Untangling Toxic Work Environments: How Servant Leadership Shapes Employee Wellbeing and Bullying Dynamics in Hospitality

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Abstract

This research aims to explore the connection between toxic work climates, co-worker bullying, servant leadership, and employee well-being in the context of the hospitality industry. To do this, a self-administered questionnaire was designed and distributed to a convenience sample of 400 employees working at Cairo five-star hotels. The study analyzed its measurement and structural model and validated its assumptions using the PLS-SEM with PLS 4 software. The results revealed a moderating role of servant leadership in the connection between toxic workplace climate, and coworker bullying. Also, the results uncovered that co-worker bullying in hotels plays a mediation role in the relationship between the toxic work climate and the employee well-being in hotel environments. This study extends the current knowledge by explaining the dynamics of workplace relationships and their effects on employee well-being in the hotel industry.

Keywords: Toxic work climate; employee well-being; co-worker bullying; servant leadership.

Introduction

The dynamic and demanding environment of the hospitality business has a considerable impact on the well-being of its personnel. This kind of business is especially vulnerable to work environments that promote employee happiness or create a toxic climate that is harmful to mental health and general performance. According to Priesemuth and Schminke (2024), workplace climate is broadly classified into two types: collaborative and toxic. High levels of optimism, collaboration, and respect for one another characterise collaborative climate, which improve productivity and job satisfaction. On the other hand, toxic climates are harmful and often lead to elevated levels of stress, anxiety, depression, health problems, absenteeism, job burnout, and unproductive work behaviour. This unfavourable work climate may have a substantial negative impact on an organization's productivity in addition to having a harmful effect on individual employees.

Basically, a toxic workplace environment climate (TWC) is one that is caused by unfavourable social and organisational dynamics. In addition to physical factors such as building design and communication hurdles, it frequently results from the degree of formality, friendliness, politeness, and distance between co-workers. Previous research, for example, (Fiabane et al., 2015; Naseem and Ali, 2023) has repeatedly shown that TWC causes several detrimental effects, including low morale, harassment, and bullying, as well as increased absenteeism, moral disengagement, a lack of compassion competency, employee fatigue, and decreased job productivity. Such work climate makes

individuals feel insecure and demotivated, which eventually affects their ability to advance professionally and their mental health.

Similarly, bullying among coworkers is a widespread problem in workplaces. Extant research (e.g., Mendiratta and Srivastava, 2023; Saka et al., 2023) pointed out that this kind of bullying is particularly common in the tourism and hospitality industries, where work discontent, disengagement, stress, and burnout are prevalent. Based on Yusri et al. (2025), it involves aggressive and violent actions directed towards specific people or groups, which can result in abusive behaviour that is frightening, intimidating, or degrading in addition to persistent abuse. According to Zanabazar et al. (2023), bullying among coworkers has detrimental effects on not only the personal health of the employee being bullied but also the overall interaction of the team leading to absenteeism increases, high turnover rates, and low productivity.

Employee well-being has a significant influence on social interactions, achievements, physical health, and financial results in both personal and professional life. Taoussi and Afilal (2024) described well-being as a complicated concept that includes aspects of spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical well-being. In the hotel sector, employee well-being is particularly important since it directly influences service quality provided to customers. Several aspects of well-being are required to maintain a productive and healthy workforce, including financial, social, professional, physical, and community well-being (Kristiana et al., 2024). A great deal of research (e.g., El-Sherbeeny et al., 2024; Kosnin et al., 2024; Tabala et al., 2024) has shown that experiencing happiness and fulfilment may significantly enhance an individual's mental well-being and physical, hence contributing to increased worker productivity and organisational success.

Servant leadership is a leadership style that highlights the needs and interests of others, placing a strong emphasis on helping others. There is evidence in research that it improves work happiness, engagement, service performance, and quality in the hospitality industry (e.g., Alyahya et al., 2023; Zhou et al., 2024). It also makes it possible to enhance employee performance and well-being, create a positive psychological atmosphere, and bridge the gap between managers and staff (Deng, 2024; Hamid, 2024).

Understanding the relationships between toxic workplace climate, employee wellbeing, coworker bullying, and servant leadership is essential when developing strategies to improve job satisfaction and organisational effectiveness in the hospitality industry. Prior research has tackled the interactivity among some of these concepts (e.g., Warr, 1990; Agervold and Mikkelsen, 2004; Lipman-Blumen, 2005; Noblet and Rodwell, 2007; Kurtulmuş, 2020; Dywili, 2023). However, the key role of servant leadership in such interrelations has yet to be investigated. Therefore, the aim of this research is to investigate the interrelationships between toxic work climate, co-worker bullying, and employee wellbeing in the hospitality sector highlighting the role of servant leadership in modifying such relationships. To attain this aim, the research attempt to: (1) investigate the connection between a toxic workplace environment and bullying among coworkers; (2) research the effects of bullying on employees' well-being; (3) evaluate the impact of the toxic workplace environment on employees' well-being; (4) ascertain the mediating

role of bullying among coworkers in the relationship between the toxic workplace environment and employee well-being; and (5) investigate the moderating role of servant leadership in these relationships. This study adds to the existing knowledge by demonstrating these relationships through empirical data and highlighting the role that servant leadership plays in reducing the detrimental consequences of a toxic work environment. Hotels can improve employee wellbeing, foster a better work climate and ultimately succeed more by understanding such relationships.

2-Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Toxic Workplace Climate

Generally, workplace climate can be categorized into two primary forms: collaborative and toxic. Collaborative environments foster feelings of happiness, kindness, harmony, joy, politeness, and cooperation (Rasool et al., 2021; Khalifa et al., 2024). Conversely, toxic climate can lead to anxiety, stress, depression, health issues, absenteeism, job burnout, counterproductive work behavior, and ultimately result in decreased productivity (Anjum et al., 2018; Rasool, 2019). A toxic workplace climate (TWC) is defined as a setting within a workplace that is considered harmful and detrimental to employees due to various pressures arising from organisational and social interactions (Rasool et al., 2021). It often results from the degree of civility, distance, friendliness, and formality among coworkers (Dickson, 2024). Furthermore, toxicity is also influenced by physical factors such building layout, communication obstacles, privacy invasions, and restrictions on staff engagement (Rasool et al., 2021).

In many cases, a toxic workplace fosters a negative organizational climate (Syaifullah et al., 2024), creating an environment that is unfavorable for professional development and mental well-being, causing employees to feel insecure, demotivated, and unfairly treated (Badri and Chieng, 2023). The detrimental effects of TWC were identified by Sarkar et al. (2024). These effects extend to include low morale, harassment, bullying, high absenteeism, moral disengagement, low compassion competence, employee burnout, and reduced job productivity. Another group of TWC consequences as stated by (Ojeleye and Ojeleye, 2024) extend to include decreased efficiency and internal conflicts. Other consequences of TWC include reduced commitment (Alsomaidaee et al., 2023), psychological and mental health problems among employees (Iqbal et al., 2022), depression (Badri and Chieng, 2023), lower satisfaction levels, increased levels of anxiety (Anjum and Ming, 2018), and physical problems (Rusdiyanto, 2022).

There is substantial evidence in the extant research for the correlation between TWC and the performance of employees. For example, Badri and Chieng (2023), stated that individuals are likely to encounter a decline in both their motivation and creative abilities when they are subjected to elevated levels of stress, bullying, or unethical conduct. They may also encounter a lack of support, reduced engagement which can have unfavorable effects on their productivity and overall well-being (Rasool et al., 2019). To overcome the detrimental effect of TWC, Rasool et al. (2021) recommended that organisations implement effective leadership approaches and address the underlying sources of stress and exhaustion that their workforce is experiencing.

Coworker Bullying

Islam and Chaudhary (2024) defined workplace bullying as violence to others by an individual or group. It includes, according to Haq and Huo (2024), mistreatment and offensive behavior that is threatening, intimidating, or humiliating others. Hasan et al. (2023) described it as a scenario where a person or group consistently faces mistreatment, posing survival challenges in a certain setting. Furthermore, Gomez and Quintos (2023) denoted that workplace bullying can have detrimental effects on victims. Extant research e.g., (Melzer and Diewald, 2020; Ribeiro et al., 2024) characterised it as a systematic and continual exposure to adverse behaviours in the workplace, encompassing criticism, negative comments, personal or physical abuse. Furthermore, Gomez and Quintos (2023) depicted workplace bullying as an extreme social stressor in which aggressive behaviour is directed systematically and persistently towards a targeted individual. More specifically, Haq and Huo (2024) emphasized that workplace bullying is characterized by continual negative actions like harassment, intimidation, verbal abuse, and social isolation, often involving a power imbalance, where the offender exerts dominance over the victim being bullied.

In tourism and hospitality organizations, Ribeiro et al. (2024) identified a substantial correlation between workplace bullying and work outcomes, including job dissatisfaction, disengagement, stress, and burnout which result in increased absenteeism, high rates of employees' turnover, and low productivity. Additionally, workplace bullying can create a distressing experience for "victims", preventing them from voicing their concerns or opinions to others (Melzer and Diewald, 2020; Al-Romeedy et al., 2023). In this context, Krishna et al. (2024) indicated that workplace bullying may lead to emotional separation from the social group associated with negative emotions, hence diminishing the resilience and robustness of interpersonal and group connections. Victims of workplace bullying might undergo traumatic suffering due to their emotional detachment from their work, hindering them from expressing their concerns or viewpoints to others.

There are diverse factors that usually contribute to workplace bullying, including demographic characteristics, personality traits, leadership styles, job features, and organizational culture (Al-Romeedy et al., 2023). Addressing such factors is imperative to mitigate their detrimental impacts on the health and safety of employees (Gomez and Quintos, 2023) and to foster a favourable work environment and for individuals, organisations, and the general economy (Ribeiro et al., 2024). For example, organisations tend to allocate resources towards the prevention of workplace bullying, including the provision of training programmes to enhance employees' awareness of antibullying practices and the implementation of robust human resources policies to address this issue (Hussain et al., 2023). Moreover, senior management promptly intervene to strike a balance between work responsibilities and employee well-being, thereby facilitating the attainment of organizational objectives and individual goals (Hussain et al., 2023).

Well-being

According to Huang et al. (2023), well-being is a fundamental issue in personal and professional life. Zheng et al. (2024) referred to its vital role in influencing various aspects such as physical health, achievements, social interactions, and economic impacts. Ryff and Keyes (1995) identified six fundamental elements of psychological well-being: self-acceptance, healthy interpersonal relationships, independence, environmental proficiency, personal progress, and a sense of purpose in life. Jung et al. (2023) pointed out that these dimensions have a particular relevance for the hospitality industry employees who frequently engage with customers and contribute to overall job satisfaction. Other works referred to it as a multidimensional concept (e.g., Jung et al., 2023; Huang et al., 2023; Taoussi and Afilal, 2024) that encompasses physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellness (e.g., Huang et al., 2024; Nassani and Alosaimi, 2024). Maintaining a delicate balance among these dimensions is critical to achieving holistic well-being (Taoussi and Afilal, 2024).

In the hospitality operation, there are various factors that impact employee's well-being (Khairy et al., 2023). For example, Huang et al. (2023) and Nassani and Alosaimi (2024) stated that positive emotions and enjoyable experiences have a favorable effect on both psychological well-being and physical, ultimately contributing to employee performance and organizational success. In line with this, Teng (2023) and Taoussi and Afilal (2024) added other factors that also impact employee's well-being namely, organizational citizenship behaviors, job satisfaction, and satisfaction with leisure activities. On the other hand, other factors that can negatively influence the well-being of employees and can function as a risk factor for organisations extend to include occupational stress, demographic characteristics, economic status, social standing, and socio-cultural backgrounds (Chaichi et al., 2023; Elshaer et al., 2023). For instance, Chaichi et al. (2023) claimed that women working in the hospitality and tourism sector often face wage disparities and are more susceptible to experiencing interpersonal abuse.

As well-being serves as a predictive factor for key organisational performance indicators, including productivity, absenteeism rates, job efficiency, and voluntary turnover (Zheng et al., 2024), employers are encouraged to invest in employee well-being considering factors that impact well-being to enhance employee satisfaction (Taoussi and Afilal, 2024) and reduce employee turnover rates (Nassani and Alosaimi, 2024).

Servant Leadership

Servant leadership is a leadership style that underscores the significance of serving others and the role of organizations in preparing individuals for a brighter future (Parris and Peachey, 2013). Coined by Robert Greenleaf (Greenleaf, 1977), this approach focuses on two fundamental concepts: service and other-oriented behavior (Rachmawati and Lantu, 2014). Servant leaders are primarily driven by a desire to serve rather than a desire to lead, viewing their lives as a mission of service (Lo et al., 2020). In other words, servant leadership encompasses a leadership style that centres on serving others, prioritising their needs and interests, and integrating principles, ethics, and integrity (Miralles et al., 2024). It highly prioritises employee well-being and career advancement, frequently correlating

with overall success at the individual, group, and organisational levels (Ghahremani et al., 2024).

Many works explained the servant leadership concept. Berhane (2023) identified five characteristics of the leadership approach: emotional healing, altruistic calling, wisdom, persuasive mapping, and organisational stewardship. Other works claimed that key attributes of servant leadership comprise vision, honesty, integrity, trust, service, modeling, pioneering, appreciation of others, and empowerment (Berhane, 2023; Miralles et al., 2024). Others said servant leadership requires active listening, compassion, healing, awareness, persuasiveness, conceptualisation, insight, governance, dedication to people's growth, and community connection (Rachmawati and Lantu, 2014). In this sense, servant leaders prioritize their followers, uphold ethical standards, and contribute value to the community (Melhem et al., 2023).

According to Buchori et al. (2023), servant leadership style can directly or indirectly impact an organisation's success in achieving its objectives, particularly within the hospitality business. For example, it enhances employee task performance (Melhem et al., 2023), increases job satisfaction, happiness, engagement and enhances service performance and quality (Zhou et al., 2024). Yikilmaz et al. (2024) stated that servant leadership also encourages employees to voice their opinions and maintain loyalty to their superiors, fostering a positive psychological environment within the organisation. In line with this, Zhou et al. (2024) posited that it helps bridge the gap between supervisors and employees, fostering quality relationships and prioritising employee well-being. Furthermore, Berhane (2023) found that servant leadership can improve organisational performance by cultivating high-quality employees, boosting organisational commitment, and fostering a caring environment and employee engagement. Also, Qamar and Soomro (2023) have shown that servant leadership can enhance employee engagement and motivation to maintain high service standards by providing valuable psychological resources, thereby fostering a culture of excellence within the workplace.

Toxic Workplace Climate and Coworker Bullying

Research has shown that TWC, which is characterised by aggressive behaviours such as bullying and harassment, can be highly damaging to the individuals involved as well as organisations (Priesemuth and Schminke, 2024). The findings of studies suggest that exposure to workplace violence and bullying incurs a higher risk of suicide, which underlines the importance of avoiding these behaviours in organisations (Steele et al., 2022; Hanson et al., 2023).

A wide range of research strongly indicates that destructive leadership behaviour can instill destructive thoughts within an organisation, leading to widespread dissemination of toxins that ultimately impact overall health and sustainability of the organisation (Tavanti, 2011; Malik et al., 2019). This toxic leadership and workplace bullying dynamic creates a highly challenging environment for personnel to navigate resulting in constant harm to individuals and the organization as a whole (Lipman-Blumen, 2005; Kurtulmuş, 2020).

Hoel et al. (2001) defined bullying as a process wherein people in positions of power try to oppress those in less powerful positions to demonstrate their superiority. As a result, bullying behaviour may be seen at all levels of the hierarchy, and its perpetrators can be managers, senior staff members, colleagues, or other powerful people who do harm to the workplace. Malik et al. (2019) looked at the negative impacts of bullying and the interactions between managers and staff. He found that harsh, dictatorial, and self-serving managerial methods frequently cause subordinates to feel toxicity in their dealings with managers in the form of misery, endurance, and resignation. In a similar vein, Malik et al. (2019) found that while interacting with TWC, subordinates commonly experience a variety of unpleasant emotions, with common results including feelings of belittlement, irritation, and violation. Notably, Sims (2024) asserted that businesses, such the hotel industry, where this high degree of TWC is frequently experienced, are thought to have a greater perception of workplace bullying. Accordingly, Gordon et al. (2023) thought that addressing TWC and bullying is a crucial part of encouraging workers' health at work. Considering this, we can posit the following hypothesis:

H1: The toxic workplace climate has a significant impact on co-worker bullying.

Co-Worker Bullying and Employee Well-Being
There is consensus that bullying in the workplace, including co-worker bullying, can have serious consequences for employee health and well-being (Farley et al., 2023). This psychological well-being, according to Mehmood et al. (2024), has significant impacts on employee performance. For example, there is evidence that social resources like support from co-workers have a significant impact in safeguarding the negative impacts of bullying exposure on well-being (Farley et al., 2023). In this sense, work bullying, psychological well-being, and job performance are connected in a way providing a full picture related with creating effective working environment neighbourhoods where employees can work healthily (Divyakala and Vasumathi, 2024).

A great deal of extant research has shown a negative connection between workplace bullying and personnel well-being (Warr, 1990; Agervold and Mikkelsen, 2004; Noblet and Rodwell, 2007; Nielsen and Einarsen, 2012; Cooper-Thomas et al., 2013; Gupta, 2013; Hsu et al., 2019). For instance, Ahmad et al. (2020) explained that extended exposure to unpleasant emotions and aggressive behaviour at work can all contribute to a decline in physical and mental health, which in turn can have an impact on overall well-being. Thus, addressing workplace bullying and cultivating social resources that are supportive are important components in reducing issues related to employee well-being in all work environments, which may lead to better organisational outcomes and a more robust workforce. Considering this, we can posit the following hypothesis:

H2: Co-worker bullying has a significant impact on employee well-being

Toxic Work Climate and Employee Well-Being
Generally, TWC shape employee well-being, as aggressive behaviours and hostile environments are prevalent in organisations (Alsomaidaee et al., 2023; Badri and Chieng, 2023;). A significant body of research investigated the impact of TWC on employee well-being, e.g. (Malik et al., 2019; Mehmood et al., 2024). Studies indicate that exposure to

toxic behaviour in the workplace, such as bullying or incivility at work, may even increase the risks of mental health problems and burnout among employees (Badri and Chieng, 2023). Similarly, workplace ostracism has also been associated with negative effects on employee well-being due to its contribution to higher levels of stress related to work and emotional fatigue (Rasool et al., 2021). In addition, various factors such as adverse physical and social conditions have been shown to have adverse impact on employee well-being. For example, Pauksztat et al. (2022) reported that workplace bullying resulted in anxiety, depression, and exhaustion among employees. Therefore, organisations consistently attempt to curb toxic behaviours to make sure employees are engaged in a healthy environment (Alsomaidaee et al., 2023; Badri and Chieng, 2023). When organisations get to the root cause of their TWC and address them, they help protect employees' welfare while fostering a healthier and more productive workplace. Accordingly, we can posit the following hypothesis:

H3: Toxic work climate has a significant impact on employee well-being

Toxic Workplace Climate, Co-Worker Bullying, and Well-being

A great bulk of research has demonstrated the significant effects of bullying and toxic work environments on employees' well-being (Dywili, 2023). For example, (Badri and Chieng, 2023) found that toxic workplace climate has a direct negative effect on employee's engagement, which in turn causes burnout, stress, and anxiety among workers. Employees working in such environments may have poor work outcomes (Malik et al., 2019) and develop negative attitudes that make it challenging for them to be satisfied at work (Kozáková et al., 2018) and do their tasks in these toxic locations effectively (Tavani, 2011). In similar vein, Wang et al. (2020) explained that co-Worker bullying may negatively affect employees' well-being by causing increased stress, decreased job satisfaction, and even psychological suffering. Therefore, further empirical research is required to fully understand the complex interactions of how bullying by coworkers affects workers' well-being in toxic workplace climate. Therefore, we can posit the following hypothesis:

H4: Co-worker bullying mediates the connection between toxic work climate and wellbeing.

## The Moderating Role of Servant Leadership

TWC is typically the result of negative leadership behaviours (Moghimi et al., 2023). On the other hand, servant leadership or leader behaviours committed to attending to the needs of staff members and fostering a compassionate work environment, serves as a catalyst for employee engagement and favourable job results (Coetzer et al., 2017). Organisations may implement servant leadership techniques to reduce toxicity, enhance working conditions, boost overall performance, and enhance employee wellbeing by knowing the consequences of toxic leadership on the sustainability of human capital (Saeed, 2023). Adopting servant leadership concepts may help mitigate the negative consequences of toxic workplaces by creating an environment that values empowerment, dignity, and compassion. This will eventually result in high employee performance and organisational success (Khurshid et al., 2024). Overall, it deeply values employee well-

being and career development, often correlating with overall performance at individual, group, and organizational levels (Ghahremani et al., 2024).

Moreover, servant leadership assumes a critical role in alleviating workplace harassment by nurturing trust in leaders, bolstering employee resilience, and minimizing exposure to mistreatment (Ahmad et al., 2021). Research findings emphasize that servant leadership has a positive influence on how employees perceive their work environment, resulting in reduced occurrences of workplace harassment due to increased empathy and respect (Ahmad et al., 2022) and a decrease in bullying incidents by enhancing interpersonal connections in the workplace (Bandura, 1977). Additionally, the intermediary function of trust in the leader and the regulatory impact of the ethical climate further underscores the importance of servant leadership in diminishing mistreatment at work (Haq et al., 2022). Therefore, we can suggest the following hypothesis:

H5: Servant leadership moderates the relationship between toxic work climate and co-worker bullying.
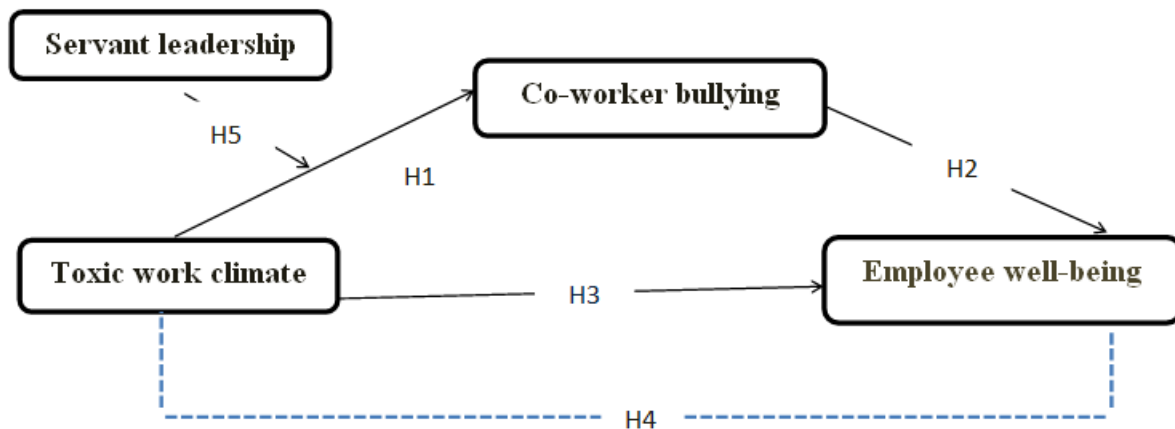
Figure 1. Hypothetical framework

3. Methodology

3.1. Instrument and Measures Development

The survey comprised two sections: the first addressed a latent variable with 32 items, while the second focused on characteristics of the research sample with six questions. Initially developed in English, the questionnaire underwent translation into Arabic by a bilingual specialist proficient in both languages, followed by a back translation into English by a second bilingual professional to ensure consistency. The English translations were cross-checked to verify accuracy, with the Arabic version subsequently administered to ensure comprehension and optimize response rates. Co-worker bullying was evaluated using a 7-item scale adapted from Islam and Chaudhary (2024), which included scenarios like. For example, "*Being ignored or excluded from work related social gatherings*" and "*Persistent criticism of your work and effort*". The toxic work climate scale, derived from Alsomaidaee et al. (2023), featured 12 items capturing sentiments such as "*I often feel devalued for my rights and opinions with reference to my age*" and *"Several times I forced to attend supplementary meetings and training*

sessions". Employee well-being was assessed through a 6-item scale adapted from Yang and Xu (2024), which included statements such as "*I can always find ways to enrich my work*" and *"I feel basically satisfied with my work achievements in my current job*". Finally, servant leadership was gauged using a seven-item scale adopted from Usman et al. (2024), with examples including "*My leader emphasizes the importance of giving back to the community."* and *"My leader gives me the freedom to handle difficult situations in the way that I feel is best*". The questionnaire items for all scales are included in Appendix A. The study employed a 5-point Likert scale to capture participants' responses across all variables, with a rating of 1 reflecting "strongly disagree" and 7 indicating "strongly agree".

3.2. Sampling and Data Collection

The research investigated a study model using data collected from employees at five-star hotels in Egypt between January and March 2024. As per data from the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism, there were 158 five-star hotels in 2018. A convenience sampling approach was employed in this study due to its practicality when randomization is not feasible, especially in situations involving a large population and limited resources, as was the case in this study. A total of 700 questionnaires were disseminated to the targeted enterprises, resulting in the retrieval of 400 valid responses, yielding a response rate of 57.14% from 20 five-star hotels. Following the guideline proposed by Hair et al. (2019), which recommends determining the sample size based on the number of variables being explored, with a suggested minimum ratio of "variable: sample = 1:10," the minimum sample size required for this study was 320 respondents considering the 32 items under scrutiny. Therefore, the sample size of 400 participants was deemed adequate for the analytical purposes of this study.

3.3. Data Analysis

The present study utilised the PLS-SEM methodology with PLS 4 software to examine the measurement and structural models and to validate the research assumptions. PLS-SEM is a widely utilised analytical method in tourism and hospitality research (Hair et al., 2019). Additionally, SPSS Version 22 was employed to analyse the demographic data of the study sample.

4. Results

4.1. Participant's Profile

Table 1 illustrates the demographic distribution of sample participants across various categories. It is observed that the sample consists of 242 male individuals, constituting 60.5% of the total, and 158 female individuals, representing 39.5% of the sample. When considering age distribution, 44 individuals fall within the age range of 18 to 30 years old, accounting for 11% of the sample, while 232 individuals are aged between 31 and 49, making up 58% of the sample. Additionally, 120 individuals are aged between 50 and 60, comprising 30% of the sample, and only 4 individuals are aged 60 and above, constituting 1% of the sample. In terms of marital status, 176 individuals are single,

making up 44% of the sample, while 224 individuals are married, representing 56% of the sample. Furthermore, educational attainment reveals that 6 individuals have a high school education, making up 1.5% of the sample, 112 individuals hold a diploma, accounting for 28%, and 280 individuals possess a bachelor's degree, constituting 70% of the sample. Only 2 individuals have a master's or doctoral degree, representing 0.5% of the sample.

Moreover, the distribution of sample members based on years of service indicates that 73 individuals have less than 2 years of service, accounting for 18.2% of the sample, 184 individuals have served between 2 to 5 years, representing 46%, 128 individuals have a service duration of 6 to 10 years, making up 32% of the sample, and 15 individuals have 11 or more years of service, constituting 3.8% of the sample. For departmental distribution, 28 individuals work in the front office department, representing 7% of the sample, 281 individuals are in the food and beverages department, accounting for 70.2%, and 91 individuals are part of the housekeeping department, making up 22.8% of the sample.

Table 1. Respondents' demographic analysis (n=242)

		Frequency	**Percent**
Gender	Female	158	39.5
	Male	242	60.5
Age	18-30	44	11
	31-49	232	58
	50-60	120	30
	60 years and above	4	1
Material status	Single	176	44
	Married	224	56
Level of education	High school	6	1.5
	Diploma	112	28
	Bachelor's degree	280	70
	Master's and doctoral degree	2	.5
Experience	< 2 years	73	18.2
	2-5 years	184	46
	6-10 years	128	32
	11 years and above	15	3.8
Departments	front office	28	7
	food and beverages	281	70.2
	housekeeping	91	22.8

4.2 The Measurement Model

Factor loadings, composite reliability, Cronbach's alpha, and average variance extracted (AVE) were utilized to assess the measurement tools. The AVE was calculated for each component of the constructs. The findings are presented in Table 2. All AVE values

exceeded 0.5, suggesting that all constructs accounted for over 50% of the variance in their respective indicators. Table 2 presents the Cronbach's alpha values and overall reliability of the scales. As discussed by Kock and Lynn (2012), who focused on addressing common method bias in PLS-SEM applications, assessments of convergent and discriminant validity are crucial for confirmatory factor analyses. The factor loadings for all constructs surpassed 0.650, indicating strong loading values.

Table 2: Assessment of the measurement model

Constructs	Measurement items	loading	α	C.R	AVE
Co-worker bullying	Co-work.bull -1	.912	**.806**	**.901**	**.623**
	Co-work.bull -2	.814			
	Co-work.bull -3	.921			
	Co-work.bull -4	.801			
	Co-work.bull -5	.899			
	Co-work.bull -6	.817			
	Co-work.bull -7	.835			
Toxic work climate	Tox. Wor. Clim -1	.843	**.799**	**.941**	**.744**
	Tox. Wor. Clim -2	.819			
	Tox. Wor. Clim -3	.798			
	Tox. Wor. Clim -4	.810			
	Tox. Wor. Clim -5	.788			
	Tox. Wor. Clim -6	.725			
	Tox. Wor. Clim -7	.765			
	Tox. Wor. Clim -8	.899			
	Tox. Wor. Clim -9	.812			
	Tox. Wor. Clim -10	.775			
	Tox. Wor. Clim -11	.868			
	Tox. Wor. Clim -12	.902			
Employee Well-Being	Employ. Wll-Beg -1	.788	**.877**	**.900**	**.844**
	Employ. Wll-Beg -2	.855			
	Employ. Wll-Beg -3	.823			
	Employ. Wll-Beg -4	.811			
	Employ. Wll-Beg -5	.911			
	Employ. Wll-Beg -6	.899			
Servant leadership	Serv.leadship -1	.912	**.901**	**.943**	**.511**
	Serv.leadship -2	.859			
	Serv.leadship -3	.875			
	Serv.leadship -4	.906			
	Serv.leadship -5	.900			
	Serv.leadship -6	.877			
	Serv.leadship -7	.903			

The theoretical framework exhibited satisfactory convergent validity as the metrics met the minimum criteria. The average variance extracted (AVE) values of the constructs ranged from 0.511 to 0.844, surpassing the limit of 0.5. The loading factors of the indicators ranged from 0.725 to 0.943, exceeding the limit of 0.7, as recommended by Hair et al. (2019; 2020). Additionally, the model demonstrated adequate internal consistency, with composite reliability values ranging from 0.900 to 0.943 and Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.799 to 0.901, all exceeding the required thresholds (Hair et al., 2019; 2020).

Furthermore, in line with Ch in's (1998) recommendation, discriminant validity was assessed by comparing indicator loadings with cross-loadings. Chin (1998) stipulates that indicator loadings need surpass cross-loadings to ensure a suitable level of discriminant validity. Discriminant validity assesses how effectively items differentiate between concepts or measure distinct constructs. Fornell-Larcker and cross-loadings were employed to evaluate the scaling model's discriminant validity. Cross-loading serves as the initial step in assessing the discriminant validity of variables (Hair et al., 2017). In this analysis, the criterion for cross-loading was met, with the external loads of variables on a construct exceeding all cross-loads with other variables. To achieve discriminant validity, all construct measures were specifically highly loaded on their respective primary constructs. However, Hair et al, (2011) have criticized the reliance on cross-loading for asserting validity due to its potential limitations. Table 3 below presents the cross-loading results of the study.

Table 3. Cross loading results

Constructs	Measurement items	Co-worker bullying	Toxic work climate	Employee Well-Being	Servant leadership
Co-worker bullying	Co-work.bull -1	.912	.137	.335	.126
	Co-work.bull -2	.814	.063	.347	.330
	Co-work.bull -3	.921	.042	.410	.272
	Co-work.bull -4	.801	.023	.106	.806
	Co-work.bull -5	.899	.140	.088	.064
	Co-work.bull -6	.817	.244	.216	.021
	Co-work.bull -7	.835	.256	.112	.012
	Tox. Wor. Clim -1	.112	.843	.165	.012
	Tox. Wor. Clim -2	.329	.819	.412	.128
	Tox. Wor. Clim -3	.066	.798	.002	.213
	Tox. Wor. Clim -4	.039	.810	.009	.155
Toxic work climate	Tox. Wor. Clim -5	.066	.788	.092	.140
	Tox. Wor. Clim -6	.059	.725	.319	.169
	Tox. Wor. Clim -7	.071	.765	.195	.175
	Tox. Wor. Clim -8	.006	.899	.266	.006
	Tox. Wor. Clim -9	.093	.812	.002	.222
	Tox. Wor. Clim -10	.159	.775	.129	.349
	Tox. Wor. Clim -11	.205	.868	.185	.195
	Tox. Wor. Clim -12	.018	.902	.100	.290

Employee Well-Being	Employ. Wll-Beg -1	.064	.182	.788	.002
	Employ. Wll-Beg -2	.099	.269	.855	.029
	Employ. Wll-Beg -3	.115	.345	.823	.095
	Employ. Wll-Beg -4	.106	.186	.811	.006
	Employ. Wll-Beg -5	.167	.082	.911	.110
	Employ. Wll-Beg -6	.166	.099	.899	.266
Servant leadership	Serv.leadship -1	.051	.775	.082	.912
	Serv.leadship -2	.331	.059	.069	.859
	Serv.leadship -3	.041	.035	.245	.875
	Serv.leadship -4	.006	.116	.222	.906
	Serv.leadship -5	.101	.174	.085	.900
	Serv.leadship -6	.014	.107	.077	.877
	Serv.leadship -7	.012	.049	.282	.903

The second method employed is the Fornell and Larcker Criterion, utilized for assessing discriminant validity. According to the Fornell-Larcker criterion, each construct's AVE's square root should exceed its highest correlation with any other construct in the model. The Fornell-Larcker criterion values, presented in Table 4, are below one. For ensuring discriminant validity, Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) values should be less than one, following the guidelines of Zhou et al. (2019). The HTMT values for all variables are below one, as shown in Table 3. Consequently, we can deduce that the discriminant validity of our investigation has been confirmed. Lastly, the range of factor loadings highlights the individual contribution of each observable variable to the construct or latent variable.

Table 4. Discriminant Validity- Latent Variable Correlations

	Co-worker bullying	**Toxic work climate**	**Employee Well-Being**	**Servant leadership**
Co-worker bullying	**.857**			
Employee Well-Being	.133	**.848**		
Toxic work climate	.084	.300	**.817**	
Servant leadership	.233	.301	.311	**.890**

Table 5. HTMT Ratio

	Co-worker bullying	**Toxic work climate**	**Employee Well-Being**	**Servant leadership**
Co-worker bullying				
Employee Well-Being	.301			
Toxic work climate	.099	.440		
Servant leadership	.110	.289	.421	

Moreover, the blindfolding technique in Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to evaluate the predictive accuracy of the model. The Q^2 statistic evaluates the

predictive relevance of a model, with a value above zero considered satisfactory. All Q2 statistical values in Table 7 were determined to be above zero. Consequently, the model employed in this study demonstrated favorable predictive relevance.

Table 7. Predictive Relevance Results

Endogenous latent construct	(R^2)	(Q^2)
	.79	.62

Analysing the path coefficient is a technique employed to illustrate the extent of the effect that the independent variable exerts on the dependent variable. Conversely, the coefficient of determination (R-Square) is utilised to measure the degree to which endogenous variables are affected by extraneous variables.

4.3.   Structural Model

The evaluation of the Inner Model (structural model), which includes analysing output r-square, parameter coefficients, and t-statistics, is performed to test the hypotheses. The decision to accept or reject a hypothesis relies on the significant values among constructs, t-statistics, and p-values. The credibility of these findings is evidenced by the bootstrapping results. This study establishes that the rules of thumb include a T-statistic more than 1.96, a significance threshold with a p-value of 0.000, and a positive beta coefficient.

The analysis of direct effects presented in Table 8 indicates significant associations between toxic work climate and Co-worker bullying (β=0.211, $p < 0.05$), Co-worker bullying and Employee well-being (β=0.145, $p < 0.05$), toxic work climate and Employee well-being (β=0.033, $p < 0.05$), as well as Servant leadership and Employee well-being ($\beta = 0.119$, $p < 0.05$).

Table 6. Coefficients calculation results

Hypo.	Path	Beta (β)	t-Values	p-Values	Results
H1	Toxic work climate⟶ Co-worker bullying	.211	19.18	.000	Accepted
H2	Co-worker bullying⟶ Employee well-being	.224	6.59	.000	Accepted
H3	Toxic work climate⟶ Employee well-being	.033	1.94	.000	Accepted
H4	Servant leadership⟶ Employee well-being	.119	15.02	.000	Accepted
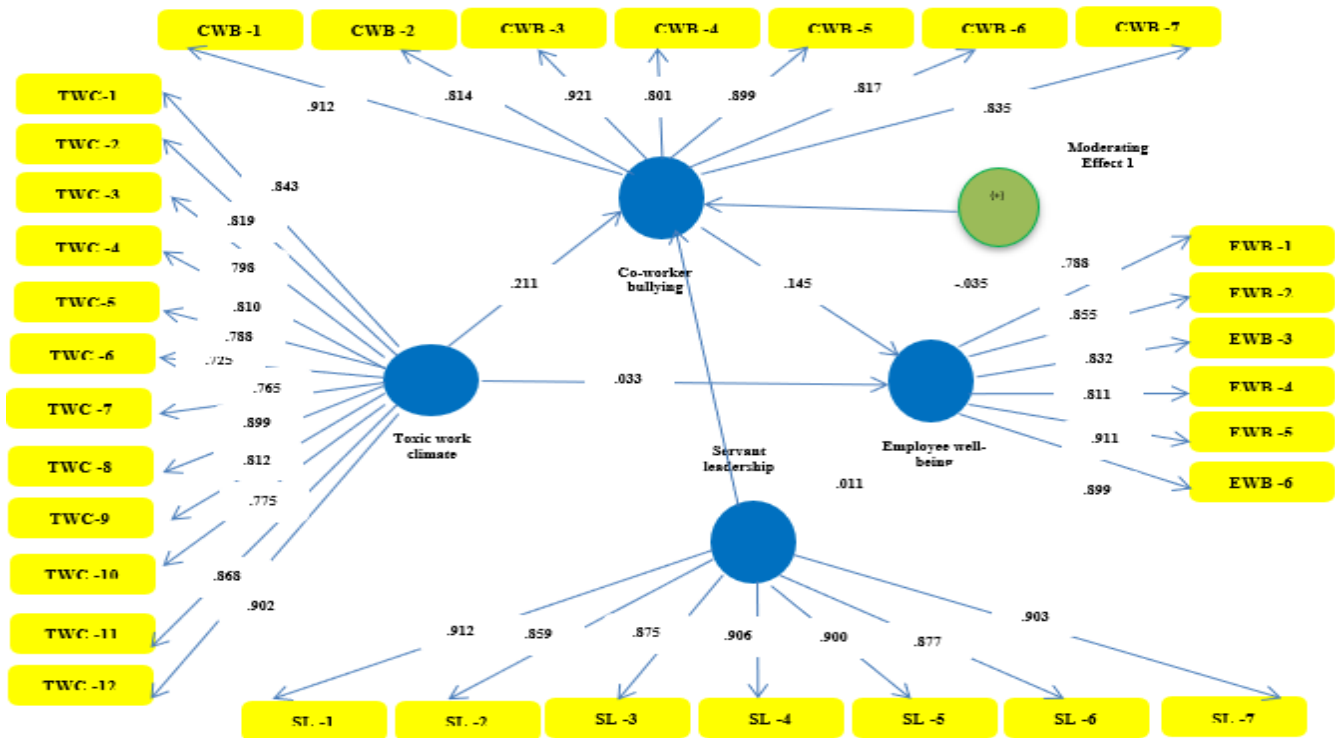
Figure 2. Measurement Model

As depicted in Table 8, the magnitude of an effect can be categorized as substantial (f2 above 0.35), medium (f2 = 0.15 to 0.35), or small (f2 = 0.02 to 0.15) based on Cohen (1988). The findings indicated that toxic work climate has a small effect size on co-worker bullying ($F2 = 0.014$) and employee well-being ($F2 = 0.073$), while Co-worker bullying demonstrates a medium effect size on employee well-being ($F2 = 0.165$). Moreover, Servant leadership exhibits a large effect size on Co-worker bullying ($F2 = 0.442$).

Table 8. F^2 Values

Constructs	F^2	Results
Co-worker bullying ⟶ Employee well-being	.165	Medium effect size
Toxic work climate ⟶ Employee well-being	.073	Small effect size
Servant leadership ⟶ Co-worker bullying	.422	Large effect size
Toxic work climate ⟶ Co-worker bullying	.014	Small effect size

Furthermore, a moderation analysis was conducted to investigate the moderating influence of servant leadership on the association between toxic work climate and co-worker bullying.

Table 9. Moderation analysis results.

Hypo.	Path	Beta (β)	t-Values	p-Values	Results
H5	Moderating Effect 1 ⟶ Co-worker bullying	-.158	2.211	.023	Accepted

The outcomes presented in Table 9 suggest that servant leadership plays a significant moderating role in the correlation between toxic work climate and co-worker bullying ($β = −0.158$, $p < 0.05$). Figure 2 visually demonstrates that Servant leadership effectively diminishes the positive association between toxic work climate and Co-worker bullying.
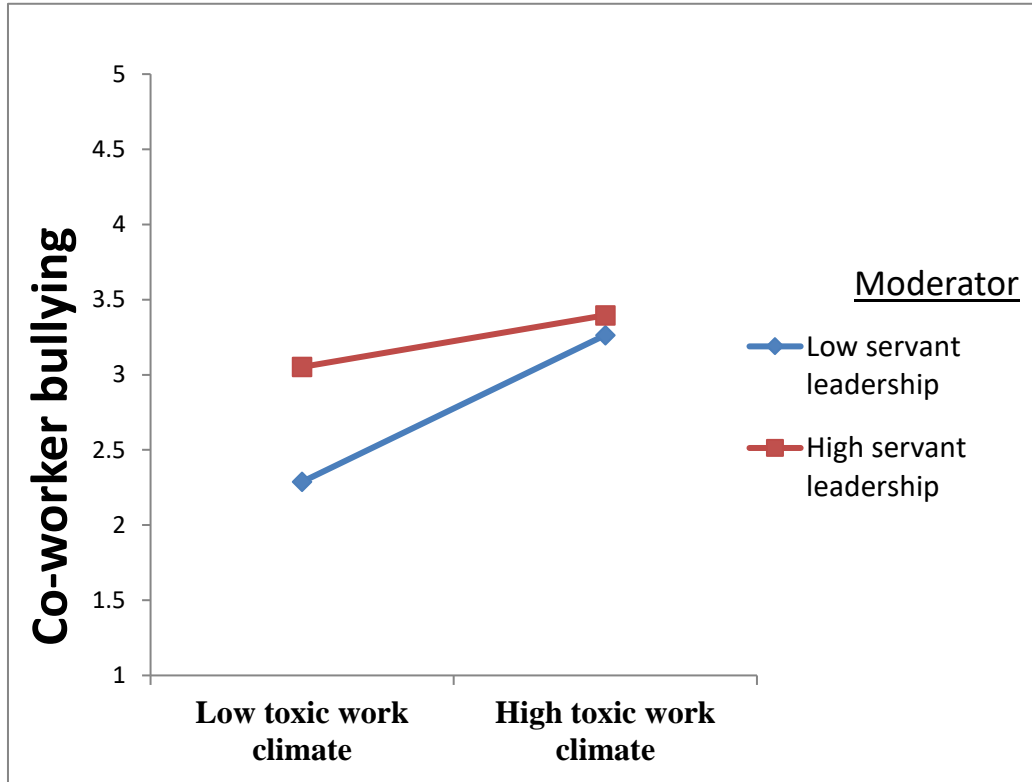

Figure 3. The moderating effect of SL on the relationship between CWB and EWB

Tables 10 and 11 present the analysis of the path coefficient, along with T-statistics values and P-values, to assess the mediating effect of the variable Co-worker bullying on the relationship between Toxic work climate and Employee well-being.

Table 10. Bootstraps the indirect effect.

Path	Beta (β)	t-Values	p-Values	Results
Idirect effect				
Toxic work climate ⟶ Employee well-being (Path c)	.033	1.94	.000	Accepted
Total effect				
Toxic work climate ⟶ Co-worker bullying (Path a)	.211	19.18	.000	Accepted
Co-worker bullying ⟶ Employee well-being (Path b)	.224	6.59	.000	Accepted
Toxic work climate ⟶ Employee well-being (Path c)	.033	1.94	.000	Accepted

Table 9 demonstrates that the bootstrapping analysis of the indirect impact revealed a statistically significant association between Toxic work climate and Employee well-being.

Table 10. Mediation analysis

	IV→ Mediator		Mediator→ DV			Bootstrapped Confidence Interval		
	Path a	**Path b**	**Indirect Effect**	**SE**	**t-value**	**95% LL**	**95% UL**	**Decision**
H6	0.330	0.224	0.074	0.032	2.315	0.011	0.137	**Mediation**

In Table 10, the results of the bootstrapping analysis revealed a significant indirect impact (β = 0.225) with a t-value of 7.049, calculated as the product of 0.545 and 0.413. Additionally, following the guidelines of Preacher and Hayes (2008), the indirect effect of 0.225, with a 95% bootstrapped confidence interval (LL = 0.163, UL = 0.288), does not include zero within the interval, indicating the presence of mediation. Therefore, the mediation effect is deemed statistically significant.

This research investigated the complex interrelationships among toxic work climate, co-worker bullying, servant leadership, and employee well-being in the context of Cairo, Egypt's five-star hotels. A balanced gender composition is suggested by the sample's demographic distribution, which shows a notable representation of both male (60.5%) and female (39.5%) individuals. The age distribution shows that people who are 31–49 years old make up most of the population (58%), followed by people who are 50–60 years old (30%). This is indicative of a middle-aged workforce, which may have an impact on the nature of relationships at work and the frequency of bullying behaviours. The distribution of marital status indicates that a small majority of people are married (56%), while the figures on educational attainment suggest that the workforce is well educated, with 70% having a bachelor's degree. This high degree of knowledge might make people more conscious of the dynamics at work and their own wellbeing. With 46% of workers having served for two to five years and 32% for six to ten years, the distribution of workers based on years of service indicates that a sizeable section of the workforce has a great deal of experience.

The study concludes that toxic work climate has a severe detrimental effect on workers' wellbeing, mostly because of coworker bullying. This finding aligns with the research conducted by Divyakala and Vasumathi (2024), which emphasized the negative impacts of a toxic work climate on worker engagement and well-being. Furthermore, it was shown that the association between a hostile work environment and peer bullying is considerably mitigated by servant leadership. Strong servant leadership levels lessen the negative consequences of a toxic work climate, which lowers the incidence of bullying among coworkers. This outcome is consistent with the research conducted by Haq et al. (2022), which found that bullying at work is directly inhibited by servant leadership. As a result, the presence of servant leadership can mitigate some of the detrimental consequences of workplace bullying that are brought on by a toxic work climate in the workplace. This shows how effective leadership techniques can improve working conditions and boost employee morale and well-being. This emphasizes how crucial a leader's style is in determining the dynamics of the workplace and the experiences of its employees. Additionally, the study highlights the negative effects of bullying on employees' mental health and well-being by demonstrating how

coworker bullying acts as a significant mediating factor in the relationship between a toxic work climate and employee well-being.

Theoretical Contribution

Theoretically, the study contributed to enhance our understanding of the intricate relationships among toxic work climate, co-worker bullying, servant leadership, and employee well-being in hotels context. Prior research has not explored the role of servant leadership to lessen the negative effects of toxic work climate on coworker bullying which was frequently proved in previous research as one of the main causes that deteriorate the employee's wellbeing. Thus, the present study contributed to the body knowledge by understanding the role that servant leadership can play in the hotel business context to minimize the negative effects of toxic work climate on coworker bullying.

Practical Implications

Empirically, undersetting the important role of servant leadership unlock a new beginning for management to overcome coworker bullying and enhance the wellbeing of employees. The study urges the management board of hotels to formulate operational training plans for managers and supervisors to foster servant leadership traits inside the hotel. By doing this, a leadership culture can be cultivated in the hotel business through implementing explicit rules and procedures in the workplace to address and prevent coworker bullying. This could entail offering channels for event reporting and guaranteeing worker safety while voicing complaints. Furthermore, hotels must include a variety of employee support programs, such as mental health services and programs to assist workers in coping with emotional stress or the harmful impacts of working in such an unhealthy environment. Such programs may include those that allow people to focus on their health, stress management classes, and counselling services. Acknowledging the moderating function that servant leadership plays between a toxic work climate and coworker bullying, this information might lead to significant gains in the context of the hotel work environment. In a similar vein, the improvement of the physical work environment for open communication and nurturing a culture that encourages collaboration can combat feelings of isolation and contribute to greater employee well-being.

Limitations and Future Research

It is important to recognize the limitations of this research. For instance, the study only included five-star hotels in Cairo and used a small sample of 380 employees. Despite the diversity of the themes, the conclusions obtained have very limited generalizability. Furthermore, care should be taken in how these findings are interpreted and used since cultural differences may distort views of workplace behaviors and leadership styles that are more appropriate for a given culture. As a result, it is advised to examine the findings in a context other than Arabic culture. Furthermore, longitudinal research may be helpful in validating the causal pathways that these findings suggest.

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تأثير القيادة الخدمية على رفاهية الموظف وتخفيف آثار بيئات العمل السامة والتنمر في قطاع الضيافة

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ملخص

تتناول هذه الدراسة العلاقة بين المناخات السامة في العمل، والتنمر بين الزملاء، والقيادة الخدمية، ورفاهية الموظف في قطاع الضيافة. وتهدف إلى فهم كيفية تأثير هذه العوامل على رفاهية الموظفين وتحسين بيئة العمل. تم تصميم استبيان وتم توزيعه على عينة من 400 موظف يعملون في فنادق الخمس نجوم في القاهرة. وتم استخدام أسلوب تحليل المعادلات الهيكلية باستخدام PLS-SEM لتحليل البيانات واختبار الفرضيات. تظهر النتائج أن المناخ السام في العمل له تأثير كبير على التنمر بين الزملاء، حيث يؤدي إلى زيادة حوادث التنمر وسلوكيات الإساءة. كما تبين أن التنمر بين الزملاء يؤثر سلبًا على رفاهية الموظف، مما يسبب مشاعر التوتر والقلق والاكتئاب. من جهة أخرى، تلعب القيادة الخدمية دورًا مهمًا في التخفيف من هذه التأثيرات السلبية، حيث تعمل على تعزيز العلاقات الإيجابية بين الموظفين وتوفير بيئة عمل داعمة. تسهم هذه الدراسة في توسيع الفهم حول طبيعة مكان العمل وتأثيرها على رفاهية الموظف في صناعة الضيافة. كما تؤكد على أهمية اعتماد أساليب القيادة الخدمية كوسيلة لتحسين بيئة العمل وتقليل التنمر، مما يؤدي في النهاية إلى تحسين رفاهية الموظف وزيادة الإنتاجية في الفنادق. توصي الدراسة بأهمية تبنى الفنادق استراتيجيات القيادة الخدمية، وتطوير برامج تدريبية للمدراء لتعزيز هذه القيم. كما توصي الدراسة بتطبيق سياسات واضحة لمكافحة التنمر وتوفير الدعم النفسي للموظفين، مما يسهم في خلق بيئة عمل أكثر إيجابية.

الكلمات الدالة: القيادة الخدمية، رفاهية الموظف، بيئات العمل السامة، التنمر في العمل، قطاع الضيافة.

Appendix

Co-worker bullying

- Co-work.bull.1. Being exposed to an unmanageable workload.
- Co-work.bull.2. Being ignored or excluded from work related social gatherings.
- Co-work.bull.3. Having insulting or offensive remarks made about your person (i.e. habits and background), your attitudes or your private life.
- Co-work.bull.4. Being shouted at or being the target of spontaneous anger.
- Co-work.bull.5. Someone reminding you repeatedly about your errors or mistakes.
- Co-work.bull.6. Persistent criticism of your work and effort.
- Co-work.bull.7. Hints or signals from others that you should quit your job.

Toxic work climate

- Tox. Wor. Clim.1. My supervisor/co-worker/subordinate often appreciates my physical appearance.
- Tox. Wor. Clim.2. My supervisor/co-worker/subordinate spoke rudely to me in public
- Tox. Wor. Clim.3. My supervisor/co-worker/subordinate often tries to be frank with me and shares dirty jokes with me.
- Tox. Wor. Clim.4. My supervisor/co-worker/subordinate often tries to talk about my personal and sexual life.
- Tox. Wor. Clim.5. I often feel devalued for my rights and opinions with reference to my age.
- Tox. Wor. Clim.6. I receive negative responses from others because of my hard work.
- Tox. Wor. Clim.7. Several times I forced to attend supplementary meetings and training sessions
- Tox. Wor. Clim.8. I am exposed to intimidator use of discipline/competency procedures.
- Tox. Wor. Clim.9. My supervisor/co-worker/subordinate assigns me work that is not of my competence level.
- Tox. Wor. Clim.10. My supervisor/co-worker/subordinate tries to maintain distance from me at work.
- Tox. Wor. Clim.11. My supervisor/co-worker/subordinate does not answer my greeting.
- Tox. Wor. Clim.12. Sometimes I feel that I am not doing anything special at work.

Employee Well-Being

- Employ. Wll-Beg**.**1. I am satisfied with my work responsibilities.

- Employ. Wll-Beg**.**2. In general, I feel fairly satisfied with my present job.
- Employ. Wll-Beg**.**3. I find real enjoyment in my work.
- Employ. Wll-Beg**.**4. I can always find ways to enrich my work.
- Employ. Wll-Beg**.**5. Work is a meaningful experience for me.
- Employ. Wll-Beg**.**6. I feel basically satisfied with my work achievements in my current job.

Servant leadership

- Serv.leadship.1. My leader can tell if something work-related is going wrong.
- Serv.leadship.2. My leader makes my career development a priority
- Serv.leadship.3. I would seek help from my leader if I had a personal problem.
- Serv.leadship.4. My leader emphasizes the importance of giving back to the community.
- Serv.leadship.5. My leader puts my best interests ahead of his/her own.
- Serv.leadship.6. My leader gives me the freedom to handle difficult situations in the way that I feel is best.
- Serv.leadship.7. My leader would not compromise ethical principles in order to achieve success.