

# hospitality

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## When Servant Leadership Fosters Frontline Hotel Employee Creativity: The Role of Harmonious Creative Passion and Psychological Safety

### Abstract

This study examines servant leadership's impact on frontline employees' creativity. Specifically, it will explore the sequential mediating effects of harmonious creative passion and psychological safety. This study analyzes data acquired from seven hotels in Indonesia using variance-based structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings of this study indicate that servant leadership has the potential to enhance the creativity of frontline employees by increasing their harmonious creative passion and psychological safety. This research strengthens the significance of servant leadership on frontline employees who aim to achieve a high level of creativity. The findings of this study indicate that managers should adopt servant leadership behaviors, which can improve employees' psychological resources, such as harmonious creativity, passion, and psychological safety, and encourage them to engage in creative behavior. This study offers original insights into the emerging body of literature by presenting the initial empirical proof of the combined impact of harmonious creative passion and psychological safety in facilitating the influence of servant leadership on frontline employees' creativity.

**Keywords:** Servant Leadership, Harmonious Creative Passion, Psychological Safety, Frontline Employee, Creativity.

### Introduction

The dynamic changes in the hospitality industry have emphasized the significant role of creativity. Hotels are increasingly motivated to innovate and provide unique services and products due to emerging problems, primarily influenced by technological improvements (Kabangire and Korir, 2023). The focus on creativity extends beyond improving guest pleasure, encompassing the increasing importance of guest satisfaction. Within the above framework, it is evident that hotel personnel in Indonesia assume a prominent role in engaging with customers and attending to their daily needs. This frontline position affords individuals a distinct advantage in generating novel ideas that can effectively enhance the quality of hotel services. The current market conditions in Indonesia present several obstacles that require the hotel sector to employ creative strategies consistently. Due to their direct interaction with clients and ability to cater to their requirements, hotel staff are crucial in fostering and promoting creativity within the hotel industry (Hassi, 2019).

Creativity, the cognitive process of producing novel and potentially valuable concepts, is widely acknowledged as a pivotal determinant for businesses, specifically within the hospitality sector, to attain enduring competitive advantage (Anning-Dorson and Nyamekye, 2020). The cultivation of creativity relies upon both the personal aptitudes of individuals and the contextual elements present in the professional setting, encompassing job attributes, accessible resources, objectives, and the general work milieu. As a crucial element within the given environment, leadership is pivotal in influencing circumstances favorable for personal creativity. The significance of leadership in the hotel sector becomes apparent as a crucial contextual factor that predicts individual creativity, exerting influence over the creative

processes of employees (Bavik and Kuo, 2022). The influence of leadership on individual creativity is frequently based on the fulfillment of followers' need for autonomy and substantial backing when presenting ideas and participating in unconventional thinking. The significance of this matter is particularly evident within the hotel business, where the prioritization of high-quality service has continually been emphasized as crucial for meeting and exceeding customers' expectations, ultimately playing a pivotal role in the profitability of hotels. When applied to employee creativity, servant leadership entails leaders embracing a mentality in which they prioritize the needs of their team members by offering essential resources, support, and a work atmosphere that fosters creative thinking. This particular leadership style acknowledges that the presence of an environment where employees feel appreciated and encouraged to share their unique ideas fosters the growth and development of creativity (Ruiz-Palomino and Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara, 2020).

Servant leaders demonstrate proactive involvement in their employees' concerns, actively listening to their viewpoints and recognizing their distinct abilities and valuable opinions. Servant leaders establish an environment that promotes employee creativity by prioritizing the growth and development of each team member, hence encouraging risk-taking and experimentation (Bavik, 2020). Several empirical investigations have demonstrated that servant leadership positively influences employee creativity. Research into how servant leadership affects employee creativity has started in response to the evidence supporting its efficacy. The componential social cognitive theory, theory of creativity, and prosocial motivation theory have all provided the theoretical groundwork for previous research concentrating on several critical mechanisms, including prosocial motivation.

Although further research into other job-focused motivational variables is needed to fully understand the relationship between servant leadership and creativity within an individual's work role, the results of these studies are encouraging from a leadership theory perspective. Human resource managers can use this study's anticipated results to drive their work design research, which can help them develop successful strategies and tools to reimagine the responsibilities of frontline staff in the workplace to encourage employee creativity. Servant leaders place a high priority on addressing the holistic needs of their employees and emphasize the importance of enhancing their capacities. Further, a servant leader prioritizes the growth of others and leads with integrity. Researchers have praised servant leadership for its central premise, which is that it prioritizes the development of subordinates over the leaders' self-interest. Hence, servant leadership is characterized by acknowledging leaders' reliance on their followers and a propensity to prioritize serving the best interests of their subordinates. We anticipated that servant leaders would establish a conducive atmosphere for employees, enabling them to emulate leadership characteristics effectively.

Consequently, when employees work for a servant leader, they are more likely to autonomously internalize creative activities into their own identity, by which these employees can better think of new ways to meet customers' needs. To date, limited studies have examined the influence of such a follower-centered and moral virtue of leadership on frontline employees' creativity. The current study proposes a theoretical model based on social learning theory (SLT) (Bandura et al., 2003), which suggests that the influence of servant leadership on employee creativity will be mediated by harmonious creative passion and a psychological safety climate. Thus, we examine whether the mediation variable can strengthen the link between servant leadership and employee creativity. Our conceptual model is presented in Figure 1.

## **Theoretical background and hypotheses development**

### **Servant leadership and employee creativity**

Servant leadership is widely acknowledged as a substantial element that inspires and motivates individuals to participate in creative endeavors. In contrast to transformational leadership, servant leadership is distinguished by attributes including humility, compassion, and a commitment to fulfilling the requirements of others (Greenleaf, 1998). Interpersonal acceptance, dedication to the development of others, humility, empowerment, community building, and empathy are the defining attributes of servant leadership (Wilson, 1999).

Within the context of servant leadership, leaders place the welfare and growth of their adherents as their highest priority. They demonstrate attentiveness to their concerns and empathy toward their needs and establish a setting that nurtures personal and professional development. Additionally, servant leaders demonstrate dedication to fostering a sense of community and integrating their followers' varied abilities and perspectives. According to Chen (2022), it is probable that these servant leadership behaviors will act as catalysts to augment creativity. In particular, when leaders prioritize listening and empathy, they may encourage followers to share creative thoughts without apprehension of criticism. The emphasis on personal and professional development is consistent with the notion that risk-taking and creative thinking are characteristics of individuals who feel valued and supported. Furthermore, the dedication of the servant leader to fostering a sense of community and appreciating a range of viewpoints can positively impact an environment conducive to facilitating creativity among frontline employees. Subsequently, they are inclined to offer inventive resolutions to obstacles when they perceive their distinct perspectives are valued and incorporated into the creative workflow. To conclude, we postulate a positive correlation between servant leadership and employee creativity based on the tenets of servant leadership. It is expected that the servant leader's focus on empathy, active listening, personal development, and fostering a sense of community will produce an atmosphere that fosters and improves the innovative aptitudes of subordinates.

**Hypothesis 1. Servant leadership is positively related to Frontline Employee creativity.**

### **Servant leadership and harmonious creative passion**

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Our proposition is based on social learning theory and posits a positive correlation between servant leadership and the harmonious creative passion of employees. Individuals acquire knowledge by observing the actions and experiences of others, according to the social learning theory, which also asserts that leaders in organizational settings serve as influential role models (Decker, 1986). Within the framework of servant leadership, wherein leaders place trust in the well-being and independence of their subordinates, it is expected that these behaviors will be internalized by the staff, thereby cultivating an atmosphere of harmonious creative passion.

As posited by social learning theory, individuals are likelier to emulate behaviors that result in favorable consequences and overall well-being. When considering servant leadership, the alignment between the principles of harmonious passion and the emphasis on autonomy and support for personal development is evident. Harmonious passion is distinguished by an internally generated connection to one's work that is autonomous. When employees observe their leaders placing importance on and encouraging autonomy, it is anticipated that they will cultivate a harmonious passion for their work, given that this enthusiasm is probable to result in favorable consequences and satisfaction. Consequently, we postulate the following tenets of social learning theory:



**Hypothesis 2: Employees' harmonious creativity and passion are positively impacted by servant leadership.**

### **Harmonious creativity passion and Frontline Employee Creativity**

Based on the Dualistic Model of Passion proposed by Vallerand et al. (2003) and the Self-Determination Theory developed by Deci and Ryan (1985), it is hypothesized that a positive association exists between harmonious passion and employee creativity. The Dualistic Model of Passion posits the existence of two distinct manifestations of passion, namely harmonious and obsessive passion. Harmonious passion is distinguished by internalizing an activity individuals perceive as personally meaningful and willing to participate in decision-making. Self-determination theory expands upon this concept by emphasizing the significance of autonomy and intrinsic motivation in facilitating favorable outcomes. Based on the hypotheses above, it is postulated that individuals who possess a sense of harmonious passion towards their professional endeavors are inclined to exhibit elevated levels of creativity. Harmonious passion indicates a constructive and advantageous connection with one's professional endeavors, characterized by voluntary and self-directed engagement in duties. According to the theoretical framework of self-determination theory, persons who autonomously internalize their activities are likely to have a heightened sense of volition and endorsement, contributing to more sustainable and pleasant outcomes (Jan and Zainal, 2020).

Creativity is characterized by its complex nature and is frequently influenced by internal motivation, autonomy, and a perception of personal importance in one's work. Employees who exhibit harmonic passion are more inclined to approach activities with an intrinsically motivated mentality, creating an environment that encourages creative thinking and problem-solving. The presence of harmonious passion fosters creativity by facilitating a favorable emotional bond with one's professional endeavors. When individuals perceive a state of congruence with their work, they are more prone to emotional engagement, concentration, and resilience, all of which foster creative pursuits. The positive affective states linked to harmonious passion, such as joy and enthusiasm, can catalyze divergent thinking and generate novel and inventive ideas (Sun et al., 2023).

Moreover, it is worth noting that harmonious passion has the potential to augment cognitive flexibility, which is widely recognized as a fundamental aspect of creativity. When individuals participate in activities that hold personal significance, there is a greater likelihood that they will actively seek out and consider various viewpoints and methods. This process promotes cognitive flexibility and the development of creative problem-solving techniques. In brief, our hypothesis suggests a favorable correlation between harmonious passion and employees. It is anticipated that the self-governing and inherently driven characteristic of harmonious passion will positively impact the work setting, fostering an atmosphere that promotes and improves creative thinking and innovative problem-solving abilities among workers. This effect is reinforced by the emotional involvement and cognitive adaptability linked to this type of passion. Therefore, our hypothesis is as follows:

**Hypothesis 3: The frontline employee's creativity is positively impacted by harmonious passion.**

### **The Mediating Roles of Harmonious Passion**

The concept of servant leadership is believed to influence employee creativity substantially. Harmonious passion further influences this relationship, which acts as a mediator. The social learning theory posits that individuals acquire and modify their behaviors through the process of observing the actions and experiences of others, with a particular emphasis on prominent personalities such as leaders within an organization (Chen, 2022).

Leaders emphasize their subordinates' welfare, self-governance, and individual growth within the servant leadership framework. When these behaviors are consistently exhibited, they provide influential role-modeling signals for individuals who follow. The social learning process includes employees observing servant leaders committed to valuing and supporting autonomy, cultivating a culture of trust, and establishing a collaborative and inclusive work environment. When employees observe these servant leadership actions, they will probably absorb and emulate them, cultivating a favorable and encouraging work environment that facilitates creativity. The alignment between the autonomy-supportive characteristics of servant leadership and the principles of social learning theory is evident, as it is observed that employees acquire knowledge that autonomy and the opportunity to explore ideas result in favorable consequences (Aboramadan, 2021)

Furthermore, the facilitation of harmonious passion contributes to the complexity of this partnership. The development of harmonious passion, which entails a self-determined and internalized attachment to one's work, is expected to occur when employees witness servant leaders who prioritize and endorse individual autonomy. The study literature extensively recognizes the beneficial impact of harmonious passion on creativity. It is commonly accepted that passion is a motivational force, driving individuals to participate in their work with greater depth and persistence (Jan and Zainal, 2020).

Hence, the suggested mediation posits that servant leadership facilitates the development of harmonious passion by modeling actions that enhance autonomy. Consequently, the presence of harmonious passion serves as a stimulus for fostering employee creativity. The convergence of leadership that promotes autonomy and the internalization of these values, as guided by the principles of social learning theory, establishes the foundation for a work environment that fosters innovation and creativity. In summary, applying servant leadership, guided by the principles of social learning theory, is anticipated to impact employee creativity by cultivating harmonious passion. The behaviors exhibited by servant leaders are regarded as a model for employees to absorb notions of autonomy and passion, thereby fostering a workplace culture characterized by positivity and innovation.

**Hypotheses 4: Harmonious passion mediates the relationship between servant leadership and frontline employee creativity**

### **Servant Leadership and Psychological Safety**

Based on Servant Leadership theory and psychological safety principles, our proposition posits a positive correlation between servant leadership and psychological safety in hospitality contexts. The concept of servant leadership, initially proposed by Greenleaf (1970), emphasizes leaders' dedication to meeting their followers' needs, facilitating personal development, and establishing a nurturing work atmosphere. Psychological safety, as defined by Edmondson (1999), encompasses the individual's belief of being able to engage in interpersonal risks without experiencing adverse outcomes. Servant leaders are inclined to

foster psychological safety in the workplace due to their focus on empathy, support, and the well-being of their followers. Cultivating trust and mutual respect within a team is encouraged by leaders who embrace the ideals of the Servant Leadership philosophy and prioritize the needs of their team members. This phenomenon aligns with the core principle of psychological safety, which pertains to the circumstance wherein individuals experience a sense of assurance and safeguarding when expressing their views, ideas, and concerns without apprehension of encountering adverse outcomes (Chughtai, 2021). The existing body of research suggests a positive correlation between the practice of servant leadership and the enhancement of trust, open communication, and the cultivation of a supportive corporate culture. These attributes closely correspond to the factors that contribute to establishing psychological safety. In an environment characterized by psychological safety, individuals are inclined to express their opinions, contribute novel ideas, and participate in cooperative efforts to address challenges, all without apprehension of criticism or retribution. The correlation between servant leadership and psychological safety is additionally supported by the notion that servant leaders empower their subordinates, foster a sense of autonomy, and promote a collaborative approach to decision-making. The elements above play a pivotal role in cultivating a psychologically secure setting wherein members perceive themselves as having the autonomy to express their viewpoints and make meaningful contributions to the team's overall development. In brief, our hypothesis asserts a positive correlation between servant leadership and psychological safety in the workplace. Servant leaders are anticipated to demonstrate sympathetic and supportive actions, which are believed to foster an environment conducive to followers feeling secure and self-assured in voicing their viewpoints. Hence, it contributes to the cultivation of psychological safety, as elucidated by Edmondson (1999). The interaction between servant leadership and psychological safety is paramount in cultivating a corporate environment that promotes transparency, confidence, and creativity.

**Hypothesis 5: The employees' creativity is positively impacted by servant leadership.**

### **Psychological Safety and Employee Creativity**

Drawing upon the theoretical framework of psychological safety, we claim a positive correlation between psychological safety and employee creativity within the confines of the hospitality industry. Edmondson (1999) defines psychological safety as an individual's subjective impression of being able to freely communicate ideas, express worries, and engage in interpersonal risks without experiencing adverse repercussions. Based on established theories of creativity, such as Amabile's Componential Model (Amabile, 1983), it is argued that a suitable environment for creative thought and innovation promotes psychological safety. According to Amabile (1999), creativity can be impacted by a range of elements, one of which is a work atmosphere that fosters support and supports the free expression of innovative ideas without the presence of apprehension over criticism or retribution. This proposition is in close alignment with the fundamental principle of psychological safety.

According to existing research, it has been found that within circumstances that foster psychological safety, individuals tend to exhibit a higher propensity for engaging in open and honest communication, expressing a wide range of various opinions, and actively contributing novel and inventive ideas. When employees experience a sense of security in freely expressing non-traditional ideas without fear or hesitation, they are more inclined to explore innovative solutions to various challenges. The ability to engage in risk-taking and experimentation is a



crucial element of the creative process, and psychological safety is essential in creating an environment that enables individuals to partake in these activities.

Moreover, a correlation exists between psychological safety and intrinsic motivation, which is a fundamental catalyst for fostering creativity. Based on the theoretical framework proposed by Deci and Ryan (1985), it is posited that individuals exhibit heightened levels of creativity when their drive stems from intrinsic sources. Additionally, providing a psychologically safe environment that nurtures autonomy, competence, and relatedness is believed to facilitate the development of intrinsic motivation. When employees perceive a state of psychological safety, they are more inclined to perceive a sense of autonomy in their work, resulting in heightened intrinsic drive, hence fostering elevated levels of creativity. In brief, our hypothesis proposes a favorable correlation between psychological safety and employee creativity.

**Hypothesis 6: The employees' creativity is positively impacted by psychological safety.**

### **The Mediating Roles of Psychological Safety**

Jit et al. (2017) proposed that Servant Leadership emphasizes leaders' dedication to meeting their followers' needs, promoting individual development, and establishing a nurturing work atmosphere. Edmondson (1999) defines that establishing psychological safety is of utmost importance in fostering an environment wherein individuals feel confident in voicing their thoughts and engaging in interpersonal endeavors without apprehension of adverse outcomes. As posited by the Servant Leadership philosophy, leaders prioritizing team members' well-being and growth fosters an environment conducive to cultivating creativity. Servant leaders foster an environment that facilitates creative thinking by advocating for transparent communication, fostering cooperation, and offering assistance. Furthermore, leaders are more likely to build a trustworthy workplace and foster a sense of psychological safety when they demonstrate empathy for their followers, prioritize interpersonal connections, and ask for subordinates' opinions. Hence, leaders are more likely to build a trustworthy workplace and foster a sense of psychological safety when they demonstrate empathy for their followers, prioritize interpersonal connections, and solicit feedback from subordinates (Khan et al., 2023). In order to enhance comprehension of how servant leadership impacts creativity, we posit that psychological safety plays a vital role as a mediating factor. Psychological safety is a mediating factor between servant leadership and employee creativity. Within a psychologically safe context, individuals experience a sense of freedom to express their viewpoints, exchange varied perspectives, and undertake innovative endeavors. This statement is consistent with the tenets of Servant Leadership, wherein leaders foster an environment characterized by trust, transparency, and assistance.

According to existing research, evidence supports that psychological safety within a workplace environment positively impacts employees' inclination to actively participate by sharing ideas and engaging in creative problem-solving activities. When employees have a sense of psychological safety, they are inclined to engage in behaviors such as exploring alternative solutions, questioning established norms, and undertaking risks connected with creative pursuits.

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**Hypotheses 7: Psychological Safety mediates the relationship between servant leadership and frontline employee creativity**



## Research Methodology

This quantitative study focused on the research methodology that entailed initiating communication with the manager of each hotel in order to solicit their voluntary participation as subjects for the study. Cover letters were written to the hotels after receiving interest and approval from their management. Subsequently, meetings were conducted with HR managers to engage in discussions regarding the study's goals and objectives. The study only received consent from 7 of the 12 HR managers approached. Cover letters were distributed after receiving approval and interest from the hotel's management. Subsequently, HR managers were invited to meetings to discuss the study's aims and objectives. A full explanation of the study's objectives and advantages was provided in the cover letter. This study further guaranteed their anonymity by promising to utilize participants' answers exclusively for research.

Similarly, the human resources managers were informed. In the first part of the survey, we asked about demographics like age, education level, gender, and years of work experience. Consequently, the surveys were to be sent to a wide variety of frontline staff who had substantial contact with consumers by HR managers or their representatives.

Following the agreement of the hotel management to participate, many prospective frontline workers respondents indicated their interest in providing data. The investigation was subsequently advanced by contacting each respondent individually and requesting their agreement to partake in the survey. The hotel respondents were chosen from the Indonesian Hotels and Restaurants Association's (IHRA) directory. The official list also contained each hotel's address, phone number, and star rating. For this particular research project, only hotels with four and five stars were selected for the following three reasons: The primary rationale for selecting four and five-star hotels as the focus of this study was their notable emphasis on fostering a creative climate (Altememi et al., 2013). Second, different leadership styles could impact higher-profile hotels in Indonesia compared to smaller hotels with lesser ratings.

Furthermore, it has been highlighted that frontline staff at four- and five-star hotels are expected to go above and beyond to meet client expectations through creative conduct, in contrast to staff at lower-tier hotels. Therefore, this particular environment was deemed appropriate for examining the creativity of frontline employees (e.g., front desk, receptionists, and concierges). They were also provided with adequate questionnaires and asked to detail the number of front-desk staff members who have been with the company for at least a year. Thirty days later, participants were asked to return the survey to their HR representatives or managers. The information was relayed to the researcher by the HR department, who instructed them to return the questionnaires in a sealed envelope. A distribution of 350 questionnaires was conducted among hotel personnel. In total, 277 responses were obtained. Three were deemed ineligible and hence excluded from the analysis.

Consequently, 274 questionnaires were employed for further investigation, indicating a response rate of 78.2%. In addition, participants were duly notified that their responses would be subjected to anonymization. To mitigate the potential influence of social desirability bias, the researchers refrained from soliciting or documenting any identifiable details from the participants. Table 1 displays the results of the data tabulation, which offers a comprehensive summary of the discoveries. By adopting this methodology, a comprehensive investigation was conducted into the viewpoints and experiences of frontline staff members at the designated four and five-star hotels. As a result, significant insights were gained regarding the intricacies of their professional milieu and a more profound comprehension of the elements that impact their creativity in the workplace.

## Measure

Brislin's (1980) translation technique was utilized to convert all items into Bahasa Indonesia, considering that all of the scales we adopted were in the English edition. For each issue, we assigned a score ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

**Servant Leadership.** We employed a 7-item unidimensional shortened version of the servant leadership scale created by Liden et al. (2015). The following is an example of a scale item: "My Manager spends the time to form quality relationships with frontline employees."

**Psychological Safety.** A 3-item scale, based on the work of Carmeli et al. (2010) and adapted from Individual psychological safety, was evaluated utilizing Edmondson's (1999) team psychological safety instrument (e.g., Chughtai, 2016). A sample item of psychological safety was "It is easy for me to ask other members of this organization for help

**Harmonious Creative passion.** We utilized the seven-item scale that Liu et al. (2011) developed to measure harmonious passion. A sample item of harmonious creative passion was "My job allows me to live various creative experiences."

**Frontline employee creativity.** We used the 13-item Zhou and George (2001) scale to measure employee creativity. A sample item of "In the workplace, I am a reliable source of creative ideas."

**Control Variable.** Maintaining alignment with previous research on employee creativity (Volmer et al. 2019), we included employees' gender, age, and work experience as control variables to account for their potential impact on the outcomes of the postulated associations. Participants were asked to indicate their gender (0 for "male," 1 for "female"), age (in years), and length of service to the company or organization in question on the questionnaire's demographic page.

## Findings

### Data Analysis

The responses were divided into various categories based on the considered demographic information. According to the reported data, around 55.8 % of respondents were male, while 44% were female. Most employees were between 31 and 34 (n = 26.2 %).

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**Table 1. Demographic Data (N: 274)**

Category	Distribution	n	Frequency (%)
Gender	Male	153	55.8
	Female	121	44.1
Age	< 20	19	6.9
	20-24	45	16.4
	25 - 30	53	19.3
	31 - 34	72	26.2

Category	Distribution	n	Frequency (%)
	35 - 40	42	15.3
	>40	43	15.6
Education Level	Senior High School or below	174	63.5
	Undergraduate	88	32.1
	Master's degree	12	4.3
Work Experience	1-2 years	72	26.1
	3-5 years	85	30.9
	6-10 years	75	27.2
	More than 10 years	43	15.6

In terms of academic qualifications, the majority of employees had a Senior High School (n = 63.5 %), and in terms of the amount of work experience they had at their hotels, the majority of them had between three and five years of experience (N = 30.9 %). A profile of the employees involved in this study is presented in Table 1.

### Common Method Variance

As suggested by prior research, we implemented procedural and statistical methods to mitigate the potential influence of common method variance (CMV). This technique was necessary because we relied on self-report measures to assess employee creativity. To avoid manipulative or dishonest answers, we took precautions to protect the participants' privacy and identity to implement a procedural remedy. Furthermore, extra factors not part of this study were inserted randomly into the survey to include study variables. This method removes respondents' ability to conceptualize a causal relationship between the constructs by establishing a psychological barrier. We used two assays to quantify the possibility of CMV in our data, taking statistical methodologies into account. Harman's single-factor test was our initial procedure (Harman, 1976). The total variance explained by a single factor was 35.5 percent, significantly less than the minimum threshold of 50 percent; therefore, CMV does not appear to be a significant problem in our research.

Furthermore, a comprehensive collinearity test was performed to produce variance inflated factors (VIF), a method that closely resembles the PLS-SEM data analysis approach that Kock (2015) suggested. Results showing collinearity and, by extension, CMV indicate VIF values of more than 3.3 and are consistent with this test. Our investigation also revealed VIF levels between 1.15 and 2.65, confirming that CMV does not pose a serious hazard to our research.

### Analytical approach

#### Measurement model

Evaluation of the measurement model is the initial stage of PLS-SEM analysis, ensuring that the structural path model incorporates solely constructs with strong validity and reliability. All constructions were tested for reliability using composite reliability (CR). The results showed that every number was higher than the threshold of 0.70. (Ringle et al. 2019). Convergent and

discriminant validity were used in the validity analysis. The first step in determining convergent validity was to examine the item-level factor loadings. Hair et al. (2017) proposed a threshold of 0.5 as the significant value for item loading. This investigation included all items because their loadings exceeded the predetermined significance threshold. Subsequently, according to Hair et al. (2017), a minimum cut-off value of 0.50 was used to evaluate each construct's expected average variance extracted (AVE). The AVE values in this study varied from 0.537 for employee creativity to 0.663 for psychological safety. The values of each construct's factor loadings, CR, and AVE are displayed in Table 2.

**Table 2. Results of Measurement Model Assessment**

Items	Outer Loading	VIF	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extract	$\alpha$
<b><i>Servant Leadership</i></b>			<b>0.905</b>	<b>0.577</b>	<b>0.877</b>
SL 1	0.787	2.162			
SL 2	0.785	2.153			
SL 3	0.795	1.988			
SL 4	0.784	1.913			
SL 5	0.747	1.727			
SL 6	0.734	1.656			
SL 7	0.678	1.505			
<b><i>Harmonious Creative Passion</i></b>			<b>0.895</b>	<b>0.549</b>	<b>0.863</b>
HCP 1	0.756	1.873			
HCP 2	0.786	1.944			
HCP 3	0.778	1.968			
HCP 4	0.748	1.898			
HCP 5	0.731	1.784			
HCP 6	0.706	1.554			
HCP 7	0.673	1.553			
<b><i>Psychological Safety</i></b>			<b>0.838</b>	<b>0.663</b>	<b>0.712</b>
PS 1	0.762	1.392			
PS 2	0.818	1.417			
PS 3	0.807	1.371			
<b><i>Employee Creativity</i></b>			<b>0.930</b>	<b>0.505</b>	<b>0.919</b>
EC 1	0.783	2.324			
EC 2	0.742	2.156			
EC 3	0.731	1.971			
EC 4	0.723	2.085			
EC 5	0.716	2.043			
EC 6	0.710	2.047			
EC 7	0.699	2.001			
EC 8	0.694	2.127			
EC 9	0.691	2.134			
EC 10	0.691	2.077			
EC 11	0.689	2.089			
EC 12	0.681	2.162			
EC 13	0.675	2.195			



Table 3. Results of Fornier-Larker Criterion

Variable	EC	HCP	PS	SL
1 Employee Creativity	<b>0.710</b>			
2 Harmonious Creative	0.440	<b>0.741</b>		
3 Psychological Safety	0.700	0.360	<b>0.796</b>	
4 Servant Leadership	0.415	0.413	0.313	<b>0.760</b>

Note\*: The square root of AVE of every multi-item construct is shown on the main diagonal.

Subsequently, the discriminant validity of the measures was evaluated. Discriminant validity is "the degree to which the measures do not reflect certain other variables." Discriminant validity is characterized by weak correlations between the measured construct and other variables' measures (Hair, 2017). Table 2 shows that each construct's discriminant validity meets the requirements when its square root of the AVE (diagonal values) exceeds its related correlation coefficients, as Fornell and Larcker (1981) stated. Hence, the measurement model adequately demonstrated acceptable discriminant validity.

Table 4. Results of HTMT

Variable	EC	HCP	PS	SL
1 Employee Creativity				
2 Harmonious Creative	0.481			
3 Psychological Safety	0.823	0.438		
4 Servant Leadership	0.451	0.463	0.389	

Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2015) suggested the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) as an additional method for dealing with discriminant validity problems in variance-based structural equation modeling. The exact HTMT cut-off value is debatable, while some scholars have put 0.85 forth as a possible cut-off (Kline, 2011). However, some have suggested 0.90 as a more appropriate figure (Gold et al., 2001). Figure 3 indicates that all the HTMT values are less than the cut-off of 0.90, indicating that the discriminant validity has been proven. In addition, confidence intervals for the HTMT ratio can be constructed using the bootstrapping process. The top 97.5% and bottom 2.5% columns represent the 95% confidence interval's boundaries, respectively. The link between SL and EC has HTMT lower and upper bounds of 0.057 and 0.260, HCP and EC of 0.057 and 0.272, and PS and EC of 0.490 and 0.678. The criteria for HTMT have bootstrap confidence interval values that are all smaller than 1, lending credence to the notion that the constructs possess discriminant validity. The assessment of the measurement model is shown in Tables 2 and 3.

#### 4.3. Structural Inner Model Evaluation

The study's hypotheses were tested utilizing a structural equation analysis. The primary objective is to focus on how effectively the model can explain and forecast the consequence variable variation due to the predictor variable. Regarding model validity, Chin et al. (2008)

categorized endogenous latent variables as either strong, moderate, or weak, depending on the R<sup>2</sup> values of 0.67, 0.33, or 0.19, respectively. The endogenous variable (Harmonious Creative Passion and Psychological Safety) has an R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.171; psychological safety explains 9.8 % of their satisfaction (R<sup>2</sup> = 0.098). Hence, the model validity can be characterized as weak. According to Farooq and Salam (2018), it is important to exercise caution when endorsing a model purely based on the R<sup>2</sup> measurement. As a result, in this investigation, we computed the model's predictive power by employing the predictive relevance (Q<sup>2</sup>) proposed by Stone's (1974) structural model. Blindfolding examination shows that employee creativity values (0.230) were greater than zero in the Stone-Geisser Q<sup>2</sup> calculation (Stone, 1974; Geisser, 1974), suggesting that the structural model had sufficient predictive power. As shown in Table 5, the Root Mean Square Theta (RMS) value is 0.122, greater than 0.120, and the NFI value is 0.752, less than 0.9. Therefore, it cannot achieve the model fit requirement according to these two model evaluations. Based on the SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square) value, which is 0.080, we can conclude that the model is fit since it is less than the threshold of 0.10.

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**Table 5. Goodness of Fit Index**

Endogenous Latent Factors	AVE	R <sup>2</sup>
Harmonious Creative Passion	0.549	0.167
Psychological Safety	0.663	0.095
Employee Creativity		
Average Score	0.606	0.131
AVE*R <sup>2</sup>	0.079	
<b>(GOF = <math>\sqrt{(AVE \times R^2)}</math>)</b>	<b>0.281</b>	
<b>RMS Theta</b>	0.122	
<b>NFI</b>	0.752	
<b>SRMR</b>	0.080	

In order to evaluate the outcomes of the GoF study, Tenenhaus et al. (2005) provided the following threshold values: Whereas GoF<sub>large</sub> is 0.36, GoF<sub>medium</sub> is 0.25, and GoF<sub>small</sub> is 0.1. A GoF value of 0.281 was computed for the model utilized in this study (Table 5), indicating a medium model fit. Finally, a bootstrapping procedure was performed in smart PLS 3.2.7 to establish the route coefficient and its related t-value for both the direct and mediated associations. The current research proposed seven hypotheses, five of which are direct relationships and two of which are indirect. To test our hypotheses, we used the bootstrapping method with 5,000 samples, the "no sign changes" option, and confidence intervals that were 95% free of bias. Since all t-values were more than 1.96 and all p-values were smaller than 0.05, we may accept all direct hypotheses. All of the hypotheses proposed in this research, as depicted in Figure 1 and Table 6, show that SL has a positive and significant impact on EC (H1:  $\beta = 0.165$ ,  $p < .001$ ); HCP and PS (H5:  $\beta = 0.313$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Similarly, the relationship between HCP and EC was significantly positive (H3:  $\beta = 0.159$ ,  $p < .001$ ); this relationship validated H4. Finally, the effect of PS on EC (H2:  $\beta = 0.519$ ,  $p < .001$ ) was also significantly positive, supporting hypothesis 6.

**Table 6. Results of Structural Model Evaluation**

Hypotheses	Relationship	Path Coefficient	Standard Error	t-Statistic	Decision
Direct Effect					
H1	SL → EC	0.165	0.051	3.260**	Accepted
H2	SL → HCP	0.413	0.049	8.456**	Accepted
H3	HCP → EC	0.159	0.054	2.958**	Accepted
H5	SL → PS	0.313	0.062	5.088**	Accepted
H6	PS. → EC	0.519	0.048	12.397**	Accepted
Indirect Effect					
H4	SL → HCP → EC	0.066	0.023	2.819**	Accepted
H7	SL → PS → EC	0.185	0.037	4.997**	Accepted

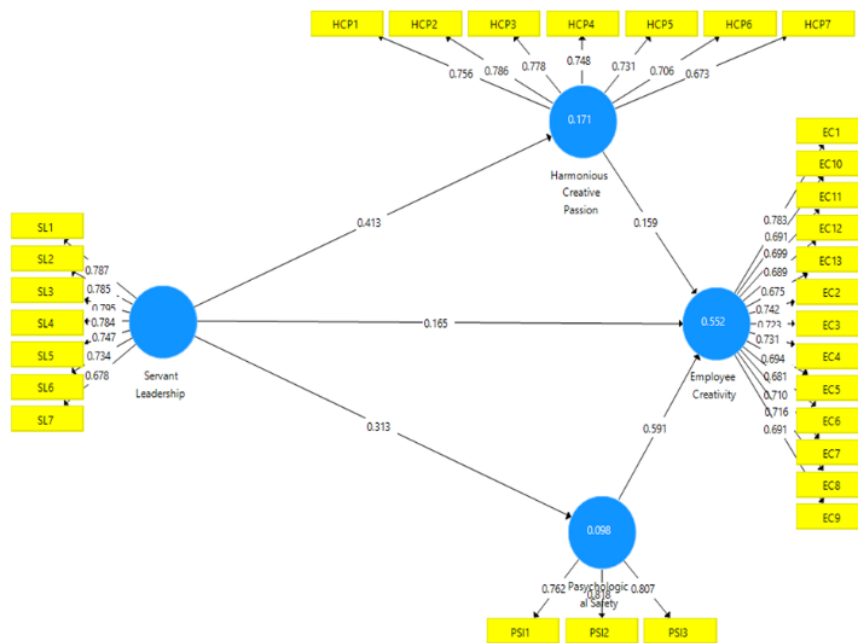
Note: Critical t-values. \*\*2.58 (P<0.01); \* 1.96 (P<0.05)

Based on Hypotheses 4 and 7, this study investigated the role of harmonious creative passion and psychological safety as intervening variables between servant leadership and employee creativity. Our method for producing targeted indirect effects in this dual mediation study was based on that of Preacher and Hayes (2008) and Nitzl et al. (20167). All of the predicted indirect associations (H4 and H7) were confirmed by the mediation test results reported in Table 4. The findings indicate a mediating effect of HCP on the connection between SL and EC (H4:  $\beta = 0.066$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Moreover, the data show that PS mediates the connection between SL and EC (H4:  $\beta = 0.185$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Effect size (F Square) mediation  $\nu$  or  $\nu$  statistics ( $\nu$ ) was also used to measure the relative size of the indirect impact and the overall effect (Lachowicz et al. 2018). According to Cohen's proposed statistical interpretation in Ogbeibu et al. (2020), an  $\nu$  mediating effect of 0.02 is considered low, 0.075 is considered moderate, and 0.175 is considered large.

**Table 5. Upsilon Mediation Effect Size ( $\nu$ ) or Upsilon Statistics ( $\nu$ )**

Statistical Path	Upsilon Statistics ( $\nu$ )	Information
SL (X1) → HCP (M) → EC (Y)	$[0.413]^2 \times [0.413]^2 = 0.004$	Low Influence
SL (X1) → PS (M) → EC (Y)	$[0.313]^2 \times [0.349]^2 = 0.034$	Low Influence

Based on the calculations in Table 5, the role of HCP (M) and PS (M) in mediating the indirect influence of SL (X1) on EC (Y) at the structural level is classified as low.



**Figure 1. Results of the hypothesized relationships**

## Discussion

Long-term competitiveness and survival are enhanced by encouraging creative behavior among frontline personnel in the hospitality industry. Hence, acknowledging the significant impact of leadership styles that are more effective at eliciting creative performance among frontline staff, specifically within the hotel industry, is an interesting topic to research. Drawing on social learning theory (SLT) and the componential theory of creativity, this paper attempts to add to the existing body of knowledge on the connection between servant leadership and employee creativity and analyze how psychological safety and harmonious creative passion mediate the relationship. The following parts emphasize the study's theoretical contributions and practical implications.

## Theoretical Contribution 69

The research has significant theoretical contributions to the fields of leadership and frontline employees in the hospitality context. First, the paper contributes to the research on employees' creativity by examining the role of servant leadership, harmonious creative passion, and psychological safety. The current study clarified the psychological process that connects SL with frontline employee creativity. Leaders who display servant characteristics will provide influential role-modeling signals for individuals and motivate them by giving individuals greater personal or psychological resources that may boost the creativity level of employees. It is worth mentioning that the authors could not find any prior empirical study that has examined these outcomes simultaneously in the hospitality business. On a second point, the research adds to the existing body of literature on hospitality, particularly with how SL influences staff



creativity via HCP and PS. The theoretical basis for this influence is grounded in the Social Learning Theory (SLT) proposed by Bandura. According to SLT, when employees believe that their leaders prioritize the well-being and growth of their team members, it fosters a pleasant and trustworthy work environment. This fosters a culture of open communication, the exchange of knowledge, and a feeling of psychological safety among the workforce.

Consequently, people are more inclined to participate in observational learning, taking inspiration from leaders who demonstrate servant behaviors. Moreover, employees are incentivized to undertake risks and engage in creative thinking when they realize their ideas are highly regarded and possess the independence to investigate and execute inventive solutions. The social learning dynamics within a servant leadership framework contribute to developing a culture that fosters and enhances employee creativity.

Furthermore, previous studies on passion have provided valuable insights into employees' creative abilities (Ivcevic, 2021; Żywiołek et al., 2011). However, these studies have overlooked the aspect of creativity, specifically within the hotel business. The creativity of frontline employees plays a crucial role in enhancing the performance of hotel firms. This aspect is of great interest to both researchers and professionals in the hotel industry due to the positive impact of creativity on adapting to customer demands, dealing with intense market competition, and enhancing the value of the services provided by existing firms. Therefore, this study expands the knowledge of passion within the service industry. While the connection between leadership and employee creativity has been extensively discussed in European and Western literature, a significant lack of attention has been given to investigating its implications and discussion in an Asian context. Scholars have advocated for Asian countries to cultivate the creative capacity of their workforce in order to contribute to a creative industry (Peng et al., 2018). The generalizability of findings from past research studies may be limited when applied to developing countries like Indonesia. Conducting a study on creativity among frontline staff in Indonesia, an emerging Asian environment, would undoubtedly contribute to expanding existing literature.

### **Practical Contribution**

This study has numerous relevant practical implications for managers and frontline workers in the hotel sector. Servant leadership's significance necessitates organizations to implement comprehensive human resource management practices that foster servant leadership. We proposed that implementing servant leadership, which prioritizes comprehending employees and fostering interpersonal acceptance, will enhance the recognition and comprehension of the various challenges employees encounter during the creative process. Navigating through the ups and downs of emotions, a servant-leader will empathize and offer the support needed to keep the ideas flowing, ultimately leading to the effective execution of the original concept. A servant-leader will always create and sustain an inclusive workplace that complies with the (sometimes strange or unexpected) needs of the creative team to set the creative process in motion. Therefore, to maintain a high rate of creativity in a dynamic, fast-paced, and unpredictable hospitality industrial environment, companies should look for managers with amiable personalities, a strong desire to help others, and strong moral principles.

Furthermore, it is essential to provide training for managers to adopt servant leadership conduct. Additionally, they should be given ample resources to empower their followers and fulfill their wants and interests. By fostering a harmonious and psychological safety,

organizations can create a psychologically safe space where employees feel secure, empowering them to engage in creative behavior. In addition, organizations should foster staff passion and customer focus. Organizations can foster employee passion by creating work settings reinforce their value and interest in their occupations. Organizations may create positive, purposeful, and stimulating work. Providing autonomy and a supportive work environment where individuals may freely voice their requirements can help foster harmonious passion. Companies should also provide constructive feedback to help employees reach their goals and motivate them to work hard. In a similar vein, in order to inspire frontline staff creativity, organizations must actively promote psychological safety. The dynamic and customer-centric hotel sector relies on frontline personnel for client happiness and service innovation. These employees are likelier to express their ideas, give feedback, and solve problems in a psychologically safe setting. Create an open-communication culture, value varied opinions, and use feedback processes emphasizing improvement rather than blame. Hotels can tap into frontline employees' creativity by prioritizing psychological safety, improving client experiences, and staying competitive in the ever-changing hospitality industry.

### **Limitations**

While our analysis has theoretical and practical consequences, it has constraints that propose future research areas. This study used self-report measures of employee creativity, which may cause CMV and impact the connections between study variables. Further study should replicate our findings using intermediate supervisor-rated and self-rated measures of creative behavior. Second, cross-sectional research design may hinder causality conclusions. While cross-sectional design is often criticized in organizational psychology and behavioral research due to its limitations, Spector (2019) recognizes its potential for significant insights. An Indonesian hotel employee sample was used to test the hypothesized study model. Research conducted in a single sector and country may not apply to other sectors and countries. Different cultural backgrounds react differently to servant leadership. In particular, Dierendonck (2011) suggested that followers with low power distance or strong humane orientation may be more susceptible to servant leadership. Indonesians can be less receptive to servant leadership due to their high-power distance. Future research may use a cross-industry and cross-cultural sample to understand hypothesized linkages better, apply the results, and have more relevant practical implications.

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