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AI Self-Efficacy and Transformational Leadership on Innovative Work Behavior: The Mediating Role of Work Engagement Among Jakarta Hotel Employees

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Abstract

Background: Amid ongoing technological change, the hospitality sector relies more on the innovative work behavior (IWB) of its employees to stay competitive; nevertheless, how AI self-efficacy, transformational leadership, and work engagement together drive innovation in this field remains scarcely documented.
Objective: Drawing on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) framework, this research investigates how AI self-efficacy and transformational leadership influence IWB among staff of four- and five-star hotels in Jakarta, treating work engagement as the mediating variable.
Methods: A cross-sectional quantitative survey gathered responses from 180 hotel employees recruited via non-probability snowball sampling. The data were obtained through an online questionnaire and examined with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) in AMOS.
Results: AI self-efficacy exerted significant positive influences on both IWB and work engagement, whereas transformational leadership shaped work engagement significantly yet showed no significant direct influence on IWB. Work engagement was a significant predictor of IWB and partially carried the AI self-efficacy-IWB link, while it fully carried the transformational leadership-IWB link.
Conclusion: The results show that personal and job resources reach employee innovation along distinct routes. AI self-efficacy contributes that is at once direct and indirect by way of work engagement, while transformational leadership operates mainly through engagement. To foster innovative work behavior, hotel management is advised to combine the cultivation of AI capability, the practice of transformational leadership, and initiatives that build employee engagement.

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INTRODUCTION

The service sector has become the principal driver of economic growth in both developing and advanced economies, contributing significantly to gross domestic product and to global productivity and innovation. Inside this sector, hospitality contributes considerably to economic growth, tourism, and job creation (Dogru et al., 2020; Näppä et al., 2025), and its remit today reaches far past lodging to encompass guest services, food and beverage, and event management, each geared toward crafting the customer experience. Fast-moving digital transformation, evolving conssumer behavior, and mounting rivalry force hotels into continual innovation if they are to endure and stay competitive (Fung So & Li, 2023; Kandampully et al., 2023).

The competitiveness of a hotel rests largely on the quality of its human resources, and the rising count of star-rated hotels in Jakarta has sharpened this rivalry. Table 1 presents the growth of star-rated hotels in Jakarta between 2021 and 2025, which shows a steady upward trend and, correspondingly, mounting pressure for hotels to differentiate themselves through superior, innovative service ("Moving Science Forward," 2022; Nicolau & Santa-María, 2013; Ostrom et al., 2010).

Table 1

Growth of Star-Rated Hotels in Jakarta, 2021–2025

Category	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
1-star	24	27	36	53	44
2-star	83	93	111	142	116
3-star	164	187	184	176	192
4-star	73	74	80	88	86
5-star	40	51	37	37	42
Total	384	432	448	496	480

Source: BPS DKI Jakarta, 2021–2025

Star-rated hotels in Jakarta recorded an average room-occupancy rate of only 60.28% in January 2025 and 51.62% in February 2025 (Statistik, 2025), indicating that occupancy performance still has considerable room for improvement, particularly among four- and five-star properties, where larger resource bases enable greater differentiation while smaller hotels tend to imitate competitors' innovations (Indriyani & Latif, 2022; Martínez-Ros & Orfila-Sintes, 2012). Since innovation in hospitality is readily copied, resting chiefly on staff skill, knowledge, and service delivery rather than on proprietary technology, preserving a competitive edge calls for employees who display innovative work behavior (IWB): the generation, promotion, and realization of novel ideas that enhance service quality and operational effectiveness (Abun et al., 2023; Afsar & Badir, 2016; Al-Ghazali & Afsar, 2021). A meta-analysis pooling 215 studies of creativity and innovative behavior among hospitality and tourism workers reported that putting IWB into practice in the sector still contends with fast-changing customer expectations, fierce competition, and loosely structured service work. Evidence from Korean hospitality employees likewise shows that standardized procedures, high work pressure, and long working hours often push employees toward routine task completion rather than idea generation (Li et al., 2025), even as guests increasingly expect personalized service that exceeds standard operating procedures (Breier et al., 2021; Lestari et al., 2023; Park & Min, 2020). Studies conducted on four- and five-star hotels in East Java confirm that IWB strengthens organizational competitiveness through new solutions, work effectiveness, and service quality (Eliyana & Christiananta, 2020; Widyanty et al., 2025), while its absence hampers organizational adaptation to business and technological change (Lasisi et al., 2024; Suprapto et al., 2024).

Work engagement has attracted growing scholarly and managerial attention because of its role in employee well-being and organizational effectiveness (Afsar & Badir, 2016; Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). Conceived as a favorable, work-related state of mind marked by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2017; TeIxeira & Santos, 2024), work engagement captures the psychological presence that employees invest in their duties and responsibilities (Bergdahl, 2022; Kahn, 1990), spurring them to perform more effectively and add greater value to the organization. Because engaged workers have more energy for producing and refining new ideas, work engagement stands as a key antecedent of IWB; studies of managerial staff across Indian service sectors Agarwal et al. (2012) and of frontline hotel workers in South Korea H. S. Jung & Yoon (2018) and Wan et al. (2022) alike demonstrate that work engagement positively forecasts innovative behavior, in keeping with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model's assertion that engaged employees are more energetic and adaptable to change (Demerouti & Sanz Vergel, 2014; Junker et al., 2025).

Meeting continuously evolving customer needs in hospitality and tourism increasingly depends on innovation (Garg & Dhar, 2017), and as Artificial Intelligence (AI) becomes more embedded in hospitality operations (Kong et al., 2025), questions arise about how far AI adoption

can foster innovative behavior. Prior research reports mixed effects: AI can broaden employee knowledge and support innovation, but excessive dependence may also erode proactive thinking and cognitive flexibility (Li et al., 2025). These conflicting results imply that AI's impact on innovative behavior hinges not on the technology by itself but also on personal factors, foremost self-efficacy, that is, a person's conviction in their ability to carry out tasks and surmount work challenges (Compeau & Higgins, 1995; Wang & Chuang, 2024). Employees with high self-efficacy tend to approach complex, creativity-demanding tasks with greater confidence (Uppathampracha & Liu, 2022), which positions AI self-efficacy, employees' belief in their ability to use AI technology to support task completion and service delivery (Byung-Jik et al., 2024), as a potentially important antecedent of IWB. Within hospitality and tourism, AI has seen broad adoption via chatbots, automated reservation systems, tailored recommendation engines, and comparable intelligent tools (Hyunsu et al., 2025; López-Naranjo et al., 2025), and yet how AI self-efficacy connects to innovative behavior is still only partly understood.

Two research gaps motivate the present study. First, scholarship on AI self-efficacy is still sparse and clusters within educational settings (Bewersdorff et al., 2025; Morales-García et al., 2024), so empirical evidence of its bearing on innovative behavior in hospitality and tourism remains thin. Second, prior studies have rarely integrated personal and job resources simultaneously within a Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) framework, limiting understanding of how individual capability and organizational leadership jointly foster employee innovation in AI-enabled work settings. Employees who use AI more frequently tend to display higher innovative behavior, particularly when their self-efficacy is high, indicating that self-efficacy strengthens the effect of AI use on innovation. Construed as a personal resource in JD-R terms, AI self-efficacy is anticipated to heighten employees' sense of control and meaning in AI-based work (Kim & Lee, 2024), thus lifting work engagement Chen et al. (2020) and Shipton et al. (2024), in turn, the creation and enactment of new ideas (Jung et al., 2022). Because self-efficacy is a recognized antecedent of work engagement, and because innovation itself is resource-intensive and time-consuming (Zhang et al., 2018, 2026), the strength of the work engagement–IWB relationship may depend on the resources available to sustain the innovation process (Ali et al., 2022; Kwon & Kim, 2020), suggesting that work engagement mediates the effect of AI self-efficacy on IWB, consistent with evidence from Thai employees (Uppathampracha & Liu, 2022). Framed as a problem rather than a mere scarcity of prior work, the literature has not yet explained how an emerging personal resource (AI self-efficacy) and an established job resource (transformational leadership) jointly and differentially shape innovative behaviour through a shared motivational mechanism; the present model addresses this by positioning work engagement as the mediating pathway and testing whether each resource reaches IWB through a direct route, a purely indirect route, or both.

Transformational leadership complements this personal-resource pathway. Serving as role models, transformational leaders inspire, support, and steer their followers toward a common organizational vision, thereby encouraging innovative behavior (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Bednall et al., 2018; Ngo et al., 2022; Suifan et al., 2018). By means of individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation, these leaders foster creative engagement and question followers' assumptions, bringing organizational and personal goals into alignment so as to prompt greater effort (Bednall et al., 2018; Garg & Dhar, 2017; Kim & Yoon, 2025; Stanescu et al., 2020). Its effect on IWB, however, is often indirect, operating through work engagement, the emotional, cognitive, and physical attachment employees feel toward their work, which several studies identify as the connecting mechanism (Begum et al., 2020; Gao et al., 2020; Puni et al., 2022; Sasmitha et al., 2026). Consistent with this pattern, a study of AI self-efficacy among hospitality and tourism employees found that it raises innovative behavior through work engagement (Li et al., 2026 , while research on Vietnamese employees found the same mediating role of work engagement between transformational leadership and IWB (Vu et al., 2025), and frontline hotel employees in Korea confirm the direct, positive contribution of work engagement to innovative behavior (H. S. Jung & Yoon, 2018; Wan et al., 2022).

Although these relationships are well documented, most prior studies of IWB, transformational leadership, and work engagement have been conducted across general or cross-industry samples, such as a meta-analysis synthesizing 105 studies across sectors Deepak & Bhagat (2025) and a survey of 390 employees across general Vietnamese companies (Vu et al.,

2025), leaving hospitality-specific evidence comparatively limited. Yet hospitality's high-pressure, high-competition environment can shape employees' psychological states, including their engagement and propensity for innovative behavior, in ways that differ from general industry settings. Where hotels fail to provide adequate leadership support or to build employee engagement, the potential for innovative behavior may be suppressed, undermining the organization's competitiveness and adaptability. To close this context-specific gap, the current study examines how AI self-efficacy and transformational leadership affect innovative work behavior among workers in Jakarta's hotel industry, positioning work engagement as the mediating mechanism and employing the Job Demands-Resources model as its theoretical lens. Jakarta was selected because of its dense concentration of national and international hotels, its role as the country's primary gateway for domestic and international travelers through Soekarno–Hatta International Airport, and the correspondingly intense competitive pressure faced by hotels operating there (Djamaludin, 2013; Prabowo, 2025).

The study is expected to enrich the academic literature on the antecedents of innovative work behavior in a hospitality-specific context and to offer hotel management practical guidance for cultivating employee innovation through the combined development of AI capability, transformational leadership, and work engagement. Beyond applying the JD-R model to hospitality, the novelty of this study lies in the mechanism it uncovers: transformational leadership is expected to influence IWB not directly but through work engagement, whereas AI self-efficacy is expected to exert both direct and engagement-mediated effects, implying that personal and job resources reach innovation through qualitatively different routes. To make these aims explicit, the study pursues one research objective and offers three distinct contributions. The objective is to test the direct and work-engagement-mediated effects of AI self-efficacy and transformational leadership on IWB among Jakarta hotel employees. The theoretical contribution is to extend the JD-R model by distinguishing the pathways through which personal and job resources foster innovation. The practical benefit is to guide hotel management in integrating AI-capability building, transformational leadership, and engagement initiatives. The research implication is to encourage future JD-R studies to model personal and job resources as operating through separable direct and indirect pathways rather than as interchangeable resource inputs.

METHOD

The research adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional design rooted in a positivist paradigm, whereby measurable data are statistically examined to test and quantify the relationships among the study's variables (Sugiyono, 2023; Sugiyono & Lestari, 2021). Data collection took place over three months, from May to July 2026. Individual employees working in Jakarta's hotel industry served as the unit of analysis; this industry was selected for its dense cluster of star-rated properties, its acute competitive pressure, and its broad uptake of digital and AI-based operational systems.

The four constructs were gauged using a five-point Likert interval scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). AI self-efficacy was measured with four items adapted from Kim and Lee (2024). Transformational leadership was measured with twelve items adapted from Avolio and Avolio and Bass (2010) and Melean Romero et al. (2023), spanning idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Work engagement was measured with nine items reflecting vigor, dedication, and absorption, adapted from the work-engagement literature (Schaufeli et al., 2017; TeIxeira & Santos, 2024). Innovative work behavior, the dependent variable, was measured with nine items adapted from Janssen (2000) and Bergdahl (2022), covering idea generation, idea promotion, and idea realization. In total, the questionnaire comprised 34 indicators across the four constructs. Every instrument was initially written in English and tailored for Indonesian respondents via a translation and back-translation routine: bilingual specialists rendered the items into Indonesian and, separately, translated them back into English, after which any inconsistencies were resolved to safeguard conceptual equivalence. The adapted items were then reviewed by two management scholars for content validity and clarity and were pilot-tested on a small group of hotel employees before full deployment, with only minor wording refinements made to improve comprehension without altering item meaning. To make the basis of each instrument explicit, AI self-efficacy items

were adapted from Kim and Lee (2024); transformational leadership items were adapted from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Avolio and Bass (2010) and Melean Romero et al. (2023) across its four dimensions; work engagement items were adapted from the Utrecht Work Engagement framework TeIxeira and Santos (2024); and innovative work behaviour items were adapted from from Janssen (2000) and Bergdahl (2022). In each case the items were adapted (reworded to fit the hotel work context while preserving the original construct definitions) rather than used verbatim or treated merely as a conceptual reference.

Primary data were collected through a structured online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms to employees working in the hospitality industry in Jakarta; secondary data were drawn from prior studies, scholarly books, and relevant institutional publications (Sugiyono, 2023; Sugiyono & Lestari, 2021). As the precise number of hotel employees fitting the study's criteria could not be determined, a non-probability snowball sampling technique was applied, whereby the first respondents recommended further eligible participants. Eligibility required that respondents (a) work for a company located in Jakarta, (b) be employed in the hospitality industry, (c) have at least one year of tenure, (d) hold permanent or active contract status, (e) use digital or AI-based systems (e.g., chatbots, booking systems, CRM, or other operational AI tools) in daily work, (f) work in an operational division (front office, food and beverage service, reservation, or guest relations), (g) work for a company that has implemented digital systems, and (h) report directly to a supervisor. In line with Hair et al. (2022), the advised minimum sample for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is five to ten times the indicator count; given 34 indicators, the target sample fell between 170 and 340 respondents. The study collected 180 valid responses, satisfying this minimum threshold and providing an adequate basis for stable and reliable parameter estimation. Snowball sampling was adopted because no sampling frame exists for hotel employees who simultaneously satisfy all eight eligibility criteria particularly daily use of AI-based operational systems so referral chains from qualified initial respondents were the only feasible way to reach this specific, hard-to-identify population (Hair et al., 2022). Because this non-probability technique constrains sample representativeness, the results are interpreted as analytic generalizations to the theoretical model rather than statistical generalizations to a defined population, and their applicability is confined to Jakarta hotel employees meeting the stated criteria.

Instrument quality was assessed through validity and reliability testing prior to hypothesis testing. Using a minimum factor-loading threshold of 0.45 for the sample size employed in this study, all 34 indicators across the four constructs were retained. Reliability was gauged through Cronbach's alpha, and each construct exhibited acceptable internal consistency: AI self-efficacy ($\alpha = 0.910$), transformational leadership ($\alpha = 0.936$), work engagement ($\alpha = 0.938$), and innovative work behavior ($\alpha = 0.943$). Data analysis was conducted in two stages. Descriptive statistics first summarized the respondents' characteristics and their perceptions of the study constructs, after which Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) in AMOS was used to appraise the measurement and structural models. Model adequacy was assessed using absolute, incremental, and parsimonious fit indices, including RMSEA, RMR, CMIN/DF, NFI, CFI, TLI, IFI, RFI, PNFI, PCFI, PGFI, and ECVI. Hypotheses were evaluated using the significance criterion specified in the study, while the mediating role of work engagement was examined using the Sobel test.

This study did not involve procedures that placed respondents at risk beyond ordinary survey participation. Participation was entirely voluntary; respondents were briefed on the study's aim before filling out the questionnaire and answered anonymously and confidentially, consistent with institutional ethical standards for social and behavioral research; being survey-based and non-clinical, the study required no separate ethics committee approval number.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Sample Characteristics and Study Context

Of the 180 respondents, the majority were female (59.44%) and aged 18–25 years (43.89%), followed by the 26–40 age group (36.11%). Most held a Diploma (D3) qualification (45.00%), reflecting the industry's emphasis on practical, vocational skills. All respondents worked in Jakarta, with a slightly larger share employed at four-star hotels (53.33%) than five-

star hotels (46.67%), and the largest concentration of hotels located in Central Jakarta (37.78%). Employment status was almost evenly split between permanent (50.56%) and contract (49.44%) staff, with most respondents holding 2–5 years of tenure (51.67%). All respondents reported having a direct supervisor and working for organizations that had implemented digital or AI-based systems in daily operations, and the largest share worked in front office/reservation roles (40.00%), followed by customer service (28.89%), food and beverage service (16.67%), and guest relations (14.44%). Taken together, the profile depicts a sample of comparatively young, moderately experienced, guest-facing staff working in technology-enabled hotel settings, in line with the study's intended eligibility criteria.

Descriptive analysis showed that respondents' overall mean perception was moderately positive across all four constructs. AI self-efficacy recorded the highest mean (3.58), followed by transformational leadership (3.56), work engagement (3.30), and innovative work behavior (3.09). These numbers suggest that employees feel fairly assured about learning and using AI technology on the job and regard their supervisors as fairly transformational, whereas their self-reported engagement and innovative behavior, although positive, still leave room to grow, a pattern that anticipates the pivotal part work engagement plays in converting personal and leadership resources into innovative outcomes, as the hypothesis-testing results that follow make plain.

Prior to hypothesis testing, the structural model's goodness of fit was evaluated. The model demonstrated acceptable fit across several indices, including RMSEA = 0.063, RMR = 0.030, and CMIN/DF = 1.715. The incremental fit indices were NFI = 0.830, CFI = 0.921, TLI = 0.915, IFI = 0.922, and RFI = 0.817, while the parsimonious indices were PNFI = 0.771, PCFI = 0.855, and PGFI = 0.683. The chi-square test remained significant ($p < 0.001$), while GFI = 0.781 and AGFI = 0.749 were below conventional cut-off values. The ECVI of 5.820 was closer to the saturated model value of 6.648 than to the independence model value of 29.832. Considering the fit indices collectively, the model was regarded as sufficiently adequate to proceed with hypothesis testing, although the results should not be interpreted as indicating uniformly good fit across all criteria.

Table 2

Structural Model and Hypothesis-Testing Results

Hypothesis	Path	Estimate	p-value	Conclusion
H1	AI self-efficacy → Innovative work behavior	0.196	0.015	Supported
H2	Transformational leadership → Innovative work behavior	0.134	0.144	Not supported
H3	AI self-efficacy → Work engagement	0.500	0.000	Supported
H4	Transformational leadership → Work engagement	0.290	0.000	Supported
H5	Work engagement → Innovative work behavior	0.777	0.000	Supported
H6	AI self-efficacy → Work engagement → Innovative work behavior	0.388*	0.0033	Supported (partial mediation)
H7	Transformational leadership → Work engagement → Innovative work behavior	0.225*	0.0014	Supported (full mediation)

**Sobel test estimate (product of path coefficients)*

Source: AMOS output

As shown in Table 2, six of the seven hypotheses were supported. AI self-efficacy had a significant positive association with innovative work behavior (H1: $\beta = 0.196$, $p = 0.015$) and work engagement (H3: $\beta = 0.500$, $p < 0.001$). Transformational leadership was significantly associated with work engagement (H4: $\beta = 0.290$, $p < 0.001$) but did not have a significant direct association with innovative work behavior (H2: $\beta = 0.134$, $p = 0.144$). Work engagement showed the strongest association with innovative work behavior in the model (H5: $\beta = 0.777$, $p < 0.001$). The Sobel test

indicated a significant indirect effect of AI self-efficacy on innovative work behavior through work engagement (H6: indirect estimate = 0.388, p = 0.0033), indicating partial mediation because the direct path remained significant. Work engagement also significantly mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and innovative work behavior (H7: indirect estimate = 0.225, p = 0.0014); because the direct path was not significant, this relationship was interpreted as full mediation.

Discussion

On the whole, the findings show that AI self-efficacy and work engagement bear a significant, direct association with innovative work behavior among Jakarta hotel employees, while transformational leadership relates to innovative work behavior indirectly by way of work engagement. Both AI self-efficacy and transformational leadership are positively associated with work engagement, which serves as the central psychological mechanism linking personal and leadership resources with innovative outcomes. This configuration accords with the Job Demands-Resources model, which holds that personal and job resources feed motivational processes tied to employee engagement and proactive work behavior. The findings further suggest two distinguishable pathways: AI self-efficacy is associated with innovative work behavior both directly and through work engagement, whereas transformational leadership is associated with innovative work behavior primarily through work engagement. Because the study employed a cross-sectional design and snowball sampling, these relationships should be interpreted as statistical associations within the tested model rather than definitive causal effects, and their generalizability is limited to hotel employees who meet the study's eligibility criteria.

The significant positive influence of AI self-efficacy on innovative work behavior (H1) reinforces earlier evidence that employees assured of their capacity to operate AI tools can more readily simplify repetitive workflows and channel their effort into more demanding, higher-value innovative work (Kim & Shim, 2026; Rick et al., 2024), echoing prior findings that AI-use self-efficacy significantly predicts innovative behavior (Teng et al., 2020; Wan et al., 2022). For Jakarta's hotel employees, who increasingly interact with chatbots, automated reservation systems, and other AI-enabled tools, confidence in these systems appears to translate directly into a greater propensity to generate, promote, and implement new service ideas, extending evidence on AI self-efficacy that has so far been concentrated largely in educational rather than hospitality settings (Bewersdorff et al., 2025; Morales-García et al., 2024).

In contrast, transformational leadership exhibited no significant direct effect on innovative work behavior (H2), a finding that diverges from studies documenting a direct positive link in other settings Garg and Dhar (2017), Stanescu et al. (2020) and Vu et al. (2025) yet is not unprecedented, since several studies similarly conclude that transformational leadership shapes innovation chiefly through intervening motivational or psychological states rather than directly (Keane et al., 2024; Shuck, 2011). One plausible explanation is that in a high-pressure, procedure-driven hospitality environment, inspirational or intellectually stimulating leadership alone may not be sufficient to convert into innovative behavior unless it first translates into a felt sense of engagement; leadership appears to set the conditions for innovation rather than to produce it directly. This interpretation aligns with the pattern observed here, where transformational leadership's effect on innovative work behavior operated entirely through work engagement, indicating full mediation.

AI self-efficacy likewise exerted a strong, significant effect on work engagement (H3), the largest structural coefficient apart from the engagement-to-innovation path, bolstering the view that, as a personal resource within the JD-R model, AI self-efficacy eases anxiety about using technology, strengthens employees' sense of control in human-AI collaboration, and thereby nurtures vigor, dedication, and absorption at work (Dong et al., 2025; Hong, 2022; Parker & Grote, 2022), in agreement with evidence from hospitality and tourism employees elsewhere (Li et al., 2026; Wang et al., 2026). Transformational leadership likewise significantly increased work engagement (H4), corroborating a substantial body of research showing that leaders who provide vision, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized attention cultivate higher energy, dedication, and concentration among followers (Pletzer et al., 2024; Zhu et al., 2022), a relationship further reinforced by meta-analytic evidence Decuypere and Schaufeli (2021) and

Qandeel and Kuráth (2025) by findings that transformational leadership raises engagement both directly and through the meaningfulness it creates in work (Vu et al., 2025).

Work engagement produced the strongest and most consistent effect in the model, significantly predicting innovative work behavior (H5), consonant with meta-analytic evidence that engagement reliably predicts innovative behavior across contexts Sari et al. (2021), TeIxeira and Santos (2024) and that it is positively tied to creativity and proactive work behavior more generally (Mazzetti et al., 2023). Consistent with findings that engaged employees are more likely to generate, promote, and realize new ideas in daily practice (Bhattacharjee & Sarkar, 2023; Sabuhari et al., 2025), Jakarta hotel employees who reported higher vigor, dedication, and absorption were markedly more likely to translate that engagement into innovative service behavior, underscoring engagement's centrality in the innovation process.

The mediation results sharpen this picture. Work engagement partly mediated the influence of AI self-efficacy on innovative work behavior (H6): AI self-efficacy lifts innovative behavior both directly, by building employees' confidence to deploy AI-enabled solutions themselves, and indirectly, by first invigorating their engagement, in keeping with evidence that self-efficacy serves as an antecedent of engagement that then advances innovation (Li et al., 2025; Uppathampracha & Liu, 2022). Work engagement fully mediated the effect of transformational leadership on innovative work behavior (H7), indicating that transformational leadership's contribution to innovation in this sample is realized exclusively through the engagement it fosters, a pattern consistent with research showing that leadership drives innovative behavior primarily by first cultivating engagement Vu et al. (2025) and Wahab et al. (2018) that this relationship holds even after accounting for leadership's broader positive association with other favorable work outcomes (Garg & Dhar, 2017; Pletzer et al., 2024). This divergence in mechanisms is the study's core theoretical contribution and reflects a functional distinction within the JD-R model: as a personal resource that is intrinsic to the employee, AI self-efficacy can be enacted directly in innovative action and therefore shapes IWB even independently of momentary engagement, whereas transformational leadership, as an external job (contextual) resource, must first be internalized as engagement before it can translate into innovative behaviour. Personal and job resources thus contribute to innovation through qualitatively different routes rather than merely differing in effect size.

Considered together, these results broaden the JD-R model's reach into an AI-enabled hospitality setting by showing that a personal resource (AI self-efficacy) and a job resource (transformational leadership) connect to innovative work behavior along partly divergent pathways. AI self-efficacy retains a significant direct association with innovative work behavior alongside its engagement-mediated association, whereas transformational leadership is associated with innovative work behavior through work engagement. This distinction has practical implications for hotel management: leadership development is unlikely to support innovative behavior unless it is accompanied by conditions that strengthen employee engagement, while developing employees' confidence in using AI may support innovation both directly and through greater engagement. The findings therefore provide hospitality-specific evidence consistent with the JD-R framework while also identifying a context-specific pattern the non-significant direct relationship between transformational leadership and innovative work behavior that warrants examination in other organizational, cultural, and service-industry settings.

CONCLUSION

Framed by the Job Demands-Resources model, this study investigated how AI self-efficacy, transformational leadership, work engagement, and innovative work behavior interrelate among staff of four- and five-star hotels in Jakarta. The results reveal that AI self-efficacy relates significantly to innovative work behavior both directly and indirectly via work engagement, while transformational leadership bears no significant direct relationship with innovative work behavior but connects to it significantly through work engagement. Work engagement also demonstrates the strongest relationship with innovative work behavior in the model. These findings indicate that personal and job resources may contribute to innovation through distinguishable pathways: AI self-efficacy operates through both direct and engagement-

mediated routes, whereas transformational leadership operates primarily through engagement. Practically, the findings suggest that hotel management should integrate employee AI-capability development, transformational leadership practices, and initiatives that strengthen work engagement rather than relying on leadership development alone.

These conclusions should be interpreted within the study's limitations. The study was confined to employees of four- and five-star hotels in Jakarta, drew on a cross-sectional design and snowball sampling, and depended mainly on respondents from operational and guest-facing divisions. The model also focused on four constructs, leaving other possible explanatory factors outside its scope. Subsequent research might therefore test the framework in other regions, hotel tiers, and service industries, embrace longitudinal and multi-source designs to pin down the direction of the relationships and lessen common-method concerns, and probe further mechanisms such as psychological empowerment, knowledge sharing, or innovative climate. Such extensions would help determine whether the distinct personal-resource and job-resource pathways identified in this study remain consistent across broader organizational contexts.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Berlian Anggita Putri Trisno contributed to the conceptualization, data collection, data analysis, and preparation of the manuscript. Medina Nilasari and Dita Oki Berliyanti contributed to the conceptual development, academic guidance, and refinement of the manuscript. Every author took part in finalizing the manuscript and sanctioned the final version for publication.

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