavioral expectations prevailing within the organization (Özyer & Develi, 2026). Employees can thereby assess the practical importance of ethical principles. Evidence supporting the mediating role of ethical climate in the relationship between ethical leadership and employee misconduct highlights the importance of considering managerial behavior alongside the shared work environment (Mayer et al., 2010).

Ethical climate is also associated with employees' attitudes toward their jobs and organizations. A study of telecommunications companies in Türkiye found that an ethical climate emphasizing self-interest was negatively associated with job satisfaction, whereas climates emphasizing team interest, social responsibility, and professional principles were positively associated with it (Elçi & Alpkan, 2009). These differences suggest that ethical climate should not be treated as a uniform attribute that produces identical outcomes across contexts. The interests and behavioral criteria prioritized within an organization matter for the nature of employees' relationships with it. Indeed, a benevolent climate is positively associated with organizational commitment, whereas an egoistic climate is negatively associated with it; the association between a principled climate and commitment, however, may vary according to employees' professional status (Cullen et al., 2003). Accordingly, the positive moderating effect proposed in this study pertains to ethical climates that emphasize shared ethical principles and stakeholder well-being; it is not intended as a general claim about all ethical climate types.

Overall, ethical climate makes explicit the shared ethical criteria employees draw upon when evaluating their decisions and organizational relationships. However, the translation of ethical judgments into behavior is also shaped by collective moral emotions and a shared belief in the capacity to act ethically (Arnaud & Schminke, 2012). Ethical climate should therefore not be viewed as the sole determinant of behavior. Understanding how employees evaluate organizational practices from the standpoint of responsibility requires consideration of both their personal judgments and the expectations they perceive in their work environment. The finding that climates emphasizing social responsibility and rules can moderate the relationship between personal ethical judgments and intentions to engage in a questionable practice underscores the importance of ethical climate in understanding the organizational context of individual decisions (Barnett & Vaicys, 2000).

2.4. Model and Proposition Development

The proposed relationships among AI acceptance, innovative work behavior, and ethical climate can be explained through an integrated approach drawing on the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989), the Job Demands–Resources Model (Demerouti et al., 2001), and Social Information Processing Theory (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). These perspectives explain why employees accept AI, how the opportunities afforded by the technology can translate into innovative work behavior, and how the organizational environment can shape this process. The model thus brings together individuals' willingness to accept the technology, the resources that support innovative initiatives, and organizational ethical expectations within a single explanatory framework.

The Technology Acceptance Model posits that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are key determinants of individuals' acceptance of a technology. *Perceived usefulness* refers to the belief that using the technology will enhance job performance, whereas *perceived ease of use* refers to the belief that its use will require little effort (Davis, 1989). From this perspective, employees who believe that AI will facilitate access to information, enable them to perform their work more effectively, and help them solve problems are expected to be more willing to use these systems. Perceiving the technology as easy to learn and manageable to use may further support this willingness.

The Job Demands–Resources Model explains working conditions in terms of *job demands*, which require sustained effort and entail certain costs, and *job resources*, which facilitate the achievement of work goals, can reduce the costs associated with demands, and support development (Demerouti et al., 2001). Within this framework, AI can be conceptualized as a potential technological job resource because of its capacity to support information processing, comparisons, and routine operations. This perspective helps identify the opportunities AI may offer for addressing work demands and supporting innovative activities. However, the availability of such opportunities does not mean that employees have already obtained additional time or cognitive resources. The relevance of this perspective to the proposed model lies in identifying the potential of the technology that employees are willing to explore, without treating AI acceptance itself as a job resource or a realized resource gain.

Taken together, these two perspectives explain different but connected parts of the proposed relationship: the Technology Acceptance Model accounts for employees' willingness to use AI, whereas the Job Demands–Resources Model explains the resource benefits that may arise when this willingness translates into actual use. AI acceptance is therefore treated as an antecedent of engagement with a technological job resource, rather than as a job resource in itself. Employees who accept AI may seek to incorporate it into their tasks when the necessary access and opportunities are available; acceptance alone, however, does not ensure actual use or generate time and cognitive resources. In the proposed model, actual use forms part of the theoretical explanation linking AI acceptance to innovative work behavior, although it is not specified as a separate mediating variable. The anticipated resource gains depend on employees using AI in ways appropriate to their tasks, critically evaluating its outputs, and integrating the information obtained with their professional experience.

For innovative work behavior, the significance of AI acceptance lies in employees' openness to exploring new possibilities for improving their work. Employees who are willing to use AI may be more inclined to question existing practices and consider how the technology could contribute to

alternative solutions. This openness may encourage them to formulate ideas for improving work processes, discuss these ideas with coworkers, and seek support for their implementation. For example, an employee who recognizes AI's potential to support information processing may propose a new approach to organizing information or addressing a recurring work problem. Such initiatives reflect an openness to exploring the technology's potential, while their development and implementation also depend on organizational opportunities and support. On these grounds, AI acceptance is proposed to positively influence innovative work behavior, as employees who are willing to use AI may be more inclined to explore its potential, develop ideas for improving work practices, and seek support for putting these ideas into practice.

Social Information Processing Theory posits that individuals draw on information from their social environment when forming work-related attitudes and interpreting their work environment (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). From this perspective, ethical climate provides shared cues about which initiatives are considered appropriate and how they are likely to be evaluated. Managers' decisions, coworkers' reactions, and organizational practices communicate expectations that guide employees in developing and advancing new ideas. For employees who accept AI, these cues may clarify how their openness to emerging possibilities aligns with organizational expectations. Ethical climate thus provides an organizational context that may reinforce the positive relationship between AI acceptance and innovative work behavior.

The proposed moderating mechanism concerns how shared ethical expectations may strengthen the relationship between employees' acceptance of AI and their innovative work behavior. AI acceptance reflects a favorable orientation toward AI and an openness to its potential, which may encourage employees to consider new approaches and challenge established practices. An ethical climate emphasizing shared ethical principles and stakeholder well-being provides guidance for evaluating the appropriateness and potential consequences of innovative initiatives. Such guidance may reduce uncertainty and help employees recognize which ideas are consistent with organizational values and responsibilities.

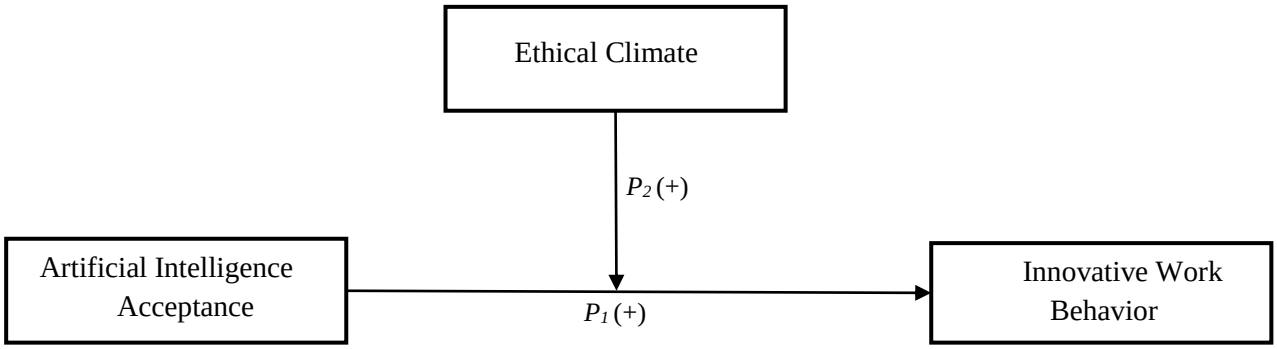
Ethical climate may also facilitate the social processes involved in promoting and implementing innovative ideas. When ethical expectations are clearly communicated and consistently reflected in organizational practices, employees may better anticipate how their proposals will be evaluated by coworkers and managers. Shared evaluative criteria can make it easier to articulate the value of new ideas, address potential concerns, and seek organizational support. These conditions may encourage employees who accept AI to express their innovative orientations more actively through idea generation, idea promotion, and idea implementation.

Accordingly, the positive relationship between AI acceptance and innovative work behavior is expected to be stronger in organizations characterized by a supportive ethical climate. When managers address ethical concerns constructively and demonstrate consistency between ethical principles and organizational practices, employees may perceive a more predictable and supportive environment for pursuing innovative initiatives. In this context, ethical climate strengthens the extent to which employees' favorable orientation toward AI is associated with innovative work behavior. This positive moderating effect is particularly relevant to ethical climates emphasizing shared principles and stakeholder well-being, which may provide the normative guidance necessary to encourage innovative behavior.

Based on these theoretical arguments, the following two propositions are advanced for the research model, which is shown in Figure 1:

Figure 1

Proposed Research Model



***P₁*:** Artificial intelligence acceptance will have a positive effect on employees' innovative work behavior. Specifically, employees who perceive AI as useful and easy to use are expected to be more willing to incorporate it into their work processes and explore its potential for generating new ideas and developing innovative solutions.

***P₂*:** Ethical climate will positively moderate the relationship between artificial intelligence acceptance and innovative work behavior. Specifically, this positive relationship is expected to be stronger in organizational climates that emphasize shared ethical principles and stakeholder well-being, as clear and consistent ethical expectations may reduce uncertainty surrounding AI-supported initiatives and facilitate the development, promotion, and implementation of innovative ideas by employees who are willing to engage with AI.

3. Discussions and Conclusion

This study has examined the relationship between employees' AI acceptance and innovative work behavior, as well as the moderating role of ethical climate, in contemporary work environments where AI is becoming increasingly prominent. By focusing on AI acceptance as a favorable orientation toward AI, the study has explored its theoretical relationship with employees' generation, promotion, and implementation of innovative ideas, while considering the role of ethical climate in strengthening this relationship. In this context, an original research model has been developed by integrating perspectives from the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989), the Job Demands–Resources Model (Demerouti et al., 2001), and Social Information Processing Theory (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978).

Consistent with the propositions developed, AI acceptance is expected to be positively associated with innovative work behavior, as employees with favorable attitudes toward AI may be more open to new perspectives, recognize opportunities for improvement, and engage in the development of innovative ideas. However, the strength of this relationship is expected to vary according to the organization's ethical climate. An ethical climate emphasizing shared ethical principles and stakeholder well-being is expected to strengthen the positive relationship between AI acceptance and innovative work behavior by clarifying organizational expectations and reducing uncertainty surrounding innovative initiatives. Rather than functioning as a rigid control mechanism that restricts

innovation, such a climate may provide a supportive environment in which employees are encouraged to generate, promote, and implement new ideas. These conceptual conclusions offer several theoretical and practical implications for the literature and organizational practice.

3.1. Theoretical Contributions

This study contributes to organizational behavior research by connecting AI acceptance, innovative work behavior, and ethical climate within an integrated explanatory framework. The theoretical gap addressed concerns how employees' willingness to use AI may translate into innovative work behavior and how organizational ethical expectations may shape the strength of this relationship.

First, the model connects the explanation of AI acceptance with its potential behavioral consequences. Whereas acceptance concerns employees' willingness to engage with the technology, innovative work behavior involves developing, promoting, and implementing new ideas. The study explains the connection between these constructs by proposing that acceptance may encourage appropriate AI use, through which employees can gain time and cognitive resources for innovative activities. This account preserves the distinction between acceptance and actual use: acceptance provides an initial orientation toward the technology, while resource benefits depend on how it is used.

Second, the model extends the discussion of AI and innovation by considering the organizational conditions under which technological resource gains may support innovative work behavior. Access to time and cognitive resources does not, by itself, explain whether employees will pursue new ideas. Employees also interpret workplace expectations when deciding which initiatives to propose and implement. Integrating the Job Demands–Resources Model with Social Information Processing Theory therefore connects the availability of resources with the ethical guidance that may facilitate their application to innovation.

Third, the study positions ethical climate as a boundary condition in the relationship between AI acceptance and innovative work behavior. Its contribution goes beyond considering whether ethical climate is associated with innovation: it explains why the positive relationship between acceptance and innovative behavior may be stronger when ethical expectations are clear and consistently upheld. Such expectations may reduce uncertainty about acceptable AI-supported initiatives and facilitate their development and implementation. The model thus specifies a proposed moderating mechanism without treating the ethical quality of innovation as equivalent to the extent of innovative work behavior. Together, these contributions provide an integrated theoretical basis for the two propositions and their subsequent empirical examination.

3.2. Practical Implications

As the integration of algorithmic systems into work processes accelerates, this study's implications offer practical strategies to guide both managers and employees.

3.2.1. Implications for Managers

Organizational managers should recognize that fostering AI acceptance requires not only highlighting the potential benefits of AI but also establishing a supportive and ethically responsible work environment. As a concrete step, managers should clearly communicate organizational

expectations concerning fairness, transparency, accountability, and nonmaleficence to provide employees with guidance when developing and advancing innovative ideas.

Furthermore, performance management systems that prioritize only speed and efficiency in evaluating innovative contributions should be reconsidered. Such narrow criteria may encourage employees to overlook ethical considerations in pursuing new ideas. Instead, multidimensional evaluation mechanisms should be developed that recognize professional diligence, responsible decision-making, and the alignment of innovative initiatives with organizational values. Managers' decisions and the ways in which ethical concerns are addressed in the workplace can reinforce shared expectations and create an environment in which employees with favorable attitudes toward AI feel more confident in generating, promoting, and implementing innovative ideas.

3.2.2. Implications for Employees

Employees should regard AI as a technological job resource that reduces routine workloads and helps conserve cognitive energy, rather than as an ultimate authority to which they delegate decision-making. Resource gains from using the technology for repetitive tasks, such as data classification, reporting, or information search, should be directed toward questioning existing work processes, developing alternative solutions, and generating new ideas.

However, employees should avoid the pitfall of shifting responsibility to the technology for innovative ideas developed with AI assistance. As a practical measure, employees should subject AI outputs to moral and professional judgment, assessing their alignment with ethical principles such as transparency, fairness, and data privacy before integrating them into work processes. Taking coworkers' potential reactions and the organization's shared moral values into account when developing concrete proposals and implementing them may enhance the success of innovative work behavior.

3.3. Limitations

This study has several limitations. The primary limitation is that it presents a conceptual model developed through a proposition-based approach, and the proposed relationships among the constructs have not yet been empirically tested. Although the model rests on a well-grounded theoretical foundation, its predictions require validation using data collected in organizational settings. A second limitation is the exclusive focus on the moderating role of ethical climate as a contextual mechanism shaping employees' engagement in technological innovation. Other contextual and structural factors, such as autonomy, job security, human resource practices, and leadership styles, fall outside the scope of this study.

3.4. Directions for Further Research

Several directions for future research can be identified. First, researchers should empirically test the proposed conceptual model across different organizational contexts through field studies or surveys. Examining the moderating effect of ethical climate would provide empirical evidence on whether shared ethical principles and stakeholder well-being strengthen the positive relationship between AI acceptance and innovative work behavior.

Further research could also investigate how AI acceptance relates to each dimension of innovative work behavior, including idea generation, promotion, and implementation. Finally, longitudinal research designs could offer valuable insights into how employees' acceptance of AI and their

innovative work behavior evolve over time. Such designs would also help clarify the direction of the proposed relationship and provide a stronger basis for causal inference.

References

Alimov, B., Park, T., & Dadaboyev, S. M. U. (2026). Ethical climate and innovative behavior: The mediating role of ethical conduct. *Frontiers in Psychology, 17*, Article 1735002. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2026.1735002

Arnaud, A. (2010). Conceptualizing and measuring ethical work climate: Development and validation of the Ethical Climate Index. *Business & Society, 49*(2), 345–358. https://doi.org/10.1177/0007650310362865

Arnaud, A., & Schminke, M. (2012). The ethical climate and context of organizations: A comprehensive model. *Organization Science, 23*(6), 1767–1780. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1110.0698

Axtell, C. M., Holman, D. J., Unsworth, K. L., Wall, T. D., Waterson, P. E., & Harrington, E. (2000). Shopfloor innovation: Facilitating the suggestion and implementation of ideas. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 73*(3), 265–285. https://doi.org/10.1348/096317900167029

Babin, B. J., Boles, J. S., & Robin, D. P. (2000). Representing the perceived ethical work climate among marketing employees. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 28*(3), 345–358. https://doi.org/10.1177/0092070300283004

Barnett, T., & Vaicys, C. (2000). The moderating effect of individuals' perceptions of ethical work climate on ethical judgments and behavioral intentions. *Journal of Business Ethics, 27*(4), 351–362. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1006382407821

Batuk, B., Aktu, Y., & Türk, N. (2025). Yapay zeka kabul ölçeği kısa formu'nun psikometrik özelliklerinin incelenmesi. *Çukurova Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi, 34*(Uygarlığın Dönüşümü: Yapay Zekâ), 438–451. https://doi.org/10.35379/cusosbil.1695975

Bos-Nehles, A., Renkema, M., & Janssen, M. (2017). HRM and innovative work behaviour: A systematic literature review. *Personnel Review, 46*(7), 1228–1253. https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-09-2016-0257

Cao, G., Duan, Y., Edwards, J. S., & Dwivedi, Y. K. (2021). Understanding managers' attitudes and behavioral intentions towards using artificial intelligence for organizational decision-making. *Technovation, 106*, Article 102312. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.technovation.2021.102312

Carmeli, A., & Spreitzer, G. M. (2009). Trust, connectivity, and thriving: Implications for innovative behaviors at work. *The Journal of Creative Behavior, 43*(3), 169–191. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2162-6057.2009.tb01313.x

Choi, Y. (2021). A study of employee acceptance of artificial intelligence technology. *European Journal of Management and Business Economics, 30*(3), 318–330. https://doi.org/10.1108/EJMBE-06-2020-0158

Choung, H., David, P., & Ross, A. (2023). Trust in AI and its role in the acceptance of AI technologies. *International Journal of Human–Computer Interaction, 39*(9), 1727–1739. https://doi.org/10.1080/10447318.2022.2050543

Cullen, J. B., Parboteeah, K. P., & Victor, B. (2003). The effects of ethical climates on organizational commitment: A two-study analysis. *Journal of Business Ethics, 46*(2), 127–141. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1025089819456

Davis, F. D. (1989). Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of information technology. *MIS Quarterly, 13*(3), 319–340. https://doi.org/10.2307/249008

Demerouti, E., Bakker, A. B., Nachreiner, F., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2001). The job demands–resources model of burnout. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 86*(3), 499–512. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.86.3.499

De Spiegelaere, S., Van Gyes, G., De Witte, H., Niesen, W., & Van Hootegem, G. (2014). On the relation of job insecurity, job autonomy, innovative work behaviour and the mediating effect of work engagement. *Creativity and Innovation Management, 23*(3), 318–330. https://doi.org/10.1111/caim.12079

Dorenbosch, L., van Engen, M. L., & Verhagen, M. (2005). On-the-job innovation: The impact of job design and human resource management through production ownership. *Creativity and Innovation Management, 14*(2), 129–141. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1476-8691.2005.00333.x

Duan, Y., Edwards, J. S., & Dwivedi, Y. K. (2019). Artificial intelligence for decision making in the era of Big Data—Evolution, challenges and research agenda. *International Journal of Information Management, 48*, 63–71. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2019.01.021

Elçi, M., & Alpkan, L. (2009). The impact of perceived organizational ethical climate on work satisfaction. *Journal of Business Ethics, 84*(3), 297–311. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-008-9709-0

Floridi, L., Cowls, J., Beltrametti, M., Chatila, R., Chazerand, P., Dignum, V., Luetge, C., Madelin, R., Pagallo, U., Rossi, F., Schafer, B., Valcke, P., & Vayena, E. (2018). AI4People—An ethical framework for a good AI society: Opportunities, risks, principles, and recommendations. *Minds and Machines, 28*(4), 689–707. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11023-018-9482-5

Glikson, E., & Woolley, A. W. (2020). Human trust in artificial intelligence: Review of empirical research. *Academy of Management Annals, 14*(2), 627–660. https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2018.0057

Gursoy, D., Chi, O. H., Lu, L., & Nunkoo, R. (2019). Consumers acceptance of artificially intelligent (AI) device use in service delivery. *International Journal of Information Management, 49*, 157–169. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2019.03.008

Hagendorff, T. (2020). The ethics of AI ethics: An evaluation of guidelines. *Minds and Machines, 30*(1), 99–120. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11023-020-09517-8

Jarrahi, M. H. (2018). Artificial intelligence and the future of work: Human-AI symbiosis in organizational decision making. *Business Horizons, 61*(4), 577–586. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2018.03.007

Jia, N., Luo, X., Fang, Z., & Liao, C. (2024). When and how artificial intelligence augments employee creativity. *Academy of Management Journal, 67*(1), 5–32. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2022.0426

Jobin, A., Ienca, M., & Vayena, E. (2019). The global landscape of AI ethics guidelines. *Nature Machine Intelligence, 1*(9), 389–399. https://doi.org/10.1038/s42256-019-0088-2

Kleysen, R. F., & Street, C. T. (2001). Toward a multi-dimensional measure of individual innovative behavior. *Journal of Intellectual Capital, 2*(3), 284–296. https://doi.org/10.1108/EUM0000000005660

Lieto, A., Bhatt, M., Oltramari, A., & Vernon, D. (2018). The role of cognitive architectures in general artificial intelligence. *Cognitive Systems Research, 48*, 1–3. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cogsys.2017.08.003

Lythreatis, S., El-Kassar, A.-N., Smart, P., & Ferraris, A. (2024). Participative leadership, ethical climate and responsible innovation perceptions: Evidence from South Korea. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management, 41*(3), 1285–1312. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10490-022-09856-3

Makarius, E. E., Mukherjee, D., Fox, J. D., & Fox, A. K. (2020). Rising with the machines: A sociotechnical framework for bringing artificial intelligence into the organization. *Journal of Business Research, 120*, 262–273. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.07.045

Mayer, D. M., Kuenzi, M., & Greenbaum, R. L. (2010). Examining the link between ethical leadership and employee misconduct: The mediating role of ethical climate. *Journal of Business Ethics, 95*(Suppl. 1), 7–16. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-011-0794-0

Mittelstadt, B. D., Allo, P., Taddeo, M., Wachter, S., & Floridi, L. (2016). The ethics of algorithms: Mapping the debate. *Big Data & Society, 3*(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/2053951716679679

Nguyen, P., Watson, G. P., Barnes, D., Agrawal, S., Schuster, A. M., & Cotten, S. R. (2026). Navigating workplace AI adoption: The influence of perceptions and affective attitudes on employees' intentions to use AI at work. *Journal of Management & Organization, 32*(4), 1018–1043. https://doi.org/10.1017/jmo.2026.10090

Özyer, Y. S., & Develi, A. (2026). Etik liderlik ve bilgi saklama davranışı ilişkisinde iş yeri nezaketsizliğinin aracılık rolü. *Bingöl Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi, 10*(1), 153-174. https://doi.org/10.33399/biibfad.1814088

Parboteeah, K. P., Weiss, M., & Hoegl, M. (2024). Ethical climates across national contexts: A meta-analytical investigation. *Journal of Business Ethics, 189*(3), 573–590. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-023-05387-z

Qian, J., Chen, J., & Zhao, S. (2025). "Remaining vigilant" while "enjoying prosperity": How artificial intelligence usage impacts employees' innovative behavior and proactive skill development. *Behavioral Sciences, 15*(4), Article 465. https://doi.org/10.3390/bs15040465

Ramamoorthy, N., Flood, P. C., Slattery, T., & Sardessai, R. (2005). Determinants of innovative work behaviour: Development and test of an integrated model. *Creativity and Innovation Management, 14*(2), 142–150. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8691.2005.00334.x

Rank, J., Pace, V. L., & Frese, M. (2004). Three avenues for future research on creativity, innovation, and initiative. *Applied Psychology, 53*(4), 518–528. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1464-0597.2004.00185.x

Salancik, G. R., & Pfeffer, J. (1978). A social information processing approach to job attitudes and task design. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 23*(2), 224–253. https://doi.org/10.2307/2392563

Schepman, A., & Rodway, P. (2020). Initial validation of the general attitudes towards Artificial Intelligence Scale. *Computers in Human Behavior Reports, 1*, Article 100014. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chbr.2020.100014

Schwepker, C. H., Jr., & Hartline, M. D. (2005). Managing the ethical climate of customer-contact service employees. *Journal of Service Research, 7*(4), 377–397. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094670504273966

Scott, S. G., & Bruce, R. A. (1994). Determinants of innovative behavior: A path model of individual innovation in the workplace. *Academy of Management Journal, 37*(3), 580–607. https://doi.org/10.2307/256701

Shih, H.-A., & Susanto, E. (2011). Is innovative behavior really good for the firm? Innovative work behavior, conflict with coworkers and turnover intention: Moderating roles of perceived distributive fairness. *International Journal of Conflict Management, 22*(2), 111–130. https://doi.org/10.1108/10444061111126666

Simha, A., & Cullen, J. B. (2012). Ethical climates and their effects on organizational outcomes: Implications from the past and prophecies for the future. *Academy of Management Perspectives, 26*(4), 20–34. https://doi.org/10.5465/amp.2011.0156

Tegmark, M. (2018). *Life 3.0: Being human in the age of artificial intelligence*. Vintage.

Treviño, L. K., Butterfield, K. D., & McCabe, D. L. (1998). The ethical context in organizations: Influences on employee attitudes and behaviors. *Business Ethics Quarterly, 8*(3), 447–476. https://doi.org/10.2307/3857431

Venkatesh, V., & Davis, F. D. (2000). A theoretical extension of the technology acceptance model: Four longitudinal field studies. *Management Science, 46*(2), 186–204. https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.46.2.186.11926

Victor, B., & Cullen, J. B. (1988). The organizational bases of ethical work climates. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 33*(1), 101–125. https://doi.org/10.2307/2392857

Yuan, F., & Woodman, R. W. (2010). Innovative behavior in the workplace: The role of performance and image outcome expectations. *Academy of Management Journal, 53*(2), 323–342. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2010.49388995

Zhang, Q., Liao, G., Ran, X., & Wang, F. (2025). The impact of AI usage on innovation behavior at work: The moderating role of openness and job complexity. *Behavioral Sciences, 15*(4), Article 491. https://doi.org/10.3390/bs15040491

Disclosure Statements

Ethics Statement: "This article has been prepared in compliance with the scientific research and publication ethics rules."

Conflict of Interest: The author acknowledges that there is no conflict of interest in the study, both for himself and the other parties.

Contribution Rate: The sole author contributed 100% to the article.

Ethics Committee Approval: Since this study is a conceptual/theoretical review and does not involve human subjects, ethical approval is not required.

Funding Information: No funding was received from any institution for this study.