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## Article

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# Investigating the managerial practices' effect on Employee-Perceived Service Quality with the moderating role of supportive leadership behavior



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## ABSTRACT

The current study investigates the effects of employee empowerment (EE) and work environment on Employee-Perceived Service Quality (EPSQ) and investigate the role of supportive leadership behavior (SLB) as a moderator. Particularly, the study addressed the mediating effect of job satisfaction (JS) on the relationship between (EE), work environment with (EPSQ). A survey distributed on a sample of 208 frontline employees working in the five-star hotels in Jordan. A statistical analysis was conducted using structural equation modelling with Smart-Partial Least Squares (PLS). The results reveal that (EE), work environment, and (JS) significantly impact on Employee-Perceived Service Quality. Also, results reveal that (JS) has a mediator role in this relationship. Quite surprisingly, we found no significant direct relationships between supportive leadership and (EPSQ) as a moderator. The practical and research implications of these findings are discussed as well as the justification of the rejected hypothesis.

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## 1. Introduction

Hospitality organizations might gain success through (EE) and work environment, which play a significant effect on organizational performance. Earlier studies on the work environment have focused on manufacturing processes and provide a shallow explanation regarding the role of the work environment in the service industry. Where it has more dynamic environment than other sectors and dynamic change in customer demands and the only way to reach that goal is by encouraging employees' to be more creative and committed to delivering high-quality service (Tsai, Horng, Liu, & Hu, 2015). To keep and improve employee service quality within a dynamic environment managerial practices must take into consideration those ways in which certain practices might effectively influence employee behaviors regarding service quality (Sellgren, Ekvall, & Tomson, 2007; Wirtz, Heracleous, & Pangarkar, 2008). One of these managerial practices is leader supportive behavior, where leaders struggle to support and improve subordinates'

service quality to achieve competitiveness; hence, there is a need to examine how leadership support influences the broader performance context, such as (EPSQ) (Tsai et al., 2015). The current study will investigate (EPSQ) as a performance indicator. He, Murrmann, and Perdue (2010) argued that job performance features several measurable indicators, one of which is employee-perceived service quality, which could use as an indicator of job performance. Satisfied employees situated in pleasant (EE) have an enhanced ability to solve customers' problems, a willingness to help customers, and the ability to meet customers' needs and utilize available physical resources to serve customers. The current study based on the problem of ineffective managerial practices in hotel industries, with an insufficient concentration on the hotel sector within the Jordanian context. Specifically, low service quality provided by unsatisfied employees will consequently have adverse effects on the hotel sector and the tourism sector in general (Al-Zoubi & Alomari, 2017). Thus, the study seeks to answer the following questions: Do a comfortable (EE) and empowered employees significantly affect employee satisfaction, in turn resulting in better service quality? Additionally, do (SLB) enhance employee efforts to provide a higher quality of service. The arguments of this study previewed as a model which has elaborated of how empowerment, work environment

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affects (EPSQ) through the (JS) and examine the moderation role of leadership supportive behavior. Fig. 1 presents this model.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Relationship among Employee Empowerment and job satisfaction

(EE) is a practice that involves offering employees a degree of independence for decision-making regarding specific tasks. Based on administrative perspective (EE) is interpersonal construct reflecting the power of organizations to share power and formal authority for employees have lacked in these processes of making a decision (Arslan & Staub, 2013; Liao, Toya, Lepak, & Hong, 2009). Based on theory X and Theory Y the current study assumes that (EE) correlated with (JS). In other words, theory x, y based on the human relations model considered the significant role of individuals and how managers could increase performance by increasing employee's (JS) through empowerment practices. Moreover, a leader with the ability to meet employees' need related to self-esteem and respect can lead to motivate them and in turn positively affect (JS). The psychological perspective of empowerment is based on an approach to affect an employee's spiritual or emotions which in turn will enhance service delivery positively and as an ingredient in the success of frontline employees. Particularly, a leader who has a positive assumption (e.g., trust employee, creative employee, hard-working, and able to take responsibility) about his subordinates then the leader will empower employee, in turn, increased employee (JS) and improved performance (Fernandez & Moldogaziev, 2012). Indeed, based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, satisfying the five distinct stages of needs desired by people including physiology, security, belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization will increase employee (JS). Particularly, (EE) will lead to satisfying the self-esteem, and self-actualization which in turn enrich the confidence level of front-line employee and it will affect (JS) positively. According to previous empirical research and theory x, y, current study hypothesis developed as:

**H2.** (EE) has a significant impact on (JS).

### 2.2. Relationship among work environment and job satisfaction

An employee work environment identified as a fundamental determinant of the quality of employee work and productivity levels. The definition is consistent with Foldspang et al.'s (2014) study about work environment. From his study, it determined that the physical work environment has a direct relationship with employee satisfaction. For detailed interpretation for such association, a model developed by Herzberg, Mausne, and Snyderman (1959) combining two factors, first one motivational and second one is hygiene factors. Both factors are related to the nature of work, the recognition, the responsibility that granted to them, and opportunities for personal growth and working conditions, supervision quality and level, interpersonal relations, job security, and salary. Further, enriching work environment with motivation and hygiene factors could increase employee motivation level which in turn will raise the internal happiness of employees and will cause (JS). Based on certain psychological, physiological, environmental circumstances employee satisfaction affected and in turn will create positive and negative feelings that employees possess toward their work (Card, Mas, Moretti, & Saez, 2012; Judge, Piccolo, Podsakoff, Shaw, & Rich, 2010). Moreover, there are many factors that influence employee satisfaction, within the context of hospitality organizations "tend to be characterized by long, irregular and unsocial working hours, low pay, absence of overtime payments, heavy workloads, and low promotion opportunities"

which might lead to affect negatively on employees' performance level (Thompson, 2016). In other words, a work environment with a friendly culture, and collaboration among employees, work environment with supplied physical elements and challenges might have a significant impact on employee performance during task executions and will have a positive implication on physiological and psychological reactions of employees. Based on the above previous empirical research and motivational two factors theory, the current study hypothesis developed as:

**H4.** The work environment has a significant impact on (JS).

### 2.3. Relationship among Job satisfaction and EPSQ

Tan and Waheed (2011), conducted a study based on Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, identified it as the role of the employee in the workplace to impact the orientation of members of an organization toward different work roles. Hence, (JS) is a combination of positive and negative feelings that employees possess toward their work (Card et al., 2012; Judge et al., 2010). For instance, employees may claim that they are delighted with their job, they are satisfied with the current work where employees are engaged in, employees are satisfied with the level of challenge, and they are looking forward to coming to work. In this context, (JS) represents one of the most critical factors that determine the efficiency and effectiveness of business organizations. To understand the link between (JS) and Employee perceived Service quality Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory deployed. Mainly, providing work environment with motivation and hygiene factors (e.g. working conditions, supervision quality and level, interpersonal relations, job security, and salary) could affect employee (JS) and in turn will affect employee efforts to provide a service with high quality, in other words, affect employee performance positively (Khan, Waqas, & Muneer, 2017), particularly, an employee working with feelings of the recognition, more responsibility granted, an employee with personal growth opportunities and better working conditions will affect intrinsic and extrinsic outcomes which reflect positively on employee outcomes related to a specific assigned task. Mainly, positive emotional satisfaction consequently contributes to a higher standard of service delivered to customers by employees. Based on the above theory and previous empirical research, the current study hypothesis developed as:

**H5.** (JS) has a significant impact on (EPSQ).

### 2.4. Mediation of job satisfaction with Empowerment and EPSQ

Within hotel industry many empirical studies reveal that frontline employee's commitment to solving customer issues, the willingness of employees to assist their guests, ability, and employee's appearance affected by several environmental factors (e.g., Al-Ababneh, Al-Sabi, Al-Shakhsheer, & Masadeh, 2017; Lin, Wu, & Ling, 2017; Musaba, Musaba, & Hoabeb, 2014). They reveal that if employees feel that they are empowered, and they feel that leaders delegate them an authority to judge and make the decision to deal with various situations this will reflect on employee's confidence within their abilities to think and act. Thus, in turn, an employee will be satisfied as superiors trust them by delegation, as a result, deliver better service quality. Moreover, Ababneh et al. (2017) state that when employees have a feeling of autonomy and authority to act independently and take control of their work, they will be satisfied in their job. Consequently, employees will have more confidence in performing their assigned tasks and will be more positive and committed to do their work and will be more passionate to serve customers, and they will have a quicker response to customers' needs and encouraged employees in solving a problem in a complicated situation and responds to customers in

a better way. Based on the above previous empirical research, the current study hypothesis developed as:

**H1.** (JS) mediates the relationship between (EE) and EPSQ.

### 2.5. Mediation of job satisfaction with work environment and EPSQ

Many studies have conducted about (EE) as a determinant factor of employee performance (e.g., Ali & Haider, 2012; Amusa, Iyoro, & Olabisi, 2013; Ongwae, Lagat, & Odunga, 2018). Most of these studies have a common in findings which reflect that comfortable working environment will, in turn, reduce negative employee attitudes such as commitment, turnover complains and absenteeism while in same time increase productivity level. In other words, (EE) provided with physical tools and better psychological will increase employee's performance. In the other, a study conducted by Ali and Haider (2012) reveals that if the employees provided with enough supportive (EE), in turn, they would be highly satisfied, and it will affect positively on their performance and commitment level. They stated that extent to which employees perceive their work environment as fulfilling their intrinsic, extrinsic, and social needs then, in turn, they will be satisfied and will perform better. Based on the above previous empirical research, the current study hypothesis developed as:

**H3.** (JS) mediates the relationship between the work environment and (EPSQ).

### 2.6. Moderation of Perceived Leadership Support on EPSQ

Leadership today is considered essential in contributing to better organizational outcomes. In other words, efficient support from a leader will motivate subordinates to increase their level of quality in performing their tasks and will also increase their concentration at work (Oluseyi & Ayo, 2009). This study assumption related to the moderation role of supportive leader behavior built on the statement of the path-goal theory, which was formulated by House (1971). House argued that leaders are responsible for helping and guiding their followers to accomplish their goals, and for ensuring that their goals are consistent with the organization's goals. However, achieve these goals leader need to adopt a specific behavior that is fitted to the employees' needs to assure employee achieve work-related tasks. Several scholars have confirmed that supportive leaders have a positive relationship with performance, such as Farris and Lim (1969), Greene (1975), Dumdum, Lowe, and Avolio (2002), Judge, Piccolo, and Ilies (2004), and Rowold and Schlotz (2009). Indeed, all of these studies found that when supportive leaders can show consideration, stimulate understanding and motivate followers, direct and encourage employees through the development of their skills, and assisting them in case any obstacles appear this approach will aid employees in accomplishing their tasks more efficiently and more effectively. Moreover, practicing supportive leader behavior such as respectful, listens to his followers, and strikes a balance between work and employees' personal lives will lead for higher performance levels and assisting them in overcoming work-related obstacles (Rafferty & Griffin, 2006). Based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, Aziri (2011) found that a new managerial paradigm reflects that employees need to be treated and considered as human beings, with individual wants, needs and personal desires all considered ideal indicators for the criticality of (JS) in modern organizations. In support of this argument, Ahmed and Halim (1982) reveal that a supportive leader who shows concern for employees' lives, their needs, and their work and who contributes to a friendly environment has an impact on employee performance as well as increases organizational efficiency levels. Slåtten (2009) argued that managers

should be required to maintain and emphasize a climate of helpfulness, trust, and support for employees, which in turn will increase EPSQ (performance). Based on the above arguments and path-goal theory, the current study proposes:

**H6.** The relationship between (JS) and (EPSQ) is stronger under the effect of (SLB).

The proposed structural model in Fig. 1 (in supplementary files) shows that work environment and (EE) have a significant impact on (JS). The model also shows that (JS) plays a mediating role between work environment, (EE), and EPSQ. Indeed, the model posits that supportive leadership has a significant relationship with (EPSQ) as a moderator.

## 3. Methodology

To achieve the current study's objectives the positivism research paradigm utilized and using quantitative research methods (Sekaran, Cavana, & Delahaye, 2010). Hence, the researcher distributed a self-administrated questionnaire. Mainly all the items are close-ended questions, taking advantage of a five-point scale to measure differences in behaviors according to degree of significance. Further, the current study applies Structural equation modeling to investigate the proposed model as it mentioned in Fig. 1.

### 3.1. Sample and data collection

Data were collected using a questionnaire convenience sampling distributed on frontline employees in five-star hotels in Jordan. A sample was selected based on the largest three five-star hotels regarding the number of rooms allocated in Jordan. This sample of employees was the focus of the current study due to their rich sources of information about studied constructs, their essential role in service delivery, their close interactions with customers, supervisors, and coworkers, and their daily operational involvement in the business. Accurately, the three hotels represent 7293 rooms, which represents 90% of the total number of rooms among all the five-star hotels. From 320 distributed questionnaires, 208 questionnaires were collected and were able to be used, providing a response rate of 65%, which is considered an acceptable rate for social studies the low level of response is due to time limitation and respondents availability. Thus, regarding the small sample size, the PLS-SEM is preferred, because there is no need to meet some model assumptions and requirements, such as large sample size (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2013).

### 3.2. Instrument design

For the survey instrument design at the first section, a several descriptive statistics were run to identify the sample population regarding the characterization of the sample, considering socio-demographic factors. In section two, the study constructs were measured by close-ended questions based on a five-point Likert scale, with anchors of strongly agrees (5) and strongly disagree (1). Regarding the content validity, the study variables have confirmed as having content validity to improve the survey instrument, and follow-up revisions made to the survey based on feedback received from experts from university faculty members who were familiar with research methodology and hospitality industry field.

### 3.3. Descriptive analysis

A total of 208 obtained responses, however, Table 3.0 (in supplementary file) show the details of the respondents for this study. Among the frontline employees in hotels there were 74.4%



male and 25.6% female respondents. Regarding the nationality, the respondents were 89.9% Jordanian and 10.1 Non-Jordanian. The distribution of the different age groups among the respondents is as follows: 61.4% were less than 25 years, 25.6% were between 26–30 years, 25.6% were between 26–30 years, 13.0% were between 31–35 years and above. In regards of the years of experience among the respondents as follows: 36.8% were less than 5 years, 31.9% were between 5–10 year, 20.9% were between 11–15 year.

### 3.4. Measurement

The survey in the current study was built to investigate the proposed structured model which aims to explore employee perception of provided service quality on its own, and to consider related independent factors association. In line with the proposal of the structured model, the measurement of (SLB) combines items adopted from House and Dessler (1974), Slåtten (2009), and Jin, McDonald, and Park (2016). The items address the degree to which employees perceive how their manager or supervisor provides guidance, support, and consideration of their work and their contributions and cares about their well-being. The current study measures (JS) using five items adapted from Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, and Klesh (1979) and He et al. (2010). These items address the extent to which employees are satisfied with their job's tasks, challenges, and assignments. Concerning employee-perceived service quality, according to He et al. (2010), job performance features several measurable indicators. One of these is EPSQ, which serves as a proper indicator of job performance. Thus, six items were adapted from Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985). These items were used to measure the degree to which employees could solve customers' problems, their willingness to help customers, and their ability to meet customers' needs and use available physical resources to serve customers. For the (EE) measurement, items under the self-determination subscale adapted from Spreitzer (1995) and Hayes (1994). These items assessed the degree of autonomy and authority employees were granted by management in dealing with customers' problems, work environment measurement combines five items under environmental work perceptions, work attitudes, and job characteristics adapted from Winter and Sarros (2002).

### 3.5. Partial Least Square PLS-SEM

To test the proposed model PLS-SEM utilized to predict the construct and relationships among constructs (Hair et al., 2013; Reinartz, Haenlein, & Henseler, 2009).

#### 3.5.1. Assessment of Measurement Model

Through deploying measurement model, the validity and reliability of the variables assessed, whereas structural model assessed for the relationships among constructs (Chin, 2010; Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011). In current analysis two reliability coefficients considered to assess construct: Cronbach's alpha and combust reliability CR (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Chin, 2010; Gotz, Liehr-Gobbers, & Krafft, 2010). Table 3.1 (in supplementary file) shows that the combust reliability for all latent variables achieved and more than 0.8. Therefore, the measurement model is internally consistent and reliable. The AVE values of latent variables should be more than 0.5 to achieve acceptable convergent validity (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Hair et al., 2011; Chin, 2010). Table 3.1 shows that the constructs AVE values in the measurement model. Moreover, in the reflective mode, the manifest variables are considered as the "reflection" of their latent variables and each manifest variable is related to its latent variable, as follows:

$$x_{jh} = \pi_{jh}^0 + \pi_{jh}\xi_j + \varepsilon_{jh} \quad \forall h = 1, \dots, \kappa_j$$

$\pi^0$  = constant term;  $\pi_{jh}$  = regression coefficient;  $\varepsilon_{jh}$  = residual term.

For Discriminant validity each construct AVE was utilized where the value should be higher than the highest squared correlation of the construct with any other LV in the model (Chin, 2010; Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2011). Moreover, Table 3.2 (in supplementary file) presents the square root of AVE of each construct with the correlation of the other construct. Fig. 2 (in supplementary file) represents the validity of the construct using factor loadings, and average variance extracted. Notably, the results of convergent validity assessment in Fig. 2 shows that all the standardized loading values are above the level of 0.5 (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Also, Table 3.3 (in supplementary file) represents Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) there are no values over than 0.9 (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015). Indeed, tricky indicators removed from the constructs, reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity were highly acceptable for the measurement model.

#### 3.5.2. Goodness of fit

Following Hair, Hult, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2014), a diagnostic tool to evaluate the model's goodness of fit (GOF) used. GOF reflect how the proposed structured model's constructs perform well by describes how well the model fits a set of observations. According to Hair et al. (2014) the standard for evaluating the outcomes of the GOF analysis is small (0.02), medium (0.25) and large (0.36). In the current study, the GOF value is 0.25 as appear in Table 3.4 (supplementary file) which validates the proposed model of the relationship between study's constructs which signify that the model performs relatively well. In the current study, the results of the  $Q^2$  calculation are 0.13 and 0.19 for EPSQ and JS respectively, indicating that they have satisfactory predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2014). Further, as Table 3.4 shows, the results of testing the structural model indicating that (EE) and work environment explain 33% ( $R^2 = 0.33$ ) of the variance of (JS). (JS) explains 25% ( $R^2 = 0.25$ ) the variance of EPSQ.

#### 3.5.3. Assessment of structural model

Based on study's objectives, the relationships between constructs and Employee perceived service quality (EPSQ) assessed. To obtain an assessment of the structural model (inner model): R-square ( $R^2$ ) measure of endogenous constructs and the path coefficients were required (Chin, 2010; Hair et al., 2011). Moreover, opposite to the measurement model, which deals with the relations between latent variables and they are manifest; the structural model concerns the mode of estimation of the latent variable between them. The relations between latent variables have the form:

$$\xi_i = \beta_i^0 + \sum_{j=1, j \neq i} \beta_{ji}\xi_j + \zeta_i \quad \forall j = 1 \dots J$$

$\beta_i^0$  = constant term;  $\beta_{ji}$  = regression coefficient;  $\zeta_j$  = residual term.

Chin (1998) suggested 0.67, 0.33, and 0.19 measures for  $R^2$  to be considered substantial, moderate, and weak, respectively. The  $R^2$  value of the endogenous construct (EPSQ) of the current study is 0.25. Therefore, the value is acceptable but weak. All path coefficients are highly significant as well (see Table 3.5). Therefore, all hypothetical relationships are significant and supported expect Hypothesis 6 rejected as path coefficient, not significance.

A bootstrapping method was used to calculate the t values of the model, where values of t equal to or greater than 1.96 indicated a significant level of the proposed relationship with a less than 0.1 of the P value. The analysis of the full sample size of 208 respondents showed that the relationship between EE and

**Table 3.5**  
Summary of the PLS regression results.

Relationships	Variable	Coefficient	t-Value	p-Value	Decision
Direct relationships	EE->JS	0.345	5.383	0.000	H2: Supported
	JS->EPSQ	0.489	7.264	0.000	H5: Supported
	WE->JS	0.324	5.220	0.000	H4: Supported
Moderate effect 1	Moderating Effect 1->EPSQ	-0.051	0.702	0.496	H6: Not supported
Indirect relationship 1	EE->JS->EPSQ	0.168	4.235	0.000	H1: Supported
Indirect relationship 2	WE->JS->EPSQ	0.158	4.102	0.000	H3: Supported

JS was significant ( $\beta = 0.345$ ,  $t = 5.383$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Thus Hypothesis 2 supported. Similarly, the results also showed that the relationship between JS and EPSQ was significant ( $\beta = -0.489^*$ ,  $t = 7.735$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) Supporting Hypothesis 5. For the relationship between WE and JS, it was significant ( $\beta = -0.324^*$ ,  $t = 5.220$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) Supporting Hypothesis 4. The details of these results presented in Table 3.4 and Fig. 3 (in supplementary files). For indirect relationship hypothesis 1 supported as ( $\beta = -0.168^*$ ,  $t = 4.235$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and Hypothesis 3 supported as ( $\beta = -0.158^*$ ,  $t = 4.102$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Indeed, in contrast to the expectation, LE has no significant relation as a moderator on EPSQ ( $\beta = -0.051^*$ ,  $t = 0.496$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, hypothesis 6 not supported.

#### 4. Discussion

The current research findings reveal that (H1) confirmed that (EE) has a significant effect on (JS) and on (EPSQ) (H1), and it is in line with previous empirical studies' findings (e.g. [Al-Ababneh et al., 2017](#); [Fernandez & Moldogaziev, 2012](#); [Lin et al., 2017](#)). The probable explanation of this result is that if employees are empowered and they feel that leaders give them a space or freedom to judge and make decision to handle awkward situation and this will reflect on employee's confidence within their own abilities to think and act. Thus, will reflect positively on their (JS) level as they feel high confidence and they're superior trust them, as a result they will do extra efforts to deliver better service quality. Moreover, the study's findings support the relationship between work environment and (JS) and (EPSQ) (H3). The finding is consistent with previous empirical studies' findings (e.g. [Foldspang et al., 2014](#); [Naharuddin and Sadegi, 2013](#); [Tsai et al., 2015](#)). The probable explanation of this result is that a (EE) enriched with friendly communication, knowledge sharing, and collaboration among employees in organizations it positively will affect employees' satisfaction and performance. Another explanation could be due to other various attributes of the work environment including physical environment, such as physical elements, challenges, and threats in the work environment, which might has a significant impact on employee performance during the execution process of assigned task. For the moderation role of (SLB), current research findings reveal that the moderation role of (SLB) hypothesis (6) rejected, as there is no significant effect of (SLB) on employee-perceived service quality. The rejected hypothesis built based on the path-goal theory assumption according to [House \(1971\)](#), which posits that leaders' behavior may have a significant impact on subordinates' performance. Particularly, leaders may use several types of supportive behavior such as directing employees how to do the assigned task, collaborate with employees by keep close-supervising and involve in task accomplishment and provide tangible and intangible support for employees. In contrary, based on current study's findings, hypothesis 6 rejected after conducting PLS analysis. The results of the rejected hypothesis 6 in current study consistent with previous empirical studies (e.g. [Hayyat Malik, 2012](#); [Lor & Hassan, 2017](#)). Previous studies investigated the relationship between (SLB) and employee performance or motivation, and they found a non-significant relationship between (SLB) and employee performance. The probable

explanation behind the rejected hypothesis is due to several reasons, such as organizational justice, employee willingness to avoid managerial, power distance in terms of cultural and contextual factors, like industry, the level of the leader's position, and age. Further, another rationale reason behind the rejected hypothesis of organizational justice is the rewards system, as when an employee believes that organizational justice does not exist in management practice and employees with high performance and deficient performance treated equally. Which in turn employees will prefer to avoid doing extra efforts. These interpretations were based on expectancy theory, where an employee decides how much effort to dedicate to a task at a time. Thus, employees who do so will not pay attention to leaders' supportive attitude. These statements are in line with findings from a study conducted by [Lor and Hassan \(2017\)](#) that a supportive leadership style does not have a strong influence on job performance as does directive or participative leadership styles. In other words, employees believed that when "leaders participate or intervene subordinate's tasks, consequently subordinates creativity might be lost and looks towards their leaders' in a negative way of doing it which causes less productive and imaginative" ([Lor & Hassan, 2017](#): p. 26). Moreover, there are two more possible explanations for rejected hypothesis (6), the first is that employees may still respect leaders' authority and accept leaders' non-participative manner, or, in other words, authoritative style followed by leaders. This implies that employees desire a higher level of power distance, and the relationships they have with their supervisors are still based on hierarchy. Thus, these workers may be productive with high performance in the case of leaders who are not very participative. This findings were confirmed by [Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohayv, and Sanders's \(1989\)](#) results, as Middle East countries have a high power distance culture, and the current study within the Jordanian culture is described at a high-power distance level. Thus, these workers in the front office may perform well and with high quality in the case of leaders who are not very participative or supportive. Indeed, the current study's findings reveal that efforts of frontline staff will increase when employees feel that they are trusted by superior who delegate to them the authority to make decisions related to their tasks. Moreover, employees' feelings of willingness will deliver service perfectly if they feel more comfortable in their work environment. Moreover, employees with positive feelings regarding communications with their colleagues, physical resources related to the job and teamwork, all of which lead employees to be more satisfied at their job, which in turn reflects significantly on frontline employees' efforts to provide better service quality, and these explanations supporting hypothesis (5). In conclusion, the current study establishes relationships between constructs, It demonstrates that adopting an empowerment style and maintaining a healthy work environment in service organizations will improve (JS) and in turn will enhance service quality efforts among frontline employees. However, regarding (SLB), the results show an insignificant relationship. The justification for this finding could be reliant on contextual factors based on previous studies that arrived at the same results, such as industry, age, or the interactions between different types of leadership behaviors and subordinates, as well as cultural factors.

## 5. Research implications

For practical research implications, the study provides insights into the critical role of (EE) and work environment in enhancing employee efforts to deliver high-quality service. Thus, hospitality organizations in Jordan must place a more concentrated focus on managerial practices that ensure a pleasant work environment by having respectful and enriching it with friendly horizontal and vertical communications, knowledge sharing with front-line employees regarding several situations, enough time to do tasks without any pressure, providing sufficient facilities to do the job. Also, leaders or supervisors need to more closely involve with front-line employees to overcome challenges might appear during the execution of several tasks and avoid any threats in the work environment which might affect employee performance such as lay off. Another practical implication regarding (EE) that leaders need to show some trust in employees to decide or judge how to solve problems related to a specific task. Mainly, leaders must create empowerment policies and procedures and implement them at all organizational levels. It is necessary to empower employees at hotels with authority to make decisions (e.g., designing work procedures and related operations) and create a cost-effective plan. Also, the current study indicates that leaders' supportive behavior does not have a significant effect on employee-perceived service quality. Accordingly, it is important to maintain organizational justice by assuring that organizational justice exists in management practice and employees with high performance and poor performance not treated equally. Managers and supervisors also need to be more flexible and adopt an open-door policy with employees to reduce issues related to employee willingness to avoid managerial intervention. The current study makes several theoretical implications. The current study contributes in tourism industry literature by integrating service quality with employee perceptions, work environment, and (EE), also considering the moderating effect of (SLB) in study framework, which has not fully investigated in previous studies. Particularly, previous studies have addressed managerial practices, (EE) and work environment with several behavioral and attitude factors, but none of the variables investigated within areas of employee perception of service quality literature (Al-Zoubi and Alomari, 2017; Slåtten, 2009). The first theoretical contribution is that the study covered the gap where most of the previous studies investigate the relationship between work environment with several behavioral factors (e.g., employee turnover, absenteeism, retention). However, the current study covers that gap by clarifying that work environment has a significant effect on employee efforts related to service quality by studying employee's perception on Jordanian hotels context. Second, this study considers as one of a few studies empirically investigated leadership supportive behavior with (EPSQ) within Jordanian context. Particularly most of the previous studies investing it through across non-Western countries as well as Confucian Asian countries (Lor & Hassan, 2017). Third, current study findings related to (SLB) hypothesis were contrary to previous research findings; the interpretation of insignificant hypothesis as discussed in the discussion will boost the related knowledge.

## 6. Research limitations and recommendations

The current research suffers from limitations. This study was limited to sample size. The sample from this study is limited to one hospitality organization in Jordan. Thus, a convenience sample was used to investigate the phenomena, but it did not cover the entire population or other industries. Hence, the results need to be generalized and take into consideration that this study could replicate in other service organizations, other industries, or other

countries. Thus, replication of the current research framework will boost our understanding of those factors affecting (EPSQ). Another limitation that is related to the results is the finding that (SLB) does not have a significant effect on the relationship between (JS) and employee-perceived service quality. Hence, the supportive leadership construct might better understand through an exploratory study by conducting qualitative research to investigate the phenomenon in-depth in different cultures and countries. The final limitation is that the dependent variable in this study was employee-perceived service quality. Although service quality is an essential construct of the study, there are critically critical dependent variables that can implement. Employees' turnover intentions and employees' productivity are two dependent variables recommended for further investigation in future research within the same model.

## 7. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study clarifies that the service quality perception of Jordanian front-line employees affected by empowering management practices and comfortable work environment through stronger (JS). However, the findings reveal that (SLB) has an insignificant effect on front-line employee's perception of service quality. This finding will help leaders in Jordan to effectively adopt empowerment practices and provide more comfortable work environment conditions and be an empirical base for future researchers.

## Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found, in the online version, at [doi:10.1016/j.iedeen.2018.11.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iedeen.2018.11.001).

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