

RESEARCH ARTICLE

How abusive leadership could harm employee job performance in hospitality and tourism businesses? The roles of social loafing and anti-citizenship behavior

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ABSTRACT

Leadership is vital in the hospitality industry, influencing employee performance, guest satisfaction, and overall success, but abusive leadership, marked by hostile verbal and non-verbal behavior, can severely damage employee performance. Therefore, this study utilized the Social Exchange Theory as a framework to explain how abusive leadership, social loafing, and anti-citizenship behavior are interconnected in the workplace. More specifically, this study attempts to examine the impact of abusive leadership (AL) on employee job performance (EJP). It also aims to explore the mediating roles of social loafing (SL) and team anti-citizenship behavior (TAB) in the relationship between AL and EJP. This research utilized the PLS-SEM method and collected data by questionnaire from 408 sampled employees working in five-star hotels and travel agencies in the Greater Cairo region in Egypt. The results show that abusive leadership significantly decreases employee job performance. In addition, abusive leadership significantly increases social loafing and team anti-citizenship behavior. Furthermore, EJP is negatively affected by SL and TAB. The results also confirm that SL and TAB significantly mediate the relationship between AL and EJP. This study enhances the application of Social Exchange Theory (SET) in workplaces, enhances understanding of AL, SL, and TAB's roles in Egyptian settings, and enriches existing theories in AL, SL, TAB, and EJP. This study also offers practical insights for scholars and professionals to enhance employee performance, thus gaining a competitive edge.

Keywords: abusive leadership; employee job performance; hospitality and tourism businesses; social loafing; team anti-citizenship behavior

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1. Introduction

Improving employee performance doesn't just lead to a better-performing workforce—it acts as a catalyst for broader organizational success. Studies have confirmed that effectively improving employee job performance is directly linked to enhancing organizational performance^[1]. In addition, leadership plays a crucial role in the hospitality industry, as it directly influences employee performance, guest satisfaction, organizational culture, and the overall success of hospitality businesses^[2,3]. However, abusive leadership, characterized by hostile verbal and non-verbal actions without physical contact, can significantly harm employee performance^[4]. Abusive leadership is identified as a major cause of negative employee behaviors, including counterproductive work behaviors^[5]. The detrimental effects of abusive leadership can be explained by how it leads to social loafing and anti-citizenship behavior among employees. On one hand, social loafing is when individuals tend to put in less effort when working in a group than when working alone. Abusive leadership fosters an atmosphere of fear and distrust, which reduces employees' intrinsic motivation and dedication to group objectives^[6], consequently, increasing the chances of social loafing occurring^[7,8]. The research conducted by Hoon and Tan^[9] on hospitality and tourism workers revealed that job insecurity and distributive injustice—issues often exacerbated by abusive leadership—play a significant role in promoting social loafing. Alyahya et al.^[10] suggested that when employees feel uncertain about their jobs and perceive unfair treatment, they are more likely to consider leaving their jobs, which then leads to a higher occurrence of social loafing. On the other hand, anti-citizenship behavior, which encompasses actions that are detrimental to the organization like sabotage, theft, and not adhering to organizational norms, serves as another important^[11]. Abusive leadership undermines trust and regard, prompting employees to partake in behaviors that run counter to organizational citizenship behaviors^[12]. Research conducted by Lichtenthaler & Fischbach^[11] illustrated those environmental factors, such as leadership style, have a significant impact on the prevalence of citizenship behaviors and social loafing. Mistreatment among employees decreases their motivation to perform job duties, leading to an environment conducive to the growth of anti-citizenship behaviors^[12].

In addition, anti-citizenship behavior in the workplace often rooted in abusive leadership, significantly impacts job performance, breaching workplace standards and potentially harming the organization^[10]. A qualitative study in an Egyptian context revealed that dysfunctional behaviors significantly reduced employee job performance, emphasizing the need for effective leadership^[7]. The intricate connection between abusive supervision and job performance adds complexity to this issue. Wolor et al.^[13] revealed that while minimal levels of abusive supervision could occasionally spur innovation in top-performing employees, an excessive amount of abusive supervision consistently resulted in reduced innovative behaviors and overall job performance. This indicates that any immediate benefits perceived from abusive leadership are probably not sustainable and ultimately detrimental to the organization. Ultimately, the repercussions of toxic leadership reach beyond just immediate job performance to influence overall job satisfaction and employee engagement, both pivotal for sustained performance. Sun et al.^[14] state that toxic leadership harms job satisfaction and motivation, key factors driving employee performance.

There is a potential gap between abusive leadership^[15-17] and its impact on employee performance at work through social loafing and anti-citizenship behavior, and there is a gap in research regarding the specific mechanisms through which abusive leadership leads to these behaviors. The current literature may lack empirical studies on the impact of abusive leadership, social loafing, and anti-citizenship behavior on employee performance in the hospitality sector^[8,18]. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by attempting to achieve two objectives; to examine how abusive leadership influences hotel and tourism employee job performance, and to investigate the mediating effects of social loafing and anti-citizenship

behavior in the relationship between abusive leadership and employee job performance. Consequently, this study contributes to the existing literature by examining the impact of abusive leadership on employee performance in the hospitality and tourism industry context. The study also fills the gaps in empirical research by providing strong evidence of the influence of social inaction and anti-citizenship behavior in the hospitality and tourism sector.

2. Literature review

2.1. Abusive leadership

Abusive leadership, defined as persistent, nonverbal, hostile actions that do not involve physical contact, has been the subject of extensive research due to its detrimental impact on employee job performance^[19,20]. Powell^[21] and Zeyu^[22] refer to some of the erosion of employee effectiveness through abusive leadership, such as promoting dysfunctional behavior, increasing work-related stress, and reducing employee empowerment. The relationship between dysfunctional workplace behavior and job performance has been extensively studied and demonstrated. Dysfunctional behavior relates to actions that are inconsistent with accepted workplace norms and can be detrimental to overall organizational effectiveness^[19,20]. Abusive leadership amplifies these dysfunctional behaviors by fostering a toxic work atmosphere that promotes rule-breaking and defiance^[23-25]. It is well-documented that leadership styles significantly influence employee behavior and stress levels. Abusive leadership intensifies work stress and negative behaviors within the workplace^[19,20]. This is primarily due to the punitive tactics often employed by abusive leaders, fostering an environment of fear and apprehension that elevates stress levels and subsequently leads to decreased job performance^[25-27].

2.2. Employee job performance

Employee job performance is defined as an individual's ability to complete assigned tasks while efficiently utilizing available resources^[28]. It represents the output an employee contributes to an organization, which can be considered either productive or counterproductive based on their behavior^[28,29]. Employee job performance (EJP) is a key indicator of an organization's efficiency and productivity, playing a vital role in its overall success by assessing the contributions of employees^[30], consequently, businesses must focus on enhancing employee job performance to improve operational effectiveness. Employee performance at work is a complex and multifaceted concept, shaped by a range of factors including mental health, leadership styles, work engagement, and organizational behavior^[31-35]. It involves the intricate interactions among these factors and their collective impact on job performance.

2.3. Social loafing

Social loafing is a significant challenge in organizational settings, defined as the tendency of individuals to exert less effort in group tasks than when working alone^[8,36,37]. This reduction in individual effort often leads to decreased group performance and overall inefficiency^[38]. One major factor contributing to social loafing is the absence of individual accountability in group tasks^[39,40]. Additionally, group learning processes play a vital role in shaping social loafing behaviors^[41]. Teams with higher collective knowledge and continuous learning experiences tend to exhibit lower levels of social loafing^[42-43]. This highlights the importance of fostering a learning-focused environment within teams to enhance member engagement and reduce loafing behaviors^[8,40]. Moreover, group dynamics and team composition can significantly impact the emergence and mitigation of loafing. Individual traits and team dynamics interact to influence loafing behaviors^[8,44]. Traits such as conscientiousness and agreeableness can help offset loafing tendencies within teams. Notably, a three-way interaction between loafing tendencies, conscientiousness, and agreeableness

suggests that high levels of these traits within a team can mitigate the negative impact of loafing on team performance^[8,37,45].

2.4. Anti-citizenship behavior

Anti-citizenship behaviors within a team refer to actions by employees that negatively impact team performance and harm the organization^[46,47]. These behaviors can include theft, sabotage, revenge, hostility, and sarcasm, all of which contribute to a toxic work environment and lower the morale of other team members. As a result, such actions hinder the effective functioning of both the team and the organization^[18,48]. Anti-citizenship behaviors pose a significant challenge for organizational leaders, leading to reduced trust, collaboration, and productivity. To maintain a healthy and high-functioning workplace, organizations must identify and address these behaviors promptly^[18].

2.5. Social exchange theory (SET)

Social Exchange Theory (SET) offers a valuable framework for comprehending how abusive leadership, social loafing, and anti-citizenship behavior intertwine within the workplace. SET suggests that social behavior is the result of an exchange process, where individuals seek to maximize benefits and minimize costs in their relationships^[49]. The theory proposes that when individuals perceive their exchange relationships as fair and beneficial, they are more likely to reciprocate with positive behaviors^[50]. The theory also suggests that to mitigate the negative consequences of abusive leadership, organizations should focus on promoting positive social exchange relationships between leaders and employees^[51]. This can be achieved by implementing effective leadership development programs, promoting a culture of respect and open communication, and holding abusive leaders accountable for their actions^[52]. SET theory recommends that To mitigate the negative consequences of abusive leadership, organizations should focus on fostering positive social exchange relationships between leaders and employees^[49]. This can be achieved through implementing effective leadership development programs, promoting a culture of respect and open communication, and holding abusive leaders accountable for their actions^[52,53].

3. Hypotheses development

3.1. Abusive leadership and employee job performance

Abusive leadership, which includes behaviors such as hostility, intimidation, and public humiliation, poses a significant threat to employee job performance^[54]. Its negative effects can be explored through the lens of dysfunctional behavior, social loafing, and anti-citizenship behavior^[19,20]. Abusive leadership fosters dysfunctional behavior within the workplace^[14], which involves actions that violate established workplace norms and harm organizational effectiveness^[13]. These dysfunctional behaviors contribute to a significant decline in employees' job performance, highlighting the importance of managing such behavior effectively. When leaders model dysfunctional behaviors, they encourage employees to engage in counterproductive work behaviors, further reducing overall job performance^[55-56]. Aversive leadership, or abusive leadership, has been also found to positively affect employees' psychological strain and contribute to increased emotional exhaustion^[57].

Abusive leadership can also demotivate both individual efforts and teamwork. Research indicates that when employees feel insecure or perceive unfair treatment—often exacerbated by poor management—they are more likely to disengage or exert less effort when working in groups compared to working alone^[58-60]. This response, driven by challenges beyond their control, can significantly undermine productivity and performance. Leaders play a critical role in creating an environment of psychological safety, fairness, and

support, where employees feel empowered to contribute their best work as part of a high-functioning team^[61-62].

Zhang and Sun^[63] and Eluwole et al.^[64] argue that ethical leadership can combat knowledge contribution loafing within the workforce, which negatively impacts job performance, by fostering a culture of ownership and accountability, unlike abusive leadership, which is known to have detrimental effects. This shift towards ethical leadership leads to enhanced employee engagement and productivity^[33,65,66]. In contrast, toxic leadership, including abusive and authoritarian styles, has been extensively documented to harm job satisfaction, motivation, and performance^[66,67] with abusive leadership specifically linked to workplace deviance as a maladaptive coping mechanism^[68,69]. Given the complex and harmful effects of abusive leadership on workplace dynamics, the research underscores the importance of addressing and mitigating these toxic behaviors to improve employee outcomes^[70].

Additionally, poor supervisor support, often a hallmark of abusive leadership, encourages workplace deviance and leads to negative psychosocial outcomes, such as diminished job satisfaction and work-life balance. Labrague et al.^[71] suggest that abusive leadership's toxic behaviors increase work stress, which in turn reduces job performance. According to Social Exchange Theory (SET), employees are less likely to engage in positive work behaviors if they perceive the organization—or its representatives, like abusive leaders—as failing to meet their responsibilities or treating them unfairly^[51]. Perceptions of organizational injustice, whether related to distributive, procedural, or interactional fairness, can lead to reduced organizational commitment, ultimately affecting employee performance. Consequently, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H1: Abusive leadership decreases employee job performance.

3.2. Abusive leadership and social loafing

SET theory refers to abusive leadership which is marked by unfriendly and belittling actions towards subordinates and goes against the principles of social exchange^[51]. When employees are subjected to abusive supervision, they may see the relationship as unjust and burdensome, resulting in decreased effort and heightened social loafing^[72]. This is because employees might see social loafing as a method to retaliate against the abusive leader and reduce their involvement in the problematic exchange relationship.

In addition, Gulzar et al.^[73] found that the relationship between abusive supervision and employee social inaction was mediated by psychological contract breach. Organizational focus also moderated this indirect relationship. It suggests that abusive leadership, characterized by behaviors such as intimidation, humiliation, and exploitation of subordinates, can create a toxic work environment that encourages social inaction among employees. Aggarwal & O'Brien^[74] showed that the positive relationship between abusive supervision and employee social inaction was weaker when employees had high-quality leader-member exchange relationships and high self-monitoring abilities. When employees encounter abusive leadership, they may feel frustrated, disconnected, and fearful of consequences^[73,74]. These negative emotional climates can lead individuals to hold back their efforts, share responsibilities, or passively resist by engaging in social inaction. Furthermore, Xu et al.^[75] noted that abusive supervision led to increased social inaction, and this relationship was mediated by employees' need for self-validation. They suggested that employees who feel mistreated or belittled by their leaders may lack the motivation or sense of security to actively participate in group activities, leading to a collective decrease in effort and performance. Consequently, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H2: Abusive leadership increases social loafing.

3.3. Social loafing and employee job performance

Social loafing refers to the tendency of individuals to exert less effort toward a goal when working collectively as part of a group, compared to working independently^[38,76]. Liden et al.^[77] found that social loafing behaviors were negatively related to individual task performance and team performance. Kidwell & Bennett^[78] and Jassawalla et al.^[79] refer that social loafing negatively impacts both individual and team performance and suggest that social loafing is more likely to occur when individual contributions to group tasks cannot be identified and evaluated. When accountability within teams is low, workers may tend to rely more on their peers and exert less effort themselves. However, social loafing can be reduced by assigning specific roles and responsibilities to team members so that their input can be recognized. In addition, factors such as group size and cohesion also affect social loafing larger groups tend to see greater social loafing as individuals feel their contributions are less detectable^[80]. However, strong team cohesion, where members support each other, can offset this effect by increasing individual effort and commitment to shared goals. Consequently, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H3: social loafing decreases employee job performance.

3.4. Social loafing as a mediator

The relationship between abusive leadership and employee performance is multifaceted, with one key mechanism being social loafing, where individuals exert less effort in group settings than when working alone^[81,82]. Abusive leadership exacerbates this phenomenon by fostering a toxic work environment that diminishes employee motivation and responsibility^[72]. Employees under abusive supervision may feel demoralized, unappreciated, or fearful of further mistreatment, leading to disengagement and a reluctance to actively participate in group efforts^[77]. This passive resistance, in the form of reduced effort, results in overall performance declines^[82]. Moreover, abusive leadership often triggers psychological disengagement, where employees mentally and emotionally detach from their work and colleagues^[25,26]. This detachment further encourages social loafing, as employees lose the drive to contribute, with skepticism toward the organization and its leadership further reinforcing their reluctance to invest effort^[23,24].

According to SET theory, workplace bonds are created through a give-and-take process where employees provide value to their employer in exchange for fair treatment, job stability, and other benefits. Abusive leadership disrupts this exchange by disregarding norms of respect and consideration through hostile behaviors such as public humiliation and harsh criticism. When leaders engage in such abusive treatment, it damages the psychological agreement between employer and employee. This may lead workers to change their behaviors, becoming less engaged and less competent in an attempt to restore a sense of balance in the relationship. Consequently, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H4: Social loafing mediates the relationship between abusive leadership and employee job performance.

3.5. Abusive leadership and team anti-citizenship behavior

Abusive leadership, characterized by behaviors such as intimidation, exploitation, and mistreatment of subordinates, can have detrimental effects on employee attitudes and behaviors in the workplace^[82]. According to Aliane et al^[18], employees exposed to abusive leadership may respond with anti-citizenship behaviors, including actions like sabotage, gossiping, and undermining the organization or their colleagues. These negative behaviors contribute to the creation of a toxic work environment, which in turn harms productivity and morale. Additionally, abusive leadership fosters a climate of fear and retaliation, prompting employees to engage in anti-citizenship behaviors as a form of resistance or self-protection.

By understanding the detrimental effects of abusive leadership on employee attitudes and behaviors, organizations can take steps to prevent and address such behaviors^[83]. Promoting a culture of respect, providing training in effective leadership practices, and implementing mechanisms for reporting and addressing abusive behavior are essential to creating a healthy and productive work environment. Kim and Lee^[84] emphasize the importance of promoting ethical leadership practices and fostering a positive organizational culture that values respect, fairness, and collaboration. Addressing abusive leadership behaviors is critical to maintaining employee well-being, engagement, and organizational effectiveness.

Employees who experience abusive leadership may also engage in anti-citizenship behaviors, such as being rude, disrespectful, or undermining their colleagues^[51]. This is because employees may view anti-citizenship behavior to retaliate against the organization and its representatives (i.e., the abusive leader) for the perceived unfair treatment they have received^[52]. Consequently, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H5: abusive leadership increases team anti-citizenship behavior.

3.6. Anti-citizenship behavior and employee job performance

Anti-citizenship behavior, encompassing actions like sabotage, gossiping, and undermining colleagues or the organization, can have adverse effects on individual and team performance in the workplace. Employees who partake in anti-citizenship behavior may divert their focus and efforts away from productive tasks, leading to diminished job performance and overall organizational effectiveness^[85]. These behaviors can foster a negative work environment, erode trust among team members, and disrupt the essential collaboration and communication needed to achieve common goals. Individuals who display anti-citizenship behaviors are likely to be less engaged, motivated, and committed to their work, resulting in decreased productivity and work quality^[86].

Podsakoff et al.^[87] suggest a negative relationship between anti-citizenship behavior and employee performance at work. Individuals who exhibit anti-citizenship behavior are likely to be less engaged, motivated, and committed to their work, leading to decreased productivity and work quality. To address the impact of anti-citizenship behavior on employee performance at work, organizations must cultivate a culture of respect, accountability, and ethical behavior^[88]. Setting clear expectations, defining performance goals, providing positive workplace behavior training, and implementing measures to address and prevent anti-citizenship behavior are all critical to enhancing employee performance and the success of the organization^[89].

SET theory states that Anti-citizenship behaviors, such as holding back effort, undermining colleagues, or sabotaging the organization, can directly and negatively impact an employee's job performance. These actions indicate a deviation from social exchange norms, where employees do not reciprocate the organization's investments with positive contributions^[52]. By engaging in anti-citizenship behaviors, employees essentially "withdraw" from the social exchange relationship, leading to a decline in their job performance and overall productivity^[51]. Consequently, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H6: Team anti-citizenship behavior decreases employee job performance.

3.7. Anti-citizenship behavior as a mediator

Abusive leadership has a detrimental impact on employee performance, often through anti-citizenship behavior^[90]. Anti-citizenship behavior encompasses actions that are harmful to the organization or its members, including behaviors like sabotage, withdrawal, and incivility. Abusive leadership fosters a hostile workplace atmosphere that frequently triggers adverse reactions from employees^[91]. When employees experience abusive supervision, they may resort to anti-citizenship behaviors as a means of retaliation or

coping. These behaviors encompass activities such as diminishing work effort, purposefully disrupting team dynamics, or even undermining the organization's objectives^[18].

Anti-citizenship behavior can act as a mediator between abusive leadership and reduced employee performance^[47,92]. When employees respond to abusive leadership by engaging in anti-citizenship behavior, they are likely to become less productive, more disengaged, and less committed to the organization's goals^[93]. This mediating role of anti-citizenship behavior helps explain how abusive leadership indirectly contributes to a decline in overall performance. Abusive leadership not only triggers anti-citizenship behavior but also diminishes organizational citizenship behavior, which encompasses voluntary, extra-role activities that contribute positively to the organization^[92]. The rise in anti-citizenship behavior coupled with the decline in organizational citizenship behavior fosters a toxic environment that severely impairs performance. In addition, the long-term presence of anti-citizenship behavior in response to abusive leadership can lead to a sustained decline in organizational performance^[18]. The accumulation of these behaviors, such as reduced effort, sabotage, and withdrawal, can undermine the organization's ability to achieve its objectives, leading to a toxic culture that is difficult to reverse^[83]. Consequently, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H7: Anti-citizenship behavior mediates the relationship between abusive leadership and employee job performance.

The theoretical model of the study is presented in **Figure 1** below.

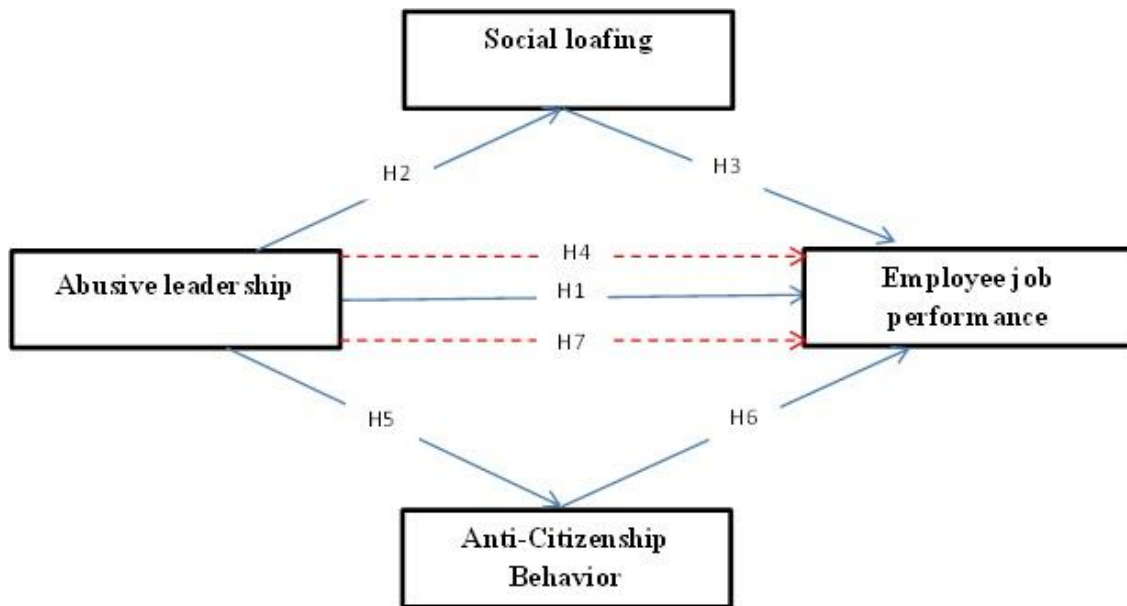


Figure 1. The theoretical model of the study.

4. Material and methods

4.1. Questionnaire design and study measures

The study employed a structured survey for its quantitative research that examines the effect of abusive leadership on social loafing, anti-citizenship behavior, and employee job performance in hotel and tourism businesses. The survey is divided into two sections: one covers employee profiles, while the other uses a five-point Likert scale to examine the four investigated concepts of the study.

The four variables under investigation were analyzed using previously verified measuring scales from the literature. Five-item scale was utilized by Mitchell and Ambrose^[94] to evaluate abusive leadership. In

addition, an 8-item scale suggested by Rodwell et al.^[95] was used to evaluate employee job performance. Moreover, the study utilized Price et al.'s^[96] 4-item scale to assess social loafing. Furthermore, the study assessed anti-citizenship behavior using a 5-item scale suggested by^[46,48]. The detailed measurement scales are presented in Appendix (A).

4.2. Sample and data collection procedures

Employees working full-time in Egypt's five-star hotels and category-A travel agencies—market leaders with excellent service standards—are the subject of this study. Five-star hotels and category-A travel agencies often have a high-stress work environment due to long hours, high customer demands, a fast-paced environment, physical demands, and emotional demands in dealing with guests. Therefore, negative behaviors can be engaged, indicating the need for enhanced leadership practices.

Given the huge population and few resources, randomization was not feasible in the current study and instead, the convenience sample approach was employed. The Greater Cairo region of Egypt has 30 five-star hotels and 1666 category-A travel agencies^[97]. Enterprises in Egypt's Greater Cairo Region were contacted to request permission to visit and distribute a questionnaire on their premises. The study involved administering 600 questionnaires to 20 hotels and 50 travel agencies that had given their consent to participate in the research. The study received 408 valid questionnaire forms, resulting in a response rate of 68%. Of the 408 individuals who took part in the study, 268 (65.7%) were men and 140 (34.3%) were women. Of the participants, 142 (34.8%) were under 30 years old, 226 (55.4%) were between 30 and 45 years old, and 40 (9.8%) were beyond 45 years old. Furthermore, a majority of the respondents ($n = 306$, 75%) had a bachelor's degree. Out of the 408 participants, 244 (60%) belonged to hotels and 164 (40%) belonged to travel agencies.

The Cochran^[98] sampling equation is utilized in the study to ascertain the suitable sample size since official data regarding the overall workforce of Egypt's five-star hotels and category-A travel agencies is not accessible. The formula for a representative sample of a large population, equivalent to 385 responses, was developed by Cochran^[98] and is applied in this study.

Employees with a minimum of one year of work experience were eligible to participate in the survey. Morrison^[99] claimed that workers could understand the culture and customs of the company six months after beginning a new position. Furthermore, following the suggestion of Donaldson et al.^[100], participants were asked at the end of the survey if they were concerned about their comments potentially endangering their work, with the option to be omitted subsequently.

Using t-tests to examine non-response bias concerns, the study found no statistically significant difference between the early and late surveys ($p > 0.05$). In addition to examining common method biases, the study discovered that no dominant factor explained more than 50% of the variation in common method variance (CMV). Multi-group analysis was also conducted to compare path coefficients in a model for hotels and travel agencies, finding no significant differences ($P > 0.05$).

4.3. Data analysis

The proposed study model, in which relationships are not well defined and multivariate normality assumptions are not made, was tested using the PLS-SEM technique. This method works well with complicated models and has fewer restrictions for data distribution^[101,102,103]. The statistical analysis was carried out using WarpPLS software. WarpPLS is a user-friendly software tool for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) that is well-known for its powerful features and appealing

interface. It provides flexibility, streamlines the analysis process, and produces thorough output—including statistics and visuals.

5. Results

5.1. Measurement model

Kock's^[104] ten model fit indices were utilized to analyze a four-factor model involving abusive leadership, employee job performance, social loafing, and anti-citizenship behavior, providing well-fitted data. Appendix (B) displays the ten fit indexes to assess model adequacy. The suggested model accurately represents data and provides a good estimate of variable relationships.

Table 1 shows that the study's confirmatory factor analysis revealed strong reliability and validity, with composite reliability (CR) over 0.70 and item loadings above 0.50 ($p < 0.05$). The study model's convergent validity is assessed using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) criterion. The results show that abusive leadership, employee job performance, social loafing, and anti-citizenship behavior all have AVE values greater than 0.50. In addition, the variance inflation factors (VIFs) of all the latent variables are less than 3.3, indicating that the study model is free from common method bias.

Table 1. Item loadings, cronbach alpha, CR, AVE, and VIFs.

Factors	Item loading	Cronbach alpha	CR	AVE	VIFs				
Abusive leadership (AL)	-								
AL.1	0.857								
AL.2	0.856	0.916	0.885	0.688	3.037				
AL.3	0.852								
AL.4	0.844								
AL.5	0.730								
Employee job performance (EJP)	-								
EJP.1	0.721								
EJP.2	0.696								
EJP.3	0.790								
EJP.4	0.822	0.910	0.885	0.560	1.110				
EJP.5	0.797								
EJP.6	0.792								
EJP.7	0.569								
EJP.8	0.767								
Social Loafing (SL)	-								
SL.1	0.736								
SL.2	0.733					0.821	0.709	0.534	3.122
SL.3	0.730								
SL.4	0.724								
Team anti-citizenship behavior (TAB)	-								
TAB.1	0.565	0.854	0.784	0.544	2.477				
TAB.2	0.640								

TAB.3	0.814
TAB.4	0.810
TAB.5	0.820

Table 1. (Continued)

The study demonstrated good convergent and discriminant validity, as evidenced by the AVE values and HTMT criterion (see **Tables 2** and **3**). The study's high AVE values ensure an accurate representation of each construct and distinct ones, resulting in reliable and meaningful conclusions. Besides, HTMT is a statistical method used to evaluate discriminant validity in structural equation modeling, specifically in PLS-SEM, by comparing correlations between heterotraits and monotraits with a threshold of 0.90.

Table 2. Discriminant validity results.

	AL	EJP	SL	TAB
Abusive leadership (AL)	0.829			
Employee job performance (EJP)	-0.209	0.748		
Social loafing (SL)	0.640	-0.224	0.731	
Team anti-citizenship behavior (TAB)	0.714	-0.314	0.718	0.737

Table 3. HTMT for validity.

HTMT ratios (good if < 0.90, best if < 0.85)	AL	EJP	SL	TAB
Abusive leadership (AL)				
Employee job performance (EJP)		0.239		
Social loafing (SL)		0.852	0.285	
Team anti-citizenship behavior (TAB)		0.872	0.367	0.862
P values (one-tailed) for HTMT ratios (good if < 0.05)	AL	EJP	SL	TAB
Abusive leadership (AL)				
Employee job performance (EJP)		<0.001		
Social loafing (SL)		0.002	<0.001	
Team anti-citizenship behavior (TAB)		0.004	<0.001	0.003

5.2. Results of testing hypotheses

The results of the hypothesis testing are presented in **Figure 2** and **Tables (4 & 5)**. The results show that abusive leadership (AL) significantly decreases employee job performance (EJP) ($\beta=-0.12$, $P<0.01$), with an increase in abusive leadership leading to a reduction in employee job performance, supporting H1. Abusive leadership, on the other side, significantly increases social loafing (SL) ($\beta=0.84$, $P<0.01$) and team anti-citizenship behavior (TAB) ($\beta=0.74$, $P<0.01$). The increase in AL leads to higher SL and TAB, supporting both H2 and H5. In addition, EJP is negatively affected by SL ($\beta=-0.11$, $P<0.01$) and TAB ($\beta=-0.39$, $P<0.01$), this means that high levels of SL and TAB are often linked to a decrease in EJP, thereby supporting the hypotheses H3 and H6.

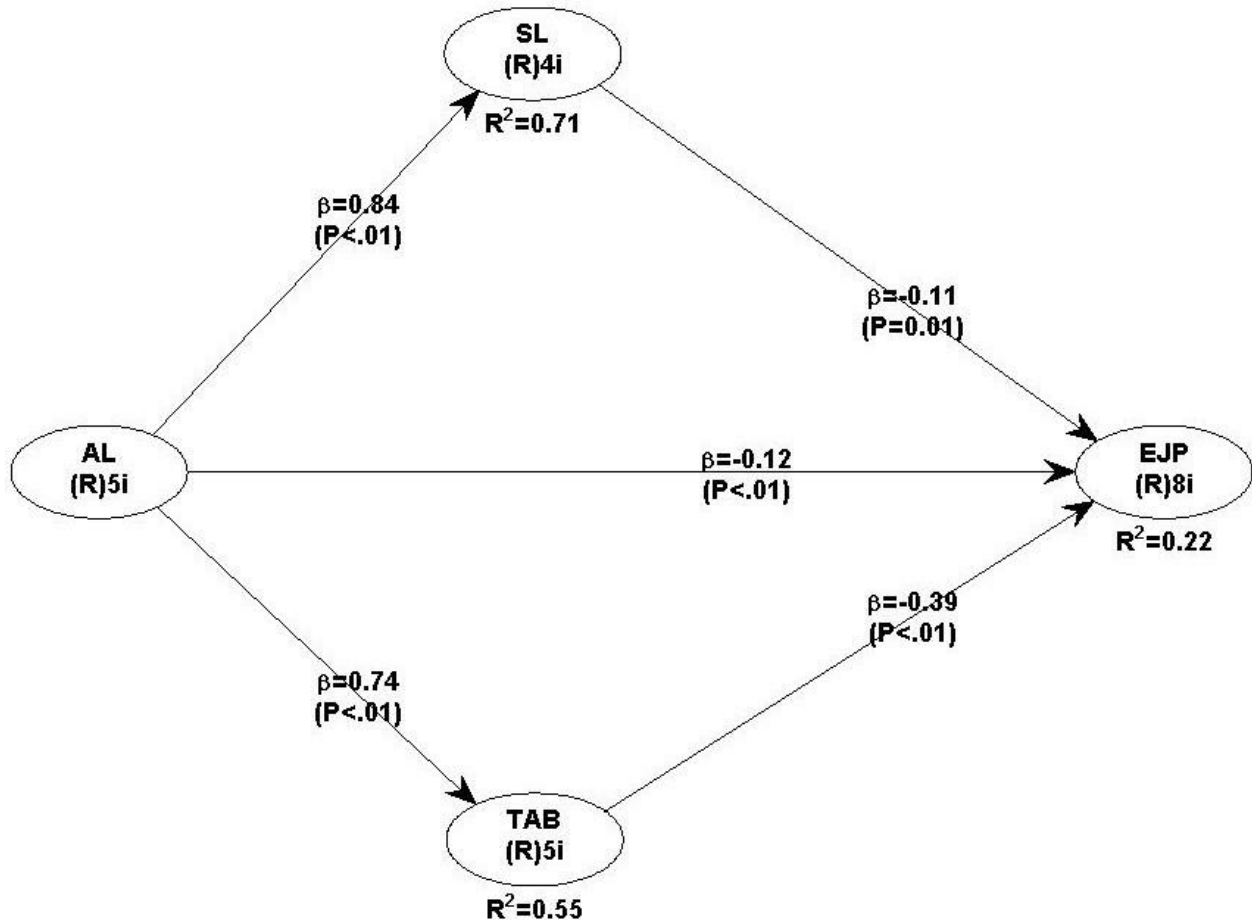


Figure 2. The final model of the study.

Furthermore, data presented in **Table 5** show that AL had a small effect size on EJP ($f^2=0.030$), while it had a large effect size on both SL and TAB ($f^2=0.712$, $f^2=0.550$, respectively). In addition, SL had a small effect size on EJP ($f^2=0.033$), while TAB had a moderate effect size on EJP ($f^2=0.154$).

Table 4. Effect sizes (f^2) for total effects.

	SL	AL	TAB
Employee Job Performance (EJP)	0.033	0.030	0.154
Social Loafing (SL)	-	0.712	-
Team anti-citizenship behavior (TAB)	-	0.550	-

Finally, using bootstrapping for the confidence intervals approach created by Preacher and Hayes ^[105], the study investigates the mediation effects of SL and TAB in the link between AL and EJP (see **Table 5**). The study confirms the hypothesis (H4) that SL significantly mediates the relationship between AL and EJP, as evidenced by the significant indirect effect observed in the bootstrapping analysis (t-value=-2.718; LL=-0.159, UL=-0.026). The study also confirms the hypothesis (H7) that TAB significantly mediates the relationship between AL and EJP (t-value=-8.488; LL=-0.355, UL=-0.222).

Table 5. Mediation analysis results.

	Path a	Path b	Indirect Effect	SE	t-value	Bootstrapped Confidence Interval		Decision
						95% LL	95% UL	
H4: AL → SL → EJP	0.840	-0.110	-0.092	0.034	-2.718	-0.159	-0.026	Mediation
H7: AL → TAB → EJP	0.740	-0.390	-0.289	0.034	-8.488	-0.355	-0.222	Mediation

6. Discussion

This study investigates the impact of abusive leadership (AL) on employee job performance (EJP) and explores the mediating roles of social loafing (SL) and team anti-citizenship behavior (TAB) in this relationship. The findings reveal that AL significantly reduces EJP, aligning with previous studies^[13,106,107] which emphasize the detrimental effects of abusive leadership on employee performance. Such leadership fosters a hostile work environment, leading to lower job satisfaction, and diminished motivation, engagement, and morale^[107]. Employees under AL may experience fear, stress, and anxiety, resulting in reduced productivity and focus. Moreover, AL contributes to a toxic organizational culture, weakening collaboration, trust, and organizational health^[108]. Additionally, employees subjected to AL may suffer from mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and PTSD^[109].

The study also highlights that AL significantly increases SL, a finding consistent with Lam et al.^[110], who note that abusive leadership diminishes employee motivation, leading to disengagement and a decline in effort. SL is characterized by employees contributing less in group settings, often due to the fear and powerlessness instilled by AL. This reduces team cohesion, trust, and communication, hindering collaboration and accountability^[8]. Employees facing AL may be less inclined to invest their best efforts to avoid becoming targets of mistreatment.

Furthermore, the results indicate that AL significantly elevates team anti-citizenship behavior (TAB), supporting Aliane et al.^[18], who argue that abusive leadership fosters negative behaviors such as sabotage and theft. Employees experiencing AL often face low job satisfaction, which reduces their motivation and engagement^[111]. The deterioration of trust between employees and supervisors, driven by AL, can lead to feelings of resentment and hostile actions^[113]. This, in turn, escalates conflict, mistrust, and destructive behaviors within teams^[114,115]. Employees may engage in TAB as a form of retaliation or as a coping mechanism for the emotional and psychological toll of AL^[18].

The study further reveals that SL negatively impacts EJP and mediates the relationship between AL and EJP. This result mirrors findings by Alghamdi et al. ^[8], who describe social loafing as employees exerting less effort in group settings, which diminishes overall productivity. When individuals feel that their contributions are undervalued or unnoticed, their motivation and engagement suffer. SL fosters a "free-rider" mentality, where employees rely on others' efforts while contributing minimally themselves. This behavior can erode team cohesion, as it generates resentment and unfairness among team members.

Finally, the study demonstrates that TAB negatively affects EJP and mediates the relationship between AL and EJP. This is consistent with Aliane et al.^[18] who assert that anti-citizenship behaviors like sabotage and theft significantly impair job performance. TAB creates a hostile, stressful work environment that undermines employee morale, motivation, and satisfaction. It erodes trust within teams, impedes collaboration, and detracts from achieving shared goals^[47]. Moreover, such behaviors often increase the workload for other team members, leading to burnout, stress, and further reductions in job performance.

6.1. Theoretical implications

This study supports and broadens the application of Social Exchange Theory (SET) in the workplace. Social Exchange Theory is a framework used in this study to explain how abusive leadership, social loafing, and team anti-citizenship behavior are interconnected in the workplace. It suggests that social behavior is a result of an exchange process where individuals seek to maximize benefits and minimize costs. To mitigate the negative consequences of abusive leadership, organizations should focus on fostering positive social exchange relationships between leaders and employees. This can be achieved through effective leadership development programs, promoting a culture of respect and open communication, and holding abusive leaders accountable. In addition, abusive leadership, marked by unfriendly and belittling actions towards subordinates, goes against the principles of social exchange. Employees may perceive the relationship as unjust and burdensome, leading to decreased effort and increased social loafing. To break this vicious cycle, organizations should focus on promoting positive social exchange relationships through effective leadership development programs, clear communication of performance expectations, and improved employee performance.

6.2. Practical implications

Abusive leadership significantly impacts employee job performance, necessitating management to implement specific practices to address this issue. Organizations, therefore, must foster a culture of respect, empathy, and ethical leadership to effectively tackle this negative impact. The training and development program focuses on providing leaders with comprehensive training on effective leadership practices, conflict resolution, and emotional intelligence should be provided. In addition, open communication channels are crucial in creating a safe and supportive environment for employees to report concerns without fear of retaliation. As well, implementing clear policies and procedures is crucial in addressing abusive behavior and ensuring appropriate consequences for such actions. Offering counseling and support services to employees can help them cope with abusive leadership, fostering a healthier and more productive work environment.

Social loafing can be a significant issue in hospitality and tourism enterprises, as it can lead to decreased job performance. To combat social loafing among hospitality and tourism employees, clear expectations, clear performance goals, and regular feedback can be implemented, ensuring everyone understands their role, fostering accountability, and reinforcing positive behaviors. In addition, promotes team cohesion and collaboration through team-building activities, encourages open communication, and recognizes and rewards teamwork achievements to create a comfortable environment for collaboration. Moreover, empower them by providing autonomy, investing in training and development, and acknowledging and rewarding individual contributions to boost confidence and motivation. Furthermore, creates a positive work environment, addresses workplace stressors, fosters a supportive culture, promotes work-life balance, and uses performance management tools like peer evaluation, individual performance tracking, and team performance metrics. These strategies help prevent burnout, reduce stress, and promote accountability among employees.

Anti-citizenship behavior can significantly harm a workplace. To mitigate workplace anti-citizenship, management should define unacceptable behaviors, implement policies that address anti-citizenship behaviors, such as those related to absenteeism, theft, sabotage, or harassment, and ensure that all employees are aware of the policies and expectations regarding anti-citizenship behaviors. In addition, management should promote a positive and supportive work environment where employees feel valued, respected, and motivated, identify and address any workplace stressors that may contribute to TAB, such as excessive workload, poor working conditions, or abusive leadership, and create channels for employees to express concerns or grievances without fear of retaliation. Furthermore, management should invest in employee

development by offering training on conflict resolution, stress management, and teamwork. Implement disciplinary actions, such as progressive discipline, and seek legal advice to ensure compliance with laws and regulations.

6.3. Limitations and further research avenues

The study was determined to have some limitations, which suggest potential for future research. First, while the proposed model provides a foundation for understanding employee job performance, it's important to acknowledge that it's not exhaustive. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing employee job performance, it's essential for further research to explore additional work-related factors "for example, job autonomy, organizational justice, organizational culture, and leadership style" and non-work-related "for instance, financial security and social support" non-work-related factors.

Second, the use of convenience sampling in this study presents another limitation. While it may have been a practical choice due to cost and time constraints, it introduces the potential for sampling bias. To address these limitations in future research, it is essential to employ random sampling techniques. Random sampling ensures that each member of the target population has an equal chance of being selected, increasing the likelihood of obtaining a representative sample. By using random sampling techniques, future research can enhance the generalizability and internal validity of its findings, providing a more robust understanding of the factors influencing employee job performance.

Third, the study's generalizability is limited due to its focus on full-time employees in five-star hotels and category-A travel agencies in the Greater Cairo Region. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of job performance within the Egyptian hospitality and tourism industry, future research should consider expanding to explore different regions within Egypt that can help identify regional variations in AL, SL, and TAB factors and their impact on employee performance. In addition, comparing Egypt's findings to other countries can offer valuable insights into cultural and contextual differences influencing EJP. Moreover, investigating EJP in lower-rated hotels, restaurants, spas, airlines, and other hospitality and tourism businesses can reveal differences in factors like leadership style, social loafing, and citizenship within the hospitality and tourism industry.

Lastly, this study explores abusive leadership, social loafing, and anti-citizenship behaviors in the hospitality and tourism industry in a developing country with weak employment legislation, recommending future research for better understanding. Expanding research to diverse countries, industries, and organizational contexts enhances understanding of workplace phenomena, aiding in the development of effective strategies for addressing issues and improving organizational performance.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Appendix (A): Detailed measurement items

Social Loafing (SL)

- SL.1. I left my work to others to do.
- SL.2. I claimed there were other things to do when others need help.
- SL.3. I avoided work and responsibility.
- SL.4. I loafed on my share of tasks.

Employee Job Performance (EJP)

- EJP. 1. I am currently working at the highest level of performance.
- EJP.2. It is my right to use my medical leave.
- EJP.3. Employees should only do enough work.
- EJP.4. I try to be at work as often as possible.
- EJP.5. I am one of the best in the work I am doing.
- EJP.6. I set quite high standards for my job.
- EJP.7. My work is always of high quality.
- EJP.8. I am proud of my job performance.

Team anti-citizenship behavior (TAB)

- TAB.1. Team members fight against the team leader's influence
- TAB.2. Team members waste a lot of time arguing about insignificant issues
- TAB.3. Team members arrive late or leave early to avoid doing their task.
- TAB.4. Team members make an effort to appear busy while they are doing nothing.
- TAB.5. Team members voice resistance, protest, and fury to harm their coworkers and managers.

Abusive leadership (AL)

- AL .1. My leader ridicules me.
- AL .2. My leader tells me my thoughts or feelings are stupid.
- AL .3. My leader puts me down in front of others.
- AL .4. My leader makes negative comments about me to others.
- AL .5. My leader tells me I'm incompetent.

Appendix (B): Model fit and quality indices

Measures	Assessment	Criterion	Result
Average path coefficient (APC)	0.443, P<0.001	P<0.05	Yes
Average R-squared (ARS)	0.493, P<0.001	P<0.05	Yes
Average adjusted R-squared (AARS)	0.490, P<0.001	P<0.05	Yes
Average block VIF (AVIF)	2.757	Acceptable if ≤ 5 , ideally ≤ 3.3	Yes
Average full collinearity VIF (AFVIF)	2.436	Acceptable if ≤ 5 , ideally ≤ 3.3	Yes
Tenenhaus GoF (GoF)	0.535	Small ≥ 0.1 , medium ≥ 0.25 , large ≥ 0.36	Yes
Sympson's paradox ratio (SPR)	1.000	Acceptable if ≥ 0.7 , ideally = 1	Yes
R-squared contribution ratio (RSCR)	1.000	Acceptable if ≥ 0.9 , ideally = 1	Yes
Statistical suppression ratio (SSR)	1.000	Acceptable if ≥ 0.7	Yes
Nonlinear bivariate causality direction ratio (NLBCDR)	1.000	Acceptable if ≥ 0.7	Yes