

## **Measuring the Impact of Entrepreneurial Leadership on Innovative Work Environment within Egyptian Travel Agencies.**

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### **Abstract:**

This study focuses on the impact of entrepreneurial leadership on innovative work environment. It also assesses the significance of entrepreneurial qualities in the travel industry's innovation environment, as well as their impact on employees in travel agencies in terms of innovation environment. It also aids in the clarification of the important entrepreneurial leadership characteristics and its impact on travel agencies innovative environment, The findings show that dimension of leaders' innovativeness has a positive effect on the innovative environment of the Egyptian travel agencies, leaders' creativity has weak positive effect on the innovative environment of the Egyptian travel agencies, leaders' passion has a positive effect on the innovative environment of the Egyptian travel agencies, leaders' tenacity has a negative effect on the innovative environment of the Egyptian travel agencies, the entrepreneurial leadership (bootstrapping) has an insignificant weak positive effect on the innovative environment of the Egyptian travel agencies, it also indicates that the entrepreneurial leadership (taking risk) dimension has an insignificant weak negative effect on the innovative environment of the Egyptian travel agencies, and there is a correlation between the entrepreneurial leadership factors and travel agency's innovative environment.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurial leadership, Innovative work environment, Egyptian travel agencies

### **Introduction :**

Every week, the world witnesses a growing market, a cutting-edge technology breakthrough, a fresh style of marketing, and other innovations that result in substantial improvements and novelties. These new offers and technology open up new possibilities, which we must be prepared for to recognize and exploit (Elshenawy and Elgamma, 2016).

Entrepreneurial leadership plays a key role in exploiting newly emerging opportunities by enhancing and influencing the innovative work environment, which is becoming increasingly relevant in products, services, and work processes for organizations (Faraz et al., 2018; Laguna et al., 2019). Moreover, Malachias and Meirelles (2009) proved that one of the characteristics that determines the innovative profile, which in turn influences firm success, is the work environment for innovation.

Entrepreneurial leadership is a dynamic strategy used by an individual with a behavioural profile that encourages initiative through opportunity-driven behaviour and supports the enhancement of the firm's potential (through strategic resource management) for continuously creating value and establishing a competitive advantage Kesidou and Carter (2014). While Innovative work environment is evidence-based organisational approaches that enable employees at all levels to fully utilise and develop their skills, knowledge, experience, and creativity while also improving corporate performance, engagement, and well-being. if employees of an organization are given an innovative work environment, then it can satisfy them intrinsically as well (Tareq et. al,2020)

In a similar vein, Pirola-Merlo and Mann (2005) noted that organisational creativity, access to necessary resources, and empowerment are all-important. The presence of these resources within a travel agency can boost the environment for innovation and employee performance.

Oldham and Cummings (1996) found that a work environment that is supportive and a leader's style motivated team members intrinsically, and this in turn fostered creativity. Such factors facilitate the learning process for team members and make it easy for them to generate new ideas and share them with the rest of the team.. According to Oksane and Rilla (2009), small entrepreneurial enterprises appear to have problems in commercialising their innovations. Managers and employees must work together to establish an environment that supports innovation fosters a true commitment to achieving competitive advantage in order to overcome the challenges.

In addition, Hansen and Pihl-Thingvad (2019) added that, researchers have indicated the effect of leadership on fostering innovation. They also found a lack of understanding of various leadership styles that could raise the employees 'creativity and innovative behaviour at work. In this context, the goal of this research is to identify the most essential entrepreneurial

leadership traits and their impact on travel agencies innovative environments.

The researchers of the current study aimed at filling the gap in the literature by examining how entrepreneurial leadership influenced the Egyptian travel agencies innovation environment. By doing so, the researchers will also attempt to provide useful implications for both researchers and practitioners in this field.

## **Literature Review:**

### **Entrepreneurial leadership**

Entrepreneurial leadership theory was developed in 2000. Researchers posited that entrepreneurial leadership contributed to new-business success and sustainability (McGrath and MacMillan, 2000). Entrepreneurial leadership, according to Renko (2018), is a leadership style that motivates followers to seek out and utilise entrepreneurial opportunities for value creation. Bullough et al. (2015) explored the relation between entrepreneurial leadership and innovative performance in organizations. In addition, Renko et al. (2015) stated that the criteria used to measure entrepreneurial leadership were: Innovativeness, creativity, passion, tenacity, bootstrapping, vision, as well as risk-taking.

Qi et al. (2019) found that inclusive leadership had a significant impact on employees' innovative behaviour, which was in line with previous research showing the significance of supervisory support in innovative behaviour. Qi et al. (2019) stated that inclusive leadership's support has a positive impact on employee innovative actions suggested that it could play an important role in addressing determinants of innovation. Shaheen (2018) showed that entrepreneurial self-efficacy has an influence on entrepreneurial intent, which in turn affects the behaviour of the entrepreneur toward their employees. Bagheri et al. (2020) results revealed that entrepreneurial leadership practices of CEOs significantly improve employees' innovation work' behaviour. Entrepreneurial leadership practices of CEOs enhance individual employee's creativity self-efficacy. According to Iqbal (2020) managers may boost employees' affective commitment, creative self-efficacy, and psychological protection by modeling entrepreneurial behaviour, which encourages employees to take innovative actions, resulting in increased organisational innovation efficiency.

**Innovative work environment**

According to Central Emergency Response Fund (2000) innovative work environment is the act of introducing and employing new concepts, goods, and/or procedures aimed at solving problems, perceiving things differently, improving productivity and effectiveness, or enhancing the standard of living. Da Poian (2008) described it as a versatile and encouraging environment that provides various opportunities for businesses to emerge and develop.

Despite the importance of the external environment, this study focuses on the internal characteristics of the firm. Internal factors may include both physical and organizational aspects. Mendel (2004) identified a suitable physical environment, clear and fluid communication, a flexible organisational structure, cooperation (confidence), freedom and autonomy, participation, and management activities that stimulate employee participation as predictors of organizational innovation.

According to Barton (1998), more human factors are required to foster innovative efforts, because creativity stems from the opportunity to learn from experts, and an innovative organization necessitates innovative people. People need freedom and autonomy, according to Tucker (2002), in order to promote creative efforts. An innovative culture cannot create a fear of taking risks because failures are part of the learning process.

Barbieri (2004) investigated leadership, internal entrepreneurship, and the innovative environment. All of these elements, according to the author, can be found in management models of innovative organizations. Sluis (2004) emphasized the role of managers as primary drivers of organisational innovation while focusing on the role of culture and environment and the significance of learning and teamwork in these three elements as well. Lichtenthaler and Lichtenthaler (2009) stated that learning and organizational integration are required to establish an atmosphere that allows people to participate in the innovation process. According to Hana (2013), innovation can only thrive if senior management supports it and if an ambitious creative team made up of people who may be termed knowledge employees is assembled. Moreover, Bagheri (2020) and Ghaben and Jaaron (2015) recommended that top executives must create a creative work atmosphere for all employees within the company. Furthermore, improving the industry necessitates a positive internal

environment and inventive culture to inspire employees to think creatively, as well as open-minded and supportive top management to build the challenge and push people to think outside the box.

The study of Li et al. (2020) suggested that the innovative environment of a company mediates the relationship between entrepreneurial leadership and the employees' innovative behavior. Fiates et al., (2010) findings showed that the responsibility for creativity frequently involves managers' ability to take action so that employees can collaborate to create innovation-friendly environment that fosters genuine dedication to achieving competitive advantage.

Entrepreneurial leadership has an important positive impact on employees' innovative work behaviour, according to empirical findings of Li et al. (2020). According to Gilson et al. (2005), Pirola-Merlo and Mann (2004), right work environment was found to help determine the innovativeness of the team.

### **Entrepreneurial leadership and innovative environment**

Barringer and Ireland (2016) stated successful entrepreneurs have passion for their business, client focus, persistence in the face of failure, and execution intelligence., and this will leads to motivating employees to engage in creative activities (Cai et al., 2019). Renko (2018) “highlighted the role of entrepreneurial leadership as “entrepreneurial accelerator” and “entrepreneurial doer”(p.388) which means that entrepreneurial leaders operate as catalysts for their followers to question the status quo, think and act creatively, and take advantage of economic opportunities. Entrepreneurial leaders, on the other hand, operate as role models by participating in entrepreneurial activities themselves, promoting vicarious learning and encouraging their followers to follow in their footsteps.. furthermore, they serve as role models by engaging in entrepreneurial activities (Iqbal and et al., 2020).

According to Kaiser et al. (2008) leaders are critical in promoting employee innovation because they can create the settings and situations that encourage creativity and innovation. Hughes et al. (2008) stated that the role of leadership is essential as catalyst for employee innovative performance; because of their ability to form work environment and manage resource allocation (Lee et al.(2020). Few studies have shown the effect and linkage between entrepreneurial leadership and innovative work environment (Bagheri et al.,2020)

Entrepreneurial actions and behaviours are typically aimed at the surrounding environment; however, it has been suggested that the most relevant behaviours and actions are those that can change the environment itself to accommodate entrepreneurial behaviour, rather than those that are appropriate to the surrounding environment (Frese, 2007). Entrepreneurial behaviour ultimately leads to new technologies, employment prospects, competitiveness, and, new revenue streams (Shaheen, 2018). Newman et al. (2018) indicated that leaders are a prominent source of role modeling due to their managerial position in the organization and their ability to use organizational tools such as incentives to promote positive habits and creating innovative environment

### **Research Methods:**

This study applies the quantitative method where hypotheses were used to explain the causal relations among study variables (Saunders et al., 2016). A semi-structured questionnaire was administered by the researchers to assess two major constructs (Entrepreneurial leadership , Innovative environment) . Using a simple random sampling technique where Sampling frame is accurate and easily accessible population is geographically concentrated in great Cairo and Alexandria, also the sampling frame don't contain relevant strata and periodic patterns according to (Saunders et.al., 2016). . The questionnaire form was disseminated to a sample of 278 travel agencies, with a response rate of 58%. (120 travel agency).

This study's sampling frame is Egyptian travel agencies. A list of The Egyptian travel agencies maintained by the Egyptian Travel Agents Association (ETAA). According to them, there are 1168 category (A) travel agencies in Egypt in 2020. They are spread across 23 of Egypt's 27 governorates. This sample frame is made up of 1008 travel agencies in total.

A simple random sampling technique was used for this sample (travel agencies). It requires randomly selecting a sample from the sampling frame using random number tables and a computer random number generator, such as Research Randomizer (2008).

## Sample size

The actual sample size calculated by the following formula by (Thompson, 2012):

$$n = \frac{N \times p(1-p)}{\left[ \left[ N-1 \times \left( d^2 \div z^2 \right) \right] + p(1-p) \right]}$$

Where N	Population size
z	Standard Z= 1.96 (z value corresponding to the level of confidence required)
d	Error accepted level = 0.05
p	Probability level = 0.50

The suitable sample size is 278 companies, which were randomly selected from the sample frame.

An online questionnaire created with Google forms was used in this study .

### Variables of the study:

The main constructs of the study are shown in figure 1 including entrepreneurial leadership (innovativeness-passion-tenacity-bootstrapping-taking risk) as exogenous (independent) variables and innovative environment as indigenous (dependent) variable.

. The independent variables are taken from the literature review and some variables are also replicated from previous studies' questionnaires of Al-Askari, A. (2011); Bagheri et.al., (2020); Iqbal et al., (2020).

The dependent variable is taken from the literature review and also replicated from previous studies' questionnaires such as Fiates. et al., (2010), Bagheri et al.,(2020).

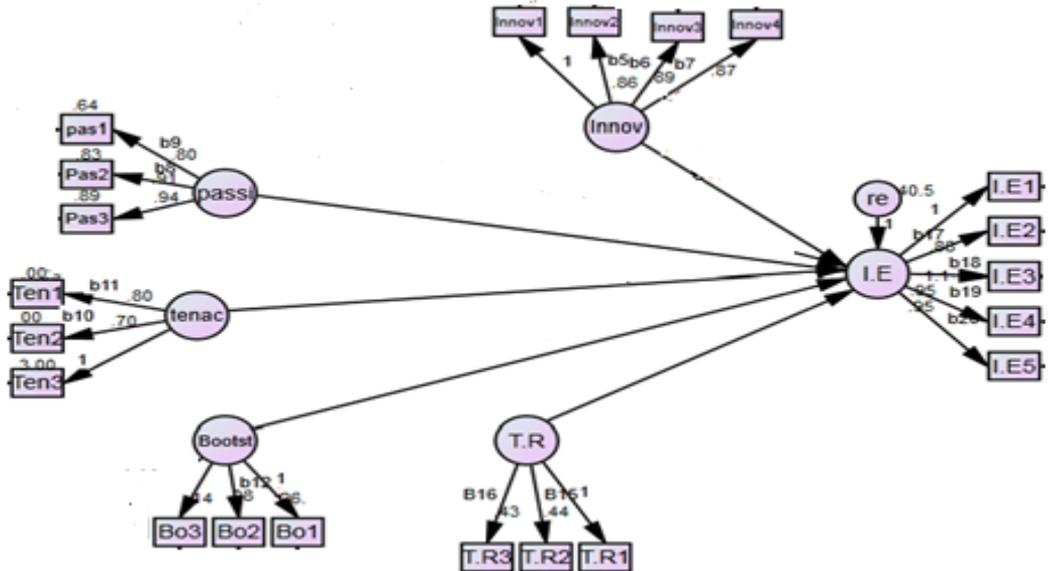


Fig. 1: The main constructs of the study

**The previous theoretical framework suggests the following hypotheses:**

**H1** Entrepreneurial leadership (Innovativeness, passion, tenacity, bootstrapping, and taking risk) is a key success factor that significantly affect the travel agency's innovative environment.

### H.1 Alternative Sub-Hypotheses

H1.1 Entrepreneurial leadership (innovativeness) has a positive effect on innovative environment of travel agencies. (Alternative)

H1.2 Entrepreneurial leadership (passion) has a positive effect on innovative environment of travel agencies. (Alternative).

H1.3 Entrepreneurial leadership (tenacity) has a positive effect on innovative environment of travel agencies. (Alternative).

H1.4 Entrepreneurial leadership (bootstrapping) has a positive effect on innovative environment of travel agencies. (Alternative)

H1.5 Entrepreneurial leadership (taking risk) has a positive effect on innovative environment of travel agencies. (Alternative)

**H.2** There is a correlation between the entrepreneurial leadership factors and travel agency's innovative environment

### Questionnaire

The designing of the initial questionnaire form, steps were followed to validate it and guarantee that it measured what it was designed to measure. The final questionnaire form is divided into two parts including entrepreneurial leadership and innovative environment of travel agencies with a response for each item ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

### Selection of Estimation methods:

According to Hair et al. (2014) when the assumption of multivariate normality is met, maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) is more efficient and unbiased. Furthermore, it is a flexible technique to parameter estimation that finds the "most likely" parameter values to have the best model fit.

### Data analysis tools:

The advanced multivariate technique structural equation modeling (SEM) was adopted for quantitative data analysis because of its ability to measure complicated causal relationships between components. Furthermore, the structural equation modeling study was carried out using Amos software version (26). Moreover, the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS version 22, Chicago, IL) is used.

### The measurement model validity and reliability:

To investigate the construct validity and reliability of the measurement model, Table (1) shows that Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability for all constructs exceed 0.70 and AVEs for all constructs are greater than 0.50, indicating convergent validity as mentioned by Altman and Bland (1994).

The construct validity of the measurement model and its reliability, Table (1)

Const ruct	indicator	Standardized loading	Error variance	Item R-square	Composite Reliability	AVE	Cronbac h's Alpha
Innova tion	Our Travel Agency's Leaders often come up with radical improvement ideas for the products / services the company is selling	0.982	0.036	0.964	0.948	0.820	0.948

	Our Travel Agency's Leaders often come up with ideas of completely new products / services that the company could sell	0.864	0.254	0.746			
	The Travel Agency's Leaders want me to challenge the current ways we do business	0.897	0.195	0.805			
	The Travel Agency's Leaders challenge and push me to act in a more innovative way	0.875	0.234	0.766			

passion	Our Travel Agency's Leaders are passionate about their work	0.797	0.365	0.635	0.915	0.782	0.915
	The Travel Agency's Leaders are able to motivate me	0.900	0.190	0.810			
	Our Travel Agency's Leaders are enthusiastic for innovative ideas	0.949	0.099	0.901			
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Taking risk	Our Travel Agency's Leaders are a risk takers	0.537	0.809	0.191	0.750	0.521	0.765
	Our Travel Agency's Leaders take responsibility for ideas and decisions	0.984	0.032	0.968			
	Our Travel Agency's leaders take calculated risk	0.553	0.694	0.306			
Bootstrap	The Travel Agency's Leaders like to do more with less to prove his / their cleverness	0.732	0.464	0.536	0.771	0.532	0.773
	The Travel Agency's Leaders would rather like to hire key players because of personality, not only because of impressive credentials or resumes	0.671	0.551	0.449			
	The Travel Agency's Leaders understand the importance of procuring funds and other resources outside the normal channel	0.781	0.390	0.610			
Tenacity	Our Travel Agency's Leaders are persistent in whatever task they undertake	0.613	0.624	0.376	0.773	0.539	0.778
	Our Travel Agency's Leaders are flexible	0.657	0.568	0.432			
	Our Travel Agency's Leaders are patient	0.900	0.190	0.810			
Innovative environment	New ideas are readily accepted	0.939	0.118	0.882	0.956	0.812	0.956
	This Travel Agency is quick to respond when changes need to be made.	0.809	0.346	0.654			

	This Travel Agency is very flexible; it can quickly change procedures to meet new conditions and solve problems as they arise	0.975	0.049	0.951			
	Assistance in developing new ideas is readily available	0.871	0.241	0.759			
	In our Travel Agency support is often provided to innovative ideas	0.903	0.185	0.815			

Table (2) Square roots of AVEs and correlations among constructs

	Innovation	passion	Taking risk	Bootstrap	Tenacity	Creativity	Innovative environment
Innovation	<b>0.906</b>						
Passion	0.645	<b>0.884</b>					
Taking risk	0.429	0.387	<b>0.721</b>				
Bootstrap	0.600	0.562	0.512	<b>0.729</b>			
Tenacity	0.243	0.127	0.088	0.421	<b>0.734</b>		
Creativity	0.999	0.645	0.429	0.600	0.243	<b>0.727</b>	
Innovative environment	0.644	0.799	0.307	0.418	-0.201	0.644	<b>0.901</b>

Source: researchers according to research statistical analysis' results

### 3- Structured model:

According to Hox (2010), the following structured model investigates the causal relationships between the unobserved variables (independent variables and the dependent variable)

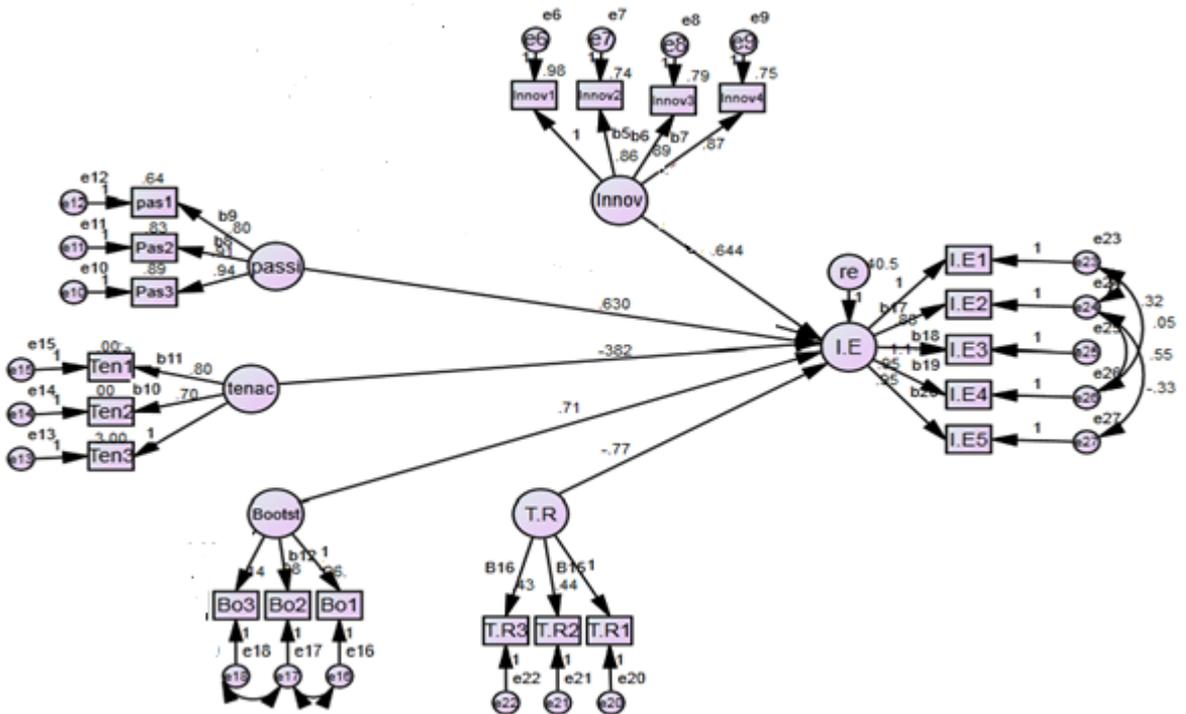


Fig.3. the structured model of entrepreneurial leadership and innovative work environment.

**Structured model Goodness of Fit:**

Table (4) Structured model fit indices

Model Goodness of Fit	Indices of current model	Target limits (ideal)	
Chi-squared	18.228		
Degrees of freedom	10	(must be > 0)	represents the amount of mathematical information available to estimate model parameters
Chi-squared P-value	39	(ideal when >.05)	we look for a relatively small Chi-squared ( $\chi^2$ ) value (and corresponding large p-value), demonstrating that there is

			no statistically significant difference between the two matrices, supporting the notion that a proposed theory fits reality
<b>Incremental fit indices</b>			
Comparative Fit Index CFI	.998	(ideal when > 0.9)	A better fit is indicated by higher values.
RMSEA	.06	Lower values of RMSEA indicate a better fit	it clearly demonstrates how well a model fits a population rather than merely a sample used for estimation
PNFI Ratio	.262	(highest PNFI values represent good fit)	

### Empirical findings

The descriptive findings of this study show that 89% of respondents agree and strongly agree with regard to the travel agencies' entrepreneurial leaders' innovativeness practices, 78% also agreed or strongly agreed with entrepreneurial leaders' passion practices, 87.6% agreed or strongly agreed with entrepreneurial leaders' tenacity practices, 82.8% agreed or strongly agreed with entrepreneurial leaders' bootstrapping, 73.3% agreed or strongly agreed with entrepreneurial leaders' Taking risk practices, and 84.2% agreed or strongly agreed with the innovative environment practices.

### Correlation findings

According to table (5) findings shows that there are correlations between the independent variables (Innovativeness (0.644), passion (0.799), tenacity (negative 0.20), bootstrapping (0.418), and taking risk (0.307)) and the dependent variable (innovative environment) of the Egyptian Travel agencies. Therefore, hypothesis H3 is supported.

**Table (5) correlation among independent variable and the dependent variable (Innovative environment)**

	Entrepreneurial leadership	Innovative Environment	Sig. (1-tailed)
Pearson Correlation	Innovativeness	.644	.000
	passion	.799	.000
	Tenacity	-.201-	.004
	Bootstrapping	.418	.000
	Taking risk	.307	.000

According to the previous table of findings shows that there are correlations between the independent variables (Innovativeness (0.644), passion (0.799), tenacity (negative 0.20), bootstrapping (0.418), and taking risk (0.307)) and the dependent variable (innovative environment) of the Egyptian Travel agencies. Therefore, hypothesis H2 is supported.

**The findings supported by the previous structured model and correlation analysis are as follows:**

Table (4) Structured model and correlation analysis findings

1	leaders' innovativeness has a positive effect on the innovative environment of the Egyptian travel agencies where ( $\beta = 0.644$ , and $P < 0.05$ )	while the alternative hypothesis H1.1 is supported, and the null hypothesis is rejected,	√
2	leaders' passion has a positive effect on the innovative environment of the Egyptian travel agencies (where $\beta = 0.630$ , and $P < 0.05$ )	the alternative hypothesis H1.2 is accepted, and the null hypothesis is rejected	√
3	leaders' tenacity has a negative effect on the innovative environment of the Egyptian travel agencies (where $\beta = -0.382$ , and $P < 0.05$ )	the alternative hypothesis H1.3 is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected	√
4	the entrepreneurial leadership (bootstrapping) has an insignificant weak positive effect on the innovative environment of the Egyptian travel agencies (where $\beta = 0.071$ , and $P = 0.17$ which is more than 0.05)	Not significant	X
5	The entrepreneurial leadership (taking risk) dimension also has an insignificant weak negative effect on the innovative environment	Not significant	X

	of the Egyptian travel agencies (where $\beta = -0.077$ , and $P = 0.07$ which is more than 0.05).		
6	According to findings shown in table (5) There is a correlation found between the entrepreneurial leadership factors (Innovativeness, passion, tenacity, bootstrapping, and taking risk) and the innovative environment of the Egyptian Travel agencies	alternative hypothesis H2 is supported, and the null hypothesis is rejected	√

### Discussion and conclusions

This study shows how entrepreneurial leadership practices correlate and also have effect on the Egyptian travel agencies' innovative work environments.

Furthermore, findings indicated that 89% of the Egyptian travel agencies apply the entrepreneurial leadership' innovativeness practices, 78% for passion practices, 87.6% for tenacity practices, 82.8% for bootstrapping practices, 73.3% for taking risk practices, and 84.2% for the innovative environment practices.

According to the present study, the dimensions of entrepreneurial leadership that have positive effect on the innovative work environment are leaders' innovativeness, and leaders' passion. This finding agreed with the study findings of Bullough et.al, (2015); Qi et.al (2019); Bagheri, et.al (2020); Li,et.al, (2020). Moreover, the study on hand found that the leaders' tenacity has a negative effect on the innovative environment of the Egyptian travel agencies (where  $\beta = -0.382$ , and  $P < 0.05$ ) this finding aligned with the study result of Bagheri et al., 2020 who mentioned that few studies have shown the effect and linkage between entrepreneurial leadership and innovative work environment.

While the entrepreneurial leadership dimensions of bootstrapping and taking risk failed to prove that they have significant effect on the innovative work environment within the Egyptian Travel Agencies.

Moreover, according to the findings a positive correlation was found between the dimensions of entrepreneurial leadership except tenacity dimension, which has a negative correlation with the innovative work environment within the Egyptian Travel Agencies. This finding agreed also with the study findings of Qi et.al (2019); Bagheri, et.al (2020); Li et.al (2020).

This study presents an updated model based on data that accurately explains the impact of travel agencies' entrepreneurial leadership on the innovative work environment within the Egyptian Travel Agencies.

As a conclusion the findings provide evidence to travel agencies' leaders that adopting strong entrepreneurial leadership can lead to an innovative work environment sustaining the success and growth of their travel agencies.

Based on this study finding a set of practical implications for Travel Agencies are provided as follows:

The outcomes of this study can help current and future business executives and entrepreneurs to understand the critical role they can play in improving their employees' innovative abilities.

Entrepreneurial leaders should always maintain good relationships with their employees, tenacity should be avoided while dealing with employees, although leaders should have flimsy values, strong opinions and being confident, this doesn't mean that they won't give their employees the opportunity to be innovative, also creativity and passion leads to an innovative environment in the travel agencies.

Team leadership should foster and support innovation by providing opportunities for team members to use their own initiative. When entrepreneurs encourage their staff, they are more likely to respond positively and strive to come up with innovative solutions to workplace problems.

Managers should also make certain that their employees are working under leadership who exhibits Entrepreneurial leadership behavior; furthermore travel agencies should encourage innovation by enacting policies that enhance individual intrinsic motivation for innovation.

Moreover, leadership training programs may assist leaders understand the importance of entrepreneurial leadership behaviour, as well as provide them with the skills they need to support staff.

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