

Investigating the Relationship between Psychological Empowerment and Sustainable Performance in Egyptian Travel Agencies

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the relationship between psychological empowerment and sustainable performance in Egyptian travel agencies. Psychological empowerment is the independent variable of the study. It includes four meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. Sustainable performance represents the dependent variable of the study and it reflects all what organizations can do to emphasize environmental, economic, and social sustainability. To achieve the study's aim, a five-Likert scale questionnaire was distributed among 80 Category A travel agencies. Data were collected which 296 were declared valid, and data was analyzed through a structural equations modelling approach using SmartPLS 4.4. Findings illustrated that all dimensions of psychological affect sustainable performance in Egyptian travel agencies positively.

The study provides many recommendations for managers of Egyptian travel agencies such as: establishing robust measurement systems that capture the influence of the psychological empowerment of employees on sustainable practices

Keywords

Psychological empowerment, Sustainable performance, Egyptian travel agencies.

Introduction

Organizations sacrifice financial and non-financial resources to meet stakeholders' expectations. This process is associated with maximizing benefits. Unfortunately, the business environment is surrounded by challenges that affect organizations' competitive position in the market. These challenges such as globalization, technological innovation, corporate governance, and deregulation have caused exponential change in dealing with human capital inside organizations (Safari et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2021; Nguyen et al., 2021).

Accordingly, organizations have made great efforts over the past years to benefit as much as possible from their human capital. The major aim of these efforts was to motivate employees to take initiatives and have roles beyond their job description (Jena, 2019). Henceforth, the concept of empowerment has emerged to enable employees to perform at their best levels and make their own decisions. After that, empowerment has developed to have a psychological dimension which affects the relationship between employees and management. Literature argues that psychological empowerment is powerfully connected to several aspects, such as leadership and competitive advantage (Solansky, 2014; Gautam and Ghimire, 2016).

Regarding sustainable performance, the business environment nowadays is characterized by substantial challenges that face organizations, such as globalization, fierce competition, dynamic markets, and instability of economic conditions. Consequently, organizations realized the significant importance of sustainable practices to maintain their competitive positions. In this context, an organization is considered sustainable when it affects society and the environment positively (Agrawal et al., 2022; Kafetzopoulos and Gotzamani, 2022; Xin et al., 2023). In other words, sustainable organizations focus on generating profits and protecting the socio-ecological environment (Zgrzywa-Ziemak and Walecka-Jankowska, 2021).

The purpose of this study is to assess the effect of psychological empowerment dimensions (meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact) on the sustainable performance in the Egyptian travel agencies. Thus, the research objectives are to: (a) examine the impact of psychological empowerment on sustainable performance in Egyptian travel agencies. (b) provide practical implications for managers of human resources departments and managers of Egyptian travel agencies to enhance sustainable performance through psychological empowerment.

Literature review

Psychological empowerment

The concept of empowerment extends back to 1890. It has developed significantly over the years. In the 1950s, the major concern with this concept was to maintain good relationships with employees. Then, in the 1960s, the concept transformed into assessing employees' needs and keeping them motivated. During the 1970s, theorists and practitioners presumed that managers should coordinate with employees during the process of decision-making. Empowerment could be identified as giving lower levels of authority and power in making decisions (Singh et al., 2013; Gholifar and Gholami, 2014; Jha, 2014).

Conger and Kanungo (1988) were the first theorists to emphasize the psychological perspective of empowerment. They indicated that people are internally motivated when they have power or the ability to influence on others. Moreover, individuals meet their needs for power and control when they have the ability to deal efficiently with challenges, situations, and coworkers. In this context, Andersson et al.; (2022) argued that psychological empowerment is more concerned with employees' perceptions of empowerment than the actual steps of delegation of authority. Furthermore, Amor et al.; (2021) agreed with Andersson et al., (2022) that structural empowerment is a prerequisite to psychological empowerment as it represents the practices and conditions needed for providing employees with the highest levels of psychological empowerment.

Spreitzer (1995, p.1444) identified psychological empowerment as "a motivational construct manifested in four cognitions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact". In other words, it is considered a process in which employees recognize the necessity of performing their jobs at their best levels. To achieve this aim, they need to value their work and have the required skills, which enable them to efficiently exploit the power given to them from upper levels (Soleimani et al., 2021). These four cognitions could be discussed as follows:

- 1- **Meaning:** It is considered a complex concept in organizational psychology. It includes several elements which make individuals satisfied with their working lives. These elements are: purpose of work, expected outcomes, value of employees' role at work, and self-worth. The construct of meaning does not have an equation that works for everyone: it differs

from one employee to another. It is believed that employees in the same positions feel differently about their work meaningfulness (Clausen and Borg, 2011; Buonomo et al., 2020; Vasconcelos, 2022).

- 2- Competence: Literature illustrates the difficulty of identifying a holistic definition of competence because of its relation to multiple elements. In general, competence could be demonstrated as the ability to achieve something using appropriate knowledge and skills. In this context, the literature divides competence into two parts. The first one is documentation, which represents all the qualifications an employee should have to be assigned to a specific job. The second part refers to attitudes, knowledge, skills, abilities, and all distinguished attributes that differ from one to another (Lester, 2014; Forsten-Astikainen and Heilmann, 2018; Johansson and Wallo, 2020).
- 3- Self-determination: it reflects the desire of employees to feel free to determine how to organize their tasks at work. This desire maximizes employees' motivation to achieve personal and organizational goals. It is noteworthy to mention that self-determination does not mean full independence or acting against organizational rules and regulations (Ferber and Rechberg, 2022; Khan, 2022; O'Donoghue and Werff, 2022).
- 4- Impact: It is a critical dimension that demonstrates how far an employee can influence strategic and organizational outcomes (Spreitzer, 1995).

Regarding the importance of psychological empowerment to organizations, Singh and Singh (2019) agreed with Li and Lin (2021) and Cyfert et al., (2022) that psychological empowerment contributes significantly to improving the mental and physical conditions of employees. In detail, empowered employees who have the ability to organize their work and participate in decision-making fulfill a wide range of their psychological needs. Consequently, empowered employees feel more satisfied with their jobs and are considered to be more effective than co-workers who are less empowered.

In addition, psychological empowerment makes employees more confident in themselves as it becomes easier for them to learn new skills and gain new knowledge. These conditions result in creating an atmosphere of confidence and respect between employees and their managers. Moreover, empowered employees contribute significantly to achieving competitive advantage because of their powerful interactions with customers, innovative solutions to problems, and new initiatives to develop work (Gautam and Ghimire, 2017; Terkamo-Moisio et al., 2022; Yazdanshenas and Mirzaei, 2022).

Sustainable performance

The business environment is changing and developing rapidly, which has put organizations under a lot of pressure to follow new management approaches and strategies. Accordingly, managers became more convinced about the notion of sustainability and its contribution not only to organizations but also to regions and nations (Kovilage, 2021; Yadegaridehkordi et al., 2023).

In this context, plenty of researchers agree that sustainable performance in organizations includes three dimensions: environmental, economic, and social sustainability. All these dimensions go hand in hand to enable organizations to meet stakeholders' needs in the short and the long-term (Stocker et al., 2021; Kinnunen et al., 2022; Khaw et al., 2022; Yu and Zhu, 2022).

In general, sustainable performance could be illustrated as using all companies' resources and capabilities to coordinate efforts towards environmental, economic, and social aspects. The

failure to achieve sustainable performance results in environmental problems, unstable economic conditions, and social conflicts (Permatasari et al., 2022).

Regarding environmental performance, it reflects the ability of organizations to make all practices suitable for preserving the internal and external environment. These practices are based on providing customers with products and services with minimum levels of air pollution, using energy, and decreasing the consumption of materials (Al-Hakimi et al., 2022; Al Koliby et al., 2022a; Al Koliby et al., 2022b).

In terms of economic performance, it is evident that financial aspects differ from economic aspects. Financial aspects focus only on numbers and how any organization can make a powerful balance sheet. However, economic aspects are concerned with other critical matters than the balance sheet, such as levels of poverty and the impact of investment on individuals and society (Acosta-Prado and Tafur-Mendoza, 2022). Moreover, financial aspects are not considered to be enough for achieving sustainable development goals, it needs economic aspects to achieve these goals (Le et al., 2022). Furthermore, economic performance is concerned with cost reduction and maximizing revenues. These practices result in achieving competitive advantage (Tondolo et al., 2021).

With respect to social performance, it refers to how far organizations treat their employees based on fair rules and create suitable work conditions for them. In addition, social performance extends to strengthening organizational relationships with customers and society to increase levels of trust and loyalty between all parties. In this manner, literature has demonstrated that investment in relationships for organizations results in better social performance (Zhang et al., 2022; Rahman et al., 2023).

Prior studies emphasized the integration of environmental, economic and social dimensions to achieve sustainable performance. When organizations adhere to providing customers with products and services that comply with environmental standards, it results in fostering economic performance and promoting their reputation within society (Suleiman, 2022).

Hypotheses development

Meaning and sustainable performance

Literature has proven that employees who consider their work meaningful contribute significantly to several organizational outcomes (Geldenhuis et al., 2014; Kettenbohrer et al., 2015). In line with this, Asiwe et al., 2017 assured that meaningful work facilitates work engagement for employees; otherwise, organizations will suffer from poor performance, which ultimately results in substantial economic and social losses (Haftador and Koohsari, 2015). Consequently, some managers consider it critical for achieving success to establish a work environment in which employees can find their roles at work meaningful (Cullen et al., 2014). Working in this kind of supportive environment affects employees' abilities to take actions to preserve the environment and protect the social and economic interests of the organization (Rashid and Al Qaseer, 2022). In this regard, this study developed the following proposition:

H1: There is a statistically significant positive relationship between meaning and sustainable performance in Egyptian travel agencies.

Competence and sustainable performance

Competence refers to knowledge, skills, and capabilities that are used by employees to perform at their best level (Elbaz et al., 2018; Permarupan et al., 2020). It is evident that competence enables employees to achieve any given task with superior performance, even in difficult circumstances.

In addition, employee competence is a key driver for organizations to identify points of strength and weakness for individuals and how they can manage difficult situations (Al-Makhadmah et al., 2020). In this regard, competence supports employees to achieve organizational goals, especially in service sectors (Singh and Sarkar, 2012; Potnuru and Sahoo, 2016). Consequently, this study developed the following proposition:

H2: There is a statistically significant positive relationship between competence and sustainable performance in Egyptian travel agencies.

Self-determination and sustainable performance

Self-determination represents the freedom that employees have to make their own choices about their tasks. It represents an opportunity for employees to participate in the decision-making process. Moreover, this process gives some space for employees' new ideas and innovative initiatives to be accepted by their organizations (Singh and Sarkar, 2012; Pradhan and Panda, 2019; Permarupan et al., 2020).

Literature has confirmed a significant association between self-determination and the job performance of tour guides (Tetik, 2016), organizational commitment in the lodging industry (Ibrahim, 2020), and employees' performance in the hospitality industry (Al-Makhadmah et al., 2020). In line with this, Rani et al., (2021) agreed with Rashid and Al Qaseer (2022) that self-determination could predict employees' performance, especially when they rely on self-determination to improve environmental, social, and economic sustainability. Given the previous discussion, this study developed the following proposition:

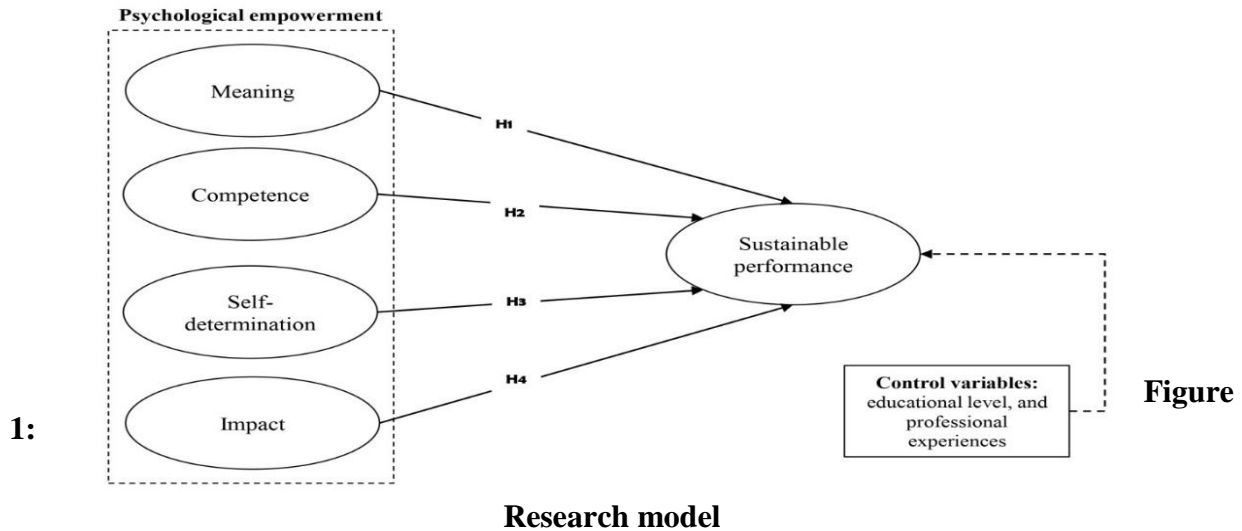
H3: There is a statistically significant positive relationship between self-determination and sustainable performance in Egyptian travel agencies.

Impact and sustainable performance

Impact is all the thoughts of employees about how their behavior contributes significantly to organizational outcomes (Maynard et al., 2012). This was supported by Stander and Rothmann (2010), who stated that impact reflects how far employees believe that their efforts contribute to making progress towards organizational goals. In this context, Pradhan and Panda (2019) assured that impact is a necessary component of any successful work environment. The absence of this concept results in serious problems for empowerment practices.

Literature confirmed that impact could predict employees' performance in different contexts (Degago, 2014; Tetik, 2016; Rani et al., 2021). Rashid and Al Qaseer (2022) demonstrated that impact improves employees' engagement in all activities related to achieving sustainable practices for organizations. Building on the previous discussion, this study developed the following proposition:

H4: There is a statistically significant positive relationship between impact and sustainable performance in Egyptian travel agencies.



Research methodology

Participants

Since the number of travel agencies in Greater Cairo is 1219, which represents 85% of all Egyptian Category A travel agencies (Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, 2022), a convenience sampling procedure was used in selecting the participating travel agencies because of the ease of the researchers' access to the emails of these travel agencies through the database of (Egyptian Travel Agents Association, 2023). The clear advantages of this sampling procedure included the availability of participants' data, the ease with which participants could be contacted through emails and phones, and the quickness with which the data could be gathered for analysis (Kivunja, 2015).

The questionnaire was sent to the emails of 120 travel agencies in Greater Cairo to ensure that the study covered 5% of the population. From the 120 travel agencies, 80 travel agencies have responded, which is more than 5%, while 40 travel agencies ignored the questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed between March and April 2023, with an average of five questionnaires per travel agency and a total of 400 questionnaires. Phone calls were made to each travel agency, which were answered by customer service employees to ask the participants to distribute the link to five employees of each travel agency. Before distributing the link to employees, customer service employees got the approval of their managers to allow the distributing process. A total of 311 forms were received, of which 296 were declared valid, with a response rate of 77.75%.

Moreover, participants were told that participation is voluntary without any financial support. Finally, participants were reassured that their information cannot be shared with any official within or outside the agency, but it is analyzed as a single block in extracting research results that benefit the tourism sector.

Instrument

Using the SurveyMonkey platform, a semi-structured online questionnaire was prepared to examine the underlying linkages between psychological empowerment dimensions and sustainable performance using advanced quantitative techniques.

The questionnaire was divided into three main sections:

1) a brief introduction about this paper's purpose and instructions for potential participants, along with their demographic information; 2) psychological empowerment dimensions; and 3) sustainable performance dimensions. All items were cited from prior studies published in top-tier journals (see Supplement A). A 5-Likert point scale was employed in this survey. To gauge psychological empowerment, Chiang and Hsieh's (2012) scale was employed with 12 items in this paper. This construct consists of four main sub-constructs: meaning, competence, impact, and self-determination, with three items each.

Likewise, 14 items were employed to assess sustainable performance, derived from Malik et al. (2020). This scale consists of three sub-constructs: environmental (five items), economic (five items), and social performance (four items). Lastly, educational level and professional experience were included in the study model to control their direct effects on sustainable performance among travel agency employees. These demographic factors were specially chosen because job experience and educational level had differences in the results extracted in previous studies. Some of them mentioned that less experience helps in better performance, and some of them refused this argument. The same is true in employee education, where higher education or intermediate education are weak points or power points for any employee to carry out his or her duties effectively.

Data analysis

The common method bias in response was investigated using an external variable to examine its effect on variables involved in the research model. The results revealed convergence of effects with and without this exogenous variable, indicating that the data missed the problem of response bias

The data were analyzed using PLS-SEM (i.e., SmartPLS 4.4). PLS-SEM is a widely employed analytical approach in the empirical literature on the tourism context (Sarstedt et al., 2020; Becker et al., 2023). PLS acceptance as a newly constructed regression-based model, such as the SEM approach hypothesized, is based on its appropriateness to be tested (Dash & Paul, 2021). Additionally, this approach entails comparing two separate models, namely the outer and inner models (Sarstedt et al., 2022).

Results

Outer model assessment

The results presented in Table 1 showed that most of the participants were males, with a rate of 57.8%, while 57.4% of those were between 21 and below 35 years old. Moreover, the results revealed that more than half of the participants hold a bachelor's degree, at a rate of 63.9%, and the marital status of married people exceeded half of the pooled sample, at a rate of 53.4%. Finally, the job experience of the participants ranged as follows: 38.2% had 2–5 years of experience, 31.1% had 6–9 years of experience, and 16.2% had less than two years of career experience.

On the other hand, the results revealed that mean and standard deviation values fluctuated from average to high, indicating that most participants' responses centered on agreeing with the questionnaire items (see Table 2). Besides, composite reliability (CR) and extracted average variance (AVE) values were employed as effective indicators for evaluating scales' convergent validity as presented in the research model (Assaker and O'Connor, 2023). Therefore, findings

showed that CR values exceeded the minimum, which is 0.70, except that IMP3, ECP1, and SCP1 were less than this value; hence, these items were omitted, while AVE values exceeded the minimum, which is 0.50 (Becker et al., 2023).

Table 1. Respondents profile (N = 296).

Categories		Frequency	%
<i>Gender</i>	Male	171	57.8
	Female	125	42.2
<i>Age group (Years)</i>	Below 21	35	11.8
	21 to less than 35	170	57.4
	35 to less than 50	28	9.5
	50 and above	63	21.3
<i>Educational level</i>	PhD/MSc	18	6.1
	Bachelor	189	63.9
	High school	79	26.7
	Elementary school	10	3.4
<i>Marital status</i>	Single	82	27.7
	Married	158	53.4
	Widowed	53	17.9
	Divorced	3	1.0
<i>Professional experiences (Years)</i>	Less than 2	48	16.2
	2-5	113	38.2
	6-9	92	31.1
	10 and more	43	14.5

Moreover, the findings confirmed that the model had strong internal consistency since all factor loadings exceeded the accepted value of 0.708 (Guenther et al., 2023). Next, the most recent discriminant validity evaluation method was employed, which is the HTMT value, which should not exceed the 0.85 value (Legate et al., 2023), indicating that each construct was relatively distinct in response choices compared to other constructs (see Table 3).

Table 2. Convergent validity.

1 st order construct	2 nd order construct	Items	Mean	STD	Factor loading	CR	AVE
Meaning		MNG1	3.77	1.525	0.851	0.839	0.636
		MNG2	3.70	1.670	0.818		
		MNG3	3.79	1.672	0.718		
Competence		CMP1	3.69	1.424	0.786	0.854	0.661
		CMP2	3.88	1.648	0.785		
		CMP3	3.55	1.506	0.866		
Self-determination		SDT1	3.50	1.577	0.857	0.875	0.701
		SDT2	3.75	1.580	0.801		
		SDT3	3.44	1.517	0.852		
Impact		IMP1	3.52	1.573	0.846	0.831	0.668
		IMP2	3.72	1.532	0.840		
		IMP3	3.57	1.514	0.676		
Environmental performance		ENP1	3.81	1.363	0.809	0.855	0.600
		ENP2	3.69	1.592	0.720		

	ENP3	3.74	1.629	0.744		
	ENP4	3.65	1.488	0.814		
	ENP5	3.84	1.575	0.780		
Economic performance	ECP1	3.58	1.503	0.625	0.859	0.611
	ECP2	3.58	1.457	0.759		
	ECP3	3.54	1.615	0.824		
	ECP4	3.49	1.713	0.846		
	ECP5	3.94	1.586	0.833		
Social performance	SCP1	4.23	1.519	0.671	0.813	0.626
	SCP2	4.19	1.548	0.739		
	SCP3	4.21	1.681	0.867		
	SCP4	4.19	1.771	0.870		
Sustainable performance	Environmental performance	3.75	1.529	0.882	0.911	0.773
	Economic performance	3.63	1.575	0.889		
	Social performance	4.21	1.630	0.866		

Table 3. HTMT test results.

Construct	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Educational level							
2. Professional experiences	0.308						
3. Competence	0.400	0.221					
4. Impact	0.387	0.044	0.510				
5. Meaning	0.308	0.103	0.501	0.438			
6. Self-determination	0.222	0.112	0.544	0.543	0.351		
7. Sustainable performance	0.385	0.290	0.550	0.439	0.416	0.426	

assessment

The values of path coefficients, significance, and confidence intervals were run to examine the extent of the effects of psychological empowerment dimensions on sustainable performance. The results presented in Table 4 revealed that meaning positively affected sustainable performance ($\beta = .388$; $t = 6.699$; $p < .001$, $CI = .125; .577$), indicating that H1 is supported. This result reveals that creating a sense of purpose and significance in the work of employees enables them to promote sustainable performance practices regarding economic, social, and environmental aspects.

In addition, competence positively affected sustainable performance ($\beta = .259$; $t = 4.998$; $p < .01$, $CI = .111; .459$), indicating that H2 is supported. This result reflects the importance of providing employees with the necessary training and resources to enhance their skills and capabilities, which can contribute to sustainable performance in Egyptian travel agencies.

Furthermore, self-determination positively affected sustainable performance ($\beta = .311$; $t = 5.082$; $p < .01$, $CI = .189; .512$), indicating that H3 is supported. This result demonstrates that organizations which promote a culture of autonomy and participative decision-making can foster employees' motivation and commitment to sustainable performance.

Finally, impact positively affected sustainable performance ($\beta = .201$; $t = 3.027$; $p < .001$, $CI = .104; .358$). Therefore, H4 is supported. This result highlights that empowering employees to have a voice and influence in the organization results in positive outcomes in terms of sustainable performance.

On the other hand, the results proved that educational level positively affected sustainable performance ($\beta = -.190$; $t = 1.726$; $p < .05$, $CI = -.345; -.123$), while professional experiences positively affected sustainable performance ($\beta = .275$; $t = 2.485$; $p < .05$, $CI = .164; .489$). Likewise, the R^2 value indicated that the model explained 49.9% of the variance in sustainable performance (see Table 4), and model fit indicators were within acceptable bounds. Thus, the study model can predict the proposed linkages. Consequently, the study's aim was achieved by illustrating the impact of psychological empowerment on sustainable performance in Egyptian travel agencies.

Table 4. Path analysis.

		Beta	t-value	LL	UL	p-value	Supported?
H1	Meaning → Sustainable performance	0.388***	6.699	0.125	0.577	0.000	Yes
H2	Competence → Sustainable performance	0.259**	4.998	0.111	0.459	0.003	Yes
H3	Self-determination → Sustainable performance	0.311**	5.082	0.189	0.512	0.003	Yes
H4	Impact → Sustainable performance	0.201***	3.027	0.104	0.358	0.000	Yes
	Educational level → Sustainable performance	0.190*	1.726	-	-	0.023	Yes
	Professional experiences → Sustainable performance	0.275*	2.485	0.345	0.123	0.041	Yes
Model fit indicators		SRMR = 0.056, $\chi^2 = 5.342$, $d_{ULS} = 0.854$; $R^2 = 0.499$					

Discussion and conclusions

General discussion

Given the critical importance of the study variables, which was illustrated in the literature, the purpose of this research is to investigate the possible association between psychological empowerment and sustainable performance in Egyptian travel agencies. The findings of the study provided valuable insights into the relationship between psychological empowerment dimensions and sustainable performance in the tourism industry.

The results of the study indicated that the four dimensions of psychological empowerment, namely meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact, have a positive impact on sustainable performance in Egyptian travel agencies. These findings are consistent with prior research that has highlighted the importance of psychological empowerment in enhancing employee motivation, job satisfaction, and performance (Spreitzer, 1995; Terkamo-Moisio et al., 2022; Yazdanshenas & Mirzaei, 2022).

The dimension of meaning refers to the employees' perception of the purpose and value of their work. This study illustrated that employees who perceive their work as meaningful are more likely to contribute to sustainable practices in the organization. This result is supported by Chadi et al., (2016) who assured that meaningful work affects employees' emotions towards their organization positively. Moreover, this study came to similar conclusions with Zeglat and Janbeik (2019); Lin et al., (2020) who confirmed that meaningful work affects organizational outcomes positively.

Competence, another dimension of psychological empowerment, is related to employees' belief in their own abilities and skills. The study found a positive association between competence and sustainable performance, indicating that employees who feel competent are more likely to

engage in sustainable practices. In line with this, Schröder et al.,-(2022); Dwikat et al.,-(2023) emphasized the role of management investing in developing employees' competences to make them more qualified for employing sustainable practices.

Self-determination, the third dimension of psychological empowerment, refers to employees' desire to have autonomy and control over their work. The study found that employees who feel empowered to make decisions and organize their tasks are more likely to engage in sustainable practices. This result came to an agreement with Camilleri (2021), who demonstrated that self-determination has a great impact on predicting employees' performance.

Lastly, the dimension of impact, which reflects employees' perceptions of their ability to influence strategic and organizational outcomes, was found to positively affect sustainable performance. Empowered employees who have a sense of impact are more likely to take initiative, contribute innovative solutions, and develop sustainable practices.

Furthermore, the study found that the educational level of employees and their previous experiences play a significant role in their awareness of sustainable practices in the organization. Employees with higher educational levels and more careful experiences tend to be more cognitively aware of sustainable practices. This finding suggests that organizations should prioritize education and training programs that enhance employees' knowledge and awareness of sustainability issues, as it can contribute to their engagement in sustainable practices.

Conclusions

This research has provided valuable insights into the relationship between psychological empowerment and sustainable performance in Egyptian travel agencies. The findings highlight the significant impact of psychological empowerment dimensions, including meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact, on promoting sustainable practices within Egyptian travel agencies.

The study achieved the first objective through four points. The first point illustrates that employees who perceive their work as meaningful tend to affect sustainable performance positively in Egyptian tourism companies. The second point is accomplished by demonstrating the positive impact of employees' competence on supporting sustainable performance. Moreover, the third point is achieved by revealing that employees who feel positive about self-determination are more likely to affect sustainable practices positively. Furthermore, the fourth point is accomplished as data analysis assures that employees who feel that their efforts make a difference and contribute to making progress towards achieving organizational goals have a significant impact on promoting and supporting sustainable practices in Egyptian travel agencies.

The results also emphasized the importance of education and previous experiences in enhancing employees' awareness of sustainable practices. Managers of Egyptian travel agencies should prioritize providing training and educational programs that enhance employees' knowledge and understanding of sustainability issues, thereby promoting their engagement in sustainable practices.

For the tourism industry, these findings have significant implications. Managers of the human resources departments of Egyptian travel agencies should prioritize the implementation of training programs and workshops to enhance employees' knowledge, skills, and support sustainable practices. Moreover, results indicated that it is critical for managers of Egyptian travel agencies to establish a supportive work environment that boosts employees' capabilities to the maximum. This work environment will have significant positive effects on the sustainable performance of Egyptian travel agencies.

Practical implications

Organizational interventions: managers of Egyptian travel agencies are encouraged to make interventions as follows:

- 1) Human resources managers should be encouraged to hire individuals who have the highest levels of qualifications when there is a chance to announce a vacancy inside their travel agencies. Moreover, individuals with the highest levels of professional experience will be more likely to promote sustainable performance.
- 2) Managers of Egyptian travel agencies should consider motivating their employees by appreciating their efforts through financial and non-financial incentives. Financial incentives could be done by providing employees with monetary rewards such as bounces on their salaries. It is recommended that managers of human resources set the rules which are used to identify employees who deserve to be rewarded. Non-financial incentives may include the following:
 - Public recognition for employees' efforts: this could be done by appreciating employees' hard work on official webpages of the travel agencies. Moreover, office parties could be organized to name the employee of the month.
 - Giving hard worker employees extra days off especially on their birthdays.
 - Promoting distinguished employees to higher positions according to vacancies in the organizational structure.
 - Managers of Egyptian travel agencies are encouraged to promote values of mutual respect, transparency, accountability, and teamwork. These values provide employees with job security which leads to the feeling of meaningful work.
- 3) Fostering a work environment that respects employees' ideas and initiatives to make them feel self-worthy and encourages them to engage in sustainable practices. In other words, it is recommended that department managers of Egyptian travel agencies organize one meeting a month at least with their employees to discuss any new ideas which may contribute to developing economic, environmental, and social performance such as dealing with energy consumption, using new materials, reducing costs, and maintaining powerful relationships with customers. Department managers are responsible for evaluating these ideas and recommend the suitable ones to managers Egyptian travel agencies.
- 4) Human resources managers should consider providing employees with training programs as follows:
 - Economic performance training programs: these kinds of programs might focus on providing employees with skills and knowledge to fully understand the meaning of economic performance of travel agencies, its indicators, methods of achieving it, cost reduction, and maximizing revenues.
 - Environmental performance training programs: these programs might focus on equipping employees with sufficient knowledge about environmental aspects related to the work of travel agencies. This knowledge could be related to reducing energy consumption, waste management, and how to exploit these practices to provide customers with a positive image of the environmental practices of Egyptian travel agencies.
 - Social performance training programs: these programs could be divided into two levels. Level one focuses on department managers to provide them with the most suitable methods to interact with employees. Level two might focus on developing employees' capabilities regarding interaction with customers.

- 5) Managers should consider implementing a participatory decision-making strategy. It allows employees to take initiatives that may contribute to maximizing economic, environmental, and social performance. Besides, employees would be encouraged to offer creative solutions to problems that might occur in all aspects of sustainable performance. This strategy might enable employees to feel self-determinant, and their efforts will have a significant impact on their travel agencies. These initiatives and solutions should be presented to department managers who evaluate their validity before presenting them to the higher management of Egyptian travel agencies.

Measurement and evaluation: Managers of Egyptian travel agencies should consider establishing robust measurement systems that capture the influence of the psychological empowerment of employees on sustainable practices. These systems might be implemented by human resources managers as follows:

- 1) Human resources managers might distribute a Likert-scale questionnaire among employees to evaluate their level of satisfaction with meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. Likewise, the previous questionnaire might include statements that represent employees' opinions about the progress of their travel agency in economic, environmental, and social practices.
- 2) Human resources managers should consider conducting interviews with employees to evaluate their level of satisfaction with psychological empowerment and register their proposals about developing economic, environmental, and social performance.

Finally, the second objective of the study is achieved by providing managers of human resources departments and managers of Egyptian travel agencies with practical implications to enhance sustainable performance through psychological empowerment.

Limitations and future research needs

The research was conducted in a specific sector of the tourism industry, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research should explore the relationship between psychological empowerment and sustainable performance across different sectors and organizational settings, such as airlines, hotels, and governmental bodies such as the Ministry of Tourism. Additionally, future studies could utilize longitudinal designs to further strengthen the findings. Finally, qualitative methods could be implemented in future studies to gain more insights about both variables in the tourism industry.

Future Research Needs:

Exploring mediating and moderating factors: Future studies could go deeper into identifying mediating and moderating factors that influence the relationship between psychological empowerment and sustainable performance. For instance, the role of organizational culture, leadership styles, or external factors like industry regulations could be considered to understand how these factors interact with psychological empowerment to influence sustainable practices.

Comparative Studies: Conducting comparative studies across different industries and countries would provide valuable insights into the cultural and contextual factors that influence the relationship between psychological empowerment and sustainable performance. Such studies could highlight similarities and differences and inform the development of tailored strategies for promoting sustainable practices in diverse contexts.

Long-term impact: Examining the long-term impact of psychological empowerment on sustainable performance would be beneficial by conducting longitudinal studies. This could involve assessing the sustainability outcomes over an extended period to determine if the positive effects of psychological empowerment are sustained or if there are any diminishing returns.

Supplement A. Measurement items and scales.

Scales	Codes	Items
Meaning	MNG1	The work I do is vital to me.
	MNG2	My job activities are personally meaningful to me.
	MNG3	The work I do is meaningful to me.
Competence	CMP1	I am confident about my ability to do my job.
	CMP2	I am self-assured about my capabilities to perform my work activities.
	CMP3	I have mastered the skills necessary for my job.
Self-determination	SDT1	I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my work.
	SDT2	I can decide on my own how to go about doing my work.
	SDT3	I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do my job.
Impact	IMP1	My impact on what happens in my department is large.
	IMP2	I have a great deal of control over what happens in my department.
	IMP3	<i>I have significant influences over what happens in my department. [Omitted]</i>
Environmental performance		Our travel agency has _____
	ENP1	Improved compliance with environmental standards.
	ENP2	Reduced airborne emissions.
	ENP3	Reduced consumption of hazardous materials.
	ENP4	Reduced energy consumption.
Economic performance	ENP5	Reduced material usage.
		Our travel agency has decreased its costs for _____
	ECP1	<i>Materials purchasing. [Omitted]</i>
	ECP2	Energy consumption.
	ECP3	Waste treatment.
Social performance	ECP4	Waste discharge.
	ECP5	Environmental accidents.
		Our travel agency has _____
	SCP1	<i>Improved overall stakeholder welfare. [Omitted]</i>
	SCP2	Improved community health and safety.
	SCP3	Reduced environmental impacts and risks to the general public.
	SCP4	Improved occupational health and safety of employees.

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استكشاف العلاقة بين التمكين النفسي والأداء المستدام في شركات السياحة المصرية

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الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف العلاقة بين التمكين النفسي والأداء المستدام في وكالات السفر المصرية. ولقد اعتمدت الدراسة علي التمكين النفسي كمتغير مستقل ، ويتضمن التمكين النفسي أربعة أبعاد تمكن الموظفين من الأداء بأفضل مستوياتهم، وهي المعنى والكفاءة وتقرير المصير والتأثير. ويمثل الأداء المستدام المتغير التابع للدراسة ويعكس كل ما يمكن أن تقوم به المنظمات للتأكيد على الاستدامة البيئية والاقتصادية والاجتماعية. ولتحقيق هدف الدراسة، تم توزيع استبيان بمقياس ليكرت الخماسي على 80 وكالة سفر من الفئة (أ) . تم جمع البيانات من إجمالي 311 مشاركاً، تم الإعلان عن صحة 296 منهم، وتم تحليل البيانات من خلال طريقة نمذجة المعادلات الهيكلية باستخدام برنامج SmartPLS 4.4. وقد أوضحت النتائج أن جميع أبعاد التمكين النفسي (المعنى والكفاءة وتقرير المصير والتأثير) تؤثر على الأداء المستدام في وكالات السفر المصرية بشكل إيجابي.