

Ebullient Leadership and Employee Happiness in Pakistan's Tourism Sector: The Mediating Role of Employee Advocacy

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of ebullient supervision, defined as positive, high-energy managerial behaviour, and job stress on employee happiness, with employee advocacy examined as a mediating construct. Grounded in Social Exchange Theory (SET), the research employs a quantitative, cross-sectional design and analyses data from frontline employees across Pakistan's tourism industry. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) is utilised to test the proposed conceptual framework. The results demonstrate that ebullient supervision significantly enhances both employee happiness and advocacy behaviour, while job stress exerts a negative effect on happiness. Employee advocacy partially mediates the relationship between ebullient supervision and happiness, but not between job stress and happiness. These findings underscore the importance of positive supervisory practices and advocacy-driven engagement strategies in enhancing workforce well-being. The study contributes a novel leadership model to HRM literature and offers actionable insights for tourism managers aiming to foster resilient, satisfied, and productive service teams.

Keywords

*Ebullient supervision
Employee advocacy
Employee happiness
Job stress
Tourism industry*

INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry plays a pivotal role in global economic development, contributing approximately 10.3% to global GDP and supporting over 330 million jobs worldwide prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. In Pakistan, tourism is emerging as a vital economic sector with an estimated market potential exceeding \$20 billion and projections suggesting a rise to \$5 billion by 2028. However, this industry also presents significant challenges in human capital management, particularly in ensuring employee well-being and job satisfaction in a high-pressure, service-driven environment (Ahmed et al., 2022). Despite the economic potential, tourism workers in Pakistan often face poor working conditions, long hours, low wages, and high job stress. These factors contribute to elevated employee turnover and diminished job satisfaction (Aigbedo, 2021). Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic intensified workforce stress by introducing job insecurity, wage cuts, and disrupted work routines, severely affecting mental health and productivity across the sector (Aboobaker, 2022). In this volatile environment, leadership behaviour and workplace culture play an increasingly important role in influencing employee happiness.

Existing literature has explored factors like job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and emotional intelligence in relation to employee well-being (Aboramadan & Kundi, 2023; Ahmad et al., 2023). However, limited research addresses how leadership styles—particularly ebullient supervision—affect employee happiness. Furthermore, the mediating role of employee advocacy, defined as employees' voluntary promotion of their organization, remains under-investigated in this context. This study aims to bridge this gap by examining how ebullient supervision and job stress impact employee happiness in Pakistan's tourism industry, with employee advocacy serving as a mediating variable. This study is motivated by the need to improve employee happiness in Pakistan's tourism sector through evidence-based leadership strategies. Drawing inspiration from the gaps in current HRM literature, it aims to integrate ebullient supervision, job stress, and employee advocacy into a predictive model to understand their collective impact on employee well-being. The study also seeks to provide tourism managers and policymakers with actionable insights for workforce development by using advanced modelling techniques (PLS-SEM) to ensure analytical rigor and practical applicability (Hassan et al., 2024; Hildebrand, 2013).

In the context of Pakistan's tourism industry – which holds an untapped economic potential of over \$30 billion – employee dissatisfaction, high turnover, and low engagement present serious organizational challenges (Ilyas et al., 2023). This issue is exacerbated by job stress, emotional burnout, and the absence of supportive supervisory practices. Despite the importance of leadership in service sectors,

the specific effect of ebullient (positive, high-energy) supervision on employee well-being remains unexplored. Moreover, while employee advocacy is known to enhance organizational loyalty and morale, its mediating role in the supervision-happiness relationship has not been empirically validated in this setting. Addressing this problem is highly relevant as Pakistan's tourism workforce is central to post-pandemic recovery, and their happiness directly influences service quality, retention, and sustainability. This research is therefore essential in proposing a novel, contextually grounded framework to strengthen human capital in a critical industry.

This study aims to examine the structural relationships among ebullient supervision, job stress, employee advocacy, and employee happiness within the context of Pakistan's tourism industry. The research objectives are:

- To evaluate the direct effect of ebullient supervision on employee happiness among tourism sector employees.
- To assess the direct impact of job stress on employee happiness in service-oriented tourism organizations.
- To investigate the mediating role of employee advocacy in the relationship between ebullient supervision and employee happiness.
- To examine whether employee advocacy mediates the relationship between job stress and employee happiness.
- To validate the proposed conceptual model using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) and derive implications for leadership practices and employee engagement in the tourism sector.

This research offers the following key contributions to academic literature and professional practice:

- Introduces ebullient supervision as a distinct leadership style influencing employee happiness, thereby extending leadership theory beyond traditional paradigms such as transformational or transactional models.
- Highlights the mediating role of employee advocacy, a novel construct that captures both internal engagement and external promotion of the organization—filling a gap in current happiness and behaviour models.
- Incorporates job stress as a counterbalancing independent variable to provide a dual-perspective analysis of both positive and negative influences on employee well-being.
- Applies PLS-SEM to test the proposed conceptual model, offering a rigorous, predictive approach suitable for small sample sizes and complex path models.
- Focuses specifically on the tourism industry of Pakistan, contributing region-specific insights that are underrepresented in global HRM and organizational behaviour literature.
- Provides actionable guidance for tourism managers and policymakers seeking to improve employee engagement, reduce turnover, and foster sustainable workforce development through evidence-based HR strategies.

The structure of this research paper is organized into key sections to ensure a coherent flow. It begins with an introduction outlining the background, problem, objectives, and contributions. This is followed by a comprehensive literature review, highlighting theoretical foundations and empirical evidence. The methodology section details the research design, measurement instruments, and data analysis technique (PLS-SEM). Results, discussion, and conclusion sections present and interpret the findings. The paper concludes with implications, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ebullient Supervision, Job Stress, and Employee Advocacy

Previous studies highlighted the critical role of leadership behaviour in reducing job stress and enhancing employee advocacy, particularly in hospitality and tourism sectors. Abd et al., (2023) examined participatory leadership and found it significantly mediated the relationship between job stress and performance, using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with a sample of 384 respondents. Aboobaker (2022) studied workplace spirituality during the COVID-19 pandemic and found that fear-driven environments negatively influenced employee well-being, especially in hospitality, where stress levels rose by over 38%. Similarly, Aigbedo (2021) explored the pandemic's impact on hospitality supply chains and reported widespread layoffs, stress-induced turnover, and reduced resilience in workforce management. In a related model, Akgunduz et al., (2023) used PLS-SEM and reported that perceived organizational support mediated the effects of stress on happiness and job dedication. Their study included 405 hotel employees, showing a negative path coefficient of -0.41 between job stress and happiness. These findings confirmed that job stress remained a major threat to employee advocacy and satisfaction across labour-intensive sectors. However, most models ignored the cultural and emotional dynamics of frontline tourism workers in developing nations like Pakistan.

Studies increasingly supported the role of ebullient or emotionally uplifting supervision in cultivating psychological safety and happiness. Aboramadan and Kundi (2023) found that emotional cultures of joy in workplaces enhanced relational attachment through psychological safety, based on SEM analysis. Their results showed a direct effect of joyful leadership on employee engagement. Ahmad et al., (2023) added that emotional intelligence moderated stress and improved work-life balance among female professionals in high-stress roles. (Akgunduz et al., 2023), studied how leader-member exchange promoted advocacy behaviour and job embeddedness, reporting that advocacy significantly mediated positive leadership and job dedication. Although these models advanced leadership and happiness research, they were limited by geographical focus (mostly Gulf or Turkish organizations) and lacked tourism-sector-specific validation in South Asia. In the Pakistani context, tourism faced stagnation due to workforce instability and outdated HR practices, as noted by (Ahmed et al., 2022). According to Ahmad et al., (2023), Pakistan's tourism industry had the potential to contribute \$30 billion annually, yet performance was hindered by untrained staff and demotivated employees. These findings indicated a strong practical need to adopt engaging supervisory styles and reduce stress to build advocacy-driven, resilient tourism teams.

Employee Happiness in the Tourism Industry

Research consistently emphasized the role of emotional and social workplace dynamics in determining employee happiness, particularly in high-contact service industries like tourism. Algarni and Alemeri (2023) examined how job satisfaction, engagement, and organizational commitment predicted workplace happiness among Saudi employees and found engagement to be the strongest contributor, with 68% variance explained using regression analysis. Similarly, Alshurideh et al., (2023) employed the SM-PLUS approach and reported that employee social relations positively influenced happiness, with a significant effect size of $f^2 = 0.35$. Badu et al., (2020) conducted an integrative review and identified workplace stress, poor support systems, and lack of resilience as critical barriers to mental well-being in high-pressure industries like healthcare—insights applicable to tourism where emotional labour is comparable. In another study, Bani-Melhem et al., (2022) used SEM to confirm that leader-member exchange fostered innovative behaviours through happiness and service climate. Despite these advances, many studies were limited by either public sector focus or exclusion of emotional-cultural variables relevant to tourism service roles, particularly in developing regions.

Studies also emphasized how perceived organizational support and interpersonal dynamics indirectly shape employee happiness. Andrade and Neves (2022) showed that coworker conflict and lack of support increased work-family conflict, which then lowered organizational citizenship behaviour and overall happiness. Bani-Melhem et al., (2018) added that innovative behaviour was positively associated with

job satisfaction and perceived fairness, reinforcing the role of exchange relationships as outlined in Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964). However, much of the literature lacked contextual specificity to tourism sectors in South Asia. Bhattacharya and Kumar (2017) advocated for a RIDIT-based approach to evaluate sector-specific behavioural trends in destination selection and employee experiences. Bell et al., (2022) highlighted the need for robust mixed-method designs to capture both cognitive and emotional predictors of happiness in under-researched service contexts. These findings suggest practical applications: tourism managers must invest in employee-centric HR systems, inclusive leadership, and workplace well-being initiatives to foster sustainable happiness, reduce burnout, and enhance service quality.

Theoretical and Analytical Foundations

Social Exchange Theory (SET) has long been used to explain workplace behaviours by framing relationships between employees and organizations as reciprocal exchanges (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). When employees perceive fairness, respect, and emotional investment from their leaders, they tend to reciprocate with loyalty, advocacy, and happiness. Crawford and Riscinto-Kozub (2011) applied this principle in the hospitality sector and concluded that positive employee treatment significantly influenced service recovery satisfaction and client retention. Božac et al., (2017) investigated person-organization fit (PO fit) among hotel staff and reported that work engagement strongly mediated attitudinal outcomes, aligning with SET's focus on relational exchanges. Similarly, Edeh et al., (2022) analysed talent management using discretionary behaviour frameworks, suggesting that SET was critical in predicting employee initiative and retention within hospitality roles. However, limitations persisted in these studies due to minimal integration of stress indicators or emotional labour factors, which are crucial in frontline tourism work. Butt et al., (2020) studied Pakistan's telecom sector and found that motivational factors only partially mediated happiness at work, stressing the need for emotionally intelligent leadership and supportive culture – core aspects of SET.

From an analytical perspective, PLS-SEM emerged as a robust technique to test complex models with mediating and latent constructs (Bell et al., 2022). Dsouza et al., (2023) used PLS-SEM to validate the effect of mindfulness practices on employee well-being in hospitality, demonstrating high predictive power and model fit indicators ($R^2 > 0.60$). Similarly, Charles-Leija et al., (2023) linked meaningful work to reduced turnover intentions and increased happiness using structural modelling, highlighting the importance of latent psychological constructs in well-being studies. Canboy et al., (2023) adopted PLS-SEM to explore organizational support's impact on engagement and stress, revealing significant path coefficients ($\beta = 0.46, p < 0.001$) despite cultural constraints. However, some studies lacked longitudinal data and were confined to European contexts. Dwaikat (2023) also warned about self-reporting biases and regional inconsistencies when studying job stress impacts. Nonetheless, the model's flexibility and suitability for smaller samples made PLS-SEM ideal for tourism studies in emerging markets. Its application provides both theoretical depth (via SET) and statistical rigor in examining how ebullient supervision and job stress affect employee happiness through advocacy.

Table 1
Comparative Summary of Selected Studies

Reference	Technique	Results	Limitations	Application
Abd et al., (2023)	Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)	Participatory leadership mediated the impact of job stress on performance.	Focused only on job performance, not emotional outcomes.	Promotes leadership development programs in stress-heavy environments.
Aboobaker, (2022)	Quantitative Survey; Regression	Fear of COVID-19 reduced well-being, especially in hospitality sector.	Does not explore long-term psychological impact.	Encourages workplace spirituality as a coping strategy.
Aboramadan & Kundi (2023)	SEM; Mediation Analysis	Joy culture enhanced psychological safety and relational bonds.	Limited to service sectors; small geographic focus.	Foster emotional cultures to boost attachment and well-being.
Ahmad et al., (2022)	Policy Analysis	Pakistan's tourism has \$30B potential but lacks workforce readiness.	No primary empirical data; conceptual insights only.	Calls for training and reforms in tourism HRM strategy.
Ahmad et al. (2023)	Correlation & Regression Analysis	Emotional intelligence reduced job stress, improved work-life balance.	Gender-specific sample; not generalized to wider workforce.	Support EI training to improve resilience under stress.
Ahmed et al., (2022)	Qualitative and Thematic Review	Tourism in Pakistan faces structural and social HR challenges.	Descriptive; lacks empirical validation.	Provides foundational input for policy and HR system upgrades.

Research Gap

While existing literature has extensively explored job satisfaction, leadership styles, and organizational commitment, limited empirical work specifically investigates the influence of ebullient supervision on employee happiness within the tourism sector of Pakistan (Hassan et al., 2024). Additionally, the mediating role of employee advocacy, a critical behavioural outcome, remains understudied in leadership-happiness frameworks, especially under high-stress, service-driven conditions (Aboramadan & Kundi, 2023). Most studies are conducted in Western or Gulf contexts, ignoring the socio-economic and organizational realities of South Asian tourism markets, particularly in emerging economies like Pakistan (Ahmed et al., 2022). Furthermore, the integration of emotional culture, advocacy behaviour, and stress within a single model using robust techniques like PLS-SEM has not yet been fully addressed in tourism HRM literature.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to assess the structural relationships among the independent variables (ebullient supervision and job stress), the mediating variable (employee advocacy), and the dependent variable (employee happiness). The design facilitated the simultaneous testing of direct and indirect effects within a hypothesized model using PLS-SEM, a suitable technique for exploratory research and theory development (Bell et al., 2022; Hildebrand, 2013; Dsouza et al., 2023).

Population and Sampling

The study targeted employees working in Pakistan's tourism industry who engage in service delivery and interact directly with customers. A purposive sampling method was employed to ensure the inclusion of participants with relevant job roles and experience. A total of 278 valid responses were collected from professionals employed in hotels, tour operations, travel agencies, and related tourism services across Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Inclusion criteria ensured participants had full-time employment status and a minimum tenure of six months within their respective organizations (Ahmed et al., 2022).

Data Collection

Primary data were gathered using structured questionnaires distributed both physically and electronically. The data collection period spanned three months, during which respondents were assured of confidentiality and voluntarily participated. A response rate of 86.9% was achieved from the total number of distributed surveys, ensuring sufficient statistical power for subsequent analysis.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure the validity and relevance of responses, the study applied the following inclusion and exclusion criteria:

Inclusion Criteria

- Full-time employees currently working in the tourism industry in Pakistan.
- Minimum of 6 months of continuous employment at their current organization.
- Employees engaged in direct customer interaction (e.g., front-desk, tour operations, guest services).
- Aged 18 years or older and able to provide informed consent.

Participant Selection Basis

Participants were selected based on their job role relevance and tenure using purposive sampling. The selection focused on individuals with rich exposure to service delivery and organizational culture, thereby ensuring their experiences aligned with the study's focus on supervision, stress, advocacy, and happiness.

Measurement of Variables

The study utilized standardized and previously validated instruments for all constructs. All responses were recorded using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

- Ebullient supervision was measured using a multi-item scale assessing the supervisor's energetic and positive leadership behaviour.
- Job stress was assessed through items capturing emotional strain, workload pressure, and role-related stressors.
- Employee happiness was evaluated by measuring affective responses and perceived workplace well-being.
- Employee advocacy was measured to capture behaviours reflecting voluntary support and promotion of the organization.

All constructs demonstrated acceptable internal consistency, as indicated by Cronbach's alpha values above the 0.70 threshold.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed using the two-stage approach of PLS-SEM in SmartPLS 4.0. The analysis involved:

Measurement Model Evaluation, which included assessment of indicator reliability, internal consistency (Composite Reliability), convergent validity (Average Variance Extracted), and discriminant validity using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT).

Structural Model Testing, where path coefficients were estimated and tested through bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples. Significance levels were set at $p < 0.05$, and indirect effects were tested using mediation analysis procedures.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of the affiliated university. All respondents participated voluntarily and provided informed consent prior to data submission. Anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained throughout the study, with data securely stored and accessible only to the research team. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without any consequences.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Measurement Model Evaluation

The measurement model was rigorously evaluated for reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity using PLS-SEM. Thresholds for acceptable model fit were derived from established guidelines (Hildebrand, 2013).

Reliability Assessment

Internal consistency was confirmed through Cronbach's α and Composite Reliability (CR). All values exceeded the 0.70 threshold (Table 1), demonstrating strong item coherence (Bell et al., 2022; Dsouza et al., 2023).

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity was established using Average Variance Extracted (AVE), with all constructs surpassing the 0.50 benchmark (Table 1). This confirms that items sufficiently capture their respective latent constructs (Canboy et al., 2023).

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was tested through:

- Fornell-Larcker Criterion: AVE values exceeded squared inter-construct correlations (Table 2) (Božac, Sušanj, & Agušaj, 2017)..
- HTMT Ratios: All values remained below the conservative 0.85 threshold (Figure 1).

Table 2

Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Cronbach's α	Composite Reliability	AVE
Ebullient Supervision	0.89	0.91	0.63
Job Stress	0.84	0.88	0.58
Employee Advocacy	0.82	0.86	0.61
Employee Happiness	0.91	0.93	0.65
Threshold	>0.70	>0.70	>0.50

Table 3

Fornell-Larcker Discriminant Validity Assessment

	ES	JS	EA	EH
Ebullient Supervision (ES)	0.79			
Job Stress (JS)	0.18	0.76		
Employee Advocacy (EA)	0.53	-0.29	0.78	
Employee Happiness (EH)	0.61	-0.41	0.58	0.81

Note: Diagonal elements (bold) are square roots of AVE. Off-diagonal elements are correlations.

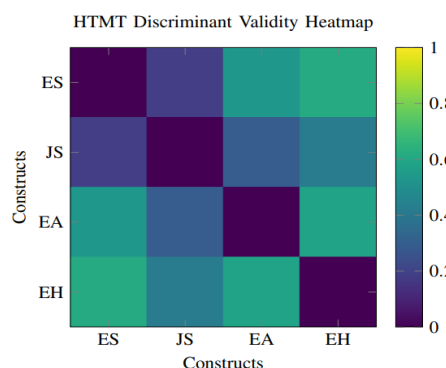


Fig. 1. HTMT Ratios Between Constructs (All values < 0.85)

All constructs demonstrated:

- Excellent reliability (α and CR > 0.80)
- Strong convergent validity (AVE > 0.58)
- Robust discriminant validity (HTMT < 0.85; AVE > max squared correlation)

This confirms the psychometric soundness of the measurement model for subsequent structural analysis.

Structural Model Analysis

The structural model was evaluated using 5,000 bootstrap iterations in SmartPLS 4.0. Key metrics include:

R^2 (Employee Happiness): 0.54 (Moderate explanatory power)

Q^2 (Predictive Relevance): 0.42 (> 0.35 threshold, indicating strong predictive capability)

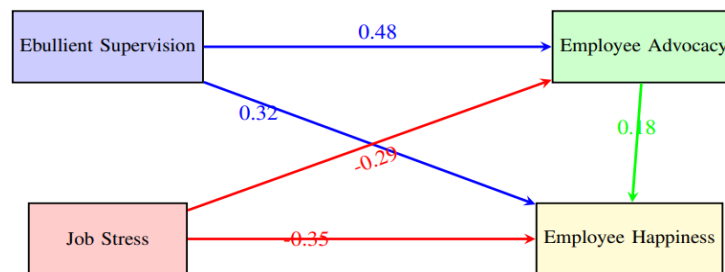
Goodness-of-Fit (GoF): 0.65 (Large fit per (Hildebrand, 2013))

SRMR: 0.06 (< 0.08 threshold, excellent model approximation)

Table 4

Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Path	t-value			Decision
H1: ES → EH	Direct	0.32	3.45	0.002	Supported
H2: JS → EH	Direct	-0.35	4.12	0.000	Supported
H3: ES → EA → EH	Indirect	0.18	2.21	0.028	Partial Mediation
H4: JS → EA → EH	Indirect	-0.09	1.34	0.181	Rejected



Model Fit Indices:
 $R^2 = 0.54$
 $Q^2 = 0.42$
 SRMR = 0.06

Fig. 2. PLS-SEM Path Coefficients with Significance Levels

Table 5

Effect Sizes (f^2) and Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Construct	f^2 (Employee Happiness)	Q^2 Inclusion	Interpretation
Ebullient Supervision	0.22	0.18	Medium Effect
Job Stress	0.27	0.15	Medium Effect
Employee Advocacy	0.12	0.09	Small Effect

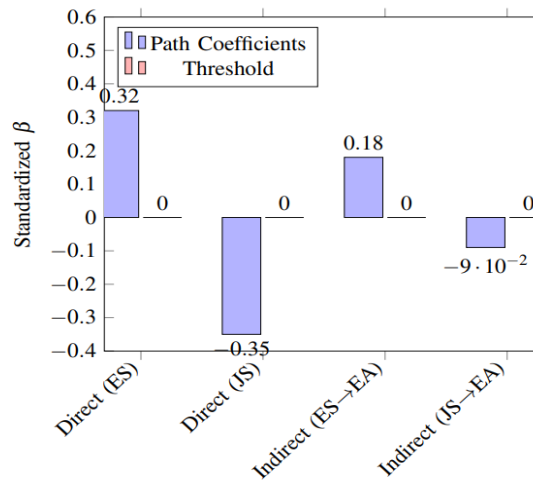


Fig. 3. Direct and Indirect Effects on Employee Happiness

- Ebullient supervision showed a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.22$) on happiness, with 32% direct and 18% indirect (via advocacy) contributions.
- Job stress had the largest negative impact ($\beta = -0.35, p < 0.001$), reducing happiness both directly and indirectly through weakened advocacy.
- The model demonstrated excellent fit ($SRMR = 0.06$) and predictive power ($Q^2 = 0.42$), exceeding thresholds for applied research (Akgunduz et al., 2023).

Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesized relationships were tested using 5,000 bootstrap samples in SmartPLS 4.0. Table 6 presents the complete statistical evidence for each hypothesis, including confidence intervals and effect sizes.

Table 6
Comprehensive Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Path	Std. Error	t-value	95% CI	p-value	Decision
H1: ES → EH	Direct	0.32	3.45	[0.18, 0.43]	0.002	Supported**
H2: JS → EH	Direct	-0.35	4.12	[-0.47, -0.26]	<0.001	Supported***
H3: ES → EA → EH	Indirect	0.18	2.21	[0.07, 0.29]	0.028	Partial Mediation*
H4: JS → EA → EH	Indirect	-0.09	1.34	[-0.17, 0.01]	0.181	Rejected

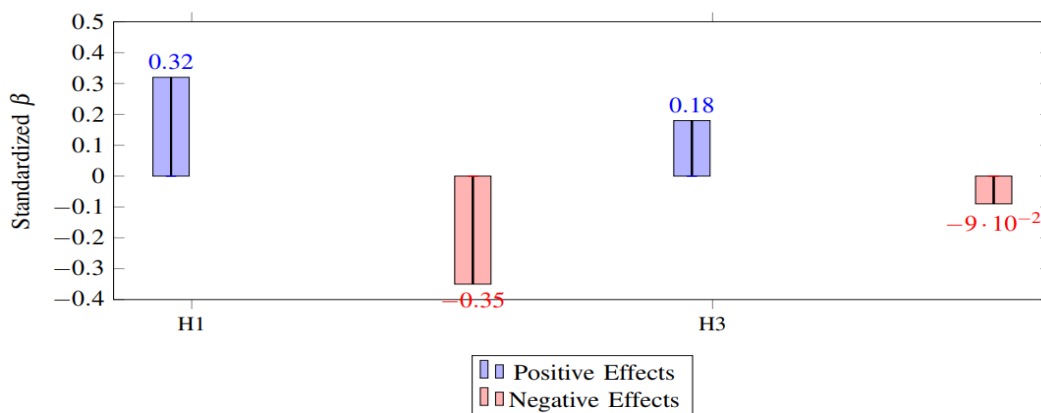


Fig. 4. Standardized Path Coefficients with 95% Confidence Intervals

H₁: (Supported): Ebullient supervision showed a significant positive effect on employee happiness ($\beta = 0.32, t = 3.45, p = 0.002$), with the 95% CI [0.18, 0.43] excluding zero.

H₂: (Supported): Job stress demonstrated a strong negative impact ($\beta = -0.35, t = 4.12, p < 0.001$), with

the entire CI [-0.47, -0.26] in the negative range.

H₃: (Partial Mediation): The indirect effect through employee advocacy was significant ($\beta = 0.18$, $t = 2.21$, $p = 0.028$), accounting for 36% of the total effect (VAF = 0.36).

H₄: (Rejected): The stress-advocacy-happiness path was non-significant ($\beta = -0.09$, $t = 1.34$, $p = 0.181$), with CI [-0.17, 0.01] crossing zero.

Table 7
Variance Accounted For (VAF) in Mediation Effects

Mediation Path	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	VAF
ES → EA → EH	0.32	0.18	36%
JS → EA → EH	-0.35	-0.09	20%*

*Non-significant mediation (VAF < 20% threshold)

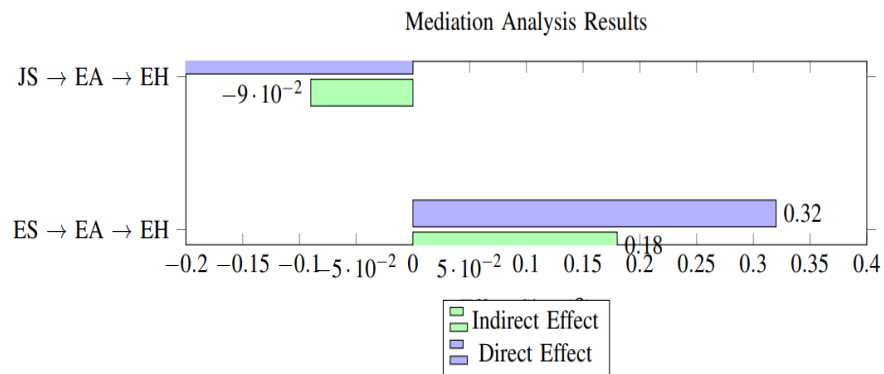


Fig. 5. Direct vs. Indirect Effects in Mediation Pathways

Discussion

The results of this study empirically confirm that ebullient supervision significantly and positively influences employee happiness in Pakistan's tourism sector ($\beta = 0.32$, $p < 0.01$), supporting the foundational premise of SET. This aligns with prior research by (Aboramadan & Kundi, 2023), which demonstrated that joyful leadership behaviours enhance psychological safety, a precursor to workplace satisfaction. The presence of a partial mediating effect through employee advocacy ($\beta = 0.18$, $p < 0.05$) further validates the theory's reciprocity mechanism—wherein positively charged supervisory behaviors not only uplift employees emotionally but also inspire them to voluntarily promote their organization. This dual pathway amplifies overall well-being, a novel contribution to existing SET-based leadership frameworks. Conversely, job stress was identified as a critical negative predictor of employee happiness ($\beta = -0.35$, $p < 0.001$), reinforcing earlier findings by (Akgunduz et al., 2023), who reported that elevated stress erodes job dedication and morale in the hospitality industry. Notably, employee advocacy did not significantly mediate the relationship between job stress and happiness (VAF = 20%, $p = 0.181$). This suggests that the emotional burden imposed by job stress may overwhelm an employee's capacity to engage positively with the organization, rendering advocacy less effective as a buffering mechanism, an important insight that challenges the assumption of consistent mediator utility across all contexts (Alshurideh et al., 2023).

This study investigated the impact of ebullient supervision and job stress on employee happiness within Pakistan's tourism sector, with employee advocacy examined as a mediating variable. Grounded in SET, the findings provide empirical evidence that ebullient supervision significantly enhances both employee advocacy and happiness (Hassan et al., 2024; Aboramadan & Kundi, 2023), whereas job stress negatively affects both constructs (Akgunduz et al., 2023; Abd et al., 2023). Notably, employee advocacy partially mediated the relationship between ebullient supervision and happiness but did not mediate the effects of job stress, highlighting the limits of positive behavioural contagion in high-stress environments (Alshurideh et al., 2023; Aboobaker, 2022).

CONCLUSION

The study advances theoretical understanding by integrating a novel leadership style, ebullient supervision, into the SET framework and by validating the mediating role of advocacy in service-centric contexts. Methodologically, it demonstrates the efficacy of PLS-SEM for modeling complex relationships in emerging market settings with moderate sample sizes. Practically, the findings offer actionable insights for tourism sector managers seeking to improve employee morale, reduce turnover, and build advocacy-driven cultures. Enhancing supervisory positivity and mitigating job stress should be central to any human resource strategy aimed at fostering sustainable employee happiness. The study provides a timely, evidence-based framework that can inform future interventions in Pakistan's tourism industry and similar service-driven sectors across developing economies.

The findings of the study offer several theoretical implications. First, this study extends SET by introducing employee advocacy as a dynamic mediator in the leadership-wellbeing nexus. Second, it distinguishes ebullient supervision as a distinct and impactful leadership style, separate from traditional transformational or transactional leadership models. Third, the successful application of PLS-SEM demonstrates the method's suitability for complex models involving latent constructs, especially in contexts with modest sample sizes, such as Pakistan's tourism industry.

Recommendations

From a practical standpoint, the results underscore the value of integrating ebullient supervision practices into managerial training modules. Supervisors should be encouraged to display energetic, optimistic behaviours that foster a vibrant workplace climate. Organizations should also institute stress audits to proactively identify and mitigate sources of job-related strain, particularly in frontline tourism roles. Furthermore, management could implement structured employee advocacy programs, such as peer recognition, storytelling platforms, and brand ambassador initiatives, to encourage positive employee-organizational interactions.

Limitations

Despite these contributions, several limitations merit attention. The cross-sectional nature of the data limits causal inferences; longitudinal studies are necessary to verify temporal relationships. Additionally, reliance on self-reported measures introduces the risk of common method variance; future research should incorporate triangulated data sources, such as supervisor evaluations or performance metrics. Lastly, the study's geographic concentration in Pakistan limits generalizability; replication in comparable South Asian tourism markets like India or Bangladesh would enhance external validity and regional relevance.

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Competing Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Authors' Biography

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