

Creativity and innovation versus typicality and standardization in hotel service

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Abstract

One of the major obstacles to hotels' ability to operate and continue making money is the industry's fierce rivalry, which undoubtedly rely on their capacity for innovation. Consequently, this research aims to analyze the hotel work environment in frontline departments regarding standardization of services and the ability of management to provide a suitable atmosphere for employee's creativity and innovation in hotel services procedures and attributes. This research employed a quantitative method with a computer-administered questionnaire to survey 258 employees from various dependent and chain hotels in Cairo, Egypt. The data were processed using (SPSS v.22) statistical program. The findings showed that there is a positive relationship between the procedures to manage typicality and standardization and procedures and innovative practices. However, no significant differences emerged based on hotel type or department in relation to these procedures and practices. Interestingly, there was only partial difference among employees based on employee position. A set of recommendations were proposed to enhance the work environment in the hotel sector, aiming to strengthen its competitive capabilities and improve employee performance and creativity quality.

Keywords: Creativity; innovation; typicality; standardization; hotel services.

1. Introduction

There has been a notable change in recent years due to a greater emphasis on experience production and creativity as a component of both hospitality and tourist production and consumption (Wong and Ladkin, 2008). So that hospitality organizations are required to be familiarized with the challenges related to creativity and innovation (Samer, *et al.*,223). As well, it is necessary for hospitality firms to understand the difficulties associated with creativity and innovation. (Coombs and Miles, 2000). Tourist establishments could not continue to compete without the implementation of proper modern innovations (Tlesova and Utemisov, 2021), as hotel industry compete aggressively to obtain a proper market share in the tourism and hospitality market (Johnston, *et al.*, 2012). Although the majority of tourism-related products were still focused on relatively static modes of consumption, creativity plays an important role to ensure guest satisfaction and loyalty (Mathisen, *et al.*, 2012)

The idea of innovation is a crucial function that has a good correlation with corporate performance (Ester *et al.*, 2009). Innovating new services with more guest satisfying

characteristics help hotel brands gain competitive advantage and develop higher services expectations resulting in enhanced service quality and ensured guest loyalty level (Drejer, 2004; Chaten, 2019). It is essential in the hospitality industry to realize that quality and reputation are constitutive through creative service attributes and innovations (Heppel, 2010; Sovani, 2022). So that, it is believed that hotels are more likely to engage in a continuous change mode of innovation in guest services (Johnston, 2012).

In fact, the increasing competition in the tourist market means that traditional goods and services are no longer enough and that tourist service producers must differentiate their products and services by turning them into 'unique experience' that helps to engage customers with a brand (Jin, *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, to obtain customer satisfaction, and to increase the competitive advantage in a global and growing tourist market, the hotel industry needs further research focused on innovation (Mark and Garrett, 2012). So, for tourism organizations to win over long-term visitors, innovation has become essential (Muhammad *et al.*, 2024).

1.1 Importance of the study

Hotel organizations' success mostly rests on their capacity to embrace and manage the changes necessary to keep up with the constantly shifting tourist landscape, which is marked by volatility and unpredictability (Nordin *et al.*, 2011). Hotel enterprises must have an organizational culture that fosters innovation and creativity to succeed as a business over the long term (Hon, 2011; María *et al.*, 2022). To create value creation strategies for the provision of goods and services to various types of guests, it is now important to dedicate innovation in organizational processes (Slatten *et al.*, 2011).

One of the primary objectives of many hotel firms nowadays is to create and preserve a sustainable competitive advantage (Karam, 2024). Instead of only creating standardized goods and services, quality involves coming up with innovative ways to meet the wants of customers (Kallmuenzer, 2018; Patrocínio *et al.*, 2024). Exclusive quality is a factor that increases competitiveness, and the degree of realization, management's understanding of the value of creative quality, and the number of resources required to achieve quality all play a significant role in the development of the quality of services in the tourism industry (Serhi, 2023).

According to Mount and Mattila (2009), travelers agree that innovative and creative hotel offerings are crucial to their pleasure as patrons. When selecting and acquiring tourism services, innovation in lodging units is crucial (Ester, 2009). Considering this, hotel managers must understand what inspires their employees to be more creative and how to encourage creativity within their establishments while keeping in mind the organizational culture that uses all available hotel resources to assist in coming up with fresh ideas to meet the needs of visitors (Cheung and Wong, 2011).

Innovation is essential to service performance; Penttinen and Palmer (2007) examined the research on inventive employee behavior and discovered that it affects both customer satisfaction and service quality. A hotel's capacity to stand out from the

competition and increase its revenues depends heavily on its service innovation and creativity (Oliva and Kallenberg, 2003; Mohd *et al.*, 2022). However, compared to product innovation, there is a dearth of study on service innovation (Sirilli and Evangelista, 1998). By cutting expenses and improving service quality, organizational process innovation can support hotel organizations' strategic positioning and economic growth (Novruz *et al.*, 2024).

1.2 Objectives of the study

The study aims to: (1) evaluate hotel staff's awareness of management procedures for standardization and typicality in hotel services; (2) explore employee views on management practices that encourage innovation and creativity in service delivery; (3) assess the correlation between management practices for standardization and typicality and those that support innovation and creativity in hotel operations; and (4) identify differences in employee perceptions of management methods related to standardization, typicality, creativity, and innovation based on hotel type (chain vs. independent).

1.3 Research hypotheses

H1: The hotels' employees realize that the management has procedures to manage typicality and standardization

H2: The hotels' employees realize that the management has practices for creativity and innovation

H3: There is a positive relationship between procedures to manage typicality and standardization and practices of creativity and innovation

H4: There is a significant difference among respondents based on hotel type towards procedures to manage typicality and standardization and practices of creativity and innovation

H5: There is a significant difference among respondents based on department towards procedures to manage typicality and standardization and practices of creativity and innovation

H6: There is a significant difference among respondents based on position towards procedures to manage typicality and standardization and practices of creativity and innovation

2. Review of literature

At recent time, the proper solution to gain competitive advantage in hotel service is the differentiation of the service characteristics (Coombs and Miles, 2000; Heppel, 2010), and that could be through innovative services and customer involvement and participation in service creation process (Sovani, 2022). Every service company understands how important it is to give clients exceptional service. To satisfy the growing diversity of customer expectations, tourism and hospitality businesses must develop new initiatives and practices (Hon, 2011; Karam, 2024).

According to Mount and Mattila (2009) It is necessary in tourist and hospitality sector to find a balance between service standardization to keep the costs low, quality consistent and simplify the operational tasks (operational objectives) and service customization to meet the variety seeking of customers, who have different needs (marketing concerns) (Mohd, *et al.*,2022). The development of innovative concepts and added value in the service process has received a lot of attention lately since many hotel firms already possess comparable physical skills (Muhammad *et al.*, 2024). It must be acknowledged that the service sector is heavily focused on the needs of the client, and that visitors value uniqueness and particular treatment (Schuckert *et al.*, 2018).

2.1 The idea of service standardization

Standardization is difficult to be defined as a single definition because of the diverse nature of services (Gyuracz and Clarke, 2011). Standardization has historically been used by hotel corporations to expand internationally since it allows them to imitate successful models in the host country and because guests initially agreed with the model, thus it shouldn't be altered (Chaten, 2019). However, this tactic of merely expanding business overseas is risky since it ignores cultural differences, which is why customization methods gained popularity (Serhii, 2023).

To reproduce successful models abroad, American corporations established standard operating procedures for overseas operations in the 1960s (Zhou and George, 2003). The companies continued to reproduce the concept and provide the same type of experience in each of their locations because it appears that the tourists enjoyed these uniform procedures. This contributed to the strict routines and standardization's long-term survival (Victorino *et al.*, 2005). In the 1970s, the benefits of strict uniformity were limited, and hotel firms started to capitalize on flexibility and the capacity to adjust to the unique needs of the local environment in the late 1980s (María *et al.*, 2022).

According to Cloninger and Swaidan (2007), standardization is the state in which the results of a service production are identical, regardless of the quantity of services or experiences generated. Additionally, standardization entails working with all relevant parties to create, develop, update, and review standards for the quality of tourism (Serena, 2017). It has historically been applied in manufacturing, production, services, and industry. Its goal is to achieve a minimal degree of quality and can be interpreted and utilized as a business management tool by businesses (Thomas and Ivar, 2022).

For deeper understanding, a standard refers to a consistent collection of norms, measures, agreements, conditions, or specifications between parties. In its most basic form, a standard is an agreed-upon method of accomplishing something (Cloninger & Swaidan, 2007). According to Berys (2010), these guidelines are usually communicated to the staff member orally or otherwise in writing. The regulations may cover everything from guidelines for how to do activities to staff conduct and appearance (Stefan and Steven, 2010). Because standardization is the minimal quality that a hotel must offer for guests to not complain about the hotel service, it is essential for hotels to be able to guarantee a particular degree of quality and meet the needs of its guests (Gyuracz and Clarke, 2011).

2.1.1 Advantages of service standardization

Oliva and Kallenberg (2003) argues that standardization helps to gain significant cost savings and to achieve consistency through low customization and low interaction with the guest. As well, Cloninger and Swaidan (2007) argued that with standardization, productivity obtains greater chances to increase. Consequently, raising productivity results in reduced expenses and lowered pricing, giving the hotel a competitive edge and increasing sales (Nordin et al., 2011). Moreover, customer satisfaction which can be caused by standardized services essentially is another advantage, meaning that the guests will experience a consistent service delivery; thus, they will get what they expect every time (Thomas and Ivar, 2022).

Additional benefits of standardization include zero failures, increased productivity, cost savings, and customer pleasure (by meeting expectations) (Happel, 2010). With an assembly-line approach to service, standardization is also a way to reduce uncertainty because it implies high production quantities, keeps customer contacts relatively distant, and minimizes employee-customer contact (Patrocinio *et al.*, 2024). Furthermore, Pine (2011) claims that the McDonaldization—the standardization of fast-food restaurants—is spreading and taking over more and more areas of the global economy.

2.1.2 Types of service standardization

Steven and Stefan (2010) There are three types of standardization: segmented, where the product is standardized but the customers are given different options; customized, where the fabrication is standardized but the customer decides how to assemble it; and tailored, where the business shows the customer a prototype and then adjusts based on their requirements and preferences. In the meanwhile, there are many standards, according to Pillar (2004). According to one of them, there are four different kinds of standards that are also governed by hotel standards; for this reason, each one was given an example (Table 1).

Table 1. Various standard classifications.

Type of standards	Definition, examples
Time	Useful in some circumstances and is simple to measure. An example of a hotel the reservation confirmation must be sent by fax or email within 24 hours after the reservation.
Productivity	At the end of the day, it must be prepared, served, or supplied. For instance, in a hotel, standards aid in figuring out how many rooms a room attendant must clean.
Quality	Audits and reviews are the measurement method; they are less quantifiable and more subjective. For instance, a hotel representative needs to be amiable and upbeat during the whole booking process.
Cost	The amount of labor costs, inventories.
Demand	The number of customers in a period

Source: Pillar (2004)

Serena makes another set of criteria (2017). This classification sought to determine the best coordination mechanism for various service organizations, with a primary focus on organizational architecture (Table 2).

Table 2. Organizational design standards

Type of standards	Hotel example
standardization of output or labor procedures	The procedure for cleaning rooms and the quantity of rooms that must be finished at the end of the day.
standardization of work procedures	Procedures for the reservation process.
standardization of output	How the rooms are set up when visitors come.
Cultural control	the procedure for greeting visitors when they arrive.

Source: Serena (2017).

2.2 Service customization

According to Pillar (2004), customization is the process of creating products and services that are tailored to each unique customer's requirements with almost mass production efficiency. It is the ability to produce a sizable number of options for goods or services for a sizable market (or group of niche markets) that require customization without sacrificing quality (Pine, 2011). Customization creates unique, personally tailored goods and services at the cost of a standardized result by utilizing dynamic, adaptable processes (Jin et al., 2012). Based on the level of alteration of the product or service and of representation (how it is presented to the customer) Petra (2013) categorized customization into A- Collaborative customization, which involves using dialogue with individual customers to help them express their needs and then creating customized products or services for them, based on the degree of modification of the product or service and representation (how it is presented to the customer). B. Adaptive customization: provide a regular product or service that can be altered by the client on their own through modification. C. Cosmetic customization, which involves presenting a standard product or service in a different way to various customers. D-Transparent customization, which involves providing each consumer with unique products or services without disclosing that they have been altered. When the needs of the clients are predictable, this is the best course of action.

According to Piller (2004), three options could be used to determine customization:

1. Differentiation option: products and services are made to cater to a wide range of consumers and precisely match their needs.
2. Cost option: bulk customization has expenses comparable to those of mass production.

3. Relationship option: each consumer is given a long-lasting relationship based on the information gathered throughout the procedure.

2.2.1 Advantages and disadvantage of customization

Penttinen and Palmer (2007) list the following benefits of customization for service organizations: increased sales, added value, lower financial and strategic risk, customer satisfaction, guaranteed quality, potential price increases, inventory reductions, chances to increase customer loyalty, and more. By providing distinctive value through the design, modification, and selection of services that are near to meeting customers' demands and environments, customization probably helps service firms compete and obtain a competitive edge (Petra, 2013). Through lowering barrier, promoting client involvement in product or service configuration, and producing an output that closely represents the needs of various customers, it offers better flexibility and adaptation (Ouyang and Chenglin, 2021).

Customers also benefit greatly from customization since it boosts visitor satisfaction and special needs satisfaction (Jin *et al.*, 2012). The products and services are tailored to each guest's specific demands because they can indicate their preferences, which strengthens the bond between them (Petra, 2013). Each consumer is given a long-lasting relationship based on the information gathered throughout the procedure. However, because the customer is involved in the service delivery process, there are certain drawbacks to service customization for service organizations, including increased expenses, increased operational risk, and longer wait times (Cloninger and Swaidan, 2007). Additionally, because there is a greater amount of interaction between the consumer and the company, personalization could be a source of uncertainty (Johnston *et al.*, 2012). That could be overcome, though, by training and educating staff members so they can react more rapidly and effectively to the unique needs of the visitors (Petra, 2013). Additionally, because of the increased desire for higher quality, there is a greater emphasis than ever on personalization, and standardization can be utilized to reduce expenses, slash prices, and boost productivity (Pine 2011).

2.3 Service personalization

The need for "personalization of service, which is the higher extent of customization" (Pillar, 2004) has been one of the biggest shifts in recent years. Personalization is one of the creative ways that businesses can gain a competitive advantage (Mohd *et al.*, 2022). According to Slatten *et al.* (2011), personalization enables businesses to meet the diverse needs of their clientele while also lowering costs and improving customer comfort by altering some aspects of the product or service (Serna, 2017). The following are some of the main benefits of personalization: a stronger bond with customers that could result in cross-selling; customer loyalty; increased employee motivation (Hon, 2011); and customer involvement in business operations (Mathisen *et al.*, 2012). However, the drawbacks of personalization include the need for extra time to handle particular requests from customers, the possibility of overly demanding clients (Happel, 2010), and challenges in learning about the true desires of customers (Mount, 2009). Additionally, consumers may

not always choose customized services, which are sometimes costlier than standardized ones (Cheung and Wong, 2011). Furthermore, the interaction could get too intense, making it harder to provide the service (Gyuracz and Clarke, 2011).

According to Sirilli and Evangelista (1998) the degrees of services personalization depends on some factors such as (homogenous versus heterogeneous customers, number of guests served at a time, the size of the company) (see figure 1).

Homogenous customers		Heterogeneous customers	
→ → → → → → → → →			
No Personalization	A la carte personalization	Resources-based Personalization	Total Personalization
No individual distinctions are accepted, and all goods and services are standardized.	The client selects from a predetermined range of options.	The company's resources (people, time, and expertise) are the only restrictions on personalization, which is encouraged.	Every client receives individual attention and takes part in the creation.
Big companies		small companies	
← ← ← ← ← ← ← ← ←			

Source: Sirilli and Evangelista (1998)

Figure1. Personalization strategies

2.4 Service creativity and innovation concept

One important component of creative and inventive work is the workplace; employees want an atmosphere that encourages and rewards original thinking (Schuckert *et al.*, 2018). They may possess all the internal resources required for creative thought, but the environment is not supportive (Vieira *et al.*, 2018). Workplaces generally do not fully encourage the use of creativity; barriers can range from minor ones, like receiving unfavorable comments about one's innovative thinking, to large ones, such threats and off-payment (Osman *et al.*, 2020). Additionally, risk is essential to creativity and invention, particularly the desire to take a chance, which is a crucial precondition for creative endeavors (Mathisen *et al.*, 2012). Because managers and organizations can create conditions that should influence the willingness to participate in particular risks, risk-taking behavior is related to creativity and innovation at work (Johnston *et al.*, 2012). Conversely, one of the biggest obstacles to creative pursuits is the fear of taking risks (Walter, 2012). Therefore, it is up to the individual to determine how to react to environmental challenges, if any exist. While some employees allow adverse environmental influences to impede their creative productivity, others do not (Jessica *et al.*, 2019). In summary, a business that encourages risk-taking by its management and staff fosters a creative environment (Karam, 2024).

2.4.1 The role of management in enhancing organizational creativity and innovation

Employees' desire and capacity for creativity and innovation are significantly influenced by organizational culture, which is a set of shared attitudes and presumptions among members of the firm that promotes internal integration and outward adaptation (Hon, 2011). Employee creativity and innovation are greatly influenced by the organizational context, and management and supervisory style is one of its primary features (Horovitz, 2004; Ouyang and Chenglin, 2021). Organizational norms and values that are used to direct individual performance have been said to either foster or stifle employee creativity (Muhammad *et al.*, 2024).

According to Wong and Ladkin (2008), managers have two main ways of influencing their subordinates' creativity: establishing a work environment and assessing creative performance. The management philosophy is a crucial tool for creativity and innovation. Additionally, helpful supervision fosters innovation, whereas restrictive or controlling supervision tends to stifle creative output (Pine, 2011). As an organizational signal, supervisory task feedback creates the impression that innovative and creative performances and ideas have the potential to benefit the organization (Kljin and Tomic, 2010). Creative performance evaluations ought to be impartial and encouraging, and managers' comments ought to be a chance to polish one's original concepts without offering unwarranted praise or criticism (Eugenia, 2024).

Leadership is another crucial contextual element that affects workers' creativity; innovative and creative work practices are closely linked to empowering leadership (Drier, 2004; Ouyang & Chenglin, 2012). According to Arnold *et al.* (2000), cited by Hon. (2011), empowerment is the process of creating circumstances that allow an employee to share power with others by assessing the importance of the employee's work, giving them more autonomy in making decisions, showing that you believe in their abilities, and granting them the flexibility to act as flexibly as the situation calls for. Furthermore, in order to act creatively, creative leaders must be able to comprehend and value the demands of their followers (Mathisen *et al.*, 2012). Additionally, creative leaders can be viewed as role models who inspire and encourage followers, who may then pick up innovative techniques and behaviors (Tlesova and Utemisov, 2021).

Service workers in the hotel business frequently experience work stress due to heavy workload, lack of time, high responsibility, role ambiguity, role conflict, and job insecurity (Slatten *et al.*, 2011). Work stress is a significant element for creativity and innovation. In a study on the connection between work-related stress and creativity, Wong and Ladkin (2008) came to the conclusion that intrinsic job-related motivators like the chance for growth and progress, employee loyalty, recognition and appreciation of work completed, a sense of involvement, and sympathetic assistance with personal issues can all promote risk-taking behavior. Therefore, reducing work-related stress is essential for any hotel hoping to boost staff creativity (Sovani, 2022).

Hotels should offer a conducive work environment to foster organizational creativity and innovation (Zhou, 2003; Mohd, 2022). Clear goals and vision should be established, time and resources should be allotted, opportunities for competence-building should be offered, efficient reward systems should be put in place, innovative efforts should

be acknowledged, and a work environment that is safe for the exchange of new ideas (Ramus, 2001; Paulus, 2000, cited by Klijn and Tomic, 2010).

Training programs and the level of innovation are directly correlated (Miles, 2000). Workers in the hotel sector ought to think that tools for training and development are significant sources of inspiration (Horovitz, 2004). Additionally, corporations themselves must acknowledge the value of training in creative problem-solving, mind mapping, and lateral thinking (Muhammad, 2024). Creative ideas are encouraged, mistakes are frequently accepted, and there is a greater chance of implementing innovations to enhance hotel services when a hotel firm has a defined training program for its staff (Jessica, 2019).

2.4.2 Creative employees

Numerous characteristics, including divergent thinking, introversion, self-esteem, tolerance for ambiguity, willingness to take chances, behavioral flexibility, and emotional diversity, have been linked to creativity, according to Coombs and Miles (2000). The majority of creative people care more about meaning and implications than they do about minutiae or facts in and of themselves (Oliva and Kallenberg, 2003; Jessica, *et al.*, 2019). Furthermore, according to Drejer (2004), creative workers should be developing their intellectual abilities. Three intellectual abilities are especially crucial: (a) the ability to think outside the box and see problems in novel ways; (b) the analytical ability to distinguish between ideas that are worth pursuing and those that are not; and (c) the practical-contextual ability to convince others of the worth of one's ideas.

In order to be creative and innovative, one must be knowledgeable enough about a topic to be able to advance it (Miles, 2000). Knowledge can either support or impede creativity because one cannot get past a field's boundaries if he does not know where it is (Drejer, 2004; Slatten, *et al.*, 2011). Similar to this, thinking style—which encompasses the chosen method of applying one's skills, the choice to think in novel ways, the demand for distinction, and the capacity for creative thought—is crucial (Vieira *et al.*, 2018). According to Wong and Ladkin (2008), personality traits that foster creative functioning include self-efficacy, the ability to overcome hurdles, the willingness to take calculated risks, and the capacity to accept ambiguity. Creative people frequently look for resistance because they choose to think differently from other people. To be creative, one must first choose to come up with new ideas, evaluate them, and present them to others (Jessica *et al.*, 2019). Stated differently, a someone may possess analytical, practical, or synthetic talents but fail to apply them to issues that may require creativity. The ability alone is insufficient; one must first decide to apply the ability (Samer, 2023).

2.4.3 Advantages of creativity and innovation in hotel work

Innovation is the act of creating something new or altering something that already exists. Additionally, employees' creation of new products or their modification of old ones is referred to as internal innovation in the organization (Ester *et al.*, 2009; Sovani, 2022). Since innovation is in charge of bringing new goods and services to market by introducing novel procedures into the product's manufacturing cycle, Schuckert *et al.* (2018) also consider innovation to be an economic competitive advantage. According to Serhi (2023),

innovation is an act that is strategically replicated and a factor linked to a larger increase in turnover or profit.

Any modification to one or more of the primary features that make up the system that represents a service is considered innovation in service (Vieira *et al.*, 2018). Innovation is crucial to the marketing strategy since it allows the service provider to maintain a competitive edge by introducing new products to the market (Walter, 2012). Put differently, a company that is more focused on the market is more likely to take creativity and innovation into account, which eventually results in better company success (Eugenia *et al.*, 2024).

The extent to which the hotel's actions and responses seem new to guests is known as service innovativeness (Slatten, 2011). Innovative hospitality services may boost service quality and client loyalty, and the idea of hospitality innovation is ingrained in the sector's DNA in order to discover new approaches to managing and improving the guest experience (Walter, 2012). According to Osman *et al.* (2020), innovation contributes to the development of a sustainable competitive advantage, improved customer satisfaction, increased profitability, problem-solving, and competitiveness. Additionally, it is critical to assess innovations from the viewpoints of the customers, as this will allow hotel organizations to embrace the marketing concept and move beyond their operations (Zahou, 2003). Finding solutions that other hotels have not yet discovered is made easier by creativity and invention (Muhammad *et al.*, 2024).

2.4.4 Obstacles of creativity and innovation in the hotel sector

While modern organizations, which are characterized by equality of members, openness, and flexibility to move, are recognized as promoting creativity, organizations that emphasize adherence to rules, following authority, and stability, as well as blindly following procedures, norms, and rules, are thought to inhibit creativity (Hon, 2011). Additionally, the primary barriers to service innovation are the shortage of skilled workers, the financial factors, and the absence of employee involvement (Kallmuenzer, 2018). Similarly, personnel who lack initiative and creative skills and who would rather be instructed to follow the rules are major barriers to creativity and innovation (Serhi, 2013). Both planners and people in charge of the attractions and organizations must learn new skills in order to establish innovative attractions (Oliva and Kallenberg, 2003). Lack of creative investment is a barrier to creativity and innovation since the growth of creativity also requires investment in people resources, intangible culture, and physical infrastructure (Klijn, 2010). Because the tourism industry lacks tangible assets or a clear return on investment, the creative sector frequently struggles to draw in capital (Hon, 2011). The primary barriers to creativity and innovation are autocratic management, a lack of employee participation in decision-making, a restriction on employee voice, intimidation and threats, and a failure to share knowledge with colleagues (Berys, 2010; Tlesova and Utemisov, 2021).

3. Methodology

3.1 The study sample

A total of 350 questionnaires were distributed on a convenience sample on 32 five star and four-star hotels (as five and four star hotels are to be more concerned to creativity and innovation in guest service) to rooms division and food and beverage departments (as these departments are guest contact departments) in Egypt electronically during July and August 2024. 258 responses were received. Out of these, 258 responses were deemed valid for analysis. Table (3) presents the response percentage for the survey distribution. These results in a response rate of 73.71%, indicating a high level of engagement among participants in the survey. The data reflects effective sampling and participant interest in the survey topic, suggesting that the results will provide a robust foundation for subsequent analysis.

Table 3. The response percentage

No. of distributed forms	Received responses	Valid	The rate of response
350	258	258	73.71%

3.2 Measurement and instrument development

The research questionnaire contained three parts; The first part contained some respondent's data, the second part contained six questions measuring the practices of standardization in hotel service and the third part involved ten questions measuring the practices of creativity and innovation in hotel service.

3.3 Data analysis techniques

The data were statistically analyzed using the "SPSS V.22" software, applying the following statistical tests:

- The reliability of the questionnaire was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

- The characteristics of the sample were summarized with means, standard deviations, and frequency percentages.

- It is important to note that the weighted mean was employed to assess the sample's responses to the research constructs, as presented in Table No. (4).

Table 4. The weighted mean

Degree levels	The weighted mean
Strongly disagree	1-1.79
Disagree	1.80-2.59
Neutral	2.60-3.39
Agree	3.40-4.19
Strongly agree	4.20-5

-Spearman's correlation coefficient is employed to demonstrate the relationships among research variables "Procedures to manage typicality and standardization (TS)" and "Practices of creativity and innovation (CI)" and assess the research hypotheses. It is applicable to ordinal data and is used for non-parametric testing.

-Simple linear regression is utilized to determine the impact of one variable on another.

3.4 Work profile

Table (5) outlines the work profile of the respondents in terms of hotel type, department, and position. For hotel type, 80.2% of the respondents work in international chain hotels, while 19.8% are employed in owner-operated hotels. Regarding department distribution, 40.3% of the respondents work in the rooms division department, and 59.7% are in the food and beverage department. In terms of position, 36.4% of respondents are clerks, 34.1% are supervisors, and 29.5% hold managerial roles.

Table 5. Work profile (N=258)

No.	Items		Freq.	%
1	Hotel type	International chain	207	80.2
		Owner	51	19.8
2	Department	Rooms division dep.	104	40.3
		Food and beverage dep.	156	59.7
3	Position	Clerk	94	36.4
		Supervisor	88	34.1
		Manager	76	29.5

3.5 Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, it was reviewed by four experts and professionals some of them are university professors in the field of hotel management studies, who assessed the extent to which the items accurately measured the intended concepts. There was a high level of agreement among the experts regarding the validity of the items. Based on this consensus, the final version of the questionnaire was then distributed to the study's sample of hotel workers.

The table (6) displays the findings of the reliability analysis of the study variables based on Cronbach's alpha. The first two variables are "Procedures to manage typicality and standardization (TS)" consisting of 6 items and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.710, and "Practices of creativity and innovation (CI)" consisting of 10 items and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.925. These Cronbach's alpha values indicate that the internal consistency of the items is acceptable for TS and excellent for CI, showing that the items within each variable reliably measure the same underlying construct.

Table 6. Cronbach's alpha for the study variables

Variables of the study		No. of items	Cronbach's alpha
1	Procedures to manage typicality and standardization (TS)	6	0.710
2	Practices of creativity and innovation (CI)	10	0.925

4. Results and discussions

4.1 Descriptive statistics of the variables

Descriptive statistics provide a summary of the main features of the study variables, giving insight into the data's central tendency, variability, and distribution. For this study, the variables "Procedures to manage typicality and standardization (TS)" and "Practices of creativity and innovation (CI)" were analyzed. Measures such as the frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation values were likely calculated to describe the characteristics of these variables. These statistics help to understand the average response levels, the spread of the data, and offering a clear picture of how participants perceive these variables.

Displays the findings of the reliability analysis of the study variables based on Cronbach's alpha. The first two variables are "Procedures to manage typicality and standardization (TS)" consisting of 6 items and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.710, and "Practices of creativity and innovation (CI)" consisting of 10 items and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.925. These Cronbach's alpha values indicate that the internal consistency of the items is acceptable for TS and excellent for CI, showing that the items within each variable reliably measure the same underlying construct.

Section (1): Procedures to manage typicality and standardization

The descriptive statistics in table (7) focus on procedures used by the hotel to manage typicality and standardization, reflecting how the organization maintains and communicates its service standards to employees. The following is a breakdown of the findings:

1-Written Standards Communication: The majority of respondents (41.9% agree, 46.1% strongly agree) believe that the hotel owns written standards, which are well communicated to all employees. The high mean of 4.22 and a standard deviation of 0.980 indicate strong agreement with this statement, though some variability in responses exists.

2-Compliance with Standards: Most employees feel obligated to strictly comply with the set standards, with 46.1% agreeing and 3.6% strongly agreeing. The mean for this statement is 4.17, with a relatively low standard deviation of 0.792, showing consistency in the responses.

3-Rewards for Compliance: A significant portion of the respondents (50% strongly agree, 36.4% agree) feel that management rewards employees who comply with the set standards. This item has the highest mean value of 4.34 and a standard deviation of 0.760, indicating a strong consensus among the respondents.

4-Punishments for Non-Compliance: Opinions on punishment for non-compliance are less strongly agreed upon, with 46.9% agreeing and 3.6% strongly agreeing. The mean is

4.12, and the standard deviation is 0.921, indicating a moderate level of agreement but with some differences in individual perceptions.

5-Training for Standards: Training initiatives to inform employees about the set standards are perceived positively, with 51.9% strongly agreeing and 32.2% agreeing. The mean score is 4.28, and the standard deviation of 0.913 suggests relatively consistent agreement.

6-Minimum Level of Service Quality: There is more diversity in responses when it comes to the statement about ensuring only the minimum level of service quality. While 36.8% agree, only 29.8% strongly agree, with a significant percentage remaining neutral or disagreeing (17.4% and 5.8%, respectively). This statement has the lowest mean of 3.71 and the highest standard deviation of 1.238, indicating a wider range of opinions among respondents.

The overall mean for the items is 4.14, indicating an overall positive view of the hotel's efforts in handling standardization and typicality. The standard deviation of 0.60 suggests some variability in perceptions, with certain items like rewards and written standards showing higher consistency compared to others like the enforcement of minimum service quality. These results imply that while employees generally support the hotel's efforts to standardize procedures and recognize adherence, there is more mixed feedback on the level of service quality and how non-compliance is handled.

Table 7. Respondents' views regarding procedures to manage typicality and standardization

Items		Frequencies percentage ¹					Mean	SD ²	
		Degree levels	1	2	3	4			5
1	The management rewards the employees who strictly comply the set standards.	%	-	1.9	11.6	36.4	50	4.34	0.760
2	The management performs training courses to inform employees with the set standards.	%	-	7.8	8.1	32.2	51.9	4.28	0.913
3	The hotel owns written standards and these standards are announced and informed to all hotel employees.	%	39	3.9	4.3	41.9	46.1	4.22	0.980
4	The management obligates employees to strictly comply the set standards.	%	-	3.9	12.4	46.1	3.6	4.17	0.792
5	The management punishes the employees who do not strictly comply the set standards.	%	19	5.8	7.8	46.9	3.6	4.12	0.921
6	The management ensures the minimum level of service	%	10	5.8	17.4	36.8	29.8	3.71	1.238

quality and doesn't ask employees to do anymore to enhance service quality.										
Note: 1 (1= Strongly Disagree; 2= Disagree; 3= Neutral; 4= Agree; 5= Strongly Agree). 2 SD = Standard deviation.									4.14	0.60

Section (2): Practices of creativity and innovation

The analysis in table (8) provides insight into the management's approach to fostering creativity and supporting innovation among employees:

1-Renewal of rules and customization of services: A large proportion of respondents (46.5% agree, 37.6% strongly agree) indicate that the management regularly renews service procedures and allows employees to customize services according to guests' requests. The mean score of 4.14 and standard deviation of 0.87 suggest a high level of agreement with moderate variability.

2-Guest Participation and Personalized Services: Most employees feel that the management supports guest participation in service design, with 47.7% agree and 34.5% strongly agree. The mean is 4.12, and the standard deviation is 0.79, indicating a consistent positive perception.

3-Resource Allocation for Service Enhancement: A significant number of respondents (40.3% agree, 39.5% strongly agree) believe that the management invests in adequate resources and advanced technologies to improve guest services. The mean score of 4.16 and a standard deviation of 0.83 reflect a strong and consistent level of agreement.

4-Encouragement of Creative Problem-Solving: The majority of employees (36% agree, 50% strongly agree) feel that the management allows them to try different approaches to solving problems and rewards creative efforts. The high mean of 4.32 and a standard deviation of 0.80 demonstrate a solid consensus in favor of this practice.

5-Supervisory Support: Supervisors are generally seen as supportive, with 46.1% agree and 39.5% strongly agree on their positive role in task feedback and knowledge sharing. The mean is 4.13 with a standard deviation of 0.98, showing high agreement but with some variation.

6-Employee Empowerment: Views on management empowerment and decision-sharing are somewhat more varied, with 36% agreeing and 35.3% strongly agreeing, while a notable 20.5% remain neutral. The mean of 3.98 and standard deviation of 0.94 indicate moderate agreement with greater diversity in responses.

7-Favorable Attitude Toward Innovation: There is broad agreement that the management supports innovative ideas, with 40.3% agreeing and 35.7% strongly agreeing. The mean score of 4.01 and a standard deviation of 0.98 suggest positive perceptions, though with some differing opinions.

8-Open and Flexible Thinking Environment: Many respondents (42.2% agree, 39.5% strongly agree) feel that the management encourages open and flexible thinking. The mean of 4.17 and a standard deviation of 0.81 reflect a positive and consistent agreement on this practice.

9-Training for Innovative Thinking: Training initiatives for fostering innovative thinking are well-received, with 54.7% agreeing and 32.9% strongly agreeing. This item has a mean score of 4.14 and a standard deviation of 0.81, indicating a high level of satisfaction with training efforts.

10-Work Environment Characteristics: Opinions on the work environment being free of stress and clear in role definitions are more mixed, with 34.1% agreeing and 35.7% strongly agreeing, while 22.1% remain neutral. The mean score of 3.93 and the highest standard deviation of 1.05 indicate more variability in responses.

The overall mean for these items is 4.11, which shows a generally positive perception of the hotel's practices in promoting creativity and innovation, this is favorable with Wong and Ladkin (2008) in that the organizational culture if the management is very important to foster creativity and innovation. The standard deviation of 0.69 suggests moderate variability in responses, with some items having stronger consensus than others. The highest level of agreement is found in practices related to rewarding creative efforts and innovation, while the lowest agreement relates to the stress-free work environment. This is in line with Hon *et al.* (2013), who noted that high responsibility, role ambiguity, role conflict, job insecurity, and a tremendous workload are some of the factors that contribute to work stress for service workers in the hotel business. According to these findings, the hotel's management is seen favorably for its initiatives to foster innovation and creativity, especially when it comes to areas like resource allocation, training, and recognizing innovation.

Table 8. Respondents' views regarding creativity and innovation

Items		Frequencies percentage					Mean	SD	
		Degree levels	1	2	3	4			5
1	Management (allows employees to try to solve the same problems indifferent ways and rewards the employees who offer creative services and innovative ideas) to enhance service quality.	%	-	3.9	10.1	36	50	4.32	0.80
2	Management (dedicates equality, combines knowledge from different fields, and provides space for open flexible, borders-crossing thinking) to enhance service quality.	%	-	3.9	14.3	42.2	39.5	4.17	0.81
3	Management approves (recruiting adequate resources and advanced technologies	%	-	3.9	16.3	40.3	39.5	4.16	0.83

	from different fields) to enhance guest service.								
4	Management (carries out training courses, held workshops) for developing intellectual and innovative thinking.	%	1.9	2.3	8.1	54.7	32.9	4.14	0.81
5	Management regularly renews the rules and procedures of services and accepts that employees do changes (customize) services characteristics according to guests request.	%	-	8.1	7.8	46.5	37.6	4.14	0.87
6	Supervisors (are supportive, give positive task feedback, share knowledge, and help in solving work problems).	%	3.9	4.3	6.2	46.1	39.5	4.13	0.98
7	Management approves (guests participating in service design and production and encourages adapting to changes) for offering personalized services to the guests.	%	-	4.3	13.6	47.7	34.5	4.12	0.79
8	Management (is favorable to employees while evaluating innovative ideas and creative work, engage in the risk of applying innovative ideas and creative work, and provide flexible work environment).	%	2.3	5.8	15.9	40.3	35.7	4.01	0.98
9	Management (empowers and inspires employees, demonstrates trust, shares employees in decision making process, offer sympathetic help with personal problems) .	%	-	8.1	20.5	36	35.3	3.98	0.94
10	The work environment is characterized with (clear work roles, sufficient time to achieve work responsibilities) and free of (work stress, high responsibility, heavy workload, insecurity and threats of being fired).	%	4.3	3.9	22.1	34.1	35.7	3.93	1.05
								4.11	0.69

The relationship between procedures to manage typicality and standardization and practices of creativity and innovation

The correlation analysis in table (9) shows a correlation coefficient of 0.592 between procedures to manage typicality and standardization and practices of creativity and innovation. This value indicates a moderate to strong positive correlation between the two variables, suggesting that as procedures to manage typicality and standardization improve, there is a corresponding increase in creativity and innovation practices. That is favorable with Cloninger and Swaidan (2007) argued that through the use of standardization, productivity obtains greater chances to increase. The p-value of 0.000 confirms that this correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This significant positive correlation emphasizes the importance of managing standardization effectively to enhance creativity and innovation within the hotels. That goes in accordance with Chaten (2019) who mentioned that standardization is used to ensure service quality and leads to enhanced service characteristics.

Table 9. The correlation between procedures to manage typicality and standardization and practices of creativity and innovation

Correlations				
Variables			Procedures to manage typicality and standardization	Practices of creativity and innovation
Spearman's rho	Procedures to manage typicality and standardization	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.592**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.000
		N	258	258
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

Regression results of procedures to manage typicality and standardization and practices of creativity and innovation

The regression analysis is statistically significant, indicating that the independent variable significantly predicts the dependent variable (See: tables 10, 11, 12). The results revealed that approximately 38.8% of the variance in creativity and innovation practices is explained by procedures to manage typicality and standardization, as indicated by the R Square value. The model's significance is supported by a high F-statistic (162.307) and a p-value of 0.000, confirming that the relationship is statistically significant. The standardized beta coefficient of 0.623 highlights the substantial influence of these procedures on creativity and innovation, suggesting that enhancing strategies to manage typicality and standardization can significantly boost innovative practices within the organization. That goes in accordance with Vieira, *et al.* (2018) who mentioned that the environments that is fully supportive could lead to the use of one's creativity. Based on the regression analysis provided, the equation for the linear regression model can be formulated as follows:

$$CI = 1.159 + 0.713 \times TS$$

This equation quantifies the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. These results imply that improving procedures to manage typicality and standardization within the organization could lead to enhanced creativity and innovation among employees.

Table 10. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.623 ^a	0.388	0.386	0.54234

a. Predictors: (Constant), Procedures to manage typicality and standardization

Table 11. ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	47.740	1	47.740	162.307	0.000 ^a
	Residual	75.298	256	0.294		
	Total	123.037	257			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Procedures to manage typicality and standardization

b. Dependent Variable: Practices of creativity and innovation

Table 12. Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.159	0.234		4.948	0.000
	Procedures to manage typicality and standardization	0.713	0.056	0.623	12.740	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Practices of creativity and innovation

The differences among respondents based on hotel type towards the study variables

The Mann-Whitney test results in table (13) indicate no significant differences in perceptions between respondents from international chain hotels and owner-operated hotels regarding both procedures to manage typicality and standardization (P-Value = 0.328) and practices of creativity and innovation (P-Value = 0.186). These non-significant p-values suggest that hotel type does not play a significant role in shaping hotels

employees' views on procedures to manage typicality and standardization and practices of creativity and innovation.

Table 13. Mann-Whitney test for the difference among respondents based on hotel type procedures to manage typicality and standardization and practices of creativity and innovation

Variables	Hotel type	Mean Rank	Z	Sig.
Procedures to manage typicality and standardization	International chain	127.27	-0.978	0.328
	Owner	138.57		
Practices of creativity and innovation	International chain	132.53	-1.323	0.186
	Owner	117.19		

The differences among respondents based on department towards the study variables

The Mann-Whitney test results as shown in table (14) indicate no significant differences in perceptions between respondents from the rooms division department and the food and beverage department regarding procedures to manage typicality and standardization (P-Value = 0.471) and practices of creativity and innovation (P-Value = 0.110). These non-significant p-values suggest that departmental does not significantly impact hotels employees' views on procedures to manage typicality and standardization and practices of creativity and innovation. This result agrees with Wong and Ladkin, (2008) in that high management philosophy is a very important mean of creativity and innovation and not only department managers.

Table 14. Mann-Whitney test for the difference among respondents based on department procedures to manage typicality and standardization and practices of creativity and innovation

Variables	Department	Mean Rank	Z	Sig.
Procedures to manage typicality and standardization	Rooms division dep.	133.54	-0.722	0.471
	Food and beverage dep.	124.77		
Practices of creativity and innovation	Rooms division dep.	138.49	-1.599	0.110
	Food and beverage dep.	123.43		

The differences among respondents based on position towards the study variables

The Kruskal-Wallis test results in table (14) reveal a significant difference in perceptions of practices of creativity and innovation among employees based on their job positions,

with mean ranks indicating that managers (162.95) and supervisors (155.44) rate these practices higher than clerks (78.18) (Chi-Square = 71.118, p = 0.000). This suggests that higher-ranking positions tend to have a more favorable view of creativity and innovation initiatives. That is alike with Wong and Ladkin (2008) in that managers have an influence on subordinates' creativity. However, no significant differences were found among the job positions regarding procedures to manage typicality and standardization (Chi-Square = 4.937, p = 0.085), indicating a generally consistent perception across all levels of staff on this aspect. These findings highlight the importance of considering hierarchical perspectives when assessing organizational efforts to foster creativity and innovation, because hotel managers could motivate their staff to be more creative and how they can foster creativity in their hotels (Cheung and Wong, 2011).

Table 14. Kruskal-Wallis test for the difference among respondents on position towards procedures to manage typicality and standardization and practices of creativity and innovation

Variables	Position	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	Sig.
Procedures to manage typicality and standardization	Clerk	117.49	4.937	0.085
	Supervisor	130.90		
	Manager	142.72		
Practices of creativity and innovation	Clerk	78.18	71.118	0.000
	Supervisor	155.44		
	Manager	162.95		

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study's findings, as summarized in Table 15, indicate several key insights regarding employees' perceptions of management practices in the hospitality industry. Employees generally recognize that hotel management implements procedures to manage typicality and standardization, as well as practices fostering creativity and innovation, confirming both H1 and H2. Additionally, a positive relationship exists between these procedures and innovative practices, supporting H3. However, no significant differences emerged based on hotel type (H4) or department (H5) in relation to these procedures and practices. Interestingly, H6 was only partially supported, revealing some variation in perceptions based on employee position. Overall, these results underline the importance of management practices in balancing standardization with creativity, though further differentiation may be needed to tailor approaches across different employee roles.

Table 15. Summary of the hypotheses test

No.	Research hypotheses	The result
1	The hotels' employees realize that the management have procedures to manage typicality and standardization	Supported

2	The hotels' employees realize that the management have practices of creativity and innovation	Supported
3	There is a positive relationship between procedures to manage typicality and standardization and practices of creativity and innovation	Supported
4	There is a significant difference among respondents based on hotel type towards procedures to manage typicality and standardization and practices of creativity and innovation	Not supported
5	There is a significant difference among respondents based on department towards procedures to manage typicality and standardization and practices of creativity and innovation	Not supported
6	There is a significant difference among respondents based on position towards procedures to manage typicality and standardization and practices of creativity and innovation	Partially Supported

5.1 Practical implications

To foster innovation and creativity in the hospitality industry, managers should focus on creating organizational conditions that support and enhance the creative potential of frontline employees, who are essential to service delivery. Training programs for hotel staff, especially managers and supervisors, should include guidance on encouraging creativity at all levels, helping to empower employees in lower positions to contribute innovative ideas. While research shows no major differences in creativity and innovation between chain and independent hotels, independent hotels should still actively promote innovation in their services to deliver quality comparable to that of international chains. Lastly, establishing an environment that balances standardization and creativity is essential, as this approach can enhance productivity and reduce costs while simultaneously increasing customer satisfaction and service quality.

5.2 Limitations of the study

This study has certain limitations. First, it focuses exclusively on frontline departments, specifically the rooms division and food and beverage, which restricts the generalizability of results to other hotel departments. Previous research has shown that hotel chains, with their greater resources, professional expertise, and experience, can foster distinct innovation processes that may not apply to other areas. Additionally, the study involved current employees who may have been influenced by managerial perspectives in their responses, potentially affecting the objectivity of their answers. These factors should be considered when interpreting the findings.

5.3 Future research

Future research could explore several areas to expand understanding of innovation and creativity within the hospitality sector. First, examining the balance between standardization and creativity in tourist restaurants would provide insights into how these

establishments can maintain quality while fostering unique dining experiences. Additionally, investigating the feasibility of establishing dedicated research departments in hotels to support, sponsor, and implement creative ideas could be valuable. Such departments might drive continuous innovation and adaptability within the industry, contributing to sustained competitive advantage and improved guest experiences.

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الملخص العربي

الابداع و الابتكار في مقابل النمطية وتوحيد المقاييس في الخدمة الفندقية

مجدي عبد الرازق باب الخير حسن
المعهد العالي للدراسات النوعية بالجيزة

لقد اصبح هناك اهتمام كبير بتشجيع الابتكار في كل المجالات لذلك لابد ان يتم نقل هذا الاهتمام الي المجال السياحي و الفندقية
اهداف البحث

- 1- التعرف علي مدى ادراك العاملين في الفنادق للاجراءات التي تقوم بها الادارة لزيادة الابتكار و الابداع في توصيل الخدمة الفندقية
- 2- دراسة العلاقة بين الاجراءات الخاصة بتوحيد المقاييس و اجراءات التنمية و الابتكار في الخدمة الفندقية.
- 3- التعرف علي الاختلاف بين العاملين في الفنادق المستقلة وفنادق السلاسل فيما يخص الابداع و الابتكار.
- 4- تحديد الاختلاف بين ادراك العاملين في اقسام الفندق (قسم الغرف – قسم الاغذية و المشروبات) فيما يخص الابداع و الابتكار.
- 5- تحديد الاختلاف بين ادراك العاملين في المستويات الوظيفية المختلفة في الفندق فيما يخص الابداع و الابتكار.
- 6- تقديم توصيات تساعد علي زيادة الابداع و الابتكار في الخدمة الفندقية.

عينة الدراسة: تم إعداد 350 استبيان و توزيعها بين العاملين بقسمي الغرف و الاغذية و المشروبات بفنادق الاربعة و الخمسة نجوم بمصر. عدد 258 استبيان كانت صالحة للدراسة و التحليل.

النتائج : اوضحت النتائج ان هناك ادراك للعاملين للاجراءات التي تقوم بها الادارة لزيادة الابتكار. هناك اختلاف في ادراك العاملين لاجراءات زيادة الابداع و الابتكار بناء علي المستوي الوظيفي وكذلك نوع ادارته بالفندق .