

## **The Influence of Innovation-Based Human Resource Management Practices on Employees' Service Innovative Behavior in the Hotel Industry Context.**

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### **Abstract**

This paper investigates the complex association between innovation-based human resource management (IBHRM) and innovative work behavior (IWB) among hotel employees. Data were obtained from 338 hotel employees in Greater Cairo and analyzed using AMOS v. 23. Findings emphasized the significant impact of IBHRM on IWB through employee engagement (EE), highlighting the importance of training, recognition programs, and fair rewards. This paper provides valuable insights for HR managers, emphasizing effective selection procedures, skill development initiatives, and training programs in fostering innovation within the hotel industry. By contributing to existing knowledge, this research provides valuable insights to promote an innovation culture in the hotel industry.

**Keywords:** Innovation-based human resource management, Innovative work behavior, employees, Employee engagement, Hotel industry, Greater Cairo

### **1. Introduction**

Innovation is a critical driver of sustained success, particularly in the hospitality industry. Recognizing the importance of innovation and creativity (Al Mehrzi & Singh, 2016), this study delves into the effect of IBHRM practices on fostering innovation within hotels. By shedding light on how hotels can nurture employees' inclination towards IWB, this paper makes significant contributions to HRM's scope. IBHRM plays a critical role in promoting IWB. These practices are specifically designed to stimulate and harness the innovative potential of individuals within the organization. They create an environment that values and supports innovation, ultimately impacting employee outcomes. Notably, the positive impact of IBHRM practices is particularly evident through enhanced EE (Hui et al., 2020).

Employee engagement characterized by emotional and cognitive commitment to work, has emerged as a powerful catalyst for employee performance success. For fostering innovation, EE serves as a mediation effect in the IBHRM-IWB linkage (Stokes et al., 2016). Understanding the mechanisms by which IBHRM effects EE and drives IWB is crucial for hotels aiming to cultivate an innovation-oriented culture (Fletcher et al., 2020). While the significance of EE for organizational innovation has been acknowledged, existing research has primarily focused on the IBHRM-IWB linkage, overlooking potential confounding

constructs (Seeck & Diehl, 2017). This paper bridges these gaps by specifically examining the mediating effect of EE in the IBHRM-IWB linkage within the hotel industry.

The scarcity of studies exploring EE's antecedents, specifically in the hospitality context, further emphasizes the importance of investigating the focal role of EE supported by IBHRM practices in promoting IWB. By addressing these research gaps, this paper aligns with the scholarly call for further exploration of the factors contributing to innovation within the hotel industry (Hon & Lui, 2016). To advance our understanding, this research adopts a comprehensive approach, employing a structural equation model to uncover the intricate connections between IBHRM practices, EE, and IWB. In doing so, it responds to recent calls to explore the promising mechanisms that underpin the relationship between IBHRM and service innovation (Lin et al., 2020). By extending the examination of EE mechanisms to the hotel context in Greater Cairo, where research attention has been limited, this paper aims to provide valuable insights and practical implications for hotel managers striving to effectively implement IBHRM, enhance EE, and foster IWB (Akbari et al., 2021). Overall, this paper endeavors to contribute to the body of knowledge surrounding HRM, innovation, and EE within the hotel industry.

## **2. Literature review**

### *2.1. Innovation behaviors*

In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, organizations recognize the pivotal role of IWB in driving competitive advantage. Innovative work behavior entails active engagement in generating, promoting, and implementing novel ideas that contribute to organizational innovation. It is a dynamic and multi-stage process influenced by organizational support and EE (Arain et al., 2020). Within the hotel industry, the pursuit of innovative service behaviors takes center stage as employees voluntarily undertake discretionary actions to generate and implement groundbreaking ideas within specific contexts. Escribá-Carda et al. (2017) emphasized the significance of IBHRM in fostering IWB, as effective HRM practices create an environment that nurtures innovation and supports employees' creative endeavors. This includes providing opportunities for learning and development, promoting a fair and equitable effort-reward system, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

### *2.2. HRM practices and structural innovation*

HRM practices encompass a diverse range of activities aimed at managing human resources within organizations (Florén et al., 2016). HRM practices have emerged as key drivers of IWB (Datta et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2022). Koster (2019) showed that organizations adopting high-performance work systems witness enhanced group problem-solving and a greater display of IWB. Factors such as formal training programs, which equip employees with the skills and knowledge necessary for innovation, and equitable effort-reward systems, which recognize and appreciate innovative contributions, have been identified as catalysts for employee innovation (Lee et al., 2019).

Moreover, intrinsic motivations, such as employees' passion for their work and the opportunity for self-expression, synergistically interact with extrinsic motivations to foster a vibrant innovation ecosystem within the hotel industry (Alzyoud et al., 2017). By synthesizing the existing body of knowledge, this literature review provides a scientific and creative exploration of the intricate

IBHRM-IWB linkage. This knowledge not only enhances our theoretical understanding but also equips hotel managers with valuable insights for designing and implementing effective HRM strategies that unleash the creative potential of their workforce. Ultimately, this holistic approach fosters a culture of innovation, ensuring long-term competitiveness and success in the dynamic hotel industry.

### *2.3. Theoretical basis*

This paper contributes to a deeper understanding of HRM practices in the hotel industry. Underpinned by social exchange theory (SET), our model illuminates how the implementation of IBHRM practices serves as a motivating strategy for employees. Referring to this theory, employees perceive IBHRM practices as a form of structural support, which motivates them to engage in more innovative behaviors. Moreover, our research model acknowledges the significance of effective IBHRM practices in promoting EE. Hotel employees display higher levels of work engagement when they receive rewards and perceive fairness, aligning with this theory.

On the other hand, organizational support theory (OST) has a crucial role in influencing IWB (De Roeck & Maon, 2018). According to this theory, employees perform better when they feel appreciated; their socio-emotional needs are fulfilled, leading to increased engagement and innovation. Previous research emphasizes the importance of investing in HRM practices to foster creativity in the hospitality industry (Al-Ababneh, 2016; Yasir & Majid, 2020). Haneda and Ito (2018) recognized linking HRM practices with employee creativity, emphasizing human capital development, a focus on learning, the facilitation of employees' IWB, and process innovation. Adoption of IBHRM strategies is crucial to inspiring employees to actively engage in the innovation process. Organizations are evaluated based on their ability to innovate.

Furthermore, performance-based rewards contribute to increased creativity through extrinsic motivation. Employees' perceptions of structural support and the presence of IWB are critical issues influencing IWB adoption within organizations. Shanker et al. (2017) demonstrated that IBHRM practices generate an environment helpful to innovation by empowering employees and encouraging their involvement in IWB. Work engagement motivates employees to build better relationships with their managers, fostering an environment conducive to openness to new thoughts (Montani et al., 2019).

In the hotel industry, EE plays a supportive role in promoting IWB (Karatepe et al., 2020). Motivated employees are more inclined to exhibit IWB, yet challenges exist in fostering and cultivating IWB due to employees' willingness to embrace innovation and potential differences in organizational culture (Mansoor et al., 2021). Research reveals a significant influence of EE on IWB, indicating that individuals experiencing high levels of work engagement are more likely to exhibit creativity (Kwon & Kim, 2020). By elucidating the theoretical basis, this paper added to the scientific understanding of how these constructs interrelate within the hotel context. It provides a foundation for further empirical investigation and offers practical insights for organizations to effectively implement IBHRM practices and enhance innovation among their employees.

Based on theoretical justifications, this paper proposes these hypotheses:

***H1. IBHRM positively affects EE.***

***H2. EE positively affects IWB.***

- H3. IBHRM positively affects IWB.
- H4. EE mediates the IBHRM-IWB linkage.

#### 2.4. Theoretical framework

The proposed conceptual model aims to explore the linkage between IBHRM and IWB within the hospitality industry. It is guided by SET and OST theories, proposing that the perceived support provided by organizations significantly influences EE in IWB. When hotel organizations meet employees' socio-emotional needs and demonstrate recognition and rewards for their enhanced efforts, perceived organizational support is developed. To enhance EE in innovation, hotels should adopt an HRM approach that prioritizes innovation, known as IBHRM (Amarakoon et al., 2019). This may involve implementing innovative selection methods to identify individuals with high potential for innovation.

Additionally, creating an innovative culture through collaborative learning, training, and development opportunities enables employees to generate fresh ideas (Amarakoon et al., 2019). By implementing IBHRM practices, hotels provide employees with learning and development opportunities, creating a sense of support and motivating them to generate innovative ideas (Barthauer et al., 2020). This expansion of organizational learning, combined with social and human capital, aligns with IWB characteristics. Therefore, Figure 1 supports these arguments to test these complex linkages between IBHRM and IWB through EE in the hotel setting.

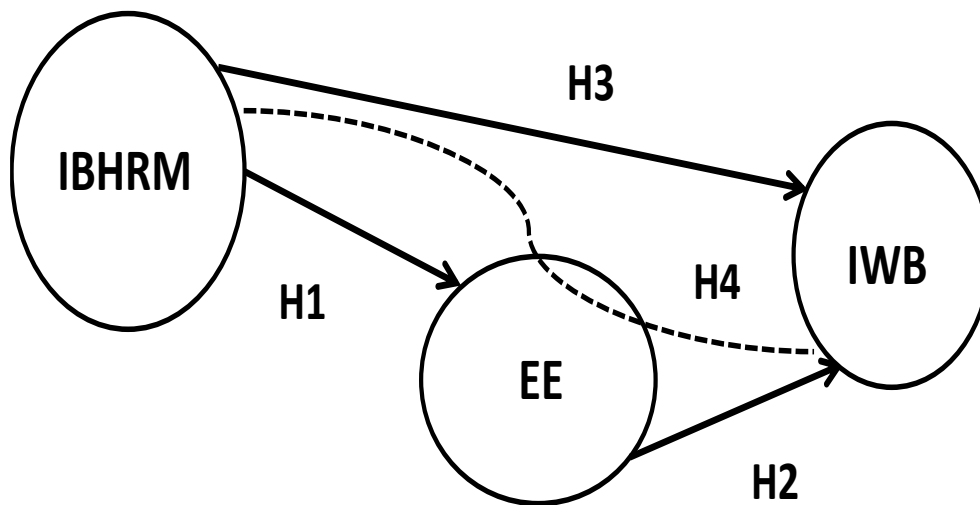


Figure 1. Research model.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Data collection process

In Greater Cairo, there are currently 33 four- and five-star hotels, mainly operated by well-established management companies of various Western nationalities, as reported by the Egyptian Hotel Association (2022). This paper focuses on employees working in these hotels, including both chains and independently owned properties affiliated with major conglomerates. Given their well-established infrastructure, efficient headquarters management, and HRM support, these hotels are more inclined to implement suitable and formal HRM practices in contrast to independent establishments (Egyptian Hotel Association, 2022). To assess the effectiveness of IBHRM practices, a survey was administered to employees

working in 18 deluxe hotels in Greater Cairo. The survey questionnaire consisted of items relating to EE and their IWB perceptions. A total of 600 questionnaires were distributed, resulting in 386 responses, yielding a response rate of 64.3%. After data screening, 338 questionnaires were deemed appropriate for statistical analysis.

### *3.2. Research instruments*

To enhance items' validity, five experts and academics critically reviewed the initial questionnaire. Their valuable feedback was incorporated to refine the language and descriptions of the items, ensuring their appropriateness. Additionally to gathering demographic data, participants were questioned to provide their perceptions of IBHRM practices, EE, and IWB. The IBHRM scale comprised eight indicators that were categorized into three dimensions: training, reward, and recruitment. Participants were requested to rate their level of agreement on a 7-point Likert scale. EE was evaluated using the UWES-9 scale developed from Schaufeli et al. (2006). Lastly, IWB was assessed using six items adapted from Hu et al. (2009).

### *3.3. Data analysis*

The analysis process began with a comprehensive examination of the scales, frequencies, and descriptive statistics. To create scale validity, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed, allowing for an assessment of indicators adequacy in capturing underlying constructs. Subsequently, the inner model was examined, enabling an examination of causal relationships using maximum likelihood estimation. Next, the average variance extracted (AVE) was employed to gauge the extent to which all items within each construct shared a common variance, indicating convergent validity. Furthermore, construct reliability was assessed using composite reliability and the omega coefficient to ensure scales' internal consistency.

## **4. Results**

### *4.1. Respondents' profile*

It was found that the sample consisted predominantly of male respondents (92.8%), with 61% employed in five-star hotels. The median age of participants was 25; this represented 64.7% of the sample. For respondents' educational levels, 41.4% held a bachelor's degree, followed by 39.2% who had a high school diploma or vocational degree. Regarding job experience, 52.2% of the sample was employed in five-star hotels for five years or less. Lastly, most respondents worked in food and beverage service positions (55.1%), followed by housekeeping (21.2%).

### *4.2. Accuracy and reliability analysis*

It was important to retest their reliability, specifically in the hospitality industry. The reliability estimates obtained were found to be satisfactory and consistent with the initial findings (see Table 1). Descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1. As proposed by Churchill (1979), a higher Cronbach's alpha coefficient indicates a scale with stronger internal consistency.

**Table 1.** Research instrument.

Item description	Mean	Sd.	SFL
<i>Innovation-based HRM practices</i>			
When hiring, we consider competencies in innovation management as a crucial factor.	4.12	1.52	0.927
We have high expectations for new employees to demonstrate innovativeness and creativity.	4.58	1.77	0.923
Employees receive training to enhance their skills for innovative behavior, such as utilizing creativity techniques.	4.90	1.74	0.897
In training sessions focused on fostering innovation, there is a particular emphasis on developing technical skills, such as training for new processes.	4.95	1.69	0.921
Regular training programs are provided to enhance individuals' personal innovativeness.	4.96	1.70	0.894
During training sessions, employees are made aware of the strategic significance of being innovation-oriented.	4.89	1.54	0.889
High performance in innovation is greatly valued and recognized through performance-based rewards.	4.33	1.73	0.932
Employees who exhibit exceptional innovation orientation receive significant rewards.	4.08	1.74	0.884
<i>Employee engagement</i>			
I have a high level of motivation and vitality at my workplace.	4.80	1.81	0.843
I feel energetic and robust in my work environment.	4.82	1.87	0.831
I have a strong enthusiasm for my job.	4.30	1.60	0.887
My work ignites my passion and motivation.	4.61	1.65	0.879
I look forward to starting work as soon as I get out of bed.	4.72	1.68	0.805
I experience joy and satisfaction while working.	4.86	1.71	0.871
I take pride in the work I do.	4.84	1.74	0.835
I am fully engaged and absorbed in my work.	4.75	1.66	0.868
I become deeply involved and engrossed when I am working.	4.65	1.60	0.843
<i>Innovative work behavior</i>			
In my job, I generate novel and imaginative ideas.	4.57	1.74	0.856
In my job, I make an effort to present my own creative concepts and persuade others.	4.70	1.72	0.846
In my job, I actively explore new service techniques, methods, or approaches.	4.65	1.66	0.889
In my job, I create appropriate strategies for implementing new ideas.	4.87	1.73	0.852
In my job, I strive to obtain the necessary funding and resources for implementing innovations.	4.66	1.74	0.823
Overall, I perceive myself as a creative contributor within my team.	4.81	1.63	0.882

The internal consistency analysis yielded highly reliable results for all variables and their respective dimensions (see Table 2). To further evaluate construct validity, a CFA analysis was performed. Findings indicated significant factor loadings, providing evidence of good convergence validity. Model fit indicators also demonstrated an acceptable dataset fit to the proposed framework. Furthermore, omega coefficient, CR, and AVE values exceeded recommended thresholds, indicating strong internal consistency (see Table 2).

**Table 2.** CFA estimates.

Construct	Composite reliability	AVE	Omega coefficient
IBHRM practices	.978	.728	.876
Employee engagement	.960	.725	.842
Innovative work behavior	.944	.737	.881

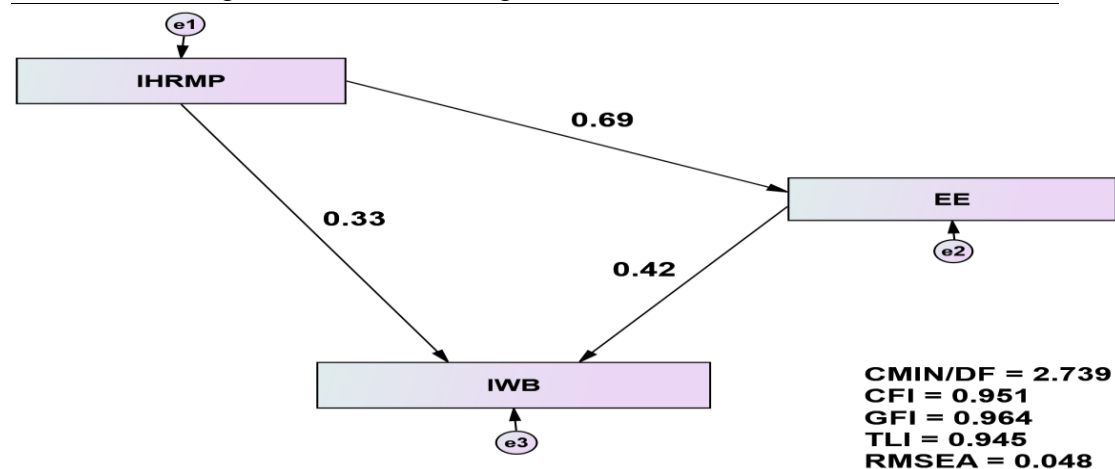
To reduce the potential influence of common method variance, participants were explicitly instructed to provide honest and accurate responses, emphasizing the importance of their genuine input. Besides, a meticulous redesign and pretesting process was undertaken to enhance clarity and eliminate any possible ambiguity in the questionnaire items. Furthermore, established and validated scales from reputable sources were utilized. In addition, the tolerance values exceeded the critical threshold of 0.1, signifying the absence of significant collinearity. Table 3 findings illustrated that employee perceptions of IBHRM, EE, and IWB yielded a high overall score, indicating positive perceptions, surpassing the scale midpoint. Next, we employed AVE’s square root criteria to gauge discriminant validity. As outlined in Table 3, these requirements are met, providing acceptable discriminant validity.

**Table 3.** Discriminant validity.

	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1.IBHRM Practices	4.37	1.83	<b>.853</b>		
2.Employee Engagement	4.89	1.64	.815	<b>.851</b>	
3. IWB	4.54	1.57	.787	.806	<b>.858</b>

#### 4.3. Inner model

Model fit indices indicated a robust fit, as evidenced by the following values: CMIN/df = 2.739, CFI = .951, GFI = .964, TLI = .945 and RMSEA = .048. These indices meet the recommended thresholds established in prior literature. Consequently, it can be inferred that IBHRM practices exert direct and indirect effects on IWB (see Figure 2). The visually appealing depiction in Figure 2 serves as a clear visual guide to understanding the theoretical framework.



**Figure 2.** Structural model findings.

Table 4 findings demonstrated that IBHRM positively affected EE ( $\beta = .686$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Furthermore, EE positively affected IWB ( $\beta = .416$ ,  $p < .001$ ). These findings supported H1 and H2, highlighting the mediation effect of EE in the IBHRM-IWB relationship. Importantly, our analysis also revealed that IBHRM positively affected IWB ( $\beta = .328$ ,  $p < .001$ ), hence, H3 was supported. Our model indicated that IBHRM and EE collectively account for a considerable variance in IWB (48.8%) and EE (53.1%). These empirical findings offer valuable insights into the IBHRM-IWB relationship via EE in the hotel industry. The Sobel test demonstrated a significant effect on the IBHRM-IWB relationship ( $Z = 9.422$ ,  $p < .01$ ), providing further support for partial mediation and supporting H4, indicating that EE partially mediated the IBHRM-IWB linkage. The indirect channel via EE accounted for 46.5% of the IWB variance explained by both IBHRM practices and EE, and the remaining variance is explained by the direct path (see Table 5).

**Table 4.** Hypotheses results

	Paths	$\beta$	S.E.	t-value	Supported?
H1	IBHRM $\rightarrow$ EE	.686***	0.027	42.723	Yes
H2	EE $\rightarrow$ IWB	.416***	0.041	21.108	Yes
H3	IBHRM $\rightarrow$ IWB	.328***	0.036	11.621	Yes

**Table 5.** Mediation results.

	Indirect effect	IBHRM on EE	EE on IWB	IBHRM on IWB	Ratio of indirect-to-total effects
H4	IBHRM $\rightarrow$ EE $\rightarrow$ IWB	.686***	.416***	.328***	.465

## 5. Discussion

This paper's purpose was to examine the linkage between IBHRM and EE through IWB. The findings demonstrated significant associations and offered valuable insights into the dynamics of the hotel industry. Our findings proved a significant positive impact of IBHRM on EE, aligning with Savaneviciene and Stankeviciute (2011), emphasizing how HRM practices focused on enhancing skills can enhance EE. Our findings support SET and OST theories, which emphasize the potential effect of HRM in fostering engagement in innovative activities (Bailey et al., 2017). Besides, our results indicated that higher levels of EE were associated with a greater likelihood of IWB, which is consistent with Jung and Yoon (2018) and highlights the positive influence of EE on IWB. This paper emphasized the role of operational managers or leaders in motivating employees to enhance their IWB and confirmed the hypothesis that EE positively influences IWB.

Furthermore, our findings support Zhou et al. (2017), who emphasize the positive influence of IBHRM practices in fostering innovation. Lastly, the results supported the idea that EE partially mediated the IBHRM-IWB relationship, highlighting the importance of EE as a mediation mechanism. This finding enhances our understanding of the complex interplay among IBHRM practices, EE, and IWB, emphasizing the significance of fostering EE to enhance innovative performance (Li et al., 2020).

### 5.1. Implications

By examining the mediating role of EE, our paper provides valuable insights into the underlying mechanisms that connect HRM practices with innovation outcomes.



These findings align with Cooke's (2013). This paper extends our knowledge about HRM by investigating the combined effects of HRM practices and EE on achieving IWB. Building on Shahzad et al. (2019), this paper emphasizes the importance of a connecting mechanism that enables active employee participation, knowledge sharing, and the contribution of innovative ideas. Furthermore, these findings lay the groundwork for future research to validate the proposed model, components, and findings in diverse contexts, contributing to a deeper understanding of the significance of EE and IBHRM practices in driving employee innovation.

This paper emphasizes the significance of implementing policies and initiatives that support EE to promote IWB, providing guidance to hotel managers by highlighting the EE-IWB relationship. By implementing effective EE practices, hotel managers can inspire employees to exhibit IWBs. It is important for hotel employees to prioritize training programs that enhance service delivery and foster innovation. Department managers should offer innovative training to develop the necessary skills for delivering exceptional services. Additionally, establishing reward systems that incentivize employees to propose new and innovative ways of delivering outstanding services is crucial. By fostering a culture of cooperation and teamwork and embracing cutting-edge techniques, managers can create an environment that sparks enthusiasm and encourages employees to engage in IWBs.

In the recruitment and selection process for IBHRM, it is beneficial to focus on candidates who are receptive to innovation and have a clear understanding of expectations. Encouraging active participation in training activities, particularly those centered on innovation, improves employees' skills, encourages IWBs, and enhances their knowledge, capabilities, and confidence. HR managers should prioritize the implementation of IBHRM practices to foster EE in IWB. By adopting this strategy, luxury hotels can elevate EE and improve the efficacy of their strategic management.

### *5.2. Limitations*

This study's use of a convenience sample from the Egyptian hotel sector restricts the findings' generalizability. Future scholars should strive to include more diverse samples to ensure broader applicability. Secondly, the study focused on a specific set of IBHRM practices and did not explore the full range of IBHRM practices that may influence IWB. Future studies should consider investigating a wider spectrum of HRM practices to offer a more comprehensive understanding of their impact on IWB. This paper did not incorporate control variables, such as demographic information, which may have an impact on IWB. Thus, future researchers can add these variables to their empirical models. Additionally, this paper would be beneficial to explore a broader range of HRM practices and examine their impact on IWB, thereby gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the IBHRM-IWB relationship. Future studies should consider investigating additional mediating variables, such as well-being or job satisfaction, to uncover the underlying mechanisms.

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## تأثير ممارسات إدارة الموارد البشرية القائمة على الابتكار على سلوك العمل المبتكر للموظفين في صناعة الفنادق

جابر جبيري أحمد خليل  
المعهد العالي للسياحة والفنادق - الغردقة

حسن سيد عبد الله  
دكتورة إدارة الفنادق - جامعة حلوان

### المخلص

تبحث هذه الدراسة في الارتباط المتشعب بين ممارسات إدارة الموارد البشرية القائمة على الابتكار وسلوك العمل المبتكر بين موظفي الفندق. تم الحصول على البيانات من ٣٣٨ من موظفي الفنادق بالقاهرة الكبرى وتم تحليلها باستخدام البرنامج الإحصائي (AMOS v. 23). أكدت النتائج التأثير الكبير لممارسات إدارة الموارد البشرية القائمة على الابتكار في تعزيز وتنمية سلوك العمل المبتكر للموظفين من خلال الإدماج الوظيفي، مع إبراز أهمية التدريب، برامج التقدير، والمكافآت العادلة. تقدم هذه الدراسة رؤى قيمة لمديري الموارد البشرية، مع التركيز على إجراءات الاختيار الفعالة، مبادرات تنمية المهارات وبرامج التدريب في تعزيز الابتكار داخل صناعة الفنادق. يمثل البحث إضافة بجانب الدراسات المماثلة الحالية ويقدم رؤى قيمة لتعزيز ثقافة الابتكار في صناعة الفنادق.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** إدارة الموارد البشرية القائمة على الابتكار، سلوك العمل المبتكر، الإدماج الوظيفي، صناعة الفنادق، القاهرة الكبرى.