

To lead or not to lead? A cultural examination of leadership in independent hotels

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Abstract

Purpose – This study explores the impact of ethical and authentic leadership on employees' workplace perceptions, focusing on organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB), trust in leader, commitment, employee voice and empowerment in independent hotels across two contrasting Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness (GLOBE) clusters: Germanic and Middle-Eastern clusters. It examines how national culture influences these relationships in the hospitality industry.

Design/methodology/approach – Data were collected from 1,678 employees in independent hotels in the Germanic European cluster (Germany and the Netherlands) and the Middle-Eastern cluster (Qatar and Turkey) using selective and snowball sampling techniques. Hypotheses were tested using two-stage structural equation modelling.

Findings – Ethical leadership significantly affects employee voice in Germany and the Netherlands but not in Qatar and Turkey. Authentic leadership positively influences employee voice in Qatar, Turkey and Germany but does not significantly impact trust in leader in any of the four countries. The study underscores the role of cultural dimensions, particularly power distance, in shaping these relationships.

Originality/value – This research contributes to the literature by investigating the effects of ethical and authentic leadership on key organisational variables in culturally diverse contexts within the hospitality industry. The findings highlight the necessity of considering national culture in leadership practices and suggest practical implications for independent hotels to adapt their leadership approaches to enhance employee outcomes. Future research should explore cultural dimensions as moderators in organisational relationships.

Keywords Ethical leadership, Authentic leadership, National culture, Independent hotels, OCB, Trust in leader

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Independent hotels endure stiff competition from chain hotels and, therefore, must leverage their resources as much as possible. They must allocate a significant part of their resources,

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such as time and money, to recruiting, training and managing inexperienced staff so as to produce the best possible customer relationships, which lead to customer loyalty (Nazarian, Zaeri, Foroudi, Afrouzi, & Atkinson, 2022). In effect, they need to create a workplace in which their employees will go beyond their contractual requirements and enhance organisations' effectiveness and performance (Nazarian, Atkinson, Foroudi, & Edirisinghe, 2020; Wang & Wong, 2011). This voluntary conduct, not formally compensated by organisations' reward system, is termed *organisational citizenship behaviour* (OCB) (Organ, Podsakoff, & MacKenzie, 2006).

Typically, employees of independent hotels suffer low wages and long working hours (Ferreira, Martinez, Lamelas, & Rodrigues, 2017), and their employers do not possess adequate monetary resources to provide them with financial incentives that could lead to OCB; therefore, they must rely on their leadership styles to create the conditions for OCB. This study examines the relationship between two leadership styles, ethical leadership and authentic leadership, and OCB via the intermediating variables of *employee voice*, *employee empowerment*, *trust in leader* and *commitment*.

Both ethical and authentic leadership seem to be credible candidates for effective leadership in these circumstances. Ethical leadership could be defined as demonstrating ongoing ethical behaviours and conduct in the organisation and communicating these attitudes to subordinates (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005). Therefore, if staff evaluate their leader as a legitimate, credible and ethical role model who exhibits ethical behaviours, they will be willing to learn and emulate leaders' ethical conduct, including honesty, consideration for others and fair treatment (Mayer, Aquino, Greenbaum, & Kuenzi, 2012).

Moreover, ethical leaders can establish an appropriate leader-member exchange (LMX) relationship with their followers by incorporating ethical standards. LMX is based on social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), which proposes that followers reciprocate the relationship of respect and do more than their required jobs when treated fairly and ethically by their leaders (Mayer, Bardes, & Piccolo, 2008). Leaders' moral behaviour appears to be the core component of ethical leadership and the necessary condition for creating authentic leadership (Brown *et al.*, 2005; Brown & Treviño, 2006). Indeed, building such a social exchange relationship requires that both employees and leaders make a mutual endeavour, and the quality of LMX directly affects the employees' trust in their leaders (Javed, Rawwas, Khandai, Shahid, & Tayyeb, 2018). Additionally, authentic leaders tend to develop features such as self-awareness, relational transparency and balanced processing as well (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008).

Studies have found differences in the perceptions of followers from different national cultures between their perceptions of authentic leadership behaviour and their perceptions of ethical leadership behaviour. The contrasting cultural frameworks result in differing expectations for what constitutes effective and ethical leadership (Forsyth, O'boyle, & McDaniel, 2008). In Western Europe, authenticity is often linked to transparency, inclusivity and fostering an open dialogue, reflecting the cultural norms of individualism and democratic participation. In the Middle East, ethical leadership is intertwined with religious adherence and social stability, where leaders are expected to embody moral virtues as defined by Islamic doctrine and ensure the collective well-being of their communities through a more paternalistic approach. These regional differences highlight the importance of context in shaping leadership styles and the attributes that are valued in leaders within different cultural settings.

Since Hofstede (1993) raised doubts about generalising research findings conducted in Western nations into other areas of the world, there has been a growing body of literature on this topic (Nazarian *et al.*, 2022). Thus, to provide new insights based on national cultural differences, we have gathered data from four countries in two contrasting regional clusters. According to the Global Leadership and Organisational Behaviour Effectiveness (GLOBE)

studies, Qatar and Turkey are in the Middle-Eastern cluster and Germany and the Netherlands are in the Germanic European cluster (House, 2004). These two clusters are, according to their GLOBE profiles, as different as it is possible for them to be in world terms. Thus, in this study, by employing the GLOBE model of national culture, we have been able to examine the cultural effects and relationships between our variables in these two contrasting regional clusters.

The GLOBE Germanic cluster has a high ranking for charismatic, participative and team-oriented leadership, indicating a preference for leaders in this cluster who have a clear vision, inspire and motivate others, value diverse opinions and ideas and are expected to be skilled in building effective teams through interpersonal and administrative skills. Moreover, the high ranking for the autonomous leadership dimension suggests that independent thinking and action are also highly valued, meaning that leaders who demonstrate autonomy and are willing to take risks are respected and admired. On the other hand, a low ranking for self-protective leadership implies that leaders who exhibit self-centred behaviour and prioritise their own interests above those of their teams are not well received. Instead, leaders who prioritise team interests over personal gain are highly respected. Overall, in the Germanic Europe cluster, leaders are expected to exhibit charismatic and participative leadership qualities, while independent thinking and action are valued and self-centred or status-conscious behaviour is rejected (House, 2004).

The GLOBE Middle East cluster is characterised by high scores on the dimensions of in-group collectivism and power distance, indicating a strong emphasis on family and group loyalty and acceptance of authority and social hierarchy. These societies are not performance-oriented, but rather value stability and order. Leadership dimensions that contribute to outstanding leadership, such as charismatic and team-oriented leadership, have the lowest scores relative to other clusters. Gender inequality is the norm in these societies. However, the Middle Eastern leadership profile is unique due to the pervasive influence of the Islamic religion, which emphasises the familial, humble and faithful aspects of leadership (GLOBE, 2004).

The aim of this research is to explore how leaders and managers of independent hotels can promote OCB behaviours among their staff. In doing so, we have examined the effects and relationships of the variables trust in leaders, commitment and employees' voice and development in independent hotels in four countries: Germany and the Netherlands in the Germanic cluster and Qatar and Turkey in the contrasting Middle-Eastern cluster. The findings of this research highlight the similarities and differences in these two culturally different clusters and add to a growing body of literature, indicating that organisational variables developed and tested largely in Western countries do not necessarily behave in the same ways in other parts of the world.

Theoretical background and hypotheses development

This study compares the effects of ethical and authentic leadership styles on OCB through other variables such as employee voice, employee empowerment, trust in leader and commitment. These two leadership styles were selected because they have been found to affect OCB: for example, ethical leadership in South China pharmaceuticals (Mo & Shi, 2017) and in Taiwanese hospitals (Wang & Sung, 2016) and authentic leadership (Qiu, Alizadeh, Dooley, & Zhang, 2019) in the Chinese hospitality industry and (Iqbal, Hassan, Akhtar, & Khan, 2018) in the Pakistani banking industry.

Ethical leadership

Ethical leadership has been defined as a leadership style that demonstrates and executes normatively proper behaviour through personal activities and interpersonal relationships by

offering fair rewards and punishments for ethical or unethical behaviour (Brown *et al.*, 2005; Brown & Treviño, 2006). Employees have been found to imitate their leaders' moral behaviours and use cultural standards to distinguish between proper and inappropriate behaviours (Black & Babin, 2019; Nazarian *et al.*, 2022) from their leaders who provide rewards for ethical manners and consequences for subordinates who do not follow the norms (Brown *et al.*, 2005).

Ethical leadership is based on two main factors: first, personal morality, so that subordinates think of the ethical leader as a "moral person" who maintains fairness and truthfulness in their relationship with employees and, second, they are perceived to be a "moral manager" when supporting the firm's employees (Brown *et al.*, 2005; Lemoine, Hartnell, & Leroy, 2019). Furthermore, since fairness, truthfulness, showing respect to employees and caring about them are inseparable parts of an ethical leadership style, it leads to positive outcomes such as commitment, job satisfaction and OCB among employees. Thus, it enhances the performance of the organisation (Dimitriou & Schwepker, 2019; Freire & Bettencourt, 2020; Nazarian *et al.*, 2020).

Authentic leadership

Authentic leaders consider the well-being of their subordinates in their decisions and actions (Ausar, Kang, & Kim, 2016). Positive leadership theories consider authentic leadership to be one of the effective leadership styles that inspire employees and motivate them to work efficiently (Hsieh & Wang, 2015). These leaders consider their values in their behaviour and try to have a proper relationship with their employees based on honesty. Also, they create high levels of engagement in their working environment among employees (Walumbwa, Wang, Wang, Schaubroeck, & Avolio, 2010).

Walumbwa *et al.* (2008) merged the various views of authentic leadership and defined it as leadership behaviour that utilises positive psychological capacities and an ethical climate to promote self-awareness, moral perspective, transparent communication and balanced information processing, leading to positive self-development in both leaders and followers. The definition draws attention to the moral aspects of authentic leadership and the characteristics that leaders can develop.

Trust in leader

Generally, most employees prefer a trust-based relationship with their leaders who care about their interests and priorities; also, employees tend to have a good relationship with leaders who keep their promises (Mo & Shi, 2017). From this viewpoint, the role of leaders is vital, and they can maintain or improve their employees' trust with truthfulness and openness (Yao, Qiu, & Wei, 2019). In terms of social exchange theory (SET), the level of trust in leaders is mainly influenced by employees' views on the quality of LMX relationships (Blau, 1964).

Both ethical leadership and authentic leadership have been shown to have a positive effect on *trust in leader*. According to Qiu *et al.* (2019), in the Chinese hospitality industry, receiving trust from employees depends on leaders' authentic behaviour, and the more authentic leadership is shown, the more trust they receive from their followers. Also, Chughtai, Byrne, and Flood (2015) showed that ethical leadership has a direct effect on *trust in leader*, and organisations can increase their positive outcomes by using this leadership style. Therefore, we propose that:

H1. There is a relationship between ethical leadership and *trust in leaders*.

H2. There is a relationship between authentic leadership and *trust in leaders*.

Also, most leaders think of themselves as open-minded and willing to accept different views and opinions from employees; however, most employees believe that their leaders do not usually want to hear their views (Hsiung, 2012). In this kind of situation, leaders may stop employees' voice behaviours since it hinders employee honesty and decreases their trust in the leader (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May, 2004). Studies have demonstrated the effect of *employee voice on trust in leader*, especially in the hospitality industry (Holland, Cooper, Pyman, & Teicher, 2012). Therefore, based on this argument, we propose:

H3. There is a relationship between *employee voice* and *trust in leaders*.

Employee voice

Employee voice has been defined as "promotive behavior that emphasizes the expression of constructive challenge intended to improve rather than merely criticize" (LePine & van Dyne, 1998, p9xy). The concept of *employee voice* derives from the belief that subordinates identify reasons for dissatisfaction with their jobs while also finding possibilities for enhancing the firm's performance (Detert & Burris, 2007). Employees' opinions often become challenging and risky for the individuals who express them, so leaders' responses are employees' most significant concern when they give voice to problems (Hsiung, 2012). For example, if leaders consider voicing as an insulting behaviour, it can affect the employee negatively. If a leader assesses the employee's voice unfavourably, there will be a significant increase in risk for the employee (Cheng, Bai, & Hu, 2022).

In organisations with an ethical leadership style, employees consider the organisation's good before anything else, even though they may confront undesirable personal outcomes (Cardona, 2000). Therefore, ethical leadership affects *employee voice* by encouraging employees to voice their thoughts honestly and openly (Cheng et al., 2022).

H4. There is a relationship between ethical leadership and *employee voice*.

Authentic leadership has multi-level effects on organisations, as this kind of leadership also facilitates *employee voice* behaviours and inspires employee honesty (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). These leaders are aware of their abilities and weaknesses, and they are prepared to be open about their limitations in their duties, tasks and problem-solving abilities. Such leaders are willing to take on-board employees' thoughts and views and may even encourage them to question the leaders' deeply held positions (Walumbwa et al., 2008). *Employee voice* may give rise to challenges to authority and questions of organisational values. However, authentic leaders' high ethical criteria, truthfulness and integrity through role modelling can also influence subordinates' opinions and values (Hsiung, 2012). Therefore, based on these previous studies and our research goal, we propose:

H5. There is a relationship between authentic leadership and *employee voice*.

Commitment

Commitment has been described as employees' loyalty to their leader and organisation (Kumasey, Bawole, & Hossain, 2017) and also as the subordinate's perspective on the organisation, which causes enthusiastic association with it (Lee & Reade, 2018). Therefore, this characteristic of employees represents a strong emotional tie that they feel towards their job, leaders and organisations; also, it includes their attitude to continue working in the same organisation. Keeping employees committed to an organisation is one of the primary issues organisations confront (Farndale, Joppe, Kelliher, & Hope-Hailey, 2011; Saleem, Bhutta, Nauman, & Zahra, 2019).

Previous studies have investigated the antecedents of *commitment* in organisations to increase their positive outcomes. Xiong, Lin, Li, and Wang (2016) showed that employees

who have trust in their leaders have more *commitment* and concluded that *trust in leader* can enhance *commitment*. Thus, we propose that:

H6. There is a relationship between *trust in leader* and *commitment*.

Employee empowerment

Employee empowerment is one of the approaches that leaders use to improve the self-efficacy of their employees by allowing them to participate in organisations' decision-making process. Baird, Su, and Munir (2018), Dust, Resick, Margolis, Mawritz, and Greenbaum (2018) and David and Lawler (2006) have defined *employee empowerment* as conveying information and knowledge about the organisation's outcomes to employees, which helps them to contribute to organisational performance and delegate authority to them so that they have the right to make decisions that influence organisational direction and performance. The employee empowerment process can happen formally or informally. However, regardless of the strategy, it improves employees' confidence and feeling of belongingness with the organisation (Huq, 2016). Empowering the employees makes them self-motivated individuals and increases their engagement with their job (Idris, See, & Coughlan, 2018).

Previous studies have focused on the enablers and effects of *employee empowerment* in organisations. In an investigation into the relationship between *employee empowerment* and its outcomes, it was concluded that it affects an organisation's performance financially and non-financially (Baird *et al.*, 2018). Therefore, subordinates' empowerment can motivate them to do their tasks more effectively, leading to better performance (Saleem *et al.*, 2019). Besides, it is important for leaders and managers to be aware of characteristics that enable *employee empowerment*, and scholars have suggested and analysed different antecedents to achieve it.

Huq (2016) has shown that *employee voice* is one of the main tools for empowering employees and should be considered as an antecedent. Therefore, we propose that:

H7. There is a relationship between *employee voice* and *employee empowerment*.

Organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB)

Organizational-Citizenship-Behaviour (OCB) is a well-known factor affecting a company's outcomes, effectiveness and performance (Nazarian *et al.*, 2020). OCB has been defined as an employee's behaviours that go beyond their assigned duties and responsibilities, which are not controlled by an organisation's formal reward system; this behaviour benefits the employee's co-workers and the organisation (Organ *et al.*, 2006). In other words, OCB is a behaviour that differs from the formal technical skills of the job, and it happens when someone goes the extra mile for the organisation (Mohammadi & Boroumand, 2016). OCB significantly affects the quality of services that an organisation offers, motivates employees to communicate effectively and helps subordinates find the best solutions for issues they confront during their work; this concept is more significant in some industries, such as service industries, especially hotels (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2018).

OCB is one of the main factors in an organisation that helps them make up for shortcomings in resources and increases profitability. Due to this, scholars have researched and analysed various aspects of organisations to determine which ones affect OCB. Several studies (Dai, Dai, Chen, & Hui-Chun, 2013; Nazarian *et al.*, 2020; Podsakoff *et al.*, 2018) have confirmed that there is a relationship between *commitment* and OCB in the hospitality industry. Also, a study has shown that employees who are empowered in an organisation and have opportunities to participate in the decision-making process show this behaviour more than others in the organisation (Mohammadi & Boroumand, 2016). Therefore, based on these previous studies and our research question, we propose that:

H8. There is a relationship between *employee empowerment* and OCB.

H9. There is a relationship between *commitment* and OCB.

Effect of culture

Besides the relationships and hypotheses that have been illustrated in Figure 1 based on the literature review above, it is essential to consider the cultural distinctions when examining relationships between organisational characteristics and organisational outcomes in a specific country. Studies such as Paine and Organ (2000) have discussed the influence of culture and its role in employees' engagement with OCB. They demonstrated that a collectivist culture, which values relationships, considerably affects the OCB among employees. *In-group collectivism* is one of the GLOBE dimensions, which have been defined as the degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty and cohesiveness in their organisation. It means that if an employee who is a member of an in-group in a company sees that his leader takes care of him, he feels that he owes loyalty and commitment to the organisation, which is manifested as OCB. Cultural distinctions affect Eastern and Western organisations differently, and the reason for this is differences in values and norms.

One of the dimensions in the two clusters of our study has a tremendous gap. Unlike the Middle-Eastern cluster, Germanic Europe has a meagre practice score for in-group collectivism. The other dimension that should be noticed in this study is performance orientation, which is defined as the degree to which a collective encourages and rewards group members for performance improvement and excellence. This dimension deals with outcomes such as OCB and has a high practice score in Germanic Europe and a low practice score in the Middle-Eastern cluster.

Methods and materials

Empirical setting

We examined four samples of hotel employees at different levels in Qatar, Turkey, the Netherlands and Germany to investigate our hypotheses. English was the original language of the survey, and the back translation procedure was performed in the native languages of each country as well. To collect data, a small group of fluent speakers of the two main languages (e.g. English and German) was assembled (Ageeva, Melewar, Foroudi, Dennis, & Jin, 2018).

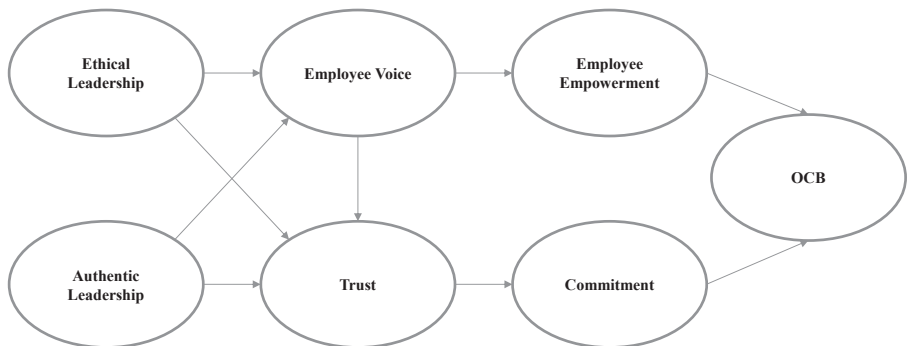


Figure 1.
The research
conceptual model

Source(s): Figure by authors

Data collection

To ensure the sample included knowledgeable individuals, we collected data through a combination of email invitations and online survey links, targeting employees at various levels within hotel organisations. This approach aimed to increase response rates, following the recommendations of [Dillman, Smyth, and Christian \(2014\)](#). We employed convenience sampling to select hotel employees from Qatar, Turkey, the Netherlands and Germany. Additionally, we used the non-probability snowball sampling method ([Goodman, 1961](#)) to reach a broader range of participants. This dual approach helped obtain a diverse and representative sample from the hospitality industry in these countries.

Between April 2022 and December 2022, we distributed a total of 3000 surveys. The surveys were administered online, with participants receiving an email containing a link to the questionnaire. This method ensured convenience and accessibility for participants across different regions. The anonymity of the respondents was maintained throughout the process; no personally identifiable information was collected, and all responses were stored securely. We received 1,678 completed surveys, with the distribution as follows: Qatar (432 responses), Turkey (423 responses), the Netherlands (429 responses) and Germany (394 responses). Detailed demographic information about the sample is presented in [Table 1](#). The majority of respondents worked for large hotels (Qatar: 49.3%, Turkey: 35.2%, the Netherlands: 35.1% and Germany: 34.5%). Turkish (64.1%) and Dutch (55%) participants were predominantly male, whereas respondents from Qatar (53%) and Germany (58.4%) were mostly female. Most respondents were aged 35–44 in Qatar (36.6%) and Turkey (29.6%), 25–34 in the Netherlands (55.7%) and under 25 in Germany (58%). A significant number of participants

	Qatar		Turkey		Holland		Germany	
<i>Size of company</i>								
Small	68	15.7	129	30.5	109	25.4	142	36.0
Medium	151	35.0	145	34.3	92	21.4	116	29.4
Large	213	49.3	149	35.2	228	53.1	136	34.5
<i>Gender</i>								
Male	203	47.0	271	64.1	236	55.0	164	41.6
Female	229	53.0	152	35.9	193	45.0	230	58.4
<i>Age of respondents</i>								
Under 25	1	.2	42	9.9	49	11.4	232	58.9
25–34	43	10.0	80	18.9	239	55.7	80	20.3
35–44	158	36.6	125	29.6	103	24.0	44	11.2
45–54	150	34.7	107	25.3	31	7.2	36	9.1
55–64	72	16.7	69	16.3	7	1.6	2	.5
65 and over	8	1.9						
<i>Education level</i>								
Ph.D.	28	6.5	15	3.5	5	1.2	30	7.6
Postgraduate	242	56.0	154	36.4	69	16.1	207	52.5
Undergraduate	161	37.3	140	33.1	196	45.7	155	39.3
Pre-university	1	.2	114	27.0	159	37.1	2	.5
<i>Position at the company</i>								
Senior management	32	7.4	61	14.4	21	4.9	73	18.5
Middle management	142	32.9	132	31.2	102	23.8	83	21.1
Junior management	181	41.9	105	24.8	68	15.9	128	32.5
Employee	77	17.8	125	29.6	238	55.5	110	27.9

Source(s): Table by authors

Table 1.
Demographic profile

held postgraduate degrees in Qatar (56.6%), Turkey (36.4%) and Germany (52.5%), while 45.7% of respondents in the Netherlands were undergraduates. Many participants were junior managers in Qatar (41.9%), Germany (32.5%) and Turkey (31.2%), with 55.5% of the total sample being junior managers and 31.2% being middle managers.

To ensure the anonymity of the respondents, (1) the survey links sent to participants were designed to not collect any personally identifiable information. Participants could complete the survey without logging in or providing names, email addresses or any other identifying details. (2) All survey responses were stored securely in a database with restricted access. Only authorised research team members had access to the data, and all data were encrypted to prevent unauthorised access. (3) At the beginning of the survey, participants were informed that their responses would be anonymous and used solely for research purposes. This statement reassured participants that their individual responses could not be traced back to them. (4) During the analysis phase, data were aggregated, and individual responses were not examined separately. Results were reported in aggregate form, ensuring that no single response could be identified.

Measurement

The constructs of interest were measured using established scales based on previous research (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). In the questionnaire, we asked questions regarding demographics, ethical leadership, authentic leadership, *employee voice*, *trust in leader*, *employee empowerment*, *commitment* and *OCB*. There was a total of 60 items in the questionnaire. The concept of ethical leadership was measured using ten items suggested by Brown *et al.* (2005). We assessed authentic leadership using Neider and Schriesheim's (2011) instrument (16 items). Six items were used to measure commitment (Nazarian, 2013). Based on a validated study by Schoorman and Ballinger (2006), four items were used to measure *trust in leader*. *Employee voice* was assessed using validated items developed by LePine and van Dyne (1998). Furthermore, *employee empowerment* was examined with four items from a previous study (Pardo Del Val & Lloyd, 2003). A ten-item instrument developed by Wang and Wong (2011) was used to examine *OCB*. We examined non-response bias using Mann–Whitney U-examination, comparing them to the whole sample, but did not find any significant differences (Foroudi, Marvi, & Colmekcioglu, 2022; Lambert & Harrington, 1990). A Likert-type scale was used to rate all items on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). A preliminary reliability test was conducted to generate a scale for each domain.

Construct validity

The sample tested preliminary research measures for factor, validity and reliability. A two-stage methodology was used to conduct this study based on Gerbing and Anderson's (1988) suggestions. Exploratory factor analyses were initially conducted on each set of constructs achieving the theoretically predicted factor solutions. Appendix I describes the research constructs. To determine the ability of the research indicators to specify the common latent construct, we evaluated the internal consistency of the research indicators. It is recommended that all measures have a reliability coefficient (ρ) greater than 0.802 (>0.70), as outlined by previous studies (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Hair *et al.*, 2010). Furthermore, the homogeneity of constructs further weakened convergence validity. Appendix II (a, b, c and d) contains convergent validity tests for each construct. Composite reliability (CR) was examined to measure the internal consistency of the constructs, akin to Cronbach's alpha. Values above 0.70 indicate good reliability. Average variance extracted (AVE) measures the level of variance captured by the construct versus the level due to measurement error. Values above 0.50 are considered acceptable. Maximum shared variance (MSV) indicates the highest amount of variance shared between constructs. For discriminant validity, MSV should be

less than AVE. Max reliability (MaxR(H)) represents the maximum reliability estimate for each construct. Square root of AVE (Diagonal) values (e.g., 0.821 for Trust) are the square roots of the AVE for each construct. They should be greater than the off-diagonal values (correlations) in the same row and column to confirm discriminant validity.

The unidimensionality of the research construct was further examined using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Measurement models were used to assess the internal consistency of different subsets of items and constructs (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988). The latent variables were constrained to be related by 1 through a series of assessments. As per Gerbing and Anderson (1988), every constraint weakened model fit (Dx 2.10; df 1–4; p 1–4 0:01). Additionally, we found that each set of items represented a unique underlying concept that was reflected in the variance extracted from each construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The linearity and multi-collinearity of the constructs were determined by Pearson's correlation matrix (2-tailed) at the significance level of 0.01. Most of the independent variables were positively correlated, and most of the dependent variables were linearly correlated.

A rule of thumb indicates that in addition to the χ^2 results, one should use one absolute and one incremental fit index (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Also, Hair *et al.* (2010) recommends reporting an absolute index and an incremental index, along with their values and degrees of freedom.

In accordance with recommendations by scholars, the Tucker–Lewis index (TLI - Qatar: 0.949; Turkey: 0.959; Netherlands: 0.941; Germany: 0.93 > 0.90), the comparative fit index (CFI - Qatar: 0.955; Turkey: 0.964; Netherlands: 0.948; Germany: 0.939 > 0.90), the incremental fit index (IFI - Qatar: 0.955; Turkey: 0.964; Netherlands: 0.948; Germany: 0.94 > 0.90) and root mean squared approximation of error (RMSEA - Qatar: 0.042; Turkey: 0.039; Netherlands: 0.042; Germany: 0.059 > 0.90) provide sufficient information to assess a model (Garver & Mentzer, 1999; Hair *et al.*, 2010; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Therefore, Steenkamp and van Trijp (1991) determined that the measurement model for these three factors was valid nomologically. In addition, both IFI and TLI were greater than the recommended threshold of 0.90, indicating a good fit between the prediction and data (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, these results are only a supplement to the model; they do not guarantee a favourable fit.

We evaluated common methods bias and latent factors by comparing the chi-square difference between fully constrained and original models. Both models shared the variance, and statistical differences were found (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Based on Podsakoff *et al.* (2003)'s categorisation of the four sources of common method variance, the results of the model were examined without considering method biases.

Hypothesis examination

The research hypothesis was examined using a structural model (Table 2). The hypothesised model matches empirical data from four countries according to goodness-of-fit indices (TLI - Qatar: 0.933; Turkey: 0.939; Netherlands: 0.931; Germany: 0.923 > 0.90; TLI - Qatar: 0.927; Turkey: 0.933; Netherlands: 0.925; Germany: 0.914 > 0.90; IFI - Qatar: 0.933; Turkey: 0.939; Netherlands: 0.932; Germany: 0.923 > 0.90; RMSEA - Qatar: 0.051; Turkey: 0.05; Netherlands: .049; Germany: 0.065 > 0.90). The conceptual framework was examined in the second stage. Hypothesis 1 concerned with the relationships between ethical leadership and *employee voice* (Qatar: $\beta = 0.028$, $t = 0.712$; $p = 0.476$; Turkey: $\beta = -0.162$, $t = -1.184$; $p = 0.237$; Netherlands: $\beta = 0.314$, $t = 4.065$; Germany: $\beta = 0.462$, $t = 8.061$). Although the relationships were confirmed in Qatar and Turkey, they were rejected in Germany and the Netherlands.

The results show significant relationships between authentic leadership and *employee voice* in Qatar, Turkey and Germany, while insignificant relationships were found in the Netherlands (Qatar: $\beta = 0.693$, $t = 6.798$; Turkey: $\beta = 0.324$, $t = -6.643$, $p = 0.237$; Netherlands: $\beta = -0.108$,

Table 2.
Results of hypothesis
testing

Hypotheses relationships				Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
				<i>Qatar</i>				<i>Turkey</i>			
H1	Ethical leadership	->	Employee voice	0.028	0.039	0.712	0.476	-0.162	0.137	-1.184	0.237
H2	Authentic leadership	->	Employee voice	0.693	0.102	6.798	***	0.324	0.049	6.643	***
H3	Ethical leadership	->	Trust	0.131	0.054	20.457	0.014	0.125	0.112	10.117	0.264
H4	Authentic leadership	->	Trust	0.029	0.118	0.244	0.807	-0.002	0.041	-0.061	0.951
H5	Employee voice	->	Trust	-0.106	0.088	-10.211	0.226	0.045	0.052	0.864	0.388
H6	Employee voice	->	Employee empowerment	0.027	0.029	0.931	0.352	0.315	0.063	50.037	***
H7	Trust	->	Commitment	0.233	0.071	30.294	***	0.654	0.062	100.509	***
H8	Employee empowerment	->	OCB	0.108	0.052	20.087	0.037	0.096	0.045	20.144	0.032
H9	Commitment	->	OCB	0.134	0.032	40.184	***	0.221	0.051	40.290	***
				<i>Holland</i>				<i>Germany</i>			
H1	Ethical leadership	->	Employee voice	0.314	0.077	40.065	***	0.462	0.057	80.061	***
H2	Authentic leadership	->	Employee voice	-0.108	0.086	-10.259	0.208	0.226	0.057	30.936	***
H3	Ethical leadership	->	Trust	0.184	0.064	20.853	0.004	-0.073	0.075	-0.967	0.333
H4	Authentic leadership	->	Trust	-0.117	0.070	-10.681	0.093	0.006	0.079	0.074	0.941
H5	Employee voice	->	Trust	-0.169	0.047	-30.626	***	0.251	0.074	30.384	***
H6	Employee voice	->	Employee empowerment	0.327	0.049	60.681	***	0.046	0.043	10.051	0.293
H7	Trust	->	Commitment	-0.177	0.066	-20.666	0.008	0.483	0.049	90.864	***
H8	Employee empowerment	->	OCB	0.015	0.037	0.418	0.676	0.110	0.070	10.582	0.114
H9	Commitment	->	OCB	-0.027	0.032	-0.839	0.401	0.458	0.065	70.006	***

Source(s): Table by authors

$t = -1.259, p = 0.208$; Germany: $\beta = 0.226, t = 3.936$). A regression path analysis of [Hypothesis 3](#) (Qatar: $\beta = 0.131, t = 2.457$; Turkey: $\beta = 0.125, t = -1.117, p = 0.264$; Netherlands: $\beta = 0.184, t = 2.853$; Germany: $\beta = -0.073, t = -0.967, p = 0.333$) shows significant relationships between ethical leadership and *trust in leader* in Qatar and the Netherlands, whereas insignificant relationships are found in Turkey and Germany. Interestingly, the relationship between authentic leadership and *trust in leader* was rejected from all the four data sets (Qatar: $\beta = 0.029, t = 0.244, p = 0.807$; Turkey: $\beta = -0.002, t = -0.061, p = 0.951$; Netherlands: $\beta = -0.117, t = -1.681, p = 0.093$; Germany: $\beta = 0.006, t = 0.074, p = 0.941$). Statistically, *employee voice* and *trust in leader* are significantly associated in the Netherlands and Germany (Qatar: $\beta = -0.106, t = -1.211, p = 0.226$; Turkey: $\beta = 0.045, t = 0.864, p = 0.388$; Netherlands: $\beta = -0.169, t = -3.626, p = 0.251, t = 3.384$).

Based on standardised parameter estimates in [Table 2](#), *employee voice* and *employee empowerment* are significantly associated in Turkey and the Netherlands (Qatar: $\beta = 0.027, t = 0.931, p = 0.352$; Turkey: $\beta = 0.315, t = 5.037$; Netherlands: $\beta = 0.327, t = 6.681$; Germany: $\beta = 0.046, t = 1.051, p = 0.293$). Data from all four sets confirm the relationship between *trust in leader* and *commitment* (Qatar: $\beta = 0.233, t = 3.294$; Turkey: $\beta = 0.654, t = 10.509$; Netherlands: $\beta = -0.177, t = -2.666$; Germany: $\beta = 0.483, t = 9.864$). In our study, we examined the influence of *employee empowerment* on *OCB*, which indicated that the regression path is not significant for participants from the Netherlands and German, but significant for those from Qatar and Turkey (Qatar: $\beta = 0.108, t = 2.087$; Turkey: $\beta = 0.096, t = 2.144$; Netherlands: $\beta = 0.015, t = 0.418, p = 0.676$; Germany: $\beta = 0.110, t = 1.582, p = 0.114$). Lastly, the regression path between *commitment* and *OCB* was significant for all data sets except the Netherlands (Qatar: $\beta = 0.134, t = 4.184$; Turkey: $\beta = 0.221, t = 4.290$; Netherlands: $\beta = -0.027, t = -0.839, p = 0.401$; Germany: $\beta = 0.458, t = 7.006$).

Conclusion and implications

Conclusion

The aim of this study is to investigate the extent to which employees' perceptions of organisational variables such as *OCB*, *trust in leader*, *commitment*, *employees' voice* and *employees' empowerment* are influenced by ethical and authentic leadership and whether these relationships are affected by national or regional culture. Thus, we have examined the relationships between these variables in independent hotels in four countries: Germany and the Netherlands in the Germanic European cluster and Qatar and Turkey in the Middle-Eastern cluster. The relationships among the variables in these countries show cultural differences and interesting similarities, making a contribution to the hospitality industry for scholars and practitioners.

Our findings show that ethical leadership has a significant relationship with *employee voice* in the independent hotels in Germany and the Netherlands, which is in accordance with previous studies ([Cheng et al., 2022](#); [Walumbwa et al., 2010](#)). However, the same hypothesis was rejected in the independent hotels Qatar and Turkey. The reason for this inconsistency is probably due to Qatar and Turkey belonging to the Middle-Eastern cluster with a significantly high level of power distance ([House, 2004](#)) in which *employee voice* is generally discouraged ([Brockner et al., 2001](#)). More specifically, as [Guzman and Fu \(2022\)](#) have shown, there is a need to have a person-supervisor fit within the organisation, leaders and followers need to have a consistent perspective on power distance. This suggests that if ethical leaders possess high power distance values, it can significantly stifle *employee voice*, which might have detrimental effects on the organisation. In addition, the findings of this study demonstrate that ethical leadership has no significant relationship with *trust in leader* in the independent hotels in Turkey and Germany. Although these two countries belong to two different cultural clusters ([Gupta, Hanges, & Dorfman, 2002](#)), they both score high on the

power distance dimension, which is consistent with employees from high power distance cultures tending to have less communication and maintain greater social distance with their managers and leaders (Loi, Lam, & Chan, 2012). Therefore, it can be inferred that ethical leadership that is mainly attributed to low power distance may not produce *trust in leader* within organisations belonging to high power distance societies.

On the other hand, the findings revealed that a positive association existed between authentic leadership and *employee voice* in the independent hotels in three out of these four countries, Qatar, Turkey and Germany, which are from both cultural clusters, and this result is consistent with the previous studies (Hsiung, 2012; Xu, Yang, & Peng, 2021). In essence, authentic leaders display their authenticity, transparency and integrity through positive role modelling, which encourages employees to share their suggestions and engage in *employee voice* behaviour (Zheng, Liu, Liao, Qin, & Ni, 2022). Surprisingly, the results also demonstrate that authentic leadership has no meaningful impact on *trust in leader* in any of the selected countries, which contradicts prior research (Clapp-Smith, Vogelgesang, & Avey, 2009). One possible reason is that Qatar and Turkey score relatively low on individualism, which is, possibly, inconsistent with the behaviour of authentic leaders. In other words, authentic leaders generally strive to fulfil the individual needs and development of their subordinates, which may not be valued by subordinates dominated by a collectivist culture (Zhang, Bowers, & Mao, 2021). Accordingly, authentic leaders, to some extent, may not be able to create trust among their followers in a collectivistic culture. Moreover, the reason that this relationship has not been supported in Germany and the Netherlands could be due to the low level of power distance in these two countries. In low power distance cultures, the equal distribution of information and power is institutionalised (Hofstede, 1980); therefore, authentic leaders cannot necessarily produce trust among their employees by emphasising openness and authenticity.

Our findings also showed that the relationship between *employee voice* and *trust in leader* has not been significant in independent hotels in Qatar and Turkey, which contradicts the positive relationship between the same variables in Germany and the Netherlands. To be more precise, employees do not necessarily engage in voice behaviour even if the leaders provide an appropriate forum for doing so. In fact, employees consider the benefits and costs of such behaviours and avoid voicing their concerns when they feel it might carry risk and bring retaliation from their leaders (Detert & Burris, 2007; Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001). Consistent with this argument, Botero and van Dyne (2009) argued that a high score on power distance is negatively related to voice behaviour, which means that employees refrain from expressing their opinions and concerns to their supervisors and prefer to accept their authority. In other words, promoting employee voice in organisations in countries with high power distance, such as Qatar and Turkey, does not necessarily build trust in leaders. In the same vein, our results indicated that *employee voice* is not significantly associated with *employee empowerment* in Qatar and Germany from two different clusters (Middle Eastern and Germanic clusters), which appears to be an anomaly that requires further investigation.

On the other hand, the findings revealed that the relationship between *employee empowerment* and *OCB* is supported in Qatar and Turkey, which is aligned with prior research (Chiang & Hsieh, 2012; Jiang, Sun, & Law, 2011; Turnipseed & Van de Waa, 2020), whereas no specific relationship could be seen between these two variables in Germany and the Netherlands. According to Bowen and Lawler (1992), *employee empowerment* is not always an effective practice and other organisational factors could limit its positive impacts. Having said that, the literature suggests that the relationship between *employee empowerment* and *OCB* should be positive, whereas our findings provide an interesting inconsistency, which highlights the fact that the results of organisational hypothesis testing in one geographical region may not necessarily be similar to those found in other regions.

Finally, as the results demonstrated, there is a positive relationship between *trust in leaders* and *commitment* in all four countries from the two different clusters, which is consistent with previous studies (Cook & Wall, 1980; Koo, Kim, & Kim, 2017). Moreover, we found that organisational *commitment* is significantly associated with *OCB* in three out of the four countries (Qatar, Turkey and Germany), which also supports the findings of prior studies (Asiedu, Sarfo, & Adjei, 2014; Uludag, Khan, & Guden, 2011). However, the relationship between these two variables has been rejected in the Netherlands.

Theoretical implications

The most important implication of this study is that independent hotels in the Germanic cluster need to adapt the ethical leadership style to enhance *employee voice* within their organisation; however, in the Asian cluster, it is the authentic leadership that improves *employee voice*. In fact, promoting employee voice within an organisation might help the staff experience better psychological well-being, which can improve their reciprocal relationship with their managers but also in their mutual connection with each other.

In the same vein, the relationship between *employee voice* and *trust in leader* has not been supported in the independent hotels in the Asian cluster, which is not aligned with the positive relationship found between the same variables in the Germanic cluster. Surprisingly, our findings show that authentic leadership has no meaningful impact on *trust in leader* in any of the four countries, which directly contradicts the findings of previous studies (Agote, Aramburu, & Lines, 2016; Wong & Cummings, 2009; Yao *et al.*, 2019).

The above statements highlight the fact that the significant relationships between the organisational variables that have been tested before in the context of western countries may not be necessarily supported in organisations located in other geographical regions. Also, inconsistencies in the findings of this research provide scholars with an understanding of the role of national culture as a critical element that can affect the findings of studies conducted in different regions. Following this, the current research provides valid arguments, based on the GLOBE's cultural dimensions, for the detected anomalies in the relationship between the variables rather than simply assuming that the findings of prior research can be used in other organisations located in different parts of the world. Moreover, we offer a range of theoretical contributions by examining the impact of authentic leadership and ethical leadership on the variables, including *OCB*, *trust in leader in leaders*, *commitment*, *employees' voice and employees' empowerment*.

Practical implications

In a competitive global market, independent hotels strive to allocate their organisational resources effectively to establish competitive advantages. As a significant source of competitive advantage, hotel employees can help their organisations to increase their financial performance and act more innovatively. Thus, it is suggested that managers of independent hotels in Germanic cultures adapt the ethical leadership style to encourage their employees to show voice behaviour, whereas their peers in the Asian clusters need to have the authentic leadership style in their organisations to positively affect their employees' voice behaviour. Employee voice behaviour may benefit both the employees and the organisation (Jolly & Lee, 2021), and furthermore, it can be a productive tool to develop innovative services and increase organisational performance. More than that, we suggest that managers and leaders of independent hotels provide their employees with professional and practical training in which they can gain new interpersonal communication skills. This can also spur their staff not only to establish better communication with customers but also to return more benefit to their organisation in the form of *OCB*.

Moreover, another conclusion that may be drawn from this research is that managers of independent hotels should consider cultural dimensions, such as power distance. In a high power-distance country, managers can benefit from their subordinates' OCB by empowering them. Thus, it is proposed that managers help their employees to have problem-solving skills, which are different aspects of empowerment and play a significant part in a service industry (Pelit & Demirdağ, 2021). By doing so, employees will become more willing to engage with their jobs and respond by showing OCB behaviour towards their organisation.

Limitations

As with all studies of this type, ours has a limitation in sample. Thus, future studies are encouraged to collect data in other geographical regions to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships between organisational constructs. Furthermore, we encourage future studies to carefully consider the relationship between *employee empowerment* and OCB. Prior studies have mainly suggested that *employee empowerment* influences OCB in a positive way; however, the findings of this research reveal that a negative relationship can be seen in the Germanic cluster. Therefore, there is a need for future studies to examine the relationship between *employee empowerment* and OCB in other regions and contexts to provide an overarching insight. Moreover, this research shows that there are two hypotheses that have been rejected in the Netherlands, i.e. the relationships between *commitment* and OCB and *authentic leadership* and *employee voice behaviour*, which are not consistent with the previous studies (Hsiung, 2012; Xu *et al.*, 2021; Asiedu *et al.*, 2014; Uludag *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, we call for research to be conducted in the Netherlands based on the collected data from this country to investigate the results of the aforementioned relationships to provide a more overarching insight. As there are anomalies in the relationships between the tested variables, it is suggested that future studies design conceptual models by which they can find new patterns of relationship between organisational variables, which can help researchers and managers gain better insight into market processes. Moreover, we also suggest that studies investigate the GLOBE's cultural dimensions, such as power distance and individualism, as moderators in their conceptual model to statistically evaluate their impacts on the relationships between the organisational variables.

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Further reading

Jum, C. N. (1978). Psychometric theory. In *Agile Project Management with Azure DevOps*.

Supplementary material

The supplementary material for this article can be found online.

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