

## **INFLUENCE OF A LEADER'S INTERNALIZED MORAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE INNOVATIVE WORK BEHAVIOR OF PHARMACY SUPERINTENDENTS IN RETAIL PHARMACIES IN KENYA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In Kenya's pharmaceutical retail sector, calls for innovative practices are mounting amid growing concerns about increased workload, burnout, and employee disengagement. These challenges are exacerbated by a leadership skills gap that fails to inspire innovative work behavior among pharmacy personnel. While the influence of authentic leadership in healthcare settings has been widely studied, limited empirical research has focused on how leaders' internalized moral perspective influence innovative behavior in retail pharmacy settings. This study addresses this gap by investigating the influence of internalized moral perspective on the innovative work behavior of pharmacy superintendents in retail pharmacies in Kenya. Grounded in authentic leadership theory, internalized moral perspective was operationalized through integrity, ethical decision-making, and consistency between values and actions. A post-positivist philosophy guided the study, which employed a descriptive correlational research design. From a population of 1,129 pharmacy superintendents drawn from the 2023 Pharmacy and Poisons Board (PPB) list of registered pharmacies in Kenya, a sample of 326 was selected using stratified random sampling. Structured questionnaires yielded 309 valid responses. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Ordinal logistic regression indicated that internalized moral perspective significantly predicted innovative work behavior ( $\beta = 1.75, p < .05$ ), accounting for 37.2% of its variance (Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .372$ ). A one-unit increase in a leader's internalized moral perspective was associated with a 5.75-fold increase in the likelihood of pharmacy superintendents exhibiting higher innovative work behavior. These findings contribute to leadership literature by empirically validating internalized moral perspective as a driver of innovative work behavior in retail pharmacy settings. The study highlights the need for leadership training of pharmacy owners/managers, with a specific focus on moral and ethical leadership through formal and continuous professional development programs.

**Keywords:** Authentic leadership, innovative work behavior, internalized moral perspective, pharmacy superintendents, retail pharmacy.

### **INTRODUCTION**

In volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environments, leadership plays a pivotal role in nurturing innovative work behavior, which is increasingly acknowledged as a key enabler of sustainable competitive advantage (Lee et al., 2020). In dynamic and intensely competitive

sectors such as pharmaceutical retail, authentic leadership has become critical for organizational resilience and growth, primarily due to its capacity to stimulate employees' intrinsic motivation to engage in discretionary extra-role behaviors (Khan et al., 2021).

Globally, the pharmaceutical retail sector is grappling with escalating challenges driven by hyper-competition, which has significantly contributed to rising cases of business failure (Vila et al., 2023). This occurs alongside mounting expectations for the sector to fulfil the triple aim of healthcare which is; enhancing the quality of care, improving population health outcomes, and reducing costs (Schommer et al., 2022). These demands are further exacerbated by widespread reports of burnout among pharmacy staff, a factor that impedes innovative work behavior in many settings (McPherson et al., 2022). Consequently, data indicates that 83% of pharmacies close within 2.5 years, with an additional 40% of those remaining exiting the market within a decade (Gebhart, 2020). In the absence of leadership that intentionally fosters innovative work behavior, the sector may be ill-equipped to implement the practice innovations critical for long-term sustainability (Goode et al., 2019).

Among leadership attributes, internalized moral perspective, which encompasses integrity, ethical decision-making, and consistency between values and actions, has emerged as a particularly critical driver of innovative work behavior (Jia et al., 2022; Shafique et al., 2019). Leaders who demonstrate a strong moral perspective play a significant role in shaping subordinate behavior through ethical role modelling (Adnan et al., 2022) and fostering trust among followers (Junaidi, 2024). They also tend to reduce job stress and foster employees' willingness to engage in extra-role behaviors, such as innovative work behavior (Sağbaşı, 2021).

Innovative work behavior refers to employees' discretionary efforts to generate, promote, and implement novel ideas that improve organizational processes or outcomes (Carlucci et al., 2019; Rafique & Bukhari, 2022). Innovative work behavior thrives when individual intrinsic motivation intersects with supportive leadership (Sengupta et al., 2020), creating a psychologically safe environment for knowledge sharing and enhanced learning (Edmondson, 2019). Moral and ethical leadership has been found to promote value-based behaviors, including innovative work behavior (Adnan et al., 2022). Specifically, leaders with an internalized moral perspective foster employee well-being, reduce work-induced stress, and support extra-role behaviors, such as innovative work behavior (Sağbaşı, 2021).

Studies conducted in the US, Europe and Asia have shown that internalized moral perspective is associated with positive employee outcomes such as job engagement (Zheng et al., 2020), commitment (Kasa et al., 2020), and organizational citizenship (Oshia et al., 2022), all of which are recognized antecedents of innovative work behavior. Internalized moral perspective has also been directly linked to creativity (Ahmed et al., 2020; Phuong & Takahashi, 2020; Shafique et al., 2019; Zeb et al., 2019) and innovative work behavior (Jia et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2021). However, conflicting evidence has been reported. For instance, Fernando and Usman (2021) found a negative correlation between internalized moral perspective and innovative work behavior. These divergent findings suggest that the relationship may be influenced by mediating and

moderating factors, and hence the need to investigate these associations in different sectors and contexts.

In Africa, internalized moral perspective has been associated with organizational citizenship (Oshia et al., 2022) and innovative work behavior (Jibola, 2020). In healthcare settings, where burnout is prevalent, it has been directly linked to improved patient care quality (Puni & Hilton, 2020). Although internalized moral perspective has been linked to positive employee outcomes, its specific influence on innovative work behavior within the pharmaceutical retail sector remains empirically limited (Shafique et al., 2019).

In Kenya, retail pharmacies play a central role in healthcare access due to their accessibility and affordability (Torotich et al., 2022). However, commercialization and intense competition threatens their sustainability, and hence the calls for the right leadership to drive the change (Mukuria, 2022). Despite studies showing that that lack of good moral judgement and unethical decision making can compromise change initiatives (Mose et al., 2022), few studies have examined this relationship, with existing studies focusing more on its influence on ethical sourcing, employee commitment, governance (Gacheru et al., 2023; Mutemi et al., 2023; Mutsoli & Odoul, 2023). This study addresses this gap by examining how pharmacy managers' internalized moral perspective influence the innovative work behavior of pharmacy superintendents in retail pharmacies in Kenya.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study was underpinned by the post-positivist research philosophy, which supports the use of objective measurement and statistical analysis to examine social phenomena. A descriptive correlational research design was adopted, alongside a cross-sectional survey strategy, to explore the relationship between a leader's internalized moral perspective and the innovative work behavior of pharmacy superintendents in retail pharmacies in Kenya. This approach enabled the collection of quantitative data at a single point in time, allowing for the identification of associations between internalized moral perspective and innovative work behavior, without implying causation.

The target population comprised pharmacy superintendents in all 1,129 registered retail pharmacies in Kenya, as per the 2023 Pharmacy and Poisons Board list. The sample size was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula:  $n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$ , where  $n$  is the sample size,  $N$  is the population size, and  $e$  is the margin of error. Based on this calculation, a sample of 326 was selected using stratified random sampling to ensure representation across different categories of retail pharmacies, from which 309 valid responses were obtained. Data analysis was done using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics entailed frequencies, means, and standard deviations while inferential statistics included Spearman's rank-order correlation and ordinal logistic regression. A significance level of 5% ( $p < .05$ ) was used to determine statistical significance. Additionally, diagnostic tests primarily factor analysis was conducted to ensure data suitability.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Institutional Ethics and Review Committee (IERC) of United States International University-Africa (USIU-A, through the Dean of School of Graduate Studies, Research and Extension. Thereafter, the permit to conduct research was obtained from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI), confirming that the research complies with the Science and Technology act, Cap 250 of the laws of Kenya. Permission to access the list of registered pharmacies in the country was sought from the Pharmacy & Poisons Board (PPB). Permission was also sought from the participating organizations to conduct the research on pharmacy superintendents through the Chief Executive Officers (CEO) of the selected pharmacies. The purpose of the study was explained to participants, who were informed of their right to opt out. Informed consent was obtained from all who voluntarily agreed to participate. Quantitative data were collected using structured, anonymous questionnaires. Participants were debriefed on confidentiality measures and the secure storage and archiving of data.

## **RESULTS**

A total of 326 questionnaires were administered to pharmacy superintendents working in retail pharmacies across Kenya, resulting in 309 completed responses, which corresponds to a high response rate of 95%. Among the respondents, 52% were male and 48% female. In terms of age distribution, 6% were under 25 years, 34% were between 25 and 30 years, 57% were aged 31 to 45 years, and 3% were above 45 years. Regarding educational qualifications, the majority (65%) held a diploma as their highest level of education, followed by 29% with a bachelor's degree, and 6% with a master's degree. In terms of work experience, the largest proportion of respondents (32%) had between 5 and 10 years of experience. Those with 3 to 5 years of experience made up 30%, while 25% had worked for 1 to 3 years. Respondents with over 10 years of experience accounted for 10%, and those with less than one year comprised 3%.

Descriptive and inferential analyses were conducted to examine the influence of pharmacy manager's internalized moral perspective on the innovative work behavior of the pharmacy superintendents. Descriptive statistics included frequency distributions, means, and standard deviations. Inferential analysis involved correlation analysis and ordinal logistic regression to assess relationships and predictive effects. However, the study first conducted factor analysis to ascertain the suitability of data.

### **Factor Analysis**

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test was conducted to measure the adequacy of the sample for factor analysis. The results, as presented in Table 1, returned a value of 0.728, which was above the acceptable threshold of 0.6, indicating that the data was suitable for factor analysis. Additionally, Bartlett's test of sphericity was statistically significant ( $\chi^2 (3) = 377.62, p < .05$ ).

**Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's Test**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.728
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-square	377.619
	df	3
	Sig.	.000

*Total Variance Explained for Internalized Moral Perspective*

Principal component analysis was conducted to assess the underlying structure of the internalized moral perspective construct. The principal component analysis as per Table 2, revealed that one dominant component had an eigen value of >1, and explained over 76 % of the total variance, while the second and third components explained much smaller proportions (13% and 12%, respectively). This suggests that internalized moral perspective is a highly cohesive construct, meaning that its elements (integrity, ethical decision-making, and consistency) are strongly correlated.

**Table 2: Total Variance Explained for Internalized Moral Perspective**

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.284	76.143	76.143	2.284	76.143	76.143
2	.381	12.701	88.844			
3	.335	11.156	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

**Component Matrix for Internalized Moral Perspective**

The component matrix was analyzed to examine the specific attributes that define the internalized moral perspective construct. The component matrix showed strong correlations between all the three elements of internalized moral perspective, confirming their strong relationship under a single construct. The correlation coefficients for ethical decision-making were (0.883), followed by consistency between values and actions (0.870), and integrity (0.865) as per Table 3. These coefficients indicated that these factors are strongly related.

**Table 3: Component Matrix for Internalized Moral Perspective**

Item	Component
	1

My supervisor has high integrity and upholds their values, even in difficult situations	.865
My supervisor is ethical in decision-making, and not afraid to make tough decisions so long as they are aligned to their convictions	.883
My supervisor consistently acts in line with their values and moral convictions	.870

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

### **Descriptive Statistics**

Using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5= *Strongly Agree*, the results indicated that supervisors were rated highly for integrity ( $M = 4.10$ ,  $SD = 0.714$ ), ethical decision-making ( $M = 4.00$ ,  $SD = 0.764$ ), and consistency in living their values in the workplace ( $M = 4.01$ ,  $SD = 0.716$ ). These findings suggest that most pharmacy superintendents perceived their supervisors as practicing high levels of integrity, making ethical decisions, and consistently applying their ethical values in the workplace as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Internalize Moral Perspective (n=309)**

Internalized Moral Perspective	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Mean	SD
My supervisor has high integrity and upholds their values, even in difficult situations	0.6	1.0	14.2	56.3	27.8	4.10	0.71
My supervisor is ethical in decision-making, and not afraid to make tough decisions so long as they are aligned to their convictions	0.6	3.2	15.5	56.6	23.9	4.00	0.76
My supervisor consistently acts in line with their values and moral convictions	0.6	1.3	17.2	57.9	23.0	4.01	0.72

Note. SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree.

When asked about the extent to which specific aspects of internalized moral perspective influenced their innovative behavior, integrity consistently received higher mean scores across all three



dimensions of innovative work behavior: idea generation ( $M = 3.62$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ ), idea promotion ( $M = 3.70$ ,  $SD = 0.90$ ), and idea implementation ( $M = 3.65$ ,  $SD = 0.92$ ). Ethical decision-making was rated as having the strongest influence specifically on idea promotion ( $M = 3.66$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ), while the supervisor's consistency in living their values was perceived to most influence idea implementation ( $M = 3.60$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ ), as reported in Table 5.

**Table 5. Descriptive Statistics for Internalized Moral Perspective and the subscales of Innovative Work Behavior (n=309)**

<b>Internalized Moral Perspective &amp; Innovative Work Behavior</b>	<b>VSE (%)</b>	<b>SE (%)</b>	<b>ME (%)</b>	<b>LE (%)</b>	<b>VLE (%)</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<i><b>Internalized Moral Perspective &amp; New Idea Generation</b></i>							
Supervisor's integrity & idea generation	1.9	13.6	18.8	51.5	14.2	3.62	0.95
Supervisor's ethical decision-making & idea generation	4.2	11.7	17.2	52.8	14.2	3.61	1.01
Supervisor's consistency & idea generation	2.9	12.3	27.2	43.0	14.6	3.54	0.98
<i><b>Internalized Moral Perspective &amp; New Idea Promotion</b></i>							
Supervisor's integrity & idea promotion	0.3	13.6	17.8	52.8	15.5	3.70	0.90
Supervisor's ethical decision-making & idea promotion	1.6	12.3	17.8	55.0	13.3	3.66	0.91
Supervisor's consistency & idea promotion	3.9	9.7	28.8	43.7	13.9	3.54	0.98
<i><b>Internalized Moral Perspective &amp; New Idea Implementation</b></i>							
Supervisor's integrity & idea implementation	1.3	12.0	21.7	50.5	14.6	3.65	0.92
Supervisor's ethical decision-making & idea implementation	3.6	12.9	18.8	52.1	12.6	3.57	0.99
Supervisor's consistency & idea implementation	2.3	10.0	29.8	41.4	16.5	3.60	0.95

Note. VSE = Very Small Extent, SE = Small Extent, ME = Moderate Extent, LE = Large Extent, VLE = Very Large Extent.

### Correlation Analysis

Spearman's rank-order correlation was performed to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between internalized moral perspective and innovative work behavior. The correlation analysis shown in Table 6, revealed a strong and significant positive relationship between internalized moral perspective and innovative work behavior ( $r = 0.520$ ,  $p < .05$ ). This finding suggests that supervisors who exhibit high integrity, make ethical decisions and demonstrate consistency between their values and actions are more likely to foster innovative work behavior among the pharmacy superintendents.

**Table 1: Correlation Analysis for Internalized Moral Perspective and Innovative Work Behavior**

		Internalized moral Perspec- tive	Innovative Work Behavior
Internalized Moral Perspective	Spearman's Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.520**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	309	309
Innovative Work Behavior	Spearman's Correlation Coefficient	.520**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	309	309

\*. Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

### *Correlation Analysis for Internalized Moral Perspective and the Subscales of Innovative Work Behavior*

Spearman's rank-order correlation was also performed to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between internalized moral perspective and the subscales of innovative work behavior. The correlation analysis results as shown on Table 7, between the supervisor's internalized moral perspective and the constructs of innovative work behavior revealed that the variables are strongly and positively correlated. Internalized moral perspective was more correlated to new idea implementation ( $r = 0.536$ ,  $p < .05$ ), compared to new idea generation ( $r = 0.515$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and new idea promotion ( $r = 0.510$ ,  $p < .05$ ). These findings suggest that internalized moral perspective has strong correlations with all the subscales of innovative work behavior, with its strongest influence being on new idea implementation.



**Table 2: Correlation Analysis between Internalized Moral Perspective and the Subscales of Innovative Work Behavior**

		Internalized Moral Perspective	New Generation	Idea New Promotion	Idea New Implementation
Internalized Moral Perspective	Spearman's Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.515**	.510**	.536**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	309	309	309	309
New Idea Generation	Spearman's Correlation Coefficient	.515**	1.000	.884**	.858**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.	<.001	<.001
	N	309	309	309	309
New Idea Promotion	Spearman's Correlation Coefficient	.510**	.884**	1.000	.888**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	.	<.001
	N	309	309	309	309
New Idea Implementation	Correlation Coefficient	.536**	.858**	.888**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	.
	N	309	309	309	309

\*. Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

#### *Ordinal Logistic Regression*

The ordinal logistic regression model for internalized moral perspective, Pseudo R<sup>2</sup> statistics were used to approximate the proportion of variance in innovative work behavior explained by the model. As shown in Table 8, the Nagelkerke Pseudo R<sup>2</sup> value ( $R^2 = .372$ ) indicated that 37.2% of variance in the innovative work behavior of the pharmacy superintendents was explained by the supervisor's internalized moral perspective. These results suggest that supervisors who are ethical and consistently act in accordance to their values are more likely to encourage innovative work behavior.

**Table 8: Pseudo R-Square for Internalized Moral Perspective and Innovative Work Behavior**

Pseudo R-Square

Cox and Snell	.371
Nagelkerke	.372
McFadden	.079

Link function: Logit.

*Parameter Estimates for Internalized Moral Perspective and Innovative Work Behavior*

The parameter estimates from the ordinal logistic regression model were analyzed to assess the specific contribution and statistical significance of internalized moral perspective on innovative work behavior. The regression coefficients ( $\beta$ ), standard errors, Wald statistics, and p-values were assessed to evaluate the direction, strength, and significance of the predictor's influence. The parameter estimates showed that internalized moral perspective significantly predicted innovative work behavior. The Wald Chi-square test was significant (Wald = 94.963,  $p < .05$ ), confirming that internalized moral perspective made a meaningful contribution to the model. The location parameter estimates indicated that perceptions of the supervisor's internalized moral perspective significantly predicted the innovative work behavior of the pharmacy superintendents ( $\beta = 1.75$ ,  $p < .05$ ), as shown on table 9. Specifically, for each unit increase in internalized moral perspective, the odds of a pharmacy superintendent being in a higher innovative work behavior category increased by a factor of 5.75. These findings suggest that internalized moral perspective played a significant role in influencing innovative work behavior of the pharmacy superintendents in retail pharmacies in Kenya. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

**Table 9: Parameter Estimates for Internalized Moral Perspective and Innovative Work Behavior**

Type	Label	Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% CI (Lower)	95% CI (Upper)
<i>Threshold</i>	<i>Y<sub>IWB</sub> = 1</i>	-7.42	1.71	18.75	1	.000	-10.77	-4.06
	<i>Y<sub>IWB</sub> = 2</i>	-6.43	1.4	21.14	1	.000	-9.17	-3.69
	<i>Y<sub>IWB</sub> = 3</i>	-4.63	1.12	17.21	1	.000	-6.82	-2.44
	<i>Y<sub>IWB</sub> = 4</i>	-2.16	0.85	6.39	1	.011	-3.83	-0.49
	<i>Y<sub>IWB</sub> = 5</i>	1.9	0.87	4.83	1	.028	0.21	3.6
Predictor	IMP	1.75	0.18	94.96	1	<.001	1.4	2.1

Note. OR = 5.75; CI = Confidence Interval; Sig. = Significance level; df = degrees of freedom.

## DISCUSSION

This study examined the influence of internalized moral perspective on the innovative work behavior of pharmacy superintendents in retail pharmacies in Kenya. Drawing on authentic leadership theory, the findings provide strong empirical support for the role of internalized moral perspective in enhancing innovative work behavior. Spearman's correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant and strong positive relationship ( $r = .520$ ,  $p < .05$ ). These findings demonstrate that leaders who uphold integrity and consistency in the application of their values in decision-making create a conducive environment for innovative work behavior to thrive. These

findings were corroborated by Kasa et al. (2020), who found that a leader's internalized moral perspective builds employee morale and organizational commitment through trust. This, in turn, creates a psychologically safe environment that supports innovation.

In this study, internalized moral perspective showed the strongest correlation with new idea implementation ( $r = 0.536, p < .05$ ), followed by new idea generation ( $r = 0.515, p < .05$ ), and new idea promotion ( $r = 0.510, p < .05$ ). These results suggest that moral leadership may be particularly crucial for sustaining innovation more than for merely initiating it. The findings mirror those of Shafique et al. (2019), who found that ethical leadership had a greater influence on new idea implementation (42%) than on idea generation (28%). Similarly, Jia et al. (2022) found that ethical leadership not only inspires innovation but also reduces the fear of failure, enabling employees to engage in risk-taking behavior. Furthermore, Ahmad et al. (2019) emphasized that ethical leadership builds trust and psychological safety, which are prerequisites for innovation.

An ordinal logistic regression analysis was conducted to determine the influence of the internalized moral perspective on innovative work behavior. The results revealed that internalized moral perspective had a statistically significant influence on innovative work behavior. The study established that internalized moral perspective explained 37.2% of the variance in innovative work behavior (Nagelkerke Pseudo  $R^2 = .372$ ). It also emerged as a strong and statistically significant predictor of innovative work behavior ( $\beta = 1.749, p < .05$ ), with a unit increase in the internalized moral perspective being associated with a 5.75-fold increase in the odds of pharmacy superintendents being in a higher innovative work behavior category. These findings affirm that internalized moral perspective is a strong predictor of innovative work behavior. Therefore, the null hypothesis that internalized moral perspective does not have a statistically significant influence on the innovative work behavior of pharmacy superintendents in retail pharmacies in Kenya was rejected.

The results of this study show that the supervisors' internalized moral perspective, in terms of integrity and ethical behavior, is a significant driver of innovative work behavior among pharmacy superintendents. This implies that moral leaders who act consistently in line with their moral convictions rather than external pressures inspire their teams to generate, promote, and implement new ideas that provide solutions to the challenges encountered at work. These findings are corroborated by Johnson (2019), who found that leaders with an internalized moral perspective have a strong desire to positively impact the world, including pursuing dreams as long as they are aligned with their moral values. Similarly, Khan et al. (2021) found that leaders with an internalized moral perspective can uphold ethical principles, even during challenging situations, thereby cultivating a culture where innovation is both encouraged and protected. According to Jia et al. (2022), leaders with an internalized moral perspective create environments in which innovation thrives.

The study findings provide empirical evidence that leaders who act in accordance with their internal moral standards positively influence innovative work behavior. These findings add to previous empirical studies that confirmed the strong influence of the internalized moral perspective on innovative work behavior. According to Phuong and Takahashi (2020), internalized moral

perspective is a strong predictor of innovative work behavior. Similarly, Zeb et al. (2019) found that ethical leadership predicted 39% of employee creativity, closely aligning with the explained variance in the current study. Internalized moral perspective has been found to influence innovative work behavior by reducing job stress (Ismail et al., 2019), encouraging organizational citizenship behavior (Oshia et al., 2022), and enhancing the capacity to think and act creatively (Jia et al., 2022). However, a study by Sazkaya and Gul (2020) conducted in Turkey found that the internalized moral perspective had no significant influence on the innovative work behavior of employees within the packaging sector. These contradictory findings suggest that the influence of internalized moral perspective on innovative work behavior may be influenced by sectoral or cultural differences.

In the context of retail pharmacies in Kenya, this study adds to the limited empirical literature by providing evidence that internalized moral perspective of pharmacy leaders contributes meaningfully to the innovative work behavior of pharmacy superintendents. This insight is particularly important amid severe burnout and complaints of increased workload among pharmacy superintendents (Nakambale et al., 2023). Mose et al. (2022) found that unethical reasoning among leaders can compromise change initiatives in an organization. This corroborates the findings of this study, which affirmed that a leadership with an internalized moral perspective demonstrated through integrity and consistent application of ethical values in decision making promotes innovative work behavior.

The study findings underscore the importance of integrating internalized moral perspective into leadership development programs. This study not only affirms the value of internalized moral perspective in driving innovative work behavior but also demonstrates the need to strengthen ethical leadership capacity in the retail pharmaceutical sector through continuous professional development frameworks.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study established that internalized moral perspective explained 37.2% of the variance in innovative work behavior (Nagelkerke Pseudo  $R^2 = .372$ ). Internalized moral perspective also emerged as a strong and statistically significant predictor of innovative work behavior ( $\beta=1.749$ ,  $p<.05$ ) among pharmacy superintendents in Kenya. A unit change in the supervisor's internalized moral perspective led to a 5.75-fold increase in the odds of the pharmacy superintendent being in a higher innovative work behavior category. These results led to the rejection of the null hypothesis that internalized moral perspective does not have a statistically significant influence on the innovative work behavior of the pharmacy superintendents in retail pharmacies in Kenya.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Theoretical Contribution and Practical Implications**

This study extends authentic leadership theory by empirically validating internalized moral perspective as a key predictor of innovative work behavior within the retail pharmaceutical sector. Furthermore, it refines the construct by operationalizing it through measurable subdimensions of integrity, ethical decision-making, and consistency between values and action, and demonstrates

their collective influence on innovative work behavior. The findings underscore the importance of integrating ethical and moral leadership development into formal and continuous professional development for pharmacy owner/managers.

### **Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research**

This study was limited to pharmacy superintendents in retail pharmacy settings. However, pharmacy superintendents are also found in other segments of the pharmaceutical industry. Future research should explore this relationship across other pharmaceutical sectors, such as manufacturing or hospital pharmacies, to enhance generalizability. Additionally, given the influence of contextual variables, future studies should investigate potential moderators of this relationship such as cultural orientation and employee well-being. to better understand the mechanisms through which internalized moral perspective influences innovative work behavior.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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