

How Appreciative Leadership Drives Organizational Innovation: Unveiling the Roles of Employee Job Satisfaction and Organizational Culture at High-Tech Firms in Jordan

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DOI Link: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v16-i6/28291>

Published Date: 10 June 2026

Abstract

Appreciative leadership, which entails recognition, positivity, and leveraging the strengths of employees, is increasingly being linked directly to organizational innovation. However, the mechanisms by which this leadership is linked to innovation are still not clearly understood, particularly with respect to the role of job satisfaction and organizational culture. This study examines the impact of appreciative leadership on innovation in high-tech firms in Jordan, moderated by organizational culture and mediated by job satisfaction. We collected the data quantitatively through a structured survey, which yielded a valid response rate of 279 for analysis. Findings show that appreciative leadership has a significant impact on enhancing organizational innovation and job satisfaction, demonstrating the critical role played by leadership in creating a lively and innovative workforce. Furthermore, job satisfaction is found to be a significant mediating variable, demonstrating that a satisfied workforce is likely to yield innovation and organizational agility. Contrary to expectations, organizational culture did not exhibit a significant moderating effect, suggesting that external factors or industry-specific dynamics may play a more influential role in shaping this relationship. These results provide valuable theoretical and practical insights, highlighting the importance of leadership strategies that enhance employee well-being to stimulate innovation. Organizations seeking to cultivate innovation-driven cultures should invest in recognition programs, participatory leadership, and strength-based management approaches. Future research should explore additional contextual variables that may further elucidate the interplay between appreciative leadership and innovation.

Keywords: Appreciative Leadership, Organizational Innovation, Employee Job Satisfaction, Organizational Culture, Innovation Drivers, High-Tech Organizations, Organizational Dynamics

Introduction

Leaders are now no doubt ready to adopt motivational styles that enhance innovation and change because of the shift towards more innovative practices. Appreciative leadership is one that has been accepted in the realm of employee wellness along with organizational innovation because of its attention towards positive reinforcement and recognition towards values. This leadership model improves relations and the recognition of individuals, teams, and organizational success leads to better outcomes (Wahab, 2023). Not only does the leadership style enhance the morale of individuals and teams but also creates a supportive environment for innovation. Appreciated leadership offers a direction for achieving organizational innovation amidst the ever-changing business environment that requires organizational flexibility and creativity for competitive advantage (Sopiyana & Soelingc, 2020). It encourages employees to think differently and take risks knowing that their efforts will be acknowledged. By innovating, organizations can better deal with challenges and take advantage of new opportunities in the marketplace.

One of the primary points of insight into how appreciative leadership influences organizational outcomes is consideration of the mediating effect of employee job satisfaction. Nanjundeswaraswamy (2023) views employee job satisfaction as a crucial mediator between leadership styles and employee behavior and performance. Leaders who concentrate on employees' positive attributes and strengths assist in creating a sense of purpose, satisfaction, and engagement in their employees. Employees that feel satisfied become more committed to the organization and more likely to participate in innovative activity (Ardelt & Sharma, 2021). Job satisfaction is a major driver in encouraging employees to do more than their regular work and participate in innovative problem-solving and other behaviors contributing to organizational innovation. Thus, knowing the mediating role played by job satisfaction provides information about how appreciative leadership indirectly contributes to enhanced innovation in the organization.

In addition, there is a necessity to acknowledge the moderating function played by organizational culture in the connection between appreciative leadership and innovation. Organizational culture establishes the assumptions, norms, and behaviors that determine the way in which employees interact and operate in the workplace (Akpa et al., 2021). A collaborative, supportive, and risk-taking culture is likely to support the intended effect of appreciative leadership in organizational innovation. A restrictive culture that is opposed to collaboration and risk-taking is likely to reverse the effect. Current studies have confirmed that ensuring that leadership styles match the culture in an organization is core in achieving desired results, such as innovation and long-term performance (Garengo & Betto, 2024). Consequently, the connection between appreciative leadership and organizational culture is a very important area of focus in order to understand the reasons behind innovative results varying from organization to organization.

The purpose of this study is to examine how appreciative leadership affects organizational innovation, and the extent to which job satisfaction and organizational culture play a role in that. These kinds of dynamic interdependencies are the foundation for a sophisticated understanding of leadership, leading to innovation in multicultural settings. In investigating these interrelations, this study adds to the growing literature on leadership and innovation by learning more about leadership styles focused on positivity, praise, and involving

employees in developing the proper conditions for innovation (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Opland et al., 2022). This study is particularly important in today's globally competitive market, where businesses are increasingly relying on their internal resources, most prominently leadership and human capital, for competitive advantage.

Literature Review

The relationship between leadership and organizational innovation has been strongly established, with appreciative leadership being described as a core driver for innovation (Alsheikh et al., 2025; Khawaldeh & Alzghoul, 2024). Appreciative leadership is interested in building on strengths, forging a culture of appreciation, and constructing teamwork, ultimately developing a culture that supports creativity and innovation (Rosales et al., 2023). There is strong empirical support for this relationship. For instance, Kpinpuo (2023) demonstrated how appreciative leadership facilitates technological innovation through the construction of employee engagement and motivation. Likewise, Slavik (2024) argued that leadership styles that focus on group dynamics and generativity allow individuals to come up with innovative ideas. This lends credence to the hypothesis that appreciative leadership is best suited for organizational innovation. Change management is also important for innovation. Appreciative leadership aligns organizational goals with positive forces like creativity and innovation, which helps with this (Rosales et al., 2023). King (2023) also indicated that organizational innovation is likely to be founded on social creativity, which appreciative leadership sustains through the facilitation of trust, open communication, and respect for one another.

Transformational leadership has long been understood as a key driver of innovation (Rashwan & Ghaly, 2022; Morales et al., 2012; Para-González et al., 2018). However, there is growing evidence that appreciative leadership has particular benefits (Asim et al., 2022; Orr & Cleveland-Innes, 2015). Transformational leadership triggers innovation by inspiring intellectual stimulation, inspiring motivation, and challenging the status quo (Rashwan & Ghaly, 2022; Morales et al., 2012; Para-González et al., 2018). Appreciative leadership, in contrast, offers alternative approaches by utilizing emotional intelligence, positive reinforcement, and organizational trust (Asim et al., 2022). Appreciative leadership's positivity and strength-based focus creates a positive and empowering organizational culture, energizes morale and engagement, and creates psychological safety—necessary for experimentation and risk-taking in innovation processes. Transformational leadership directly changes the learning and culture in the organization, but appreciative leadership creates intrinsic motivation and organizational attachment, which means employees are more likely to produce innovative ideas (Alzghoul, 2024b; Akay & Demirel, 2017). The emerging evidence highlights that transformational and appreciative leadership styles complement each other in innovation support. While transformational leadership inspires change through vision and intellectual stimulation, appreciative leadership deepens trust, emotional attachment, and intrinsic motivation. With the use of both leadership styles, organizations can adopt a combined approach that not only inspires creativity and risk-taking but also inspires feelings of belonging and purpose, ultimately resulting in more innovative outcomes (Asim et al., 2022).

Research Problem

Previous studies have largely focused on transformational leadership as a driver of innovation, while appreciative leadership remains comparatively underexplored despite its potential to foster employee motivation, psychological safety, and collaborative work environments. Moreover, the mechanisms through which appreciative leadership influences organizational innovation are still insufficiently understood. Specifically, there is limited empirical evidence explaining whether employee job satisfaction acts as an intermediary mechanism linking appreciative leadership to organizational innovation outcomes.

In addition, organizational culture may significantly influence the effectiveness of appreciative leadership in promoting innovation. Supportive and collaborative cultures may strengthen the positive effects of appreciative leadership, whereas rigid or risk-averse cultures may weaken them. However, the interaction between appreciative leadership and organizational culture in shaping innovation outcomes has not been adequately examined, especially in high-tech firms operating in developing economies such as Jordan.

Furthermore, despite the increasing importance of the Jordanian high-tech sector as a contributor to economic growth and competitiveness, there is a scarcity of studies investigating leadership approaches that enhance innovation within this context. Most prior research has been conducted in Western or different organizational settings, limiting the generalizability of findings to Jordanian high-tech firms, which operate within distinct cultural and organizational environments.

Therefore, the research problem of this study lies in the limited empirical understanding of how appreciative leadership drives organizational innovation, as well as the unclear roles of employee job satisfaction and organizational culture in this relationship within high-tech firms in Jordan.

Research Gap

Although substantial research has examined the relationship between leadership styles and organizational innovation, several important gaps remain in the existing literature.

First, prior studies have predominantly concentrated on transformational leadership as the primary leadership style influencing innovation, while appreciative leadership has received relatively limited scholarly attention. Existing studies on appreciative leadership mainly focus on employee well-being, engagement, or interpersonal relationships, with insufficient emphasis on its direct impact on organizational innovation.

Second, previous research has not adequately explored the underlying mechanisms through which appreciative leadership contributes to innovation outcomes. In particular, the mediating role of employee job satisfaction remains under-investigated. While job satisfaction has been linked independently to both leadership and employee performance, few studies have empirically examined its role as a mediator between appreciative leadership and organizational innovation.

Third, there is a lack of comprehensive studies examining contextual factors that may influence the effectiveness of appreciative leadership. Specifically, the moderating role of organizational culture in strengthening or weakening the relationship between appreciative

leadership and organizational innovation remains insufficiently addressed in the literature. Existing studies often examine leadership and culture separately rather than investigating their interaction in fostering innovation.

Fourth, most existing studies have been conducted in Western countries or across general organizational contexts, creating a contextual gap in developing countries and high-tech industries. Limited empirical evidence is available regarding appreciative leadership and innovation within Jordanian high-tech firms, despite the strategic importance of innovation in this sector.

Finally, few studies have integrated appreciative leadership, employee job satisfaction, organizational culture, and organizational innovation into a single conceptual framework. This creates a theoretical gap concerning the combined and interrelated effects of these variables on organizational innovation outcomes.

Accordingly, this study seeks to fill these gaps by developing and testing an integrated model that examines the effect of appreciative leadership on organizational innovation, while investigating the mediating role of employee job satisfaction and the moderating role of organizational culture in high-tech firms in Jordan.

Therefore, we propose the following hypotheses:

H1: There is a significant positive relationship between appreciative leadership and organizational innovation.

There is a body of literature concentrated on the complexity of the relationship between leadership styles and employees' job satisfaction. There were a number of studies that directed their interest to the impact of leadership styles on employees' level of job satisfaction. For example, Tepret and Tuna (2015) looked at how managerial factors affect employees' job satisfaction in the telecommunications sector. They found that there is a positive link between how employees see their leaders and how satisfied they are with their jobs. Fouad (2019) directed their interest to the hospitality sector and reported the significant impact of leadership style in improving employees' job satisfaction and in reducing employees' rate of turnover in the sector (Fouad, 2019). A number of contexts that were found directed their interest to transformational leadership as a dominant style that is highly linked to employees' job satisfaction. Transformational leadership is a key to employees in the NGO sector being more job-satisfied. This demonstrates the need for leaders to provide support and empower their employees (Mufti et al., 2019). Transformational leadership is connected to how satisfied employees are with their jobs (Attia et al., 2023; Bernanthos, 2018).

Scholars have tested numerous leadership styles, such as transformational leadership, against the level of satisfaction among employees. Rahman (2021) showed how the difference between intellectual and inspirational leadership styles in Pakistan's hospitality industry affected how happy employees were with their jobs. Reyaz (2024) also did a systematic review of different leadership styles, including transformational, transactional, charismatic, and laissez-faire, and how they affect employee motivation and satisfaction.

Researchers also looked at how different types of leadership, like servant leadership and emotional leadership, affect how satisfied people are with their jobs. Zhihua (2017) illustrated the positive relationship between servant leadership and levels of satisfaction. The study emphasized on the role of servant leadership in ensuring employee satisfaction. Jin et al. (2020) were interested in the influence of emotional leadership on levels of satisfaction. The study focused on how emotional intelligence affects how leaders act to make sure their employees are pleased.

In addition, researchers have also examined contextual moderators that affect the impact of leadership style on job satisfaction. Chen & Huang (2022) examined the function of spiritual leadership in influencing job satisfaction, with particular reference to the moderating function of employee optimism and the moderating function of Machiavellian personality in this relationship. The study highlights the necessity of organizational contexts and individual differences in examining the leadership effect on employee job satisfaction. The reviewed studies establish a strong, multi-dimensional relationship between leadership styles and employee job satisfaction. Transformational leadership appears to be a core driver of satisfaction in the workplace in most industries, with other leadership styles playing a substantial role in determining the level of satisfaction among employees. The mediation role played by job satisfaction in the leadership-employee performance relationship also underscores the need for creating a positive workplace through quality leadership styles. In addition, the contextual and individual factors that moderate the leadership style influence demonstrate the complexity in developing and understanding employee job satisfaction in organizations.

H2: There is a significant positive relationship between appreciative leadership and employee job satisfaction.

Employees' satisfaction in their jobs is one of the most critical determinants in organizational innovation enhancement. Allouzi (2018), in his research, reaffirmed the strong and positive relationship between organizational innovation and job satisfaction. Nikpour (2018) confirms the same, with statistically significant and positive correlations between organizational innovation perception and job satisfaction. Suleman et al. (2019) also illustrated a strong and positive relationship between organizational performance and employee job satisfaction, confirming the role played by job satisfaction in the achievement of overall organizational success. Leadership style, organizational culture, and employee engagement also play critical determinants in shaping the relationship between organizational innovation and job satisfaction. Hao (2024) constructed a framework from leadership style, employee job satisfaction, and organizational culture in supporting employee innovation behavior, leading to product, service, and process innovation that leads to business expansion. Samosir et al. (2022) recorded the organizational support effect on employee job satisfaction, confirming the role played by a supportive organizational culture in enhancing job satisfaction level.

One of the most powerful determinants of organizational innovation and job satisfaction is organizational culture. Jie et al. (2017) established bureaucratic organizational culture in having a positive relationship with job satisfaction, but innovative and supportive organizational culture has more desirable relations with job satisfaction. Maswani et al. (2019) also emphasized the positive relationship of organizational culture, organizational

commitment, employee performance, and job satisfaction, suggesting the influence of a supportive organizational culture in developing job satisfaction and overall performance. Ibrahim et al. (2022) also examine the mediating role between organizational variables and outcomes. Ibrahim et al. (2022) illustrated job satisfaction and employee productivity as a mediator between service innovation and organizational performance. This suggests that job satisfaction is a part of the way in which organizations function. Salam et al. (2023) also illustrated that job satisfaction partially and fully mediates the effect of various organizational culture factors on organizational commitment. This suggests that job satisfaction has a mediating role in organizational processes.

Additionally, organizational commitment's effect through job satisfaction has been a point of interest. Yousef (2001) noted a positive and significant relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction, suggesting that an increase in job satisfaction leads to an increase in organizational commitment. In addition, Astuti & Amalia (2021) highlighted the manner in which organizational commitment rises with adequate job satisfaction, affirming the link between organizational outcomes, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction. Consolidation of the studies above reveals the strong positive relationship between organizational innovation and employee job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is a strong mediator between organizational factors, such as organizational support, organizational culture, and leadership style, and organizational outcomes, such as organizational innovation and organizational performance. Organizational climate creation, which results in job satisfaction and organizational commitment, is central in driving organizational innovation.

H3: There is a significant positive relationship between employee job satisfaction and organizational innovation.

Job satisfaction leads to increased employee motivation, engagement, and commitment, and an organizational culture that promotes innovation in the company (Alzghoul, 2024a). Job satisfaction is a mediator in the link between organizational culture, leadership style, work motivation, and employee performance (Irwan et al., 2020; Mariyatha, 2023). Job satisfaction is one of the most powerful predictors of employee productivity and loyalty, measuring the level of satisfaction and commitment of employees with the company (Egenius et al., 2020). Literature has consistently proved the strong, positive connection between employee performance and job satisfaction (Endeshaw, 2023). Job satisfaction has been correlated with morale, discipline, and employee performance (Mafrukhah, 2023). Organizational concern with job satisfaction has more innovative and productive employees, leading to enhanced business prosperity and competitiveness (Hao, 2024).

Researchers have also investigated the mediation effect of job satisfaction in leadership style and employee performance. Maya et al. (2020) confirmed that leadership styles and incentives influence satisfaction with the job among employees, which in turn influences overall job performance. Similarly, Tanuwijaya & Jakaria (2022) reported the positive influence of leadership styles, in this case, transformational leadership, on employee satisfaction, which in turn influences employee retention and performance. Satisfaction with the job significantly mediates the effect of a leadership style on employee performance. For instance, satisfaction with the job completely mediates the effect of transformational leadership in employee performance (Mariyatha, 2023). Similarly, the relationship between

leadership, work motivation, and employee performance is always mediated by satisfaction with the job, in affirmation that employees should be satisfied and happy (Irwan et al., 2020). Appreciative leadership, with its emphasis on strength and positivity, can lead to increased satisfaction with the job among employees, in turn developing the innovation spirit in the organization (Hao, 2024). Organizational culture also influences employee performance through the influence it has on satisfaction with the job. Positive organizational culture has been linked with satisfaction with the job among employees, resulting in increased performance (Azhari, 2024). The workplace environment can also influence employee performance through the influence it has on satisfaction with the job (Maulidiyah & Ilahi, 2020). Happy employees in a positive workplace environment tend to be highly motivated and perform well in their workplaces.

Besides, leadership, organizational culture, work discipline, training, remuneration, and self-efficacy influence job satisfaction. These elements could directly or indirectly impact the level of job satisfaction, which in turn affects employee performance (Dharma, 2023; Rahmawati, 2022; Mafrukhah, 2023). Financial and non-financial remuneration, for example, could directly impact employee performance through job satisfaction (Rahmawati, 2022). Similarly, superior job satisfaction, self-efficacy, and competence could lead to enhanced employee morale and performance (Mafrukhah, 2023). Job satisfaction is a critical mediator in appreciative leadership and organizational innovation. With the creation of a workplace in which employees feel satisfied, inspired, and committed, organizational performance is improved, innovation is enhanced, and market competitiveness is ensured. Job satisfaction must be prioritized through effective leadership, good organizational culture, correct training, and sufficient remuneration in order to guarantee employees' welfare and ultimately organizational performance.

H4: Employee job satisfaction mediates the positive relationship between appreciative leadership and organizational innovation.

Organizational culture is a powerful moderator in the leadership style-outcome relationship, particularly innovation. A number of studies have shown that organizational culture is able to connect the values of leaders to new ideas (Abdullah et al., 2013; Tipu et al., 2012; Muchtar & Qamariah, 2014). Ashaar et al. (2023) take this to mean that the values of leadership need to be translated to real innovative outcomes, and this is only possible in a supportive environment. There is also a strong link between transformational leadership and the actual implementation of new ideas, as shown by studies (Tipu et al., 2012; Muchtar & Qamariah, 2014). This is to mean that the role of transformational leadership in the generation of innovation is moderated by the organizational culture of the organization. Studies have also shown that organizational culture has a part to play in the transformational leadership-new ideas relationship. This is to say that the generation of innovative ideas requires a supportive culture.

Existing literature has also shown organizational culture playing a significant role in affecting leadership and effectiveness, even in the banking sector (Koranteng et al., 2022). The discovery implies that strong organizational culture can augment the effectiveness of leadership practices, leading to better organizational results. Another study showed that organizational learning and open-minded culture could complement different types of

leadership to help Malaysian small and medium enterprises perform better. This implies an interaction between leadership, culture, and organizational results (Rehman et al., 2019). Appreciative leadership studies have also investigated the degree to which organizational trust affects the relationship between appreciative leadership and employees' willingness to offer support (Asim et al., 2022). This evidence corroborates the intricate interaction between leadership styles, organizational trust, and employee behaviors, with organizational elements playing a critical role in leadership effects. Hao (2024) cites organizational culture as one of the most effective factors in encouraging innovation among employees. A model investigating leadership style, job satisfaction, and organizational culture can enhance the innovativeness of employees.

Literature also suggests that organizational culture extends its influence beyond innovation to affect other organizational outcomes. Organizational culture, for instance, has been shown to be correlated with job satisfaction, such that a good organizational culture is likely to enhance the job satisfaction of the employees. Organizational culture has also been established to have a significant impact on the performance of the employees, stressing the broad reach of a positive culture in an organization (Arfandi, 2023). The synthesis of the mentioned studies underscores the necessity of organizational culture in the moderation of the impact of leadership styles, including appreciative leadership, on organizational innovation. Not only does a positive organizational culture moderate leadership's impact on innovation, but it also dictates other organizational outcomes, such as efficiency, performance, and employee behaviors. Therefore, organizations should prioritize cultivating a positive and adaptive culture to maximize the effectiveness of leadership practices and drive innovation and overall success.

H5: Organizational culture positively moderates the relationship between appreciative leadership and organizational innovation.

Research Method

The study adopted a quantitative research design in examining the impact of appreciative leadership on organizational innovation, and more specifically, the mediating effect of employee job satisfaction and the moderating effect of organizational culture. Quantitative methods were selected on the basis of their ability to provide empirical evidence through statistical analysis, which allows objective determination of the interrelation between variables within a given framework. This was deemed appropriate for measuring and examining complex interactions between leadership, culture, and innovation. By adopting quantitative methods, the study aimed to arrive at conclusions that are replicable and generalizable, particularly for the context of high-tech firms in Jordan, where employee motivation and innovation are extremely critical. The quantitative design also allowed the examination of mediation and moderation effects, which are essential in ascertaining the extent to which appreciative leadership indirectly influences innovation outcomes through job satisfaction, and the extent to which organizational culture influences such relations.

The population in this study was employees in Jordanian high-tech companies. A stratified sample was employed in order for the sample to be representative of various levels and departments in the companies so that the study would be able to capture as many perspectives as possible regarding leadership and innovation at all organizational levels. Data

were gathered through a structured survey that was sent via email, and the number of invitation emails sent was 384. We got 281 invitation responses, and we discovered that 279 were usable for analysis. The study variables were measured using existing scales. The Appreciative Leadership scale by Ali & Jaaffar (2020) had 5 items; the Organizational Innovation scale by Elrehail et al. (2018) had 10 items; the Employee Job Satisfaction scale by Dotson & Allenby (2010) had 6 items; and the Organizational Culture scale by Ghosh & Srivastava (2014) had 11 items. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using Partial Least Squares (PLS) was employed in the data analysis.

Empirical Results

Constructs validity and reliability

The research constructs were evaluated in this study in order to evaluate the validity and reliability issues that indicate the internal consistency of study constructs with their assessment by Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR). This determination was made in order to analyze the validity and reliability concerns. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values that are greater than 0.70 are indicative of constructs that attain exceptional reliability, according to the research that has been conducted (Hair et al., 2020). According to the findings that were reported in Table 1, all of the research constructs attained an outstanding level of reliability. This was demonstrated by the fact that the values for Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were both greater than 0.70. In addition, the research shows that a value of at least 0.50 is required in order to infer that validity in constructs has been reached (Hair et al., 2021). The study proved the construct validity by using the average variance extracted (AVE). Because of the constructs, achieving levels of AVE value more than 0.50, the findings presented in Table 1 lead to the conclusion that all of the study constructs are valid.

Discriminant validity

In addition, the research investigated the discriminant validity, which is a term that describes the capacity of a construct to separate itself from other constructs inside a study model, hence allowing for the measurements of its distinctive characteristics (Zaiğ & Berteau, 2011). It is possible for research to evaluate the discriminant validity by employing an approach of heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT), which refers to constructs correlations. This may be accomplished through the use of the partial least square PLSSEM technique. The HTMT is also considered to be an effective instrument that is utilized in the process of evaluating the discriminant validity of the PLS-SEM model. According to Hair et al. (2021), a threshold value is defined as a value of HTMT that is less than 0.90. This number is chosen on the assumption that a concept has satisfied the criteria for discriminant validity. Therefore, the current research may reach the conclusion that the discriminant validity has been obtained because the data that are presented in Table 2 indicate that the study constructs have attained HTMT with values that are lower than 0.90. Indicated a large discriminant reliability that is established when the construct covariate surpasses the covariate involving another construct. This was determined by comparing the square roots of the AVE values that were represented in off-diagonal values in the rows. Table 3 provides an illustration of the findings of the research carried out in accordance with Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criteria. Given that the findings of the square roots of the AVE values in the table are higher than the off-diagonal values that are located above them, it can be concluded that the considerable discriminant validity is in agreement with this characteristic.

Table 1

Constructs Reliability and Validity

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
AL	0.908	0.932	0.732
OI	0.954	0.960	0.708
Product	0.936	0.952	0.798
Process	0.920	0.940	0.758
JS	0.948	0.959	0.796
OC	0.909	0.960	0.708

AVE = average variance extracted, CR = composite reliability, AL = appreciative leadership, OI = organizational innovation, JS = job satisfaction, OC = organizational culture

Table 2

Heterotrait-monotrait ratio HTMT

	AL	JS	OC	OI	Process	Product
AL	0.812					
JS	0.776	0.811				
OC	0.638	0.633	0.781			
OI	0.634	0.677	0.745	0.890		
Process	0.786	0.735	0.661	0.456	0.880	
Product	0.776	0.320	0.275	0.262	0.252	0.255

AL = appreciative leadership, OI = organizational innovation, JS = job satisfaction, OC = organizational culture

Table 3

Forner-Larcker Criteria

	AL	JS	OC	OI	Process	Product
AL	0.855					
JS	0.757	0.892				
OC	0.714	0.767	0.757			
OI	0.780	0.793	0.709	0.841		
Process	0.765	0.821	0.729	0.830	0.870	
Product	0.725	0.694	0.625	0.456	0.823	0.893

AL = appreciative leadership, OI = organizational innovation, JS = job satisfaction, OC = organizational culture

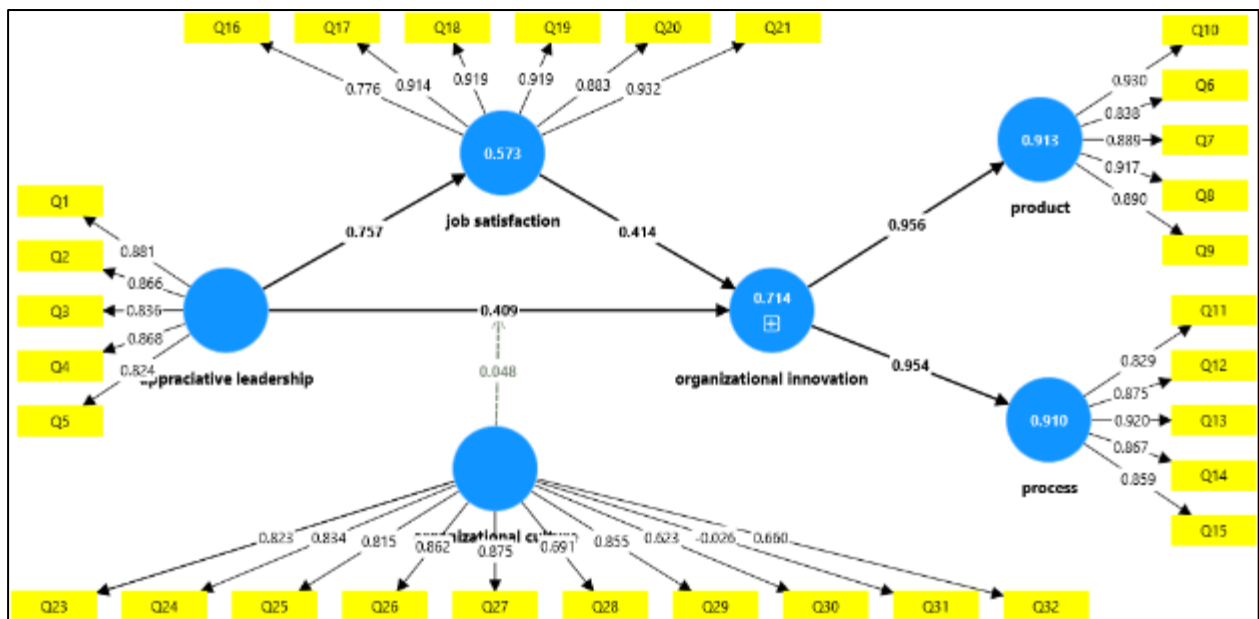


Figure 1. Measurement Model

Structural Model

The structural model was further evaluated in order to test both direct and indirect research hypotheses. The study took into consideration appreciative leadership (AL), organizational innovation (OI), and job satisfaction (JS), with job satisfaction (JS) serving as a mediator variable and organizational culture (OC) serving as a moderator variable. The determination of the model fit was made using an NFI value of 0.761 and an SRMR value of 0.071 (which is less than 0.08). In light of this, the structural model was deemed suitable for the following. Additionally, the data were evaluated using the structural model by means of a bootstrapping technique, which resulted in the creation of one thousand subsamples. The relationships between AL, OI, and JS are depicted in this model, along with the moderating influence that OC has on the relationships. Furthermore, the acceptability of hypotheses H1, H2, H2, and H4 was investigated in this study in addition to these correlations. In Figure 2, a graphical representation of the data is shown, which includes the path coefficients as well as the p-values.

Hypotheses Testing and Analysis

The results of the testing of the hypotheses are presented in Table 4. The findings suggest that there is a positive association between appreciative leadership and organizational innovation OI, as well as between appreciative leadership and employee job satisfaction JS. In addition, there is a favorable correlation between the level of job satisfaction experienced by employees and the level of innovation inside a firm. In addition, the research adopted the mediation hypothesis, which proposes that the positive association between appreciating leadership and organizational innovation is mediated by the level of job satisfaction experienced by employees. Nevertheless, the moderation hypothesis, which proposed that the organizational culture (OC) positively moderates the association between appreciating leadership and organizational innovation, was not supported by the findings of the study. Within the scope of the current investigation, these findings offer significant insights into the dynamic relationship between the elements that influence organizational innovation and the level of job satisfaction experienced by employees. Of the hypotheses that have been

accepted, the one that has the strongest path coefficient (0.407) in terms of a direct link is the one that states that AL has a considerable influence on OI. 0.757 is the path coefficient that is revealed by H2. The influence of AL on JS is strong. 0.408 is the path coefficient that is revealed by H3. The influence of AL on JS is strong. The route coefficient of AL -> JS -> OI (H4) is 0.309, and it is expressed in terms of the mediator variable at this point. The coefficient of 0.042 indicates that the moderator, OC, does not have a substantial moderation impact between AL and OI.

Table 4
Direct and Indirect Effects among the Constructs

Relationship	Path coefficient	Standard deviation	t-statistics	p-value	Result
AL ----> OI	0.407	0.072	5.609	0.000	Supported
AL ----> JS	0.757	0.026	2.042	0.000	Supported
JS ----> OI	0.408	0.072	6.640	0.000	Supported
AL---> JS ----> OI	0.309	0.054	5.756	0.000	Supported
AL*OC ----> OI	0.042	0.036	1.173	0.241	Not supported

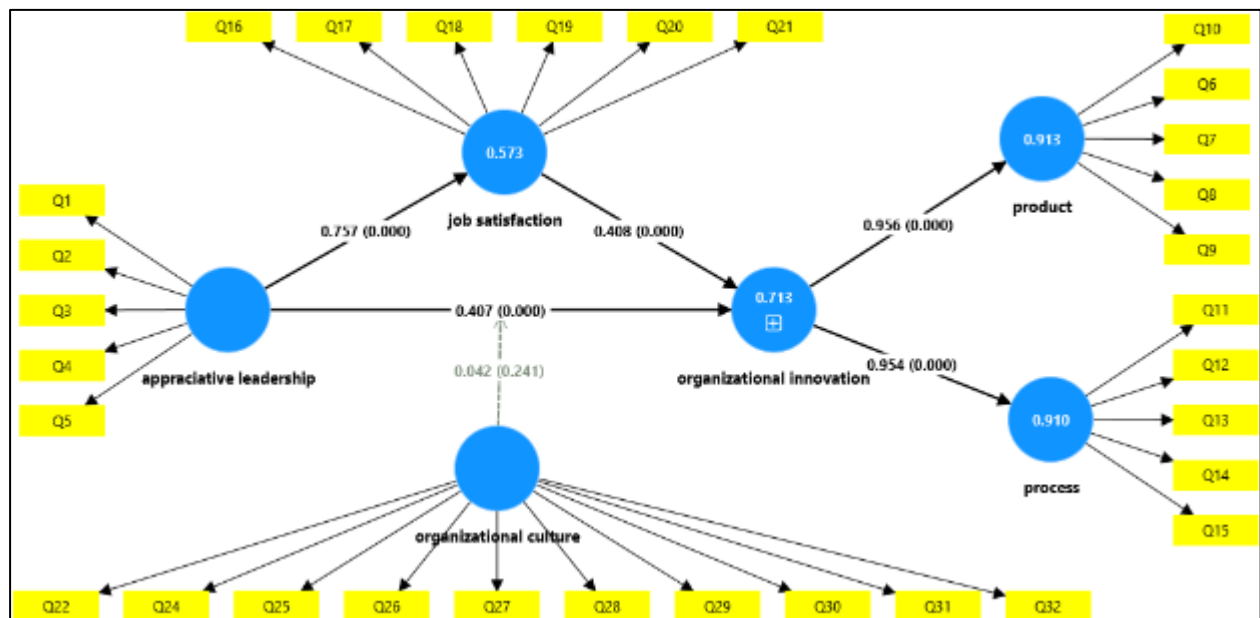


Figure 2. Structural Model

Discussion

This research aimed to explore the impact of appreciative leadership on organizational innovation, focusing on the mediating role of employee job satisfaction and the moderating effect of organizational culture. By addressing a critical gap in understanding how leadership styles influence innovation, this study contributes to the literature on leadership and organizational dynamics. The results show how important it is for leaders to focus on encouraging positivity, recognizing strengths, and helping people grow based on those strengths. As the business world changes quickly these days, innovation is key to staying ahead of the competition. This study shows how appreciative leadership can help organizations gain a long-term edge.

The study confirmed H1 by showing that appreciative leadership leads to more organizational innovation (path coefficient = 0.407, $p < 0.001$). This aligns with the findings by other researchers, for example, Sopiyan and Soelingc (2020) and Kpinpuo (2023), which highlight the strength-based and positivity-based leadership that is required to trigger innovation. The result supports the idea that leaders who create workplaces where people feel appreciated can help workers be more creative and come up with new ways to run businesses. It was found that appreciative leadership did affect how happy employees were with their jobs (path coefficient = 0.757, $p < 0.001$). The results of this study back up the results of Ardelt and Sharma (2021), which show that praise and positivity can boost morale and happiness. The finding supports the occurrence of increased satisfaction among employees in appreciative workplaces, in agreement with previous studies.

The study also verified H3, with employee job satisfaction being positively correlated with organizational innovation (path coefficient = 0.408, $p < 0.001$). The result is in agreement with that by Suleman et al. (2019) and Nikpour (2018), which proved that satisfied employees become more performance- and creativity-focused. Replication of such results validates the pivotal role played by employee satisfaction in shaping innovative behavior in organizations. H4 verified the mediational role played by job satisfaction in the relationship between appreciative leadership and organizational innovation, with the indirect effect being 0.309 and the p-value being 0.001. The result is in line with earlier work by Hao (2024) and Ardelt & Sharma (2021), which emphasized the role of a satisfied workforce as the intermediary between effective leadership and innovation. By focusing on the satisfaction and well-being of workers, organizations can indirectly influence their innovative performance, affirming the connection between the three factors of leadership, employee morale, and creativity.

H5 did not show that organizational culture had any significant effects on the relationship between organizational innovation and appreciative leadership (moderation effect = 0.042, $p > 0.05$). This finding is different from other research like Akpa et al. (2021) and Garengo & Betto (2024), which showed the facilitation role of supportive cultures in the impact of leadership towards innovation. The difference could be attributed to the difference in sample characteristics or cultural backgrounds, in particular since the study only focused on high-tech organizations in Jordan. The finding shows that while organizational culture does impact innovation, other contextual factors might be more significant in this context.

Conclusion

This study analyzed the impact of appreciative leadership on organizational innovation, with the mediating role of employee job satisfaction, as well as the moderating impact of organizational culture. The findings reaffirm the importance of leadership approaches centered on positivity, recognition, and strengths-based development in order to power innovation in organizations. Appreciative leadership was found to be positively related to organizational innovation as well as employee job satisfaction, demonstrating its pivotal position in the creation of an engaged, motivated workforce. In addition, the fact that job satisfaction acts as a mediator shows how important it is for turning leadership practices into new results. This shows how important it is for companies to make employee well-being a strategic imperative. Contrary to expectations, organizational culture did not moderate the relationship between appreciative leadership and innovation significantly, which points towards other contextual factors being more pivotal in this relationship. The finding presents

avenues for future research to explore other variables potentially influencing the relationship between leadership and innovation. The study contributes to the burgeoning body of work by offering empirical validation of the mechanism through which appreciative leadership generates innovation, namely in high-technology organizations in Jordan.

The findings for the practitioners underscore the requirement for leaders to adopt appreciative practices for employee satisfaction, which indirectly supports innovation. The organizations can also look forward to developing a culture in accordance with the initiatives of the leaders to provide maximum contribution towards innovation. By integrating employee-centric initiatives with leader development, the organizations can provide a work environment for creativity, flexibility, and long-term competitive success. The research reiterates the feasibility of appreciative leadership as an effective strategy for achieving organizational innovation in today's competitive business landscape.

There are a number of limitations in this study that should be noted in interpreting the findings. First, the study was restricted to high-tech companies in Jordan, so the findings cannot be applied across various industries and cultures. Future studies can expand the sample across industries and geographies to generalize the findings. Second, the study's cross-sectional design makes it harder to figure out what caused what between the variables. We recommend longitudinal studies to monitor the dynamic interaction between appreciative leadership, organizational culture, innovation, and job satisfaction over time. Third, organizational culture was used as a moderating variable. However, market conditions, technological advances, or the make-up of the team are other context variables that can also change the relationship between leadership and innovation. Future studies can test these other variables to derive a more comprehensive set of factors for innovation. Finally, the study employed quantitative methods, which, although robust, are unable to capture the subtle experiences and perceptions of the leaders and the employees. Employing qualitative methods, such as interviews or case studies, can yield a richer set of insights about the mechanisms underlying the relationships obtained. These limitations offer opportunities for future studies to build on and extend the findings of this study.

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