



INNOVATIVE WORK BEHAVIOR IN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY: THE ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT AND WORK ENGAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to explore how innovative work behavior (IWB) is constructed in a hospitality industry. Hospitality industry is one of highly standardized operating procedure industries. SOP often leaves less room for improvisation and innovation because every activity is standardized and evaluated based on the SOP. However, customers demand highly customized services that often need the creativity of the employees to meet the customers' expectations. Therefore, this study is examining the influence of psychological empowerment and work engagement on IWB among the hotel employees. As quantitative research, the data were gathered using questionnaires which were distributed to 250 respondents, with 205 valid questionnaires. The respondents were the employees of three-to-five-star hotels who had been working for at least one year. Then, the collected data were processed and analyzed with the help of smartPLS software. This study finds that psychological empowerment does not influence significantly on IWB. However, work engagement influences significantly on IWB, and work engagement also mediates psychological empowerment and IWB.

Keywords: *innovative work behavior; psychological empowerment; work engagement; hotel management.*

ABSTRAK

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah mengeksplorasi bagaimana perilaku kerja inovatif (IWB) terbentuk di industri perhotelan. Industri perhotelan merupakan salah satu industri dengan prosedur operasi yang sangat terstandarisasi. SOP seringkali memberikan sedikit ruang untuk improvisasi dan inovasi karena setiap kegiatan distandarisasi dan dievaluasi berdasarkan SOP. Namun, pelanggan menuntut layanan yang sangat disesuaikan dengan keinginan mereka sehingga seringkali membutuhkan kreativitas karyawan untuk memenuhi harapan pelanggan. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini menguji pengaruh pemberdayaan psikologis terhadap IWB melalui work engagement pada karyawan hotel. Sebagai penelitian kuantitatif, pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan menggunakan kuesioner yang disebarkan kepada 250 responden, dengan 205 kuesioner yang valid. Respondennya adalah karyawan hotel bintang tiga sampai lima yang telah bekerja minimal satu tahun. Kemudian data yang terkumpul diolah dan dianalisis dengan bantuan software smartPLS. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa pemberdayaan psikologis tidak mempunyai pengaruh yang signifikan terhadap IWB. Namun work engagement mempunyai pengaruh yang signifikan terhadap IWB. work engagement juga berperan sebagai variabel intervening antara pemberdayaan psikologis dan IWB.

Kata Kunci: *innovative work behavior; psychological empowerment; work engagement; hotel management.*

INTRODUCTION

To survive and strive in the fast-changing business environment, innovation becomes mandatory to organizations and individuals working inside the organizations. In creating an innovation, organizations have to support the individuals so that they can come up with fresh ideas to reach the organization's goals (Srirahayu, Ekowati, Sridadi, 2023). Therefore, organizations, mostly represented by human resource department, need to develop innovative work behavior (IWB) among employees (Prieto & Pérez-Santana, 2012). IWB deals with developing, adopting, and implementing new ideas for products, technologies, and work methods by employees (Afsar & Badir, 2016).

The purpose of this research is to examine what constitutes the construction of IWB in hospitality industries. The human resources department works meticulously hard to provide proper training on standardized service procedures for all levels of employees to deliver excellent services. The hospitality industry is notoriously famous for its highly standardized operating procedures (SOP), which rule all levels and sectors of employment in any hotel property. Hence, hotel employees, especially the frontlines, are trained with various competencies to deliver excellent services to their guests. However, hotel guests demand the most customized services, which often go beyond the SOP (Breier *et al.*, 2021).

Innovative work behavior is regarded as a process of motivation and reasoning of an individual or a group of employees, which are articulated through certain duties. Employees are expected to carry out tasks that go beyond their assigned routines within a team, group, or organization (Masood & Afsar, 2017). As a service-oriented industry, IWB is important because employees can be motivated to always perform innovative and creative tasks, requiring the employees to use their

abilities and skills to give new ideas that are able to improve the quality of service to meet the expectations of consumers (Eid & Agag, 2020). Experienced employees usually will outperform the novices in handling this situation.

Ironically, hotel employment experiences one of the highest turnover rates among all industries. Previous studies blame such a condition for various reasons, but one main reason connotes the job burnout due to lack of room for improvisation while on duty (Al-Hawari, Bani-Melhem, & Shamsudin, 2019). Another crucial psychological aspect is also the motivation to work in the hospitality industry. Some studies have identified managerial factors that have an important role to encourage employees to visualize the meaning of their work and to continue having the urge to bring the impact on their work (Pradhan *et al.*, 2017). One of the factors is called psychological empowerment (PE), which is defined as the process of intrinsic motivations that help increase the feelings of self efficacy and these motivations are embodied in four cognitive dimensions: meaning, impact, competence, and self-determination (Spreitzer, 1955). Some studies have identified PE as one critical factor that influences IWB significantly (Afsar & Badir, 2016; Jain, 2015; Nasir *et al.*, 2019; Sinha *et al.*, 2016). The perceived organizational support to empower employees certainly influences the ability and willingness to innovate, and the sufficient provided resources can facilitate the emergence of new ideas (Jain, 2015).

Several studies have shown that work engagement (WE) also has influenced significantly on IWB (Al-Hawari *et al.*, 2019; Hoon Song *et al.*, 2014; Kim & Park, 2017). Over the last few years, the concept of work engagement has been considered a powerful instrument to increase organizational effectiveness and is recognized as a promising intervention mechanism for organizational growth and

development. Psychologically empowered employees are more committed to their work and company, and are also more engaged in their duties, which are shown by a decreased desire to quit their jobs (Alotaibi *et al.*, 2020). In addition, previous research has also suggested that an engaged workforce produces better products and services, supports high levels of innovation, attracts, and retains skilled workers (Baek-Kyoo *et al.*, 2019)

This study examines the influences of PE and WE on IWB among the star hotel employees. After three years of human mobility restrictions which is caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the hospitality industry is swinging to its former achievements by offering various themes to lure potential guests to spend their vacation or even remote working in the property. As the capital of East Java Province and the hub to eastern Indonesian islands, the city of Surabaya experiences an influx of visitors after the pandemic. Three-to-five-star hotels welcome guests with new normal health protocols, even though the government of Indonesia has claimed the Covid-19 as an endemic. Yet, the hotel employees also experience crises in adjusting with many new procedures and changing demands. The major problem faced by hotel employees after the pandemic is the lack of innovation among them, meanwhile hotel customers are becoming more demanding about new experiences as a result of being restricted to travel. Therefore, IWB is expected to create smooth transition in making the hotel guests satisfied. In the highly standardized operating procedure industry, two independent variables are set up, namely PE and WE, to see their influences on IWB. This is the first study to examine IWB among the hotel employees after the Covid-19 pandemic, so it offers a new insight for three-to-five star hotel human resource departments to plan their potential human capital.

Innovative Work Behavior (IWB)

Innovation is a process in which novelty ideas are generated through someone's creative mind, and then, these ideas are captured, recognized, filtered, clarified, modified, further developed, and finally commercialized. This process also includes anticipating various obstacles along the way, and creativity helps navigate through those obstacles by making channels of innovation process (Jain, 2015). Innovation is also often defined as the process of extracting economic or social value from knowledge. This occurs through the creation, diffusion, and transformation of knowledge to produce new or significantly improved products or processes that can be used by society (Akram *et al.*, 2020; Palumian *et al.*, 2021). An organization's ability to continuously innovate products, services, technology and work processes is one of the most important aspects in running a business, because innovation combines the skills, knowledge and networks of the organization in such a way with the needs of members and customers (Kör *et al.*, 2020), which can result in an organization's competitive advantage (Saeed *et al.*, 2019; Spanuth & Wald, 2017; Yean *et al.*, 2015), and open up opportunities for companies to achieve long-term success (Akram *et al.*, 2020).

Basically, innovation at the employee level is achieved through IWB. IWB is defined as the actions that are directed at creating, processing, and applying/ implementing new ideas, including new ways of doing things, new ideas for products, technology, procedures or work processes, with the aim of increasing organizational effectiveness and success (Boss-Nehles, *et al.*, 2017). Employees can contribute to innovative process within an organization in a various way, but there are certain ways they can contribute across the organization, such as generating new ideas, disseminating the ideas among co-workers or supervisors, spreading the innovation throughout the organization, and working to

implement the innovation by themselves or help others to do it (Kmieciak, 2020). Some studies conducted by Bücke and Horst (2017) stated that IWB is the foundation for a company's success in a rapidly changing business environment, because a company cannot be innovative without its employees. However, innovation only occurs when employees are actively involved in generating and implementing new ideas. As a result, management needs to recognise how IWB can be formed and stimulated (Bos-Nehles *et al.*, 2017). In this research, IWB is measured using the following indicators (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010): idea exploration (IE), idea generation (IG), idea championing (IC), and idea implementation (II).

Psychological Empowerment (PE)

Empowerment is generally a term used to describe employee work experiences. More specifically, it denotes to a set of personal beliefs that an employee possesses in regard to his role in the organization (Tripathi, 2020). Empowerment leads to employee engagement, motivation, and satisfaction. This also reassures loyalty and commitment to the organization, which make any employee stay in the organization (Safari *et al.*, 2020). Empowerment has been explored in three broad categories: leader-driven, structural, and psychological, with sequential relationships between them. Among them, psychological empowerment (PE) is the most outstanding empowerment to employee outcomes (Minai *et al.*, 2020).

Previous studies on PE that is still widely used today are by Spreitzer (1995) and Conger and Kanungo (1988). According to Spreitzer (1995), PE is defined as intrinsic motivation which is manifested in four cognitive scopes: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. These scopes mirror the individual's orientation towards their social or work role. Conger and Kanungo (1988) explains that employees will experience PE when they consider their work to be

important, they have the required skills and competencies to accomplish the tasks, they have autonomy to make decisions about doing their work, and they have confidence in their work to make a difference in achieving organizational goals. Conger and Kanungo (1988) also stated that psychological empowerment is intended to find value in the tasks given to produce better performance and career achievements.

Recent studies define PE as a continuous process that improves relationships in the workplace, which ultimately increases organizational effectiveness and leads to increased productivity and performance (Safari *et al.*, 2020). PE needs to be understood as a motivational construct that is formed in the work environment, which is based on employees' perceptions of the ability to do work well, choices to initiate and organize actions, impact on the environment, and work that has meaning (Cerne *et al.*, 2019; Minai *et al.*, 2020). Employees who feel autonomy and freedom to pursue tasks that lead to achieving organizational goals (self-determination) tend to engage in extra-role behavior, working outside their job description (Turnipseed & VandeWaa, 2020). In this research, PE was measured using the following indicators (Spreitzer, 1995): meaning (ME), competence (CO), self-determination (SD), and impact (IM).

Work Engagement (WE)

The concept of engagement has received much attention from both the academic and corporate executive over the last two decades, who recognize the need to go deeper on the potential role of WE (Afsar, Al-Ghazali, *et al.*, 2020). Bakker and Albrecht (2018) investigate the relationship between WE, employee well-being, and performance, and claim it has positive impacts for employees and organizations. Initially, engagement in workplace was conceptualized by Kahn (1990) which was defined as "the self-utilization of organizational members for

their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during the performance of tasks." and although these three dimensions are different, they are interrelated (Baek-Kyoo *et al.*, 2019). Kahn (1990) also explained engagement as the psychological presence of employees when occupying and carrying out an organizational role.

As organizations are under high pressure to meet customer demands and create a competitive environment, they increasingly rely on the strengths and talents of their employees (Bakker, 2017). Schaufeli *et al.* (2002) consider WE as a positive and satisfying work-related state of mind, then conceptualize it through three constructs: vigor (enthusiasm); dedication (dedication) and absorption. Schaufeli *et al.*

(2001) also argue that engaged employees will try harder and have a more robust and effective relationship with their work, resulting in positive outcomes for both the individual and organization. Apart from that, WE can also be translated as a mental state in which a person carrying out a work in a completely immersed mindset, feeling full of energy, and showing enthusiasm about the work (Bakker, 2017). In this research, WE is measured using the following indicators (Schaufeli, 2001): vigor (VI), dedication (DE) and absorption (AB).

Based on the above literature review, the research hypothesis come as follows:

- H1: PE influences significantly IWB
- H2: PE influences significantly WE
- H3: WE influences significantly IWB
- H4: PE influences significantly IWB through WE

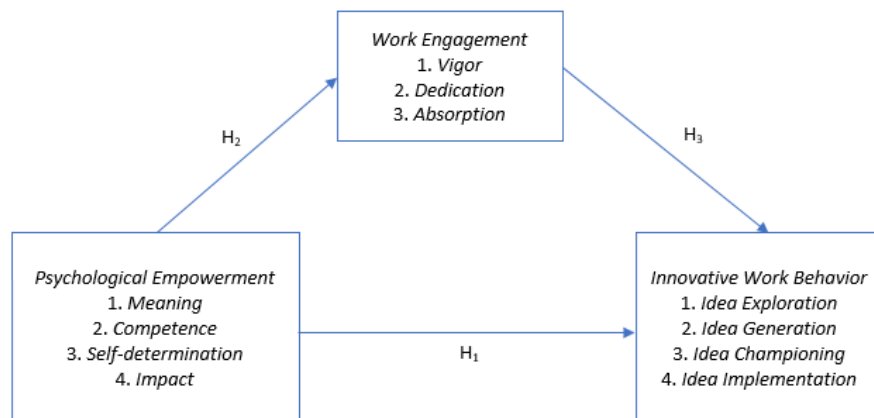


Figure 1. Research Framework

RESEARCH METHOD

The purpose of the research is to examine the influences of the PE and WE on IWB, therefore, the model in this research is constructed based on a quantitative research approach. In this approach, the relations between variables are best explained when researchers collect primary data, and then reach a conclusion from the hypothesis tests that have been set (Saunders *et al.*, 2007). The data in the study were collected by questionnaires that were distributed to hotel employees and

supervisors from different departments of various three-to-five-star hotels in Surabaya. This study focuses on three-to-five-star hotel employees because they are required to comply their performance according to the hotel standard operating procedures, and are qualified to carry out their tasks in an excellent manner. The number of valid questionnaires comes from 205 respondents. The questionnaire consists of statements that are valued by the five categories of Likert Scale, stretching from (1) as strongly disagree to (5) as strongly agree. Then, smartPLS software is used to

get the results of the outer model and the inner model. The outer model is to check the validity and reliability, while the inner model is to get the hypothesis results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The total respondents for this study are 205 respondents. The respondents are collected from various hotels in the city of Surabaya.

Table 1. The Profile of The Respondents

Profiles	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
1. Male	116	56.59%
2. Female	89	43.41%
Age range		
1. ≤ 20	19	9.27%
2. 21-25	74	36.09%
3. 26-30	66	32.19%
4. 31-35	27	13.17%
5. 36-40	14	6.83%
6. ≥ 40	5	2.44%
Level of education		
1. High school	87	42.43%
2. Vocational diploma	32	15.60%
3. Undergraduate	83	39.51%
4. Graduate	3	2.435
Department		
1. Accounting	21	10.24%
2. Engineering	12	5.85%
3. F&B Product	21	10.24%
4. F&B Service	19	9.27%
5. Front Office	27	13.17%
6. Housekeeping	33	16.10%
7. HR	19	9.27%
Department	24	11.71%
8. Sales & Marketing	17	8.29%
9. Security	12	5.85%
10. Others		
Type of hotel		
1. Three-star hotel	98	47.80%
2. Four-star hotel	55	26.82%
3. Five-star hotel	52	25.36%

Source: Data Collection, 2024.

The respondents of this study are hotel employees with at least three years of working experience in the same hotel. The majority of the respondents is male

employees, with the age range of 21 to 25 years old and high school diploma. Most of the respondents are working in three-star hotel, especially in the housekeeping department.

The Outer Model

The outer model is to examine the validity and reliability of the research instrument. One of the validity test is the convergent validity.

Table 2. Convergent Validity

	IWB	PE	WE
AB1			0.557
AB2			0.625
CO1		0.683	
CO2		0.619	
CO3		0.551	
DE1			0.771
DE2			0.696
IC1	0.734		
IC2	0.757		
IG1	0.603		
IG2	0.701		
IG3	0.726		
II1	0.765		
II2	0.681		
IM1		0.603	
IM2		0.629	
IM3		0.714	
ME2		0.683	
ME3		0.652	
SD1		0.656	
SD2		0.572	
SD3		0.630	
VI1			0.731
VI2			0.646
VI3			0.743

Source: data collection, 2024.

The values in Table 2 show that all are above 0.500 (Hair et al., 2022). Therefore, they have met the prerequisite of convergent validity, so all indicators are valid.

Table 3. Validity and Reliability Tests

	CA	CR	AVE
PE	0.854	0.861	0.406
WE	0.809	0.817	0.409
IWB	0.836	0.842	0.506

Source: SmartPLS output, 2024.

Table 3 shows that all variables have the values of Cronbach's Alpha (CA) and composite reliability (CR) greater than 0.7, thus it indicates that all variables meet the requirements. It can be said that the instrument is reliable, so its consistency can be trusted.

The Inner Model

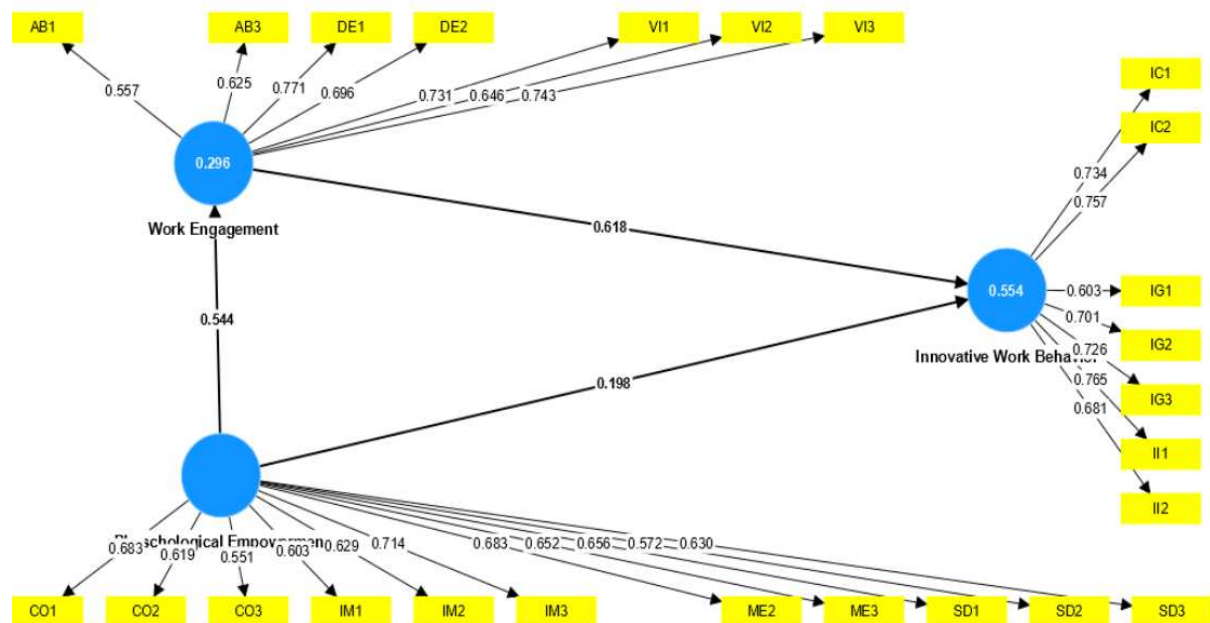
Inner model analysis is a structural model which connects latent variables and is used to measure whether the model is robust and accurate. The inner model test is done by looking at the value of the coefficient of determination (R-square). The R-square value aims to assess the magnitude of the endogenous variables, namely IWB and WE which can be explained by the exogenous variable, namely PE. Rated R-square that is good is between 0 and 1. The higher the value of R-square or approaching one means that the prediction model has a better result. The results of the R-square data processing in this study are as follows.

Table 4. R-square

	R-square	Adjusted R-square
IWB	0.564	0.546
WE	0.296	0.289

Source: smartPLS output, 2024.

The results of Table 4 note that the values of R-square for all variables are over zero. The result of the calculation shows that the value of R-square for IWB is at 0.546, in which it shows that the strength of the influence of PE and WE on IWB is of 54.6%, or moderate, while the other 45.4% is explained by other variables that are not used in this researcher. Furthermore, the value of R-square on work engagement is at 0.289, which means the strength of the influence of PE on WE is 28.9%, or weak, while the remaining 71.1% are constructed by variables that are not used in this research.



Source: smartPLS output, 2024

Figure 2. The Result of The Bootstrapping

Finally, Table 5 shows the results of the path coefficient and the results of the

hypothesis testing through the value of the T-Statistics and the P values.

Table 5. The Path Coefficient

	Path coefficient	T statistic	P Value
H1: PE → IWB	0.198	1.697	0.090
H2: PE → WE	0.544	5.195	0.000
H3: WE → IWB	0.618	6.044	0.000
H4: PE → WE → IWB	0.336	4.968	0.000

Source: smartPLS output, 2024.

Results in Table 5 show that one hypothesis is rejected because it does not comply with the standard of the T statistic of 1.96 and p value of 0.050. Hypothesis 1 is rejected because the value of T statistic is below 1.96, with p value of 0.090. Meanwhile, all other hypotheses are accepted because they comply with the standard of the T statistic and p value.

Discussion

The Influence of PE on IWB

The result of hypothesis testing shows that PE has no significant effect on IWB. This finding contradicts the studies by Nasir *et al.* (2018), Afsar & Badir (2016), and Sinha *et al.* (2016), stating that PE has significant influences on IWB, and explain employees' psychological empowerment experience at a high level allowing them to respond to the innovative behavior in their company. Empowerment of employees can create potential within employees themselves by making changes to the positive mindset of work, the unit of work, and organization where they are, therefore this raises the ability of innovation. PE is also contributing to the performance of the employees at the higher level to achieve better service and performance (Nasir *et al.*, 2018).

The Influence of PE on WE

The result of hypothesis test shows that the influence of PE on WE is significant and positive, meaning that the PE for employees is getting higher, the WE of employees is also going to increase higher. The result of this research also supports the results from other studies, such as by Ugwu *et al.* (2013) and Tripathi *et al.* (2021), which both explain PE having a significant effect on WE. Their studies conclude that

psychologically empowered employees will respond in the form of increased energy levels to carry out their duties and show their involvement in work. Similarly, when employees believe that their work makes a difference and affects organizational outcomes, they will feel more motivated to increase their energy and give greater dedication to their work. Empowered employees perceive themselves as more competent and therefore, they will also put more effort into making positive changes in their work and organization.

The Influence of WE on IWB

The result of the third hypothesis test indicates that work engagement has a significant and positive influence on innovative work behavior. This means the higher WE of employees, the better their IWB. The result of this study is in accordance to the studies by Kim and Park (2017), Afsar *et al.* (2020), and Karkoulian *et al.* (2019), that explain WE has a significant effect on IWB. Since IWB involves the creation of new things in terms of differentiated products or services, the employee must be absorbed and dedicated to their work by having a sense of happiness and satisfaction with the job (vigor) and having mental endurance to avoid distractions. Looking at the indicator of WE, most of the respondents agree strongly on the statement that they are proud of their current job position, which indicates them engaging in their current job.

The Mediating Effect of WE on PE and IWB

The result of the fourth hypothesis test shows that WE plays a significant role in mediating PE and IWB. With the interference of WE, PE becomes a

significant influence on IWB. In a highly standardized operating procedure industry, namely hospitality industry, PE is not strong enough to trigger innovative behavior, as SOP hinders or triggers creative minds. Yet, unpredictable working environments which draw the full attention of employees may cause the employees to alter the standardized procedures to satisfy the demanding customers without sacrificing the procedures. Looking at the indicator of PE and IWB, it shows that the respondents realize the importance of their jobs, but they do not have the freedom to execute their duty. Through the support of other employees, the respondents strongly agree that they are eager to improve their competence.

CONCLUSION

This research examines the influence of PE on IWB through WE of star hotel employees in Surabaya, the second largest city in Indonesia. This study concludes that PE has no significant influence on IWB. However, PE has a significant influence on WE, and WE has a significant influence on IWB. Finally, PE becomes a significantly influential factor when it is under the mediation of WE., therefore, WE plays its role as a mediating variable on PE and IWB.

Working in three-to-five star hotels is demanding, as the employees have to comply with sets of rules and standardized procedures, yet the customers request individualized services, which need innovative mindset. This study proves that work engagement is a dominant factor in creating the innovative work behavior. Since hospitality industry is a intense human interaction industry, the role of human resources department in creating engagement among employees is crucial. Theoretically, working environment and organizational culture can stimulate and foster work engagement. In that sense, work engagement in the hospitality industry is linked to teamwork.

This study has some limitations on data collections and sample size. Due to the post Covid-19 pandemic, many hotels are still employing half of their employees, and some operations are still not running in full capacity, so the respondents are not representing all departments. Besides, the job employments in other industries are still limited, therefore, many hotel employees struggle to survive in their current job, even though the job condition is not favorable for them. Finally, the data were collected from hotel employees in Surabaya only, which are mostly serving business travelers with high expectations and demands on efficiency and services. It is suggested that the samples of the respondents are extended to other types of hotels that serve leisure and family guests, which require a different mindset of service.

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