

Tourism Policy

ISSN: 3149-8167

available at http: www.econjournals.com

Tourism Policy, 2026, 2(4), 28-34.

Letting Go and Taking Up: How Paradoxical Leadership Shapes Frontline Employees' Transition to AI in Turkey's Hotels

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Received: 11 August 2026 **Accepted:** 04 November 2026 **DOI:** https://doi.org/10.32479/tp.25396

ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence (AI) is changing frontline work in hotels. Employees must abandon familiar tools while adopting new ones. This study examines how paradoxical leader behavior (PLB) relates to frontline employees' unlearning of obsolete tools and their discretionary AI adoption. Drawing on paradox theory and social cognitive theory, it proposes that AI learning readiness self-efficacy carries these effects. Three-wave data were collected from 275 frontline employees in hotels in Turkey and analyzed with confirmatory factor analysis and bootstrapped mediation analysis. PLB was positively related to AI learning readiness self-efficacy. Self-efficacy, in turn, was related to unlearning obsolete tools and to AI adoption. The indirect effects were significant. PLB also retained a direct association with unlearning and AI adoption. The findings extend research on paradoxical leadership, unlearning, and technology adoption in hospitality. They suggest that supervisors who combine structure with flexibility help employees believe they can learn AI, and this belief eases the move from old tools to new ones. Implications for hotel managers and tourism policy in emerging economies are discussed.

Keywords: Paradoxical Leadership, Artificial Intelligence Learning Readiness Self-Efficacy, Unlearning, Artificial Intelligence Adoption, Frontline Employees
JEL Classifications: L2, L83

1. INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence is reshaping how tourism and hospitality services are produced and delivered. Chatbots handle reservations, algorithms set room rates, and generative tools draft guest messages and review responses (Tussyadiah, 2020). Digital transformation of this kind changes routines, roles, and skill requirements across the firm (Verhoef et al., 2021). Frontline employees (FLEs) feel these changes first. They work at the point where technology meets the guest. For tourism-dependent economies, their capacity to adapt matters at a national scale. In Turkey, travel and tourism was projected to contribute about 12% of GDP and to support about 3.3 million jobs in 2025 (WTTC, 2025). The country also ranked 29th of 119 economies on the 2024 Travel and Tourism Development Index (Daily Sabah, 2024). Sustaining this position depends partly on whether hotel staff can move from legacy practices to AI-enabled service.

Leadership is a likely lever in this transition. Paradoxical leader behavior (PLB) refers to seemingly contradictory yet interrelated behaviors that leaders enact to meet competing demands simultaneously and over time (Zhang et al., 2015). Paradoxical leaders enforce work requirements while allowing flexibility. They keep control while granting autonomy. Studies link PLB to employee engagement, voice, and creativity (Fürstenberg et al., 2021; Li et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2022). Meta-analytic evidence shows that PLB explains variance in innovation beyond transformational and servant leadership (Lee et al., 2023).

However, the shift to AI places a specific tension on employees. They must destroy part of their past practice while building on it.

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Paradox theory labels this a learning tension (Smith and Lewis, 2011). Employees may also appraise disruptive technology as a threat to their jobs (Brougham and Haar, 2020). Leadership that holds opposites together can ease such tensions, but it can also leave followers ambivalent (Zhang et al., 2022). Its effectiveness weakens under some forms of uncertainty (Batool et al., 2023). Recent work has tied executive PLB to digital transformation at the firm level (Su et al., 2026; Trieu et al., 2024; Wu et al., 2026). Studies of leadership and employee AI use have focused on transformational leadership (Wang et al., 2025). Reviews of hospitality leadership research also note limited attention to the distinct demands of the hospitality context (Guchait et al., 2023). How supervisors' paradoxical behavior shapes FLEs' move away from obsolete tools and toward AI therefore remains unknown.

Addressing this gap is important for two reasons. First, unlearning and adoption are two halves of the same transition, yet research has examined them apart. Unlearning remains under-researched at the individual level (Klammer and Gueldenberg, 2019). Studies of AI at work concentrate on usage alone (Liu et al., 2026; Wang et al., 2025). A leadership style built on holding opposites offers a natural account of how both halves unfold together. Second, hotels in emerging economies face rising pressure to digitize with limited training budgets. If supervisors' everyday behavior builds employees' readiness to learn AI, hotels gain a low-cost route to technology transition. Tourism authorities gain a target for leadership development within skills policy.

The present study responds to this need by developing and testing a model of how PLB shapes FLEs' unlearning of obsolete tools and their AI adoption. Using paradox theory (Smith and Lewis, 2011) and social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1997), we contend that PLB matters because it builds employees' belief that they can master new technology. Paradox theory explains how supervisors frame old and new as compatible. Social cognitive theory explains how that framing becomes a personal capability belief.

The mechanism we examine is AI learning readiness self-efficacy. It refers to confidence in one's ability to learn, adapt to, and apply new AI technologies (Oksanen et al., 2026). Self-efficacy shapes which tasks people attempt, how much effort they invest, and how long they persist (Bandura, 1997). Paradoxical supervisors provide structure that reduces anxiety and autonomy that permits practice. Both conditions feed efficacy beliefs. Employees confident in their capacity to learn AI should find it easier to release familiar tools and to experiment with new ones beyond what their role requires (Ahuja and Thatcher, 2005; Matsuo, 2018).

This study makes three contributions. First, PLB research has documented benefits for engagement, voice, and creativity (Fürstenberg et al., 2021; Li et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2022) and has begun to connect executive PLB with digital transformation (Su et al., 2026; Trieu et al., 2024; Wu et al., 2026). We extend this literature to supervisors and FLEs and to the employee side of technological change. Second, research on unlearning has mapped its forms, levels, and antecedents (Klammer and Gueldenberg, 2019; Kmieciak, 2021; Matsuo, 2018) and has shown its value for hospitality firms (Cegarra-Navarro et al., 2013). We identify a leadership behavior and a capability belief associated with unlearning obsolete tools. Third, studies of AI in hospitality and at work have focused on threat perceptions and usage (Brougham and Haar, 2020; Liu et al., 2026; Tussyadiah, 2020; Wang et al., 2025). We position AI adoption alongside unlearning and show that one efficacy belief connects them. Together, these contributions explain how supervisors help frontline staff let go of the old while taking up the new.

2. THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

2.1 Paradox Theory and the AI Transition in Hotels

Paradoxes are contradictory yet interrelated elements that exist simultaneously and persist over time (Smith and Lewis, 2011). Smith and Lewis (2011) identify learning tensions as a core category. Organizations and people must build on past knowledge while destroying parts of it to make room for the new. The AI transition in hotels presents this tension in concrete form. A front-desk agent who adopts an AI messaging tool must stop relying on handwritten logs and phone-based request routines. A restaurant server who uses generative AI to describe dishes must abandon a familiar script. Each step requires release and uptake at once.

Responses to paradox can be defensive or accepting (Smith and Lewis, 2011). Defensive responses split the poles, favoring one at the expense of the other. Employees might cling to legacy tools or adopt AI superficially while preserving old habits. Accepting responses hold both poles together. Leaders shape which response prevails because they signal how tensions should be handled (Zhang et al., 2015). In hotels, the immediate supervisor is the most proximal source of such signals. Supervisors allocate tasks, enforce standards, and decide how much latitude FLEs receive.

2.2. Paradoxical Leader Behavior and AI Learning Readiness Self-Efficacy

Zhang et al. (2015) describe five dimensions of PLB in people management. Paradoxical leaders combine self-centeredness with other-centeredness. They maintain distance while staying close. They treat subordinates uniformly while allowing individualization. They enforce work requirements while allowing flexibility. They keep decision control while allowing autonomy. These behaviors are not compromises. They are deliberate combinations that let followers experience order and freedom together.

Social cognitive theory identifies four sources of self-efficacy: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological and affective states (Bandura, 1997). PLB activates each source in the context of AI. First, by allowing flexibility within clear requirements, paradoxical supervisors give FLEs room to try AI tools without risking service failures. Small successes in this protected space build mastery. Second, paradoxical leaders model how to integrate competing demands. Employees who observe a supervisor combine established service standards with new tools gain vicarious evidence that integration is possible. Third, individualized treatment lets supervisors tailor encouragement to each employee's level, which strengthens persuasion. Fourth, uniform standards and retained decision

control reduce the ambiguity that AI can create. Lower ambiguity eases the anxiety that undermines efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997).

Evidence supports these mechanisms in related domains. PLB is associated with goal clarity and work autonomy, which carry its effect on engagement (Fürstenberg et al., 2021). Executive PLB has been linked to digital transformation through resource orchestration (Wu et al., 2026). Transformational leadership is associated with employees' AI usage (Wang et al., 2025). We expect PLB to build FLEs' confidence in learning AI.

- Hypothesis 1: Paradoxical leader behavior is positively related to frontline employees' AI learning readiness self-efficacy.

2.3. AI Learning Readiness Self-Efficacy, Unlearning, and AI Adoption

Unlearning refers to the intentional discarding of beliefs and routines that no longer serve their purpose (Klammer and Gueldenberg, 2019). At the individual level, it includes giving up outdated work methods, information practices, and work tools (Matsuo, 2018). Unlearning is effortful. Employees must accept that familiar routines are obsolete and tolerate a period of reduced competence. Self-efficacy shapes willingness to bear such costs (Bandura, 1997). Employees who doubt their ability to learn new technology have reason to hold on to legacy tools, because those tools are their source of competence. Confident employees can release them, because they expect to master the replacements. Research on unlearning points in the same direction. Individual unlearning is associated with critical reflection and goal orientation (Matsuo, 2018) and carries effects on innovative work behavior (Kmieciak, 2021). In hospitality firms, an unlearning context helps employees replace outdated knowledge (Cegarra-Navarro et al., 2013).

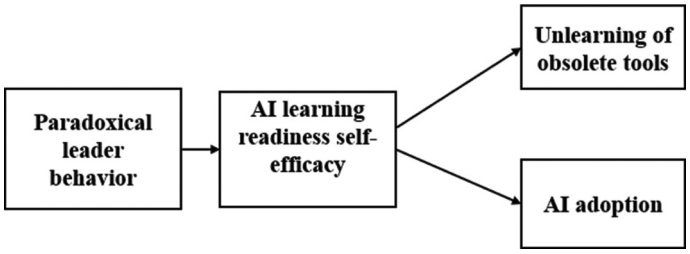
AI adoption in this study refers to discretionary use. It captures employees' efforts to find new uses for AI tools and to apply them in novel ways beyond what the job requires (Ahuja and Thatcher, 2005). Discretionary adoption matters in hotels because many systems are mandated. Mandated use reveals little about employee initiative. Trying to innovate with technology reflects the employee's own effort and persistence (Ahuja and Thatcher, 2005). Self-efficacy is a direct antecedent of such effort (Bandura, 1997). Employees who believe they can learn new AI tools should explore them more often and apply them more widely.

- Hypothesis 2: AI learning readiness self-efficacy is positively related to frontline employees' (a) unlearning of obsolete tools and (b) AI adoption.

2.4. The Mediating Role of AI Learning Readiness Self-Efficacy

Hypotheses 1 and 2 together imply an indirect relationship. Paradox theory explains why PLB should matter for both outcomes. Unlearning and adoption are the destroying and building poles of a learning tension (Smith and Lewis, 2011). Social cognitive theory explains how PLB reaches them. Supervisors' paradoxical behavior builds an efficacy belief, and the belief motivates action on both poles (Bandura, 1997). A single belief should therefore carry PLB's influence to letting go and to taking up.

Figure 1: The proposed model



We do not expect full mediation. PLB may also shape the outcomes through channels other than efficacy. Enforcing requirements, for instance, can directly push employees to drop obsolete tools. Allowing flexibility can directly permit experimentation. We therefore expect AI learning readiness self-efficacy to explain part of PLB's relationship with each outcome (Figure 1).

- Hypothesis 3: AI learning readiness self-efficacy mediates the positive relationship between paradoxical leader behavior and frontline employees' (a) unlearning of obsolete tools and (b) AI adoption.

3. METHODS

3.1. Context and Sample

The study was conducted in Turkey's hotel sector. Hotels in the country are adopting AI-enabled systems unevenly. Some properties run AI-based revenue management and guest messaging, while others rely on manual processes. This variation makes the sector a suitable setting for examining how employees move between legacy and AI-enabled tools. Participants were FLEs in hotels in Turkey. FLEs held guest-facing roles in front office, guest relations, food and beverage service, and concierge.

3.2. Procedure

Human resource managers in participating hotels distributed sealed questionnaires to FLEs. Participation was voluntary, and anonymity was assured. Respondents created a personal code to link responses across waves. Data were collected in three waves, 4 weeks apart, to separate predictor, mediator, and outcomes in time (Podsakoff et al., 2012). At Time 1, employees rated their supervisor's PLB and reported demographics. At Time 2, they reported AI learning readiness self-efficacy. At Time 3, they reported unlearning of obsolete tools and AI adoption.

The final sample comprised 275 FLEs, of whom 47.6% were women. Mean age was 34.47 years (SD = 6.08), and mean organizational tenure was 4.08 years (SD = 1.76). Regarding education, 22.2% had 10 years of schooling, 35.6% had 12 years of schooling, 29.5% held an undergraduate degree, and 12.7% held a master's degree.

3.3. Measures

All items used a five-point scale. Unless noted, anchors ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Paradoxical leader behavior was measured with the five-item scale adapted from Fürstenberg et al. (2021) ($\alpha = 0.88$). A sample item

is "My supervisor uses a fair approach to treat all subordinates uniformly, but also treats them as individuals."

AI learning readiness self-efficacy was measured with the five-item AILRSE-5 (Oksanen et al., 2026) (α = 0.89). The scale was validated across 17 samples from 12 countries. A sample item is "I'm confident in my ability to learn how to use new AI technologies independently." We replaced "daily life" with "daily work" in one item to suit the work setting. The original seven-point format was converted to five points for consistency with the other measures.

Unlearning of obsolete tools was measured with the eight-item individual unlearning scale of Matsuo (2018), adapted from team-level research for individual use (α = 0.93). The items ask how much respondents had given up outdated beliefs and routines over the past year, including work methods, information practices, and work tools. We referred the items to technology-related practices in hotel work. Anchors ranged from 1 (hardly changed) to 5 (greatly changed).

AI adoption was measured with three items capturing discretionary use. Two items were adapted from the trying-to-innovate-with-IT scale of Ahuja and Thatcher (2005), replacing "IT" with "AI tools." A sample item is "I try to use AI tools in novel ways in my work." The third item, "I use AI tools for work tasks even when my job does not require it," was written for this study to capture use beyond role requirements (α = 0.87).

3.4. Analytic Strategy

We first estimated a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test the four-factor measurement model. Convergent validity was assessed with composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE). Discriminant validity was assessed with the Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion and the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT; Henseler et al., 2015). We assessed common method variance with Harman's single-factor test and an unmeasured latent method construct (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Model fit was appraised with CFI, TLI, and RMSEA (Hu and Bentler, 1999).

Hypotheses were tested with PROCESS Model 4 (Hayes, 2022), using composite scores. Indirect effects were estimated with 5,000 bootstrap samples and were judged significant when the 95% percentile confidence interval excluded zero (Zhao et al., 2010).

4. RESULTS

4.1. Measurement Model and Common Method Variance

The hypothesized four-factor model fit the data well, $\chi^2(183) = 236.24$, $P = 0.005$, $\chi^2/df = 1.29$, CFI = 0.984, TLI = 0.982, RMSEA = 0.033, 90% CI (0.019, 0.044). Standardized loadings ranged from 0.72 to 0.86 (Table 1). CR ranged from 0.86 to 0.93 and AVE from 0.61 to 0.68 (Table 2). Cronbach's alpha and CR exceeded 0.85 for all constructs, and AVE exceeded 0.50. The square root of each construct's AVE exceeded its correlations with other constructs (Table 2), and all HTMT values were below 0.85 (Table 3; highest = 0.43). These results supported convergent and discriminant validity.

Table 1: Standardized factor loadings from the confirmatory factor analysis

Construct	Item	Standardized loading
PLB	PLB1	0.74
	PLB2	0.74
	PLB3	0.74
	PLB4	0.83
	PLB5	0.86
AILRSE	AILRSE1	0.84
	AILRSE2	0.76
	AILRSE3	0.80
	AILRSE4	0.81
	AILRSE5	0.76
UL	UL1	0.83
	UL2	0.78
	UL3	0.77
	UL4	0.77
	UL5	0.84
	UL6	0.77
	UL7	0.72
	UL8	0.75
AIA	AIA1	0.81
	AIA2	0.82
	AIA3	0.83

n=275. PLB: Paradoxical leader behavior, AILRSE: AI learning readiness self-efficacy, UL: Unlearning of obsolete tools, AIA: AI adoption

The first unrotated factor explained 38.8% of variance, below the 50% threshold. Adding a latent method factor did not significantly improve fit, $\Delta\chi^2(21) = 32.34$, $P = 0.054$, and the factor explained only 1.1% of item variance on average. Common method variance was therefore unlikely to account for the results.

4.2. Descriptive Statistics

Table 4 reports means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlations. PLB correlated positively with AI learning readiness self-efficacy ($r = 0.39$, $P < 0.01$), unlearning of obsolete tools ($r = 1.32$, $P < 0.01$), and AI adoption ($r = 0.30$, $P < 0.01$). Self-efficacy correlated with both outcomes ($r = 0.29$ and 0.38, $P < 0.01$).

4.3. Hypothesis Tests

Table 5 presents the PROCESS Model 4 estimates. PLB had total effects of B = 0.31 (95% CI [0.20, 0.42]) on unlearning and B = 0.34 (95% CI [0.21, 0.46]) on AI adoption. The indirect effects through self-efficacy were B = 0.07 (95% bootstrap CI [0.03, 0.14]) and B = 0.13 (95% bootstrap CI [0.07, 0.20]), respectively. The direct effects were significant for both unlearning (B = 0.23, $P < 0.001$) and AI adoption (B = 0.21, P = 0.002). The model explained 15% of the variance in self-efficacy, 13% in unlearning, and 17% in AI adoption.

5. DISCUSSION

This study investigated how paradoxical supervisors shape FLEs' move from obsolete tools to AI. The results indicate that PLB is associated with both unlearning and AI adoption. Part of this

Table 2: Convergent and discriminant validity

Construct	α	CR	AVE	MSV	PLB	AILRSE	UL	AIA
PLB	0.88	0.89	0.61	0.18	0.78			
AILRSE	0.89	0.90	0.63	0.18	0.43**	0.80		
UL	0.93	0.93	0.61	0.13	0.34**	0.32**	0.78	
AIA	0.87	0.86	0.67	0.18	0.34**	0.43**	0.36**	0.82

n=275. CR: Composite reliability, AVE: Average variance extracted, MSV: Maximum shared variance. Square roots of AVE are on the diagonal; off-diagonal values are latent factor correlations. **P<0.01. PLB: Paradoxical leader behavior, AILRSE: AI learning readiness self-efficacy, UL: Unlearning of obsolete tools, AIA: AI adoption

Table 3: Heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations

	PLB	AILRSE	UL	AIA
PLB				
AILRSE	0.43			
UL	0.35	0.32		
AIA	0.34	0.43	0.36	---

n=275. PLB: Paradoxical leader behavior, AILRSE: AI learning readiness self-efficacy, UL: Unlearning of obsolete tools, AIA: AI adoption

association runs through employees' confidence in their ability to learn AI, and the remainder runs directly. Self-efficacy explained a portion of PLB's total effect on each outcome, indicating partial mediation. The two outcomes, often studied in isolation, appear to share a common leadership antecedent and a common efficacy mechanism.

5.1. Theoretical Implications

The study extends three literatures. First, it extends research on PLB. Prior work has documented benefits for engagement, voice, and creativity (Fürstenberg et al., 2021; Li et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2022) and has linked PLB to innovation beyond other styles (Lee et al., 2023). Recent studies have connected executive PLB to firm-level digital transformation (Su et al., 2026; Trieu et al., 2024; Wu et al., 2026). Our findings carry this work to supervisors and FLEs. They suggest that the capacity to hold structure and flexibility together matters on the front line, where technology is used rather than chosen. The efficacy pathway also speaks to the double-edged character of PLB (Zhang et al., 2022). Where supervisors build confidence, contradictory signals appear to be construed as support rather than inconsistency. The significant direct effects suggest that PLB also works through other channels. Enforcing requirements may push employees to drop obsolete tools, and allowing flexibility may permit experimentation, as paradox theory would anticipate.

Second, the study extends research on unlearning. Prior work has defined unlearning, traced its levels, and identified antecedents such as critical reflection and goal orientation (Klammer and Gueldenberg, 2019; Kmieciak, 2021; Matsuo, 2018). Hospitality research has shown that an unlearning context supports knowledge renewal (Cegarra-Navarro et al., 2013). We add a leadership antecedent and an efficacy mechanism. Employees appear more willing to discard tools when they trust their ability to master replacements. This implies that unlearning depends on forward-looking beliefs as well as on reflection about the past. Self-efficacy explained a smaller share of PLB's effect on unlearning than on adoption. Releasing familiar routines may therefore depend more on direct supervisory signals, such as explicit permission to retire a tool, than taking up new technology does.

Third, the study extends research on AI and technology adoption in hospitality and at work. This literature has emphasized threat perceptions, automation, and usage frequency (Brougham and Haar, 2020; Liu et al., 2026; Tussyadiah, 2020). Leadership studies of AI use have focused on transformational leadership (Wang et al., 2025). We treat adoption as a discretionary initiative and pair it with unlearning. In this light, adoption and unlearning emerge as complementary responses to a single learning tension (Smith and Lewis, 2011). The same self-efficacy belief connects them, which helps explain why some employees move smoothly between old and new tools while others stall. The indirect path was stronger for adoption, in line with self-efficacy being a direct antecedent of the effort and persistence that discretionary use requires (Ahuja and Thatcher, 2005; Bandura, 1997).

5.2. Practical and Policy Implications

The findings offer three practical implications. First, hotel managers should treat frontline supervisory behavior as a core element of their technology strategy rather than focusing solely on system features and technical training. Supervisors who simultaneously maintain clear service standards and provide room for experimentation strengthen employees' readiness to learn AI. Leadership development programs can therefore equip supervisors with the skill to hold structure and flexibility together, rather than alternating between the two.

Second, hotels can deliberately build AI learning readiness self-efficacy. Brief, low-risk practice sessions with AI tools create mastery experiences, while peers who already use the tools can provide vicarious learning and modeling. Because paradoxical leader behavior also related directly to unlearning, supervisors should pair encouragement with explicit permission to retire specific legacy routines, thereby lowering the psychological cost of letting go.

Third, the results have implications for tourism policy in Turkey and comparable emerging economies. Given that travel and tourism already support a large workforce (WTTC, 2025), national and provincial authorities, together with hospitality training institutes, could incorporate paradoxical leadership competencies into supervisory certification and skills frameworks. Measuring AI learning readiness self-efficacy could further serve as a practical indicator of workforce preparedness, complementing investments in hardware and software that yield limited returns if employees lack the confidence to use them.

Table 4: Means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlations

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. PLB	3.38	0.78	(0.78)							
2. AILRSE	3.34	0.82	0.39**	(0.80)						
3. UL	3.31	0.75	0.32**	0.29**	(0.78)					
4. AIA	3.34	0.87	0.30**	0.38**	0.32**	(0.82)				
5. Gender	---	---	0.06	−0.02	0.04	0.01				
6. Age	34.47	6.08	0.07	−0.02	0.03	0.05	−0.06			
7. Tenure	4.08	1.76	0.05	−0.02	0.02	0.05	−0.06	0.17**		
8. Education	---	---	−0.03	0.02	0.06	−0.01	0.08	−0.13*	−0.01	

n=275. Square roots of AVE in parentheses on the diagonal. Gender: 1=male, 2=female. Education: 1=10 years of schooling, 2=12 years of schooling, 3=undergraduate degree, 4=master's degree. *P<0.05. **P<0.01. PLB: Paradoxical leader behavior, AILRSE: AI learning readiness self-efficacy, UL: Unlearning of obsolete tools, AIA: AI adoption

Table 5: PROCESS model 4 total, direct, and indirect effects

Path	B	SE	95% CI
Unlearning of obsolete tools			
PLB → AILRSE	0.41	0.06	(0.29, 0.52)
AILRSE → UL	0.18	0.06	(0.07, 0.29)
PLB → UL (total effect)	0.31	0.06	(0.20, 0.42)
PLB → UL (direct effect)	0.23	0.06	(0.12, 0.35)
PLB → AILRSE → UL (indirect effect)	0.07	0.03	(0.03, 0.14)
AI adoption			
PLB→AILRSE	0.41	0.06	(0.29, 0.52)
AILRSE→AIA	0.32	0.06	(0.20, 0.45)
PLB→AIA (total effect)	0.34	0.06	(0.21, 0.46)
PLB→AIA (direct effect)	0.21	0.07	(0.07, 0.34)
PLB→AILRSE→AIA (indirect effect)	0.13	0.03	(0.07, 0.20)

n=275. Unstandardized coefficients (B) from OLS regressions with composite scores, following PROCESS Model 4. For the indirect effects, the SE and 95% CI come from 5,000 bootstrap samples (percentile method); the other CIs come from the regression models. R^2: AILRSE=0.15, UL=0.13, AIA=0.17. PLB: Paradoxical leader behavior, AILRSE: AI learning readiness self-efficacy, UL: Unlearning of obsolete tools, AIA: AI adoption

6. CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

AI asks frontline hotel employees to let go of familiar tools while taking up new ones. This study shows that supervisors who hold competing demands together help employees make both moves. They do so partly by building employees' confidence that they can learn AI. For hotels and tourism economies seeking to digitize service, leadership on the front line deserves as much attention as the technology itself.

A few limitations are worth mentioning. First, all data came from employees. Time separation and the method-variance tests reduce but do not remove same-source concerns (Podsakoff et al., 2012). Future studies should obtain supervisor ratings or system logs of AI use. Second, the three-wave design supports temporal order but not causal inference. Experimental or intervention studies could test whether training supervisors in PLB raises self-efficacy. Third, the study was conducted in Turkish hotels. Cultural norms around hierarchy may shape how employees construe paradoxical behavior, so replication in other contexts would test generality. Finally, the significant direct effects indicate that other mechanisms are at work. Psychological safety and paradox mindset are plausible candidates that future research could test alongside self-efficacy.

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