



# Leader vision, organizational inertia and service hotel employee creativity: Role of knowledge-donating

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## Abstract

This paper presents a conceptual model reflecting relationships between visionary leadership and service employee creativity through organizational inertia and knowledge-donating behavior. The research sample consists of 423 employees of 21 four-star hotels in Egypt. The PLS-SEM results revealed that service employee creativity is enhanced when they realize their leaders have visions for the future, are capable of overcoming organizational inertia, along with keeping up with simultaneous changes. The results revealed that this behavior dampens the negative relationship between visionary leadership and organizational inertia. The theoretical and practical implications of the extracted results are discussed.

**Keywords** Visionary leadership · Hotel employees · Knowledge-donating · Organizational inertia · Service employee creativity

## Introduction

Hotel organizations rely on the inventiveness of their workers to survive and prosper (Wang et al., 2021). Generating novel and valuable ideas serve as a crucial input for organizational innovativeness to deal with several internal and external challenges and opportunities (Chang & Teng, 2017;

Liu et al., 2012; Liu et al., 2020; Reiter-Palmon & Illies, 2004; Zhou & George, 2001). Without a doubt, an employee's mind and his/her distinctive features are the principal sources of each creative idea. Nonetheless, researchers and practitioners have sought to understand knowledge sharing in organizational contexts to identify several contextual elements that could facilitate or inhibit employee creativity (see Hirst et al., 2011; Hur et al., 2016; Kim & Lee, 2013; Lim & Ok, 2021). Contemporary research has established that employee creativity is chiefly affected by many contextual elements, such as transformational leadership (Hughes et al., 2018; Jolly & Lee, 2021; Shafique et al., 2020; Shamim et al., 2017), team-member exchange (Hirst et al., 2011), leader-member exchange (Liu et al., 2020), depth and width of knowledge (Mannucci & Yong, 2018), supervisor expectations (Tierney & Farmer, 2004), and among many other factors.

Prior research has consistently emphasized the importance of context in the development of human force creativity (Jaiswal & Dhar, 2017; Sumaneeva et al., 2021) and thus less emphasis was devoted to the organizational stagnation issue and the elements that may assist in overcoming its detrimental influence on their employees' creativity. Organizational inertia refers to rigidities that grow over time and are ingrained in established procedures, routines, resources, and workplace culture (Gilbert, 2005; Huang et al., 2013;

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König et al., 2021). When inertia is well established in an organization, employees prefer to respond instantly based on their experience and competence. However, when inertia is embedded in an organization, there is a substantial internal propensity for sameness (Klammer et al., 2019), which may diminish the ability of employees to generate innovative ideas. As a result, this study investigates the mediation effect of organizational inertia in the indirect relationship between visionary leadership and service employee creativity, which was ignored in previous research.

Additionally, given the substantial role of leadership in the work environment (Hughes et al., 2018), an attempt was made to explore how visionary leadership could contribute to organizational inertia reduction and subordinate creativity enhancement. Prior research has established that overcoming organizational inertia is chiefly associated with the perception of threat and opportunity, which imposes a compelling need for change (König et al., 2021). Accordingly, visionary leaders can oversee and identify potential environmental threats and opportunities (Mascareño et al., 2020). Hence, they would proactively engage in slackening organizational inertia to achieve a competitive advantage or absorb the potential threat. Monitoring and projecting the future environment also means that leaders will have more time to think about where to go to overcome the inertia dilemma. In this study, visionary leaders may find various inventive methods to tackle the current organizational stagnation. Besides, visionary leaders may find numerous innovative techniques to tackle the current organizational stagnation. Similarly, recent literature shows that most leadership styles influence their subordinates' creativity (see Lee et al., 2020; Xu & Wang, 2020). In addition, visionary leaders will be most effective in fostering service employee creativity when they donate their ideas, vision, knowledge, and ideas to their colleagues.

Thus, drawing from leadership-member exchange (LMX) theory and visionary leadership theory (VLT), and organizational inertia theory (OIT), the purpose of this study is to identify knowledge-donating behavior as a moderator between three aspects of visionary leadership and organizational inertia and service employee creativity. This paper focuses on examining the effect of visionary leadership in reducing organizational inertia; determining the effect of organizational inertia on service employee creativity; understanding the mediation effect of organizational inertia in the visionary leader-employee creativity relationship; and examining how employee knowledge-donating behavior can modify putative relationships. Finally, the proposed model has been applied and tested in the hotel industry, which has not received much attention in previous research (Chang & Teng, 2017).

## Literature review and hypotheses development

### LMX theory

According to social exchange theory, Xie et al. (2020) identified LMX as a reciprocal activity. It enables the manager to offer work-centric resources and information to employees and ensure their contribution to decision-making. The greater significance of LMX is that it increases employees' willingness to work with greater responsibility. The LMX, according to Kirrane et al. (2019), is the quality perception related to affinity among leaders and their subordinates. An effective relationship requires trust, respect, and mutual respect for leaders and employees to share responsibilities, as evidenced by informal bonding and communication excellence (Hu et al., 2009). Otherwise, a low-quality relationship is created by restricting communication among employees and leaders to the level specified in the employment contract. Employees from a high LMX group are assigned to the in-group, while the out-group is allotted human resources with a lower perception of LMX. A leader-member exchange is also considered a natural catalyst for the encouragement of the creativity of employees. Kim and Koo (2017) concluded that LMX has a significant impact on innovation and employment. However, it has an insignificant influence on engagement with the organization.

### Visionary leadership

Theoretically, leadership is recognized as a principal predictor of innovation. However, recent literature focuses on transformative leadership as a chief driver of creativity and innovation at the individual and team levels (Hughes et al., 2018; Shafique et al., 2020; van der Voet & Steijn, 2021). Liu et al. (2020) stressed the visual aspect of leadership in conjunction with charismatic leaders and underlined the strategic position. As a result, expressing the vision for the attraction and inspiration of followers has been identified as an essential component of transformational leadership that leads to the development of change and increased productivity (Colton, 1985). Thus, visionary leadership is described as the future image that draws people to convince them to help realise that specific future (van Knippenberg & Stam, 2014).

VLT theory focuses on the necessity of a compelling vision and communication (Avolio et al., 1991). There are three main components to visionary leadership. First, visionary leaders require creating a clear vision (Carton et al., 2014). Second, after establishing a vision, it must

be conveyed appropriately, providing information about the desired outcomes so that staff may adjust their performance to reach these objectives. Third, visionary leaders should persuade employees to contribute to the realisation of a shared future (Dvir et al., 2004). This is because visionary leaders inspire and motivate their followers to meet the standards of their membership. To accept the vision, team members must feel the vision and the organization's leadership share it in a suitable manner. Visionary leadership helps employees stay focused on a common goal (Shafique et al., 2020). Moreover, it contributes significantly to the reduction of inertia and the development of creativity in its subordinates. To investigate the putative relationships in Figure 1, we created and tested hypotheses based on linkages found in the literature.

## Organizational inertia

OIT theory postulates the tendency of a mature organization to stay on the same path (Le Mens et al., 2015). On the other hand, Sillic (2019) argued that organizational inertia is the inability of an organization to bring about internal change in the face of significant external change. Furthermore, consistency in the organization's functions and forms keeps the change process moving forward or expanding (Stieglitz et al., 2016). Organizational inertia is a barrier to business growth and change that can positively influence an organization's expansion (Gilbert, 2005; Zhen et al., 2021). Inertia in the organization, for example, prevents it from implementing the processes, techniques, and procedures in place (Wang et al., 2015). As the business environment has become highly competitive and market segments fragmented, it is indispensable to overcome inertia to assure survival (Huang et al., 2013). Market dynamics are constantly changing: players come and go, technology improves, and consumer tastes vary, all of which may have a detrimental impact on an organization that tries to maintain the same procedures,

investments, or attitude. Organizational inertia is seen as a barrier to change, effective and even more comprehensive transformation. Little empirical evidence has confirmed that combating organizational inertia is chiefly associated with threat perception and opportunities for imposing compelling change requirements. Thus, a visionary leader is willing to try innovative approaches to overcome organizational stagnation (Mishra & Mishra, 2017; Shin & Zhou, 2003). Thus, employees are more prone to disregard the need for organizational transformation to accomplish innovative goals (van Knippenberg & Hirst, 2020). As a result, this paper assumed that:

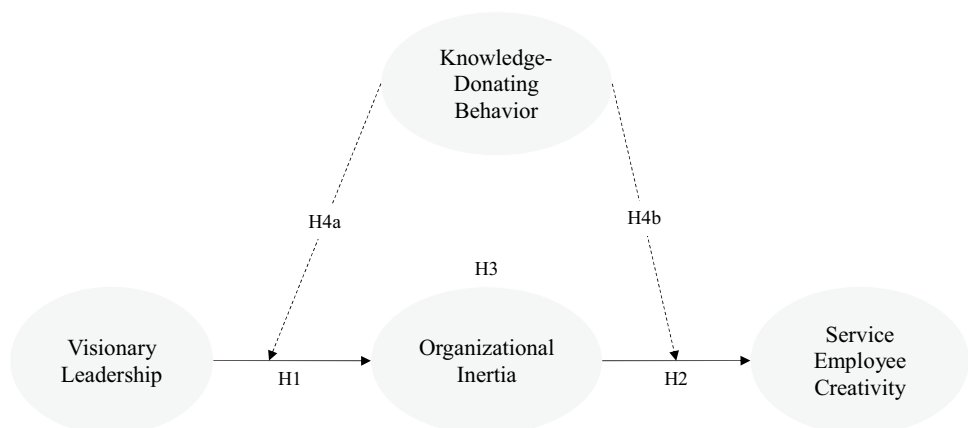
*H1. Visionary leadership has a negative relationship with organizational inertia.*

## Service employee creativity

According to Hur et al. (2016), service employee creativity provides the foundation for organizational creativity in hotel organizations, an organization's core competencies that eventually results in competitive advantages. As a result, most service organizations are looking for novel ways to encourage their employees' creativity (Geng et al., 2014; He et al., 2021; Sok et al., 2018). That is crucial in an era in which customers are looking for personalized services to meet their specific demands (Wilder et al., 2014). Few studies have been performed to determine the focal role of leadership styles in encouraging employee creativity. It provides advice on dealing with organizational innovations in the face of numerous external and internal possibilities and difficulties (Reiter-Palmon & Illies, 2004).

According to OIT theory, an organization's internal inertia might impede it from responding to changes in the external environment on time and engaging in reforms (Gilbert, 2005). The stance of inertia provides a stable sense of stable environmental situations (Zhen et al., 2021). When

**Fig. 1** Proposed model



organizational capacities become more rigid, most successful businesses can collapse. Inertia promotes sensory stability under stable environmental conditions. Otherwise, organizational inertia may be the main hindrance to business innovation (Bertels et al., 2020; Geer & Barnes, 2006; Klammer et al., 2019). Organizational inertia, without a doubt, involves rigidities that can be formed through time and are consistent with current rituals and corporate environments. A lack of research has been observed regarding the impact of organizational inertia on service employee creativity. The current business environment raises the necessity for more inclusive innovation to acquire and maintain competitiveness. The main reason for the higher failure rate of innovation is that it can disrupt the status quo by imposing changes (Hur et al., 2016). Thus, this study hypothesized that:

*H2. Organizational inertia has a negative relationship with service employee creativity.*

Some empirical evidence implies that organizational inertia has a significant and negative impact on organizational learning (see Chang & Teng, 2017; Chang et al., 2014; Eggers & Kaul, 2017). Creative self-efficacy had a substantial influence on individuals' imaginative activities, as noted by Hughes et al. (2018). According to self-efficacy theory (SET), an individual may assess the availability of personal and situational resources for completing specific actions. However, OIT theory confirms that restricting the leader's capacity to transmit important information to the subordinate (Le Mens et al., 2015), makes the latter less innovative and unwilling to accept organizational changes.

*H3. Organizational inertia mediates the indirect relationship between visionary leadership and service employee creativity.*

## Knowledge-donating behavior

Knowledge sharing is described as the interaction between information transmitter and receiver that involves sharing it among others to acquire new knowledge (Carmeli et al., 2011; Swanson et al., 2020). It extends beyond information dissemination, task representation, and procedural knowledge to encompass changes in cognitions and behaviors in information collection and donation (Dysvik et al., 2015). In other words, knowledge-sharing involves knowledge collecting (i.e., obtaining information from others through consulting with them) and knowledge donating (i.e., desiring to engage individuals and transfer knowledge to them) (van den Hooff & de Ridder, 2004; van den Hooff & de Ridder, 2004). According to Xue et al. (2011), the dominant perspectives of shared team members imply that they can donate

knowledge to others to build new ideas. The knowledge-donating process requires employees to communicate their knowledge with colleagues. Therefore, knowledge-donating is related to knowledge dissemination tactically and explicitly to other workforces (Kim & Lee, 2013; Matić et al., 2017). Based on these arguments, this paper used employee knowledge-donating behavior as a moderating role in putative relationships.

It's important for organizations to be aware of and respond to an immediate threat. If a company recognizes a threat to its survival, all managers must reduce inertia levels through performing several changes in work routines by knowledge-donating (Luu, 2021). Furthermore, the association between service employee creativity is related to his awareness of knowledge donation (Kim & Lee, 2013). According to previous empirical studies, service employee creativity relies on learning new skills and information (Hussain et al., 2017; Park & Kim, 2018; Thuan & Thanh, 2020). A higher degree of trust in knowledge-giving leads to more possibilities for escalation of experience and knowledge through simulation of various creative ideas, which improves creativity (Hao et al., 2019).

*H4a. Employees' knowledge-donating strengthens the negative relationship between visionary leadership and organizational inertia.*

*H4b. Employees' knowledge donating dampens the negative relationship between organizational inertia and service employee creativity.*

## Methodology

### Participants and procedure

A quantitative approach-based questionnaire was used as a survey instrument in this study (Gelo et al., 2008). The reverse-translation method was used, drawing on three-consecutive steps, as recommended by Brislin (1980). As such, two proofreaders re-translated the converted phrases from Arabic to English to validate the survey's content. Accordingly, this survey included 22 items, along with an employee profile and a brief introduction about the study's purpose. Prior to the actual survey, a pilot test was conducted on 78 employees in four-star hotels in Egypt across the Google Form platform. These employees were reached through graduate students working in these hotels and with the help of members of the regional office of the Egyptian Hotels Association in South Sinai. Of whom, 59 responded with a response rate of 76% to determine the extent to which they understood the survey's content. As such, participants recommended minor modifications to the questionnaire's introduction, and their comments have

been processed. The study sample consisted of frontline employees at 21 out of 33 four-star hotels in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt. These employees were chosen particularly because they have the most elevated contact with guests on the frontlines (Jaiswal & Dhar, 2017; Sumaneeva et al., 2021) and are most directly tied to organizational practices (Wilder et al., 2014).

## Instruments

We chose the measurement constructs in this study adapted from the existing literature. Visionary leadership was measured by five items originally developed from developed by Elbaz and Haddoud (2017) & Rafferty and Griffin (2004). Employees rated the degree to which they disagreed or agreed with each item (e.g., “My leader takes a long-term view of this hotel and its surrounding environment”). Organizational inertia was measured by five items adapted from Gilbert (2005) & Liang et al. (2017). An example of the items is “Facing economic shifts and market changes, I am not able to seek new development directions at this hotel”. Service employee creativity was measured with eight items taken from Employees rated the degree to which they disagreed or agreed with each item (e.g., “I propose innovative methods for improving service quality”). Knowledge donating was measured by four items derived from van den Hooff and de Ridder (2004) & van den Hooff, and van Weenen, F. de L. (2004). An example of the items is “I share my skills with colleagues within my department”. All scales ranged from ‘7’ (strongly agree) to ‘1’ (strongly disagree).

## Common method variance

Most constructs used in the proposed model relied on self-report; this can create issues related to participants’ responses bias (Podsakoff et al., 2012). We included a cover letter with the survey as part of the procedural remedies to ensure the respondents’ identities were not exposed (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). The data was carefully gathered from participants with relevant expertise about the purpose of the paper. Besides, pre-validated scales were used with unambiguous measurement items tested by several academic experts and proofreaders. Under statistical remedies, Harman’s single-factor test was used as a robust determinant to verify issues related to CMV (Podsakoff et al., 2003) by aggregating all measurement items onto a single factor. The findings revealed that the explanatory power of the single-factor (35.8%) is less than the total variance (50%) threshold, implying no substantial bias. Using PLS-SEM, all variation inflation factor (VIF) values were less than 3.3 (Kock, 2015),

indicating that it did not find full collinearity of the measurement items. Given these arguments, CMV in this study is not a noticeable concern.

## Results

### Sample characteristics

Given that targeted hotels were operating at half of the human forces (downsizing policy) to coexist with COVID-19. Therefore, we collected data over three months. A total of 630 questionnaires were distributed, of which 572 were retrieved from 18 March to 7 June 2021. After excluding incomplete responses of collected data, the sample size reached 423 valid cases, with a response rate of 67%. Table 1 displays the employee profile, which 91.3% of respondents were males, and 68.6% of them were married. The respondents’ majority ranged in age from 39 to < 50 (70.4%); most of them had a bachelor’s degree (43.7%), followed by had a high school (32.6%). Respondents’ professional experiences were as follows: (36.2%) had 5 to < 7 years, (28.8%) had > 5 years, (23.2%) had 7 to < 10 years and (11%) had  $\geq$  10 years.

**Table 1** Employee profile (N = 423).

	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	386	91.3
Female	37	8.7
<i>Marital status</i>		
Single	133	31.4
Married	290	68.6
<i>Age</i>		
< 25 years	69	16.3
25 to < 39 years	21	5.0
39 to < 50 years	298	70.4
$\geq$ 50 years	35	8.3
<i>High education level</i>		
MSc / PhD	28	6.6
Diploma	59	13.9
Bachelor	185	43.7
High school	138	32.6
Preparatory school	9	2.1
Other	4	0.9
<i>Professional experience</i>		
< 5 years	122	28.8
5 to < 7 years	153	36.2
7 to < 10 years	98	23.2
$\geq$ 10 years	50	11.8

**Table 2** Construct reliability, validity and multicollinearity.

Constructs	Items	FL	VIF	CR	CC	AVE
<i>Visionary leadership</i>	VISION1	0.839	1.95	0.93	.90	0.72
	VISION2	0.870	2.77			
	VISION3	0.841	2.53			
	VISION4	0.826	2.33			
	VISION5	0.852	2.77			
<i>Organizational inertia</i>	INERT1	0.830	2.15	0.92	0.89	0.69
	INERT2	0.874	2.68			
	INERT3	0.816	2.01			
	INERT4	0.792	1.94			
	INERT5	0.840	2.21			
<i>Service employee creativity</i>	CREAT1	0.787	2.15	0.92	0.91	0.60
	CREAT2	0.778	2.31			
	CREAT3	0.785	2.13			
	CREAT4	0.779	2.00			
	CREAT5	0.787	2.06			
	CREAT6	0.739	1.79			
	CREAT7	0.758	2.13			
	CREAT8	0.785	2.17			
<i>Knowledge-donating behavior</i>	DONAT1	0.861	2.46	0.93	0.89	0.76
	DONAT2	0.885	2.81			
	DONAT3	0.886	2.80			
	DONAT4	0.846	2.24			

FL = factor loadings; VIF = variation inflation factor; CC = cronbach's alpha coefficient; CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted; M = mean; SD = standard deviation.

## Measurement model

Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was adopted for several reasons in this study (Chin, 1998) for data analysis. First, PLS-SEM handles complicated models with several latent constructs (Sarstedt et al., 2016). Second, PLS could be run to examine several regression models and equations (Lowry & Gaskin, 2014). Hence, this study adopted the PLS-SEM technique-based SmartPLS3.0 software (Hair et al., 2019) to assess two main phases: measurement model and structural model. Table 2 illustrates factor loadings of all measurement items exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2021). That indicates that the used construct scales have no distortions, verifying robust item reliability (Hair et al., 2014). To determine whether construct reliability was internally consistent, we verified the values of composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's coefficient (CC). Table 2 results illustrated that these values exceeded the threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1994). Furthermore, we examined the average variance extracted (AVE) to assess the convergent validity (Henseler et al., 2009). Thus, AVE values exceeded the minimum ( $\geq 0.50$ ) threshold recommended by Hair et al. (2019). As shown in Table 2, each construct can explain more than 50% of its items. Furthermore, the variance inflation factor (VIF)

**Table 3** Assessment of discriminant validity.

(i) Fornell–Larcker criterion index				
Latent constructs	CREAT	DONAT	INERT	VISION
CREAT	<b>0.775</b>			
DONAT	0.460	<b>0.870</b>		
INERT	-0.610	-0.386	<b>0.831</b>	
VISION	0.438	0.127	-0.427	<b>0.846</b>
(ii) Heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT)				
Constructs	CREAT	DONAT	INERT	VISION
CREAT				
DONAT	0.507			
INERT	0.671	0.432		
VISION	0.475	0.130	0.460	

CREAT = service employee creativity, DONAT = knowledge-donating behavior, INERT = organizational inertia, VISION = visionary leadership. The square roots of AVEs are the diagonal items highlight in bold

values for all measurement items range between 1.79 and 2.81. The aforementioned indicates that full collinearity was not an issue in the measurement model (Kock, 2015).

Next, Fornell-Larcker criterion index and heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratios of all construct correlations were examined to assess the discriminant validity (Henseler et al.,

2015). Furthermore, the correlation matrix indicated that the shared variances of the constructs are greater than their variances with the other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2011), and thus the square root of all AVE ratios for each construct was shaded in bold (see Table 3i). As recommended by Henseler et al. (2015), the results evidenced that all HTMT ratios for the used construct correlations did not exceed the maximum threshold of 0.85 (see Table 3 ii). Based on these results, the measurement model has an adequate discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2021). We can move to the next phase, which is the structural model assessment, because the measurement model proved to be psychologically acceptable.

### Assessment of the structural model

Due to the difficulty of making assumptions about the normal distribution using PLS-SEM, the complete bootstrapping approach was adopted. Table 4 and Figure 2 present the hypotheses testing and path coefficients results. The results showed that visionary leadership has a significant and negative effect on organizational inertia ( $\beta = -.43, t = 10.39,$

$p < .001, f^2 = 0.22$ ), supporting H1. Findings showed that organizational inertia has a significant and negative effect on service employee creativity ( $\beta = -.61, t = 17.18, p < .001, f^2 = 0.60$ ), indicating that H2 was supported. Next, the type of mediation effect was verified using the model proposed by Zhao et al. (2010). The t-statistics and path coefficients results show that organizational inertia mediates the positive relationship between visionary leadership and service employee creativity ( $\beta = .26, t = 7.99, p < .001, BC = .21; .33$ ). As presented in Table 4, the direct effects were significant and negative, while the total effect was significant and positive. This evidence proves that organizational inertia achieved a competitive partial mediation of the putative relationship, and thus supporting H3.

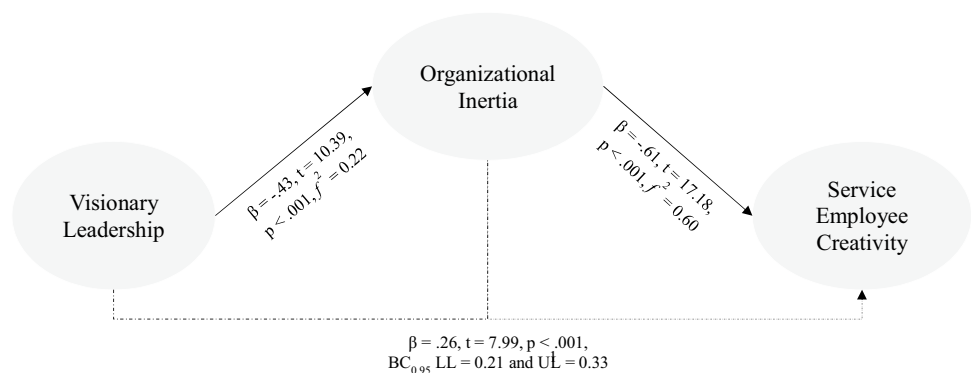
To estimate the predictive goodness of the overall structural model, Hair et al. (2019) used the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), effect size ( $f^2$ ), and cross-validated redundancy measure ( $Q^2$ ). This model explained 18.3%, 37.4% of the variance in organizational inertia and service employee creativity, indicating reasonable explanatory power of the model because these values ranged between the 0 to 1 threshold (Hair et al., 2021; Shmueli et al., 2019).

**Table 4** Hypothesis tests for direct and mediated relationships.

H	Path	B value	T-value	P-value	Decision	Bootstrapping CI		$f^2$
						LL	UL	
H1	VISION → INERT	-0.428	10.39***	0.000	Supported	-0.51	-0.36	0.22
H2	INERT → CREAT	-0.612	17.18***	0.000	Supported	-0.68	-0.54	0.60
H3	VISION → INERT → CREAT	0.263	7.99***	0.000	Supported	0.21	0.33	-
	$R^2$ for INERT	0.183						
	$R^2$ for CREAT	0.374						
	$Q^2$ for INERT	0.125						
	$Q^2$ for CREAT	0.218						

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; UL = upper level; LL = lower level; CI = confidence interval; VISION = visionary leadership; INERT = organizational inertia; CREAT = service employee creativity; H = hypothesis

**Fig. 2** Path analysis results



As recommended by Cohen (1988), the small, medium, and large  $f^2$  effect sizes depict the higher values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35, respectively. Hence, the  $f^2$  values ranged between 0.22 and 0.60 in this study. That indicates an adequate effect for the endogenous latent constructs. The Stone-Geisser criterion is another means of assessing the predictive accuracy of the structural model (Geisser, 1974; Stone, 1974). This is achieved when the  $Q^2$  value is higher than zero for a specific endogenous construct. Thus, the  $Q^2$  values in this study exceeded the zero thresholds, indicating the model's predictability.

### Moderation analysis

Interaction factors and their effects on dependent constructs were computed and analyzed in order to assess the moderating effects (Hair et al., 2021; Henseler & Fassott, 2010). As illustrated in Figure 3, the interaction effects of potential connections were investigated in order to establish the amount and degree of moderation. The interaction effect (VISION\_x\_DONAT) results show that knowledge-donating behavior dampens the negative effect of visionary leadership on organizational inertia ( $\beta = .32$ ,  $t = 7.99$ ) and thus not supporting H4a. The interaction effect (INERT\_x\_DONAT) results also show that knowledge-donating behavior dampens the negative effect of organizational inertia on service employee creativity ( $\beta = .32$ ,  $t = 8.60$ ) and thus supports H4b.

### Discussion

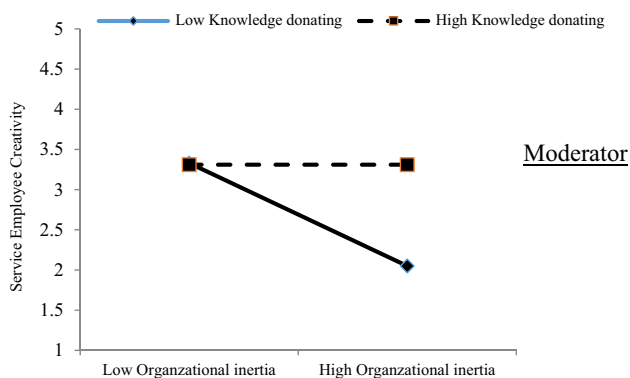
Both practitioners and research scholars have long recognized employee creativity as the basis for organizational success. This study contributes to this issue and based on the extant literature as the basis, this study examines the moderating role of knowledge-donating behaviors and the mediating effect of organizational inertia, and derives a host of implications to

fill the gaps. Knowledge donating is an important aspect of knowledge sharing, which aims to share and communicate to others what one has learned or gained from experience (van den Hooff & de Ridder, 2004). Prior studies were focused on the causal relationship between visionary leadership and knowledge sharing (Sudibjo & Prameswari, 2021; Zhou et al., 2018). Success, nevertheless, depends on the leaders having the ability to get their followers to feel the vision (McLarney & Rhyno, 1999), which includes meaning, ideas about the future, values and beliefs (Alvesson & Blom, 2021). Though visionary leaders may create an exciting and viable vision (Groves, 2006), there are study gaps in addressing the employees' lives, who are unable to respond to this vision. Here is due to the organization's inertia and a lack of expertise to keep up with the changes. This study thus serves to fill the theoretical gaps. There are numerous ways the results of this study manifest the theoretical contributions.

The understanding of organizational inertia is the principal entry point of this study, as it is the fundamental barrier to change, the most critical factor for resistance against change (Allcorn & Godkin, 2011), and without addressing it, the consequences are detrimental. Thus, counteracting inertia is an urgent role of visionary leaders, which is the position of this study, but its battle without other contextual support is not easily won. Consistent with Sydow et al. (2009), the empirical result in the hotel context of this study shows that the unlocking of inertia forces in the organization can contribute to the creativity of the hotel service employees. Service employee creativity was negatively associated with an organization's inertia. That shows how inertia may either encourage or impede this creativity.

To some extent, employees become inflexible and rigid partly because they have become habituated through psychological and behavioral lock-in (Heine & Rindfleisch, 2013). Knowledge-donating behaviors of intra-organizational members can be used to provide a new understanding of what the leaders envision (De Clercq & Pereira, 2020), and to stimulate new internal learning (Akrouh & Awwad, 2018), so that the psychological safety for change and employee creativity counteracts the inertial forces, as noted in Yin et al. (2020) the inertia forces. In other words, the moderating role of knowledge-donating behaviors and attitudes can contribute to shifting organizational inertia into an incentivized zone that motivates creativity. Assuredly, as shown in this study, visionary leadership also plays a crucial role in the incentivization enacted through vision.

By supporting experimentally the variables affecting service employees' inventiveness that counterbalance an inertial attitude, this study helps to refocus attention on the key basis of the attitude-behavior (A-B) relationship. The A-B relationship is presupposed on the assumption that "attitudes cause, reflect, or at least correlate substantially with behaviors" (Schuman & Johnson, 1976). It also justifies organizational



**Fig. 3** The effect of organizational inertia under high and low level of knowledge donating



investments to develop a more appropriate attitude to embrace the needs for visionary pursuit, which is seen by the role of visionary leadership, and through knowledge-donating actions of the intra-organizational members. Many theoretical approaches exist to alter attitudes and behaviors, which can be applied to break away the barriers of inertia forces, such as through reasons (Ajzen, 2012), and certainly, visionary leadership is critical anchoring ingredients (Cohen & Reed, 2006), which are evidenced in this study.

### Theoretical implications

The theoretical implications are discussed of the two central constructs around which this study revolves namely knowledge-donating behaviors and organizational inertia. As organizational inertia entraps employees to stick to the routines of the organization and prevents them from investing in the right resources, the organization's dynamic capability to create, extend, and modify resources (Pitelis & Wagner, 2019) will be significantly and negatively impacted. The supported hypothesis that states the moderating role of knowledge-donating behavior in the relationship between organizational inertia and service employees' creativity infers that knowledge-donating behavior is capable of enabling the breaking out of the timeworn routines. Through knowledge-donation, new possibilities of cognition and opportunity arise, and thus, new incentives for change and creativity arise, which contribute to the incentivized angle of breaking away inertia and is consistent with the concept of inertia as being in a state of no more incentives for truce breaking and remaking (Kaplan, 2015). This study also contributes to job resources-demand theory (Lei et al., 2021) in the sense of using knowledge-donating behaviors as an additional resource to de-rigidify the inertia structures so as to be in support of creativity and visionary demands. Because knowledge-donating, by definition, transcends "silo" activities, it has the potential to be promoted as a feature of organizational culture in the Egyptian hotel sector.

### Practical implications

This study provides important practical implications for human resource and general management practices. Though a visionary leader who articulates well, for instance, a compelling vision and a sense of shared purpose can break certain barriers of inertia, such as incompetent perceptions and reluctance attitudes, the ability to foster the creative contributions of creativity is very limited without the leveraging role of the helping behaviors of colleagues. This research provided managers with a set of scientific and applicable guidelines that affect the creativity of employees through the preparation of soft skills development courses for supervisors, to work in accordance with modern trends in leadership, such as wise

leadership to reduce organizational inertia and enhance creativity for subordinates. This paper also presented a model for leaders in hotels to monitor and anticipate the future environment to overcome external threats and seize opportunities in the potential external environment.

Moreover, this research presented hotel management with the need to focus on the employee's mind to generate creative ideas through knowledge sharing, especially in light of hotel organizational contexts. That employees' gaining knowledge would lead to a perception and feeling of a match between the capability and creative demand of jobs. Another important aspect is relating to the habitual norm of knowledge-sharing practice, which should be brought to the strategic attention of the organization. Here, this research has mentioned an important issue that affects the creativity of employees and the elimination of a widespread phenomenon in different work environments, especially since the hotel sector is one of the sectors that needs the creativity of employees in order to satisfy customer needs and overcome various problems, as well as achieve survival and prosperity for hotel organizations. This conceptual model has been presented to confront the problem of organizational inertia and the creativity of employees and help managers to generate new and valuable ideas for organizational innovation to address internal and external hotel obstacles.

### Limitations and future suggestions for research

Despite the recent theoretical and practical contributions, there are a few possible limitations to be noted. First, the fact that creativity is nowadays a boundary-spanning issue, especially in hotel services, considering more comprehensive job roles in sampling would expand the insights, such as frontline managers' creativity. The more nuanced findings would boost the model's explanatory power and elevate the moderating function of knowledge donation to a statistically significant level in dampening, for example, the detrimental effects of visionary leadership and organizational inertia. Therefore, future studies should be done on cultural or personality variables for comparison reasons, since frontline staff's creativity intensity and efforts might be affected by the type of services. Given the possibility that the current sample is being targeted at four hotels located in Sharm El-Sheikh might limit the generalizability of the findings, a cross-national or cross-regional study should be directed. Finally, though the current study emphasizes the moderating effect of knowledge-donating behaviors and attitudes, other causal functions of the variable should be tested, which can help the holistic perspectives through comparative studies.

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## Declarations

**Ethics Approval** This research could not obtain consent from authors' universities but participants participated voluntarily.

**Conflict of Interest** The author declares no competing interests.

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