The Relationship between Leader's Perceived Emotional Labor and Employee Innovative Behavior

"An Empirical Study on Mansoura University Demonstrators and Teaching Assistants"

Research extracted from a master's thesis

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between leader's perceived emotional labor and employee's innovative behavior. Based on established measurement scales, a questionnaire-based deductive approach was used to collect data from a quota sample of 311 demonstrators and teaching assistants from Mansoura university faculties. The proposed model and hypotheses were analyzed using the structural equation modelling employing the PLS-SEM. The results indicated that perceptions of leader's deep acting are positively related to employee's innovative behavior while perceptions of leader's surface acting are not significantly related to employee's innovative behavior. Theoretical and practical implications as well as limitations and venues for future research are presented.

Keywords: Leader's Perceived Emotional Labor, Employee's Innovative Behavior.

1. Introduction:

Currently, higher education institutions (HEIs) are facing the pressures of operating in an increasingly competitive environment (Brewer & Brewer, 2010; Mutonyi, 2021) which has posed various economic and political challenges like the lack of government funds, diversified labor market needs, rapid technological and social changes in society, and the need to continuously provide high-quality educational services (Brewer & Brewer, 2010; Thurlings et al., 2014). In this context, academics' innovative behaviors are essential to ensure that innovation is implemented in aspects of education and development in relation to the challenges (Ibus & Ismail, 2018; Lambriex-Schmitz et al., 2020). For organizations with knowledge-intensive work contexts, motivating employees to innovate has added an additional burden to the role of leaders (Afsar et al., 2014). Higher education leaders face important and challenging emotional roles as they

are expected to manage their emotions and influence the outcomes of followers while performing the duties required within their role (Cowley, 2018). Previous studies have uncovered that employees' emotions and behaviors are influenced by the emotions of their leaders (Sy et al., 2005; Damen et al., 2008). Specifically, the use of emotional labor by leaders affects employees' behaviors, including their innovative behaviors (Wu & Wu, 2019).

The term emotional labor, which refers to managing emotions to create an appropriate publicly observable appearance of the face and body (Hochschild, 1983), is not an uncommon practice in the context of higher education. Academics' roles have started to emerge more and more in a way that fits Hochschild's (1983) portrayal of emotional labor. They have face-to-face and/or voice-to-voice contact with their students, colleagues, administrators, and sometimes, non-academic partners like trustees and the public (Hochschild, 1983). They also elicit emotions in the people they interact with, which requires managing their own emotions and the emotions of others (Meier, 2005).

A review of the literature revealed that leaders who employ emotional labor strategies regularly can effectively influence their employees' emotions, attitudes, and behaviors (Tang et al., 2017; Moon et al., 2018). Furthermore, some studies have gone beyond in-role behaviors of employees and examined the role of leader's emotional labor perceived by their followers on their extra-role behaviors (Fisk & Friesen, 2012; Madrid et al., 2019). However, more empirical studies are needed to clarify the role that perceived leader's emotional labor plays in employee's innovative behaviors.

Hence, the questions that arise in this study are the following:

Q1. Is there a significant negative effect of perceived leader's surface acting on employee's innovative behavior?

Q2. Is there a significant positive effect of perceived leader's deep acting on employee's innovative behavior?

Therefore, the present research attempts to answer these questions by investigating:

RO1. The direct impact of perceived leader's surface acting on employee's innovative behavior.

RO2. The direct impact of perceived leader's deep acting on employee's innovative behavior.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Perceived Leader's Emotional Labor

Emotional labor revolves around creating observable facial and bodily displays to express specific emotions that shape how the audience perceives them and the effect these perceptions have on the audience in return (Hochschild, 1983). Likewise, how employees perceive their leaders' emotional labor plays a vital role in the extent to which leader's emotional labor affects followers' attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes (Gardner et al., 2009; Rajah et al., 2011; Fisk & Friesen, 2012; Moon et al., 2018). Leaders' emotional displays can have a significant impact on their followers' perceptions of leaders (Newcombe & Ashkanasy, 2002; Dasborough, 2006). From authenticity perspective (Gardner et al., 2009), when followers perceive leaders' emotional expressions as insincere or fake (surface acting), followers view them as inauthentic (Rajah et al., 2011). Implications consequent to this lack of authenticity in the eyes of followers are mostly negative (Gardner et al., 2009). On the other hand, when followers perceive leaders as authentic (deep acting), many positive effects are produced (Gardner et al., 2009; Moon et al., 2018).

2.1.1 Dimensions of Perceived Leader's Emotional Labor

Hochschild (1983) introduced surface acting and deep acting as the two main dimensions of managing one's emotions at the workplace.

Surface acting strategy occurs when the internal feelings do not match the requirements of the organization, so the external body language, gestures, and expressions are faked to adhere to the desired rules of the organization or suppress an undesirable feeling (Ashforth & Humphery,

1993; Yang et al., 2019). Surface actors have no intention of internally engaging with the desired emotion (Moin, 2018). This does not mean that the individual is emotionally deficient, but that authentic feelings are different from those that are displayed (Zapf, 2002; Fouquereau et al., 2019). When employed, surface acting is likely to result in a feeling of inauthenticity and is often perceived as fake (Hochschild, 1983; Moin et al., 2021).

On the contrary, *deep acting* refers to changing one's internal feelings to appear authentic to others and to match the required displays of organizations (Hochschild, 1983; Yang, Chen, & Zhao, 2019). Deep acting is achieved through attentional deployment which according to gross (1998) is thinking about something else to change the emotional experience to that which is desired (Beal, 2006; Gross, 1998; Grandey & Sayre, 2019).

2.2 Employee's Innovative Behavior

Employee's innovative behavior (EIB) refers to the intentional generation, promotion, and realization of new ideas within a work role, work group, or organization to benefit role performance, a group, or an organization (Janssen, 2000). EIB differs from the concept of employee creative behavior as it includes the implementation stage and intends to benefit the organization in a way or another as it is expected to result in innovative output (Jong & Hartog, 2010). EIB is portrayed as an individual-level, self-initiated, proactive behavior commonly displayed by frontline employees (Janssen, 2000; Jong & Hartog, 2007). In terms of workplace behaviors, EIB is perceived as an extra role of purely discretionary behaviors assumed by individual employees to constitute innovations (Janssen, 2000; Dorenbosch et al., 2005; Ramamoorthy et al., 2005). It is also argued by Messmann and Mulder (2012) that EIB is dynamic in nature due to the complex relationships between innovation tasks with the actions, needs, and expectations of the many actors engaged in this behavior in order to achieve the development of innovation (Messmann & Mulder, 2015).

Recently, few empirical studies have shown and emphasized the EIB role in HEIs and investigated factors that facilitate such behavior. For instance, AL-Magableh, and Otoum (2014) indicated that there is a positive correlation between administrative empowerment and the innovative behavior of faculty members. Similarly, Ibus et al. (2018) found that innovative behavior of university academics is positively and significantly affected by self-leadership and self-efficacy. Psychological empowerment was also found to be positively associated with EIB (Mutonyi, 2021; Waheed et al., 2018). Wahunyi et al. (2021) studied innovative behaviors of lecturers in relation with organizational learning and organizational commitment and found that they both have a positive direct influence on the innovative behavior of lecturers. Namono et al. (2021) also found that academics and staff members who possess the psychological characteristics of hope exhibit innovative behavior. Faculty members' perceptions of performance appraisal quality relationship have also been found to be effective in promoting their innovative behavior (Waheed, Abbas, & Malik, 2018).

2.2.1 Dimensions of EIB

According to Janssen (2000), EIB consists of three stages, namely, idea generation, idea promotion, and idea realization.

Idea generation, the first stage, refers to the development of new ideas of any kind or type regarding how the improvement of new products, organizational practices or services can be realized (Kanter, 1988; Spiegelaere et al., 2014; Moll, 2015). The beginning of this stage often takes place as a discovery of an opportunity, emergence of a problem, performance discrepancies, or conditions in need of improvement (Jong & Hartog, 2007; Akram et al., 2017).

Once a creative idea has been formed, it must be sold (Jong & Hartog, 2007). To do this, the employee needs support to bring strength to this idea and make use of it (Reuvers et al., 2008). This is the basis around which the *idea promotion* stage revolves. Idea promotion involves championing an idea, reducing barriers and resistance, and mobilizing

support from relevant people throughout the organization in order to facilitate and prepare the successful realization of the idea (Janssen, 2000; Reuvers et al., 2008).

Innovative process is completed by implementing the ideas generated and promoted. *Idea realization* means doing what is required to turn ideas into a regular part of business, such as developing, testing, and modifying new products, services, or business processes (Akram et al., 2017).

3. Research Hypothesis

In order to achieve the research objectives, the following hypotheses have been developed based on the literature review:

3.1 Leader's Perceived Emotional Labor and Employee's Innovative Behavior:

A large body of empirical studies have investigated how leaders' emotional labor affects employees' behaviors and outcomes. For example, leader's emotionality has been linked to follower's performance (McColl-Kennedy & Anderson, 2002; Johnson, 2008), moods (Sy, et al., 2005), and follower's creativity (Zhou, 2003). With evidence to suggest that individuals can in fact distinguish between surface and deep acting (Ekman et al., 1988), Fisk and Friesen (2012) study confirmed that employees who engage in high-quality leader-member exchanges report more frequent surface acting on the part of their leaders and less participation in prosocial and extra-role behaviors (Fisk & Friesen, 2012). On the other hand, deep acting was positively associated with members' self-reported job satisfaction especially in low-quality exchanges as the follower's perceptions that the leader is trying to show authentic emotions seems to mitigate negative implications usually associated with low quality leader–member exchanges (Fisk & Friesen, 2012). Moon et al. (2018) found that perceptions of leaders' deep acting toward customers are positively related to followers' perceptions of authentic leadership. Moreover, followers who perceive their leaders as authentic identify with

and trust those leaders which lead to better job performance (Moon et al., 2018). Wang and Seibert (2015) concluded that the frequency of leader's positive and negative emotional displays is associated with higher follower performance for leaders who rarely surface act, whereas it is the opposite for the leaders who usually are surface acting (Wang & Seibert, 2015). Tang et al., (2017) investigated the influence of emotional labor practiced by both leaders and employees on employee's service performance and found that leader's surface acting positively influences employee's surface acting, and leader's deep acting positively influences employee's deep acting and service performance. Leader's emotional labor has also been linked to follower's emotional engagement (Nisar et al., 2018). Although the relationship between leader's emotional labor and employee's innovative behaviors has not been empirically verified, several leadership styles like transformational leadership (Afsar et al., 2014; Aryee et al., 2012; Hadi et al., 2019), transactional leadership (Sethibe & Steyn, 2017), entrepreneurial leadership (Bagheri A. , 2017; Bagheri et al., 2020), inclusive leadership (Bannay, 2020), Self-leadership (Ibus & Ismail, 2018), and Paternalistic Leadership (Handayani & Hartijasti, 2021) have been linked to employee's innovative behavior. Jong and Hartog (2007) study revealed that leaders influence the innovative behavior of employees through their intentional actions aimed at stimulating the generation and implementation of ideas as well as their more general everyday behavior.

Previous research on emotional labor supports the claim that surface acting leads to a negative impact in terms of generating desired audience impressions while deep acting is likely to garner favorable impressions (Grandey, 2003; Beal et al., 2006; Bono & Vey, 2007). In leadership context, Leader's surface acting tends to generate unfavorable impressions as they are perceived as insincere and manipulative (Bono & Vey, 2007), reflecting leaders' personal disrespect for their followers. In contrast, followers perceive leaders who use deep acting as sincere and authentic (Gardner et al., 2009), which yields positive impressions and improved work relationships (Gross & John, 2003; Moin et al., 2021). the improved leader's perceived impressions and work relationships provide followers

with opportunities to improve their performance (Moin, et al., 2021). In addition, deep acting leaders are socially and personally competent in a way that increases admiration for these leaders and produces extra role attitudes and behaviors (Fisk & Friesen, 2012), including innovative behavior. So, the influence of employees' perceptions of leader's surface acting and deep acting on their innovative behavior is likely to manifest in different direction.

Therefore, the study suggests the following hypotheses:

H1. Leader's perceived surface acting has a significant negative effect on employee's innovative behavior

H2. Leader's perceived deep acting has a significant positive effect on employee's innovative behavior.
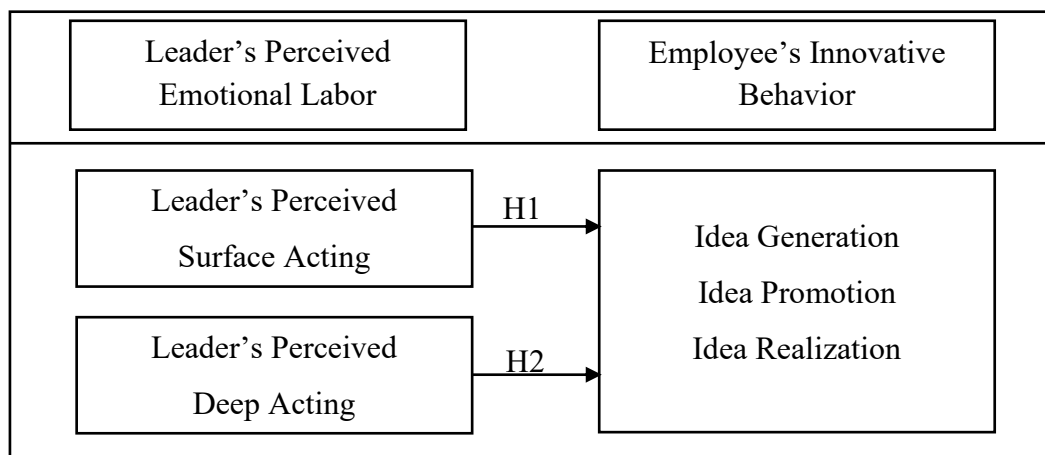

Figure 1. Proposed Conceptual Framework for the Relationships Between Research Variables
Source: Prepared by the researcher based on literature review

4. Research Methodology
4.1 Sample and Procedures

The target population in this study consists of all demonstrators and teaching assistants from all the faculties of Mansoura university who add up to 2,068 demonstrator and teaching assistant according to Mansoura university administration (2022). Based on this population size, the study depends on drawing a sample consisting of 327 sampling unit. Sample size was determined based on the electronic tables prepared for this purpose (The research advisor 2006), which is the statistically required size with a confidence degree of 95%. Quota sampling technique is utilized since there is no sampling frame.

This study adopted the self-administered questionnaire to collect data. Since all questionnaire items were originally in English, they were translated and then back translated to produce the Arabic versions. The Arabic version of the questionnaire was reviewed and validated by academic experts in order to assess the clarity of the questions and to examine their appropriateness to the study context. The researcher delivered the survey questionnaires in person to the demonstrators and teaching assistants in each faculty. An in-person visit was conducted to increase the response rate through face-to-face interactions, and to ensure that participants knew how to fill-out the questionnaire. As the normal response rate is approximately between 60% and 70% (Burns & Burns, 2008), the researchers directed the questionnaire to 360 employees, only 320 of them accepted. Finally, researchers collected 311 usable questionnaires with a response rate of 86.4% and 309 of them (after deleting missing and incomplete responses) were valid. Table 1 shows the sample characteristics.

4.2 Measures

All constructs were measured with a 5-point Likert type scale (ranging from 5 = strongly agree to 1 = strongly disagree).

Leader's perceived emotional labor was measured by eight items by moon et al. (2018) which was adapted from Diefendorff et al. (2005). Five items were used to measure leader's perceived surface acting and three items were used to measure leader's perceived deep acting. Employee's innovative behavior was measured using Janssen's (2000) 9-item scale. Each stage (idea generation, idea promotion, idea realization) is measured by three items.

Table 1. The sample characteristics

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Academic position		
Demonstrator	191	61.4
Teaching assistant	120	38.6
Total	311	100.0
Faculty type		
Medicine	88	28.2%
Engineering	28	9.1%
Dentistry	26	8.2%
Science	27	8.7%
Nursing	16	5.2%
Arts	18	5.8%
Pharmacy	22	7%
Education	14	4.6%
Veterinary	9	2.9%
Specific education	4	1.3%
Law	7	2.2%
Agriculture	7	2.3%
Physical Education	7	2.2%
Commerce	15	4.7%
Tourism and Hotels	4	1.2%
Kindergarten	4	1.3%
Fine Arts	6	1.9%
Computers and Information	9	3.2%
Total	311	100.0
Gender		
Male	63	20.3
Female	248	79.7
Total	311	100.0

Source: researchers own calculations

5. Data Analysis and Results

Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach was applied to evaluate the proposed model and evaluate the proposed hypotheses. PLS analysis is divided into two major models: the measurement model and structural model. The measurement model estimates the association between the observed variables and their latent variables, while the structural model examines the relationships between the latent variables (Ullman & Bentler, 2012).

5.1 Measurement Model

The assessment of reflective measurement models of which the current study model is) in terms of reliability includes individual item reliability, Cronbach's alpha, and composite reliability to evaluate internal consistency reliability. In terms of validity, convergent validity is assessed using average variance extracted (AVE). Fornell-Larcker criterion is used to assess discriminant validity. As Table 2 shows, some of the items' Indicator loadings are less than the suggested threshold value. Hair et al. (2011) suggested that rather than immediately remove items with low loadings, the effects of item removal on the composite reliability and average variance extracted should be examined first. LPSA_1 and LPSA_2 have been removed because loadings are exceptionally low. The rest of the items with loadings that ranges between 0.4 and 0.7 (LPSA_4, LPSA_5, LPDA_1, and IP_1) has been retained. Cronbach' s Alpha values exceeds the minimum required value if 0.6. Coefficients of composite reliability values range from 0.727 to 0.902 which exceed the recommended threshold value of 0.7. All constructs, except for Leader's Perceived Surface Acting, have AVE values greater than 0.5, however, according to Fornell and Larcker (1981) if AVE is less than 0.5 but composite reliability is higher than 0.6, the convergent validity of the construct is still sufficient, which is the case here.

Table 2. Loadings, α, Composite reliability and Average Variance Extracted

construct	Code of indicator	Loadings	α	CR	AVE
Leader's Perceived Surface Acting	LPSA_1	Removed	0.717	0.727	0.471
	LPSA_2	Removed			
	LPSA_3	0.759			
	LPSA_4	0.627			
	LPSA_5	0.667			
Leader's Perceived Deep Acting	LPDA_1	0.587	0.775	0.790	0.658
	LPDA_2	0.706			
	LPDA_3	0.784			
Idea Generation	IG_1	0.831	0.759	0.861	0.674
	IG_2	0.826			
	IG_3	0.807			
Idea Promotion	IP_1	0.663	0.652	0.812	0.592
	IP_2	0.798			
	IP_3	0.837			
Idea Realization	IR_1	0.869	0.837	0.902	0.754
	IR_2	0.887			
	IR_3	0.848			

Source: researchers own calculations

Discriminant validity has been evaluated using the criterion recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981). As shown in table 3, (the AVE's square root) were higher than those Off-diagonal values, indicating satisfactory discriminant validity. So, it can be concluded that reliability and validity have been established.

Table 3. Correlation and square Root of Average variance Extracted

	IG	IP	IR	LPDA	LPSA
IG	**0.821**				
IP	0.532	**0.77**			
IR	0.572	0.689	**0.868**		
LPDA	0.221	0.307	0.236	**0.695**	
LPSA	0.116	0.11	0.17	0.137	**0.687**

Note: square roots of average variance extracted (AVE's) shown on diagonal P value <0.001

Source: researchers own calculations

5.2 Hypothesis Testing

As table 4 shows, leader's perceived deep acting has a significant positive impact on employee's innovative behavior (H_2 supported). Results, however, revealed that leader's perceived surface acting did not predict employee's innovative behavior (H_1 not supported).

Table 4. The direct effects on endogenous variables.

Hypothesis & Relations		Direct effects (β)	T-value	Percentile bootstrap 95% CI		Results
				Lower	Upper	
H_1	LPSA -> EIB	0.099^{ns}	1.351	-0.036	0.209	**Rejected**
H_2	LPDA -> EIB	0.225**	3.635	0.12	0.32	**Accepted**

Note: ** p >0.001 (one tailed), ns: not significant.

Source: by researchers own calculations

6. Discussion

Aligned with the hypothesized relationship, research findings reveal that demonstrators and teaching assistants' perceptions of their leader's deep acting are positively related to their innovative behaviors. This finding is consistent with the previous research which indicates that employee's perceptions of leader's deep acting are positively associated with

employees' attitude and behaviors (Fisk & Friesen, 2012; Moin, 2018; Wu & Wu, 2019; Moin et al., 2021).

Moreover, leader's deep acting is often associated with transformational leadership style (Humphrey et al., 2008; Fisk & Friesen, 2012). Leader's perceived as transformational often support their employees into taking initiatives and exhibit their innovative ideas freely which encourage their employee's into increasingly engaging in innovative behavior (Gong et al., 2009; Wu & Wu, 2019). Additionally, Jong and Hartog (2007) revealed that leaders who display transformational qualities listen and respond constructively to followers, providing them with ongoing support from idea generation to idea realization. A prominent level of innovative behavior can be expected in such environment (Afsar & Masood, 2018). It is particularly important when higher education institutions need to develop such behaviors to offer new ways, methods, techniques, and solutions to deal with emerging educational challenges (Lambriex-Schmitz et al., 2020; Ayoub, 2021).

On the other hand, and in contrast with the anticipated hypothesis, the results indicate a non-significant relationship between leader's perceived surface acting and demonstrators and teaching assistants' innovative behaviors. Although our result contradicts the majority of previous research results (Fisk & Friesen, 2012; Moin M. , 2018; Wu & Wu, 2019; Moin et al., 2021), one possible explanation to the current result might be that demonstrators and teaching assistants perceive their leader's surface acting as a part of his or her job (Buckner, 2012), meaning that they may not view their leader's surface acting as indicative of the leader's inauthenticity or lack of concern, instead, they view the leader simply as fulfilling the requirements of his or her job. This is in line with findings of Moon et al. (2018) who revealed that employee's perceptions of their leader's surface acting did not have a significant negative impact on their perception of leader's authenticity. Another explanation may be that leader's surface acting does not necessarily lead to negative outcomes when employees presume that the leader's intentions are good (Ashkanasy & Humphrey, 2011; Gardner et al., 2009).

6.1 Theoretical Implications

The study results contribute to the current literature in several ways. First, scholars have shown a growing interest in assessing leader's emotional labor consequences (Gardner et al., 2009; Fisk & Friesen, 2012; Grandey & Gabriel, 2015). This study followed their footsteps by investigating the impact of leader's surface and deep acting perceived by employees on their behaviors, specifically, their innovative behaviors (Moon et al., 2018; Moin M. , 2018; Wu & Wu, 2019; Moin et al., 2021). It has been proven that leader's deep acting plays a key role in encouraging innovative behaviors of their employees, which is consistent with findings in the emotional labor literature in leadership context, that deep acting performed by leaders generally leads to positive outcomes (Moin , 2018; Moon et al., 2018; Wu & Wu, 2019).

Second, although universities are the core force of the social innovation system, and university leaders play a key role in the development of innovative talents, the majority of similar studies have mainly focused on business organizations. Therefore, examining the effect of leader's emotional labor on the innovative behavior of demonstrators and teaching assistants is valuable, and our findings contribute to the generalization of leader's emotional labor in a new organizational context.

6.2 Practical Implications

The findings of this study can be extrapolated to work settings and provide managerial implications for the leaders to help them improve their employees' innovative behaviors in several ways. First, as evidence from the present study shows that leader's deep acting is positively associated with employee's innovative behaviors, The primary practical contribution is that university leaders need to increasingly engage in deep acting as demonstrators and teaching assistants perceive them as being sincere and transformational which subsequently encourage them to engage in more extra role behaviors. To do so, universities can design and implement programs that address leaders appropriate use of emotional labor strategies. In addition, recruitment processes should also be improved by expanding policies and job descriptions related to the university leadership

roles to explicitly state that the role requires the performance of emotional labor in order to legitimize of emotional labor as part of the work required by university leaders (Cowley, 2018).

6.3 Limitations & Future Research Suggestions

Despite the implications of this study, there are several limitations that should be highlighted, which point to avenues for future investigations. First, the research design of the present study is cross-sectional, which makes it difficult to ensure causality. Future scholars should conduct longitudinal studies with meaningful time lags to measure how leader's emotional labor strategies fluctuate over time and the extent of their impact on innovative behaviors of their subordinates.

Second, researchers recommend that future studies explore possible mediation and moderation mechanisms like positive and negative affect of employees (Affective mechanisms) or identification with leader and employees' creative role identity (Identification mechanisms) (Hughes, Lee, Tian, Newman, & Legood, 2018).

Lastly, the present study was conducted using a sample from a public Egyptian university (Mansoura University), so the findings derived from this work are largely applicable to local public HEIs, however, the results of this study may differ in magnitude in private HEIs located in Egypt, so, perhaps future researchers might be interested in undertaking comparative research to address probable differences in university leaders' emotional labor effect on innovative behaviors of demonstrators and teaching assistants.

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العلاقة بين إدراك العمل العاطفي للقائد والسلوك الابتكاري للموظف

دراسة تطبيقية على معاوني أعضاء هيئة التدريس بجامعة المنصورة

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ملخص البحث

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى اختبار طبيعة العلاقة بين إدراك العمل العاطفي للقائد والسلوك الابتكاري للموظف. تم جمع البيانات من عينة حصصية بلغ حجمها ٣٠٩ مفردة من مجتمع يضم المعيدين والمدرسين المساعدين في جامعة المنصورة. بلغ معدل الاستجابة من أعضاء العينة ٨٦,٤% وقد تم تحليل البيانات باستخدام -PLS SEM. أظهرت النتائج أن إدراك التمثيل الباطني للقائد يرتبط بشكل معنوي إيجابي بالسلوك الابتكاري للموظف؛ في حين أن إدراك التمثيل الظاهري للقائد ليس له تأثير معنوي على السلوك الابتكاري للموظف بالإضافة إلى ذلك تمت مناقشة الآثار النظرية والعملية لنتائج الدراسة