



Does Psychological Empowerment Mediate the Effect of Job Security on Employees' Productivity? Evidence from Hospitality and Tourism Industry

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ARTICLE INFO

Abstract

Keywords:

Job security, employees' productivity, psychological empowerment, hospitality and tourism industry.

(IJTHS), O6U

Vol 9, No.2,
October 2025,
pp. 188- 208

Received:1/1/2025
Accepted:17/2/2025
Published:15/9/2025

This study investigates the impact of job security on employees' productivity within the Egyptian hospitality and tourism sector, drawing upon social exchange theory. Recognizing the critical role of employees' productivity, this research examines the direct effect of job security and the mediating role of psychological empowerment on employees' productivity. Utilizing the PLS-SEM approach, the study analyzed data from 467 respondents employed in category-A travel agencies and five-star hotels within the Greater Cairo area of Egypt. The findings demonstrate a significant positive relationship between job security, employees' productivity, and psychological empowerment. Furthermore, psychological empowerment was found to significantly and positively influence employees' productivity. The study confirms that psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between job security and employees' productivity. This research offers valuable theoretical and practical contributions. It highlights the critical role of psychological empowerment as a mediator in the social exchange process, demonstrating how job security, through its influence on psychological empowerment, ultimately impacts employees' productivity.

Introduction

Employees' productivity (EP) is a critical factor for success in any business, particularly within the hospitality and tourism industry, which is currently grappling with a workforce crisis. Hospitality organizations face numerous challenges, including high staff turnover, mandatory

overtime, low wages, seasonal fluctuations in demand, and more (Ritsri & Meeprom, 2020). In the service sector, maintaining high levels of employee productivity is paramount to effectively address guest needs and expectations (Sadek, 2016; Shaheen et al., 2018). The hotel industry, characterized by its labor-intensive nature in production and service delivery, is often associated with relatively low employee productivity rates (Hu & Cai, 2014). Accurately measuring productivity within service industries presents unique challenges due to the intangible nature of services and the inherent complexity of the work environment (Mustapić & Marušić, 2023). EP was defined as an organization's capacity to maximize output while minimizing labor input, or conversely, to achieve desired output levels with minimal labor expenditure (Hu & Cai, 2014). Previous research has identified several factors that can significantly impact employees' productivity, including human capital innovation (Sharma & Bhat, 2020), job satisfaction and training programs (Utar et al., 2021), and the interplay of time-based conflict and altruistic behavior (Barsulai, 2022). Research continues to explore additional factors that may influence employees' productivity.

Job security (JS) has emerged as a critical determinant of employee and organizational productivity (Haq et al., 2023). JS can be defined as the assurance that an employee will maintain their current employment position, regardless of prevailing economic conditions (Adebayo & Lucky, 2012). It centers on the likelihood or probability of an individual retaining their job (Chukuigwe, 2018). Research consistently demonstrates a positive correlation between perceived job security and employee engagement and productivity (Altinay et al., 2019; Adedapo, 2020; Nkedishu, 2020). This sense of stability not only cultivates employee loyalty but also empowers them to concentrate on delivering high-quality service, a crucial factor in the competitive tourism sector (Mohd Said et al., 2020).

Rooted in organizational disciplines, psychological empowerment (PE) is a critical construct that fosters intrinsic motivation toward work (Hsieh et al., 2022). PE was defined as the process of enabling, it emphasizes creating conditions that enhance motivation for task accomplishment by cultivating a strong sense of personal efficacy (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). Spreitzer (1995) characterizes psychological empowerment as a psychological state shaped by the environment, characterized by feelings of autonomy, impact, meaning, and competence. Research demonstrates that empowered employees exhibit increased motivation and commitment, resulting in superior customer interactions and improved service outcomes (Seibert et al., 2011). Moreover, fostering psychological empowerment can enhance job satisfaction, boost productivity, and reduce employee turnover. Empowered employees, believing they possess decision-making control and authority, are more likely to exert greater effort in their work, ultimately contributing to increased organizational productivity. Therefore, employee empowerment emerges as a crucial strategy for enhancing organizational productivity (Salimi & Saeidian, 2015).

This study proposes that psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between job security and employees' productivity, particularly within the tourism industry where service

quality is paramount. Given the unique demands faced by hospitality and tourism employees, understanding how job security influences their sense of empowerment is crucial for comprehending its impact on productivity. However, this area remains under-explored, particularly within the hospitality and tourism sector, as existing research has not adequately addressed this specific relationship. Therefore, this study leverages social exchange theory to investigate how employees' sense of job security contributes to their productivity through the mediating role of psychological empowerment.

Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses Development

Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory (SET), as coined by Homans (1958), posits that social behavior is an exchange process where individuals strive to maximize rewards and minimize costs in their interactions. Homans laid the groundwork by suggesting that relationships are formed and maintained based on the perceived benefits received from them. Building upon this, Kelley et al. (1962) emphasized the role of social exchanges in shaping interpersonal relationships. Within the workplace context, SET suggests that when employers provide positive exchanges, such as job security, recognition, and empowerment, employees are likely to reciprocate with increased loyalty and productivity. This reciprocal relationship forms the basis for a more engaged workforce, highlighting the importance of mutual benefit in organizational settings (Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu, 2018). Consequently, SET provides a valuable framework for understanding the interplay between job security, psychological empowerment, and employees' productivity within the hospitality and tourism sector.

Job Security and Employees' Productivity

Job security signifies the degree to which organizations ensure the continuity of employment for their employees, thereby safeguarding valuable job features such as promotion opportunities and long-term career prospects (De Meulenaere et al., 2016). By providing job security, organizations demonstrate their appreciation for employee contributions, experience, and engagement, signifying a willingness to invest time and resources in their development (Altinay et al., 2019). Employees experiencing high job security are more likely to exhibit optimal performance within an organization they perceive as committed to their long-term employment (Segun et al., 2024). This sense of security is a critical determinant of employees' productivity. Research has consistently shown that when employees perceive their positions as secure, they exhibit heightened levels of engagement and commitment to their tasks (Imawati, 2022). Conversely, a perceived lack of job security can induce anxiety and diminish motivation, ultimately leading to decreased productivity (Klug et al., 2024). Drawing on social exchange theory, prior research has suggested that employees reciprocate a supportive work environment with increased loyalty and dedication to the organization and its objectives. Consequently, employees are more likely to act as "good organizational agents," exhibiting behaviors that benefit the organization (Imran et al., 2015; Nkedishu, 2020). This translates to increased

cooperation among colleagues, a greater willingness to share skills and knowledge, and ultimately, enhanced overall productivity (Haq et al., 2023). Hence, the study hypothesized that:

H1: Job security has a positive effect on employees' productivity.

Job Security and Employee Psychological Empowerment

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs posits that human needs are hierarchically arranged, encompassing physiological requirements, safety and security, belongingness, self-esteem, and self-actualization (Akilu & Junaidu, 2015). Within an organizational context, achieving employee job satisfaction and enhanced performance necessitates addressing these fundamental needs. This theory provides a framework for understanding the various motivational factors that influence employee behavior (Singhapakdi et al., 2015). Organizations that prioritize employee needs related to job security and compensation effectively address the initial three levels of Maslow's hierarchy: physiological needs, safety and security, and belongingness (Akilu & Junaidu, 2015). Meeting physiological needs, such as ensuring financial stability in the workplace (George, 2015), contributes to a sense of belonging by fulfilling these foundational requirements. Ekwoaba et al. (2015) argue that the provision of job security fulfills physiological needs and aligns with broader workforce requirements at the second level of Maslow's hierarchy. By fulfilling these initial needs, organizations create a positive social exchange dynamic where employees feel valued and appreciated. This, in turn, fosters a sense of trust and reciprocity, motivating employees to contribute more effectively (Wang et al., 2021). Furthermore, Ishtiaq et al. (2022) emphasize that job security plays a crucial role in enhancing not only employees' sense of stability but also their psychological empowerment. When individuals perceive their positions as secure, they experience a sense of trust and confidence in the organization. This trust can be viewed as a valuable "reward" within the SET framework, motivating employees to take ownership of their tasks and contribute meaningfully to the organization. Based on this analysis, the following hypothesis was developed.

H2: Job security has a positive effect on employee psychological empowerment.

Psychological Empowerment and Employees' Productivity

Psychological empowerment, as defined by Menon (1999), is a multifaceted construct encompassing four key dimensions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact (Lee & Koh, 2001). This framework positions psychological empowerment as a form of intrinsic motivation that fosters proactive control within the workplace (Li et al., 2015). From the social exchange theory perspective, these components can be viewed as valuable "rewards" provided by the organization to employees (Ertürk & Vurgun, 2015). Meaning reflects the alignment between employees' values and beliefs with their specific work environment and job demands (Joo & Shim, 2010). Competence relates closely to self-efficacy, indicating an employee's belief in their ability to perform tasks effectively within the work setting (Ardalan, 2021). Self-determination refers to an employee's authority and autonomy to initiate actions, establish rules, and maintain specific behaviors within the workplace (Ghalavi & Nastiezaie, 2020). Impact highlights

employees' perception that their contributions have a meaningful impact on the organization. This gives them a sense of value and significance. This sense of impact serves as a powerful motivator, encouraging employees to exert greater effort and contribute more effectively (Spreitzer, 1995).

Koberg (1990) posited that fostering psychological empowerment can enhance job satisfaction, increase productivity, and reduce employee turnover. Empowered employees, believing they possess decision control and authority, are more likely to exert greater effort in their work, ultimately contributing to increased organizational productivity (Salimi & Saeidian, 2015). Zare et al. (2015) further supported this notion, reporting a direct relationship between psychological empowerment and productivity. They emphasized that psychological empowerment, by enhancing self-efficacy and efficiency, unlocks the potential of human ability. It acts as a developmental process that, through the expansion of individual and team capabilities, fosters continuous productivity improvement. Based on the arguments and evidence presented by previous researchers, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H3: Psychological empowerment has a positive effect on employees' productivity.

The Mediating Role of Psychological Empowerment

Psychological empowerment has gained significant recognition in both management theories and practices, particularly within tourism research, where it is considered a precursor to enhanced efficiency and satisfaction (Spreitzer, 1995; Moura et al., 2015; Alagarsamy et al., 2023). Psychological empowerment reflects an individual's intrinsic motivation to actively engage with their work environment and shape their roles within it. It is a multifaceted psychological state characterized by four key dimensions: meaning, self-efficacy, autonomy, and influence (Wang & Zhang, 2011). Bordin et al. (2006) posited that job security significantly enhances employees' levels of psychological empowerment. Empowerment necessitates that employees are both empowered and expected to exercise initiative and take calculated risks. Job security provides the necessary psychological safety for employees to take such initiatives without fear of negative consequences, such as job termination (Stander & Rothmann, 2010). Conversely, job insecurity can create a climate of anxiety and fear, diminishing motivation and contributing to feelings of powerlessness (Klehe et al., 2012). These negative emotions can significantly impede employee empowerment, as they may be less likely to demonstrate initiative.

Job security fosters strong trust and positive emotions (Hipp, 2020), motivating employees to engage in honest behavior and enhancing their self-efficacy, thereby positively impacting their perception of psychological empowerment (Wang et al., 2021). Employees with high levels of psychological empowerment are more likely to feel valued and appreciated by the organization, fostering a strong sense of organizational affiliation (Chiang & Hsieh, 2012). This enhanced sense of belonging reduces anxiety about job loss and motivates employees to increase their performance and productivity (Zare et al., 2015). Furthermore, high psychological empowerment grants employees greater autonomy and decision-making power, a valuable resource that

enhances their flexibility and reduces uncertainty, ultimately contributing to increased productivity (Wang & Zhang, 2011; Ghena et al., 2019). Based on SET, this study hypothesizes that employees' productivity will increase when individuals perceive a positive and equitable exchange with their organization, characterized by valued contributions (i.e., job security) through increased motivation (i.e., psychological empowerment). Accordingly, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H4: Psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between job security and employees' productivity.

The following Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework for the study.

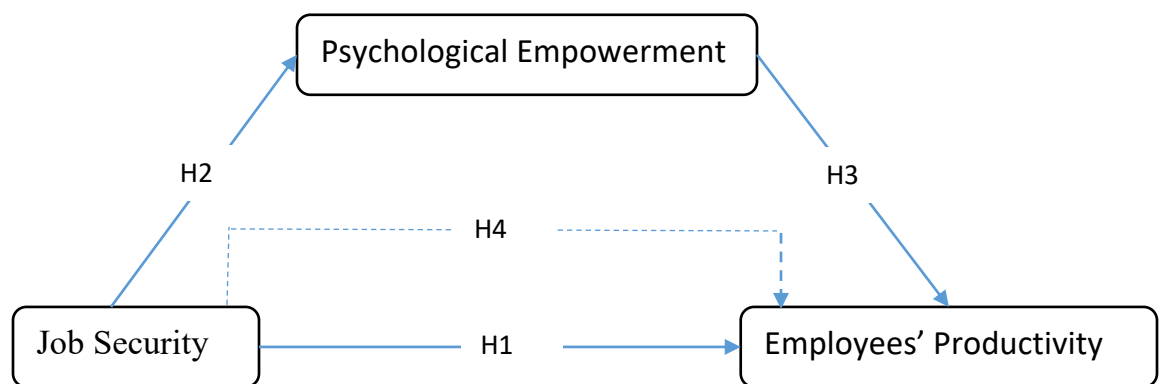


Figure (1): Conceptual framework

Methodology

A quantitative research approach was adopted to test the proposed hypotheses. Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) examined the direct and indirect relationships between job security, psychological empowerment, and employees' productivity. WarpPLS v.8.0 software was used for carrying out PLS-SEM (Kock, 2022), which is particularly well-suited for complex models that involve multiple latent variables and has seen widespread use in hospitality and tourism research (ElAdawi et al., 2024; Abd El-majeed et al., 2025; Elsokkary et al., 2025). Descriptive statistics were also used to describe the demographic profile of the sample.

Measures and Instrument Development

To operationalize the primary constructs, validated scales from previous research were adapted. These English-language scales underwent a rigorous back-translation process to ensure their cultural and linguistic appropriateness for Arabic-speaking participants. The resulting Arabic version was then validated to confirm their reliability and validity for the current study. Items were answered by participants using a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting "strongly disagree" and 5 denoting "strongly agree."

Job security (JS): A three-item scale adapted from Anand et al. (2023) was used to measure JS. A sample item is, *"If my job were eliminated, I would be offered another job in my current organization."* Higher scores indicate a stronger perception of job security.

Psychological empowerment (PE): A seven-item scale adopted from Soleimani et al. (2023) was used to assess PE. A representative item is, *"I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job."* Higher scores reflect higher levels of psychological empowerment.

Employees' productivity (EP): A five-item scale adapted from Farooq & Sultana (2022) was used to measure EP. A sample item is, *"I accomplish tasks quickly and efficiently."* Higher scores indicate a greater tendency to be productive at work.

Sampling and Data Collection

The study employed a mixed-methods approach, primarily relying on quantitative data collection. The sample for this study comprised employees from category-A travel agencies and five-star hotels located in Greater Cairo, Egypt, between August 2024 and December 2024. This region was chosen as the primary sample frame due to its significant concentration of approximately 28 five-star hotels and 1235 category-A travel agencies (Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, 2024). A judgmental sampling technique was used to select five-star hotels, as these establishments adhere to rigorous international standards for service, facilities, and operations. Meanwhile, category-A travel agencies, concentrated in Greater Cairo, comprise approximately 85% of Egypt's travel agency sector and were chosen due to their extensive service offerings for customers. This approach ensured a consistent and reliable sample for analysis (Abouelenien et al., 2024). To gather data, a self-administered questionnaire was distributed to approximately 600 staff members. A combination of convenience and snowball sampling methods was utilized to reach potential participants. Convenience sampling involved distributing questionnaires to accessible individuals, while snowball sampling encouraged participants to share the survey with their colleagues and networks within the five-star hotel industry through social media platforms (e.g., WhatsApp and Messenger). Of the 600 questionnaires distributed, 467 were deemed valid, resulting in a response rate of 77.8%. This sample size is considered adequate, as it exceeds the recommended minimum of 10 participants per item (Hair et al., 2010), given the study's 15-item scale measuring job security, employees' productivity, and psychological empowerment.

The respondents were predominantly male (63.8%), and most were aged 30-40 (52.9%). The majority were employed in travel agencies (53.5%), and holding bachelor's degrees (56%). Notably, 39.6% of respondents possessed 16 or more years of experience in the industry. A more detailed breakdown of respondent characteristics can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Participants' profile

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	298	63.8
	Female	169	36.2
Age	<30years	84	18
	30: ≤40 years	247	52.9
	41: ≤50 years	136	29.1
	51 years and more	-	-
Education	High schools/institute	154	33.9
	Bachelor	261	56
	Master/PhD	52	11.1
Experience	< 5 years	-	-
	5: ≤10 years	123	26.3
	11: ≤15 years	159	34.1
	16 years and more	185	39.6
Employer	Five-star hotel	217	46.5
	Category-A travel agency	250	53.5

Results

Measurements outer model assessment

To confirm the validity and reliability of our measures, we assessed several psychometric properties:

- Convergent Validity: Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceeded 0.5 for all constructs (ranging from 0.708 to 0.836, as shown in Table 2), indicating that the constructs adequately represent their respective indicators (Hair et al., 2021).
- Internal Consistency Reliability: According to Table 2, composite reliability (CR) values ranged from 0.925 to 0.944, and Cronbach's Alpha (CA) values ranged from 0.899 to 0.930, both exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.7, demonstrating high internal consistency (Kock, 2022).
- Indicator Reliability: All outer loadings were above 0.5 (ranging from 0.723 to 0.937, Table 2), indicating strong relationships between indicators and their respective constructs (Sarstedt et al., 2021).
- Common Method Bias (CMB): Based on Table 2, variance inflation factors (VIFs) were all below 3.3, suggesting no significant common method bias (Kock et al., 2021).

Table 2. Factor loadings, Cronbach Alpha, CR, AVE, and VIF

	Item Loading	CR	CA	AVE	VIF
Job Security (JS)	-	0.939	0.902	0.836	2.563
JS.1	0.937				
JS.2	0.924				
JS.3	0.882				
Psychological Empowerment (PE)	-	0.944	0.930	0.708	3.228
PE.1	0.873				
PE.2	0.909				
PE.3	0.894				
PE.4	0.904				
PE.5	0.723				
PE.6	0.829				
PE.7	0.739				
Employees' Productivity (EP)	-	0.925	0.899	0.713	3.122
EP.1	0.792				
EP.2	0.815				
EP.3	0.917				
EP.4	0.829				
EP.5	0.865				

e. Discriminant Validity

according to Tables 3 and 4, Both the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) confirmed discriminant validity, demonstrating that the constructs are distinct from one another (Sarstedt et al., 2021).

Collectively, these findings support the reliability and validity of the measurement instrument, enhancing the confidence in our study's results.

Table 3. Fornell– Larcker results

	JS	EP	PE
Job Security (JS)	0.914	0.735	0.745
Employees' Productivity (EP)	0.735	0.845	0.797
Psychological Empowerment (PE)	0.745	0.797	0.842

Table 4. HTMT ratios

(good if < 0.90, best if < 0.85)	JS	EP	PE
JS			
EP	0.818		
PE	0.814	0.874	

Structural model assessment

Structural model assessment is the second step of PLS-SEM analysis. Five key criteria were employed to assess its efficacy:

- a. Path coefficients: Significant path coefficients ($p < 0.05$) were found for the relationships between job security and psychological empowerment ($\beta = 0.75$, $p < 0.001$), and between both

job security ($\beta = 0.32$, $p < 0.001$) and psychological empowerment ($\beta = 0.57$, $p < 0.001$) and employees' productivity, as shown in Figure 2.

- b. Coefficient of determination (R^2): According to Figure 2, job security explained 56% of the variance in psychological empowerment, and together, job security and psychological empowerment explained 69% of the variance in employees' productivity.
- c. Effect size (f^2): Job security and psychological empowerment demonstrated medium and strong positive effects on employees' productivity ($f^2 = 0.23$ and 0.46 , respectively). Job security also had a strong positive impact on psychological empowerment ($f^2 = 0.56$) (Hair et al., 2021), as exhibited in Table 5.

Table 5. The effect size (f^2) of constructs

Constructs/Dimensions	JS	PE
Employees' Productivity (EP)	0.23	0.46
Psychological Empowerment (PE)	0.56	

- d. Predictive relevance (Q^2): The model exhibited strong predictive relevance, with all Q^2 values exceeding 0 (Table 6), indicating acceptable predictive accuracy (Sarstedt et al., 2021).

Table 6. The predictive relevance Q^2 of the model

Constructs/Dimensions	Q^2	Predictive Relevance
Employees' Productivity (EP)	0.70	Strong
Psychological Empowerment (PE)	0.56	Strong

- e. Model fit: The overall model fit was evaluated using various fit indices, including RSCR, GoF, SPR, APC, and ARS. As shown in Table 7, the results indicated a good overall fit for the model (Kock, 2022).

Table 7. Model fit and quality indices

	Assessment	Criterion	Supported/Rejected
Average path coefficient (APC)	0.544, $P < 0.001$	$P < 0.05$	Supported
Average R-squared (ARS)	0.624, $P < 0.001$	$P < 0.05$	Supported
Average adjusted R-squared (AARS)	0.621, $P < 0.001$	$P < 0.05$	Supported
Average block VIF (AVIF)	2.206	acceptable if ≤ 5 , ideally ≤ 3.3	Supported
Average full collinearity VIF (AFVIF)	2.971	acceptable if ≤ 5 , ideally ≤ 3.3	Supported
Tenenhaus GoF (GoF)	0.685	small ≥ 0.1 , medium ≥ 0.25 , large ≥ 0.36	Supported
Sympson's paradox ratio (SPR)	1.000	acceptable if ≥ 0.7 , ideally = 1	Supported
R-squared contribution ratio (RSCR)	1.000	acceptable if ≥ 0.9 , ideally = 1	Supported
Statistical suppression ratio (SSR)	1.000	acceptable if ≥ 0.7	Supported
Nonlinear bivariate causality direction ratio (NLBCDR)	1.000	acceptable if ≥ 0.7	Supported

Hypotheses Testing

The findings of the path analysis, as illustrated in Table 8 and Figure 2, provided compelling empirical support for the proposed model as follows.

Hypothesis 1 and 3: Consistent with our predictions, job security demonstrated a significant positive impact on both employees' productivity ($\beta = 0.32$, $p < 0.001$) and psychological empowerment ($\beta = 0.75$, $p < 0.001$). These findings suggest that when employees perceive a high level of job security, they tend to experience increased feelings of empowerment and are more likely to be productive. Hypothesis 2: As expected, psychological empowerment was also significantly and positively associated with employees' productivity ($\beta = 0.57$, $p < 0.001$). This supports the notion that empowered employees are more motivated, engaged, and effective in their roles. Hypothesis 4: To investigate the mediating role of psychological empowerment, a bootstrapped confidence interval analysis was conducted (Table 9). The analysis revealed a significant indirect effect of job security on employees' productivity through psychological empowerment ($\beta = 0.43$, $t\text{-value} = 9.716$). The 95% confidence interval (LL = 0.341, UL = 0.514) did not include zero, further confirming the mediating role of psychological empowerment according to Kisbu-Sakarya et al. (2014). These findings suggest that a substantial portion of the positive impact of job security on employees' productivity is channeled through increased feelings of psychological empowerment.

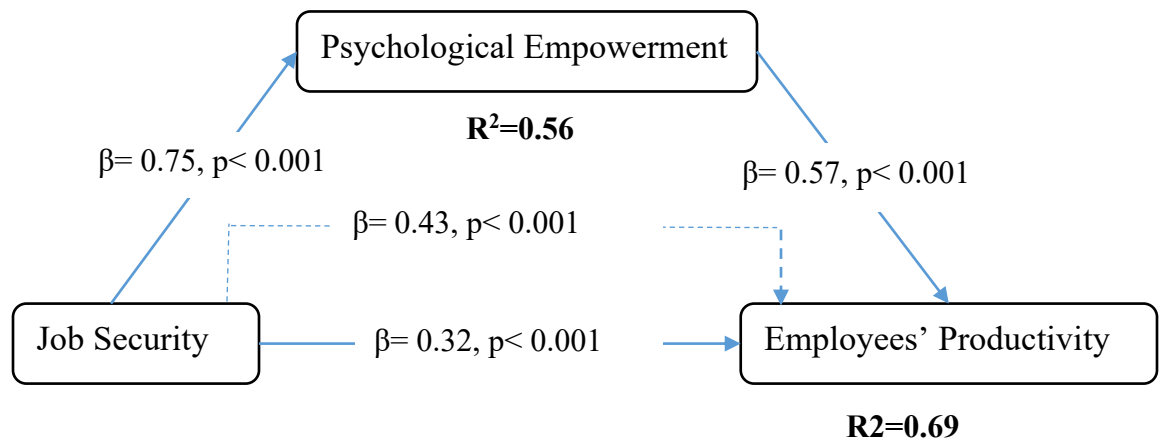


Figure 2. Structural model findings

Table 8. Path coefficient of the study hypotheses

H	Relationships	Std. Beta	Std. Error	T- Value	P- Value	Result
H1	JS → EP	0.32	0.064	4.952	<0.001	Accepted
H2	JS → PE	0.75	0.059	12.598	<0.001	
H3	PE → EP	0.57	0.061	9.317	<0.001	
H4	JS → PE → EP	0.43	0.044	9.716	<0.001	

Table 9. Mediation analysis results

H4	Path a JS→PE	Path b PE→EP	Indirect Effect	SE	t-value	95% LL	95% UL	Decision
JS→PE→EP	0.75	0.57	0.43	0.044	9.716	0.341	0.514	Mediation

Discussion

This study, grounded in social exchange theory, investigated the mediating role of psychological empowerment in the relationship between job security and employees' productivity within the Egyptian hospitality and tourism sector. The first hypothesis, positing a positive association between job security and employees' productivity, was supported, aligning with previous research by Imran et al. (2015) and Nkedishu (2020). Social exchange theory suggests that employees are more likely to be productive when they feel secure in their employment. This is because job insecurity can negatively impact employee motivation and performance (Asfaw & Chang, 2019). Contract employees, for instance, often experience lower motivation due to the lack of long-term stability (van Loon et al., 2020). Organizations benefit from motivated and satisfied employees who can do their best. Providing job security and ensuring a positive work environment is crucial for the hospitality and tourism industry, which heavily relies on employee attitude and customer interaction (Abouelenien et al., 2024).

However, the relationship between job security and productivity is not always linear. Machek (2019) argues that excessive job security can lead to complacency and decreased productivity. When the likelihood of job loss is minimal, employees may experience a decline in motivation due to reduced perceived risk. This "income effect" suggests that high job security can lead to decreased work effort. Conversely, moderate levels of job insecurity can incentivize employees to work harder to maintain their employment and income. Furthermore, excessive job insecurity can have detrimental effects on organizational outcomes. It can negatively impact knowledge sharing, trust, and teamwork. When employees feel insecure, they are less likely to invest in their work, leading to decreased commitment and productivity (Hngoi et al., 2023).

The second hypothesis was supported, predicting a positive relationship between job security and psychological empowerment. This finding is consistent with previous research by Ishtiaq et al. (2022) and Oraibi et al. (2025), demonstrating a positive association between these constructs. Social exchange theory posits that a positive organizational environment that addresses employee needs, such as job security, fosters satisfaction and high productivity (Nderitu & Ndeto, 2019). This aligns with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, where meeting basic needs like physiological needs (e.g., financial stability) and safety needs (e.g., job security) is foundational for higher-level needs, such as self-esteem (e.g., psychological empowerment) (Stewart et al., 2018). As Ishtiaq et al. (2022) highlighted, job security is crucial in fostering psychological empowerment. When employees feel secure in their positions and confident in the continuity of their employment, they are more likely to take ownership of their work and feel empowered to

make significant contributions. This sense of security provides the foundation for employees to thrive and reach their full potential.

Finally, the study found strong support for a positive relationship between psychological empowerment and employees' productivity, aligning with previous research by Salimi & Saeidian (2015), Zare et al. (2015), and Ghena et al. (2019). These studies emphasize that when employees feel empowered to influence their work outcomes, they are more motivated and productive. This empowerment stems from a sense of control and the belief that their actions have a significant impact on the workplace (Ghena et al., 2019). Furthermore, the study demonstrated that psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between job security and employees' productivity. This finding supports the notion that job security, by fostering a sense of stability and confidence in continued employment (Ishtiaq et al., 2022), empowers employees to take ownership of their work and contribute significantly. This increased empowerment, in turn, drives higher levels of employee engagement and productivity. This mediating role of psychological empowerment aligns with the findings of Oraibi et al. (2025), who suggest that psychological empowerment acts as a crucial channel through which the positive effects of job security translate into improved employee behavior. This underscores the reciprocal relationship between the organization and its employees, where a secure and empowering work environment fosters increased employee engagement and productivity.

Theoretical and practical implications

This research significantly contributes to the literature on employees' productivity in the Egyptian hospitality and tourism sector. While some studies have explored this topic (e.g., Shaheen et al., 2018; Mekled et al., 2023), a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing productivity within this context remains elusive. This study addresses this gap by investigating the direct and indirect effects of job security and psychological empowerment on employees' productivity. Drawing on social exchange theory, which posits that positive relationships are built on reciprocity, the study examines how job security, by fostering psychological empowerment, can motivate employees to enhance their productivity. A key contribution of this research lies in identifying psychological empowerment as a crucial mediator in this process. By demonstrating how job security, through its influence on psychological empowerment, impacts employees' productivity, the study provides valuable insights into the underlying mechanisms of social exchange within employment contexts. This research also enhances our understanding of social exchange theory by applying it specifically to the hospitality and tourism industry, considering its unique characteristics and challenges. The findings offer valuable practical guidance for hospitality and tourism organizations seeking to improve employees' productivity by fostering job security and cultivating a psychologically empowering work environment.

This study offers crucial insights for hospitality and tourism managers. Recognizing that job security significantly impacts employees' productivity, managers must prioritize strategies to enhance employees' sense of job security. This involves ensuring fair compensation, equitable reward systems, and equitable access to professional development opportunities (Senol, 2011).

Furthermore, cultivating strong employee-management relationships through open communication and employee involvement is paramount. To enhance employees' job security and productivity, they should strive to build positive relationships with their supervisors. This facilitates access to support and guidance when facing job security concerns (Altinay et al., 2019).

Hiring practices in the hospitality and tourism industry may impact employees' productivity. So, managers must implement employee-friendly practices that prioritize employee well-being. This includes creating a supportive and inclusive work environment and offering competitive compensation and benefits packages. Furthermore, establishing a clear link between employees' productivity and monetary rewards, such as performance-based bonuses or salary increases, can serve as a powerful motivator. This incentivizes employees to consistently strive for higher productivity (Peshave & Gujarathi, 2014). Finally, fostering psychological empowerment among employees, particularly at administrative levels, is crucial. This involves creating a work environment that encourages employee autonomy, recognizes their skills and abilities, and allows for employee input in decision-making processes. By adopting more horizontal organizational structures and fostering a culture of learning and development, hospitality and tourism establishments can empower employees to enhance their performance and contribute effectively to organizational goals (Al-Makhadmah et al., 2020).

Limitations and further research

This study has several limitations. Firstly, the cross-sectional design precludes the establishment of causal relationships between job security, psychological empowerment, and employee' productivity. Longitudinal research, tracking changes in these variables over time, is necessary to understand this relationship's temporal dynamics and causality. Secondly, the study's focus on the Greater Cairo Region of Egypt may limit the generalizability of the findings. While Cairo is a significant center for the hospitality and tourism industry, the socio-cultural and economic context of the region may not be representative of other parts of Egypt or other countries. Cross-cultural research, including comparative studies between developed and developing economies, is crucial to understanding the broader applicability of these findings. Thirdly, the study's focus on five-star hotels and category-A travel agencies may not fully capture employees' experiences in other sectors of the hospitality and tourism industry. Future research should expand the scope to include a wider range of organizations (e.g., restaurants and airline companies) to determine the generalizability of the findings across different organizational contexts. Finally, the study does not fully consider the influence of other organizational factors, such as communication strategies, organizational culture, and leadership styles. These factors can significantly impact employees' sense of job security and how it affects their psychological empowerment and productivity. Future research should incorporate these variables to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the interplay between these factors and their impact on employee outcomes.

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هل التمكين النفسي يتوسط تأثير الأمن الوظيفي على إنتاجية الموظفين؟

الأدلة من صناعة الضيافة والسياحة

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الملخص العربي

تبحث هذه الدراسة في تأثير الأمن الوظيفي على إنتاجية الموظفين في قطاع الضيافة والسياحة المصري، مستفيدة من نظرية التبادل الاجتماعي. وإدراكًا للدور الحاسم لإنتاجية الموظفين، يدرس هذا البحث التأثير المباشر للأمن الوظيفي والدور الوسيط للتمكين النفسي على إنتاجية الموظفين. باستخدام نهج نمذجة المعادلات الهيكلية الجزئية المربعة باستخدام برنامج WarpPLS v.8 ، حلت الدراسة بيانات من 467 مستجيبًا يعملون في وكالات سفر من الفئة أ وفنادق خمس نجوم داخل منطقة القاهرة الكبرى في مصر. توضح النتائج وجود علاقة إيجابية كبيرة بين الأمن الوظيفي وإنتاجية الموظفين والتمكين النفسي. وعلاوة على ذلك، وجد أن التمكين النفسي يؤثر بشكل كبير وإيجابي على إنتاجية الموظفين. أوضحت الدراسة أن التمكين النفسي يتوسط العلاقة بين الأمن الوظيفي وإنتاجية الموظفين. يقدم هذا البحث مساهمات نظرية وعملية قيمة. ويسلط الضوء على الدور الحاسم للتمكين النفسي كوسيط في عملية التبادل الاجتماعي، موضحة كيف يؤثر الأمن الوظيفي، من خلال تأثيره على التمكين النفسي، على إنتاجية الموظفين.

الكلمات الدالة: الأمن الوظيفي، إنتاجية الموظفين، التمكين النفسي، صناعة الضيافة والسياحة.