

Innovation Mechanism in the Hospitality Industry: A Mediated-Moderated Model

Gamal S. A. Khalifa

Faculty of Business, Higher Colleges of Technology, Al Ain, Abu Dhabi, UAE
Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Fayoum University, Al-Fayoum, Egypt

Abuelhassan Elshazly Abuelhassan

College of Tourism and Hospitality, University of Tabuk, Tabuk, KSA

Sawsan Haider Abdullah Khreis

College of Tourism and Hospitality, University of Tabuk, Tabuk, KSA

Faculty of Tourism and Hotel, Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan

Mohammad Soliman

University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Salalah, Oman

Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Fayoum University, Fayoum, Egypt

Md Sazzad Hossain

College of Tourism and Hospitality, University of Tabuk, Tabuk, KSA

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between empowered leadership (EL), intrinsic motivation (IM), job complexity (JC), and innovative employee behavior (EIB) in the hospitality industry. The study specifically investigates how EL affects EIB and how IM mediates this connection. Furthermore, this study explores the moderating impact of JC on the direct interconnected linkages between EL, IM, and EIB. Our sample comprises 506 employee-supervisor dyads from 45 five-star hotels in the Middle East, representing a variety of international hotel chains. Using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), the study finds that EL significantly impacts EIB, which IM subsequently influences. Additionally, we discover that IM acts as a mediator for EL and EIB. Moreover, we find that JC has a moderating impact on the strength of these relationships. Our findings have both theoretical and practical implications for hotel managers and researchers interested in fostering their subordinates' IM and promoting their innovation. We also emphasize the importance of JC in positively influencing the strength of these relationships in the hotel industry. Managers can develop strategies to increase their businesses' competitiveness in this dynamic and competitive sector by better understanding the factors that drive EIB.

Key Words: empowering leadership, intrinsic motivation, innovative employee behavior, job complicity, hotels

JEL Classification: O31, O32, O33

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1. Introduction

Hotels always search for new strategies and innovative methods to enhance their offerings, including products and services, and ultimately achieve success. One such method involves fostering

the innovativeness of employees to attract and retain customers (Hossain, et al., 2019; Yen, et al., 2020). Employee innovative behavior (EIB) is the ability of an employee to generate, originate, and implement new and beneficial ideas (Shin et al., 2017), and has been a significant source of competitiveness (Shafique, 2020).

The literature on EIB reflects an interactional perspective that highlights the relationship between contextual elements (e.g., leadership style and job complexity) (C.-J. Wang et al., 2014) and the personal characteristics of employees (T. Chen et al., 2016; Lulewicz-sas, 2022; Mohamed et al., 2018) in driving employee creativity. As a result, researchers have become highly dependent on the circumstances that lead to employee innovation (Shin et al., 2017). However, there have been limited studies examining the determinants of EIB in the hospitality sector (Arasli et al., 2020). For instance, Dhar (2016) investigated the impact of ethical leadership on EIB, while Su, et al. (2020) explored how servant leadership affects EIB. Nevertheless, academic interest in innovation is multileveled, complex, and growing, suggesting a need for skillful leaders and a revision of working methods (Alharthi & Khalifa, 2019).

Empowering leadership (EL) is a key contextual component for motivating hospitality workers to engage in innovative behavior (Lin et al., 2019). According to Lin et al. (2019), EL could generally be described as “behaviors that share power with subordinates”. Inside contemporary organizations, EL is increasingly seen as a contextual element in generating employee creativity, that is an initial and important step for the EIB (Wu & Chen, 2015). EL entails a power transfer from top management to knowledge workers who have high autonomy and are competent to take the initiative and make decisions on everyday tasks (Jada et al., 2019). EL has the potential to boost hotel employee creativity, allowing businesses to gain a better understanding of their employees' willingness to embrace new prospects (Jada et al., 2019). However, there is limited research on the impact of EL on EIB in the tourism and hospitality setting, especially in the Middle East region. Additionally, there is an argument that the impact of EL on EIB is less significant when subordinates practice more routine tasks (Lee et al., 2018). Furthermore, EL has been shown to improve a range of work-related outcomes such as psychological empowerment and engagement (e.g., Huertas-Valdivia et al., 2019). However, rare research has investigated if this leadership style has an equal impact on subordinates' innovative behavior or if all subordinates need an empowering leader to be motivated for achieving their tasks (Jada et al., 2019). This is because EL may have negative impacts on subordinates' outcomes (Cheong et al., 2019), raising the need to investigate the relationship between EL and subordinates' behaviors (i.e., EIB) under a number of moderators (Lee et al., 2018; Tang et al., 2020).

Furthermore, for the hotel industry's survival, performance, growth, and sustainability (Pereira-Moliner & Pertusa-ortega, 2021), innovative behavior at the managerial and individual levels is critical (Hassi, 2019). Given that EL style is a significant dominant behavior in the hospitality sector (Lin et al., 2019), studies to investigate the effect of EL on the EIB at the employee level are required to fill this gap and enrich the hospitality literature (Hassi, 2019). In addition, there have been insufficient recent studies investigating the significant moderators and mediators between EL and EIB. For instance, intrinsic motivation (IM) has received substantial academic attention as a significant predictor of employee creativity and EIB (T. Chen et al., 2016). Yet, the mechanism underlying the relation between EL and EIB through motivation is unclear at the individual level (Hassi, 2019). Nevertheless, few hospitality studies have highlighted the significance of IM in the generation and implementation of EIB, and no research has been conducted to examine the role of IM as an intermediary between EL and EIB. Previous studies (e.g., Zhang & Zhou, 2014) found that the nature and characteristics of leaders and subordinates can influence the relationship between EL and employees' IM. However, very little research has looked into the role of the nature of work/job in influencing leadership behaviors and employees' IM, efficacy, or creativity (Abdullah et al., 2019).

Job complexity (JC) is another contextual factor thought to impact employee innovative behavior, creativity, or innovation. Drawing on a study by Afsar & Umrani (2020), two types of JC have

been explored in the hospitality industry context. The first is the concept of difficult jobs being performed by front-line workers (FLWs). These staff execute a variety of responsibilities while retaining direct contact with hotel guests; as a result, they require a high level of autonomy and expertise to do their jobs well. The second involves simple and routine back-office job (BOJ) personnel, who have fewer encounters with hotel guests and do simple and repetitive activities. Workers with more difficult occupations express more IM and are consequently more creative than those with more routine jobs (Saeed et al., 2019). Unfortunately, there is not much information available about how JC affects the innovativeness of employees (Afsar & Umrani, 2020), particularly in the hospitality industry context. It should be mentioned that our classification of front-office and back-office professions was based on the conventional organizational structure of the hotel business as well as workers' perceived job demands, task diversity, and skill needs. However, this classification may have some overlap or exceptions, and some back-office professions, such as revenue managers and executive chefs, may be more sophisticated than others. Furthermore, because our research was done in a specific geographic location, it may not be applicable to other cultural or institutional situations. Consequently, this study aims to (1) test the links among EL, IM and EIB; (2) investigate the mediating role of IM in EL's impact on EIB; (3) find out how JC influences the EL-EIB, EL-IM, and IM-EIB relationships; and (4) provide new insights into how EL promotes EIB in the hospitality industry and under what circumstances.

This study is divided into six sections: Introduction, Literature Review, Methods, Results, Discussion (theoretical and practical implications), and Conclusion. The Introduction section summarizes the study's aims and research questions. The Literature Review section addresses the theoretical foundation and pertinent literature on empowering leadership, intrinsic motivation, job complexity, and employee inventive behavior. The Methods section explains the study design and data analysis procedures. The statistical analysis findings are presented in the Results section. The Discussion section interprets the study's findings theoretically and practically. Finally, the Conclusion section discusses the study's overall results, limitations, and makes recommendations for future research.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Resource-Based View

According to RBV theory, a firm's resources and capabilities are the key sources of its competitive advantage. Resources can be tangible, such as physical assets, or intangible, such as knowledge, skills, and reputation (Mai et al., 2021). Capabilities relate to a company's capacity to successfully use its resources in order to produce value for consumers and make profits (Tian et al., 2021). A company can gain a lasting competitive advantage by using its unique resources and competencies (Chatterjee & Rana, 2021).

In the context of this study, the RBV theory proposes that a firm's resources and competencies, such as empowered leadership, intrinsic motivation, and job complexity, may boost employee inventive behavior, resulting in a sustainable competitive advantage (Khalifa et al., 2023). Empowering leadership, for example, may be viewed as a resource or capability that allows people to have more decision-making authority and autonomy, which can lead to increased creativity and innovation (Hoang et al., 2021). Intrinsic motivation may also be viewed as a resource or capacity since it gives employees a personal stake in their job, which can motivate them to take chances and explore new ideas. Job complexity may be viewed as a resource or capacity that offers people possibilities for learning and growth, as well as more autonomy and decision-making power.

2.2. Employee innovative behavior in the Egyptian Hospitality Context

The Egyptian hospitality industry contributes significantly to the country's economy, with tourism being one of the most important sources of foreign currency. The business is distinguished by a wide range of lodging types, ranging from luxury hotels to low-cost hostels. Cairo, Sharm El Sheikh, Hurghada, Luxor, and Aswan are among the most popular tourist attractions in Egypt. Egypt's hotel business confronts a number of obstacles, including economic instability, economic uncertainty, and security worries. Yet, the tourism sector has remained resilient and continues to attract visitors from all over the world (Abuelhassan & AlGassim, 2022). International hotel chains in Egypt include Marriott, Hilton, and Accor, which are among the world's most well-known hotel brands. These hotels frequently conform to worldwide standards and provide the same level of service and facilities throughout all of its locations, regardless of location (Vij & Nadkarni, 2022). It is crucial to note, however, that the features of the Egyptian hospitality business may differ from those of other Middle Eastern nations or the rest of the globe (Abuelhassan & AlGassim, 2022). Local customs and traditions, as well as economic and political issues, may all have an impact on how hotels function and what customers anticipate (Çelik, 2021).

Employee innovative behavior (EIB) refers to the creation, development, and implementation of new ideas inside a business by its workers (Z. Wang & Cui, 2022). The entrepreneurial actions of employees within a firm, such as the creation of new goods or services, are referred to as intrapreneurial behavior (Fadda, 2020). Employee-based innovation refers to how workers contribute to innovation within a business and includes both EIB and intrapreneurial activity (Pandher et al., 2017). While all three concepts are crucial to understand, EIB is especially pertinent in the context of Egypt's hotel business. With the sector confronted with issues such as economic instability and security concerns, innovation may provide a competitive advantage and contribute to the organization's long-term success (Z. Wang & Cui, 2022). EIB can lead to the creation of new goods, services, and procedures that distinguish the company from competitors while also meeting the changing demands of visitors. Moreover, EIB can boost employees' job satisfaction and commitment, which can lead to higher levels of performance and customer satisfaction (Z. Wang & Cui, 2022).

2.3. Empowering leadership and employee innovative behavior

Earlier research has indicated that differences in leadership styles are a function of EIB (e.g., Dhar, 2016; Su et al., 2020). The current study looks at the effect of EL on EIB at the individual level, assuming that leaders delegate more to subordinates who are eligible and competent, have positive relationships with their leaders, and execute jobs with comparable goals to their leaders (Khalifa, 2020). In the hospitality context, Mutonyi & Si (2020) found that firms that empower their employees had a positive impact on their creativity and EIB. Furthermore, Luoh et al. (2014) revealed a positive relation between psychological empowerment (PE) and IB. Nevertheless, this research contends that EL is distinct from PE (Raub & Robert, 2013). This study investigates possible links between EL and EIB, having found that the four dimensions of EL behaviors – expressing confidence in high performance, reinforcing the significance of work, boosting involvement in decision-making, and increasing the right of a group of employees to manage itself and to organize its activities against bureaucratic limitations – make a significant contribution to staff creativity (Zhang & Zhou, 2014). It has also been reported that employee creativity might be a strong stimulus for innovative behavior (Wallace et al., 2016).

Furthermore, evidence suggests a link between employee perceptions of EL behaviors and EIB. Delegating authority to employees to implement actions and make decisions without supervision or intervention, for example, boosts their creativity and inventiveness. Additionally, when employees are empowered, they gain more confidence in their ability to complete tasks, which improves their problem-solving skills, creativity, and innovativeness (Hong et al., 2023; Luoh et al., 2014). Employees also tend to pay more attention to problem-solving from various perspectives and review various information channels to recognize how to solve a specific problem or deal with a difficult situation,

despite the fact that they may recognize the importance of their work and see it as personally meaningful (Elkhwesky et al., 2022; Khalifa et al., 2022). This, in turn, motivates employees to push past their typical patterns of thinking and produce various horizons of innovation (Luoh et al., 2014). Moreover, providing employees with autonomy reinforces their sense of freedom, insofar as they perceive themselves to be responsible for controllable outcomes, enhancing their motivation and enthusiasm to improve their job performance (Elshaer et al., 2022), resulting in higher levels of innovativeness. Consequently, the first hypothesis is:

H1: Individual employees' perceptions of EL are positively associated with EIB.

2.4. Empowering leadership and intrinsic motivation

Considering that EL enables EIB, the authors note a wealth of available evidence explaining the links between EL and IM in the workplace. Ryan & Deci (2020) described IM in terms of the degree to which one is self-directed, fascinated with, or willing to do a job and involved in the task for the sake of the job itself. Past research has indicated that EL provides autonomy to subordinates and encourages the meaningfulness of their work (Lin et al., 2019). Previous studies have also indicated that autonomy and meaningfulness (Deci et al., 2017) are crucial to the development of IM. Conceptually, the current study draws links between EL and IM depending on the prior study of (Vu et al., 2021). First, empowering leaders raise the job value by allowing employees to understand their work-related purpose and objectives, as well as the significance of their contributions to the organization's overall efficiency. Secondly, they express self-efficacy in their employees' competence by expressing their belief in their ability to deliver high performance. Lastly, empowering leaders support the participation of employees in making decisions when they enhance employees' feelings of autonomy by supporting their autonomous decision making with respect to how to initiate and complete their work. These leadership behaviors, in turn, will boost the individual experience of IM (Huertas-Valdivia et al., 2019). Therefore, this argument leads us to hypothesize that:

H2: Individual employees' perceptions of EL are positively related to their IM.

2.5. Intrinsic motivation and employee innovative behavior

One related psychological factor proposed by previous studies concerns the IM of employees to engage in their tasks, which would positively influence employee creativity (Zhang & Bartol, 2010). Creativity (i.e., generating new ideas) is the genesis of innovative behavior (i.e., generating and implementing new ideas) (Wallace et al., 2016); therefore, IM may also be helpful in interpreting EIB (Saeed et al., 2019). When people have high IM, they are more likely to be creative because they are enthusiastic about the work, issue, or problem that needs to be solved, and are thus more interested in it because of the task itself (Abdullah et al., 2019). In other words, the employee has a self-directed inner interest in the issue and is fascinated with finding a solution to the problem (Peng et al., 2022). Limited empirical evidence, however, has investigated the direct influence of IM on EIB (Peng et al., 2022), particularly in the context of hospitality. A prior study suggested a positive association between IM and employee creativity (Zhang & Bartol, 2010). The current study aims to generalize the IM-EIB relationship to the hospitality context; thus, the study hypothesizes that:

H3: Individual employee IM is positively related to EIB.

2.6. The mediating role of intrinsic motivation

The role of IM as a mediating factor in the link between contextual variables and employee creativity has been studied (Feng et al., 2018). Employees' IM is also seen as a crucial element in their

innovation (Peng et al., 2022). Intrinsically motivated workers also demonstrate greater commitment in the face of challenges and are more willing to try new or innovative approaches to issues, making them more likely to be inventive at the workplace (Su et al., 2020). Highly motivated workers typically focus on their purpose and appear to be fully engaged in their service work when it comes to job-innovative behavior. For emotionally motivated workers, service work is more of a fun activity than a heavy burden, making them more likely to actively engage in business innovation activities (Su et al., 2020).

This study has previously argued that EL positively impacts EIB (H1), as well as contended that EL behavior has the ability to encourage employees' IM (H2). Furthermore, it has also presumed that intrinsically motivated employees are more willing to show innovative behavior in the workplace (H3). In conjunction with hypotheses 1, 2, and 3, the current research paper supposes that IM mediates the relationship between EL and EIB. Based on non-hospitality studies, IM can mediate the relationship between favorable leadership behaviors and EIB. For example, IM mediates the association between supervisor support and employee innovativeness (Chen et al., 2016), as well as the association between ethical leadership and employee innovativeness (Peng et al., 2022). Eventually, EL is an effective leadership style to stimulate employee IM (Zhang & Bartol, 2010), leading to significant increases in employee creativity and innovation, since employees with high IM exhibit greater persistence and cognitive flexibility (Jada et al., 2019), and are able to develop more inventive and distinctive solutions to work challenges and difficulties (Chen et al., 2016). Accordingly, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H4: IM mediates the relationship between EL and EIB.

2.7. Job complexity as a moderator

EL behaviors have the potential to enhance their subordinates' IM and IBs, but these behaviors are not suitable for all subordinates' IM and IBs. As the main benefits of empowering leaders include autonomy and delegation of authority and responsibility to subordinates to successfully complete tasks (Jung & Kang, 2020), these leadership behaviors are unhelpful and demotivating for subordinates who perform simple or routine jobs (Jung & Kang, 2020). Additionally, leadership is unlikely to enhance employee creativity under the circumstances of simple or routine jobs (Wang et al., 2014). Therefore, this study argues that under complex work situations, supervisors with EL behaviors have a greater impact on their subordinates (FLJ employees) to exert additional efforts to achieve high IM and perform IBs. Meanwhile, under simple work situations, the influence of empowering leaders on their subordinates (BOJ employees) to exhibit IBs and have high IM is lower.

JC has been defined as inclusive of five work features: task identification, task feedback, skill diversity, autonomy, and task importance (Vila-v & Castro-casal, 2020). JC is considered a significant contributor to increasing both employee creativity (C.-J. Wang et al., 2014) and employees' feelings of IM. Within the hospitality context, JC encourages FLJ employees to make greater effort than BOJ workers in developing original, unusual, and beneficial notions because both leadership behaviors and JC allow them to have a higher level of confidence in their creativeness, effectiveness, and creative identity than BOJ employees (C.-J. Wang et al., 2014).

Vila-v & Castro-casal 2020 identified a positive association between JC and IM in their research. Based on Vila-v & Castro-casal (2020), employees who consider their work complex also tend to feel that their work is more exciting because they can better discern the meaningfulness and importance of their job, and they are personally responsible for organizational outcomes, thus improving their IM. Employees with fairly simple jobs, on the other hand, have less IM because they are less likely to feel motivated to do their best, as they feel that any other employee can perform their job just as well (Vila-v & Castro-casal, 2020).

Furthermore, JC is characterized by autonomy, decision-making latitude, and task significance (Vila-v & Castro-casal, 2020), which in turn requires EL behavior (Jung & Kang, 2020). When jobs are

highly complex, managers should ensure that their employees have some level of authority and autonomy, as well as participation in decision-making processes, so that they can discuss different points of view, assess the situation, and develop appropriate strategies to solve problems and meet the needs of their clients. Within the field of hospitality, FLJ staff is expected to resolve customer issues and meet their various needs without having to go through the process of consulting with their supervisors. Therefore, empowering leaders increase their employees' feelings of autonomy, work meaningfulness, authority, and decision-making latitude (Hoang et al., 2021).

In contrast, employees who work in routine jobs and perform relatively simple tasks (e.g., BOJ workers) are left to follow standard working procedures. Consequently, these employees have limited requirements for EL behavior due to the clarity of their functional tasks, in addition to the less reciprocal influence, thus reducing their level of IM. As such, employees working in repetitive roles are less likely to feel motivated to do their best because they feel that any other employee can perform their job just as well, thus diminishing their motivation to develop IB in their job (Hoang et al., 2021; Vila-v & Castro-casal, 2020). Thus, this study suggests that:

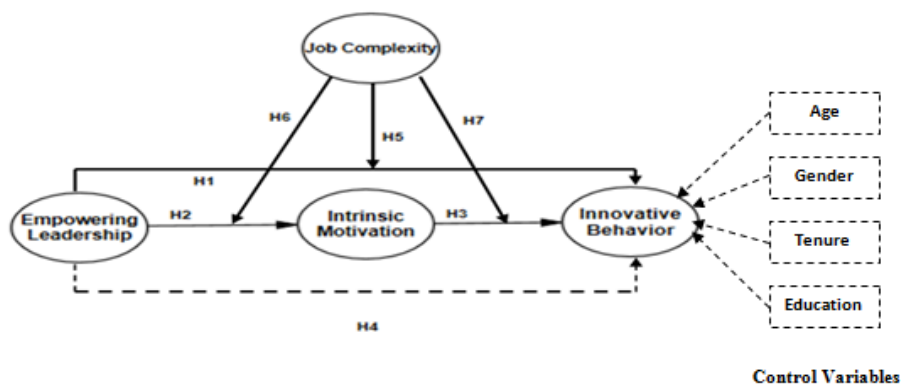
H5: The impact of EL on EIB is stronger in FLJs than in BOJs.

H6: The impact of EL on employees' IM is stronger in FLJs than in BOJs.

Finally, this study emphasizes the significant moderating role of JC in the IM-EIB relationship. Specifically, the current research suggests that the influence of IM on EIB is stronger in FLJs than in BOJs. Prior studies lend credence to these arguments; for instance, the nature of JC (as a complex or routine job) has a pivotal impact on the development of EIB in the hospitality industry (Saeed et al., 2019; Vila-v & Castro-casal, 2020).

Furthermore, Chien et al., (2021) confirmed that JC positively affects IM and employee creativity. When workers have the autonomy to respond to difficult jobs that require great mental or physical effort to be successfully done, they will express greater IM and be more productive and creative than those performing simple or routine jobs (Afsar & Umrani, 2020). This is especially true when the job is complex (i.e., involves complexity, autonomy, and high challenge), in which case the employee should experience greater IM in terms of wanting to concentrate their efforts and attention on their job, being more consistent, and being more likely to consider alternative perspectives (Minh-duc & Huu-Lam, 2019). This should, in theory, increase the employee's innovative output. In contrast, jobs that are more routine and simple may not be intrinsically motivating for employees as such routine jobs do not enhance their abilities to adopt novel mechanisms and techniques to carry out their tasks and potentially perform IB (Chen, et al., 2017). Linking H3 with this discussion, this study supposes that:

Figure 1. The conceptual model of the study



Source: Authors' elaboration

H7: The impact of an employee's IM on their IB is stronger in FLJs than in BOJs.
Based on the aforementioned discussion, Figure 1 presents the research model.

3. Methods

3.1. Sampling and data Collection

We selected Egypt for our research on innovative employee behavior in the Egyptian hospitality sector because of its substantial contributions to the tourism industry in the Middle East and Africa (El Atiek & Goutte, 2023; Vij & Nadkarni, 2022). Egypt has a broad range of hotels and resorts, from local chains to international brands, each offering a unique perspective on the subject (El Atiek & Goutte, 2023; Elshaer et al., 2022). Furthermore, Egypt's geographical location at the crossroads of Africa, Asia, and Europe makes it a hub for international tourism, allowing us to draw connections between employee creative behavior in the Egyptian hospitality sector and the larger global context.

The population frame for this study is based on a comprehensive census technique of five-star hotels in Egypt, particularly in Cairo and Sharm El-Sheikh, as the majority of these hotels are international chains and are located in these two cities. The study has targeted five-star hotels because they have the advantage of international competition experience, ongoing training, innovative solutions (Salem, 2014), scheduled programs for staff satisfaction, and periodic surveys of staff opinions (Salem, 2014). In accordance with the aims and objectives of the current research, 45 out of 76 human resources directors agreed to support this study and provided a list of Food and Beverage (F&B) managers and Front Office (FO) managers, as well as their direct full-time staff, with the assurance that participants' responses would remain confidential. F&B and FO departments were targeted because they are the public face of the hotel, serving as the point of interface between customers and the hotel (Rutherford, 2021). In addition, F&B and FO departments are responsible for performing some of the most challenging and critical tasks associated with the industry (Gössling & Hall, 2021), as they are responsible for providing customized and high-quality services to hotel customers (Kuo et al., 2012). As a result, F&B and FO staff exhibit a high degree of expertise and competence and contribute to the hotel industry's success (Gössling & Hall, 2021).

To minimize the likelihood of common method bias (CMB), managers and employees were given different sets of questionnaires (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Additionally, it has been reported that supervisors are the best assessors of a subordinate's innovative behavior (Dhar, 2016). In the employee survey, respondents were asked to evaluate their immediate supervisor's EL behaviors and their IM. In contrast to the employee survey, the supervisor survey was designed to obtain supervisors' evaluations of their subordinates' innovative behaviors. To ensure meaning equivalence, the questionnaires were translated from English into Arabic and then back-translated into English by two bilingual academic staff members (Brislin, 1970).

Between July and December 2019, data were collected from hotel staff in Cairo and Sharm El-Sheikh. From the employees' list, eight participants from each department were chosen at random by the authors (F&B and FO) to include front line and back-office employees. Thus, from each hotel (45 hotels), two supervisors (F&B and FO) with 16 front line and back-office employees were selected, resulting in 90 managers and 720 employees in a dyad ratio of 1:8. The authors separately met with both departments' managers and the participating employees to explain the study's purpose and confidentiality. Employee questionnaires were individually delivered by the authors to each employee, who was instructed to mail the survey using a pre-addressed, pre-stamped envelope (Time 1).

The number of distributed employee questionnaires was 720, including eight front line and backline employees of the two departments in 45 hotels. The managers were given two months to

observe their subordinates' innovative behaviors in the workplace without informing the employees. Meanwhile, this period was enough to receive the complete employee survey.

The manager survey was sent to the 90 participating managers, who were asked to evaluate 720 subordinates' innovative behavior using a pre-addressed, pre-stamped envelope after the two-month period had passed (Time 2). To ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of participants' responses, researchers and human resource directors briefed them about the study's aims and research processes. Each set of surveys was attached with a pre-addressed, pre-stamped envelope for easy return, as well as a cover letter outlining the study's purpose and details about the researchers' commitment to participant anonymity. Each employee survey was given a unique code number to help match the data from the two sample periods.

Time 1 (Employee Survey): 720 questionnaire forms were circulated to evaluate EL and IM, and 540 completed questionnaires were obtained. **Time 2** (Manager Survey): separate questionnaires were sent to the 90 managers, and 688 questionnaires were received from 86 managers. After excluding surveys with incomplete data, questionable response patterns, and unmatched codes, the study was left with 506 matched pairs of valid and completed supervisor and employee questionnaires for analysis.

3.2. Measures

Each construct was assessed using participants' responses on a 7-point Likert-type scale, except for the control variables. The EL construct was assessed as a second-order construct using a 12-item scale adapted from four multi-item subscales: autonomy (3 items, $\alpha = 0.78$), confidence in high performance (3 items, $\alpha = 0.86$), participation in decision-making (3 items, $\alpha = 0.86$), and meaningfulness of work (3 items, $\alpha = 0.87$), previously developed by Zhang and Bartol (2010).

The fit indices for the four dimensions revealed a good level of fit: (χ^2 (d.f.) = 178.004 (48), $p < 0.00$ [χ^2 /d.f.=3.70], CFI = 0.96; NFI=0.95; AGFI=0.92; GFI=0.95; RMSEA=0.07; SRMR=0.03). IM construct was estimated using three items stated by (Zhang & Bartol, 2010), and adapted from the study of Tierney et al. (1999). EIB construct was estimated depending on the 6-item scale of Hu et al. (2009). Following prior creativity and innovation research, the current study has employed various control variables to measure and control their impact on EIB (C.-J. Wang et al., 2014; Zhang & Bartol, 2010; Zhang & Zhou, 2014), these variables include gender (0=female, 1=male), age (years), tenure (years in the hotel), and educational level (5=post graduate, 4=bachelor, 3=diploma, 2=senior school, 1=less than senior school).

3.3. Analytic approach

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to test the validity and reliability of the measured constructs before using PLS-SEM to test the hypothesized model (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). AMOS-21 was employed to examine the direct relationships (H 1–3), and the mediating role of IM (H 4) using the technique described by Baron and Kenny (1986), plus a nonparametric re-sampling procedure (i.e., bootstrapping) as an additional test of mediation (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Regarding the moderation model (H 5–7), a multi-group analysis was performed using AMOS. We divided the data into two groups after using JC as a moderating variable. The first group was comprised of BOJ employees (n=218), while the second group was comprised of FLJ employees (n=288).

4. Results

4.1. Sample profile

The sample consisted of 218 BOJ employees (43.1%) and 288 FLJ employees (56.9%). The respondents had an average age of 32.5 years, with 319 males (63%) and 187 females (37%). On average, participants had worked in the participating hotels for 6.5 years. The majority of respondents had studied up to a bachelor's degree level (214 [42.3%]) or diploma level (184 [36.4%]), with 39 (7.7%) and 51 (10.1%) having completed postgraduate or senior school education, respectively.

4.2. Descriptive statistics

The descriptive statistics, correlation, and reliability of the constructs used in this study are presented in Table 1. The EL dimensions, including MW ($r=0.27$ and 0.22 , $p<0.01$), PDM ($r=0.31$ and 0.21 , $p<0.01$), CHP ($r=0.26$ and 0.21 , $p<0.01$), and autonomy ($r=0.34$ and 0.24 , $p<0.01$), are positively correlated with employee IM and EIB, respectively. Moreover, employee IM is positively correlated with EIB ($r=0.44$, $p<0.01$).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics, Correlations, and Reliabilities.

n = 506	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
(1) Gender										
(2) Education	0.19**									
(3) Tenure	0.03	-0.02								
(4) Age	0.06	-0.01	0.71**							
(5) MW	0.06	0.05	-0.11*	-0.08	(0.84)					
(6) PDM	0.02	0.08	-0.03	0.00	0.55**	(0.82)				
(7) CHP	0.02	0.06	-0.04	-0.05	0.58**	0.54**	(0.82)			
(8) Autonomy	0.04	0.07	-0.03	0.00	0.54**	0.56**	0.47**	(0.74)		
(9) IM	0.08	0.11*	-0.06	-0.09*	0.27**	0.31**	0.26**	0.34**	(0.80)	
(10) EIB	0.18**	0.15**	-0.06	-0.03	0.22**	0.21**	0.21**	0.24**	0.58**	(0.77)
Mean	1.37	3.41	6.58	32.46	4.07	4.01	4.07	4.01	4.26	4.35
SD	0.48	0.90	6.04	9.04	1.52	1.44	1.34	1.40	1.38	1.38

Note: MW= meaningfulness of work, PDM= participation in decision making, CHP= confidence in high performance, IM= intrinsic motivation, EIB= employee innovative behavior

a = Internal reliabilities (alpha coefficients) for the overall constructs are given in parentheses on the diagonal; * $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$

Source: Authors' elaboration

4.3. Measurement Model

To test for reliability and convergent validity, we utilized composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), and factor loadings (shown in Table 2). Factor loadings of all items were above 0.7, the CR of all constructs was above 0.70, and the AVE of all constructs was above 0.50 (Hair

et al., 2017), indicating better convergent validity and reliability of the measurement model. Furthermore, the square root of the AVE for each construct surpassed the estimated intercorrelation among all constructs as shown in Table 1, providing preliminary indication of discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2017).

Table 2. Measurement model

Items	Loadings	AVE	ASV	MSV	α /CR	t-value
Empowering leadership		0.64	0.14	0.19	0.91/0.88	
<i>Meaningfulness of work</i>		0.700	0.42	0.450	0.87/0.88	
MW1	0.85					22.53***
MW2	0.87					28.32***
MW3	0.77					17.57***
<i>Participation in decision making</i>		0.68	0.42	0.48	0.86/0.86	
PDM1	0.80					20.67***
PDM2	0.78					18.67***
PDM3	0.87					25.82***
<i>Confidence in high performance</i>		0.68	0.39	0.45	0.86/0.86	
CHP1	0.77					15.82***
CHP2	0.87					26.42***
CHP3	0.82					20.02***
<i>Autonomy</i>		0.55	0.41	0.48	0.78/0.79	
ABC1	0.75					19.46***
ABC2	0.78					17.36***
ABC3	0.69					14.08***
Intrinsic motivation		0.64	0.32	0.456	0.84/0.84	
IM1	0.85					30.68***
IM2	0.76					29.46***
IM3	0.77					25.83***
Employee Innovative Behavior		0.59	0.28	0.456	0.90/0.90	
EIB1	0.78					17.89***
EIB2	0.79					18.93***
EIB3	0.79					20.36***
EIB4	0.75					18.07***
EIB5	0.76					19.00***
EIB6	0.71					15.19***
Model measurement: ($\chi^2=326.03$, d.f.=182, χ^2 /d.f.=1.79; CFI=0.98; RMSEA=0.04).						

Source: Authors' elaboration

The results of the competing models indicate that the three-factor model (EL, IM, and EIB) fits the data best ($\chi^2=326.03$, d.f.=182, χ^2 /d.f.=1.79; CFI=0.98; RMSEA=0.04), significantly better than the other two models. For example, the measurement model for the two-factor model in which IM and EIB were combined into one factor was significantly worse than in the three-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2(2)=326.21$, $\chi^2=652.24$, d.f.=184, χ^2 /d.f.=3.545; CFI=0.92; RMSEA=0.07). Furthermore, the measurement model for the one-factor model, in which all measured points were included in one category, was very poor ($\Delta\chi^2(7)=2813.16$, $\chi^2=3139.19$, d.f.=189, χ^2 /d.f.=16.61; CFI=0.50;

RMSEA=0.18). Because most managers in the current study were required to estimate the EIB of some subordinates, it was essential to ensure that managers were evaluating their subordinates' EIBs independently of one another. Therefore, we used a one-way test of ANOVA, the results of which were insignificant ($F=0.894$, $p=0.724$), revealing no systematic between-group variances in EIB.

4.4. Hypotheses testing

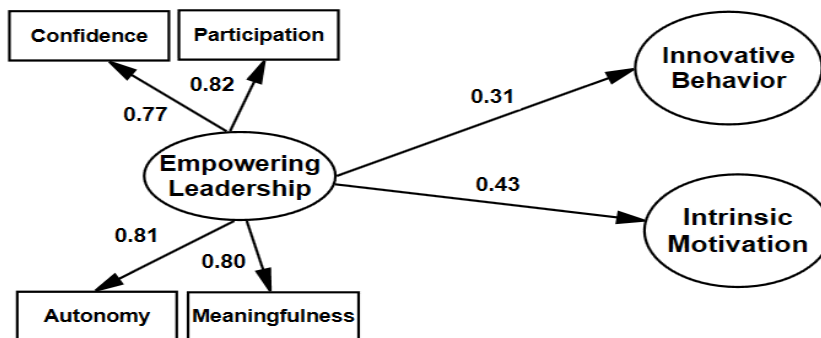
The data fit the hypothesized model well ($\chi^2=427.388$, $d.f.=258$, $\chi^2/d.f.=1.657$; $GFI=0.939$; $AGFI=0.923$; $NFI=0.936$; $CFI=0.973$; $RMSEA=0.036$). Furthermore, this research used Baron & Kenny's (1986) four criteria to provide evidence for the existence of a mediator. To meet the first three conditions, as stated by Baron and Kenny, hypotheses 1–3 must be supported, as shown in Table 3 and Figure 2.

Table 3. The results of direct and indirect relationships

Hypotheses		B	S. E.	t-value	95% confidence		Results
					Lower	upper	
Step 1							
H1	EL → EIB	0.31	0.055	5.636**	0.201	0.417	Supported
H2	EL → IM	0.43	0.045	9.556**	0.344	0.519	Supported
Step 2							
H3	IM → EIB	0.66	0.032	20.625**	0.610	0.734	Supported
H4	EL → EIB	0.02	0.058	0.345	-0.084	0.142	Supported
	EL → IM → EIB	0.29	0.041	7.073**	0.215	0.374	

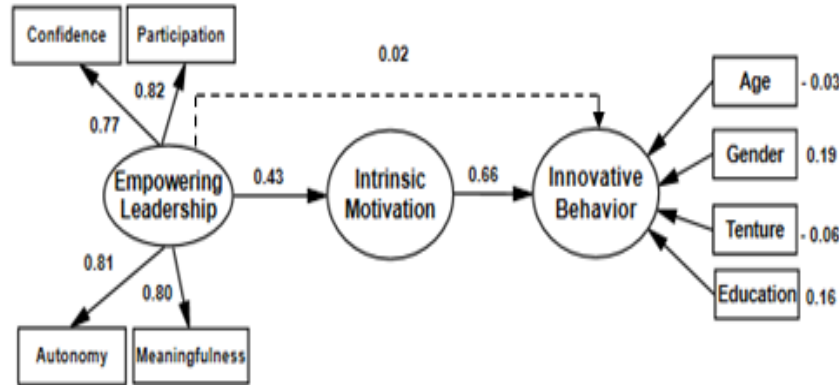
Source: Authors' elaboration

Figure 2. The SEM results without controlling IM (Step 1)



Source: Authors' elaboration

Figure 3. The SEM results of the mediating model (Step 2)



Source: Authors' elaboration

As shown in Table 3 and Figure 2, the effect of EL on EIB is significant ($\beta=0.31, p<0.01$) without controlling for IM, confirming H1. H2 proposes that EL is positively correlated with IM, and the findings of this study support this claim ($\beta=0.43, p<0.01$). H3 posits that the relationship between IM and EIB is significant and positive, and the results support this hypothesis ($\beta=0.66, p<0.01$), as shown in Figure 3. After supporting hypotheses 1-3, the final criterion of Baron and Kenny (1986) requires examining the direct and indirect links between EL and EIB through the mediator (IM). After regressing the control variables, namely age ($\beta=-0.03, p>0.05$), gender ($\beta=0.19, p<0.05$), tenure ($\beta=-0.06, p>0.05$), and education ($\beta=0.16, p<0.05$), on EIB, the results presented in Table 3 indicate that the indirect link between EL and EIB via IM is significant ($\beta=0.29, p<0.01$), and the 95% confidence interval does not include zero ([0.215, 0.374]). The direct link from EL to EIB via IM is insignificant ($\beta=0.03, p>0.05$), and the 95% confidence interval includes zero ([-0.084, 0.142]), thus supporting H4. These results suggest that IM mediates the relationship between EL and EIB, providing full mediation.

Table 4. Moderating effect of job complexity

	BOJ (N=218)			FLJ (N=288)			Unconstrained model χ^2 (df=364)	Constrained model χ^2 (df=365)	$\Delta\chi^2$ ($\Delta df=1$)
	β	S.E.	t-value	β	S.E.	t-value			
	EL→EIB	-0.01	0.083	-0.12	0.50	0.071			
EL→IM	0.22	0.076	2.90**	0.55	0.065	8.46**	574.842	589.120	14.28**
IM→EIB	0.44	0.067	6.57**	0.80	0.033	24.24**	574.842	590.517	15.68**

Note: ** = $p < 0.01$, BOJ= back office job, FLJ =front line job

Source: Authors' elaboration

H5 claims that the link between EL and EIB is stronger in FLJ employees than in BOJs. Initially, the path coefficient was set from EL to EIB to be equal, and then the study freely evaluated the other path coefficients of FLJ and BOJ. Table 4 shows that the chi-square variance between constrained and unconstrained modes is significant ($\Delta\chi^2(1) = 3.84, P < 0.05$), and that the significant association between EL and EIB is higher in FLJs ($\beta = 0.50, t = 7.04, p < 0.01$) than in BOJs ($\beta = -0.01, t = -0.12, P > 0.05$). Thus, the results support H5. H6 suggests that in FLJs, the effect of EL on IM is stronger than in BOJs. Therefore, the regression from EL and IM is equal, allowing the other relationships to be tested in both jobs freely. In Table 4, the findings confirm that the chi-square variance is significant ($\Delta\chi^2(1) = 14.28, p < 0.01$) among the two models. As anticipated, the positive association among EL and IM is stronger in FLJ ($\beta = 0.55, t = 8.46, p < 0.01$) than in other groups ($\beta = 0.22, t = 2.90, p < 0.01$), (Table 4).

H7 suggests that the regression from IM and EIB in FLJ is stronger than in BOJ. Therefore, the study sets the link from IM to EIB as equal, leaving the other path coefficients of both FLJ and BOJ to be freely estimated. The findings in Table 4 also state that the chi-square difference between the constrained and unconstrained modes is significant ($\Delta\chi^2(1) = 15.68, p < 0.01$). Moreover, in FLJ, the positive regression from IM to EIB is stronger ($\beta = 0.80, t = 24.24, p < 0.01$) than in BOJ ($\beta = 0.44, t = 6.57, p < 0.01$), and thus supporting H7.

5. Discussion

5.1. Theoretical contributions

The current research makes several contributions to the literature. Firstly, this paper adds and enriches the literature on the relationships between EL, IM, JC, and EIB. Although EL has been shown to improve employee IM and EIB in previous studies, these relationships have been explored separately in non-hospitality studies, which may not be fully applicable to the hospitality industry (Yen et al., 2020). Because the profitability of the hotel industry is based on human behavior, it is culturally distinct and different from other industries. Moreover, hospitality businesses are known to employ a range of strategies and regulations to succeed in the market and require employees who exhibit spontaneous and innovative behaviors that go beyond conventional tasks. EL is advocated as a method of enlisting service staff to engage in these activities (Lin et al., 2019). Thus, investigating and generalizing the EL-EIB relationship, the EL-IM relationship, and the IM-EIB relationship in one model at the individual level, which is carried out in the context of hospitality, adds and enriches the literature in response to the call made by Arasli et al. (2020) and Hassi (2019). These results help to demonstrate the triggering elements of EIB (Alkathiri et al., 2019; Hansen & Pihl-Thingvad, 2019; Iqbal et al., 2020) and provide validity to EL in the Middle Eastern context. Secondly, in the hospitality industry, scholars focus heavily on measuring the effect of EL on the behaviors of front-line employees (e.g., Lin et al., 2019), leaving insufficient information about how EL affects back-office employees. This research collected data from both groups of employees to close this literature gap by analyzing EL's influence on IM and EIB. Finally, this research compares the findings of the relationship between EL-EIB, EL-IM, and IM-EIB when JC moderates the relationship and when it does not, in order to enrich and broaden the literature. After searching and scrutinizing processes, the study found that no research had been conducted to analyze the mediating impact of IM between EL and EIB or to assess the moderating role of JC on the direct paths between EL, EIB, and IM, to the best of the authors' knowledge.

First, the findings show that employees' perceptions of EL behavior, as described by their managers, are positively associated with their IB, as measured by their managers. The positive relationship between the two variables indicates that hotel employees value their managers' empowerment, allowing them to come up with, develop, and implement unique and frequently profitable ideas. These findings are in line with those of a non-hospitality research (Jada et al., 2019)

conducted on subordinates and supervisors, evaluating the impact of EL on their ability to participate in innovative work behaviors at the team level. This study contributes to the body of knowledge by exploring the impact of EL on actual innovative behaviors evaluated by supervisors at the individual level.

Second, the current study confirmed that employee IM is positively related to employee perceptions of EL conduct. Zhang and Bartol (2010) discovered an indirect positive relationship between EL and IM via the mediating role of psychological empowerment. It is crucial to look into the direct link between EL and IM because hotels rely on EL style to succeed (Hassi, 2019; Huertas-Valdivia et al., 2019; Lin et al., 2019 by intrinsically motivating their employees (Saeed et al., 2019). These findings highlight that employees' IM increases when their managers trust in their performance, increase the meaningfulness of their work, give them autonomy, and involve them in decision-making.

Thirdly, the findings indicate that employees' intrinsic motivation (IM) is strongly associated with their innovative behavior (EIB). Such findings are consistent with previous studies in non-hospitality contexts that have established a strong positive association between IM and employee creativity (Zhang & Bartol, 2010). Moreover, the study's results support the arguments that IM is a strong predictor of EIB (Hoang et al., 2021; Wallace et al., 2016). According to our findings, hotel employees are more likely to exhibit innovative behavior when they exhibit high levels of intrinsically motivated behavior, which can boost their internal motivation and interest in developing novel and effective solutions for customer needs, workplace challenges, and other job demands.

Fourth, after reviewing previous studies, it was noticed that the current study is the first attempt to examine the mediating role of IM between EL and EIB. Consistent with past work, this result also confirms the importance of the mediating mechanism of IM in the association between individual behavior and contextual factors (Feng et al., 2018), which adds to and enriches the literature on "how EL impacts EIB." The findings show that IM's mediating role is statistically significant. When hotel employees perceive that their managers have delegated some of their authority to them by involving them in decision-making and giving them autonomy, they believe that their supervisors are confident in their ability and performance and appreciative of their contributions. This feeling inherently inspires employees to take on increased responsibility for overcoming work challenges for the purpose of the work itself, resulting in the search for new, better, and more helpful ideas, methods, strategies, and approaches.

Nevertheless, limited research has examined the moderating role of JC in the context of hospitality (C.-J. Wang et al., 2014). The present paper is probably the first to examine the moderating role of JC between EL, IM, and EIB constructs. As JC in the hotel industry is characterized by two types of jobs—FLJs and BOJs—the findings of the current study indicate that the moderating role of JC is statistically significant. These results support the connections between EL, EIB, and IM; arguing that these relationships are stronger in FLJs than in BOJs. Such findings are parallel to those of several previous studies (Shin et al., 2017). Employees at FLJ hotels, for example, confront a variety of problems to meet the diverse needs of their customers. Additionally, FLJ hotel personnel are expected to give excellent service continually. As such, those working in FLJs need greater empowerment to fulfill their duties without having to constantly consult with a supervisor. In addition, this empowerment increases the employees' responsibilities and encourages their IM to search for novel and useful ideas that enable them to perform their work duties and tasks successfully. In contrast, the structure of BOJs makes it difficult for these employees to feel empowered, lowering their IM and increasing their IB at work. Considering these concerns, the purpose of this research is to evaluate the managerial implications of the findings.

5.2. Managerial implications

The current study's findings have significant implications regarding hotel management practices. In the dynamic and competitive market climate of the hospitality business, EIB is crucial. Hotel managers must fully utilize their most valuable resource - their employees - by motivating them to come up with innovative ways to attract and retain customers (e.g., Abou-Shouk & Khalifa, 2017; Hong et al., 2023; Mohamed et al., 2019). Hotel managers can achieve this goal by enhancing their employees' ability to design and implement new and advantageous hospitality processes and service concepts.

Therefore, managers should give their subordinates enough autonomy to perform their tasks effectively and conveniently (by reducing micromanagement and delegating some calculated authorities), express more confidence in their abilities and skills in achieving success in highly challenging work environments, encourage greater employee participation in decision-making, and amplify the meaning of their work to improve their subordinates' IM and productivity.

These findings also demonstrate that a work environment that supports employee well-being, job satisfaction, and healthy interpersonal interactions may be sufficient to foster employee innovation. As a result, hotel management, in collaboration with the human resources director, should ensure that managers exhibit emotional intelligence behaviors, such as empathy, stress management, and maintaining strong connections with staff. Managers can create a culture of innovation and creativity among their staff by fostering a supportive and constructive work environment. Recent studies by Chen et al. (2016) and Dhar (2016) suggest that organizations should invest in managerial training, especially leadership behavior training programs, as hotel employees are highly receptive to perceiving favorable leadership behaviors. These studies also reveal that leaders' behaviors have a substantial impact on employees' ability to provide innovative services. The present study proposes engaging managers and candidates for managerial job vacancies in a diagnostic survey of EL behavior. This survey should include empowering leadership dimensions to assess managers/supervisors' awareness and adoption of this type of leadership and their ability to implement these behaviors among subordinates (Konczak, et al., 2000). Furthermore, the results of this diagnostic survey can inform hotel management of which managers might benefit from participating in training programs aimed at developing and improving their leadership skills. To this end, the human resources director should assess employee perceptions of their managers' EL behaviors to estimate and evaluate the effectiveness of such training programs. Such surveys of staff perceptions can provide valuable data to measure the EL behaviors of current hotel managers. Therefore, this study recommends using the Zhang and Bartol (2010) questionnaire for both the diagnostic survey and employee survey of EL behavior.

Concerning the mediation effect of IM in EL-EIB relations, these results also have considerable implications for practice. Managers and HRDs must take better care of subordinates' IM needs. Hotel managers need to delegate extra power to workers and involve staff more in decision-making, eventually improving the morale and encouragement of subordinates to participate in innovative hotel services activities. Therefore, according to the findings, IM can provide a perfect environment for developing and encouraging EIB within the hotel service industry. Throughout the hiring process, managers should focus on selecting and employing highly intrinsically motivated employees. Moreover, HRDs should measure current employees' IM as a tool to evaluate EL behaviors of managers and also as a strong predictor of their readiness to show innovative behaviors. Such strategies can help develop high IM, ensuring that each employee can make the most of their expertise to deal with various customer problems, needs, and work challenges in innovative manners.

Lastly, the study findings have significant implications for practice. The nature of EIB and IM is important not only for EL but also for high JC conditions. In other words, EL behaviors are not enough to stimulate all employees' IM to present innovative behaviors. The complexity of job manages and controls the strength of the EL-EIB relationship, EL-IM relationship, and IM-EIB relationship. The results reveal that employees in FLJs, who can better recognize the expectations of hotel customers, have better perceptions of EL behaviors, higher IM, and more innovative behaviors than BOJ employees, and might also have a better grasp on administration processes. Given that the

hospitality industry is characterized by intense competition (Dhar, 2016; Kundan et al., 2022) and is extremely labor-intensive, managers must look to harness their most valuable employees. Greater employee IB can enhance the quality of products and services, reduce costs, increase profitability, facilitate hotel operations, enhance customer satisfaction (Hossain et al., 2023; Sudigdo & Khalifa, 2020), encourage customer loyalty to repeat visits, maintain a competitive advantage, and secure a greater market share (Chang et al., 2011; Elshaer et al., 2022; Lei et al., 2021).

Hotel management should not, however, underestimate the value of BOJ staff. While the results of this study might suggest that BOJ can be easily overlooked in hotel innovation, we would argue that managers should pay greater attention to ensuring that the abilities and skills of BOJ employees are being fully utilized to achieve organizational goals by encouraging them to perform their duties more innovatively. In this respect, Wang et al. (2014) recommend that both human resource managers (HRMs) and supervisors should provide employees with job rotation opportunities to allow BOJ employees to work in FLJ roles, thus enriching their experiences and promoting their innovative behavior. The findings reveal that the traditional BOJs provide an active barrier against opportunities for innovation, regardless of employee motivation or supervisor empowerment. Moreover, efforts to empower BOJ employees under these traditional jobs are often seen as fruitless because they have neither the opportunity nor the motivation to be more innovative.

In today's competitive market, hoteliers must understand the need to pursue an innovation plan in order to keep the hospitality sector competitive and profitable. Thus, using the mind-set of each hospitality employee is significant for implementing a diversity of innovative solutions. Hospitality employee innovativeness refers to the individual capacity to create and implement new/improved useful or meaningful services/products, processes, administrative ideas, organizational methods, and marketing methods in the hospitality business. Therefore, HRMs, in cooperation with departmental managers, should sophisticate and increase the complexity of BOJ by encouraging BOJ employees to engage in departmental issues, challenges, and barriers. They should also ask them to seek out-of-the-box solutions to reduce operating costs, enhance service quality, satisfy customers' needs and desires, upgrade sales, or create new activities related to significantly renewing or improving a particular service delivery.

6. Conclusion

Employee innovative behavior (EIB) has gained considerable prominence in recent years because of its potential to provide organizations with a competitive advantage. The purpose of this article was to investigate the link between empowering leadership (EL), intrinsic motivation (IM), job complexity (JC), and EIB in the Egyptian hotel sector. According to the findings of this study, EL, IM, and JC have a significant and positive association with EIB.

Nonetheless, this study has several limitations that might be utilized to guide future research. First, the sample was chosen from a Middle Eastern culture and the hotel business, which may restrict the findings' generalizability to other cultural and industrial situations. As a result, future studies should investigate doing comparable studies in other industries in Western or Eastern nations to yield different results. Secondly, because this study was limited to the influence of EL and JC factors, it may have overlooked other external factors that may have an impact on employees' IM and EIB. As a result, more study is needed to identify the influence of additional external variables on IM and EIB, such as improving opportunities, increasing career development, earning financial benefits, and raising staff engagement in work. Furthermore, because this study relied mostly on a quantitative paradigm, future research should use a qualitative approach to acquire a deeper comprehension of the components analyzed in this study, which may disclose previously hidden factors that might improve the existing framework.

Despite its limitations, the findings of this study provide valuable insights into the factors that drive EIB in the Egyptian hotel industry. In particular, this study highlights the crucial role of EL, IM, and JC in promoting EIB. Empowering leadership provides individuals with the autonomy and decision-making authority necessary for creativity and innovation, while intrinsic motivation and job complexity foster personal involvement and opportunities for growth and autonomy. Together, these factors drive innovative employee behavior, leading to the creation of new products, services, and procedures that differentiate the business from competitors and contribute to its long-term success.

The current paper has several limitations that could inform future research. First, the research sample was drawn from the hospitality industry, specifically from a Middle Eastern culture, which may have influenced the study's findings. Therefore, before generalizing these findings to other cultural settings, we suggest conducting similar research in other industries in Western or Eastern countries, which may produce different results. Second, this study was limited to the influence of EL and JC factors. As a result, the study may have overlooked other external factors that could impact employee IM and EIB. Further research is needed to determine the impact of external variables such as skill-building, increased opportunities, career development, financial benefits, and enhanced staff engagement on IM and EIB. Lastly, the present study's results rely primarily on a quantitative paradigm. A qualitative study might provide a more in-depth understanding of the factors examined in this study and offer a clearer or more elaborate idea of the relationships among the different factors discussed in this paper, which could reveal previously hidden factors that could enhance the existing framework.

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Brief description of Authors:

Prof. Gamal Sayed Ahmed Khalifa

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1665-9291>

Affiliations: Tourism Management, Faculty of Business, Higher Colleges of Technology, Al Ain, Abu Dhabi, UAE. Hotel Studies, Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Fayoum University, Al-Fayoum, Egypt, <https://www.fayoum.edu.eg/English/Tour/HotelStudies/DrGamal.aspx>

Email: gkhalifa@hct.ac.ae, gsk00@fayoum.edu.eg

Gamal Khalifa is an associate professor who worked at Fayoum University in Egypt, ex-Dean, the Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism at Lincoln University, Malaysia, School of Postgraduate, City University, Malaysia, and is currently employed at Higher Colleges of Technology in the UAE. His research focuses on various areas such as Tourism Marketing, Human Resources, Strategic Management, Risk Management, and Hospitality Management.

Dr. Abuelhassan Elshazly Abuelhassan

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3875-7490>

Affiliation: College of Tourism and Hospitality, University of Tabuk, Tabuk, KSA

Email: a.elshazly@ut.edu.sa

Abuelhassan Elshazly Abuelhassan is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Tourism and Hospitality at the University of Tabuk. His research interests are in the hospitality and tourism areas of organizational behavior, human resources management, leadership, research methods, green hospitality, and marketing.

Dr. Sawsan Haider Abdullah Khreis

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6364-8590>

Affiliation: College of Tourism and Hospitality, University of Tabuk, Tabuk, KSA &

Department of Tourism and Travel, Faculty of Tourism and Hotel, Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan.

Email: skhreis@ut.edu.sa

Sawsan Khreis is an Associate Professor in the Department of Tourism and Travel at Yarmouk University, and currently, she is working for the University of Tabuk in the Department of Tourism and Hospitality. Her research interests are in the hospitality and tourism areas of sustainable tourism, human resources management, tour guiding, and marketing.

Prof. Mohammad Soliman

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9359-763X>

Affiliation: Head of Scientific Research Department, University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Salalah, Oman & Tourism Studies, Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Fayoum University, Fayoum, Egypt

Email: msoliman.sal@cas.edu.om, sawsan.k@yu.edu.jo

Mohammad Soliman is the Head of the Scientific Research Department at UTAS, Salalah, Oman, and a Professor at the Faculty of Tourism & Hotels, Fayoum University, Egypt. He has published multiple papers in reputed journals indexed in WoS and Scopus. He sits on the editorial board of some journals and serves as a reviewer for some top-tier journals. He has supervised and examined a number of Master's and PhD theses. His research interests include tourism, PLS-SEM, etc.

Dr. Md Sazzad Hossain

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3414-7003>

Affiliation: College of Tourism and Hospitality, University of Tabuk, Tabuk, KSA

Email: m.sazzad@ut.edu.sa

Md Sazzad Hossain works as an assistant professor at the College of Tourism and Hospitality, University of Tabuk, Al-wajh, Saudi Arabia. He is widely engaged with research in the field of Hospitality and Tourism. His research interests are consumer behaviour, revisit intention, and tourist satisfaction.