



INVESTIGATING THE EFFECTS OF EPISTEMIC CURIOSITY ON INNOVATIVE WORK BEHAVIOUR: A STUDY ON HOTEL EMPLOYEES

Abstract

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Purpose - The main aim is to find out the effects of interest and deprivation type of epistemic curiosity (EC) on innovative work behaviour (IWB) in this study. In addition, the IWB and EC levels of the employees of five-star hotels are compared considering their personal characteristics.

Design - Hypotheses were tested within correlational research and causal-comparative research design.

Methodology - This research utilized quantitative research methods.

Originality of the Research- The current study focuses on a relatively unexplored area, EC in hospitality enterprises and its relationships with IWB.

Findings - Data were collected from 247 hotel employees working in five-star hotels in Antalya, Turkey. The results showed that the IWB and EC levels of hotel employees were high. Moreover, the interest and deprivation type of curiosity affected their IWB. In addition, differences in EC level were found in relation to their personal characteristics. However, no difference was found in IWB levels.

Keywords Epistemic curiosity, interest-type, deprivation-type, innovative work behaviour, hotel employees

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INTRODUCTION

Due to the strength of global competition in dynamic environments, the survival and competitiveness of an enterprise are mainly limited to its capacity to extend innovation (West & Farr, 1989; Thurlings et al., 2015). Organizations recognize that they need to create or incorporate innovative concepts that can come up with new methods, goods or services to achieve or secure competitive advantage (Jones, 1996; Young, 2012). In markets where complexity and uncertainty prevail, the survival, development or growth of businesses can be realized by emphasizing the innovative side of the enterprises (Yuan & Woodman, 2010). To assure their internal processes and interactions with customers or consumers, companies require new products and approaches (Messmann & Mulder, 2020). Hotel enterprises consider the supreme role of employees' innovative work behaviour (IWB) as they make every effort to exist in an extremely competitive environment where the satisfaction of customers and meeting customers' heterogeneous needs and demands are essential (Jan et al., 2021; Slåtten & Mehmetoglu, 2015; Stock, 2015).

In the hospitality industry, organizations have recently acknowledged the value of IWB in generating unique and entertaining experiences for customers to meet their needs (Stock et al., 2017). Employee innovative behaviour has become an important part of corporate innovation at various levels (Shih & Susanto, 2011). The idea that employees' IWB will result in a new product, service or design will also contribute to the innovation, effectiveness and preservation of businesses (de Jong & den Hartog, 2010). Specifically, this is mostly related to employees' willingness to be a part of creating new ideas which ultimately end up in the realization of them (Dorenbosch et al., 2005; Janssen, 2000). Therefore, it is crucial for hotel enterprises that their employees, especially those working at the frontline can follow new technologies closely, adapt to new ideas, and implement innovative and creative applications at the workplace. Accordingly, they can fulfil their roles in ensuring organizational innovation (Coelho et al., 2011; Jan et al., 2021).

There are numerous studies on IWB. These studies are focusing mainly on enhancing IWB (M. Stoffers et al., 2014; Shanker et al., 2017), its mediating role (Thneibat & Sweis, 2022; Vuong, 2022; van Zyl et al., 2021) and figuring out the determinants of the behaviour (Eid & Agag, 2020; Ramamoorthy et al., 2005; Verschuere et al., 2014). In other words, researchers are increasingly interested in learning more about intervening mechanisms, relationships, and long-term impacts of IWB (Messmann & Mulder, 2020). However, more study is needed to increase knowledge of the individual antecedents of such behaviours, including motivation, because innovative behaviour is heavily reliant on it (Saether, 2019).

Intrinsic motivation is the inner motivator that drives human behaviour. Intrinsic motivation theory stresses that employees' primary goals are to pursue job enjoyment, intuitive happiness, a sense of accomplishment, curiosity, and struggle. Obtaining financial benefits is not the major focus of explaining the employees' certain behaviours. Litman (2008) emphasises that employees focus on the intrinsic reward which can be accomplished by reaching a goal without other benefits. Cerasoli et al. (2014) have discovered a significant connection between intrinsic motivation and employee creativity. Furthermore, Fischer et al. (2019) have determined that intrinsic motivation and employees' creativity and innovation have positively correlated. The researchers have stated that employees who are driven by intrinsic motivation voluntarily devote themselves to their work, actively investigate and dig for new thoughts and ideas, and support the development of innovative behaviour. Wu and Parker (2012) explicitly state that curiosity as a source of intrinsic motivation leads employees to identify new knowledge and search for opportunities. Curiosity may be a crucial factor in explaining particular human behaviours, which can help to promote proactive behaviours in the workplace. Accordingly, defined as the motivation or "passion for information" that drives people to learn new things, fill knowledge gaps, and solve issues that need knowledge epistemic curiosity (EC) can be evaluated as an important variable that needs further research within IWB theory. In keeping with intrinsic motivation theory, this study is an attempt to explain the relationships between EC and IWB. There is a dearth of research examining the relationship between employee EC and IWB. To fill this void, this study is an attempt to reveal the effects of sub-factors (interest & deprivation) of EC on IWB. Moreover, EC and IWB levels of hotel employees are aimed to be determined. Within the framework of the study, hotel employees' EC and IWB are also investigated based on demographic and personal characteristics.

This article is organized in the following manner. Past research is reviewed to contribute to the conceptual development of the research first. Then, the methodology of the research has been fully explained. Last, results are presented with concluding remarks and recommendations for future directions.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

1.1. Innovative Work Behaviour

IWB is defined as "an employee's intentional introduction or application of new ideas, products, processes, and procedures to his or her work role, work unit, or organization" (Yuan & Woodman, 2010, 324). Conceptually, it refers to employee behaviours that make significant contributions to corporate innovation (De Spiegelaele et al., 2016). According to de Jong & den Hartog (2010), IWB is evaluated as a concept that encompasses a series of behaviours that includes generating ideas, finding supporters for the ideas and helping to implement them. It focuses on the behaviours of employees individually, increases the efficiency and productivity of the organization, affects the competitiveness of the organization positively and contributes to its survival for a long time (Escribá-Carda et al., 2017; Pieterse et al., 2010; West et al., 2004). Furthermore, it is critical for an organization's success in a dynamic environment because it aids in the successful development of organizational processes, the resolution of organizational challenges, and the maintenance of competitive advantage (Miao et al., 2018).

Organizations and teams should seek ingenuity and innovation to thrive and prosper in the face of rapid market change and fierce competition (Shin et al., 2012). IWB comes into prominence as a critical notion, especially for hotel enterprises due to the continuing competition in the industry. Employees who engage in such behaviours will contribute to the success of the company as a whole as well as benefit themselves by allowing them to complete tasks more efficiently (Ramamoorthy et al., 2005). Yet, it is a complicated process involving various steps. As a term, IWB and creativity at the workplace are used interchangeably. However, IWB differs from creativity by involving complex actions such as creating, promoting and implementing novel ideas (Madrid et al., 2014). Janssen (2000; 2004) evaluates that IWB involves the following steps: idea creation, idea promotion and idea implementation. However, de Jong and Den Hartog (2010) have argued that there is a slight difference between these dimensions. Due to the broad nature of the concept of idea creation, they believe that IWB encompasses four dimensions: idea exploration, idea generation, idea championing, and idea implementation. The IWB process generally starts with the recognition of problems that need to be addressed or the discovery of an opportunity. Then, in the idea generation process, identified solutions are asserted for the defined problems. Following the generation of ideas, the process known as idea championing begins. Ideas or solutions need to be promoted to find support within a group, team, or organization. In the idea championing process, the main aim is to build coalitions and break the resistance towards a created idea, product, process, or implementation (de Jong & den Hartog, 2010). The last step or in other words, the end of the journey (Perry-Smith & Mannucci, 2017, 4) is coined as idea implementation. Created ideas are turned into concrete objects, procedures, prototypes or models in the implementation stage (Kanter, 1988; Scott & Bruce, 1994).

In the hospitality industry, organizations have recently recognized the value of IWB in generating distinctive and entertaining experiences for customers to satisfy their expectations (Stock et al., 2017). Many studies have been done in various industries to acquire a better knowledge of the aspects that affect employees' IWB. However, given the existing literature, there have been calls for greater research on IWB of hotel employees in order to find hidden features of the concept (Jan et al., 2021). To promote IWB among their employees, hotel enterprises are looking for strategies. Accordingly, the underlying mechanisms of such behaviours should be uncovered to boost IWB in the workplace.

1.2. Epistemic Curiosity

EC is the desire to acquire new knowledge, in other words, it can be simply defined as the “drive to know” (Berlyne, 1954; Loewenstein, 1994; Kashdan & Silvia, 2009). It is a critical motivation which drives individuals to learn new things, solve problems or fulfil information gaps (Mussel, 2010) and it is mostly triggered by distinguishing an information gap in their knowledge. It’s a term that’s commonly used to describe people’s desire to engage in intense cognitive tasks. There are circumstances where they should master their skills or improve their performance (Von Stumm et al., 2011). Curiosity-driven people stretch or broaden their experience, skills, and goal-directed effort by actively searching out novel and challenging activities (Kashdan & Steger, 2007).

The literature acknowledges the importance of EC. In literature, the basic motivation that activates EC is tried to be explained with the theory of conflict and information gaps. According to the theory, the discordance between the inherent drive for exploration and the knowledge gaps caused by the lack of knowledge stimulates EC (Noordewier & van Dijk, 2017). Curiosity becomes rigid when the gap gets smaller (Litman et al., 2005). According to Loewenstein (1994), this can be explained by the density of the desire for knowledge. When an individual concentrate on a smaller information gap, the desire for knowledge intensifies. Thus, EC arises to fulfil the mentioned information gap. Assuming that curiosity is “knowledge hunger,” pieces of knowledge widen the gap; it is claimed that desire disappears as knowledge increases (Kang et al., 2009). As a result, epistemic curiosity arose with two distinct impulses: the first is an interest in what is new in the world, and the second is to compensate for the individual’s lack of understanding about any subject. Thus, EC is classified into two: interest-type curiosity and deprivation-type curiosity.” Interest-type curiosity is related to exploring unfamiliar situations and acquiring new knowledge. It focuses on the emotional pleasure that people seek when they make discoveries, as a state of pleasure-seeking and intellectual mastery acquired through the acquisition of new information (Litman & Jimerson, 2004). However, deprivation-type curiosity is linked to the desire to reduce uncertainty and fulfil the information gaps (Hardy et al., 2017; Litman et al., 2010). It only manifests itself when there is a deficit in learning new information, which causes a sense of inadequacy. Being the antecedent of scientific discoveries and evaluated as a positive trait that needs to be reinforced especially in education (Celik et al., 2016), curiosity has recently been heavily investigated. EC is a vital variable for studies conducted on psychology (Litman & Spielberger, 2003; Litman, 2008; Lauriola et al., 2015), education (Elmalı Özsaray & Eren, 2018; Eren, 2009; Eren & Coskun, 2016; Hassan et al., 2015) and philosophy. Yet there is a limited number of studies (Celik et al., 2016; Ishaq et al., 2019; Law et al., 2016) specially designed for adapting the concept to the workplace. In these studies, the core of the study is defined as workplace curiosity which can be assessed as a concept derived from EC.

1.3. The Relationship Between Epistemic Curiosity and Innovative Work Behaviour

With a particular focus on the behaviours of employees, IWB increases the efficiency of the organization, positively affects competitiveness, and contributes to its survival and growth in the future (Escribá-Carda et al., 2017; West et al., 2004). As a vital concept for hospitality enterprises, it is important to concentrate on the antecedents of such behaviours. Yet, little attention has been paid to finding individual factors. Accordingly, it is necessary to explore the individual factors that reveal IWB to prompt or encourage such behaviours. Categorized as an individual factor, curiosity in the workplace can affect the organization. Curiosity is described as a person’s proactive willingness to learn information in order to develop, sustain, or bridge gaps in knowledge that are useful in problem-solving (Hardy et al., 2017). De Alencar & Fleith (2004) have mentioned that such personality traits as courage and curiosity facilitate individual creativity. According to Harrison et al., (2011), curiosity contributes to employees’ adaptation process. The researcher has found that curious newcomers adapt to the organization faster. That can be assessed as a critical finding for the hospitality enterprises in which seasonal employment and high turnover rate emerge especially in top seasons. In their studies, Horng et al., (2005) have revealed that teachers with a high level of curiosity are more creative. In a similar study, Kaur & Gupta (2016) found that curiosity positively affects IWB. Messmann & Mulder (2012) have stated that curiosity is an important driver for organizational innovation, especially in the problem-solving process. Celik et al. (2016) have examined curiosity from a different perspective and determined that curiosity positively predicts employees’ innovative behaviours. Furthermore, each type of curiosity can affect the IWB of the employees. According to Hardy et al., (2017), interest-type curiosity has a direct effect on employees’ information-seeking, while deprivation-type curiosity has a significant impact on idea development. Information-seeking behaviour and idea development are both dimensions of IWB. Moreover, Litman & Mussel (2013) have stated that one of the dimensions of EC, interest-type is directly linked to idea exploration which can be evaluated as the initial step of IWB. However, these studies only look at some aspects of creativity, not the entire process. Accordingly, taking the aforementioned studies into consideration, we posit that:

H_{1a}: Interest-type curiosity has a significant effect on hotel employees’ IWB.

H_{1b}: Deprivation-type curiosity has a significant effect on hotel employees’ IWB.

Considering the existing literature, some further hypotheses are developed within the framework of the study. Taking EC into account, various results are reported in the literature. Lauriola et al., (2015) have determined that there is no difference in EC levels in terms of gender or age. However, Litman & Spielberger (2003) have found a slight difference in terms of gender.

Early studies indicated that differences could be identified in terms of gender and age (Rossing, 1978). Nevertheless, that needs further evidence. Taking IWB into account, there is a common tendency to accept men engaging in more innovative behaviours (de Jong & den Hartog, 2010). According to Luksyte et al., (2018), the propensity for identical efforts to be seen as much more creative may also be explained by gendered stereotypes. However, some studies have reported no difference in terms of gender (Li et al., 2020). Therefore, even if they are not deemed to be crucial, it may still be feasible to contribute to both theories by assessing the employees' degrees of EC and IWB in terms of demographic information. Within the framework of this study, developed hypotheses are indicated as follows:

H2a: There is a significant difference in interest-type curiosity levels of hotel employees in terms of their demographic and personal characteristics.

H2b: There is a significant difference in deprivation-type curiosity levels of hotel employees in terms of their demographic and personal characteristics.

H2c: There is a significant difference in overall epistemic curiosity levels of hotel employees in terms of their demographic and personal characteristics.

H2d: There is a significant difference in innovative work behaviour levels of hotel employees in terms of their demographic and personal characteristics.

3. METHODOLOGY

In this study, quantitative research methodologies were used. To examine the proposed *H1a* and *H1b* hypotheses, a correlational research design was chosen, which is generally used for figuring out the relationships between two or more variables. Further, causal-comparative design is preferred to compare the levels of EC and IWB of hotel employees in terms of their personal properties indicated as *H2a*, *H2b*, *H2c*, and *H2d*.

3.1. Data Collection and the Characteristics of the Sample

The effects of two types of EC, interest and deprivation, on IWB, were investigated in this study. The research was carried out at five-star hotels. Five-star hotels have a common organizational structure that is at the pinnacle of the star rating system. They must operate in line with innovation and act with the duty to keep up with the ever-changing agenda by closely tracking the changing consumer profile within the context of service quality (Shi et al., 2021) and employees are expected to adapt to an ever-changing environment. Thus, the population of the study was formed by hotel employees working at five-star hotels in Antalya, Turkey. According to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism statistics, there are 358 five-star hotels in Antalya. However, due to Covid 19 regulations, only a few hotel enterprises continued to provide service between August and November 2020. Most hotels shut their doors since it was difficult to fulfil the appropriate procedures to serve clients during the epidemic. Further, it was not possible to reach the exact number of hotels. Thus, a convenience sampling technique was applied in order to collect data. During the data collection procedure, the researchers made face to face interviews with 20 hotel managers. Only 10 of them were willing to take part in the research. Upon the managers' request, an online questionnaire was applied to the hotels. 247 five-star hotel employees were reached via an online questionnaire. Thus, the sample of the research was confined to 247 hotel employees. The demographic characteristics of the sample are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Profile (N=247)

		N	%
Age	18-22	25	10.1
	23-27	33	13.4
	28-32	38	15.4
	33-37	52	21.1
	38-42	48	19.4
	43 +	51	20.6
Gender	Female	73	29.6
	Male	174	70.4
Marital Status	Single	133	53.8
	Married	114	46.2

		N	%
Education	Elementary school	37	15
	High school	77	31.2
	Vocational school	43	17.4
	Undergraduate	76	30.8
	Post-graduate	14	5.7
Tenure in Tourism Industry	1 year or less	10	4
	2-7 years	70	28.3
	8-14 years	60	24.3
	15+	107	43.3
Experience in Current Position	1 year or less	42	17
	2-7 years	133	53.8
	8-14 years	44	17.8
	15+	28	11.3
Monthly Income	0-2324 ₺	42	17
	2325-3500 ₺	95	38.5
	3501-4500 ₺	33	13.4
	4501 ₺ or more	77	31.2

Table 1 indicates that 52 (21%) out of 247 hotel employees were between 33-37 years old. 51 (20.6%) of them were aged between 43 and more. 48 (19.4%) of them were between 38-42. Out of 247 participants, 73 (29.6%) of them were female, and 174 (70.4%) of them were male. Besides, 133 (53.8%) of them were single and 114 (46.2%) of them were married. Taking their educational status into consideration, it is clear that 77 (31.2%) of them had a high school degree. 76 out of 247 participants had an undergraduate degree. 107 (43.3%) participants had 15 years or more of experience in the tourism industry. 70 (28.3%) of them have been working at tourism facilities for 2 to 7 years. Out of 247 hotel employees, 133 of them (53.8%) have been working in the current position for 2 to 7 years and 44 (17.8%) of them had 8-14 years of experience at the current position. Lastly, 95 (38.5%) out of 247 hotel employees had 2325-3500 ₺ monthly average income and 11 (32.2%) of them had 4501 ₺ or more monthly income.

3.2. Survey Instrument

A self-administrated questionnaire was utilised in the study. In the first part, demographic and personal information of the participants (age, gender, marital status, educational status, tenure in the tourism sector, experience in their current position, income) were obtained with seven close-ended questions. In the second part, EC and IWB scales took place. Developed by Litman & Spielberger (2003) and tested its reliability by Litman (2008), EC Scale's validity and reliability analysis was carried out by Eren (2009) in Turkish literature. The Cronbach's Alpha value for the scale was determined to be 0.80. the value was calculated to be 0.79 in our study. IWB Scale was developed by de Jong & den Hartog (2010). Arslan (2019) conducted its validity and reliability analysis and its Cronbach's Alpha was determined as 0.90. Cronbach's Alpha was determined to be 0.88 in this research. To ensure consistency, all items were scored on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

3.3. Data Analysis

The collected data was analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics 20. First, a descriptive analysis was conducted to determine the IWB and EC levels of hotel employees in the study. Second, correlations among variables (IWB and interest & deprivation types of EC) were analysed. As the obtained data showed normal distribution, Pearson correlation analysis was used. Then, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to test hypotheses H1a and H1b. Furthermore, in order to test H2a, H2b, H2c and H2d, t-test and ANOVA Tukey tests were used.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Descriptive Findings

Table 2 shows the arithmetic mean and standard deviation for each item in both scales.

Table 2: Arithmetic Mean and Standard Deviation of IWB and EC Scales

Items		M	SD
Innovative Work Behaviour Levels of Participants		4.12	.605
Innovative Work Behaviour	I pay attention to issues that are not part of my daily work	3.81	1.032
	I wonder how things can be improved	4.38	.739
	I search out new working methods, techniques or instruments	4.32	.791
	I generate original solutions for problems	4.26	.762
	I find new approaches to execute tasks	4.21	.798
	I make important organizational members enthusiastic for innovative ideas	3.97	.947
	I attempt to convince people support an innovative idea	3.91	.954
	I systematically introduce innovative ideas into work practices	3.94	.973
	I contribute to the implementation of new ideas	4.26	.804
	I put effort in the development of new things	4.23	.774
Epistemic Curiosity Levels of Participants		4.07	.546
Epistemic Curiosity	Enjoy exploring new ideas.	4.45	.814
	Find it fascinating to learn new information.	4.58	.693
	Enjoy learning about subjects that are unfamiliar to me.	4.62	.717
	Enjoy discussing abstract concepts.	3.57	1.075
	Learn something new, like to find out more about it.	4.49	.721
	Hours on a problem because I can't rest without answer.	4.11	.904
	Brood for a long time to solve problem.	3.66	1.014
	Conceptual problems keep me awake thinking.	3.99	.874
	Frustrated if I can't figure out problem, so I work harder.	3.72	1.125
	Work like a fiend at problems that I feel must be solved	3.52	1.118

M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation

Considering the IWB Scale in Table 2, it can be stated that hotel employees (M=4.12; SD=.605) engaged in higher levels of IWB. Looking at the arithmetic means of each scale item in detail, it could be observed that the item *I wonder how things can be improved* (M=4.38; SD=.739) had the highest average. *I search out new working methods, techniques or instruments* (M=4.32; SD=.791) had the second highest average amongst others. *I pay attention to issues that are not part of your daily work* (M=3.81; SD=1.032) had the lowest average. When considering EC Scale, it can be expressed that the EC levels of hotel employees (M=4.07; SD=.546) were high. It was also observed that *I enjoy learning about subjects that are unfamiliar to me* (M=4.62; SD=.717) had the highest average. *I find it fascinating to learn new information* (M=4.58; SD=.693) had the second highest average. *I work like a fiend at problems that I feel must be solved* (M=3.52; SD=1.118) had the lowest average among other items.

4.2. Findings on Modelling Factors Affecting Hotel Employees' IWB

The arithmetic means, the standard deviation for each variable, and correlation coefficients among variables were determined in this study using descriptive and correlation analyses, and the results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Arithmetic Means, Standard Deviations and Correlation Coefficients (N=247)

	M	SD	1	2	3
IWB (1)	4.12	.60559	-		
Interest-type Curiosity (2)	4.34	.58610	.569*	-	
Deprivation-type Curiosity (3)	3.80	.72549	.490*	.380*	-

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation

Pearson correlation analysis was used since the data had a normal distribution. Taking Table 3 into account, it can be stated that there were correlations among variables. Between IWB and interest-type curiosity, the correlation coefficient was .569 $p < 0.01$. Also, IWB was positively correlated with deprivation-type curiosity ($r = .490$; $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, a positive relationship was found between interest-type and deprivation-type curiosity ($r = .380$; $p < 0.01$). Because multicollinearity among independent variables is a crucial issue for future regression analysis, the relationships between variables were regulated, and the findings acquired were not deemed to be strong correlations among variables. As a result, further research was carried out. Furthermore, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value was discovered to be 1.169, which falls between acceptable values because the value achieved in the study was less than the proposed threshold of 10. (Hair et al., 1992).

To test the hypotheses, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted. We hypothesized that both interest-type and deprivation-type of curiosity would have a significant effect on hotel employees' IWB. As indicated in Table 4, the results of the multiple linear regression analysis supported *H1a* and *H1b*.

Table 4: Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Results for Hypotheses

Model	B	S (bj)	t	p	F	R ²	p
(Constant)			4.696	0.00	85.135	.41	0.00
Interest-type Curiosity	.447	.055	8.414	0.00			
Deprivation-type Curiosity	.320	.044	6.023	0.00			

Evaluating the results in Table 4, it can be stated that the model is meaningful. Interest-type and deprivation type curiosity have significant effects on IWB ($F = 85.135$, $p < .01$). In other words, both interest-type ($p < .01$) and deprivation-type curiosity ($p < .01$) affect IWB significantly. *B* coefficients also explain that a unit of increase in interest-type curiosity leads 45% increase in IWB of hotel employees. Besides, a unit of increase in deprivation-type curiosity leads 32% increase in IWB. Thus, it can be expressed that *H1a* and *H1b* are supported.

4.3. Findings on Hotel Employees' IWB and EC Levels in Terms of Demographic and Personal Characteristics

Since the data had a normal distribution, the t-test and ANOVA tests were employed to evaluate the differences between demographic characteristics, IWB and EC levels of hotel employees. Table 5 presents the t-test results.

Table 5: T-test Results (N=247)

Variables		M	SD	t	p-value
IWB	Female	4.03	.63147	-1.533	.127
	Male	4.16	.59210		
EC	Female	4.04	.56201	-.482	.630
	Male	4.08	.54072		
Interest-type	Female	4.37	.57826	.569	.570
	Male	4.32	.59047		
Deprivation-type	Female	3.71	.72483	-1.188	.236
	Male	3.83	.72491		

M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation

According to Table 5, it is clear that there was no change in the IWB and EC levels of hotel employees. As a result, it can be inferred that both female and male hotel employees exhibited similar IWB and their EC levels did not differ based on gender. Furthermore, to find out the differences in IWB and EC levels of hotel employees in terms of their age and experience in the tourism sector; ANOVA Tukey tests were conducted. Results are given in Table 6.

Table 6: ANOVA Tukey Test Results

Age	IWB	SS	df	MS	F	p
	Between Groups	2.097	5	.419	1.147	.336
	Within Groups	88.120	241	.366		
	EC	SS	df	MS	F	p
	Between Groups	1.218	5	.244	.813	.541
	Within Groups	72.175	241	.299		
	Interest -type	SS	df	MS	F	p
	Between Groups	1.138	5	.228	.658	.656
	Within Groups	83.366	241	.346		
	Deprivation-type	SS	df	MS	F	p
	Between Groups	1.863	5	.373	.704	.621
	Within Groups	127.615	.241	.530		
Experience in Tourism Sector	IWB	SS	df	MS	F	p
	Between Groups	2.619	3	.873	2.422	0.67
	Within Groups	87.598	243	.360		
	EC	SS	df	MS	F	p
	Between Groups	2.373	3	.791	2.707	.046
	Within Groups	71.019	243	.292		
	Post Hoc Tests	Experience	Experience	Average difference	SE	p
		2-7 years	Less than 1 year	-.15714	.18276	.825
			8-14 years	-.06548	.09511	.901
			15+	-.22471*	.08311	.037
	Interest-type	SS	df	MS	F	p
	Between Groups	2.514	3	.342	2.484	.061
	Within Groups	81.989	243	.560		
	Deprivation-type	SS	df	MS	F	p
	Between Groups	2.378	3	.793	1.516	.211
Within Groups	127.100	243	.523			
Experience in Current Position	IWB	SS	df	MS	F	p
	Between Groups	3.079	4	.770	2.137	0.77
	Within Groups	70.098	242	.290		
	EC	SS	df	MS	F	p
	Between Groups	3.295	4	.824	2.844	.025
	Within Groups	70.098	242	.290		
	Post Hoc Tests	Experience	Experience	Average difference	SE	p
		2-4 years	Less than 1 year	-.11738	.14661	.930
			5-7 years	-.09755	.12323	.933
			8-10 years	-.25174	.10990	.151
			11+	-.26885*	.08575	.016
	Interest-type	SS	df	MS	F	p
	Between Groups	3.209	4	.802	2.388	052
	Within Groups	81.295	242	.336		
	Deprivation-type	SS	df	MS	F	p
	Between Groups	8.133	4	2.033	4.055	.003
	Within Groups	121.345	242	.501		
	Post Hoc Tests	Experience	Experience	Average difference	SE	p
	8-10 years	Less than 1 year	.19505	.20662	.879	
		2-4 years	.43903*	.14460	.022	
		5-7 years	.52359*	.17823	.030	
		11+	.13211	.13494	.865	

SS= sum of Squares; MS= Mean Square

*the mean difference is significant at the level 0.05 level.

There was no significant difference in hotel employees' IWB depending on their ages, experiences in the tourism sector, or experiences in their current position, according to Table 6. As a consequence, all of the participants had identical IWB. However, it is evident that there were substantial differences in their EC levels in terms of their personal and demographic characteristics ($p < .05$). Looking at the ANOVA Tukey test results, there was no difference in terms of their ages. Therefore, we may conclude that hotel employees, regardless of age, exhibited similar EC. Yet, taking their experience in the tourism sector into consideration, we could observe that there were statistically significant differences in participants' EC levels. Participants with 15 years or more experience had higher levels of EC than participants with 2-7 years of experience. Among all groups, participants with 15 years or more experience ($M=4.17$) had the highest level of EC and participants with 2-7 years of experience had the lowest ($M=3.95$). Additionally, a statistically significant difference in their EC levels was found when considering their experience in the current position. Participants working in the same position for 11 years or more had a higher level of EC than participants with 2-4 years of experience. Among all groups, participants with 11 years or more experience in their current position had the highest ($M= 4.17$) on the other hand, participants with 2-4 years of experience in current position had the lowest ($M=3.90$) levels of EC.

5. DISCUSSION

The primary objective of the present study is to find out the effects of interest and deprivation type of curiosity on hotel employees' IWB. Furthermore, hotel employees' EC and IWB levels are compared in terms of gender, age, tourism sector experience, and experience in their current position. First, the IWB and EC levels of hotel employees have been determined. According to the obtained results, both IWB and EC levels of hotel employees are high. Taking the existing literature (Afsar & Badir, 2017; Kim & Koo, 2017; Afsar et al., 2019) into consideration, it can be stated that our results are consistent with the previous studies. This can be explained by the nature of the works in the hospitality industry. Numerous jobs in hotels can directly affect the customers' expectations and satisfaction. Thus, being ready for the unexpected needs and demands of customers, hotel employees should investigate the improvable aspects of their jobs, and easily recognize the problems with the tasks assigned. As recognizing the problems at the workplace is the first step of IWB, a high level of IWB is an expected result. This result can also be explained by issues such as the company's vision, empowerment strategies or commitment (Slåtten & Mehmetoglu, 2011). Apart from other studies, this result can be related to the curiosity levels of employees. Curiosity, as one of the individual factors, might cover the desire for information for the creation of original ideas and problem resolution (Bani-Melhem et al., 2020). Taking their EC levels into account, it can be expressed that hotel employees' EC levels are high. Our findings are in line with the other studies (Bani-Melhem et al., 2020; Jabeen, 2020) in the literature. EC is the drive for seeking out novel ideas and exploring situations that are complicated and uncertain. Hospitality is a different industry where high interaction with customers can lead to the arousal of various problems which need immediate intervention. Besides, the nature of jobs and tasks assigned to the hotel employees should be updated permanently. Accordingly, employees working in hotels should be curious enough to keep up with the changes that occurred. According to Huang (2021), curious employees are necessary to find a connection between themselves and the ideas of others, encourage the sharing and integration of knowledge, experience and knowledge, and receive useful suggestions and feedback from superiors or colleagues, thereby implementing innovative ideas and innovative ideas.

Secondly, it is determined that interest and deprivation type of epistemic curiosity have a significant and positive effect on the IWB of hotel employees. In their study, Hardy et al., (2017) determined that both interest and deprivation type curiosity had an effect on creative problem-solving and the creative performance of employees. The researchers discovered that whereas interest-type curiosity is associated with employee creative performance, deprivation-type curiosity has a significant impact on solution quality and originality in creative problem-solving behaviour. Although creativity and IWB are distinct concepts, the connection between them is apparent. Celik et al., (2016) have found that workplace curiosity (derived from EC) was a positive predictor of innovative behaviours of individuals. Bani-Melhem et al., (2020) have determined that curiosity significantly and positively predicted IWB. Jabeen (2020) has demonstrated that there is a significant relationship between EC and IWB. Our findings are consistent with these studies. According to Loewenstein (1994: 79), there is a direct link between curiosity and creativity. The researcher also stated that the failure to identify a positive relationship between curiosity and creativity would be a disturbing outcome. According to Van Kleef et al., (2012), EC at work is a sign of employees' desire to get, develop and maintain accurate information on work-related issues. Besides, providing an attentional focus on task-related issues in work settings, EC enables employees to produce new ideas for solving problems (Chang & Shih, 2019). From this point of view, we can infer that the EC of employees as a personal trait is an important drive for employees to reveal their IWB. Besides, curiosity is a concept which can be linked to cognitive engagement and openness to novel ideas and curious individuals like discovering new things, and enjoy learning and thinking (Celik et al., 2016). Furthermore, employees that are more enthusiastic about their jobs are more likely to participate in the process of acquiring new information and expertise, which aids them in identifying work-related difficulties (Hardy et al., 2017).

Lastly, IWB and EC levels of hotel employees are compared in terms of their personal and demographic characteristics. The results show that there is no difference in IWB levels of hotel employees in terms of their gender, age, experience in the tourism sector and experience in their current position. Our study findings run counter to the previous studies in the literature. According

to de Jong & den Hartog (2010), men were more active in engaging IWB in the workplace than women. Imran et al., (2011) have found that gender had a moderator effect on IWB. Hernaus et al. (2019) have focused on the relationship between age and IWB and found that there was a significant difference between older and younger employees' IWB. However, researchers have not determined a specific difference in terms of organizational tenure of the employees. Taking the data obtained from comparing EC levels of hotel employees in terms of their demographic and personal characteristics into account, there are certain differences. According to the t-test results, both male and female hotel employees' EC levels are similar. Thus, we can infer that both male and female hotel employees exhibit similar levels of EC. Furthermore, there is no difference in terms of age. In a study conducted by Eren & Coskun (2016), no statistical difference was detected in EC levels of students in terms of gender and age. Litman et al. (2010) have determined that there was no significant difference in non-student individuals' EC levels in terms of gender and age. Our study results are consistent with the mentioned studies. However, differences in terms of experience in the tourism sector (tenure) and experience in the current position are determined in the study. There are studies (Koo & Choi, 2010; Hassan et al., 2015) in the literature opposite to obtained findings in our study. This may be related to other variables that are not the focus of this study. Besides, employees' age can be evaluated as an important variable that needs to be addressed. Furthermore, organizational support or organizational innovativeness can be the reason for the relationship between tenure and epistemic curiosity. Yet, these comments need empirical support.

6. CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In this study, it was aimed to find out the effects of interest and deprivation type of EC on IWB of hotel employees. In addition, their levels of EC and IWB were compared in terms of demographic variables. Accordingly, it is found that interest and deprivation-type curiosity have a significant effect on their IWB. Furthermore, their IWB and EC levels are high. No significant difference is determined in IWB levels of hotel employees. Yet, there are differences in EC levels of hotel employees when compared in terms of their demographic and personal characteristics.

Considering our study findings, it can be stated that our research makes theoretical contributions to the relevant literature in various ways. First, this study advances IWB research by finding out its relations with EC. EC is an endeavour that needs further investigation, particularly within the framework of organizational behaviour and management studies in tourism. Accordingly, our study findings contribute to both EC and IWB theories by focusing on the effects of both dimensions of EC (interest and deprivation type) on IWB. Secondly, the EC and IWB levels of hotel employees are examined and results indicate that their EC and IWB levels are high. Obtained findings can provide a basis for further studies to expand the scope since our study is limited to hotel employees. Future studies may focus on different sectors active in the tourism industry. They can utilize our findings to a make comparison. Finally, the EC scale was employed for the first time in a tourism study using a sample made up of Turkish hotel employees. The scale has been widely used in educational research in Turkish literature. However, no other study concentrating on EC in tourism and management research fields has been reached in the national literature.

There are several practical implications that need to be addressed. First, managers and employers in the hospitality industry must differentiate their companies from competitors because they are part of a massive industry. Thus, they have to put special emphasis on their employees. They rely on human resources to compete with other businesses by highlighting the innovative aspects (Pelit & Katircioglu, 2022). Given the importance of IWB in the hospitality sector, human resources managers may identify candidates who will contribute to organizational innovation by asking questions throughout the recruiting process to assess their curiosity levels. Furthermore, managers could nurture the EC of employees by organizing training sessions. Human resource managers can also form knowledge-sharing groups. These groups can be formed with participants from a variety of departments, both frontline and back-office, to share their ideas on case studies, which will pique their curiosity. This can also affect their IWB. Secondly, this research can help developing a framework for human resource strategies and practices focused on enhancing individual motivation to follow new avenues of action.

The study also has some limitations. In this study, the relationship between EC and IWB has been tested; future studies may add different variables to test the model. Also, the current study has been premised on data from 247 Turkish hotel employees. With a larger number of participants, the model can be re-tested. Further, future studies can focus on the same topic in a different cultural context. Lastly, our study has been designed with utilizing quantitative research methods. Future studies could use qualitative research methods or mixed methods to get deeper information on both EC and IWB of hotel employees.

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