Does wisdom leadership drive employee advocacy and retention in travel agencies?
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Abstract
Prior theories on how crucial knowledge is to leadership have changed over time. Scholarly studies of leadership have recently shifted their attention from early leaders’ wisdom like Confucius to their efficacy and efficiency in maximizing revenues and organizational success. Questioning that emphasis is necessary due to the lack of wisdom in leadership in the tourism context. To address this lack, this paper underpins social exchange theory to examine how wise leader behaviors drive travel agencies employees to advocate for and retain them. This paper also examines the mediation mechanisms of employee advocacy in travel agencies category -A within Greater Cairo. Drawing on Google Form, 442 responses were gathered from travel agency employees and analyzed using ADANCO v.2.2. Findings revealed that wisdom leadership positively affected employee advocacy and retention. Besides, employee advocacy increased their retention levels. Further, employee advocacy partially mediated the positive nexus between wisdom leadership and employee retention. Accordingly, this paper provides valuable insights for tourism decision-makers. For example, tourism businesses need to provide managers and supervisors with the right tools to help them acquire compassion, persuasiveness, voluntariness, and self-worth to successfully train wise leaders. Further, tourism leaders need to be aware that employee advocacy entails more than just promoting or defending their organizations to outside parties.

Keywords: Employee retention, employee advocacy, wisdom leadership, travel agencies

1. Introduction
Recently, one of the topics that HRM researchers are interested in studying is employee retention (Papa et al., 2020). This concept is the antithesis of employee turnover, and prior studies have established the detrimental impacts of a high rate of voluntary employee turnover on profitability and employee satisfaction (Ghani et al., 2022). Consequently, raising employee retention rates among employees is crucial (Mahadi et al., 2020). As the majority of recent research indicates, an organization’s social and economic processes benefit from high employee retention rates (see Ghani et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2020; Kurdi & Alshurideh, 2020). However, employee advocacy—previously defined as a form of organizational civic activity in which employees willingly support or defend their organization to both internal and external audiences—has drawn the attention of tourism professionals (Thelen, 2020). This increasing interest is partly due to its ability to raise awareness, recruiting, and employee retention rates (Ahmad et al., 2022).

Over the past 20 years, perceived wisdom has been linked to leadership (Karami et al., 2020). Leaders are drawn to followers by their ability to live up to their ideal of a wonderful life (Ogunyemi & Ogunyemi, 2020). Each person readily follows others who model a good life through their actions and a great deal of compassion for other people
(Kristjánsson et al., 2021). As such, it should come as no surprise that over human history, those who were regarded as wise—like Socrates and Confucius—have also been regarded as outstanding leaders (Wang et al., 2021). Since the emergence of contemporary economies and globalization, wisdom—which seeks to advance good lives—has seldom been compared to leadership (Hassi & Storti, 2023). This is more frequently associated with efficacy and efficiency in fostering organizational success (Wang et al., 2021).

Business experts typically overlook wisdom as a crucial component of exceptional leadership because of the focus placed on organizational efficiency (Kristjánsson et al., 2021). In this regard, wisdom was not a common study topic until recently, nor had it been discussed in academic talks on leadership in the tourism sector. On the other hand, disregarding the importance of wisdom in leadership can have detrimental effects (e.g., employee turnover and incivility among coworkers). Thus, wisdom is currently acknowledged as a subject of study in the social sciences (Karami et al., 2020). Now is the right moment to conduct an empirical investigation into the effects of wisdom-driven leadership in the tourism industry.

From an empirical perspective, previous studies have highlighted wisdom leadership as an antecedent of job performance among Egyptian travel agents (Elbaz & Haddoud, 2017), LMX quality among Australian business employees (Zacher et al., 2014), and service innovation performance among Iraqi private bank employees (Hamad & Maghdid, 2022). However, wisdom leadership was tested as a mediator between dysfunctional customer behavior and turnover intention among frontline hotel employees in Oman (Salem et al., 2023). Likewise, previous studies have examined employee retention as a consequence of positive leadership styles such as transformational (Ohunakin et al., 2019; Tian et al., 2020; Yamin, 2020) and servant leadership (Pham et al., 2023), without examining the pivotal role of wisdom leadership in enhancing employee retention in the service sector, especially the tourism and travel sector.

To the best of the author’s knowledge, recent studies (see Ahmad et al., 2022; Elbaz & Haddoud, 2017; Hsiao et al., 2024) have not examined employee advocacy as a moderator or mediator between positive leadership styles and employee outcomes in the tourism and hospitality sectors. Accordingly, the existing study highlights wisdom leadership as a precedent for employee retention through employee advocacy in the Egyptian travel sector, which is considered a research agenda that may add valuable insights to decision-makers in tourism organizations during the upcoming years. This paper aims to add major contributions as the following:

- Advancing knowledge about wise leadership’s efficacy in the travel industry;
- Elucidating the particular paths via which employee advocacy may be impacted by wisdom leader behaviors;
- Employing employee advocacy as a mediation mechanism to examine how wise leadership affects employee retention.

2. Literature review
According to social exchange theory (SET), work relationships are made up of a sequence of resource exchanges between leaders and employees (Blau, 1964), wherein
the two sides interact to create duties that are both mutually and reciprocally owed (Bordia et al., 2017). The trade of advantageous resources can result in high-quality trade connections, which in turn can produce advantageous and fruitful behaviors (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Additionally, SET suggests that various resources might be exchanged between individuals and organizations (Ahmad et al., 2023). According to Foa and Foa (1980), resources may be classified into six categories: products, services, money, status, information, and love. They contend that the analysis of resources can be based on the universality of value (i.e., money has a relatively constant value) and the concreteness of the resource, i.e. a financial incentive is very objective and tangible (Balkin & Werner, 2023, but a promise for future development may be less concrete and more symbolic (Salem et al., 2023).

According to Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005), these characteristics are frequently divided into two categories of resources: socioemotional and economic. In this paper, a theoretical paradigm for comprehending how wise leadership affects employee advocacy is provided by SET (Salem et al., 2023), which deals with duties produced via interpersonal interactions (Selem et al., 2022). More precisely, leadership styles that empower employees and heighten the sense that their organizational values foster relationships with them can act as psychological resources (Ambad et al., 2021). This will encourage employees to return favors by speaking up for their organizations (Carney, 2021). As a result, this study evaluated the SET paradigm that connects employee advocacy, retention, and wisdom leadership (see Figure 1).

![Figure 1. Proposed model](image_url)

2.1. Wisdom leadership
The capacity to deal with difficult life situations in a way that promotes one’s and others’ growth refers to wisdom (Magezi & Madimutsa, 2023). As per Karami et al. (2020), wisdom leadership is characterized by a blend of cognizance of one’s work environment and the capacity to predict outcomes within workplace dynamics. It also entails the ability to comprehend organizational dynamics and draw reasonable conclusions from environmental cues (Salem et al., 2023). In this regard, intellectual shrewdness, spurring
action, moral conduct, and cultivating humility are all crucial elements for wisdom leadership (Hassi & Storti, 2023). First, intellectual shrewdness is the ability to know, comprehend, and make judgments in the face of both ordinary and unusually confusing or uncertain situations (Carney, 2021). It involves timely situational awareness that goes beyond insights, as well as predicting obstacles and outcomes (Shahzad et al., 2022).

Given their ability to recognize variance in the environment and deal with its complexity, they are aware of absolute principles (Trevino & Nelson, 2021). Second, spurring action is a leadership style that shares knowledge, points followers in the direction of the action required to accomplish goals, and inspires and unites them behind a desired vision (Bostanli & Habisch, 2023). Leaders behave in a way that their subordinates respect and believe to be wise by displaying these attributes (Shahzad et al., 2022). Giving employees a sense of purpose and imparting information to them enables the alignment of corporate and individual goals (Jia et al., 2024), which in turn motivates them to take action (Rooney et al., 2021).

Accordingly, fulfilling a good future vision and being true to it seem to subordinates like encouraging opportunities to learn new things and act in a particular goal-oriented way (McClellan, 2020). For this reason, wise leaders are able to persuade others of their worth based on establishing relationships, being true to their words, and providing chances for knowledge exchange for employees (Schiuma et al., 2022). Third, moral conduct refers to the governing function of morals, values, and principles in the consistent, honest, and moral behavior of smart leaders in their daily interactions with stakeholders (Trevino & Nelson, 2021). As a result, they promote ethics and cherish virtuous results. Wise leaders operate in this way because they firmly believe that their acts should have a moral purpose (Rooney et al., 2021). In practical terms, wise leaders balance their own interests with those of others, advance shared benefits and uphold their values and beliefs (Schiuma et al., 2022).

Wise leaders use a moral compass that establishes boundaries for their behavior, keeps their word, and aligns their deeds with their words (Verhezen, 2024). Their organizations abide by social norms by abstaining from excess and greed and by basing themselves on such a noble objective (Hassi & Storti, 2023). On the other hand, leaders who value their knowledge, talents, and abilities while constantly challenging them are said to exhibit cultivating humility (Maldonado et al., 2022). By displaying an interest in experiences, wise leaders dedicate themselves to lifelong learning (Verhezen, 2024). They also readily accept that they are not experts in everything and are open to learning from others, including their subordinates (McClellan, 2020).

2.2. Employee retention
Employee retention was first described in the early 1990s as a management or organizational strategy used to encourage employees to work for extended periods of time (Malik et al., 2020). In a similar vein, employee retention was defined as the steps an organization takes to guarantee that employees with critical abilities and competencies are kept on board (Kurdi & Alshurideh, 2020) by offering competitive pay, positive workplaces, chances for professional growth, and strong employee relationship development (Ghani et al., 2022). Another definition of employee retention is an
organization’s strategy for persuading employees to work there for an extended period of time (Elsafty & Oraby, 2022).

In addition, employee retention was described as the sentiment or dedication of employees to their organizations to remain, depending on the incentives provided (Scott et al., 2021). On the other hand, employee retention describes those who stick with an organization (Chatzoudes & Chatzoglou, 2022) because of supportive workplaces meet their needs and aspirations (Salem et al., 2023). Key drivers that are linked to wisdom leader actions influence employee retention (Salem et al., 2023). Intellectual shrewdness, motivating action, moral behavior, and cultivating humility are a few of these motivators that are thought to be essential for keeping employees on board (Thomas et al., 2023).

Currently, the body of research on wisdom leadership that is accessible offers a theoretical foundation for understanding how wisdom leader behaviors affect employee retention (Vasconcelos, 2022). It was discovered that certain actions—such as intellectual shrewdness, inspiring action, moral conduct, and cultivating humility—had an enormous effect on employee retention (Hassi & Storti, 2023). In previous years, moral conduct has been the most researched behavior of wise leaders (Vasconcelos, 2022). Intellectual shrewdness can boost employee retention (Thilagham et al., 2022), as well as cultivating humility has been proven to have major implications for employee retention in other circumstances (Luu, 2021). Thus, wise leadership actions might improve employee retention in the tourism industry and this paper assumes that:

\[H1.\text{Wisdom leadership positively affects employee retention.}\]

2.3. Employee advocacy

Employees serve as significant organizational advocates because of their extensive understanding of their organization’s nature and frequent interactions with stakeholders (Lee & Kim, 2021). Thus, the obvious question that comes up is: What exactly is an employee advocate? According to earlier academics, employee advocacy is the willingness of an employee to support, advocate for, and defend an organization to the public at large (Ahmad et al., 2022; Thelen & Formanchuk, 2022). According to Thelen (2020), employee advocacy encompasses not just defending and promoting their organizations to other employees but also reaching out to the external public. Nonverbal communication is also a part of employee advocacy, which has been defined as a form of organizational citizenship behavior (Ghorbanzadeh et al., 2023).

Consequently, the existing paper employs Thelen’s (2020) definition, characterizing employee advocacy as “a vocal or nonverbal expression of endorsement, recommendation, or defense of an organization or its goods by an employee to either internal or external audiences” (p. 8). It is possible to categorize the exchange nexus that exists between employees and their leaders as social or economic (Hermanto & Srimulyani, 2022). When relationships are solely economic, employees will carry out their duties in exchange for a predetermined payment (Kim et al., 2023). Otherwise, employees gain from socioemotional resources that their organizations and leaders supply in social exchanges (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017).

Effective social interactions inside an organization demonstrate commitment, reciprocal trust, and long-term focus (Li et al., 2021). According to SET, which focuses
on responsibilities that are formed by interdependent relationships (Salem et al., 2023), employees are more likely to engage in extra-role activities when they feel that their leaders care about their advancement within their organizations and support them (Aboramadan et al., 2022). Several research have suggested a favorable correlation between extra-role practices and wise leadership. For instance, Hermanto and Srimulyani (2022) and Kim et al. (2023) discovered that supervisors’ wisdom behaviors predicted frontline employees’ extra-role service performance. Consequently, there is likely to be a favorable nexus between employee advocacy and wise leadership, and this paper predicates that:

**H2. Wisdom leadership positively affects employee advocacy.**

Almost two-thirds (64%) of service organizations with authorized employee advocacy programs believe they have benefited from them bringing in and growing new business (Shafi et al., 2020). Simultaneously, recent studies have demonstrated that organizations experience greater contribution profits and retention rates when they obtain new customers via employee advocacy (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017; Thelen, 2020). An organization’s financial performance is reinforced when employees feel motivated to engage in this activity (Soleimani et al., 2023). Besides, employee advocacy helps businesses acquire high human capital and hire qualified employees, in addition to gaining prospective customers (Thelen, 2020). Thus, this paper makes the following assumption:

**H3. Employee advocacy positively affects employee retention.**

In the travel industry, employee advocacy is crucial as it influences vital results like employee loyalty, performance, and satisfaction (Akgunduz et al., 2023; Phuong & Tran, 2020; Saini & Arasanmi, 2021). Employee autonomy, decision-making involvement, open employee rules, and equitable promotion procedures are just a few of the elements that must be understood to boost employee advocacy (Frega, 2021; Thelen & Men, 2023). As such, theoretical insights are provided by SET regarding how a wise leader might improve employee retention. Since employee advocacy may play a pivotal role in the nexus between wisdom leadership and employee retention, this paper is the first attempt in the tourism literature to examine this phenomenon. Hence, this paper assumes that:

**H4. Employee advocacy mediates the nexus between wisdom leadership and employee retention.**

3. Methods

3.1. Research design and measurements

In this paper, employee advocacy served as a mediating construct, employing a quantitative technique to assess the impact of wisdom leader behaviors on employee retention. Since a structured questionnaire survey is the best way currently available to examine leader behaviors in the HR context of the tourism industry, it was primarily employed for data gathering. There were four distinct sections in the questionnaire. In the first section, socio-demographic parameters of employees’ demographic profiles were included. The sections that follow employ earlier literature reviews in the tourism context. More specifically, the second section included items about leaders’ wisdom
behaviors from their subordinate perspective. The third section oversees employee advocacy items, while the last section includes employee retention items.

Accordingly, wisdom leadership was assessed using 16 items developed from Hassi and Storti (2023). This scale consists of four subscales: intellectual shrewdness, spurring action, moral conduct, and cultivating humility, with four items each. To gauge employee retention, six items were adapted from Chauhan (2022). Six items were employed to assess employee advocacy, modified from Thelen and Formanchuk (2022).

A 7-point Likert scale was employed with 1 = "strongly disagree" and 7 = "strongly agree. In surveys and questionnaires, the 7-point Likert scale is frequently used to gauge respondents' thoughts and feelings on a certain subject (South et al., 2022). Since each respondent is unique and experiences a range of emotions, the scale points have been increased to account for this diversity of perspectives (Yamashita, 2022). Furthermore, scales with seven response possibilities are more likely to accurately represent respondents' subjective evaluations of each statement than those with three, four, or five response options (Russo et al., 2021). Additionally, Aybek and Toraman (2022) examined the test-retest reliability coefficients to confirm the validity of the internal consistency. They discovered that the response scales with seven choices had the highest test-retest reliability, indicating that the results obtained from based scales are accurate using a seven-point Likert scale. Lastly, monthly salary and marital status were included as control variables.

3.2. Sampling and data collection

To extend the theoretical model, an empirical investigation was carried out in Egypt. Travel agency category-A employees were sampled from the research population, which consisted of 3500 employees (El-Daly et al., 2024). A representative sample of 500 employees of travel agencies located in Greater Cairo was selected using a random sampling approach, representing 14.3% of the research population. The existing sample size was chosen specifically because it exceeds the default sample size (n = 341 cases) if the actual population size were 3,500 cases (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970).

The intended employees were reached by preparing the survey content on Google Form and sending the link to all employee groups in the tourism sector within Greater Cairo. With almost half of Egypt's travel agencies located in Greater Cairo, we selected it (Eltofigy & Attia, 2023). To ensure non-compliance by other categories of employees who may not be interested in the nature of the current empirical investigation, a filter question was added at the beginning of the survey, including: Do you work for a travel agencies in Greater Cairo? If the answer was yes, they would be presented with a complementary question, which is: Do you consider your agencies classified as tourist agencies of any category? As such, respondents were considered to be working within category-A travel agencies.
Data collection was carried out between January and mid-February 2024. Respondents were not prompted for their names because it was not essential to rate such employees. This made sure that employees would not consider the data collection procedure a major threat. Over the course of 45 days, completed surveys from employees were gathered, i.e., 444 completed responses out of 500 questionnaires that were distributed to respondents were successfully received, yielding an 88.8% response rate. Of the total collected responses, 442 underwent processing to eliminate any outliers or missing data before being incorporated into further investigations.

3.3. Analysis technique
Using SPSS v.26, the first stages were generating descriptive statistics (i.e., frequencies and percentages) to summarize respondents’ demographic profiles. This made managing the multivariate analysis for the existing paper easier (Cooksey & Cooksey, 2020). In the context of tourism management, PLS-SEM has drawn a lot of interest (see Assaker & O’Connor, 2023; Sarstedt et al., 2020; Usakli & Rasoolimanesh, 2023). This can be attributed to its proficiency in managing challenging modeling issues, such as non-normal distribution and intricate models, that frequently arise in the social sciences (Guenther et al., 2023). Based on estimations obtained for outer and inner models (Assaker & O’Connor, 2023), PLS-SEM using ADANCO v.2.2 was utilized in this paper to investigate the interrelationships between various constructs (Memon et al., 2021).

Confirmatory composite analysis (CCA) in contemporary partial least squares structural equation models (PLS-SEM) was made incredibly easy with ADANCO software (Jhantasana, 2023). To create emergent variables for the CCA study, it was also a useful tool for converting latent and observable variables (Afthanorhan et al., 2020). PLS-SEM was specifically employed because: a) the existing theory is still in its infancy; b) it can be applied to multiple indicators; c) it assumes that all calculated variance is useful for explaining or predicting the causal connections between various constructs (Sabol et al., 2023); d) PLS is a useful SEM technique for investigating mediation paths (Sarstedt et al., 2023); and e) PLS-SEM typically occurs when an analysis involves a conceptual framework that is being evaluated with respect to predicted outcomes (Legate et al., 2023).

4. Findings
4.1. Characterization of respondents’ profile.
Table 1 presents a summary of the respondent profile derived from 442 valid responses.

**Table 1.** Respondent profile (N = 422).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>53.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job tenure</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 3 years</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>38.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-6 years</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>47.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 years or more</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monthly salary</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 3k L.E.</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3k-4k L.E.</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>32.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5k-6k L.E.</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>25.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7k-8k L.E.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 8k L.E.</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding respondent gender, 53.3% of participants were female, and 46.7% of participants were male. When it came to their job tenure, a significant percentage of them had three to six years (47.9%). In terms of educational attainment, bachelor’s degrees were held by 31.5% of the total sample of employees. Additionally, 32.9% of respondents made between 3,000 and 4,000 L.E. per month, and 63% of them were married.

4.2. Measurement model evaluation

Two distinct validity types—convergent validity and discriminant validity—were taken into consideration in order to evaluate the measurement model (Hair et al., 2020). To make sure that each indicator had a sufficient loading for the corresponding latent construct, the item loading for every component in the reflective measurement framework was first looked at (Legate et al., 2023). Cheah et al. (2021) indicated that item loading exceeding 0.708 would offer a good level of item reliability. Using Cronbach’s alpha (α) and composite reliability (CR), internal consistency reliabilities are examined as the next stage in evaluating the reflective measurement model.

The outer model requires that the estimated α be more than 0.70 (Cheah et al., 2021). According to Hair et al. (2020), CR values that are used to assess the internal consistency and reliability of construct metrics have to be 0.70 or higher. Given that the
indications taken into consideration are not weighted (Hair et al., 2020), Cronbach’s alpha provides a less precise measure of reliability and may occasionally decrease the construction’s reliability (Legate et al., 2023). When attempting to assess the reflective measurement model, its convergent validity was examined (Cheah et al., 2021). The degree to which the items interpret the construct that they are intended to assess is explained (Hair et al., 2020). The average variance extracted (AVE) was employed as a statistical approach to assess convergent validity (Legate et al., 2023). According to Hair et al. (2020), convergent validity may be achieved with an AVE value of 0.50 or above.

**Table 2. Convergent reliability and validity.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Convergent validity</th>
<th>Internal consistency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Loadings</td>
<td>AV E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual shrewdness</td>
<td>ISH1</td>
<td>My leader _________ Anticipates what will happen.</td>
<td>.850</td>
<td>.662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ISH2</td>
<td>Takes the appropriate action in the right moment.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ISH3</td>
<td>Quickly senses what lies behind a situation.</td>
<td>.825</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ISH4</td>
<td>Exhibits sound judgment.</td>
<td>.798</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spurring action</td>
<td>SPA1</td>
<td>My leader _________ Guides towards the action needed to achieve a desired outcome.</td>
<td>.798</td>
<td>.643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SPA3</td>
<td>Voluntarily shares knowledge with others.</td>
<td>.847</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SPA4</td>
<td>Rallies others around his/her vision.</td>
<td>.759</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral conduct</td>
<td>MRC1</td>
<td>My leader _________ Constantly considers the morality of what he/she does.</td>
<td>.818</td>
<td>.718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MRC2</td>
<td>Balances his/her interests and other people's interests.</td>
<td>.858</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MRC3</td>
<td>Puts the greater good of this travel agencies first.</td>
<td>.883</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MRC4</td>
<td>Consistently links saying and doing.</td>
<td>.829</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultivating humility</td>
<td>CHM1</td>
<td>My leader _________ Regularly questions what he/she knows.</td>
<td>.817</td>
<td>.684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CHM2</td>
<td>Recognizes that he/she does not know everything.</td>
<td>.826</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CHM3</td>
<td>Admits errors and mistakes that he/she makes.</td>
<td>.817</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CHM4</td>
<td>Willingly learns from everyone.</td>
<td>.848</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisdom leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td>Intellectual shrewdness</td>
<td>.814</td>
<td>.607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Spurring action</td>
<td>.776</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 shows that, with one item exception, "SPA2," that states motivates subordinates to act, which has been omitted under the spurring action construct, all factor loadings are over the cutoff value of 0.70. When taking into account Table 2, item reliability and convergent validity findings are found to fulfill the statistical criteria. The values of α and CR were larger than 0.7, with all indicator loadings surpassing 0.7. It was found that the AVE was more than 0.5 for each construct. To experimentally ascertain the degree to which a certain construct is distinct from other constructs, discriminant validity was examined (Hair et al., 2020). As such, recent researchers have been using the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations (see Legate et al., 2023; Memon et al., 2021; Sarstedt et al., 2023). According to Hair et al. (2020), discriminant validity can be indicated by HTMT cut-off values that are less than 0.85.
Table 3. Discriminant validity (HTMT).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs</th>
<th>1.</th>
<th>2.</th>
<th>3.</th>
<th>4.</th>
<th>5.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Marital status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Monthly salary</td>
<td>.051</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Employee advocacy</td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Employee retention</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>.104</td>
<td>.226</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Wisdom leadership</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>.062</td>
<td>.213</td>
<td>.359</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 presents HTMT ratios for various constructs. These values were found to be less than 0.85, indicating sufficient discriminant validity.

4.3. Hypothesis testing and model evaluation

Upon ensuring that the measurement models satisfied all prerequisites, an internal model evaluation was conducted (Benitez et al., 2020). Drawing on prior research, the model’s overall fit was assessed using several criteria. This comprises the effect size ($f^2$) and coefficient of determination ($R^2$) (Cheah et al., 2021; Hair et al., 2020). First, the $R^2$ values of the endogenous variables may be calculated to determine the amount of variation in latent constructs (Legate et al., 2023). According to Hair et al. (2020), $R^2$ shows variance percentages in outcome constructs that can be explained by predictor constructs. $R^2$ values typically fall between 0 and 1, with larger values denoting greater variation. As such, $R^2$ values of 0.27, 0.13, and 0.02 in PLS-SEM would indicate significant, moderate, and weak levels of overall variance, respectively. On the other hand, Cheah et al. (2021) stated that an $R^2$ value of 0.10 is considered sufficient.

The effect size ($f^2$) may be employed to analyze the effect strength between exogenous and endogenous constructs (Benitez et al., 2020). According to Hair et al. (2020), $f^2$ values greater than 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 would indicate acceptable, medium, and large effect sizes, respectively. Further, PLS-bootstrapping was performed to estimate path coefficients using a 5,000 iteration resampling (Hair et al., 2020). Next, a mediation test was conducted to evaluate the critical role that employee advocacy plays in the nexus between wisdom leadership and employee retention. According to Baron and Kenny’s approach, the mediation effect is investigated. The findings are shown in Table 4 and Figure 2.

Table 4. Hypothesis testing results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>H</th>
<th>Paths</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$t$-value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>$f^2$</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marital status $\rightarrow$ Employee retention</td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>.727</td>
<td>.467</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly salary $\rightarrow$</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>.882</td>
<td>.378</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 provides a graphical presentation of the inner model results. Thus, findings indicate that $R^2$ explained 49.2% of the variance in employee advocacy and 27.7% of the variance in employee retention. In light of the fact that the existing model examined one predictor construct, the degree of explained variance is sufficient with high explanatory power. Table 4 and Figure 2 findings proved that wisdom leadership was found to have a large effect size on employee advocacy ($f^2 = 0.388$) and an acceptable effect size on employee retention ($f^2 = 0.102$). Further, employee advocacy had a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.184$) on employee retention. On the other hand, marital status and monthly salary have no effect on employee retention. Overall, all direct and indirect paths were supported, as indicated in Table 4 and Figure 2. In other words, wisdom leadership positively affected employee advocacy ($\beta = 0.459$, $t = 10.580$, $p < 0.001$) and employee retention ($\beta = 0.113$, $t = 2.325$, $p < 0.05$), supporting H1 and H2.
Further, employee advocacy positively affected employee retention ($\beta = 0.213$, $t = 6.343$, $p < 0.01$), supporting H3. On the other hand, the results of the control variables (i.e., marital status and monthly salary) did not yield significant effects on employee retention, as shown in Table 4 and Figure 2. Next, employee advocacy partially mediated the positive effect of wisdom leadership on employee retention ($\beta = 0.106$, $t = 3.656$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that H4 was supported (see Table 4 and Figure 2) with complementary mediation, according to what Hair et al.'s (2020) indicated, when all paths are in the same direction, whether positive or negative.

5. **Discussion and conclusion**

This research highlighted wisdom leader behaviors and their intervening role on subordinate advocacy and retention in category-A travel agencies within Greater Cairo. Initially, respondents’ demographic characteristics showed that the vast majority of travel agencies employees were married women, which indicates that family responsibilities and stability are significant factors in their employment decisions and job tenure, potentially influencing their commitment to their roles within their organizations. Findings also confirmed that the educational level of most employees in these agencies was high, indicating a workforce that is likely to possess analytical skills and can solve problems. Moreover, most travel agencies employees have job tenures ranging from three to six years, which shows a stable workforce with moderate experience levels, likely contributing to organizational stability and continuity. Finally, the majority of such employees receive monthly salaries limited to between three and four thousand Egyptian pounds, confirming that there may be economic considerations and limitations that influence employee motivations and perceptions of job satisfaction and retention.

On the other hand, results indicated that wise leadership positively influences employee attitudes and behaviors within the workplace. This result supports recent empirical evidence that has yielded agreement with the positive effect of wisdom leader behaviors on employee advocacy (see Bostanli & Habisch, 2023; Luo, 2020; Tan, 2023; Wei & Horton-Deutsch, 2022). This indicates that leaders exhibiting wisdom behaviors are likely to foster a culture of support and engagement among their subordinates, leading to increased advocacy for any organization.

Findings indicated that wise leader behaviors increased employee retention, which aligns with Cerutti et al.’s (2020) and Hassi and Storti’s (2023) findings, which proved that leaders with wisdom traits are more effective in retaining employees by fostering positive organizational climates and supportive work environments. Further, findings confirmed that employee advocacy increased their retention levels; this result agrees with Akgunduz and Sanli (2017) and Thelen (2020). Lastly, findings proved that wisdom leader behaviors increased their subordinate retention through the high advocacy levels for them. This result agrees with Hassi and Storti (2023) and Tyagi (2021). Hence, this proves that fostering a culture of advocacy among employees improves retention rates. Hence, this supports the idea that wise leadership and employee advocacy influence organizational outcomes and employee behaviors.

In summary, this paper is considered a first attempt to explore the potential effects of the positive aspects of one of the leadership styles, "wisdom leadership," in the tourism
context and the focal role of this modern style in bringing about behavioral changes in the relevant travel agency subordinates. Further, exploring employee advocacy as a mediation mechanism is considered a new research agenda between tourism leaders’ wisdom behaviors and their subordinate retention. Further, this paper provides a valuable insight into the development and expansion of the tourism literature around the wisdom behavior concept in organizational contexts. Hence, this will increase our knowledge of employing SET to serve tourism organizations and develop employee-leader interactions.

5.1. Implications
The existing research has significant implications for tourism decision-makers. Those who are nominated as wise leaders frequently have major capacities to reconcile divergent viewpoints and competing agendas using dialectic thinking. In addition to their cognitive integration, they use their activities to positively impact not just themselves but also subordinates, organizations, and society. Firstly, tourism organizations that invest in cultivating intelligent leaders will raise the probability that their employees will support and defend such organizations. Tourism businesses need to provide managers and supervisors with the right tools to help them acquire compassion, persuasiveness, voluntariness, and self-worth to successfully train wise leaders.

Second, tourism businesses need to demonstrate to their employees that they are interested in building a long-term connection and strive to enhance employee loyalty if they want their employees to willingly advocate on their behalf. Third, tourism leaders need to demonstrate to their employees that they actually care. Employees are more inclined to go above and beyond their assigned duties when they sense that their superiors recognize and appreciate them. Lastly, tourism leaders need to be aware that employee advocacy entails more than just promoting or defending their organizations to outside parties. At the very least, it is equally necessary to advocate internally on behalf of these organizations.

5.2. Limitations and future directions
This paper has several limitations. The first limitation is that the dataset exclusively takes into account employees who work in the tourism industry. Therefore, more studies might be conducted that consider various samples of managers and supervisors in various tourism destinations (such as Sharm El-Sheikh, Riyadh, Marrakech, and Doha). The second limitation is a popular sampling technique in the tourist context: the simple random sample approach adopted in this paper. Nonetheless, the findings derived from this approach do not accurately reflect the whole population. Thus, it is advised that in future research, a wider variety of sampling techniques (e.g., ice balls and purposive sampling) be taken into account.

The third limitation is that the connection between wisdom leadership and employee retention may be influenced by additional mediating factors rather than employee advocacy. This covers employee professionalism, thriving at work, psychological wellbeing, and perceived self-efficacy. The fourth limitation is not employing any factors affecting employee advocacy and retention. Thus, future research should be conducted taking cultural and contextual aspects into account when analyzing the impact of employee advocacy on retention. The last limitation is employing marital status and
monthly salary as control variables only. Hence, future research can take into account employee characteristics like career maturity, monthly income, and ethnicity.

References


هل تقود القيادة الحكيمة إلى تأييد الموظفين والاحتفاظ بهم في وكالات السفر؟

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المعهد العالي للسياحة والفنادق والحاسب الآلي
السيف - الإسكندرية

الملخص

لقد تغيرت النظريات السابقة حول مدى أهمية المعرفة للقيادة بمرور الوقت. مؤخرًا، حولت الدراسات العلمية حول القيادة اهتمامها من حكمة القادة الأوائل مثل كونفوشيوس إلى فاعليتهم وكفاءتهم في تنظيم الإجراءات والنجاح التنظيمي. من الضروري تسليط الضوء على القيادة الحكيمة بسبب الافتقار إليها في صناعة السياحة. لمعالجة ذلك، تدعم هذه الورقة نظرية التبادل الاجتماعي لدراسة كيف تدفع سلوكيات القائد الحكيم موظفي وكالات السفر إلى الدفع عنها والاحتفاظ بها. تتناول هذه الورقة أيضاً آليات الوساطة لتأييد الموظفين في وكالات السفر الفئة A داخل القاهرة الكبرى. باستخدام Google Form 444 v.2.2. ADANCO، كشفت النتائج أن 442 استجابة من موظفي وكالات السفر وتحليلها باستخدام Google Form v.2.2. كشفت النتائج أن القيادة الحكيمة أثرت بشكل إيجابي في تأييد الموظفين والاحتفاظ بهم. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، أدى تأييد الموظفين إلى زيادة مستويات الاحتفاظ بهم. علاوة على ذلك، فإن تأييد الموظفين توسط جزئياً في العلاقة الإيجابية بين القيادة الحكيمة والاحتفاظ بالموظفين. بناءً على ذلك، توفر هذه الورقة رؤى قيمة لصانعي القرار السياحي. على سبيل المثال، تحتاج وكالات السفر إلى ترزيت المديرين والمشرفين بالأدوات المناسبة لمساعدتهم على اكتساب التعاطف والإيجابية والتطوع وتدريب الذات لتدريب القيادة الحكيمة بنجاح. علاوة على ذلك، يجب على قادة السياحة أن يدركوا أن تأييد الموظفين يتلزمن أكثر من مجرد الترويج لمؤسساتهم أو الدفاع عنها أمام الأطراف الخارجية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاحتفاظ بالموظفين، تأييد الموظفين، القيادة الحكيمة، وكالات السفر