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Constructive Leadership and Employee Innovative Behaviors: A Serial Mediation Model

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Abstract: This study aims to examine the influence of constructive leadership practices on the service innovative behaviors of hotel employees by a serial mediation system that treats employee psychological safety and employee creativity as mediators. Empirical data were collected from full-time frontline hotel employees in Antalya, Turkey. By using both convenience and judgmental sampling methods, this study included 357 hotel employees. The results provide empirical evidence for all suggested hypothesized associations. In particular, the findings display that psychological safety and engagement in creative work tasks play intervening roles (in the form of a chain) in the indirect influence of constructive leadership on employee perceptions regarding their service innovative culture. The current work provides practical contributions for hotel industry professionals who are in the treatment of implementing psychological safety and employee creativity, in order to establish innovative service culture in the hotel setting. The paper is among the first studies to investigate a serial mediation model to analyze which constructive leadership practices influence their innovative service culture.

Keywords: constructive leadership; safety; creativity; innovative behavior; hospitality industry; serial mediation

1. Introduction

At present, the fast changes in technology, tourist expectations and needs, and competitive strategies and practices have resulted in many challenges for hospitality leaders, which is highly related to the academic world, and has been investigated for three decades [1]. Under these circumstances, achieving the expected growth or surviving in the market has become very difficult. Accomplishing such objectives forces organizations to focus on service innovation, which appears when a service provider develops, promotes, and puts new ideas into practice as key ingredients of innovative services or work behaviors [2]. A service representative providing new solutions and creating novel ideas for customers is known as "service innovative behavior" (SIB) [3], which has emerged as an essential target in a range of organizations [4,5]. It is especially true for the hotel industry, in which managers have started examining creative ways to attract and keep their customers through supporting the novel ideas of their employees regarding hospitality processes and services [6–8]. This has been shown to lead to higher service quality and sustainable growth [9] because the hospitality industry is labor intensive, with human resource playing a vital role [10]. Chen and Chiu (2009) [11] claimed that the unique services of hotel managers resulting from developing innovative ideas not only satisfy their customer's requirements, but also positively affect organizational profitability and growth. Due to the importance and value of employee creative engagement, scholars have shown great interest in identifying the

conditions that affect employee SIB, at both the employee and organizational levels [12,13]. However, few investigations have examined innovativeness in the context of an employee's willingness to develop new ideas and confront new things [14].

The present study concentrates on psychological safety as a feature of the social background, which refers to the extent to which people feel the results of taking interpersonal risks in his/her work environment. This notion improves the capability of employees to control their stress, which leads to the better use of new information [15]. Understanding how psychological safety enables employees to be engaged in creative work tasks and SIB is the focus of this empirical research, as psychological safety in the work environment is one of the fundamental aspects that assists employees in feeling secure and enables them to learn, change their attitude, and be engaged in their work tasks [16].

Constructive leadership (CL) is defined as the behaviors of a manager, which foster the legitimate interest of employees, such as charismatic and team-oriented decisions and actions [14]. This type of leadership can be referred to as a combination of those decisions and actions, which are pro-organization and pro-subordinate [17]. Constructive behaviors seem to be crucial for the success of leadership [18]; in fact, it has been shown that supervisors who present constructive-oriented leadership traits are capable of supporting and assisting their employees in achieving common shared goals [19]. These leaders care about the welfare of their subordinates and, at the same time, can concentrate on the efficient utilization of sources and goal achievement, in terms of the legitimate interests of the organization [17].

Scholars now know that the investigation of leadership for SIB outcomes is complicated and only in an early stage [20]. The innovative behavior of employees in hospitality work settings has also been investigated by scholars in recent years [6,21]; nevertheless, academic understanding of the processes by which employee SIB might be promoted or hindered in hotel organizations is incomplete and primary items are missing. For example, previous studies have demonstrated leadership to be a vital factor in the innovation process; however, such accounts have mostly concentrated on the need for participative or ethical leadership styles [6,22], or presented specific leadership approaches such as leader-member exchange (LMX) [23]. The role of contemporary leadership styles in this innovation process remains an under-explored domain in the hospitality literature. Having seen this important problem, we aimed to examine the effects of CL, which is one of the newest leadership approaches. We also examined the role of psychological safety and employee engagement in creativity on SIB, as the consequences of the chain effect of these factors on SIB has received little attention to date.

The chain effect refers to the serial mediation analysis of employee SIB, which is an outcome variable of this study. According to Hayes (2013) [24], serial mediation is of vital importance in exploring the contradistinctive effect of the causation from CL to employee SIB. This is specifically pertinent, maybe depictive of the hidden and untried causal chain, which is yet untouched. Therefore, another purpose of this research was to progress our understanding of the elements causing the relationships between CL and employee SIB by considering the potential mediating roles of psychological safety and employee engagement in creativity. To address these research questions, the present study investigates the relationships between CL and employee SIB by gathering data from a sample of 357 full-time hotel employees in Antalya, Turkey. The mediating effects of psychological safety and engagement in creative work tasks are tested by performing a serial mediation analysis. In summary, this study has attempted to expand on past investigations into service innovative behaviors. Its purpose is to clarify constructive leadership–service innovative behavior mechanisms by exploring the influence of constructive leader practices on service innovation behaviors, as identified by the psychological safety and engagement in creativity of employees. In particular, we have endeavored to back up these assertions by utilizing social exchange theory, high-quality connections theory, and the theory of creative action as a background for this research.

2. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

2.1. Constructive Leadership and Psychological Safety of Employees

Social exchange theory [25], a significant approach in management, which refers to the effects of contingent and rewarding actions in their recipients, is applied in this study. Blau considered social exchange as a basis of both group and individual relationships, which is an important key process in social life. His focus was on the reciprocal exchange of extrinsic benefits and the development of associations and social structures created by this type of social interaction. Based on his definition, social exchange is "voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and typically do in fact bring from others" [25]. Blau argued that social exchange includes the principle that, with the expectation of some return in future, an individual does a favor for another.

According to a model of management [17], which can be considered as an elaboration on Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid [26], the behaviors of leaders can be characterized as being more or less anti-behaviors (i.e., destructive leadership) or more or less pro-behaviors (i.e., constructive leadership). Constructive leadership (CL) describes leaders who constructively behave towards both their organization and subordinates. According to the legitimate interests of the organization, these leaders not only make optimal use of organizational resources, but also support and enhance the organization's goals and strategy [17]. Social exchange theory explains that, when a high level of organizational support is perceived by employees, they feel obligated to pay back the organization, which they do by showing positive attitudes and behaviors [27]. According to this theory, Emerson asserted that individuals exchange resources with each other because they expect to receive something in return (so-called reciprocity) [28]. The relationship between CL and employee SIB can also be explained by social exchange theory; that is, leaders who display concern about their employees and give priority to employee well-being lead employees to make serious attempts at their job [29]. Kark and Carmeli claimed that the interpersonal work context is significant and enables employees to be engaged in creative work tasks [15]. In fact, in regards to the norm of reciprocity, recognizing a leader's commitment to employee mental health may result in highly motivated employees who will engage more in their job [30], and perform creative work tasks and higher service innovative behaviors, even when confronted with high service demands.

Moreover, through encouraging employees to expand their engagement and enabling participation in decision-making processes, constructive-oriented managers attain job satisfaction, well-being, and motivation in their employees. Based on a meta-analysis performed by Schyns and Schilling [31], in comparison with destructive leadership, CL is likely to have a stronger association with distinct outputs such as behavior towards the manager, individual performance, intention to quit, and job satisfaction. A recent study conducted by Brandebo, Nilsson, and Larsson demonstrated that CL behaviors have strong positive correlations with trust in the manager and work environment and negative correlations with emotional exhaustion and intention to quit the job [32]. A number of scholars have recommended that leadership is favorably associated with the business commitment and employee innovation in companies [33–35]. For example, constructive management approach could generate employee innovative solutions [36]. Research has also suggested that the improvement of a hotel organization's innovativeness could be positively affected by the capability of the leader to show the constructive behaviors [37]. CL has been underlined as a key antecedent of safety and the safety climate in a number of theoretical models [38]. It has been also demonstrated, in meta-analyses on leadership and safety, that there is a connection between organizational/group leadership and a variety of safety indicators [39,40]. Psychological safety refers to an employee's perceptions of safety-related practices, policies, and processes that influence their personal well-being in the workplace [40], which can result from constructive leadership. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). *Constructive leadership is positively associated with employee psychological safety.*

2.2. Psychological Safety and Engagement in Creative Work Tasks

Based on Edmondson [16], psychological safety can be considered as a general belief among employees that the organization is safe for risk-taking actions and that there is no rejection or punishment for taking interpersonal risks (i.e., looking for feedback and expressing concerns). This construct (psychological safety) is rooted in Schein and Benni's (1965) study [41] on organizational change, in which the necessity for establishing an individual's psychological safety in order to ensure a feeling of security and to extend their capability to handle challenging situations was discussed. Therefore, an employee's psychological safety depends on a sense of confidence about the organization; for example, that it never humiliates them for their mistakes. Mutual respect and trust are the bases for this confidence, which comforts employees when they need to take bold actions [16]. Heaphy and Dutton asserted that physiological ingenuity resulting from favorable exchanges may raise the degree of physiological roots for engagement in a job task [42]. Based on this suggestion, the presence of psychological safety in a work environment contributes to a feeling of mental and physical power, which, in turn, can influence an employee's capability to be involved in their job, especially in becoming more engaged in creative work tasks [15].

Those employees with psychological safety do not feel uncomfortable with risk-taking; instead, they engage in experimental trials, discuss their failures with others, and learn from them [43]. The psychological safety of employees improves their capability to confront various degrees of energy and emotions, which may trigger their engagement in creative work tasks [15]. The different characteristics of the work setting, climate, and relationships can help employees to feel psychological safety and provide an atmosphere for them to confront higher degrees of energy and engagement, which may contribute to their engagement in discovering new ideas, novel solutions, and inventive behaviors [15,44]. The presence of relational connections among people may strongly affect their engagement in specific behaviors and processes. Furthermore, quality and effective teamwork can be manifested by certain interpersonal processes [45].

According to the theory of high-quality connections [46], interpersonal connection is a vital mechanism for motivating individuals in the workplace, as it provides them with a "sense of being eager to act and capable of action" (p. 6). The feeling of psychological safety, thus, forms a foundation for high-quality interactions or bonds among people. Good psychological conditions are required in order to enable employees to engage in innovative attitudes [47]. Vinarski-Peretz and Carmeli found that these problems materialized by psychological safety, availability, and meaningfulness are important types in inspiring employee engagement in innovative attitudes [48].

By experiencing a work environment with high-quality connections, individuals feel safe in openly expressing their opinions, frankly reporting failings and mistakes, and carelessly taking risks without being humiliated, as they know they will not lose their confidence, respect, status, or power. Experiencing positive moods in the workplace leads employees to develop problem-solving skills and think creatively [49]. It has also been demonstrated, in previous studies, that experiencing positive relationships in the work environment, such as psychological safety, may contribute to physiological resources resulting in physical health and a sense of mental and physical strength, which are key components in the feelings of vitality and aliveness [5]. Similarly, May, Gilson, and Harter demonstrated that engagement can be promoted by psychological safety [50]. Kark and Carmeli also revealed the key influence of psychological safety on employee engagement in creativity [15]. Thus, the authors posit the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2 (H2). *Psychological safety is positively related to employee engagement in creative work tasks.*

2.3. Employee Engagement in Creative Work Tasks and Service Innovative Behavior

Employee engagement in creative work tasks is potentially valuable for organizations, which should, thus, delineate essential steps towards creativity [1]. It refers to the extent to which an employee

dedicates their resources (i.e., time and effort) towards work-related creative processes [51]. According to Kark and Carmeli, creativity includes the invention of new job procedures or technology, new orientations toward the decision-making process, creative changes, and novel solutions for business problems [15].

Service innovative behavior (SIB) has been defined as implementing and producing or adopting useful ideas, which begins with identifying a problem and then creating new ideas and solutions [23]. It also refers to "initiative from employees concerning the introduction of new processes, new products, new markets or combinations of such into the organisation" [52] (p. 8). At the individual level, innovation starts with problem recognition and solution finding [6]. As recent studies have revealed that service industries (e.g., the hotel industry) require their employees to develop innovative ideas in service-delivery processes [9], it is now necessary for hotel employees to demonstrate innovative behaviors to achieve sustainable growth and gain a competitive advantage [6]. Study has actually discovered that comprehensive leadership has a significant impact on employee innovation [34]. More recently, employee commitment has been discovered to be an antecedent of SIB in companies [53].

The creativity of employees can be considered as the beginning point of service innovative behaviors [21]. With respect to the relationship between creativity and innovation, Ford (1996) [54] developed a theory focused on the effects of creative actions of employees in organizational and market settings, which has been called the theory of creative action. According to Ford, the creative actions of employees may affect procedures and outputs, which may resolve the processes and challenges, which appear during the innovation process [54]. This theory also suggests that creativity is a mechanism, which distinguishes successful innovative processes from less noteworthy efforts. This theory attempts to clarify how creative actions develop and support the use and improvement of new, unique, and innovative remedies in organizations. In his conceptual study, Amabile (1988) also suggested that employee creativity processes must be acknowledged as a vital determinant in the process of individual innovation [55]. Although the theoretical explanation confirms a close link between two constructs, scholars focusing on innovative behaviors have paid limited attention to examining the influence of creativity at the employee and group levels [54]. Besides close relationships, engagement is an important antecedent of employee SIB and performance, as employees with a higher interest in their work are more likely to achieve persistent developments in their job [4,56,57]. Accordingly, it is rational to assume that employees who engage in creative actions are more likely to display innovative behaviors throughout their operation, in order to provide excellent service to customers in hospitality work settings. Therefore, the present study suggests the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3 (H3). *Employee engagement in creative work tasks is positively related to employee service innovative behavior.*

2.4. Serial Mediation and Chain Effect

The mediating role of psychological safety has been tested in several recent studies [58–60]. For example, Chughtai [59] collected data from full-time employees working in a large food company in Pakistan and revealed that psychological safety partially mediated the relationships between servant leadership and voice with negative feedback-seeking behavior. In another study, Carmeli et al. [61] tested the intervening roles of psychological safety, suggesting that, in the presence of transformational leadership, psychological safety is both directly and indirectly associated with the creative problem-solving capacity of employees via reflexivity. In addition, the intervening role of psychological safety on the positive association between the transparent behavior of leaders and employee creativity has been shown by Yi et al. [58]. Employee engagement in creative work tasks has been also considered as a mediator in previous studies [61–63]. Supported by the sequential mediation model, Henker et al. [62] demonstrated that the effects of promotion focus and employee creativity are partially mediated by engagement in the creative process. Recent literature also shows that empowerment has an intervening role in the relationship of leadership and employee SIB [35].

The serial mediation model [24], which describes how the distinct mediator variables of a proposed model are connected together in a particular way along a chain, has been applied and tested in a limited number of previous studies in the hospitality management literature [64,65]. For instance, Huertas-Valdivia et al. [64] conducted a study among hotel employees and, by developing a serial mediation model, they investigated the intervening roles of empowerment and empowering leadership on the indirect effect of high-performance work practices on employee's work engagement. This present study is aimed at extending the knowledge and shedding light on the serial mediation relationships among the four considered variables; that is, to consider psychological safety and employee engagement in creativity as two mediators in the association between CL and employee SIB, in order to analyze whether serial mediation analysis can support this chain of effects. In this regard, the following hypotheses are posited:

Hypothesis 4 (H4). *Psychological safety will mediate the relationship between constructive leadership and employee service innovative behavior.*

Hypothesis 5 (H5). *Employee engagement in creative work tasks will mediate the relationship between constructive leadership and employee service innovative behavior.*

Hypothesis 6 (H6). *Upper management's constructive leadership practices are positively associated with their employee service innovative behavior via the chain of employee psychological safety and creativity.*

The proposed model demonstrating the hypothesized relationships is presented in Figure 1.

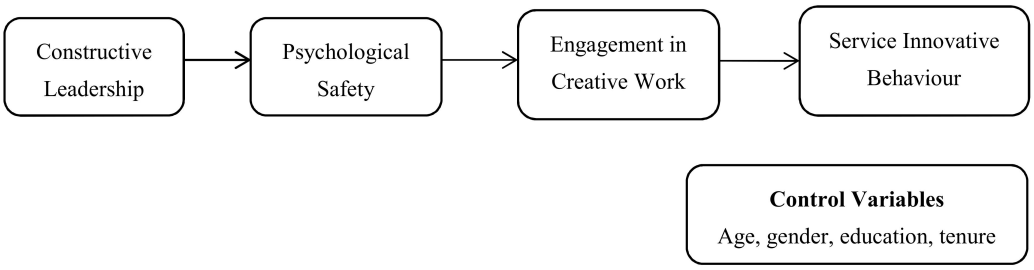


Figure 1. Study model.

3. Methodology

3.1. Sampling and Procedure

The research hypotheses were analyzed based on data collected from a sample of hotel frontline employees working in five-star hotels in Antalya, Turkey, utilizing both convenience and judgmental sampling methods. The respondent employees included several job positions, such as desk clerks, food and beverage service attendants, door attendants, and housekeepers. One researcher directly distributed the survey packets to participating employees with the aid of their supervisors. Each participant received a cover letter including a brief paragraph summarizing the objective of this present investigation and a warranty of anonymity, and the survey instrument.

Following the guidelines of Podsakoff et al. [66], we gathered data from the employees in two waves, with a one-month time lag. The Time I survey consisted of constructive leadership (CL) and psychological safety scale items, as well as five questions concerning the demographic profiles of the respondents. The Time II survey included employee engagement in creative work tasks and service innovative behavior (SIB) scales. Thanks to numerical coding, both Time I and Time II questionnaires were able to be matched.

A total of 496 questionnaires were distributed to the participants at Time I, and 423 (85.2%) of them responded. Then, 423 Time II survey instruments were handed out to the same respondents.

A total of 364 instruments were gathered at the end of the Time II. After excluding three questionnaires with reckless replies (significantly the similar answers, such as 5 for all questions) as well as four questionnaires with incomplete answers, the sample includes questionnaires from 357 hotel workers with a response rate of 84.3% of the latter sample and 71.9% of the former sample. The t-tests results ($p < 0.05$) show that there are no significant differences among respondents participating in both questionnaires and those not participating in Time II.

For the demographics, 47% of employees were female and 53% were male; 44% of employees were aged between 18 and 25 years, 40% were aged between 26 and 35 years, and the others were older than 35; regarding education, 13% of the employees had a primary-school degree and 49% had secondary and high school degrees. Regarding organizational tenure, 21% of respondents had worked in the organizations for less than three years, while 24% had worked for 3–5 years, 35% for 5–10 years (representing most of the respondents), and 20% had worked for more than 10 years.

3.2. Measurement

Six items for CL were drawn from Ekvall and Arvonen's study [67]. Response options for this measure were 'never', 'sometimes', 'quite often', and 'very often/nearly always', concentrating on the leadership attitude and style that respondents had observed in their immediate superior.

To measure psychological safety, a five-item scale was adopted from Edmondson [16]. Responses were ranged by utilizing a five-point Likert scale, from 1 = 'not at all' to 5 = 'to a large extent'.

A four-item scale has been generated and utilized by Tierney, Farmer, and Graen [13], which investigates the level of an individual's engagement in creativity in the work place [51], was used in this study to measure respondent's engagement in creative work tasks. Responses for this measure ranged from 1 = 'not at all' to 5 = 'to a large extent'.

Employee SIB was examined through a 6-item scale developed by Hu et al. [68]. The participants rated this measure on a seven-point Likert scale, as recommended in past studies (e.g., Dhar, 2016), with potential responses ranged from (1) (strongly disagree) to (7) (strongly agree).

All survey questions were primarily developed in English and translated to Turkish by two independent professional bilingual translators. Drawing on the guidelines produced by McGorry, a back-translation was then carried out by a professor fluent in these languages [69], to check if all questions are cross-linguistically comparable and formed a same context. Moreover, the pilot study was conducted with a sample of 20 hotel workers, in order to control the comprehensibility of survey questions. It showed that the wording, survey items, and series of questions seem robust.

3.3. Data Analysis

Drawing on guidelines produced by Anderson and Gerbing, we conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test the convergent and discriminant validities [70]. SPSS was performed to obtain kurtosis and skewness values as suggested by Tabachnick and Fidell [71], who declared that cut-off value of kurtosis and skewness ranges are between −1.5 and +1.5. The distribution of scale items for normality test demonstrated that the majority of the items' kurtosis and skewness scores were within the range of ± 1.5. Therefore, Spearman's correlation analysis was performed to check the correlations between the variables. The proposed hypotheses were examined by conducting a serial mediation analysis. Haye's Model (6) was used to test the serial mediation analysis by employing CL as a predictor variable, psychological safety, and employee creativity as intervening variables, as well as SIB as the outcome variable. In addition, we analyzed the mediation effects by employing the bootstrapping technique with 95% confidence intervals, as recommended by Preacher and Hayes [72].

4. Results

4.1. Measurement Results

As can be observed from Table 1, one item in the CL scale was dropped, due to low factor loading during the CFA. The results demonstrated that the standardized loading estimates were significant, ranging from 0.64–0.92 ($p < 0.05$). Moreover, the factors demonstrated satisfactory composite construct reliabilities (CCR), varying between 0.862–0.951. The average variance extracted (AVE) results also showed convergent validity (between 0.512–0.838). Further, the results confirmed that the proposed model provided a good-fit to the data ($\chi 2 = 341.49$; df = 159; $p < 0.01$; comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.96; goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = 0.92; Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) = 0.95; root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.057; and standardized root-mean-square residual (SRMR) = 0.048). Thus, the four factors have been considered as different constructs [73]. In conclusion, the AVE score of each factor was more than the shared variance between the constructs, providing discriminant validity [74]. In addition, as can be noticed in Table 2, the correlations among the study variables were in the expected direction, which provides initial support for the hypothesized relationships, which were analyzed by conducting Haye's serial mediation analysis in greater detail. Both demographic variables (tenure and education) have a correlation with psychological safety and employee creativity. These preliminary results show that higher tenure means lower psychological safety and the more educated employees have the more engagement in creative work tasks.

Table 1. Measurement results.

	Factor Loadings	CCR	AVE	A
Constructive leadership		0.882	0.601	0.801
CL1	0.82			
CL2	0.8			
CL3	0.79			
CL4	0.81			
CL5	0.65			
CL6 *	-			
Psychological safety		0.888	0.613	0.857
PsySafe1	0.75			
PsySafe2	0.82			
PsySafe3	0.81			
PsySafe4	0.8			
PsySafe5	0.74			
Engagement in creative work tasks		0.951	0.83	0.912
ECWT1	0.91			
ECWT2	0.85			
ECWT3	0.98			
ECWT4	0.92			
Service innovative behavior		0.869	0.526	0.866
SIB1	0.67			
SIB2	0.75			
SIB3	0.69			
SIB4	0.84			
SIB5	0.64			
SIB6	0.7			

Note: * Removed question due to low factor loading. The factor loadings are significant at the 0.01. $\chi^2 = 341.49$; df = 159; χ^2 /df = 2.14; comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.96; goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = 0.92; Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) = 0.95; root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.057; and standardized root-mean-square residual (SRMR) = 0.048. CCR denotes composite construct reliability; AVE denotes average variance extracted.

Table 2. Spearman Correlation Matrix.

Variables	Means	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Gender	1.53	0.50	—							
2. Age	1.77	0.86	−0.055	—						
3. Education	2.32	0.79	0.065	−0.08	—					
4. Tenure	2.56	1.04	0.039	0.360 **	−0.111 **	—				
5. CL	3.57	0.60	0.059	0.055	0.027	−0.093	—			
6. PsySafe	3.78	0.84	0.042	−0.013	0.086	−0.108 *	0.506 **	—		
7. ECWT	3.48	1.21	0.025	0.015	0.142 **	−0.059	0.193 **	0.183 **	—	
8. SIB	3.99	0.95	0.064	−0.031	−0.01	−0.069	0.533 **	0.460 **	0.248 **	—

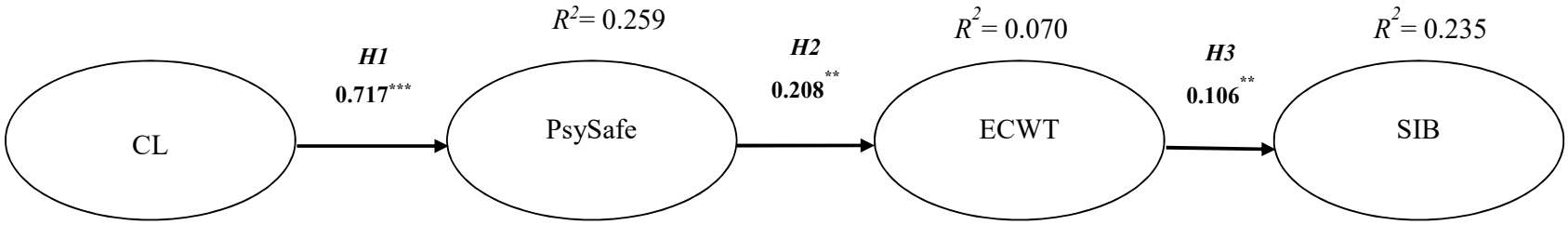
Note: SD denotes Standard Deviation. CL = constructive leadership; PsySafe = Psychological safety; ECWT = Engagement in creative work tasks; SIB = Service innovative behavior. * $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$.

4.2. Test of the Model and Research Hypotheses

We investigated the effects of CL on employee SIB through their perceptions of psychological safety and engagement in creative work tasks. The series of the research framework showed the benefit of a serial mediation. Hence, a serial mediation model was conducted using Hayes' process macro. The findings showed that the direct influence of CL on employee psychological safety was positive and significant ($\beta = 0.717$, $t = 11.15$, $p < 0.001$). This finding supports hypothesis 1. The influence of psychological safety on their engagement in creative work tasks was positive and significant ($\beta = 0.208$, $t = 2.62$, $p < 0.01$). Thus, hypothesis 2 was also supported. Moreover, the relationship between engagement in creative work tasks and employee SIB was significant and positive ($\beta = 0.106$, $t = 2.59$, $p < 0.01$), which supports hypothesis 3.

Further, the findings displayed that the indirect influence of CL on employee SIB through psychological safety ($\beta = 0.127$) was significant, since the lower and upper levels of the 95% confidence interval (CI) does not include zero [lower-level CI = 0.021; upper-level CI = 0.253]. Hence, the research findings also provide empirical support for hypothesis 4. Accordingly, the indirect influence of CL on employee SIB through employee engagement in creative work tasks was also significant ($\beta = 0.030$), as the lower and upper levels of the 95% CI does not include zero [lower-level CI = 0.048; upper-level CI = 0.082]. These findings provide empirical evidence for hypothesis 5.

Finally, the results empirically supported the serial mediation, such that the influence of CL on employee SIB mediated by employee's feelings of psychological safety and employee creativity was significant ($\beta = 0.016$) and the lower and upper levels of the 95% CI does not consist of zero [lower-level CI = 0.022; upper-level CI = 0.046]. The findings also provided empirical evidence for hypothesis 6 (see Figure 2).



H4: The indirect effect of CL on SIB through PsySafe

CL PsySafe SIB	0.127 (0.06)	
Percentile 95% confidence intervals [Lower bound–Upper bound]		0.021 −0.244

H5: The indirect effect of CL on SIB through ECWT

CL ECWT SIB	0.030 (0.02)	
Percentile 95% confidence intervals [Lower bound–Upper bound]		0.050 −0.081

H6: A serial mediation effect of PsySafe and ECWT

CL PsySafe ECWT SIB	0.016 (0.01)	
Percentile 95% confidence intervals [Lower bound–Upper bound]		0.021 −0.044

Figure 2. Model test results. *Note:* n = 357. Number of bootstrap samples for bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals: 5000. The value corresponding to the indirect effect of CL is estimated (β), with standard error appearing in parenthesis. CL = Constructive leadership; PsySafe = Psychological safety; ECWT = Engagement in creative work tasks; SIB = Service innovative behaviour. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

5. Discussion

5.1. Evaluation of the Findings and Theoretical Implications

The primary purpose of the research was to test the role of CL in employee SIB, as well as the role of psychological safety and employee engagement in creative work tasks as potential intervening mechanisms mediating the effect of CL on employee SIB. The results, as predicted, demonstrated that CL has a positive and significant effect on employee psychological safety; that psychological safety is positively related to engagement in creative work tasks; and that engagement in creative work tasks has a significant influence on employee SIB. Moreover, psychological safety and engagement in creative work tasks were shown to mediate the positive relationship between CL and employee SIB. Therefore, the findings of the current research contribute to the hospitality literature in various avenues.

First, despite its importance, the influence of CL on employee job outcomes has received limited attention in the hospitality literature. Therefore, an exploration of the influences of CL is a major contribution of the research. Although the potential significance of SIB remains obvious, the empirical literature investigating the antecedents of SIB in the hospitality industry has been decidedly equivocal [33–35,53,75]. In other words, generic employee outcome variables have been explored in greater detail, but employee service-related outcomes have scarcely been discussed in the hospitality literature [6,22,23]. Due to such little focus on employee SIB in the hospitality literature, the current study has started to examine the CL–SIB model to extend knowledge and propose a new vision for scholars and professionals. This study also emphasizes the call to direct more focus towards the role of CL in the hospitality field.

Second, Einarsen et al. [17] concentrated on a model of management, which can be considered as an elaboration of Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid [26]. Within this study framework, it has been suggested that the behaviors of leaders can be characterized as either destructive leadership or constructive leadership. As the previous study findings suggested that constructive leadership is a key antecedent of safety and safety climate in a number of theoretical models [38], and as the outcomes of this work imply that CL has a strong and significant effect on the feelings of employee psychological safety in hospitality organizations, it is advisable that CL practices and its effects on employees may result in a shift in employee's feelings of psychological safety; namely, employees led by CL may feel more psychologically safe than others. This finding is also consistent with the reciprocity norm in social exchange theory. Further, our results support the empirical findings of very recent leadership studies on employee outcomes, such as inclusive leadership on employee innovative behavior [34], paternalistic leadership on innovative behavior [35], leadership on commitment and innovative work behavior [33], and team-level participative leadership on employee innovation [53]. Two recent studies have also indicated the significant effects of transformational leadership on innovation in the public sector of three different countries (Denmark, the Netherlands, and Spain) [76] and leader inclusiveness on work-unit performance in hospitals [77].

Third, the present work highlights the influence of psychological safety in increasing employee creativity in the work setting, which has received little attention in the hospitality literature. Particularly, this important finding suggests that when leaders constructively behave towards both their organization and employees, they can develop a safe work climate, where employees perceive themselves as psychologically safe to freely express their opinion and communicate new, unique, and helpful remedies. Following the guidelines of the theory of high-quality connections, this finding provides further empirical support for the significance of safety in the hospitality work setting, which triggers employee engagement in creative work tasks. In addition, this study expands on past explorations addressing how certain psychological situations can improve individual engagement in specific tasks [15,78], by investigating the significance of psychological safety in boosting employee engagement in creativity.

Fourth, our findings stress that employee engagement in creative work tasks has a strong influence on promoting employee SIB, which, in turn, endorses conceptual recommendations of the creative

action theory provided by Ford [54]. Despite its importance, empirical explorations focusing on creativity and innovation in the hospitality field have been equivocal. Hjalager indicated that scholars in the hospitality field are slow in examining innovation approaches and hypotheses, which have been already acknowledged in other industries for several decades [79]. In addition, past studies on creativity and innovation in the hospitality field have generally counted on qualitative contexts and students for sampling [80–82]. That is, few studies have focused on employee innovative behaviors in the hospitality context [14,36]. Therefore, there has been a call for more studies to empirically explore the hypothesized relationships between creativity and innovation in the service industry [83]. This finding demonstrated the significance of employee engagement in creative work tasks for employee SIB, as was recommended in previous studies concerned with the association between the constructs [84]. Overall, this significant result provides empirical evidence for the argument that creativity may be acknowledged as a main factor, triggering employee SIB.

Fifth, academic understanding of the processes by which CL promotes employee SIB in hospitality firms is incomplete several main parts are still missing. To illustrate, the direct effect of CL on employee SIB is not a rational and compelling claim without any intervening effect, as suggested by Whetten [85], and scholars should clarify the associations by considering the potential influences of mediator variables between predictor and outcomes constructs. To comprehend exactly how CL could result in employee SIB, the findings of this study disclosed this black box by examining the mediating influences of psychological safety and employee engagement in creative work. Our results demonstrated that CL promotes a feeling of psychological safety in employees, which encourages them to share their thoughts, opinions, and questions, which relate to enhanced creativity in the organization [16]. This process leads to employee SIB. By using the serial mediation analysis of Hayes on the relationship between CL and employee SIB, this work expands the hospitality literature, offering a causal chain based on psychological safety and engagement in creative work tasks. This outcome is also consonant to past examinations analyzing the indirect influences of leadership on employee SIB [33,34].

The relationships in the casual chain between CL and employee SIB has not been analyzed in the hospitality literature before and, thus, this present study adds to past investigations that focused on the antecedents of creativity and employee SIB in the workplace [9,75,78].

Finally, another important contribution of this study is related to the study population and sample. To date, the SIB construct has been examined in different cultures and countries, such as Taiwan, India, Pakistan, the U.S., and China [10,14], but Eastern European culture and countries have been largely ignored by scholars, despite the large population there. Therefore, this study expands the knowledge of antecedents of SIB by collecting data from full-time workers at 5-star hotels in Turkey.

5.2. Managerial Implications

This study presents some important contributions for hospitality leaders. First, leadership style is important and can encourage employees to display SIB, through psychological safety and creative work tasks. CL is important for employees to feel psychologically safe. Therefore, hospitality managers need to know the effect of their leadership approach on employee's psychological safety. In this sense, they should constructively behave towards employees by following CL-style principles and staying conscious of the significant link between leadership style and employee psychological safety. In order to be sure of the leadership styles perceived by their employees, they need to obtain feedback from their subordinates in the workplace by utilizing survey instruments. Second, given that there are high demands, which must be satisfied in a limited time, it may become a growing issue for supervisors and leaders to conduct and develop a safe work climate, in which employees can speak out and discuss creative opinions in a complex and uncertain work environment. Such uncertainty challenges can restrict employee creativity, which, in turn, negatively affects both employee and organizational outcomes. Therefore, leadership styles encouraging psychological safety are specifically significant in the highly competitive and complex environment of the hospitality industry. Hotel

managers should aware that they can utilize CL to encourage employee psychological safety, which brings about employee engagement in creativity in the work setting. Finally, in the hospitality industry, the achievement level of innovation is rather low [86], as creative work tasks and innovative behaviors are typically perceived as risky of hazardous. Thus, this process must depart from traditional procedures. A majority of individuals resist changing, as they psychologically hesitate about uncertain and ambiguous situations [9], which, in turn, obstructs employee service innovative behavior.

Despite the obstacles and winces, the findings of this research indicate that CL style ensuring a psychologically safe climate in hotel organizations may play a significant role in mitigating uncertainty challenges. Individuals are more likely to take higher risks if they perceive themselves as psychologically safe [38]. Therefore, besides concentrating on developing a feeling of safety in employees, managers following CL practices need to also provide employees with an understanding of the level of risks and the possible outcomes of risky attitudes clearly. Hotel managers should not hide their knowledge, which should be known by their employees as well. They need to show constructive and obvious behaviors. Leadership behaviors enable employees to realize the necessity of change in promoting innovation and present them the needed support from their leaders to cope with the obstacles and problems when they demonstrate service innovative behaviors. Sustainability has been perceived as a competitive advantage and a crucial determinant of competitiveness in the hospitality industry [1]. To accomplish sustainable development and ensure a competitive advantage in the industry, it is fundamental for hotel employees to show SIB [6]. Therefore, hotel managers need to pay more attention to creating a psychological safety climate and foster employee engagement in creativity, which results in SIB, by accordingly following CL practices in order to increase their organizational competitive advantage.

Finally, our practical suggestions are important for hospitality management in Turkey, as CL ensures a psychological safety climate, employee creativity, and innovative behaviors, which may provide a remedy for the development of the country's hospitality industry, which needs far more empirical studies proposing applicable and suitable practical suggestions.

5.3. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Though this work changes our understanding of the antecedents of employee SIB in the hospitality field, it has several limitations indicating avenues for further investigation. First, this study may still be limited by common method bias, as data were obtained from the same resource, even though the risk of this bias driving the outcomes of this research study was significantly reduced by the usage of time lag and CFA. An increased data collection process in future examinations may be utilized to test causalities more cautiously.

Second, as the data of this study were obtained from five-star hotels in Antalya, Turkey, cultural differences may have influenced the hypothesized relationships in our study model of the. Replicated explorations with greater cultural, industrial, and geographical discrepancies (e.g., including other countries) may be conducted, such that we may have a better comprehension generalizability and limiting circumstances of our research model. Avenues for further research may include a cross-cultural measure of the validity of the proposed model.

Third, further studies could also investigate other determinants of the hospitality work setting, apart from safety and creativity, which can trigger SIB. In addition, future research is needed to designate the circumstances under which CL practices are sustained and how this leadership style influences employee SIB in the long run. Therefore, examining the possible moderators that can promote or diminish the relationship between CL and employee SIB (e.g., perceived organizational support) may provide useful information.

Fourth, another direction for further research consists of an exploration of the effects of employee SIB on organizational outcomes, such as competitive advantage or organizational profitability. Moreover, this current work calls for further empirical investigation of the role of CL as a predictor variable in the hospitality field.

Finally, in this research, CL was treated at the employee level to examine the effects of leadership approach. An avenue for further research could include a multilevel study examining the influences of CL at an organizational level, in order to provide further generalizable outcomes. Hierarchical linear modelling may be a useful method for analyzing such multilevel data.

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