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Roles of Emotional Intelligence in Promoting the Innovative Work Behavior of Restaurant Employees

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Abstract

This research investigated the role of emotional intelligence in promoting innovative work behavior in restaurant employees in Bangkok. Given the unknown population of restaurant employees in Bangkok, survey data were collected from 414 restaurant employees, representing a response ratio of 82.80%. According to PLS-SEM, emotional intelligence directly affects innovative work behavior ($\beta = 0.38$; $p < 0.01$). Emotional intelligence can influence innovative work behavior indirectly through job satisfaction ($t = 2.35$, $p = 0.018$) and knowledge sharing ($t = 7.00$, $p = 0.000$). Emotional intelligence also moderates the impact of knowledge sharing on innovative work behavior ($\beta = 0.10$; $p = 0.02$). These results provided a new understanding of emotional intelligence's role in promoting innovation at the individual level and its mechanism via job satisfaction and knowledge sharing, particularly in the restaurant business, which is still scarce. In addition, they provided guidelines for restaurant owners and managers to promote innovativeness in their employees and innovation in their businesses for sustainable success.

Keywords

Emotional intelligence, Innovative work behavior, Customer satisfaction, Knowledge sharing, Restaurant business

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Introduction

Innovation has been widely recognized as a critical factor for sustainable business success, allowing businesses to differentiate and stay ahead of their competitors by being the first to satisfy customers' unmet needs (Esposito et al., 2022; Ratasuk & Charoensukmongkol, 2020). Innovation in a company is mainly derived from its human resources, as found in research that employees play a critical role in driving business innovation (Ratasuk & Charoensukmongkol, 2020). In general, employees are considered the foundation of organizations, enabling them to achieve their goals by contributing their efforts, knowledge, skills, expertise, and commitment to their assigned roles (Diamantidis & Chatzoglou, 2018; Maley et al., 2020; Ratasuk, 2022). Like other attributes, employees' innovativeness or innovative work behavior (IWB) enables companies to drive and enjoy innovations that promote business sustainability (Afsar et al., 2019; Akram et al., 2020; Sanz-Valle & Jiménez-Jiménez, 2018). Among all businesses, with its low barriers to entry, the restaurant business is a charming one that attracts a great deal of interest from all investors and entrepreneurs due to its cash-earning potential (Ratasuk & Charoensukmongkol, 2020). In Thailand, like other countries across the globe, it was one of the industries severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in a year-on-year decline in sales of 113 billion baht in 2021, or 28.5%. The industry is expected to rise again to about 143 billion baht in 2022, or 26.5%, according to KasikornResearchCenter (2021). In the context of the restaurant business, innovation is critical for restaurants to achieve sustainable success by remaining attractive and competitive. This is because innovative food and beverage products, services, and operating platforms or models always attract customers' attention and foster their loyalty (Esposito et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2019; Oh & Jang, 2020; Ratasuk & Charoensukmongkol, 2020). Therefore, IWB is needed in restaurant employees and has become essential in driving restaurant innovation (Ratasuk & Charoensukmongkol, 2020).

This research considers EI a critical attribute in improving employees' performance. EI is the ability of individuals to manage and control their emotions, and was proposed to be examined as a potential driver of IWB (Iqbal et al., 2021; Sembiring et al., 2020), especially in the restaurant business where staff feel pressure from customers, their supervisors and their colleagues (Kim et al., 2019; Oh & Jang, 2020; Ratasuk, 2022). In restaurants, employees have to cope with customers and stressful working conditions that affect their emotions, leading to unpleasant work results, such as conflicts with team members, job burnout, low job satisfaction, low work performance, and low innovative performance. EI has proven essential in dealing with these issues (Butakor et al., 2021; Ratasuk, 2019; Ratasuk & Charoensukmongkol, 2020; Srivastava & Dey, 2020). Even though EI has also been studied as an antecedent of innovation at different organizational levels (Andrabi &

Rainayee, 2020; Malik, 2021; Winton & Sabol, 2022), its contribution to IWB is still unclear and limited, especially in the context of the restaurant business.

This research examined the role of EI in promoting restaurant employees' IWB and its mechanism via the mediating roles of job satisfaction and knowledge sharing. This study provides new insights and evidence on the role of EI, job satisfaction, and knowledge sharing in promoting IWB. It also provides restaurant owners and managers with guidelines to promote innovation in their restaurants.

Literature Review

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence, or EI, was developed as a psychological theory by Salovey and Mayer (1990) and was refined and expanded by Goleman (1996). Salovey and Mayer (1990) defined EI as the ability of people to properly monitor and recognize their own and others' emotions and feelings to guide their thoughts and actions. For scholars, EI is known as a competitive advantage that allows individuals to understand, control, and express their emotions appropriately (Chandra, 2020; Khosravi et al., 2020; Kotsou et al., 2019; Villegas-Puyod & Charoensukmongkol, 2019). Individuals with high EI tend to skillfully regulate their own emotions and the emotions of others, which enables them to be more confident and perform their tasks better than others (Jamshed & Majeed, 2019; Mysirlaki & Paraskeva, 2020; Prentice, 2019). EI is recognized as a preferred trait of individuals that can lead to various other preferred outcomes, such as work performance, subjective well-being, job satisfaction, and many others (Alsufyani et al., 2022; Lee et al., 2020). For example, Darvishmotevali et al. (2018) found that EI promoted creative performance among frontline hotel employees. Mysirlaki and Paraskeva (2020) showed a significant positive relationship between EI and transformational leadership in the context of online gaming teams. EI allows organizations to achieve superior creativity, productivity, employee engagement, customer experiences, loyalty, advocacy, and profitability (Matthews et al., 2004).

EI has also been found to offset undesirable outcomes such as job burnout, turnover intentions, and low productivity (Chen & Wang, 2019; Srivastava & Dey, 2019). For example, Srivastava and Dey (2019) found that EI moderates the relationship between persistence and job burnout of employees in different companies in the IT Enabled Services-Business Process Outsourcing (ITES-BPO) sectors in Delhi National Capital Region (NCR) in India. According to Choi et al. (2019), EI was found to counterbalance job burnout and job stress among hotel employees.

Innovative Work Behavior

Innovation has been proven essential in promoting organizational competitiveness at all levels (i.e., individual, group, and corporate) (Ratasuk & Charoensukmongkol, 2019, 2020). Innovation refers to interactions among individuals that allow them to collectively introduce novel and creative ideas, products, and processes benefiting their organizations (Esposito et al., 2022; Ratasuk, 2019; Yang et al., 2021). Research shows that organizational innovations tend to be created by employees (Ratasuk, 2019; Ratasuk & Charoensukmongkol, 2020). At the personal level, a variable generally used to measure an individual's innovative performance is innovative work behavior or IWB, which is defined as how individuals perform their work by creating, promoting, and implementing new and valuable ideas, processes, products, or procedures to benefit their organizations sustainably (Ali et al., 2020; Janssen, 2000; Khan et al., 2021; Leong & Rasli, 2014). Accordingly, IWB can be divided into three stages: idea generation, idea promotion, and idea realization (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2008; Janssen, 2000). 1) The idea generation stage requires certain behaviors and actions, such as brainstorming, research, analysis, observation and empathy, reverse thinking, and random word association, to create new ideas for new products, organizational practices, processes, and services, significantly affected by employees' motivations (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2008; Janssen, 2000). 2) The idea promotion stage strengthens new ideas and minimizes potential resistance, requiring great collaboration and support (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2008; Janssen, 2000). 3) The idea realization stage brings the generated and promoted ideas to practice and leads to the development of new products, processes, and services (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2008; Janssen, 2000). Many studies have suggested that, in a rapidly changing world, employees with innovative work behavior are a sustainable competitive advantage for organizations by allowing them to enjoy long-term survival and success (Afsar et al., 2019; Purwanto, 2020; Widmann et al., 2016). IWB is a product of various factors, such as leadership, psychological empowerment, work engagement, knowledge sharing, organizational fit, organizational justice, and organizational commitment (Afsar et al., 2019; Akram et al., 2020; Farrukh et al., 2023; Khan et al., 2021). For example, Bos-Nehles and Veenendaal (2019) found that HR practices and an innovative climate can promote the IWB of Dutch manufacturing companies' employees.

Knowledge Sharing

Organizations have increasingly become dependent on human resources, particularly knowledge assets that can be extracted from their employees (Ratasuk & Charoensukmongkol, 2020). Organizations gain competitive advantages based on employees' expertise, skills, and integrated understanding and apply them in their daily

business practices (Kim & Shim, 2018; Ratasuk, 2019; Swanson et al., 2020). Knowledge sharing refers to providing task information and knowledge among group members to support and collaborate to address issues, solve problems, create new ideas, or implement policies or procedures (Albana & Yeşiltaş, 2021; Ratasuk, 2019; Ratasuk & Charoensukmongkol, 2020). Knowledge sharing is a multi-directional process involving donors and collectors who donate and collect knowledge from others (Alhady et al., 2011). Knowledge sharing creates a pool of knowledge that can be converted to actual practices, which is an essential role of an organization (Ratasuk & Charoensukmongkol, 2020; Usmanova et al., 2020). Integrating diverse knowledge from employees is vital in product and service development and knowledge management initiatives (Ratasuk, 2019; Ratasuk & Charoensukmongkol, 2020; Singh, Gupta, et al., 2021). The knowledge generated from the knowledge-sharing process is a valuable organizational resource and asset, providing a competitive edge to businesses (Arsawan et al., 2020; Ratasuk, 2019). Ratasuk and Charoensukmongkol (2020) found that knowledge sharing promotes innovation in international restaurant teams.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction refers to the degree to which individuals value and appreciate their jobs (Alwali & Alwali, 2022; Eliyana & Ma'arif, 2019; Park & Johnson, 2019). In other words, it serves as an attitude indicator presenting how much individuals feel pleased with what they do for a living (Cherif, 2020; Dodanwala & Shrestha, 2021; Lin & Huang, 2020). It is essential in fostering several desired organizational outcomes, such as job performance, organizational commitment, and work engagement (Alwali & Alwali, 2022; Eliyana & Ma'arif, 2019; Koo et al., 2020; Park & Johnson, 2019). On the other hand, it offsets undesired organizational outcomes, particularly job burnout and turnover intention (Duan et al., 2019; Koo et al., 2020). Job satisfaction has also been investigated in various contexts and industries. For example, Gheitani et al. (2018) examined the Relationship between Islamic work ethic, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment in the banking sector. Akinwale and George (2020) studied the impact of the work environment on nurses' job satisfaction in government tertiary hospitals in Nigeria.

Social Capital Theory

Social capital theory has been applied to explain various phenomena across disciplines, such as sociology, political science, education, and management (Dubos, 2017). Social capital is the association and network between individuals living or working together in a particular society, and it is considered as their potential valuable resource (Dubos, 2017; Häuberer, 2011). The theory suggests that social relationships and networks are vital resources for developing and accumulating human capital (Brooks & Nafukho, 2006; Dubos, 2017). The theory benefits both individual and organizational performance. For example,

Swanson et al. (2020) indicated that social capital theory could explain how employee job performance and loyalty were promoted by knowledge sharing. Singh, Mazzucchelli, et al. (2021) and Cofré-Bravo et al. (2019) also revealed that social capital allows organizations to achieve creativity and innovation. In this study, the theory is employed to explain the role of EI, which allows individuals to develop better relationships and network with others (Boohene et al., 2020; Swanson et al., 2020), in promoting IWB by having job satisfaction and knowledge sharing as mediators.

Emotional Intelligence, Job Satisfaction, Knowledge Sharing, and Innovative Work Behavior

This study investigated the roles of EI on the IWB and the mediating roles of knowledge sharing and job satisfaction of restaurant staff in Bangkok. Innovation and creativity are essential for any organization that wants to stay competitive, adapt to changing needs, and solve complex problems (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2008; Ratasuk & Charoensukmongkol, 2019, 2020). Based on social capital theory, EI, which allows individuals to create social capital by building a network and positive relationships with others effectively (Bozionelos & Bozionelos, 2018; Brooks & Nafukho, 2006), should promote human capital development, particularly innovative performance (Aguilar & George, 2019; Brooks & Nafukho, 2006; Dacre Pool et al., 2019; Huang et al., 2021; Swanson et al., 2020). Innovative performance is not only a consequence of diverse knowledge and resources but also depends on the emotional climate, team and organizational culture, and interactions (Alzoubi & Aziz, 2021; Ratasuk & Charoensukmongkol, 2019, 2020). EI has been found to promote positive and supportive environments, allowing individuals to feel pleasant, respected, and valued (Butakor et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2020). EI also empowers individuals to share their ideas, experiences, and knowledge and to experiment and learn from failures (Ansari & Malik, 2017; Tamta & Rao, 2017; Wen et al., 2019)

Since EI allows individuals to take control of their emotions, which influences their behavior and ability to evaluate others and certain situations, employees with high EI should communicate better, have better relationships with others, and have less conflict/stress at work. Employees with high EI are thought to have higher job satisfaction than those with lower EI (Butakor et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2020; Villegas-Puyod & Charoensukmongkol, 2019). Butakor et al. (2021) found a positive impact of EI on teachers' job satisfaction working in schools in the Greater Accra Region in Ghana. EI also allows individuals to perform well with others, fostering their openness to listen and share their information and knowledge (Ansari & Malik, 2017; Shariq et al., 2018; Tamta & Rao, 2017). Ansari and Malik (2017) found that EI directly affected the knowledge sharing of service sector workers in the northern region of India.

EI also prohibits individuals from unfavorable emotions, such as burnout, anxiety, depression, and stress, allowing them to promote their creativity and innovative behavior (Choi et al., 2019; Darvishmotevali et al., 2018; Gholipour Soleimani & Einolahzadeh, 2017; Martínez-Monteagudo et al., 2019; Wen et al., 2019). Darvishmotevali et al. (2018) found a significant impact of EI on the creative performance of frontline hotel employees. Rodrigues et al. (2019) found a direct positive effect of EI on the creativity of higher education students.

Given positive moods at work and satisfaction with their jobs, high EI individuals have low barriers to cooperating and communicating with their supervisors, colleagues, and customers, and are willing to share their knowledge and are open to receiving new knowledge and information from them in return (Kianto et al., 2016; Rafique & Mahmood, 2018; Usmanova et al., 2020). According to Trivellas et al. (2015), employees in a knowledge-sharing environment achieve higher job satisfaction than those with lower knowledge-sharing.

Knowledge sharing has also been evidenced to drive IWB in the study by Akram et al. (2020) and Afsar et al. (2019). Consequently, individuals with high EI should have more appropriate and creative behaviors than ones with lower EI since they can regulate their emotions and their surrounding environment (Chin et al., 2012; Dincer et al., 2011; Zhang et al., 2015). Abdullah et al. (2021) argued that EI allows employees to disseminate and implement innovative ideas more effectively since they can understand and manage their emotions and others.

Moreover, EI should allow knowledge sharing to be more effective in driving IWB because people with high EI are better at exchanging their knowledge with others, enabling them to be more innovative (Ansari & Malik, 2017; Shariq et al., 2019; Tamta & Rao, 2017). For example, Mura et al. (2013) found a valid moderation of social capital on the positive direct impact of knowledge sharing on IWB. Therefore, five hypotheses were proposed and are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Proposed Hypotheses

	Hypotheses
H1	EI has a positive impact on IWB.
H2	Job satisfaction positively mediates the association between EI and IWB.
H3	Knowledge sharing positively mediates the association between EI and IWB.
H4	Knowledge sharing positively mediates the association between job satisfaction and IWB.
H5	EI positively moderates the relationship between knowledge sharing and IWB.

Methodology

This study aims to investigate the roles of EI in promoting IWB and other variables that potentially influence the IWB of restaurant employees in Bangkok. The following are the details of how the study will proceed.

Sample and data collection procedure

There is some available data on the number of restaurants in Thailand. According to Statista (2022), in 2020, there were around 530,000 registered restaurants in Thailand. While the number of restaurants in Thailand has continued to grow, the number of restaurant employees in Bangkok is unknown. Therefore, the researcher planned to collect data from around 400 full-time employees of full-service restaurants in Bangkok, which is considered adequate at a 95% confidence interval (Serdar et al., 2021). The correspondents were selected using stratified random sampling, allowing the sample to be chosen with equal opportunity using simple probability. The fifty districts of Bangkok were arranged into 10 area groups. Five restaurants were randomly selected and approached in each area group for permission to collect data. Restaurant managers were asked to arrange a convenient date and time for data collection. Ten qualified employees were randomly selected and invited to participate voluntarily. Self-administered questionnaires were employed. Before distributing the questionnaires, the respondents were informed about their anonymity and rights to leave the study anytime.

Measurements

All the question sets measuring latent variables were adapted from previous research. They have been proven valid and reliable. A five-point Likert scale: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree, was employed to measure each question item.

EI was measured using the EI scale adapted from Chen and Wang (2019). The scale consists of seventeen items measuring all four sub-dimensions of EI. Question items included "You are often observant and can perceive other people's emotions well.," " You can understand the mood of those around you very well," and " When you are very angry, you can quickly control your anger."

IWB was measured using the ten-item IWB scale adapted from Afsar and Umrani (2019). Question items included "Are you interested in improving things?" and " You can find new techniques, tools."

Knowledge sharing was measured using the five-item knowledge-sharing scale adopted by Jia et al. (2019) and Kucharska and Erickson (2019). Question items included "You share your experience and knowledge with your teammates within the store." and " You

can gain new knowledge from the experience and knowledge of specialists or colleagues in the shop."

Job satisfaction was measured using the six-item job-satisfaction scale drawn by Sang et al. (2019). Question items included "Are you satisfied with the company's policies?" and " You are satisfied with your salary and job."

Control Variables

This study included five control variables: gender, age, education, and income. These variables were chosen because they have been frequently used in previous studies as control variables, all of which have been found to affect individuals' outcomes (Ratasuk, 2020, 2022). First, gender was selected as a control variable because research shows that gender significantly impacts innovative work behavior (Imran et al., 2011; Leong & Rasli, 2014). Second, age was selected as a control variable because research shows that older employees may have more experience and knowledge, which could lead them to develop innovative performance (Kunze et al., 2013); moreover, research shows that age directly impacts workers' innovative performance (Hernaus et al., 2019; Schaffer et al., 2012). Third, income was included as a control variable because prior research has supported its significant association with innovative work behavior (Hanif & Bukhari, 2015). Lastly, education was included as a control variable because it has been found to be an antecedent of innovative performance (Alheet et al., 2021; Bysted & Jespersen, 2014).

Data Analysis Method

Partial least square structural equation modeling, or PLS-SEM, was used to examine the proposed research model. PLS integrates a principal component analysis (PCA), path analysis, and a set of regressions to estimate the model's paths, standardized regression coefficients, and measurement items' factor loadings (Lin et al., 2020). PLS-SEM is suitable for a complex research model with several variables and relationship paths compared to CB-SEM (Dash & Paul, 2021). Moreover, unlike other CB-SEMs requiring a large sample size to assure normal data distribution, PLS-SEM effectively produces more accurate results when the sample size is small, or the data is not normally distributed (Hair et al., 2012; Ratasuk, 2022). Even though this study's sample size was considered significant, it does not confirm normal distribution. WarpPLS 8.0 was selected because it is the latest version. Before proceeding with PLS-SEM, descriptive statistics, validity and reliability tests, normality tests, multicollinearity tests, and model-fit indices were used to evaluate the model quality.

The university research ethics committee approved this study and granted it the following reference number: PIM-REC 045/2565.

Results

Five hundred restaurant employees were initially approached, and 414 of them, 82.80 %, responded to the survey. Table 2 shows that most respondents were female (234), accounting for 56.52% of the respondents, and the rest were 180 males, representing 43.48%. Most respondents (270) were between 21-30 years old, representing 65.22% of the sample, followed by 76 respondents between 18-20 years old, accounting for 18.36%. One hundred eighty-four respondents earned between 10,001 to 20,000 baht per month, representing 44.44%, and 120 respondents earned less than 10,000 baht, accounting for 28.98%. Two hundred fifty respondents had a bachelor's degree, or 60.39%, followed by those with lower or equivalent high school/ vocational education (85 people), representing 20.53% of the total sample.

Table 2 Correspondents' characteristics and descriptive statistics

Control Variables		**Descriptive Statistics**
Gender	Male	180 (43.48%)
	Female	234 (56.52%)
Age	18 – 20 years old	76 (18.36%)
	21 – 30 years old	270 (65.22%)
	31 – 40 years old	35 (8.45%)
	41 - 50 years old	20 (4.83%)
	51 - 60 years old	8 (1.93%)
	Older than 61 years old	5 (1.21%)
Income	Lower than 10,000 Baht	120 (28.98%)
	10,001 - 20,000 Baht	184 (44.44%)
	20,001- 30,000 Baht	75 (18.12%)
	30,001- 40,000 Baht	26 (6.28%)
	40,001 -50,000 Baht	5 (1.21%)
	More than 50,001 Baht	4 (0.97%)
Education	High School Diploma	85 (20.53%)
	Associate Degree	64 (15.46%)
	Undergraduate Degree	250 (60.39%)
	Master’s Degree	13 (3.14%)
	Doctoral Degree	2 (0.48%)

Prior to the SEM analysis, criteria should be met. Convergent and discriminant validity, reliability, and model fit indices were tested. The convergent validity was tested by including the factor loadings, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) in the consideration (Cheung et al., 2023; Cheung & Wang, 2017). All factor loadings of all constructs ranged from 0.734 to 0.913. This conforms to Cheung and Wang (2017) and Cheung et al. (2023), who recommended that all factor loadings should be no lower than 0.5. Table 3 shows that the lowest CR value is 0.882, recommended that the CR of all constructs be higher than 0.7 to be satisfactory, while the AVE values range from 0.601 to 0.796, recommended that the AVE of all constructs be greater than 0.5, indicating less error remains (Hair et al., 2011; Hair Jr et al., 2020). Therefore, the convergent validity of the data is satisfactory.

Table 3 Convergent Validity (Factor Loadings, CR, and AVE)

Construct	**Items**		**Factor Loadings**	**Composite Reliability (CR)**	**Average Variance Extracted (AVE)**
Emotional Intelligence (EI)	EI11	You can be aware of your own emotions.	0.814	0.966	0.653
	EI12	You have a good understanding of your emotions.	0.826		
	EI13	You can understand what you're feeling.	0.814		
	EI14	You can always know whether you are happy or not.	0.801		
	EI21	You can always know your friend's mood by their behavior.	0.767		
	EI22	You are often observant and can perceive other people's emotions well.	0.739		
	EI24	You can understand the mood of those around you very well.	0.734		

Table 3 Convergent Validity (Factor Loadings, CR, and AVE) (continued)

Construct	Items		Factor Loadings	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
	EI31	You will always set your goals and do your best to achieve them.	0.838		
	EI33	You are a self-motivated person.	0.774		
	EI34	You always encourage yourself to do your best.	0.835		
	EI41	You can control your emotions to deal with problems. reasonably	0.843		
	EI42	You are quite able to control your emotions.	0.833		
	EI43	When you are very angry, you can quickly control your anger.	0.813		
	EI44	You can control your emotions well.	0.823		
	EI45	You can control your emotions to deal with problems. reasonably	0.856		
Innovative Work Behavior (IWB)	IWB2	Are you interested in improving things?	0.797	0.956	0.707
	IWB3	You can find new techniques, tools, or ways of working.	0.822		
	IWB4	You can solve any problem.	0.846		
	IWB5	You can find new ways of working.	0.863		
	IWB6	You can make your colleagues in the store enthusiastic about being creative.	0.840		

Table 3 Convergent Validity (Factor Loadings, CR, and AVE) (continued)

Construct	**Items**		**Factor Loadings**	**Composite Reliability (CR)**	**Average Variance Extracted (AVE)**
	IWB7	You can convince your colleagues to support innovative ideas or creativity in action.	0.855		
	IWB8	You are involved in the implementation of new ideas.	0.840		
	IWB9	You are trying to develop new things to happen.	0.848		
	IWB10	You can suggest practical ways of being creative in a systematic way.	0.857		
Knowledge Sharing (KS)	KS1	You share experiences and knowledge with colleagues.	0.871	0.951	0.796
	KS2	You share your experience and knowledge with your teammates within the store.	0.896		
	KS3	You can gain new knowledge from the experience and knowledge of specialists or colleagues in the shop.	0.913		
	KS4	You can gain new knowledge from the experience of specialists from companies who come to help the store.	0.890		
	KS5	Overall, colleagues share their experiences and knowledge.	0.892		

Table 3 Convergent Validity (Factor Loadings, CR, and AVE) (continued)

Construct	**Items**		**Factor Loadings**	**Composite Reliability (CR)**	**Average Variance Extracted (AVE)**
Job Satisfaction (JS)	JS2	You have the opportunity to advance in your work.	0.796	0.882	0.601
	JS3	You can take responsibility for setting and planning your work.	0.738		
	JS4	Are you satisfied with the company's policies?	0.777		
	JS5	You are satisfied with your salary and job.	0.751		
	JS6	You guarantee your job security.	0.809		

Notes: EI = Emotional Intelligence, IWB=Innovative Work Behavior, KS=Knowledge Sharing, JS =Job Satisfaction

Discriminant validity was tested employing the heterotrait–monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT). The results reported in Table 4 show that the HTMT criterion was met as all the values are below the 0.85 ceiling value, as recommended by Henseler et al. (2015).

Table 4 HTMT Ratio

	EI	IWB	KS	JS
EI				
IWB	0.705**			
KS	0.660**	0.684**		
JS	0.645**	0.549**	0.479**	

Notes: **= p-value≤0.01, EI = Emotional Intelligence, IWB=Innovative Work Behavior, KS=Knowledge Sharing, JS =Job Satisfaction

Confirming the discriminant validity, Table 5 shows that all absolute values of all variables' Average Variance Extracted (AVE) are greater than their involving correlations. Therefore, it can be concluded that the data collection tool and collected data are accurate, and the validity is satisfactory, as suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981). As illustrated in Table 5, composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha for all variables ranged from 0.833 to 0.966, higher than 0.7 total; thus, the data acquisition tool and the collected data are

considered reliable (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Full collinearity tests were performed to test multicollinearity among the variables and common method bias (CMB). Petter et al. (2007) and Kock (2015) recommended that the full VIF be lower than 3.3. Table 5 shows that the highest VIF was 2.527, lower than 3.3. Therefore, the model has no serious multicollinearity issue and is free from CMB.

Table 5 Correlations and reliability test results

	EI	**IWB**	**KS**	**JS**	**Gender**	**Age**	**Income**	**Education**
EI	(0.808)							
IWB	0.672**	(0.841)						
KS	0.627**	0.644**	(0.892)					
JS	0.577**	0.487**	0.422**	(0.775)				
Gender	-0.049	-0.005	-0.091	-0.126	(1.000)			
Age	0.215**	0.166**	0.113	0.187**	0.061	(1.000)		
Income	0.202**	0.213**	0.145	0.190**	0.052	0.573**	(1.000)	
Edu	0.217**	0.201**	0.265**	0.130	0.008	0.337**	0.329**	(1.000)
Composite reliability	0.966	0.956	0.951	0.882	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Cronbach's alpha	0.962	0.948	0.936	0.833	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Full Collin.VIF	2.527	2.242	2.032	1.605	1.039	1.580	1.566	1.237

Notes: **= p-value≤0.01, EI = Emotional Intelligence, IWB=Innovative Work Behavior, KS=Knowledge Sharing, JS =Job Satisfaction

The ten measurement criteria in the model fit indices, shown in Table 6, represent the data quality used in the PLS-SEM analysis. It can be seen that all ten criteria were satisfactory.

Table 6 Model fit indices

Model fit indices	**Coefficient**	**Result**
Average path coefficient (APC)	0.191**	Significant
Average R-square (ARS)	0.349**	Significant
Average adjusted R-square (AARS)	0.344**	Significant
Average variance inflation factor (AVIF)	1.581	Ideally
Average full variance inflation factor (AFVIF)	1.691	Ideally
Tenenhaus GoF index (GoF)	0.549	Large
Simpson's paradox ratio (SPR)	0.800	Acceptable
R-square contribution ratio (RSCR)	0.970	Acceptable
Statistical suppression ratio (SSR)	0.933	Acceptable

Nonlinear bivariate causality direction ratio (NLBCDR)	0.933	Acceptable

Notes: **= p-value≤0.01

PLS-SEM Results

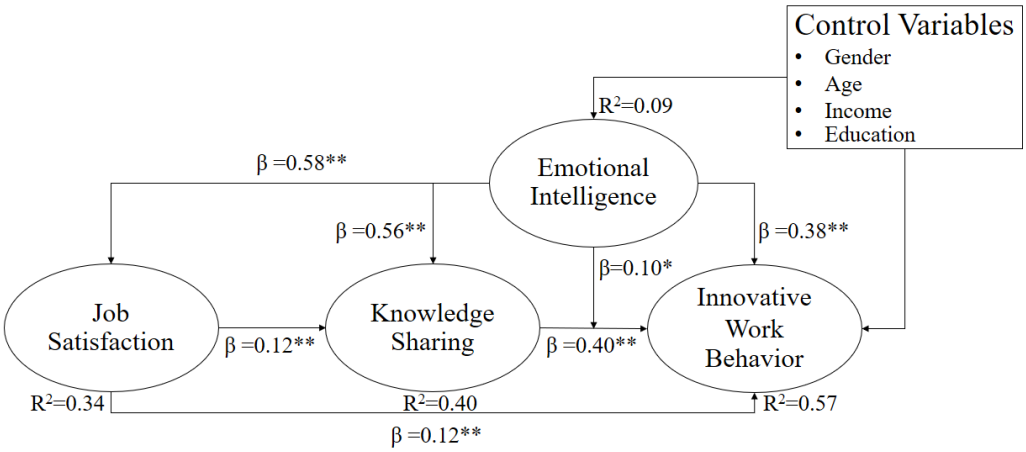

Figure 1 The PLS-SEM Results

Notes: **= p-value≤0.01, *= p-value≤0.05

Figure 1 presents the results of PLS-SEM, showing the relationships among all the variables, which are summarized below.

Hypothesis 1 suggests a positive impact of EI on IWB. The findings revealed a significant positive association between the two variables (β = 0.38; p < 0.01). Therefore, hypothesis 1 is supported.

The results revealed a positive influence of EI on job satisfaction (β = 0.58; p < 0.01) and knowledge sharing (β = 0.56; p < 0.01), a positive impact of job satisfaction on knowledge sharing (β = 0.12; p < 0.01) and IWB (β = 0.12; p < 0.01), and a positive impact of knowledge sharing on IWB (β = 0.40; p < 0.01). Therefore, the following hypotheses are reported.

Hypothesis 2 suggests job satisfaction positively mediates between EI and IWB. As Preacher and Leonardelli (2001) recommended, the Sobel test results indicated a significant positive mediation of job satisfaction between EI and IWB (t = 2.43, p = 0.014). This result was also in line with the bootstrapping mediation test result, recommended by Preacher and Hayes (2004) and Preacher and Hayes (2008), indicating a significant positive indirect effect of EI on IWB via job satisfaction (β = 0.086; p < 0.001) with the effect size 0.058. Therefore, job satisfaction partially mediates between EI and IWB. Thus, hypothesis 2 is supported.

Hypothesis 3 suggests that knowledge sharing positively mediates the relationship between EI and IWB. The Sobel test results indicated a significant positive mediation of

knowledge sharing between EI and IWB (t = 7.00, p = 0.000). This result was also consistent with the bootstrapping mediation test result, indicating a significant positive indirect effect of EI and IWB by job satisfaction (β = 0.246; p < 0.001) with an effect size of 0.166. Therefore, knowledge sharing partially mediates between EI and IWB. Thus, hypothesis 3 is supported.

Hypothesis 4 suggests that knowledge sharing positively mediates job satisfaction and IWB. The Sobel test results indicated a significant positive mediation of knowledge sharing between job satisfaction and IWB (t = 2.30, p = 0.021) aligned with the bootstrapping mediation test result indicating a significant positive indirect effect of EI and IWB by job satisfaction (β = 0.254; p < 0.001) with the effect size 0.128. Therefore, knowledge sharing partially mediates between job satisfaction and IWB. Thus, hypothesis 5 is supported.

Hypothesis 5 suggests a positive moderation of EI on the relationship between knowledge sharing and IWB. The results showed a positive mediation of EI on the positive relationship between knowledge sharing and IWB (β = 0.10; p = 0.02). This result suggested that the association between knowledge sharing and IWB became weaker for employees with high EI, as presented in Figure 2. Therefore, hypothesis 5 is supported.

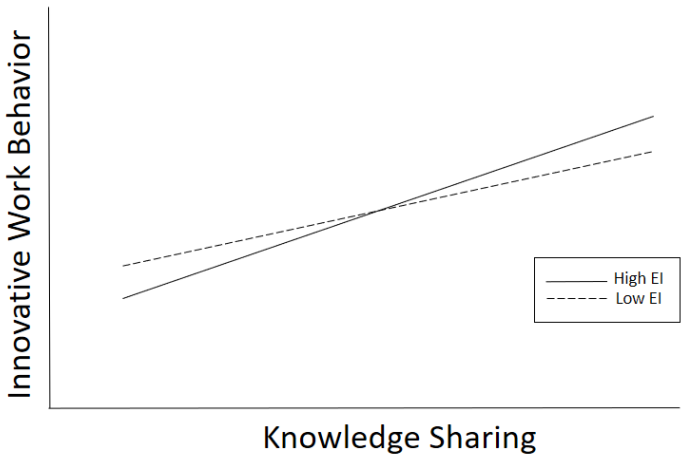

Figure 2 The Moderation Results

According to the PLS analysis, the association influences of the four control variables, including gender, age, income, and education, on EI and IWB were also tested. The analysis showed positive impacts of age on EI, income on EI and IWB, and education on EI.

Conclusion and Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the role of emotional intelligence (EI) in promoting employees' innovative work behavior in casual fine dining restaurants in the Bangkok area. The results can guide restaurant owners and management teams to improve human

resources and enhance their business' innovative performance. Results from the PLS-SEM estimation support all of the five hypotheses proposed. Survey results and estimation showed that individuals with high EI are more likely to have a high level of innovative work behavior, aligning with previous research (Shafait et al., 2021; Tajpour et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2015). For example, Yang et al. (2021) also revealed that EI promotes employee innovation. The results were also supported by Alzoubi and Aziz (2021), who revealed that EI could promote open innovation in the context of financial employees in the UAE. These findings also align with social capital theory, which states that relationships and networks with others, driven by EI, are valuable resources for individuals in developing themselves as human capital (Brooks & Nafukho, 2006; Dubos, 2017). Findings also revealed that job satisfaction and knowledge sharing are the mechanisms of the promotion of IWB by EI. According to the PLS-SEM results, EI promotes job satisfaction and knowledge sharing, which can lead to the escalation of IWB concurrent with social capital theory and several relevant prior studies (Brooks & Nafukho, 2006; Dacre Pool et al., 2019; Dubos, 2017; Sembiring et al., 2020; Wen et al., 2019). The results supported the findings by Malik (2021), who found a significant relationship between EI and IWB of high-tech knowledge-intensive organizations' employees in India, and the relationship was also partially mediated by tacit knowledge sharing. The results were also concurrent with Gholipour Soleimani and Einolahzadeh (2017), who found that EI directly influences the job satisfaction of Sayeh Sabz Oloum Company staff in Tehran, Iran. Wen et al. (2019) found a significant direct impact of EI on the job satisfaction of hotel employees in Guangzhou and Shenzhen, China. They were also consistent with Ansari and Malik (2017), who found a positive effect of EI on the knowledge sharing of employees working for service sector organizations in the northern region of India. In addition, the findings added additional support for Ratasuk and Charoensukmongkol (2020), who found a significant influence of knowledge sharing of international restaurant employee teams in Thailand on their team innovations. According to the results, EI also moderates the impact of knowledge sharing on IWB, which means that the impact of knowledge sharing on IWB becomes weaker for individuals with high EI, helping them achieve IWB more efficiently, even with low knowledge sharing. This aligns with social capital theory and Mura et al. (2013), who found a significant and positive mediating effect of social capital between knowledge sharing and IWB. This study is similar and harmonious with the results, although, in this study, EI was proposed as the moderator instead of social capital because EI has been proven to be a key mechanism in developing social capital (Boohene et al., 2020; Swanson et al., 2020).

According to this study's findings, restaurant staff with high EI, who can control their temper, can better perform in dealing with their colleagues and customers, communicate effectively, and are open to exchanging ideas and information with others. They tend to be

more satisfied with their job than those with lower EI. Considering self-awareness, self-management, self-motivation, and social skills, they are more likely to share and exchange knowledge and experience with others, allowing them to possess decent relationships and networks with others, which is regarded as their potential social capital, empowering them to develop innovations that help compensate for their work (Ratasuk, 2019; Ratasuk & Charoensukmongkol, 2020). For instance, in the back of the house (BOH), cooks and kitchen staff with high EI always create new and creative dishes and innovative cooking tools and methods. As for the front-of-the-house (FOH), high EI servers tend to develop innovative service models and ways to help them work more effectively, easier, and faster, such as applying new technologies or nontraditional restaurant equipment to provide better and faster customer service to ensure their customers' satisfaction.

Academic Contributions

This research provides new knowledge and evidence about the role of EI in promoting innovative work behavior of restaurant employees by having job satisfaction and knowledge sharing as its mechanisms based on the concept of social capital theory, particularly in the context of restaurants. Even though EI has been widely studied, its application within the hospitality field remains limited and needs further investigation. The integrated research model that had not been explored is the mechanism of how EI promotes innovation through building job satisfaction and knowledge sharing. Although the relationships among all the variables have been present in many studies (Alzoubi & Aziz, 2021; Ansari & Malik, 2017; Malik, 2021; Wen et al., 2019), EI has limitedly been investigated as an antecedent of IWB and the mediating roles of job satisfaction and knowledge sharing between EI and IWB have not been evident. In particular, the moderation effect of EI on the impact of knowledge sharing on IWB has not been examined. This research contributes to the literature by providing a better understanding of EI, IWB, and social capital.

Practical Contributions

The findings of this study can be applied as a guideline in human resource development in the restaurant business, emphasizing innovative performance. For example, 1) EI is recommended as a criterion for selecting new employees in the recruitment process by including EI testing in recruitment. 2) EI training is recommended for all levels of employees, for example, providing meditation training to all employees. 3) Employee satisfaction should be prioritized by regular monitoring and promotion, such as improving work conditions and environment and providing fair employment and work benefits, including decent resting space and healthcare benefits. 4) Encourage employees to regularly express, share, and exchange their knowledge and opinions with colleagues and promote and reward their ideas. For example, establish a contest among employees for novel ideas for new menu

items or work process improvement, reward the best ideas, and promote employee recognition.

Limitations

The limitations of this research also need to be recognized. 1) The findings are based on data collected from restaurant employees working for casual fine dining restaurants in Bangkok; therefore, the findings may not be applicable to other types of restaurants or in different contexts, for example, in other industries with different work cultures where workers may not be required to interact with others, work as a team or directly encounter customers. 2) All variables' measurements were subjective evaluations, which may cause subject bias. 3) Other influential variables not included in this study, such as job stress, job burnout, and entrepreneurship, may provide interesting results in future studies if included. 4) Since the data were collected using a cross-sectional method, the results may not represent causal relations but only correlations among the variables.

Recommendations for Future Research

Regarding the role of EI in promoting innovative work behavior, this study can also be applied in several other industry contexts, particularly in the hospitality and service sectors. In addition, many other variables should be investigated as outcomes of EI and antecedents of IWB and other related innovation variables, such as team and organizational innovation. Lastly, other organizational variables should play important roles as an effective mechanism between EI and IWB.

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