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## Article

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Article

# Emotional Intelligence, Leadership and Human Resources Empowerment in Luxury Hotels: The Case of Athens

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## Abstract

In recent years, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a noticeable rise in demand for luxury urban hospitality services. Luxury hospitality is not solely about costly offerings; it emphasises creating authentic, personalised, and wellness-focused experiences. Successful luxury hotel operations depend on emotional intelligence, supportive leadership, and HR empowerment. This research aims to identify the variables positively associated with these factors in metropolitan hotels and to propose HRM policies to enhance them. Conducted from March to May 2025 in Athens, Greece, with a sample of 220 luxury five-star hotel employees, the research utilised Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analyses. The Exploratory Factor Analysis was performed using the method of Principal Components Extraction, while the Confirmatory Factor Analysis employed Structural Equation Modelling. The analysis of the research findings highlighted specific variables that are positively correlated with the development of the emotional intelligence, supportive leadership, and HR empowerment needed to deliver luxury services in metropolitan destination hotels. This paper provides validated Likert-type scales and practical insights for developing these essential workplace factors in luxury hotels, ultimately improving customer service and employee support.



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**Keywords:** emotional intelligence; leadership; empowerment; human resources management; luxury hotels; Athens

## 1. Introduction

The hospitality industry is known for being intercultural and labour and communication-intensive (Stavrinoudis et al., 2022a). It is one of the most dynamic economic sectors with a significant contribution to the GDP and labour market worldwide (Thommandru et al., 2023). In recent years, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a notable increase in demand for luxury urban hospitality services (Zhao et al., 2022).

The modern provision of luxury hospitality services does not simply require the offering of expensive products in luxurious environments (Lopes et al., 2023); on the contrary, it requires the provision of services that will become experiences of authenticity, individuality and well-being for guests (Kakarougkas et al., 2024). Consequently, the effective operation of a luxury hotel relies to a large extent on teamwork and communication among employees, as well as the management of guest participation in the co-creation of value (Sadighha et al., 2024). On the other hand, the effective operation of a hotel requires the coordination of many departments (such as reception and housekeeping) and

necessitates managers to possess not only organisational skills but also leadership flexibility (Szende et al., 2021).

In line with the above, Peng et al. (2022) and Sotiriadis and Varvaressos (2016) argue that luxury hotel operations require the coexistence of three central factors: emotional intelligence, supportive leadership, and Human Resources (HR) empowerment. Emotional intelligence is defined as an individual's capability to recognise, express, comprehend, and regulate their emotions in relation to themselves and others (Bru-Luna et al., 2021). Supportive leadership involves the capacity to direct and support a group towards accomplishing a common goal. It incorporates the ability to inspire, encourage, and lead individuals, often through effective communication, support and decision-making abilities (Wilson, 2023). Empowerment is a psychological state fostered by leadership that enables subordinates to find meaning in their work, feel capable of performing it, experience self-determination, and recognise the impact of their contributions (Al-Sabi et al., 2023; Stavrinoudis & Simos, 2016).

Following the above, the main objective of this research is to identify the variables that, in the context of hotels in a metropolitan destination, are positively correlated with the development of emotional intelligence, supportive leadership and HR empowerment that are needed for the provision of luxury experiences. Then, based on these variables, it will propose Human Resources Management (HRM) policies that will support the development of these variables in the work environment of luxury five-star hotels in Athens. To achieve this objective, field research was conducted from March to May 2025 to gather quantitative data using a questionnaire in the metropolitan city of Athens, the capital of Greece, from a "convenience" sample (Golzar et al., 2022) of 220 five-star hotel employees. Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analyses were used to statistically analyse the data. The extraction of factors in the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed using the method of Principal Components Extraction (PCE) (Watkins, 2018). The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) employed Structural Equation Modelling (Kline, 2015). Other researchers in the hotel sector also apply this combination of methods (Leung & Baloglu, 2015; Pradhan & Panda, 2021; Perinotto et al., 2022). The scientific and practical contributions of the research lie in validating prototype Likert-type scales for future research and identifying key HRM policies to improve leadership, emotional intelligence, and HR empowerment in luxury hotels in metropolitan destinations.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Hotel Front-Line Employees' Emotional Intelligence

The interactions that take place between front-line employees and guests during the provision of services in hotels include emotional dimensions that significantly influence their experiences (Koc & Boz, 2020). Therefore, HR must develop emotional intelligence on the one hand to improve guest experiences during their stay in a luxury hotel (Lam et al., 2021) and, on the other, to prevent emotional disharmony through the positive management of their emotions (Koc, 2018). The concept of emotional intelligence pertains to an individual's capacity to perceive, articulate, comprehend, and regulate their emotions in relation to themselves and others (Bru-Luna et al., 2021). Emotional intelligence (EI) enables individuals to guide their thinking and behaviour by monitoring and distinguishing their own emotions from those of others (Park & Kim, 2021). Mayer et al. (2016) suggest that emotionally intelligent people accurately recognise their own and others' emotions and use them to enhance their cognitive functioning. Mayer and Salovey (1997) and Grunes et al. (2014) argue that people with emotional intelligence can: (a) distinguish and (b) understand their own and others' emotions, (c) regulate and control them, and (c) use their emotions to the benefit of their personal daily performance. Vashisht et al. (2023), in agreement with the above, argue that EI allows a person to: (a) control their emotions, (b) correctly interpret

their own and others' emotions, (c) understand the way others think to interact effectively with them, and (d) appreciate their achievements and face the future with optimism. Based on the above, the following research question can be synthesised:

**Q1:** *What are the key variables, in the context of hotels in a metropolitan destination, that are positively correlated with the development of the EI needed to provide luxury services?*

## 2.2. Supportive Leadership

In customer-centric industries, such as the luxury hospitality sector, organisational success is strongly influenced by leaders, who shape their subordinates' attitudes, emotions, and actions (Terglav et al., 2016). Bass (1985) and Mumford et al. (2017) argue that leaders must, in addition to motivating subordinates, also demonstrate positive work behaviours and attitudes. According to Aftab et al. (2023), in the luxury hospitality industry, when a leader demonstrates a combination of high expertise and a positive attitude towards HR, they can earn employees' respect and motivate them to fully participate in their work responsibilities. Jameel et al. (2025) suggest that, in the hospitality sector, leaders must practice supportive leadership, offering encouragement, resources, and emotional support, so that HR can adapt to the business's demands and customers' needs.

Kim et al. (2021) argue that supportive leadership serves two main positive functions in HRM. Initially, supportive leadership enhances the quality of relationships between managers and team members (Hauff et al., 2022). This function of supportive leadership is based on the principle of reciprocity (Ekelund & Bergquist, 2023), according to which, when subordinates experience supportive leadership, they feel they must, in turn, offer their leader high levels of performance and emotional support. The second function of supportive leadership is its ability to cultivate a warm, psychologically supportive environment among team members (Saleem et al., 2024). This function of supportive leadership is based on psychological climate theory, which examines how employees develop collective views of the practices, processes, and behaviours that are rewarded and supported in a particular work environment (Amenumey & Lockwood, 2008). Kim et al. (2021) conclude that supportive leadership, by creating a supportive intra-organisational psychological climate, cultivates a sense of trust and camaraderie that is essential for a thriving team. Based on the above, the following research question can be synthesised:

**Q2:** *What are the key variables, in the context of hotels in a metropolitan destination, that are positively correlated with the development of the supportive leadership needed to provide luxury services?*

## 2.3. Hotel Human Resources Empowerment

Empowerment can be defined as the psychological state developed in subordinates by the leadership or management of an enterprise or department in which subordinates can experience the meaning of their work, their ability to perform their work, self-determination in performing their work, and the impact that their work has (Al-Sabi et al., 2023; Stavrinoudis & Simos, 2016). Klidas (2001) and Stavrinoudis et al. (2022b) argue that, in a hotel context, empowerment can be defined as the transfer of power and responsibility from leadership to frontline employees, enabling them to control and improve the quality of services provided. Empowerment involves employees going beyond formal procedures to meet or exceed customer expectations, especially in unique situations. This involves bending the rules, accepting responsibility, offering financial concessions, being inventive, and exercising discretion in customer interactions (Klidas et al., 2007).

In agreement with the above, Tohidi and Jabbari (2012) argue that the concept of HR empowerment includes four aspects: Self-efficacy and Autonomy, Accountability, Self-esteem and Trust. Al Halbusi et al. (2023) suggest that hotel HR with high self-efficacy and

autonomy feel capable of handling challenging tasks, which boosts their work engagement. In contrast, individuals with low self-efficacy struggle to translate feelings of empowerment into actual involvement, which can diminish their enthusiasm and commitment to work. Accountability in HR involves cultivating a work environment in which both employees and the companies they work for are responsible for their actions, choices, and results (Amaka et al., 2023). The existence of accountability strengthens trust among team members, regardless of hierarchical level, enhances participation in decision-making processes, and leads to improved performance (Frederick et al., 2016). In this context, it is crucial at all hierarchical levels to set clear goals, describe roles and responsibilities, provide transparent feedback, and encourage open horizontal and vertical communication (Parker & Chung, 2018). Self-esteem refers to an individual's ability to evaluate and appreciate their overall worth in relation to others (Spreitzer, 1995). The presence or lack of self-esteem can positively or negatively affect an individual's performance and behaviour in their work environment, as an individual can only live in harmony with themselves when they can accept their strengths and weaknesses (Karatepe & Demir, 2014). Several factors contribute to building self-esteem, including emotional interactions, demonstrating one's skills, effective skill development, and anger management (Akgunduz, 2015). Employees who trust their management and colleagues are more effective in achieving organisational goals. In demanding environments, such as the hospitality industry, employee trust enhances morale, motivation, cooperation, and job satisfaction (Güçer & Şerif, 2014). Based on the above, the following research question can be synthesised:

**Q3:** *What are the key variables, in the context of hotels in a metropolitan destination, that are positively correlated with the development of the HR empowerment needed to provide luxury services?*

### 3. Materials and Methods

#### 3.1. Questionnaire Design and Pilot Research

This research involved developing a prototype questionnaire in two phases. The first phase conducted a content analysis (Kleinheksel et al., 2020) to identify key factors related to the emotional intelligence, supportive leadership, and HR empowerment needed for luxury service provision. In the second phase, the data from the initial analysis were organised to design a prototype questionnaire, which was then tested through a pilot study (Teresi et al., 2022) with four hotel employees. This helped ensure content validity and pinpoint potential challenges in completing the questionnaire. Insights from the pilot and participant feedback led to a clear and easily understandable questionnaire. This process aimed to reduce misunderstandings that could lead to poor data quality (Jordan & Troth, 2020).

Consequently, the questionnaire employed in this research was organised into four sections. The first three sections included a total of thirty Likert-type scales (Tanujaya et al., 2022) designed to assess the extent to which hotel employees in a metropolitan destination agree or disagree that specific variables are positively associated with the development of the emotional intelligence, supportive leadership, and HR empowerment needed for the provision of luxury services. The fourth part focused on collecting demographic data.

#### 3.2. Data Collection and Analysis

The survey was carried out using an electronic form from March to May 2025 at luxury five-star hotels in Athens, Greece's capital, and a convenience sample of 220 completed questionnaires was used (Golzar et al., 2022). The city of Athens, Greece, was chosen because it is an important European metropolitan destination with a steadily increasing tourist demand (including luxury tourists) and an international reach comparable to capitals such as Paris and Rome (Karachalis & Sarantakou, 2022; Foulkes, 2023). The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics and Exploratory and Confirmatory

Factor Analyses. The descriptive statistics included the calculation of mean, median, and mode (Cao, 2021). The EFA was conducted using the statistical software SPSS 29 and employed the PCE method, based on varimax rotation, to identify factors. This approach aims to identify a set of latent variables that explain the correlations among a broader set of observed variables, ultimately leading to the formulation of a new data structure or model (Laerd Statistics, 2015; Osborne, 2014). This data analysis methodology is deemed most appropriate for addressing complex issues in the hospitality industry (Arasli et al., 2020; Ciasullo et al., 2021; Vasilagos et al., 2017). Following this, the PCE method was carried out in two phases (Laerd Statistics, 2015; Osborne, 2014). In the initial phase, it was confirmed that (a) all variables exhibit linear correlations with each other through the correlation matrix and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin index for each variable, and (b) there is an acceptable level of sampling adequacy indicated by the overall Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin index and the Bartlett test of sphericity. During the second phase, a limited number of factors were extracted based on the following criteria: percentage of variance explained, scree plot assessment, and interpretability criteria. This process resulted in the establishment of four new data models/structures (Laerd Statistics, 2015; Osborne, 2014).

The EFA results were validated using CFA. For this purpose, a latent construct was developed and confirmed for each research question. The development of these latent constructs was facilitated by the AMOS 26 static package, utilising the Structural Equation Modelling method founded on the maximum likelihood estimation approach (Kline, 2015), which is deemed suitable for the hospitality industry (Chen & Chen, 2010; Wang, 2016). The validation process for the latent constructs relied on meeting several conditions: ensuring unidimensionality among the construct variables, achieving validity and reliability, and obtaining a high probability level ( $p$ -value). The interpretation of the statistical analysis results was grounded in the validated latent constructs, the results of the descriptive statistics, and the findings of the literature review. The integration of these methods is regarded as highly effective for examining similar topics in the tourism and hospitality industry, leading to its widespread application by many researchers (Leung & Baloglu, 2015; Pradhan & Panda, 2021; Perinotto et al., 2022). Figure 1 below summarises the main steps followed for the development of this research.

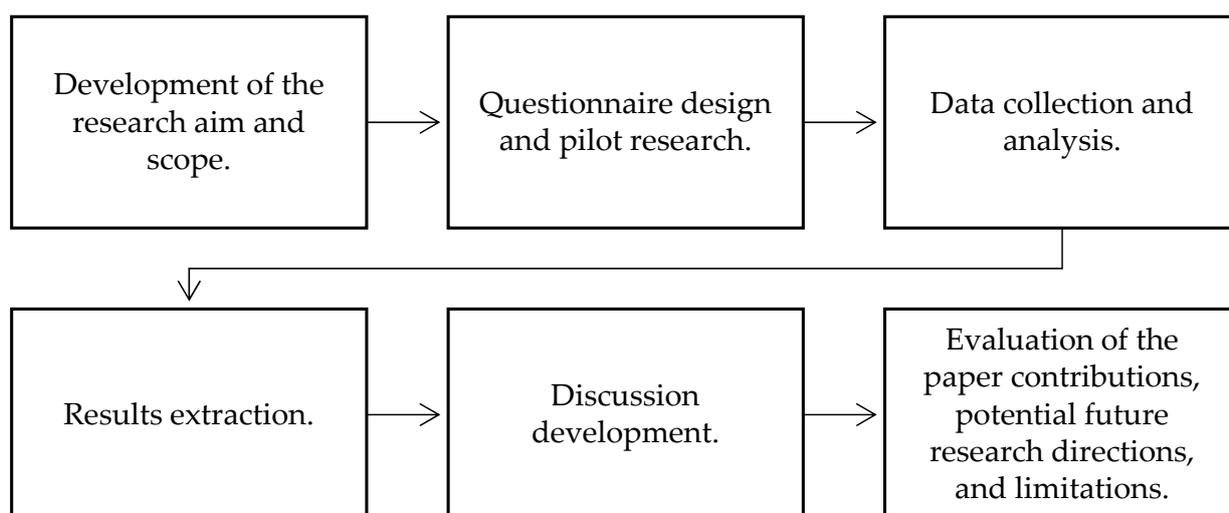


Figure 1. Research development workflow. Source: Authors' own work.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Demographic Characteristics

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the research participants. A total of 220 individual five-star hotel employees took part in the survey. Regarding their age, most are between 18 and 35 years old (73.6%). Concerning gender, women constitute the majority (52.7%), while a notable percentage (11.4%) opted not to answer. In terms of educational level, nearly half are university graduates (43.2%). Regarding hierarchical level, the majority are front-line employees (63.6%). Finally, in terms of years of work, most participants (33.2%) have been working in the sector for 1–3 years.

**Table 1.** Demographic characteristics of the participants.

Demographic Characteristic	N (220)	%
Age		
18–25	66	30%
26–35	96	43.6%
36–45	42	19.1%
46–60	16	7.3%
Gender		
Men	76	35.9%
Women	116	52.7%
I prefer not to answer	25	11.4%
Educational level		
High School Graduate	39	18.1%
Vocational Education Graduate	51	23.2%
University Graduate	95	43.2%
Master’s Degree Holder	33	15%
Doctoral Degree Holder	2	0.9%
Hierarchical Level		
Frontline Employee (e.g., Receptionist, Housekeeper, Waiter, etc.)	140	63.6%
Department Head (e.g., Assistant Manager, Supervisor, Captain, etc.)	47	21.4%
Department Manager (e.g., Front Office Manager, F&B Manager, etc.)	21	9.5%
Senior Executive of the Business (e.g., Hotel Manager)	12	5.5%
Years of work in the industry		
1–3	73	33.2%
4–6	57	25.9%
7–9	34	15.5%
10–12	22	10%
13–15	20	9.1%
Over 15 years	14	6.4%

Source: Authors’ own work.

### 4.2. Exploratory Factor Analysis Results

Table 2 presents the EFA results using the PCE method and descriptive statistics for the variables that, in the context of hotels in a metropolitan destination, are posi-

tively correlated with the development of the emotional intelligence needed to provide luxury services.

**Table 2.** Emotional intelligence variables.

Literature Review Elements	Variables	Factor 1 “Emotional Intelligence”	Factor 2 “Interpersonal Emotional Intelligence”	* Com.	Mean	Median	Mode
Distinguishing and understanding emotions (Grunes et al., 2014; Mayer & Salovey, 1997) Interpreting emotions (Vashisht et al., 2023)	Understanding needs, intentions and emotions (V1_1)	0.769	0.291	0.676	2.89	3.00	2.00
	Interpreting emotions through understanding: body language, non-verbal messages (V1_2)	0.771	0.166	0.622	2.96	3.00	2.00
Regulating and controlling emotions (Grunes et al., 2014; Mayer & Salovey, 1997) Controlling emotions (Vashisht et al., 2023)	Stress management (V1_3)	0.833	0.286	0.775	3.00	3.00	3.00
	Controlling emotions within the workplace and team setting (V1_4)	0.841	0.223	0.757	2.98	3.00	2.00
Using emotions beneficially (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Grunes et al., 2014)	Easy adaptation to the work environment (V1_5)	0.255	0.892	0.860	3.78	4.00	4.00
	Utilising diversity (V1_6)	0.822	0.274	0.751	2.96	3.00	3.00
Understanding others’ thinking (Vashisht et al., 2023)	Understanding the needs, intentions and emotions of others (V1_7)	0.236	0.902	0.870	3.77	4.00	4.00
Appreciating achievements and optimism (Vashisht et al., 2023)	Appreciation of personal value (V1_8)	0.827	0.214	0.730	3.0	3.00	4.00
	Recognition of efforts and effectiveness (V1_9)	0.814	0.238	0.720	2.98	3.00	4.00
	Emotional security (V1_10)	0.780	0.158	0.634	3.12	3.00	3.00
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy.	0.912	Cronbach’s alpha:	0.932	Bartlett’s test of sphericity			
				Approx. Chi-Square	1649.318		
				df	45		
				Sig.	0.000		

Source: Authors’ own work. Extraction Method: Principal Components. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization. \* Communalities. The grey colour highlights the correlation between variables and factors.

The scores of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy, Bartlett’s test of sphericity, and Cronbach’s alpha indicate that the factorial data structure obtained through EFA, using the PCE method for the first central research question, has high validity and reliability, making it suitable for CFA (Hajji et al., 2021). Additionally, Table 2 shows that two factors, with low complexity, explain most of the variance in the original variables

(73.961%). It is also noteworthy that participants agree, based on these results, that EI is relatively low at the hotel where they work.

Table 3 presents the EFA results, following the PCE of extraction and descriptive statistics, regarding the key variables that, in the context of hotels in a metropolitan destination, are positively correlated with the development of the supportive leadership needed to provide luxury services.

**Table 3.** Supportive leadership variables.

Literature Review Element	Variable	Factor "Supportive Leadership"	* Com.	Mean	Median	Mode
Improved relationships between supervisors and subordinates (Ekelund & Bergquist, 2023; Hauff et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2021)	Vision and clear and unambiguous instructions (V2_1)	0.807	0.652	3.22	3.00	3.00
	Trust in the decisions of team members (V2_2)	0.815	0.665	3.17	3.00	4.00
	Promotion of values such as creativity and innovation (V2_3)	0.845	0.715	3.08	3.00	2.00
	Effective problem solving (V2_4)	0.886	0.785	3.20	3.00	3.00
	Emotional self-control (V2_5)	0.905	0.819	3.10	3.00	2.00
Cultivating a warm and psychologically supportive environment within a group (Amenumey & Lockwood, 2008; Kim et al., 2021; Saleem et al., 2024)	Avoiding transferring personal tension to the team (V2_6)	0.890	0.791	3.00	3.00	2.00
	Positively dealing with diversity (V2_7)	0.914	0.835	3.19	3.00	3.00
	Effective conflict resolution (V2_8)	0.874	0.764	3.18	3.00	2.00
	Promoting trust, mutual respect and cooperation (V2_9)	0.920	0.846	3.25	3.00	2.00
	Understanding the emotional needs of team members, e.g., ignorance, insecurity, anxiety (V2_10)	0.818	0.669	2.99	3.00	2.00
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy.	0.954	Cronbach's alpha:	0.964	Bartlett's test of sphericity		
				Approx. Chi-Square	2313.632	
				df	45	
				Sig.	0.000	

Source: Authors' own work. Note: Only one factor was extracted. The solution cannot be rotated. \* Communalities.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy, Bartlett's test of sphericity, and Cronbach's alpha scores suggest that the factorial data structure derived from EFA—using the PCE method for the second central research question—possesses high validity and reliability. This indicates it is appropriate for CFA (Hajji et al., 2021). Furthermore, Table 3 reveals that only one factor, characterised by low complexity, accounts for the majority of the variance in the original variables (75.413%). It is also noteworthy that participants agree, based on these results, that the existence of supportive leadership is relatively low in the hotel where they work.

Table 4 presents the EFA results following the PCE method and descriptive statistics regarding the key variables that, in the context of hotels in a metropolitan destination, are positively correlated with the development of the HR empowerment needed to provide luxury services.

**Table 4.** HR empowerment variables.

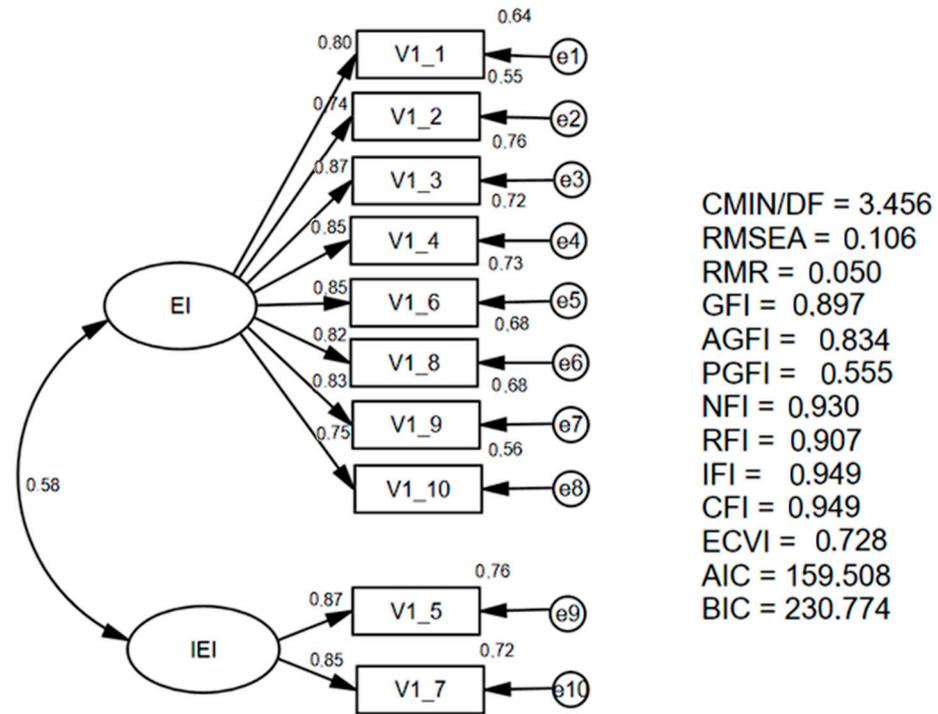
Literature Review Element	Variable	Factor “HR Empowerment”	* Com.	Mean	Median	Mode
Self-efficacy and Autonomy (Al Halbusi et al., 2023; Tohidi & Jabbari, 2012)	Strengthening individual initiatives to improve work efficiency (V3_1)	0.861	0.741	3.07	3.00	3.00
	Strengthening individual initiatives to improve and acquire additional skills (V3_2)	0.827	0.684	3.14	3.00	3.00
	Enhancing individual initiatives to foster collaborations (V3_3)	0.840	0.705	3.09	3.00	4.00
	Enhancing individual management of changes and challenges (V3_4)	0.883	0.779	2.89	3.00	2.00
Accountability (Amaka et al., 2023; Frederick et al., 2016; Parker & Chung, 2018; Tohidi & Jabbari, 2012)	Policies of self-control and voluntary respect for work regulations (V3_5)	0.608	0.370	3.74	4.00	5.00
Self-esteem (Akgunduz, 2015; Karatepe & Demir, 2014; Tohidi & Jabbari, 2012)	Strengthening self-esteem and self-realisation (V3_7)	0.868	0.754	2.75	3.00	2.00
	Strengthening the will for self-improvement (V3_6)	0.845	0.714	3.00	3.00	2.00
Trust (Güçer & Şerif, 2014; Tohidi & Jabbari, 2012)	Promoting friendly cooperation within teams (V3_8)	0.862	0.743	3.39	3.00	4.00
	Respect for diversity (V3_9)	0.866	0.750	2.87	3.00	3.00
	Developing interpersonal relationships of trust (V3_10)	0.775	0.600	3.23	3.00	3.00
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy.	0.937	Cronbach’s alpha:	0.947	Bartlett’s test of sphericity		
				Approx. Chi-Square	1877.156	
				df	45	
				Sig.	0.000	

Source: Authors’ own work. Note: Only one factor was extracted. The solution cannot be rotated. \* Communalities.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin, Bartlett’s test, and Cronbach’s alpha indicate high validity and reliability for the EFA-derived data structure, indicating that it is suitable for CFA (Hajji et al., 2021). Table 4 shows one factor with low complexity, explaining 68.404% of the variance. Participants also agree that HR empowerment is relatively low at their workplaces.

#### 4.3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

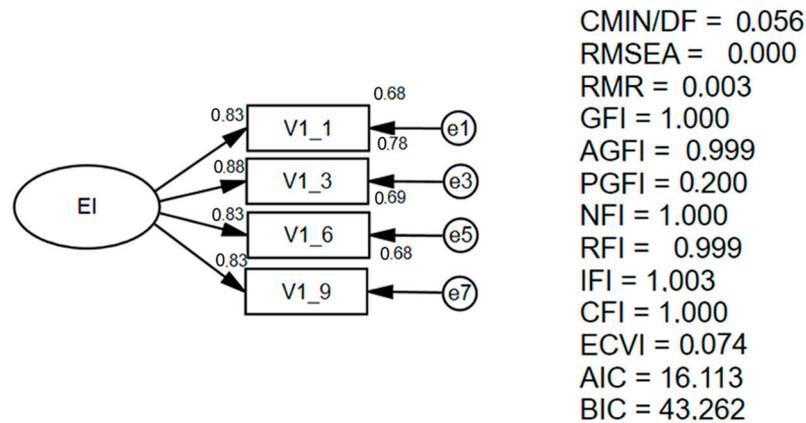
Based on the EFA results for the first research question, an initial attempt was made to validate a latent variables model that includes the interdependent latent variables “Emotional Intelligence” and “Interpersonal Emotional Intelligence,” along with all the observed variables associated with them. However, this was not possible, as the resulting Latent variables model 1 (Figure 2) did not meet the validation conditions (Discriminant validity, Construct validity and Probability level). For this reason, it was decided to remove the observed variables “V1\_2; V1\_4; V1\_5; V1\_7; V1\_8 and V1\_10”, primarily based on the Modification Indices and, secondarily, on the Standardised Regression Weights (Cheung et al., 2023; Brown, 2014; Zainudin, 2012).



Chi-square = 117.508; Degrees of freedom = 34; P- values =0.000

**Figure 2.** Latent variables model 1: The interdependent latent variables Emotional Intelligence and Interpersonal Emotional Intelligence. Source: Authors’ own work.

The above resulted in the creation of Latent construct 1 (Figure 3), which covers all validation conditions. The study of Latent construct 1 (Figure 3) shows that the development of the EI needed for the provision of luxury services in a metropolitan destination is correlated with four central variables: Understanding needs, intentions and emotions; Stress management; Utilising diversity; and Recognition of efforts and effectiveness.

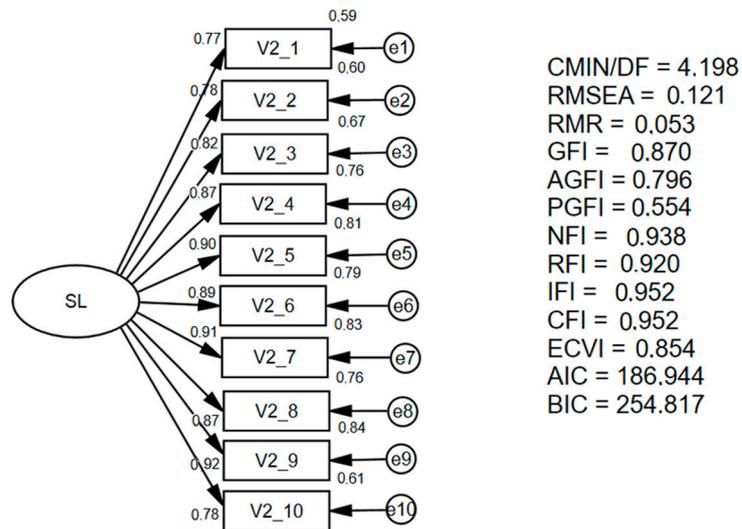


Chi-square =0.113;Degrees of freedom = 2; P- values = 0.945

**Figure 3.** Latent construct 1: The key variables correlated with Emotional Intelligence. Source: Authors’ own work.

Regarding the second central research question, Latent construct 2 (Figure 4) has been developed. This latent construct incorporates the set of latent variables and their corresponding observed variables, as identified through the EFA. However, the validation of this model was not possible as it did not meet all of the validation conditions (Discriminant

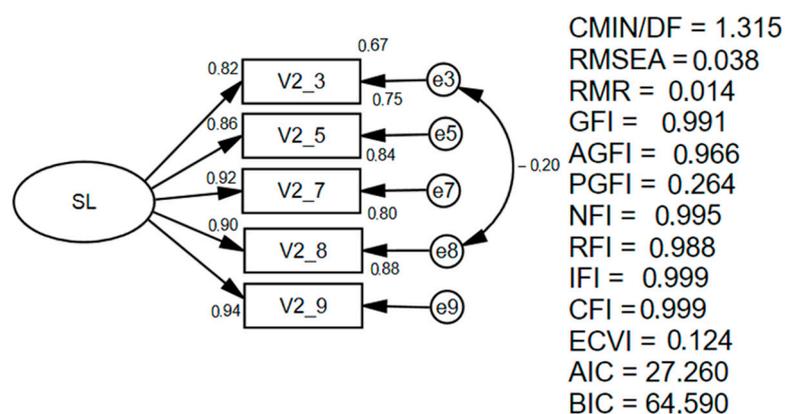
validity, Construct validity and Probability level). Following this, primarily based on the Modification Indices and, secondarily, on the Standardised Regression Weights (Cheung et al., 2023; Brown, 2014; Zainudin, 2012), it was decided to remove the variables “V2\_1; V2\_2; V2\_4; V2\_6 and V2\_10”.



Chi-square = 146.944; Degrees of freedom = 35; P- values = 0.000

Figure 4. Latent construct 2: The variables correlated with Supportive leadership. Source: Authors’ own work.

The removal of the aforementioned variables led to the creation of Latent construct 2.1 (Figure 5), which encompasses all validation conditions. The study of Latent construct 2.1 (Figure 5) reveals that the development of Supportive Leadership appropriate for the provision of luxury services in a metropolitan destination is correlated with five key variables: Promotion of values such as creativity and innovation, Emotional self-control, Positively dealing with diversity, Effective conflict resolution and Promoting trust, and mutual respect and cooperation.

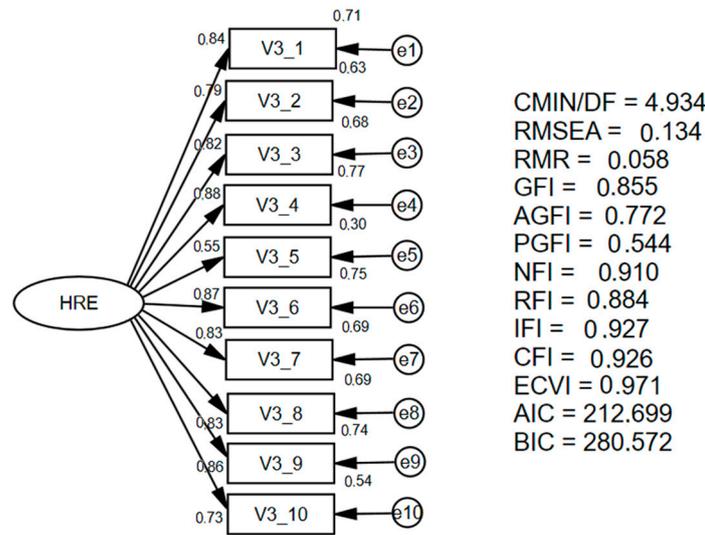


Chi-square = 5.260; Degrees of freedom = 4; P- values = 0.262

Figure 5. Latent construct 2.1: The key variables correlated with supportive leadership. Source: Authors’ own work.

In the same context as the preceding text, an initial attempt was made to validate Latent construct 3 (Figure 6) as it emerged from the EFA; however, (like the previous ones) it did not meet the validation conditions. Consequently, the variables “V3\_5; V3\_6;

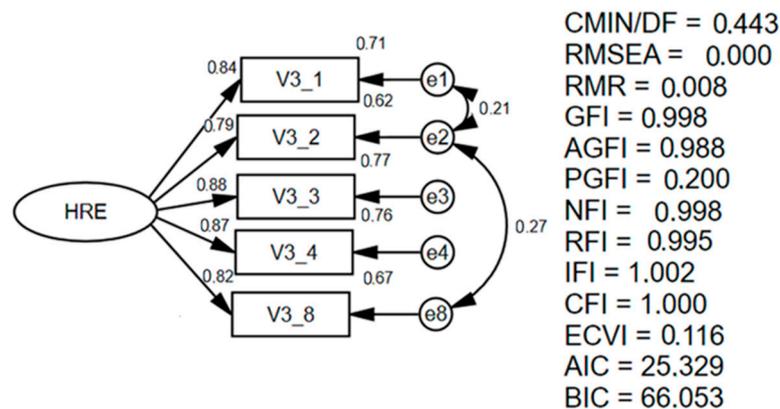
V3\_7; V3\_9 and V3\_10" were removed, primarily based on the Modification Indices and secondarily based on the Standardised Regression Weights (Cheung et al., 2023; Brown, 2014; Zainudin, 2012).



Chi-square = 172.699; Degrees of freedom = 35; P- values = 0.000

Figure 6. Latent construct 3: The variables correlated with HR empowerment. Source: Authors' own work.

The above led to the creation of Latent construct 3.1 (Figure 7), which covers all validation conditions. The study of Latent construct 3.1 (Figure 7) reveals that the development of HR empowerment suitable for the provision of luxury services in a metropolitan destination is correlated with five central variables: Strengthening individual initiatives to improve work efficiency, Strengthening individual initiatives to improve and acquire additional skills, Enhancing individual initiatives to foster collaborations, Enhancing individual management of changes and challenges, and Promoting friendly cooperation within teams.



Chi-square = 1.329; Degrees of freedom = 3; P- values = 0.722

Figure 7. Latent construct 3.1: The key variables correlated with HR empowerment. Source: Authors' own work.

Tables 5 and 6 below summarise the Standardised Regression Weights and the validation conditions of the Latent variables model and the Latent constructs presented above.

**Table 5.** Overview of the Standardised Regression Weights.

Latent Variables Model 1	Latent Construct 1	Latent Construct 2	Latent Construct 2.1	Latent Construct 3	Latent Construct 3.1
V1_1 <-- EI 0.801	V1_1 <-- EI 0.827	V2_1 <-- SL 0.766	V2_3 <-- SL 0.816	V3_1 <-- HRE 0.842	V3_1 <-- HRE 0.843
V1_2 <-- EI 0.742	V1_3 <-- EI 0.883	V2_2 <-- SL 0.776	V2_5 <-- SL 0.864	V3_2 <-- HRE 0.795	V3_2 <-- HRE 0.788
V1_3 <-- EI 0.870	V1_6 <-- EI 0.832	V2_3 <-- SL 0.816	V2_7 <-- SL 0.916	V3_3 <-- HRE 0.822	V3_3 <-- HRE 0.875
V1_4 <-- EI 0.849	V1_9 <-- EI 0.827	V2_4 <-- SL 0.875	V2_8 <-- SL 0.897	V3_4 <-- HRE 0.879	V3_4 <-- HRE 0.869
V1_6 <-- EI 0.853		V2_5 <-- SL 0.901	V2_9 <-- SL 0.936	V3_5 <-- HRE 0.552	V3_8 <-- HRE 0.818
V1_8 <-- EI 0.824		V2_6 <-- SL 0.889		V3_6 <-- HRE 0.867	
V1_9 <-- EI 0.827		V2_7 <-- SL 0.912		V3_7 <-- HRE 0.831	
V1_10 <-- EI 0.749		V2_8 <-- SL 0.871		V3_8 <-- HRE 0.831	
V1_5 <-- IEI 0.869		V2_9 <-- SL 0.916		V3_9 <-- HRE 0.860	
V1_7 <-- IEI 0.847		V2_10 <-- SL 0.782		V3_10 <-- HRE 0.735	

Source: Authors' own work.

**Table 6.** Overview of the validation conditions.

Validation Conditions	Latent Variables Model 1	Latent Construct 1	Latent Construct 2	Latent Construct 2.1	Latent Construct 3	Latent Construct 3.1	Cut off Criteria
Discriminant validity	Not Achieved	Achieved	Not Achieved	Achieved	Not Achieved	Achieved	Low value of Modification Indices and Unidimensionality of the variables (Cheung et al., 2023; Brown, 2014; Zainudin, 2012)
Convergent validity	Achieved (0.679)	Achieved (0.710)	Achieved (0.726)	Achieved (0.786)	Achieved (0.651)	Achieved (0.704)	Average variance extracted >0.5 (Cheung et al., 2023)
Construct validity	Not Achieved	Achieved	Not Achieved	Achieved	Not Achieved	Achieved	Good fit of the fitness indexes (Brown, 2014; Zainudin, 2012)
Internal reliability	Achieved (0.931)	Achieved (0.907)	Achieved (0.920)	Achieved (0.946)	Achieved (0.947)	Achieved (0.928)	Cronbach's alpha score > 0.7 (Cheung et al., 2023; DeVellis, 2016)
Composite reliability	Achieved (0.955)	Achieved (0.907)	Achieved (0.963)	Achieved (0.948)	Achieved (0.948)	Achieved (0.922)	Construct reliability > 0.7 (Cheung et al., 2023; Zainudin, 2012)
Probability level	Not Achieved (0.000)	Achieved (0.945)	Not Achieved (0.000)	Achieved (0.262)	Not Achieved (0.000)	Achieved (0.722)	p-value > 0.05 (Brown, 2014)

Source: Authors' own work.

## 5. Discussion

The present research aims to identify, by addressing three main research questions, the variables that, in the context of hotels in a metropolitan destination, are positively correlated with the development of the emotional intelligence, supportive leadership, and HR empowerment needed for the provision of luxury services. In relation to the first research question, “What are the key variables, in the context of hotels in a metropolitan destination, that are positively correlated with the development of the EI needed to provide luxury services?”, initially, the EFA concluded that ten variables in combination compose two factors, “Emotional Intelligence” and “Interpersonal Emotional Intelligence”. However, the application of CFA overturned this finding, leading to the conclusion that four key variables are positively correlated with the development of the emotional intelligence needed for the provision of luxury hotel services in a metropolitan destination. This finding is partially consistent with previous research. Specifically, the emergence of the variables Understanding needs, intentions and emotions, Stress management, Utilising diversity and Recognition of efforts and effectiveness, at the expense of the variables Interpreting emotions, Controlling emotions within the workplace and team setting, Easy adaptation to the work environment, Understanding the needs, intentions and emotions of others, Appreciation of personal value and Emotional security for the development of EI is in partial agreement with the findings of [Grunes et al. \(2014\)](#), [Mayer and Salovey \(1997\)](#) and [Vashisht et al. \(2023\)](#). It is striking that descriptive statistics show that the four central variables mentioned above are poorly supported by the work environment of luxury hotels in Athens, which may impact employees’ psychological health and the relationships between frontline employees and guests ([Koc & Boz, 2020](#); [Park & Kim, 2021](#)). Therefore, the management of these hotels should, through HRM policies, strengthen employees’ ability to regulate and manage their emotions, positively leverage the feelings generated by diversity, value their achievements, and maintain a positive attitude towards the future. Such policies could include training programs, coaching, and mentoring to develop these abilities.

The second research question was “What are the key variables, in the context of hotels in a metropolitan destination, that are positively correlated with the development of the supportive leadership needed for the provision of luxury services?” Initially, the EFA highlighted ten variables. However, the CFA limited these variables to five. This finding partially agrees with the results of previous research. Specifically, the emergence of the variables: Promotion of values such as creativity and innovation, Emotional self-control, Positively dealing with diversity, Effective conflict resolution and Promoting trust, mutual respect and cooperation at the expense of the variables: Vision and clear and unambiguous instructions, Trust in the decisions of team members, Effective problem solving, Avoiding transferring personal tension to the team and Understanding the emotional needs of team members for the development of Supportive leadership is in partial agreement with the findings of [Amenumey and Lockwood \(2008\)](#), [Ekelund and Bergquist \(2023\)](#); [Hauff et al. \(2022\)](#), [Kim et al. \(2021\)](#) and [Saleem et al. \(2024\)](#). An important element is that the descriptive statistics indicate that in the work environment of luxury hotels in Athens, the variables that develop supportive leadership have not been developed to a large extent, which can negatively affect the attitudes, emotions, actions and motives of employees ([Aftab et al., 2023](#); [Terglav et al., 2016](#)). For this reason, it is essential to develop HRM policies that, on the one hand, enhance the quality of relationships between superiors and subordinates and, on the other hand, foster a warm, psychologically supportive environment among team members. Policies that can achieve this result include adopting a flat organisational structure at the expense of a hierarchical one, and strengthening

teamwork and bottom-to-top communication at the expense of individualism and top-to-bottom communication.

For the third research question, “What are the key variables, in the context of hotels in a metropolitan destination, that are positively correlated with the development of the HR empowerment needed for the provision of luxury services?”, ten variables were initially identified through EFA, which were then reduced to five with the application of CFA. These five variables are in agreement, partial agreement and disagreement with the results of previous research. More specifically, the identification of the variables: Strengthening individual initiatives to improve work efficiency, Strengthening individual initiatives to improve and acquire additional skills, Enhancing individual initiatives to foster collaborations and Enhancing individual management of changes and challenges, is in agreement with the findings of [Al Halbusi et al. \(2023\)](#) and [Tohidi and Jabbari \(2012\)](#), while the prominence of the variables: Promoting friendly cooperation within teams at the expense of the variables: Respect for diversity and Developing interpersonal relationships of trust is in partial agreement with [Güçer and Şerif \(2014\)](#) and [Tohidi and Jabbari \(2012\)](#). The finding that the variables: Policies of self-control and voluntary respect for work regulations, Strengthening self-esteem and self-realisation and Strengthening the will for self-improvement do not have a strong correlation with the development of HR empowerment in state hotels of metropolitan destinations is in contrast with [Akgunduz \(2015\)](#), [Amaka et al. \(2023\)](#), [Frederick et al. \(2016\)](#), [Karatepe and Demir \(2014\)](#), [Parker and Chung \(2018\)](#), [Tohidi and Jabbari \(2012\)](#) and [Tohidi and Jabbari \(2012\)](#). The results of the descriptive statistics are striking, indicating that the work environment of Athenian luxury hotels does not strongly support the five central variables that are strongly correlated with the development of HR empowerment, an element that can potentially harm guest satisfaction when offering luxury services ([Al-Sabi et al., 2023](#); [Klidas, 2001](#); [Klidas et al., 2007](#); [Stavrinoudis & Simos, 2016](#)). HRM policies that can enhance HR empowerment in luxury hotels in metropolitan destinations include training that supports frontline HR in acquiring professional competence for autonomous work, even under adverse conditions; the development of incentives for taking initiative when serving customers; and the elimination of a work model that favours micromanagement.

## 6. Contributions, Future Research and Limitations

The results of this research offer original contributions in both scientific and practical aspects. The scientific and practical originality lies in the fact that prior studies, such as those by [Peng et al. \(2022\)](#) and [Sotiriadis and Varvaressos \(2016\)](#), have acknowledged the value of the factors: emotional intelligence, supportive leadership, and HR empowerment in the provision of hospitality services but there remains a notable gap in research that explicitly identifies the variables influencing these dynamics within the context of luxury hotels in metropolitan destinations. The scientific contribution of the research lies in the validation and introduction of original Likert-type scales for measuring emotional intelligence, supportive leadership, and HR empowerment. These scales are intended to provide researchers with robust tools for future investigations, facilitating a deeper understanding of these factors and the variables that correlate with them. The practical contribution of the research lies in the identification of key elements that need to be developed in the work environment of luxury hotels in metropolitan destinations to foster emotional intelligence, supportive leadership and HR empowerment among employees. Additionally, it proposes actionable policies and strategic initiatives to enhance these essential elements. Implementing these suggestions is expected to improve service delivery for guests while also creating a more supportive and enriching workplace for hotel employees. By prioritising these aspects, luxury hotels can achieve higher levels of

guest satisfaction and employee engagement, ultimately contributing to their success in a competitive metropolitan landscape.

Following the above, this research focused solely on analysing quantitative data; future studies could incorporate qualitative data by utilising interviews or open-ended survey responses to gain a deeper understanding of the subject. Furthermore, the present research was based exclusively on data obtained from luxury hotels in Athens, which may limit the applicability of the findings. Future research could analyse similar data from the hospitality sector of other metropolitan destinations and countries, allowing for a comparison of the results. Additionally, future research could examine differences between metropolitan and non-metropolitan destinations regarding the topic at hand. This comparative approach would enable researchers to identify trends, similarities, and differences in key factors related to the emotional intelligence, supportive leadership, and HR empowerment needed for luxury service provision across diverse cultural and economic contexts. In the same vein, future research could focus on emerging research topics, such as the use of artificial intelligence in HRM and emotional assessment, post-pandemic emotional labour and its psychological implications and the rise of digital empathetic leadership in international hotel organisations. Additionally, this research aimed to identify the variables that, in the context of hotels in a metropolitan destination, are positively correlated with the development of emotional intelligence, supportive leadership, and HR empowerment for the provision of luxury experiences. Future research could explore whether supportive leadership mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and empowerment. Finally, a convenience sample was used for data collection. Therefore, the results cannot be generalised. Future research could adopt a more randomised sampling approach to enhance the generalisability of the results.

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**Informed Consent Statement:** Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

**Data Availability Statement:** The original contributions presented in this study are included in the article. Further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

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## Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this manuscript:

CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
HR	Human Resources
HRM	Human Resources Management
PCE	Principal Components Extraction

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