The Impact of Benevolent Leadership on Work Engagement in Hotels: The Mediating Role of Ethical Climate

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Abstract

This study examines the effect of benevolent leadership on work engagement in five-star hotels in Egypt. It also explores the mediating role of ethical climate. Data analysis was conducted by WarpPLS 7.0 software. The PLS-SEM approach was used to test the study model and hypotheses. 390 valid responses were collected and statistically analyzed. The results revealed that benevolent leadership positively affects work engagement and ethical climate. Results also revealed that ethical climate positively affects work engagement, and positively mediates the relationship between benevolent leadership and work engagement. The research adds to the theoretical knowledge of benevolent leadership, work engagement, and ethical climate in the hotel industry within the context of Egyptian culture. Practically, the study provides hotel managers with recommendations for maximizing the benevolence of leadership and improving work engagement.

Keywords: Benevolent Leadership, Work Engagement, Ethical Climate, Hotels.

Introduction

According to Akanji et al. (2018), Leadership is the ability of an individual or a group to have an impact on the behavior and decisions of others. Leadership style is a crucial management tool because it can improve positive relationships with employees, strengthen the hierarchical environment, and increase benefits for the organization and employees (Kozak & Uca, 2008, Alatf & Anjum, 2018). Leadership styles have been studied by a variety of authors and scholars in the field of management. Servant leadership, spiritual leadership, transactional and transformational leadership have all been the subject of research in this area (Karakas, 2006). Benevolent leadership was provided to broaden the scope of leadership (Kanwal et al., 2019).

In management literature, benevolent leadership is becoming more popular as a desirable leadership style for non-Western populations (Lin et al., 2018; Shen et al., 2023). Benevolent leadership is characterized as a style of leadership that prioritizes individual and comprehensive care for the personal and family well-being of subordinates (Cheng et al., 2004; Wang & Cheng, 2010; Chen et al., 2011; Chan & Mak, 2012; Tan et al., 2016). Benevolent leadership can be referred to as a state of individualized care that is demonstrated by allowing employees the opportunity to make amends, preventing employee dishonor, assisting with training, offering high-quality solutions to their personal and professional issues, and demonstrating an interest in their professional development (Wang & Cheng, 2010; Vinitha et al., 2018).

Positive employee outcomes, such as higher job engagement, satisfaction, productivity, creativity (Wang & Cheng, 2010), compliance with supervisory demands and motivation for work, task performance, citizenship behavior (Wang et al., 2013; Cenkci & Özçelik, 2015) and organizational commitment (Lin et al., 2018) are linked to benevolent leadership. Benevolent leaders put their subordinates' welfare first, help and create a happy workplace. Leadership

philosophies that prioritize values, dignity, respect, and assistance are beneficial to the health of employees and the long-term viability of organizations (Khairy et al., 2023).

One of the behaviors associated with one's work is work engagement (Nal & Sevim, 2020). More precisely, engagement was defined as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption" (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Work engagement is especially important in the hospitality sectors because employees deal directly with customers and are essential to providing great experiences (Cheng and Chen, 2017). Employee engagement is positively correlated with commitment, motivation, and performance, which in turn improves customer satisfaction and loyalty. Thus, companies in this sector must understand the elements that impact employee engagement (Gupta & Sharma, 2016; Hanaysha, 2016; Khairy et al., 2023).

Numerous scholarly investigations have suggested that benevolent leadership plays a significant role in shaping workers' job engagement (Tuan, 2018; Xu et al., 2018). Through the introduction of constructive change, creativity, and moral decision-making, benevolent leaders foster an environment that promotes engagement (Karakas & Sarigollu, 2012; Hutchins, 2018). Cenkci and Özçelik (2015) claimed that when leaders show benevolence, their subordinates are more engaged and devoted to their work.

Over the past ten years, there has been a rise in interest in business ethics. Ethical climate is defined as "the shared perceptions of what is ethically correct behavior and how ethical issues should be handled" (Victor & Cullen, 1987; Ghosh, 2015; Ötken & Cenkci, 2012). The ethical climate establishes the moral standards that apply to employees and the ethical behaviors that are necessary in organizations (Saygili et al., 2020). Leader behaviors play a significant role in shaping perceptions of the ethical climate within an organization, as they are perceived to be responsible for instilling moral values and ethical standards in their subordinates (Dickson et al., 2001). For the followers in the organization, the leader sets an example of what conduct is considered morally right and how ethical issues and dilemmas should be resolved (Erben & Güneşer, 2008).

Maintaining positive relationships between employees and organizations is largely dependent on the ethical climate, which is regarded as a component of organizational culture. It is a culture that will aid in predicting the efficacy of work (Ambarwati & Robbie, 2021). Establishing an ethical climate in the workplace that fosters positive social interactions between managers and staff increases employee engagement which can be viewed as a competitive advantage (Judeh, 2021; Nasser et al., 2023). Employee engagement is higher in companies that prioritize a culture that fosters ethics. The dimensions of vigor, dedication, and absorption of employees' work engagement were positively predicted by the ethics culture in their workplace (Nasser et al., 2023).

It is possible to argue that an organization's ethical culture and benevolent leadership are related. Erben and Güneşer (2008) found a positive relationship between the perception of an ethical climate and paternalistic leadership characteristics and benevolent and moral leadership. Researches on paternalistic leadership also consistently show that benevolent leadership has a positive impact on several positive follower outcomes, including task performance, innovative behavior, organizational citizenship, creativity, affective commitment, and ethical climate (Wang and Cheng, 2010; Karakas and Sarigollu, 2012; Chan and Mak, 2012; Al-Abedie and Al-Temimi, 2015; Ghosh, 2015; Vinitha et al., 2018).

Research on the impact of benevolent leadership, on an employee's degree of engagement is little (Cenkci & Özçelik, 2015; Hutchins, 2018). There are still few known underlying processes

through which benevolent leadership affects employee engagement in the hospitality industry (Tan et al., 2016; Luu, 2019). Moreover, there is little research that studied benevolent leadership, work engagement and ethical climate in a single study. So, this research aims to examine the relationship between benevolent leadership and job engagement in the hospitality industry, specifically focusing on the mediating role of ethical climate.

Literature Review
Benevolent Leadership
"Leadership" has been employed in several domains of human activity, including governmental affairs, organizations, academia, social work, and so on. The concept and definition of leadership can alter depending on the individual or situation (Alatf & Anjum, 2018). Leadership style is a crucial management tool Because it can improve positive relationships with employees, strengthen the hierarchical environment, and increase benefits for the organization and employees (Kozak & Uca, 2008, Alatf & Anjum, 2018).

In management literature, benevolent leadership is becoming more popular as a desirable leadership style for non-Western populations (Lin et al., 2018; Shen et al., 2023). One of the best types of management is benevolent leadership (Chan & Mak, 2012; Iqbal & Abdullah, 2021). Benevolent leadership is characterized as a style of leadership that prioritizes individual and comprehensive care for the personal and family well-being of subordinates (Cheng et al., 2004; Wang & Cheng, 2010; Chen et al., 2011; Chan & Mak, 2012; Tan et al., 2016). According to Ghosh (2015), benevolent leadership is the act of starting and promoting change within businesses via the use of wise decision-making and honest communication to establish a cycle of virtue among employees. The main goals of it are to benefit, transform, and provide favorable results for followers.

Benevolent leadership can be referred to as a state of individualized care which is demonstrated by allowing employees to make amends, preventing employee dishonor, assisting with training, offering high-quality solutions to their personal and professional issues, and demonstrating an interest in their professional development (Wang and Cheng, 2010; Vinitha et al., 2018).

Benevolent leadership is considered one of the facets of paternalistic leadership (Tan, 2015; Alatf & Anjum, 2018). Paternalistic leadership is a style of leadership that blends strong authority and discipline with moral integrity and fatherly kindness, all wrapped up in a personality-driven environment (Ötken & Cenkci, 2012). Paternalistic leadership is divided into authoritarian, benevolent and moral (Nal & Sevim, 2020; Öge et al., 2018).

Benevolent leadership contains four parts which are morality, spirituality, energy, and community responsiveness (Tan et al., 2016; Karakas & Sarigollu, 2012). Ethics, integrity, trust, and honesty make up the morality component. Essentially, it is derived from corporate ethics and pertains to leadership ethics, values, and ethical decision-making procedures (Brown and Trevino, 2006; Ghosh, 2015). The spiritual perspective gives leaders positivity and vitality, a clear life focus, a stress-free mindset, and a positive influence on peers, superiors, and subordinates (Ghosh, 2015). The vitality stream focus is on systematically lowering resistance to change, recognizing and assisting others in seeing the larger picture, starting, and spearheading the change, and managing negativity among people (Kanwal et al., 2019). The last component of benevolent leadership is community responsiveness. According to Garriga and Melé (2004), a leader's role involves contributing to organizational innovation and resolving social issues to enhance society. The community stream places a strong emphasis on the role that leaders play in

generating benefits for all parties involved, including society and the global community (Kanwal et al., 2019).

Leaders who exhibit benevolence are those who offer their subordinates comprehensive and personalized care, job security, and career development guidance to shield them from being held accountable for serious mistakes (Li et al., 2022). Benevolent leaders show a particular concern for their staff members' personal and professional lives outside of work. They give benefits, take part in constructive activities, and produce favorable outcomes for the benefit of all workers (Chen et al., 2011; Iqbal & Abdullah, 2021; He et al., 2022). In addition to helping in the work environment, benevolent leaders also extend their support to their subordinates in non-work settings. Examples of this include treating subordinates like family, reacting quickly to personal emergencies, and offering guidance outside of the workplace (Wang and Cheng, 2010; Vinitha et al., 2018). According to Lin et al. (2018) and Li et al. (2022), followers exhibit reciprocity and gratitude in response to the leader's altruistic actions, and these positive behaviors have a positive impact on their organizational outcomes.

The notion of benevolent leadership is distinct from other leadership philosophies that also prioritize employee care because it has its roots in Chinese and paternalistic culture. In contrast to servant leadership, benevolent leadership places more emphasis on caring than on sacrifice. Additionally, servant leaders influence employees through their services, whereas benevolent leaders treat their staff members as if they were their parents (Chughtai, 2019). In contrast to benevolent leadership, which prioritizes employee care, ethical leadership highlights the responsibility of leaders to set a high ethical standard for their subordinates (Zhu et al., 2004). Caring is not the fundamental characteristic of authentic leadership, which revolves around the notion that leaders present their genuine selves, uphold honesty, translate personal values and beliefs into practical actions, and build an equitable and open relationship with their staff. Employees may experience a greater positive change because of benevolent leaders' concern for both their professional and personal well-being (Jiang and Lin, 2020; Huang, 2022).

Positive employee outcomes, such as higher job engagement, satisfaction, productivity, creativity (Wang and Cheng, 2010), compliance with supervisory demands and motivation for work, task performance, citizenship behavior (Wang et al., 2013; Cenkci & Özçelik, 2015) and organizational commitment (Lin et al., 2018) are linked to benevolent leadership. According to Nguyen et al. (2023), benevolent leadership is also linked to long-term organizational competitive advantage through sustainable organizational growth. Benevolent leaders help to create a positive, supportive work environment that inspires the best in their team members by putting their followers' needs first, showing empathy, and cultivating positive relationships (Chan and Mac, 2012). Moreover, it has a strong correlation with followers' identification and respect, leader trust, organizational support, and job performance (Cheng et al., 2003; Alatf & Anjum, 2018). A benevolent leadership style facilitates change and manages employee negativity. It boosts employee morale, accelerates productivity, and reduces turnover, allowing businesses to endure challenging circumstances (Iqbal & Abdullah, 2021).

Work Engagement
Academic interest in work engagement can be traced to Kahn's (1990) work where work engagement was defined as "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles, by which they employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performance" (Cenkci & Özçelik, 2015; Akanji et al., 2018; Öge et al., 2018). More specifically, Rich et al. (2010) defined it as "the simultaneous investment of an individual's

physical, cognitive, and emotional energy" (Xu et al., 2018). According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) and Decuypere & Schaufeli (2020), work engagement is characterized as a pervasive and persistent affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any specific object, event, person, or behavior. One of the positive behaviors associated with one's work is work engagement (Nal & Sevim, 2020). More precisely, engagement was defined as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption" (Schaufeli et al., 2002). The term "vigor" describes a person who is highly motivated, persistent, resilient mentally, and willing to put effort into their work, even in the face of challenges. Feeling important, being enthusiastic and inspired, feeling proud, and being challenged are traits of dedication. Dedication is a deeper "involvement" with one's work. Absorption means being completely focused and absorbed in one's work, with time flying by and difficulty separating oneself from it (Çağlar, 2012; Cenkci & Özçelik, 2015; Rahmadani & Schaufeli, 2022; Li et al., 2022).

Organizations may improve performance by hiring engaged employees at the individual, team, organizational, and business unit levels (Schaufeli, 2012; Salanova et al., 2014). Engaged workers will devote themselves all to the company and work very enthusiastically; they are also more wholesome and devoted to the company, as well as proactive, and creative (Schaufeli, 2012). Work engagement is essential to achieve organizational competitive advantage especially in labor productivity, job satisfaction, low turnover rates, customer satisfaction, loyalty, and profitability (Bakker et al., 2008). Furthermore, motivated workers exhibit creative and inventive behaviors at work (Chang et al., 2013; Demerouti et al., 2015). Moreover, there is a positive correlation between high work engagement and favorable financial returns (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009), high-quality services (Salanova et al., 2005), workplace safety, and company expansion (Nahrgang et al., 2011). Furthermore, it has been shown that work engagement affects performance outcomes like job satisfaction and job involvement (Christian et al., 2011). According to Gupta (2015), businesses with high employee engagement levels give staff members a lot of chances to advance their knowledge and skill development. Srivalli and Mani Kanta (2016) and (Hutchins, 2018) found that employee engagement and human resource development are considered key components of an employee's success.

Work engagement is especially important in the tourism and hospitality sectors because employees deal directly with customers and are essential to providing great experiences (Cheng and Chen, 2017). Employee engagement is positively correlated with commitment, motivation, and performance, which in turn improves customer satisfaction and loyalty. Thus, companies in this sector must understand the elements that impact employee engagement (Gupta and Sharma, 2016; Hanaysha, 2016; Khairy et al., 2023).

Ethical climate

Over the past decades, there has been a rise in interest in business ethics. Numerous models and research projects regarding the ethical climate have been developed because of the growing interest in and desire to comprehend ethical behavior and decision-making better (Erben & Güneşer, 2008). According to Blome and Paulraj (2013), organizational culture can be broadly defined to include ethical climate, which is a subcategory of organizational/work climate. Victor and Cullen (1987) defined the organizational ethical climate as "the shared perceptions of what is ethically correct behavior and how ethical issues should be handled" (Ghosh, 2015; Ötken & Cenkci, 2012). The ethical climate within the organization serves as a guide for employees' behavior and embodies the moral standards of the company (Cullen et al., 2003). It can also be defined as a particular kind of workplace environment that represents morally organizational

policies, procedures, and practices (Mulki et al., 2007). The ethical climate establishes the moral standards that apply to employees and the ethical behaviors that are necessary in organizations (Saygili et al., 2020). It defines what ethical behavior in the workplace is, as well as what the organization allows and prohibits (Wu & Tsai, 2012; Mentari & Santoso, 2020).

A theoretical typology of ethical climate that is two-dimensional was proposed by Victor and Cullen (1987, 1988). The ethical criterion is the first dimension, and the locus of analysis is the second. The ethical criterion dimension consists of egoism, benevolence, and principle. In egoistic or instrumental environment, the primary focus is on one's own self-interest, while in benevolent or utilitarian environments, the welfare of others takes precedence (Ötken & Cenkci, 2012; Ghosh, 2015). According to Blome and Paulraj (2013), benevolence is linked to caring for the welfare of stakeholders, such as other workers within the organizations and members of the public. In deontological or principled environment, decisions are made with consideration for the application of laws, rules, and regulations (Lemmergaard and Lauridsen 2007). According to Barnett and Vaicys (2000), the reference group serves as the locus of analysis when making ethical decisions. Three potential referent levels make up the second dimension: individual, local, and global. The individual locus of analysis is centered on the wants and requirements of the individual. The organization's members are the focus of the local locus of analysis. The larger economic or social system outside the organization is the focus of the cosmopolitan locus of analysis (Neubaum et al. 2004; Ötken & Cenkci, 2012; Blome & Paulraj, 2013).

One can broadly classify the antecedents of ethical climate as formal or informal. Leadership, structure, rules, incentive programs, and decision-making procedures are examples of formal components (Ardichvili et al. 2009). Role models and implicit behavioral norms are examples of informal components (Trevino et al., 2006; Ardichvili et al., 2009; Blome & Paulraj, 2013). Leader behaviors play a significant role in shaping perceptions of the ethical climate within an organization, as they are perceived to be responsible for instilling moral values and ethical standards in their subordinates (Dickson et al., 2001). For the followers in the organization, the leader sets an example of what conduct is considered morally right and how ethical issues and dilemmas should be resolved (Erben & Güneşer, 2008).

Hypotheses Development
Several variables can impact employee engagement at work, including management style, communication, leadership, degree of trust and respect for the workplace, organizational culture, and the organization's overall reputation (Wenehenubun et al., 2022). Organizational leadership is a major component of employee engagement and organizational success (Hutchins, 2018). Leadership is one of the factors that is crucial in raising employee work engagement. (Rahmadani & Schaufeli, 2022). This is because work engagement is influenced by other job resources, which are influenced by leadership. Therefore, leaders can have a positive impact on their team members' work engagement directly through their relationships with their followers as well as indirectly through managing and allocating job resources (Breevaart et al., 2015; Engelbrecht et al., 2017).

Numerous scholarly investigations have suggested that benevolent leadership plays a significant role in shaping workers' job engagement (Tuan, 2018; Xu et al., 2018). For example, Xu et al. (2018) found that followers will experience positive emotions because of their benevolent leaders' helpful, considerate, supportive, and compassionate actions. Furthermore, positive affective states are fostered by benevolent leaders who are concerned about their employees' success both within and outside of the workplace (Tuan, 2018). Li et al. (2022) indicated that

there is a connection between work engagement and benevolent leadership. Through the introduction of constructive change, creativity, and moral decision-making, benevolent leaders foster an environment that promotes engagement (Karakas & Sarigollu, 2012; Hutchins, 2018). Cenkci and Özçelik (2015) claimed that when leaders show benevolence, their subordinates are more engaged and devoted to their work. Work engagement is expected to be higher when leaders are more open to receiving feedback from their subordinates (Suharti and Suliyanto, 2012).

Benevolent leadership is linked to positive worker outcomes, such as higher job satisfaction, engagement, and productivity (Wang et al., 2022; Shen et al., 2023). Leaders that take a benevolent stance put their subordinates' welfare first, help and create a happy workplace. Positive results such as increased organizational commitment and work satisfaction have also been associated with this leadership style (Lin et al., 2018; Shaw and Liao, 2021; Khairy et al., 2023). Furthermore, engaged workers credit their manager's leadership style for their high level of engagement. According to Hutchins' (2018) study, workers favored working for a benevolent manager who exhibits traits like sincere concern, kindness, and care for both the staff and their families. When workers are engaged, they go above and beyond the call of duty. They work under a manager who values them as individuals as well as the work they do.

A positive impact of benevolent leadership on job engagement has been observed, which is in line with previous studies (Li et al., 2022; Lee and Ding, 2022; Wu et al., 2020; Park et al., 2019) that have suggested that leadership is seen as an essential resource for job engagement in the hospitality and tourism industry. Benevolent leaders provide a clear understanding of roles and expectations so that staff members know exactly what they are expected to do and how their work affects the company᾽s goals. Employees' sense of purpose is strengthened and job engagement is greatly increased when they perceive that their roles are aligned with larger goals and have a clear understanding of them (Wang & Cheng, 2010; Shi et al., 2022; Khairy et al., 2023). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H1: There is a positive relationship between benevolent leadership and work engagement.

According to Martin and Cullen (2006) and Saygili et al. (2020), a variety of organizational and environmental factors, including management styles, organizational type, and environmental regulations, have an impact on employees' perceptions of the ethical climate. Leadership, among other things, is essential to the growth and establishment of an ethical climate (Schminke et al., 2005; Neubert et al. 2009). Leadership philosophies and actions of leaders have a substantial impact on the growth of an ethical climate within the company both in formal and informal settings (Saygili et al., 2020). According to Grojean et al. (2004), organizational leaders communicate and put ethical policies and practices into practice, which significantly contributes to the development of an ethical climate. Employees are more likely to adhere to ethical expectations when leaders create ethical guidelines, communicate expectations, and outline the consequences of organizational norms (Ghosh, 2015).

It is possible to argue that an organization's ethical culture and benevolent leadership are related. Erben and Güneşer (2008) found a positive relationship between the perception of an ethical climate and paternalistic leadership characteristics and benevolent and moral leadership. A benevolent climate is primarily based on concern for others (Victor & Cullen, 1987, 1988). Making moral decisions while, considering both the positive and bad effects on other people is the cornerstone of a benevolent-local climate. In a benevolent-local climate, individuals would

make their decisions with concern for others in the organization (Wu & Tsai, 2012). According to Cheng et al. (2004), benevolent leaders prioritize the welfare of their subordinates over organizational and financial goals. This suggests that benevolent leadership can influence local ethical climates by simultaneously promoting benevolent-local climate and discouraging an egoistic local climate. Researches on paternalistic leadership also consistently show that benevolent leadership has a positive impact on several positive follower outcomes, including task performance, innovative behavior, organizational citizenship, creativity, affective commitment, and ethical climate (Wang and Cheng, 2010; Karakas and Sarigollu, 2012; Chan and Mak, 2012; Al-Abedie and Al-Temimi, 2015; Ghosh, 2015; Vinitha et al., 2018).

According to recent findings, ethics plays a significant role in the well-being and effectiveness of organizations (Hijal-Moghrabi et al., 2017). Maintaining positive relationships between employees and organizations is largely dependent on the ethical climate, which is regarded as a component of organizational culture. It is a culture that will aid in predicting the efficacy of work (Ambarwati and Robbie, 2021). Establishing an ethical climate in the workplace that, fosters positive social interactions between managers and staff increases employee engagement, which can be viewed as a competitive advantage (Judeh, 2021; Nasser et al., 2023). A high degree of organizational ethics positively correlates with various individual psychological outcomes, including work engagement (Yener et al., 2012; Huhtala et al., 2014; Mitonga-Monga & Cilliers, 2015; Judeh, 2021; Suebvises, 2023). Employees are more likely to exhibit positive attitudes and behaviors, be less likely to leave, are cognitively, affectively, and emotionally engaged in and committed to their work when their organizations set and uphold ethical standards and practices (Kaptein 2011; Huthala et al., 2014).

Employee engagement is higher in companies that prioritize a culture that fosters ethics. The dimensions of vigor, dedication, and absorption of employees' work engagement were positively predicted by the ethics culture in their workplace (Nasser et al., 2023). This implies that employees who feel a positive ethical climate of their work are more likely to exhibit higher degrees of vigor, involvement, pride, inspiration, and happiness when immersed in their work which are considered as indicators of a higher level of engagement (Monga-Mitonga et al., 2016). As employees realize ethical climate as work resources (Mitonga-Monga & Cilliers, 2015), these resources could encourage employees to reciprocate in the form of positive work consequences such as increased work engagement, job satisfaction, job performance, and well-being (Bedi et al., 2015). Employee engagement and an ethical workplace are positively correlated. The organizational values system, which forms the basis for the prevailing ethical climate, may have an impact on employee engagement. This means that managers' and employees' opinions of how ethical or unethical the workplace is have a direct bearing on how much they trust or mistrust the organization (Nasser et al., 2023). Employees are more likely to tend to work in an ethical environment. They can express their gratitude to their employer by becoming more engaged, which could give them a competitive edge. In the end, organizations that establish an ethical atmosphere and succeed in raising employee engagement will endure (Yener et al., 2012). Accordingly, the following hypotheses are formulated as follows:

H2: There is a positive relationship between benevolent leadership and the ethical climate.
H3: There is a positive relationship between ethical climate and work engagement.
H4: Ethical climate in the workplace mediates the relationship between benevolent leadership and work engagement.

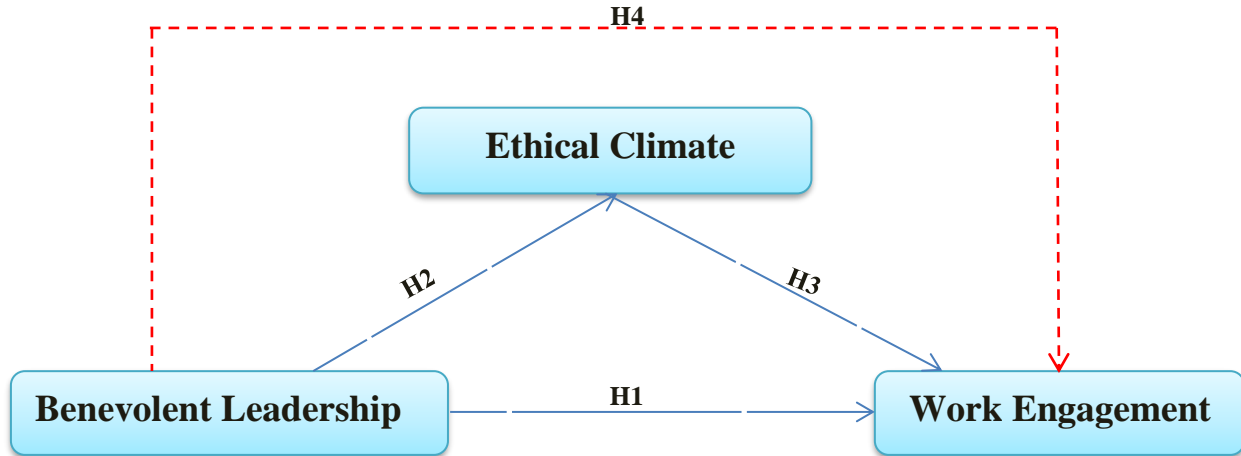The theoretical framework of the study is presented in Figure (1).

Figure (1): Hypothetical framework of the study

Methodology

Measures

The study included literature-based measures to ensure the validity of the scales used. Benevolent leadership was assessed by a 10-item scale adapted from Cheng et al. (2004). For example, "My supervisor is like a family member when he/she gets along with us" and "Beyond work relations, my supervisor expresses concern about my daily life". Work engagement was evaluated by a 5-item scale of Jung et al. (2021). For instance, "I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose" and "I am enthusiastic about my work". The ethical climate was measured using a seven-item scale by Schwepker (2001). Sample items include: "My hotel has a formal, written code of ethics" and "My hotel has policies with regards to ethical behavior". The complete measures are presented in Appendix (A). In this study, a self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data to evaluate the suggested model. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: one for demographic information, such as gender, age, and education level, and the other for questions regarding benevolent leadership, work engagement, and ethical climate. A "5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree" was used to score participants' responses.

Sampling, Data Collection, and Data Analysis

The study's population was staff members of the five-star hotels in Egypt in the Greater Cairo region. This location in Egypt was chosen since it is a famous tourist destination due to its proximity to Egypt's capital, where various hotels can be found. The choice of five-star hotels was made with the expectation that their large diverse personnel would be found, and the applicability of adopting different leadership styles is more in the chain hotels. In Egypt's Greater Cairo region, there are 34 five-star hotels (Shaheen et al., 2021). Only 27 hotels were agreed to be investigated. The inspected hotels were assured of privacy and anonymity when dealing with the questionnaires. The total number of surveys distributed is 600. Only 390 valid questionnaires out of the 600 distributed were returned, representing a response rate of 65%. Because of the geographic span of the study and the variety of five-star hotels throughout Egypt, the convenience sample was also used. Hair et al. (2010) state that estimating the proper sample size should be based on the number of variables being researched "The least acceptable ratio is 10 surveys for each investigated variable item"; (1:10). The minimum sample size needed for this

study was 220 due to the 22 items that were being examined (10 items for benevolent leadership, 5 items for work engagement, and 7 items for ethical climate). Therefore, for the final analysis, the sample size of 390 hotel employees was enough. For data analysis, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to test the proposed model of the study. Data analysis was conducted using WarpPLS 7.0 software. For participant characteristics, there were 375 men (96.15%) and only 15 women (3.85%) among the 390 responses. 175 (44.87%) were under 30, 145 (37.18%) were between the ages of 30 and 45, and 70 (17.95%) were older than 45. In addition, 30 (7.69%) had a high school or high institute certificate, compared to 330 (84.62%) who had a bachelor's degree, 30 (7.69%) who had a master's degree, and 30 (7.69%) who had a Ph.D. Participants with fewer than two years of work experience were not eligible and thus were excluded.

Results
Reliability and validity
The item loading was calculated and ranged from 0.548 to 0.893 (see Table 1). Factor loading values greater than 0.5 were deemed acceptable by Hair et al. (2010). Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values are also more than 0.7 for all variables, as shown in Table 1. Furthermore, because the AVE values are greater than 0.5, the scales' validity was proven using the Hair et al. (2020) criterion. Additionally, variance inflation factors (VIFs) are calculated for each latent variable in a model, indicating that it is free of common method bias because the VIF values are less than 3.3 (Kock, 2015).

Table (1): Factor loadings, Cronbach's, CR, AVE, and VIF

	Item Loading	CR	CA	AVE	VIF
Benevolent leadership (BL)	-				
BL.1	0.798**				
BL.2	0.838**				
BL.3	0.569**				
BL.4	0.753**				
BL.5	0.548**	0.901	0.876	0.522	1.989
BL.6	0.714**				
BL.7	0.631**				
BL.8	0.674**				
BL.9	0.794**				
BL.10	0.835**				
Work engagement (WE)	-				
WE.1	0.893**				
WE.2	0.882**				
WE.3	0.840**	0.903	0.863	0.655	1.619
WE.4	0.796**				
WE.5	0.599**				
Ethical climate (EC)	-				
EC.1	0.647**				
EC.2	0.765**				
EC.3	0.773**				
EC.4	0.608**	0.795	0.696	0.504	1.475
EC.5	0.829**				
EC.6	0.629**				
EC.7	0.689**				
"CR: Composite reliability; CA: Cronbach's alpha; AVE: average variance extracted; VIF: variance inflation factors " ** P value <0.05					

Moreover, Franke and Sarstedt (2019) noted that "the correlation between two latent variables must be significantly less than unity to prove discriminant validity, and the AVE value for each variable must be greater than the greatest common value". According to the results in Table 2, the study model's discriminant validity has therefore been accomplished.

Table (2): Discriminant validity results

	BL	WE	EC
Benevolent leadership (BL)	0.696	0.579	0.529
Work engagement (WE)	0.579	0.809	0.308
Ethical climate (EC)	0.529	0.308	0.608

Model fit metrics for the research model
The current study met all Kock's (2021) model fit and quality index requirements (see Appendix B).

Results of testing hypotheses
Figure 2 shows the results of testing the hypotheses of the study. Results indicated that benevolent leadership positively affects ethical climate ($\beta=0.38$, $P<0.01$) and work engagement ($\beta=0.58$, $P<0.01$). This means that when benevolent leadership is high, both ethical climate and work engagement tend to be higher. Thus, H1 and H2 are supported. In addition, ethical climate positively affects work engagement ($\beta=0.44$, $P<0.01$), which means that when ethical climate increases work engagement tends to be high. Therefore, H3 is supported.
Furthermore, figure 2 shows that benevolent leadership interpreted 13% of the variance in ethical climate ($R^2=0.13$). In addition, Benevolent leadership and ethical climate interpreted 54% of the variance in employee work engagement ($R^2=0.54$).
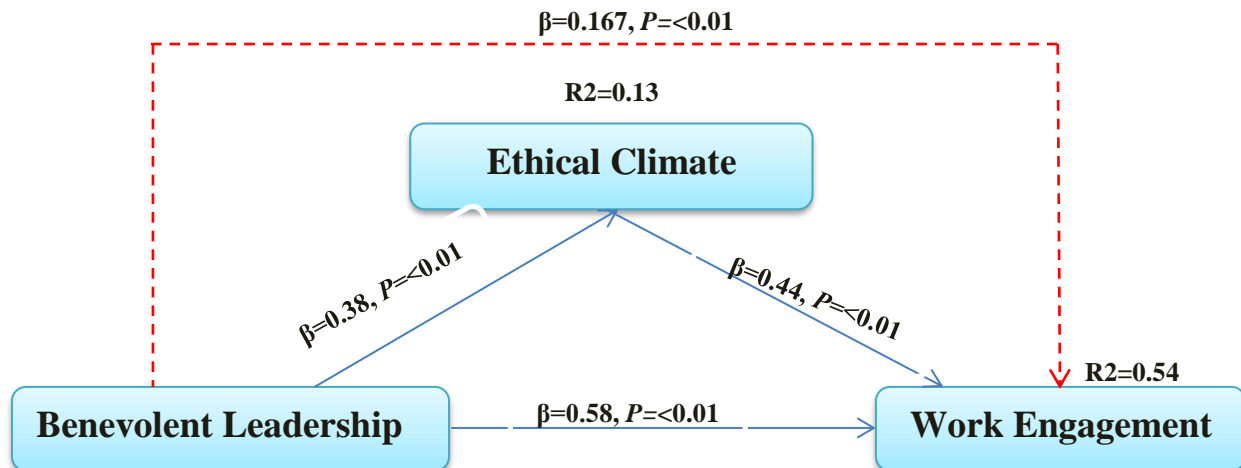

Figure (2): final model of the study

Moreover, to assess the effect of ethical climate (EC) as a mediator, the "Bootstrapped Confidence Interval" analysis was conducted (see Table 3). According to the bootstrapping analysis, the indirect effect's Std. $\beta=0.167$ (0.380×0.440) was significant (p value <0.05), which had a t-value of 4.777. Furthermore, a zero does not exist in between "95% Bootstrapped

Confidence Interval": (LL= 0.099, UL= 0.236), confirming partial mediation. Thus, it can be said that there is statistical evidence for the mediation effect of ethical climate in the BL→WE relationship. Therefore, H4 is supported.

Table (3): Mediation analysis (Bootstrapped Confidence Interval)

Hypothesis	Path a BL→EC	Path b EC→WE	Indirect Effect	SE	*t-value*	Bootstrapped Confidence Interval		*Decision*
						95% LL	95% UL	
H4: BL→EC→ WE	0.380	0.440	0.167	0.035	4.777	0.099	0.23 6	Mediation

Discussion

This study aims to examine the impact of benevolent leadership on work engagement in hotels through the ethical climate as a mediator. Findings revealed that benevolent leadership positively affects work engagement. This is consistent with studies of Xu et al. (2018), Shen et al. (2023), Khairy et al. (2023), and Zhou et al. (2023) which claimed a positive link between benevolent leadership and work engagement. Based on Vroom (1964)' affective events theory, because benevolent leaders are enthusiastic, provide opportunities to repair mistakes, and think positively, they are more likely to meet the requirements of their followers and implant pleasant feelings in them (Chen et al., 2014). Leaders who exhibit benevolent behaviors are likely to instill a sense of kindness and concern for their interests in their followers. Kind leaders are encouraging, thoughtful, supportive, and compassionate toward their subordinates, which may be important indicators of work engagement (Christian et al., 2011; Chen et al., 2014). According to Decuypere and Schaufeli (2020), benevolent leadership behaviors are part of positive leadership styles and are intended to promote employee engagement, motivation, and well-being.

Findings also revealed that benevolent leadership positively affects the ethical climate. This is consistent with studies by Ghosh (2015) and Gumusluoglu et al. (2020), who argued for the positive link between benevolent leadership and ethical climate. Employee adherence to ethical standards is increased when leaders create ethical rules, convey expectations, and set repercussions for breaking organizational norms. According to Grojean et al. (2004), leaders are viewed by their subordinates as "role models" who provide standards and guidelines for proper behavior. In addition, benevolent leaders genuinely care about their staff members and offer both personal and professional assistance (Gumusluoglu et al., 2020). These behaviors not only boost employees' dedication, collaboration, and retention (Hiller et al., 2019), but they also establish an open and caring working atmosphere, which may foster an ethical climate.

Lastly, the findings revealed that the ethical climate positively affects work engagement and positively mediates the BL→WE relationship. This is consistent with previous studies of Mitonga-Monga and Cilliers (2015), Engelbrecht et al. (2017), and Burhan et al. (2023) which reported a positive link between ethical climate and work engagement. When employees are treated fairly and respectfully by their leaders "i.e., benevolent leaders", employees are more likely to reciprocate by putting in extra effort at work, having increased job commitment, and having the willingness to become more actively engaged in work (Macey et al., 2009). In

addition, within the organization, benevolent leaders treat staff members fairly, ethically, and with respect. Subordinates simultaneously participate in work-related activities because they feel obligated to. Such treatment of an employee, according to the social exchange theory, comes back in the form of engagement (Brown et al., 2005).

Theoretical and practical implications

This study adds to existing leadership theory and research on how ethical climate influences the impact of benevolent leadership on subordinates' work engagement. According to the results, the impact of an ethical climate on work engagement was found to be a mediating factor in a particular process of benevolent leadership. Subordinates who have witnessed their leader's benevolence are more inclined to feel that an ethical climate is necessary to demonstrate respect and foster engagement.

The current study is also important for hotel management. This research indicates that a more ethical climate and, thus, more work engagement are linked to benevolent leadership. This emphasizes the significance of cultivating leaders' benevolent behavior. To improve the ethical climate and thereby increase subordinate work engagement, hotels should offer leadership training that focuses on developing and promoting leader benevolence, particularly because subordinates value and appreciate benevolent leadership (Chan and Mak, 2012). This would encourage leaders to show personal care, support, and guidance in different domains; work and non-work realms. This leadership style can improve work engagement among subordinates when they are ethically inspired. Furthermore, hotel managers should also establish an acute awareness of the ethical facets of their business. The findings imply that creating ethical climates can reinforce the benefits of benevolent leadership by encouraging work engagement in an environment where misconduct is not tolerated. Hotels should have strong grievance rules that allow workers to express their disappointment or dissatisfaction with any unpleasant event they may encounter.

Limitations and further research directions

This study examined the ethical climate as a mediator between benevolent leadership and work engagement. Other factors such as trust in the leader or justice could work as mediators. Other individual variables and personality qualities may also function as moderators "i.e., employee willpower, work passion, and employee conscientiousness". Politics, for example, might be a distinct contextual variable that could alter the perception of leadership, hence, needs to be further investigated. Furthermore, this study was carried out in five-star hotels in the Egyptian context. More comparative studies are needed in different hospitality categories 'ie, 4-star or 3-star hotels, restaurants' or in different cultural contexts 'ie, other MENA countries'.

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Appendix (A): Measurement Scales

Benevolent leadership   Cheng et al. (2004).
- My supervisor is like a family member when he/she gets along with us.
- My supervisor devotes all his/her energy to taking care of me.
- Beyond work relations, my supervisor expresses concern about my daily life.
- My supervisor ordinarily shows a kind concern for my comfort.
- My supervisor will help me when I'm in an emergency.
- My supervisor takes very thoughtful care of subordinates who have spent a long time with him/ her.
- My supervisor meets my needs according to my personal requests.
- My supervisor encourages me when I encounter arduous problems.
- My supervisor tries to understand what the cause is when I don't perform well.
- My supervisor handles what is difficult to do or manage in everyday life for me.
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Work Engagement   Jung et al. (2021).
- I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose
- I am enthusiastic about my work.
- My work inspires me
- At my work, I feel bursting with energy
- I get carried away when I am working

Ethical climate   Schwepker (2001).
- My hotel has a formal, written code of ethics.
- My hotel strictly enforces a code of ethics.
- My hotel has policies concerning ethical behavior.
- My hotel strictly enforces policies regarding ethical behavior.
- In the hotel, the unethical behaviors will not be tolerated.
- Behavior leading to personal gain is being reprimanded.
- Behavior leading to corporate gain is being reprimanded.

Appendix (B): Model fit and quality indices

	Assessment	Criterion	Supported/Rejected
Average path coefficient (APC)	0.436, P<0.001	P<0.05	Supported
Average R-squared (ARS)	0.288, P<0.001	P<0.05	Supported
Average adjusted R-squared (AARS)	0.286, P<0.001	P<0.05	Supported
Average block VIF (AVIF)	1.006	acceptable if ≤ 5, ideally ≤3.3	Supported
Average full collinearity VIF (AFVIF)	1.555	acceptable if ≤ 5, ideally ≤ 3.3	Supported
Tenenhaus GoF (GoF)	0.394	small ≥ 0.1, medium ≥ 0.25, large ≥ 0.36	Supported
Sympson's paradox ratio (SPR)	1.000	acceptable if ≥ 0.7, ideally = 1	Supported
R-squared contribution ratio (RSCR)	1.000	acceptable if ≥ 0.9, ideally = 1	Supported
Statistical suppression ratio (SSR)	1.000	acceptable if ≥ 0.7	Supported
Nonlinear bivariate causality direction ratio (NLBCDR)	1.000	acceptable if ≥0.7	Supported

الملخص العربي
تأثير القيادة الخيرية على الارتباط بالعمل في الفنادق: الدور الوسيط للمناخ الأخلاقي

تتناول هذه الدراسة تأثير القيادة الخيرية على الارتباط بالعمل في فنادق الخمس نجوم في مصر والدور الوسيط للمناخ الأخلاقي. تم إجراء تحليل البيانات بواسطة برنامج WarpPLS 7.0. كما استخدم منهج PLS-SEM لاختبار نموذج الدراسة وفرضياتها. تم جمع 390 استجابات صحيحة وتحليلها إحصائيا. وأظهرت النتائج أن القيادة الخيرية تؤثر إيجابيا على الالتزام بالعمل والمناخ الأخلاقي. كما أشارت النتائج أن المناخ الأخلاقي يؤثر إيجابياً على الارتباط بالعمل، كما يتوسط إيجابياً في العلاقة بين القيادة الخيرة والإرتباط في العمل. ويضيف هذا البحث إلى الدراسات النظرية للقيادة الخيرية، والمشاركة في العمل، والمناخ الأخلاقي في صناعة الفنادق بالثقافة المصرية. ومن الناحية العملية، تقدم الدراسة لمديري الفنادق توصيات لتعظيم تطبيق القيادة الخيرية وتحسين المشاركة في العمل.

الكلمات الدالة: القيادة الخيرية، الارتباط بالعمل، المناخ الأخلاقي، الفنادق.