

## GENDER DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT, EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT, AND INTENTION TO STAY IN EGYPTIAN HOTELS: A MIXED-METHOD APPROACH

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**Abstract:** The Egyptian hotel sector, with a significant gender gap, faces challenges in managing employee relations under new work models. Implementing gender diversity management practices (GDMPs) - such as equal pay and mentoring - is vital to address this gap and ensure equal opportunities. These practices foster an inclusive workplace, which enhances employee commitment, reduces turnover, and improves overall organizational stability and performance. Grounded in the theory of planned behavior and attachment theory, this research comprises two studies; the primary objective of the first one is to investigate the relationship between the implementation of GDMPs, employee engagement - encompassing physical, emotional, and cognitive dimensions - and the intention to stay within the hotel. Additionally, it investigates the role of gender as a moderating variable. While the second one seeks to delineate the specific GDMPs and their resultant effects. This research employs a mixed-methods sequential explanatory design, initiating with the collection of quantitative data through a questionnaire (Study 1) administered to 522 employees within the hotel sector in Egypt, followed by qualitative data obtained from in-depth interviews (Study 2) conducted with 13 employees in similar establishments. The findings indicate that the implementation of GDMPs exerts a positive influence on both employee engagement and the intention to stay. Gender also serves as a moderator within the established relationships in the proposed model. Four sub-themes are identified as components of GDMPs. The implementation of GDMPs culminates in favorable outcomes that can be categorized into three overarching themes: organizational-level, group-level, and employee-level outcomes. The research will enrich the hospitality diversity, equity, and inclusion literature and provide valuable practical implications, as it shows implementing gender diversity policies improves employee engagement and reduces turnover, presenting a successful model for human resource management in hotels.

**Keywords:** mixed methods, gender diversity, engagement, intention to stay, hotels, Egypt

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### INTRODUCTION

Managing employee relations and guaranteeing their commitment has grown more difficult and important with the rise of contemporary and varied work organization models, especially in the hotel sector. The hotel sector in Egypt plays a crucial role in the country's economy, providing employment to a considerable workforce. According to the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS, 2023), the Egyptian hotel business employs about 1.5 million individuals, with women making up approximately 25% of this labor total. The presence of this gender gap emphasizes the significance of adopting efficient gender diversity management practices (GDMPs) in the industry. Organizations, especially in the hotel industry, must adopt appropriate diversity management policies because of the increased variety in the workforce, particularly regarding gender (Khassawneh & Mohammad, 2025). These practices are crucial not just for fostering a supportive and inclusive culture within an organization, but also for enhancing employee engagement and reducing turnover. Within the specific setting of Egypt's hotel industry, where there is a lack of female representation, GDMPs play a vital role in resolving gender-related inequalities and promoting equal opportunity for all employees.

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The significance of diversity management methods cannot be overstated, especially due to their incorporation of gender diversity concerns. These policies facilitate the identification and equitable treatment of all employees, irrespective of their gender (Kim, 2022). Diversity management aims to implement policies and organizational practices that effectively mitigate workplace discrimination and facilitate the professional growth of people from varied backgrounds (Dahl Andersen, 2025; Holm et al., 2025; Triana et al., 2021). Effective GDMPs can play a crucial role in promoting a fair and balanced work environment in the Egyptian hotel business, where traditional gender stereotypes often impact career advancement.

GDMPs implementation can involve payment for work and equal opportunities and special programs aiming at ensuring that gender diverse people get promotions and/or hiring to top positions (Mousa, 2021). The offering of the mentoring programs that target the women employees can be of great help in removing the imbalance that may have been there in the past and ensuring that women get equal opportunities as men. Moreover, it is possible to encourage parental leave and flexibility at work, which can give employees with young children the opportunity to balance between work and family responsibilities; this is helpful for both men and women but it especially important for women as traditionally they are supposed to do most of the childcare (Georgiadou & Syed, 2021). Creating a positive workplace environment increases psychological satisfaction founded on mutual obligation where the employee gives their best in their work (Akgul et al., 2025; Ceptureanu et al., 2024; Elkhwesky & Castañeda-García, 2025; Zhang et al., 2022). It may lead to enhanced creative thinking, critical thinking, and efficiency as diverse workforce application of their different outlooks and insights towards solving problems and enhancing performance. Furthermore, firms that support diversity are regarded as more desirable places to work by employees, which can be helpful in recruiting and retaining such talent (Dauth et al., 2023).

Hence, gender diversity concerns can and should be handled both as a matter of compliance with basic principles of justice and fairness as well as the measures that can help an organization to be or become successful (Sharma, 2016). The implementation of diversity and inclusion should lead to employee boost their morale, thereby extending their stay with the corporation as well as enhance its performance (Singh & Ramdeo, 2023). Therefore, by making the necessary changes to provide for the inclusion of these employees, the above organizations would be able to harness its employees fully being able to offset competition within the market (Holck & Muhr, 2023).

Physical engagement can be described as the level of willingness among those employees to commit physical force to an endeavor (Ahad & Khan, 2020; Iddagoda et al., 2025). It can be measured in the time and effort and energy that has been devoted to preparing for the implementation of the given tasks. Emotional engagement is a positive net organizational emotion of the employee regarding the organization it influences motivation (Fait et al., 2023). This is the level of mental faithfulness employees have in workplace, whether they are attentive or how focused they are or how engaged they are in achieving the set goals and objectives of an organization (Herzallah et al., 2025; Park et al., 2022; Rameshkumar, 2020).

Physical engagement of employees means that they have the intention to work, exert the effort needed so as to accomplish their tasks appropriately and in time. They behave in ways like coming early or working late to complete a certain work, carrying out more than what is required or having a lot of zeal during busy working time. In addition to tactics that increase physical activity, there are other strategies which would contribute to physical and vigour of the worker in the organization (Cortés-Denia et al., 2023). Emotional engagement can be defined as the extent of emotional connection employees develop with their respective organization, determines their intention to work (Ouakouak et al., 2020). This means that employees who are emotionally engaged are likely to have positive self and/or object related feelings about the work which is likely to increase their work-related motivation. To gain emotional faithfulness organizations can ensure that they create organizational environment that embraces and acknowledges the employees. Thus, praising or rewarding employee performance, either by formal means or otherwise, may greatly contribute to the employees' feeling of value in the organization (Malik et al., 2015). Furthermore, the recruitment and maintenance of healthy working interpersonal relationships can positively boost the levels of emotional devotion in the workplace (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014).

Cognitive engagement refers to the psychological presence of employees in their respective works, their concentration towards their duties and personal obligation to the accomplishment of organizational objectives (Jeung, 2011). If employees are cognitively involved, they would be highly involved in their task, and this would reveal a high level of focus, analytical skills and invention. They are keen on understanding their obligations to the letter and figuring out how to accomplish the set organizational goals efficiently. Learning opportunities can be offered in organizations to increase cognitive activity. Through training programs, workshops, and access to training materials, it is possible to develop the intellectual activity of employees and preserve their desire to advance (Osegbue, 2025). In addition, sharing decisions with the employees and granting them decision freedom on activities can improve cognitive absorption. Allowing workers to assume responsibilities and provide solutions can also increase their responsibility and productivity (Khaskheli et al., 2020).

Higher level of physical, emotional and cognitive commitment usually has positive impact on the level of employees' intention to stay since the engaged employees are more satisfied with the role and position they are in and have clearly defined perception of the prospects in the hotel. In turn, the intention to stay decreases turnover rates, which are essential factors maintaining stability and preserving employees' experience (Herzallah et al., 2025; Holtom et al., 2008).

Intention to stay has both direct and indirect impact on turnover on the one hand, those with higher intention to stay will not seek employment with other hotels, and on the other hand, such employees bring with them positive attitude to the organizations. Receiving experienced and highly skilled employees helps to keep employment costs at a low level, such as expenses for the new hires and additional staffing training; there is also stability in the hotel. Moreover, those who are willing to remain in the hotel are more likely to increase their training activities and indeed experience to be promoted within the hotel. This is a continuous process that in the long-run has a positive impact on the individual disposer and the organization

since it creates an environment that embraces change. Hotel that has high retention rates usually have stronger teamwork and cooperation since the employees' duration on their jobs is longer than normal (Batt & Colvin, 2011).

Employees who have spent many years within the organization are likely to have a better rapport with their co-workers due to better understanding; therefore, they foster better communication, fosters trust, and works well in a team. As such, this improves the collaboration as people will feel relaxed sharing their ideas and contribute towards the achievement of organizational goals. In the hotel industry, existing research has investigated the relationship between GDMPs and employees' intention to stay (Halim et al., 2023) and examined various types of employee engagement (Fahmi & Mohamed, 2020). However, there is a substantial gap in understanding how these factors interrelate and how gender moderates these relationships. In the past, research has primarily concentrated on the direct effects of GDMPs on retention and engagement, without a comprehensive examination of the mediating functions of physical, emotional, and cognitive engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). Additionally, the potential impact of gender on engagement and retention strategies has been understudied, despite its potential (Kalev et al., 2006).

By proposing a comprehensive framework that investigates the direct and mediated effects of GDMPs on various forms of engagement and the ways in which gender influences these relationships, this study addresses these gaps. The study endeavors to offer actionable insights for the development of effective diversity management interventions that improve employee engagement and retention by incorporating these dimensions. Indeed, it is acknowledged that gender plays a significant role in ensuring organizational success and particularly in diverse workplaces and especially in the current challenging hotel environment, it is however difficult to account for a clear link between gender and these factors (Ely & Meyerson, 2000). This gap in knowledge hinders the potential of the design of effective interventions to increase the success of diversity management, employee physical, emotional and cognitive engagement, and intention to stay.

The theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991; Magoshi & Chang, 2009) and attachment theory (Ainsworth, 1979; Bowlby, 1973) are the theoretical basis for the current study's framework (Figure 1). A mixed-methods sequential explanatory research design (Wang et al., 2022) is employed by gathering quantitative data via a questionnaire (study 1) and following up with qualitative data from in-depth telephone interviews (study 2). The main aim of the study 1 is to investigate the relationship among GDMPs implementation, employees' engagement (including physical, emotional, and cognitive engagement), and intention to stay. It also examines gender as a moderator. Study 2 aims to identify GDMPs and their outcomes. It also helps in exploring in-depth information about the model constructs and presents new variables that could be also used by future scholars. Both study 1 and study 2 were conducted in the hotel industry in Egypt from the perspective of hotel employees including managers, supervisors, and entry-level staff.

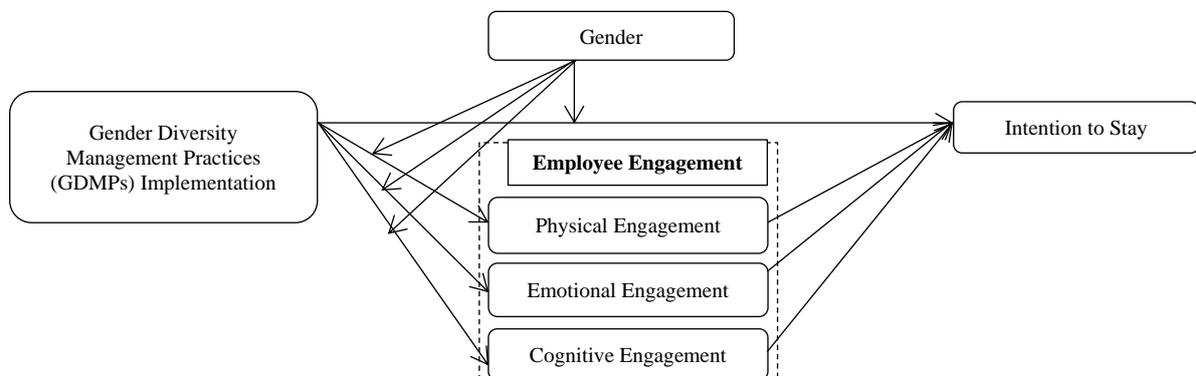


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical underpinnings

The complex of gender diversity management, physical engagement, emotional engagement, cognitive engagement and intention to stay requires a sound theoretical foundation. Thus, the current study is based on two theories, namely the theory of planned behavior (TPB) and the attachment theory. The aforesaid theories offer a robust framework for understanding the relationship among gender diversity management, employees' engagement and intention to stay.

The TPB, by Ajzen (1991), remains a common psychological theory that examines why people behave in certain ways in particular situations. TPB states that the actual behavior will be determined by the intended behavior that will be determined by behavioral control. When dealing with engagement and intention to stay of employees, organization influences engagement level and hotel's desirability to employees. Perceptions developed towards encompassing diversity management strategies should make workers' experience better, therefore raising their interest and loyalty to the company (Ajzen, 1991; Khassawneh & Mohammad, 2025; Magoshi & Chang, 2009). Recent bibliometric evidence by Naskar & Lindahl (2025) confirms the growing interdisciplinary application of TPB across organizational contexts, including diversity management and employee engagement, highlighting its continued relevance in explaining behavioral intentions and workplace outcomes. From this perception, people in an organizational setting also have their behaviors shaped by those in their immediate working environment such as colleagues and managers. People are encouraged and motivated to embrace prosocial behaviors at working places and be committed to working for the organization (Ajzen, 1991; Wentling

& Palma-Rivas, 1998). At the workplace, the more employees are convinced that they have the tool they require to do their given work effectively, more will be employee's overall happiness and the higher their intention to stay with the employer. Measures taken within diversity management practice may improve behavioral control since feel of the implication environment (Hossain et al., 2025; Lim et al., 2023). Mosquera & Soares (2025) supported this view, demonstrating that effective onboarding practices—particularly those involving managerial and peer support—significantly enhance employee well-being and organizational identification, which in turn reduce turnover intentions. Through creating positive attitudes towards diversity, organizational management can enhance the retention of employees.

Another foundational theoretical framework for this study is the attachment theory advanced by Bowlby (1973) in the early stages while Ainsworth (1979) deepened the initial conceptualization of the theory. It details how people develop these feelings and the influence these feelings hold over the response and growth of an organism. The attachment theory can be applied to understanding the type of bond the employees establish with the organization, and the resultant impact on the intention to stay attached with the organization (Chen et al., 2021). Securely attached employees are those that trust their organization and have the feeling of being part of the organization. Recent meta-analytical evidence by Warnock et al., (2024) reinforces this perspective, revealing that secure attachment styles are significantly associated with higher organizational commitment and reduced turnover intentions. Their findings underscore the predictive power of attachment orientations in workplace outcomes, even beyond traditional personality traits. Furthermore, Ren et al. (2024) integrated attachment theory with self-regulation frameworks, illustrating how emotional security within the workplace enhances employee resilience and engagement. It is possible that efficient gender diversity practices enhance secure attachment, thus enabling individuals to grow cordial working relationships as notes Ainsworth (1979).

The second precaution is evaluating the level of dedication of employees with anxious attachment since they are most likely to perceive their place as insecure and may be at risk of rejection or exclusion. This can lead to behavior that will drive down these metrics in terms of levels of interaction and/or intention to stay as a customer (Khalifa et al., 2025; Tajeddini et al., 2022). Fostering diversity and equality in treatment of all employees can assist in decreasing the levels of anxious attachment and create a favourable work-environment for the employees (Akay & Ahmadi, 2022). Employees' avoidant attachment are emotionally detached and may lack trust in the organization. These employees are less likely to be involved or committed and more inclined to have the intention to quit out of the firm (Ainsworth, 1979).

#### **GDMs implementation and employees' engagement**

Implementing GDMs has a substantial influence on employee engagement across multiple aspects. The successful administration of gender diversity is associated with favorable results in staff organization and performance (Elkhwesky et al., 2019). According to Kossek et al. (2017), implementing GDMs that promote cultural inclusion and treat employees equally regardless of their gender can greatly improve the emotional bond between employees and their firm. When employees see that their gender is appreciated, this acknowledgment enhances their emotional commitment to the organization (Brien et al., 2021). Madera et al. (2023) emphasized that inclusive diversity policies in hospitality and tourism significantly enhance employee engagement and organizational performance. Their thematic analysis revealed that when employees feel involved and integrated within their organization, especially through gender-inclusive practices, their emotional and professional commitment increases. In addition, Wallrich et al. (2024) conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis revealing that team diversity, including gender diversity, positively correlates with team performance, particularly in complex and creative work environments. Their findings emphasized the importance of context-sensitive diversity management in fostering employee engagement and optimizing organizational outcomes.

Emotional involvement pertains to the extent of emotional connection and dedication that employee experiences towards their organization. According to a study conducted by Milliman et al. (2018), workplace spirituality, characterized by an environment that is inclusive and supportive, has a considerable positive impact on emotional engagement among employees. This indicates that GDMs, through the promotion of fairness and inclusiveness, can have a comparable effect of increasing emotional engagement. Besides, Yoo et al. (2025) emphasized that empowering leadership and inclusive emotional climates in hospitality settings significantly enhance emotional labor authenticity and employee engagement, positioning emotional involvement as a strategic asset in service excellence.

Cognitive engagement refers to the level of intellectual commitment and concentration that people dedicate to their work. Bates et al. (2021) found that employees experience an increase in cognitive engagement when they perceive their firm as having a strong awareness of diversity concerns. Héliot et al. (2020) found that when gender minorities are treated fairly in an organization, they experience a greater sense of identity safety. This, in turn, strongly predicts their level of cognitive engagement. Milliman et al. (2018) substantiate this claim by emphasizing that employees who derive significance from their work and perceive organizational support are more actively involved in their cognitive processes. Kim & Yoon (2025) demonstrated that empowering leadership enhances adaptive performance in hybrid work environments through the mediating roles of knowledge sharing and employee agility, which are closely tied to cognitive engagement.

Physical involvement refers to the level of energy and effort that individuals invest in their professional responsibilities. According to Hayes et al. (2020), proficient diversity management diminishes gender-related bias and animosity, resulting in improved collaboration and increased levels of physical involvement. According to Laer & Essers (2024), employees who show respect and collaborate with colleagues of different genders are more inclined to put in greater physical effort in their job responsibilities. These results align with the research conducted by Milliman et al. (2018), which shown that work settings that are supportive and inclusive result in increased levels of physical engagement. This is because employees are more motivated to actively participate to their work. Adam & Alfawaz (2025) demonstrated that gender diversity significantly

enhances employee engagement and commitment, particularly in environments that value inclusion and equity. Their study emphasized that when employees perceive gender diversity as a core organizational value, they are more likely to invest physical and emotional energy in their roles, contributing to improved organizational performance. This reinforces the notion that inclusive and supportive work settings foster higher levels of physical involvement among employees.

Moreover, the implementation of GDMPs that are in line with an organization's culture can strengthen employees' sense of belonging to the organization, resulting in increased levels of involvement and commitment (Azmat & Rentschler, 2017). According to El-Amin (2022), employees are more likely to adopt the values of a business and increase their participation when they see that their diversity is valued. According to McKay et al. (2007), the presence of well-defined and comprehensive diversity management policies is linked to increased employee engagement. This is because such policies create a work climate that promotes employee recognition and appreciation. Setthakorn et al. (2024) found that job embeddedness—particularly organizational fit and sacrifice—is strongly associated with reduced turnover intention and increased employee retention. These findings suggest that inclusive and culturally aligned diversity practices may enhance employees' embeddedness, thereby fostering greater commitment and engagement. To summarize, GDMPs have a substantial influence on the three categories of employee engagement: physical, emotional, and cognitive. Organizations can improve their employees' overall engagement, performance, and retention by creating an inclusive atmosphere that respects and values diversity. Hence, this study proposes:

**H1:** GDMPs implementation positively impacts physical engagement.

**H2:** GDMPs implementation positively impacts emotional engagement.

**H3:** GDMPs implementation positively impacts cognitive engagement.

#### **GDMPs implementation and intention to stay**

GDMPs involves organizational strategies and policies that seek to address matters concerning gender disparities at workplace. As for the components of GDMPs, it involves diversity training, equal opportunity policies, and mentorship plans. Gender sensitivity training provides awareness of gender issues and the right approach to alter discrimination. Affirmative action policies guarantee that no discrimination occurs in employment to favor one gender or the other. Mentorship programs offer assistance and career guidance to underrepresented genders (Ozturk & Tatli, 2016). Hypothesis three also holds that there is a positive relationship between GDMPs implementation and employee retention intentions. Studios suggests that companies that have effective GDMPs implementation, have reduced turnover and increased employee retention (Sabharwal, 2014). Several factors act as intermediary links in this relationship. Firstly, GDMPs encourage tolerance eradicating discrimination hence increasing the level of acceptance by employees. Promoting an inclusive workplace climate enhances employee commitment and minimizes turnover intensity (Elkhwesky et al., 2019). Secondly, GDMPs have high correlation with job satisfaction. When employees have confirmed perceptions of procedural justice and equal opportunity, they have a higher level of job satisfaction and better intention to continue working for the organization (McKay et al, 2007). Jo & Shin (2025) demonstrated that recognition, fairness, and transformational leadership significantly enhance employee engagement and job satisfaction, reinforcing the role of inclusive practices and procedural justice in shaping positive employee outcomes. Finally, GDMPs also offer a framework for successful establishment of a mentorship and support networks that ensure that employees are given opportunities for career development in the organization, hence increasing their commitment. The proper execution of implemented GDMP is to foster a workplace environment that would generate a positive impact towards employees' intention to remain in the organization. When it comes to matters of gender diversity, organizations stand to benefit from lower turnover rates and improved employee loyalty. That way, GDMP can assist in creating a more inclusive culture when it comes to employee relations, improve employees' satisfaction levels, and offer opportunities for growth in their respective careers (Elkhwesky et al., 2019).

The implementation of GDMPs is especially critical in the hotel and service industry, as these sectors significantly rely on a diverse workforce. Research indicates that inclusive practices in the hospitality sector result in increased employee satisfaction and decreased attrition, which are crucial for the preservation of organizational reputation and service quality (Baum & Devine, 2007). This is because hospitality industry employees frequently appreciate work environments that prioritize diversity and provide equal opportunities for advancement. Thus, Galdiero et al. (2025) emphasized that gender-inclusive human resource management policies contribute significantly to organizational sustainability by enhancing employee satisfaction, reducing turnover, and strengthening institutional reputation in service-oriented sectors. Harris & West (2019) have conducted research in the hotel industry that indicates that a diverse and inclusive work environment can result in improved employee satisfaction, greater team collaboration, and a stronger commitment to the organization. This positive work environment not only decreases the intention to depart but also increases the likelihood that employees will remain with their current employer because of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and perceived career growth opportunities (Mowday et al., 1982). Also, Peralta-Jaramillo (2025) emphasized that gender equity policies and inclusive labor practices significantly enhance employee retention and satisfaction in service-oriented sectors, including hospitality, by addressing structural inequalities and promoting equal opportunities for advancement. Hence, this study proposes:

**H4:** GDMPs implementation positively impacts intention to stay.

#### **Employee engagement and intention to stay**

Engagement and intention to stay are two active citizens of the organization which play an active role in determining behavior and the success/failure ratios of the hotel. While engagement refers to emotional, cognitive, and physical attachment a person has to work being done by employee and intention to stay refers the loyalty which an employee has towards

organization to continue to work (Ashraf & Siddiqui, 2020). Workers who are committed to their work, actively promote the organization's goals, and are prepared to put in extra effort and time to help the organization succeed (Raza et al., 2021).

Employees are more productive, creative, and customer-oriented thereby enhancing the organizational performance (Ghlichlee & Bayat, 2021). Hawata (2025) emphasized that effective diversity management significantly contributes to employee engagement and organizational commitment. The study found that when employees perceive their workplace as inclusive and respectful of diversity, they are more likely to develop stronger emotional and professional bonds with their organization. This sense of belonging and fairness enhances their intention to stay and motivates them to contribute actively to organizational success. Reissová & Papay (2021) also revealed the negative correlation between the turnover and the degree of the engagement of the employees and the fulfillment of customers. It is also necessary to ensure that one understands the context of employee engagement within the framework of the job demands-resources (JD-R) model. According to this model, work hassle like work pressure and role stress could lead to burning out while resources like decision making power and social support enhances engagement (Canboy et al., 2023). Therefore, it is argued that by enhancing the level of work resources, employee engagement at the workplace of the specified organizations will be enhanced at the same time diminishing the levels of work demands. Communicating the intention to stay with the organization means describing the behavior of the employees (Sudibjo & Suwarli, 2020).

Physical engagement is the measure of energy that puts into a work task or how hard an employee works physically (Boccoli et al., 2023). The 'effort is usually defined in terms of employees' intention to work hard and with passion to accomplish assigned tasks. Physically active employees were found to be more committed and loyal towards their organization, thus resulting in a higher probability of them to stay with their organization based on the intention to stay (Redondo et al., 2021). Emotional engagement entails the feelings of affective attachment and the sense of organizational membership the employees have delivered (Turner & Turner, 2020). By using the measure of emotional engagement, the extent to which employees care about their work and organization is captured which later defines their motivation. This feeling of emotions is often followed by a positive attitude towards the organization, and employees' intention (Pereira & Mohiya, 2021). Furthermore, Elshaer et al. (2025) found that emotional contagion among hotel employees significantly influences job satisfaction, performance, and psychological well-being, highlighting the role of emotional engagement in fostering organizational commitment and resilience in hospitality settings.

Cognitive engagement is defined as the extent to which employees are mentally involved in their activities as well as the effort, they elicit to accomplish goals (Khusanova et al., 2021). Employees who enjoy cognitive absorption are productive and eager to make substantial changes in their organization. This level of engagement is linked with a higher level of intention because the employees value commitment towards professional career growth within an organization (Albrecht & Marty, 2020). To improve the levels of employee engagement and their intentions to stay within the organization, there is a need to promote all forms of engagement. This involves encouraging employees to use their physical, emotional, and cognitive engagement at work and acknowledging and rewarding their efforts (Kwarteng et al., 2024).

In fact, if the organization focuses on increasing the level of engagement, the turnover level will be significantly reduced, and employees will be more productive. In conclusion, employee engagement and intention to stay are important indicators of success within an organization. Focusing on these constructs, organizations can build a more committed employee force which increases their performance and competitiveness. To improve organizational success, it is crucial to prioritize employee engagement, as it can substantially decrease turnover and increase productivity. The intention of employees to remain with an organization is significantly influenced by physical, emotional, and cognitive engagement. In the hotel industry, physical engagement is associated with increased productivity and passenger satisfaction, as engaged employees invest more energy in their work, resulting in reduced turnover (Karatepe & Karadas, 2015).

In service industries, emotional engagement is essential because it influences customer service quality and loyalty (Alarcon & Lyons, 2011). This term refers to the emotional connection that employees have with their work. In the hospitality sector, cognitive engagement, which involves employees' mental investment and problem-solving capabilities, improves operational efficiency and innovation (Wang et al., 2020). Also, Gharbi et al. (2025) found that psychological safety and reduced job insecurity significantly enhance emotional and cognitive engagement among hotel employees, leading to better service delivery, reduced anxiety, and stronger organizational commitment.

The effective implementation of GDMPs can cultivate an inclusive environment that facilitates these types of engagement. GDMPs can positively mediate physical engagement by establishing a supportive work environment in which employees feel their efforts are appreciated, thereby increasing their intention to remain. In the same vein, GDMPs that prioritize inclusivity enhance emotional engagement, thereby fostering a sense of loyalty and connection among employees. This, in turn, has a positive effect on their intention to remain.

This relationship is further mediated by cognitive engagement, which is supported by GDMPs that promote critical thinking and innovation, which results in increased job satisfaction and reduced attrition (Pu et al., 2025; Saks & Gruman, 2014). Consequently, organizations can improve their performance and competitiveness by fostering a more committed workforce by concentrating on these engagement dimensions. Hence, this study proposes:

**H5:** Physical engagement positively impacts intention to stay.

**H6:** Emotional engagement positively impacts intention to stay.

**H7:** Cognitive engagement positively impacts intention to stay.

**H8:** Physical engagement positively mediates between GDMPs implementation and intention to stay.

**H9:** Emotional engagement positively mediates between GDMPs implementation and intention to stay.

**H10:** Cognitive engagement positively mediates between GDMPs implementation and intention to stay.

### **Gender as moderator**

According to global statistics, female labour force participation is on the rise (Pu et al., 2025; Vaiman et al., 2012). Gender evaluation is crucial for understanding the interplay between internal and external factors since men and women react differently. There was a gender gap in the workplace, with women experiencing unequal pay, promotions, and training chances compared to men. Gender was included in the current study as a moderator in the relationship between GDMPs implementation and physical, emotional, and cognitive engagement and between GDMPs implementation and intention to stay. Physical participation is the degree of commitment employees bring to the work environment. Studies also indicate that interventions aimed at promoting gender diversity might affect the physical presence of men and women in distinct ways depending on perceived notions of inclusion and equity at the workplace (Kulik & Metz, 2017).

For example, women might have a sense of embodiment in a context that supports gender parity more than men will in the same circumstances. Emotional commitment is the extent to which the employees are emotionally invested in the work and the organization. Research has shown that women have a better perception of GDMPs and are more emotionally involved since the practices address equity and diversity, aspects that may have a negative impact on them (King et al., 2012).

In the case of men, their emotional buy-in likely will not be affected as strongly by GDMPs unless they consider these practices as fostering a more positive approach to work requirements. Perceptions are a measure that is got by the degree the employees consider the task at hand require them to use their intellectual ability. How the GDMP can help with improving cognitive involvement is that it can bring the culture that encourages people to listen to each other. The effect of GDMPs on cognitive stimulation may be gender sensitive with females possibly benefitting more from such programmes to delay the checking due to more recent strive by employers to acknowledge women's contribution (Huffman et al., 2010).

Considering the sociology of fear, women who might experience more physical proxemics in an inclusive environment, will demonstrate a significantly stronger intention to continue using a service. Depending on the perception that they have for GDMP, it is probable for men not to record an equal or higher level of retention as recorded (Downey et al., 2015). Ben Mim et al. (2025) found that gender-diverse leadership significantly enhances institutional stability and retention, particularly during periods of uncertainty, as women tend to exhibit more risk-averse and participatory oversight styles that foster trust and long-term commitment. Moreover, Aragón-Morales & Ruiz-Jiménez (2025) revealed that gender equality significantly influences women's behavioral intentions and long-term engagement with institutional services, while men's responses remain comparatively less affected by inclusive gender regimes.

A scoping review indicates that GDMPs may have a substantial moderating effect on the emotional responses of employees and their intention to remain with an organization. A supportive and inclusive work environment can considerably increase the positive emotions that women experience in their jobs, thereby increasing their intention to remain with the organization. This phenomenon, known as "Emotional Indispensability", suggests that women may experience a more profound emotional connection and commitment when they perceive favorable changes in organizational culture because of GDMPs. Conversely, males may not demonstrate the same degree of retention unless they also observe significant enhancements in organizational culture. The relationship between intention to stay and GDMPs is further mediated by cognitive engagement, with gender serving as a moderating variable. The hypothesis is that women exhibit a more robust intention to remain in the workforce than men because of their increased cognitive activity and engagement in a gender-diverse context. According to Sabharwal (2014), there are possibilities where men's cognitive involvement as well as their knowledge retention will depend on appreciating the relevance and fairness of the GDMP. Hence, this study proposes:

**H11:** Gender moderates the relationship between GDMPs implementation and physical engagement.

**H12:** Gender moderates the relationship between GDMPs implementation and emotional engagement.

**H13:** Gender moderates the relationship between GDMPs implementation and cognitive engagement.

**H14:** Gender moderates the indirect relationship between GDMPs implementation and intention to stay via physical engagement.

**H15:** Gender moderates the indirect relationship between GDMPs implementation and intention to stay via emotional engagement.

**H16:** Gender moderates the indirect relationship between GDMPs implementation and intention to stay via cognitive engagement.

### **Study 1: The quantitative study - Aim**

The main aim of the study 1 is to investigate the relationship among GDMPs implementation, employees' engagement (including physical, emotional, and cognitive engagement), and intention to stay. It also examines gender as a moderator.

### **METHODOLOGY**

Quantitative data were gathered using a web-based questionnaire (Al-Azab et al., 2024) completed by hotel employees from different positions in Egypt. After developing the questionnaire, 15 academic experts in the tourism and hospitality domain were asked to check the questionnaire for validity. A few comments were related to the questionnaire format and to adding some demographic questions. The questionnaire was translated from English to Arabic by three authors of the current study as Arabic is the local language of hotel employees in Egypt. Three Arabic-English language teachers were recruited to check the questionnaire scales for clarity and content. As a result, minor modifications were made. A pilot study was directed to 30 hotel employees to minimize measurement error and affirm the questionnaire's content before collecting the final data.

The final data were gathered during the months of March, April, and May 2024. The email addresses of all human resources managers in Egyptian hotels were obtained with the assistance of the Egyptian Hotel Association (2024). Then,

the HR managers were asked to use the questionnaire as an attached URL hyperlink and to direct it to their hotels, showing the study's aim. Finally, two follow-up emails were directed to the managers to maximize their response rates until the survey's closing. All respondents signed the informed consent, asserting that they are hotel employees, and they voluntarily agreed to be a part of the current study. A non-probability convenience sampling was employed to collect data because it is proper if the population is difficult and huge as in the case of Egypt. This method is also used by previous research in tourism and hospitality, and it could provide reliable findings with a high level of participation (Elkhwesky et al., 2023). According to the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS, 2022), there are 820,000 employees in Egypt's accommodation and food services. The target sample size is 384 if the population size ranges from 1,000,000 to 10,000,000 and the margin of error is 5% (Saunders et al., 2007). We collected 572 questionnaires from employees in Egyptian hotels. A sample of 522 questionnaires was deemed suitable for analysis.

GDMs implementation was measured by using 13 items adapted from Elkhwesky et al. (2019). Ten measurement items were employed to measure employees' engagement (three for physical engagement, four items for emotional engagement, and three for cognitive engagement), and three items were used to measure intention to stay (Milliman et al., 2018). Hotel employees were asked to respond to all questions on a 5-point Likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The second part of the survey included questions such as gender, age, and level of education, among others (Appendix 1; <https://shorturl.at/WcZAD>). Figure 2 summarizes methodology of the study.

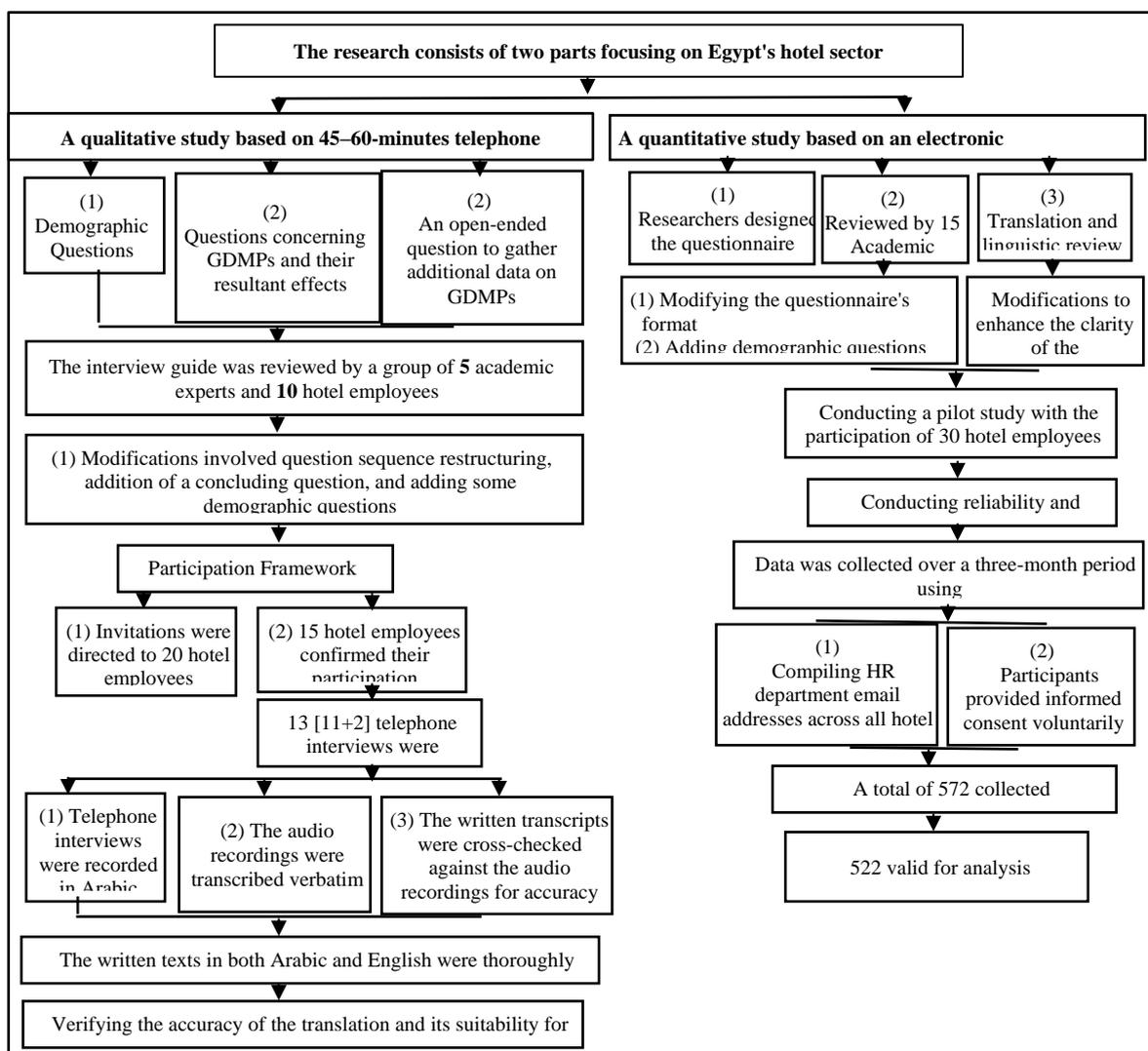


Figure 2. Methodology of the study

## RESULTS

### Construct validity

The collected data totalled 572; after screening for missing information, a sample of 522 hotel employees was deemed suitable for analysis. Table 1 and Figure 3 indicate the demographic analysis of the collected data. The means, standard deviations, and correlations of the study constructs are presented in Table 2. Additionally, all constructs have a positive correlation ( $p < 0.01$ ). In line with the recommendation of Fornell & Larcker (1981), we calculated the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) values to confirm discriminant validity. According to Fornell & Larcker's suggestion, each variable should have an AVE value greater than its correlation values with other variables. Our findings demonstrate

that in this study, the square root of the AVE values for each variable exceeded all of their correlation coefficient values, thereby establishing the study's discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2006; Khreis et al., 2025).

Table 1. Demographic analysis

Demographic information	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	349	66.9%
Female	173	33.1%
<b>Age</b>		
Less than 17	8	1.5%
17 and less than 28	272	52.1%
28 and less than 42	182	34.9%
42 and more	60	11.5%
<b>Level of education</b>		
Less than university	115	22%
University (bachelor/master/PhD)	407	78%
<b>Type of contract</b>		
Permanent	213	40.8%
Temporary	309	59.2%
<b>Professional category</b>		
Manager	88	16.9%
Supervisor	139	26.6%
Entry-level staff	295	56.5%
<b>Job seniority in hospitality</b>		
Less than 2 years	174	33.3%
2-5 years	113	21.6%
Greater than 5 years	235	45%
<b>Job seniority in the hotel</b>		
Less than 2 years	170	32.6%
2-5 years	142	27.2%
Greater than 5 years	210	40.2%
<b>Type of ownership</b>		
Independent	206	39.5%
Chain	316	60.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>522</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2. Descriptive analysis and correlations (Note: \*\* p < 0.01)

	Constructs	Means	S.D	1	2	3	4	5
1	GDMPs Implementation	3.357	1.278	<b>.865</b>				
2	Physical Engagement	3.335	1.240	.362**	<b>.829</b>			
3	Emotional Engagement	3.244	1.227	.380**	.437**	<b>.850</b>		
4	Cognitive Engagement	3.384	1.191	.335**	.369**	.456**	<b>.844</b>	
5	Intention to Stay	3.383	1.092	.473**	.601**	.588**	.621**	<b>.858</b>

To evaluate the convergent validity of the study, we examined the factor loadings of the items related to the five constructs (Appendix 2; <https://shorturl.at/RxsAl>). We found that all the loadings were statistically significant (p < 0.01) and above 0.50. Our analysis indicated that each of the five constructs exhibited composite reliability (CR) values exceeding 0.60, with the highest value of 0.975 for GDMPs implementation and the lowest value of 0.868 for physical engagement (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). The substantial factor loadings and CR values suggested that all five constructs did not display any issues with convergent validity.

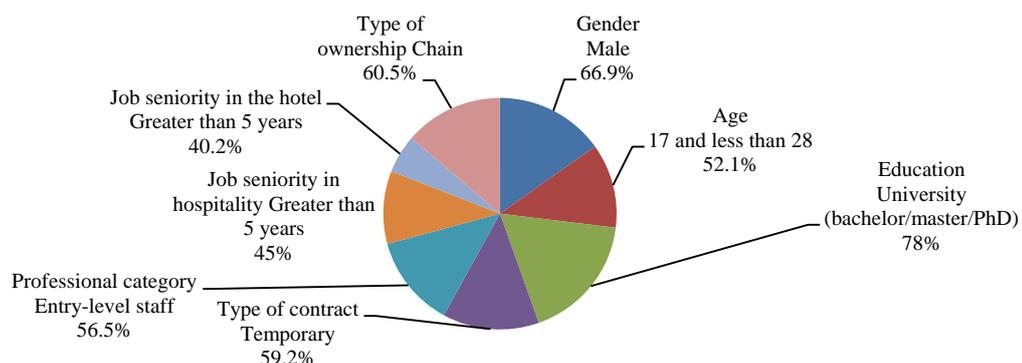


Figure 3. The most dominant characteristics of the sample

Furthermore, all the constructs in the current study had AVE values greater than 0.50, providing additional evidence of convergent validity (Hair et al., 2016). Finally, the CFA findings (Figure 4) using AMOS showed a good fit ( $\chi^2$  [df] = 381.827 [395],  $\chi^2/df = 1.326$ , CFI = 0.993, RMSEA = 0.025, AGFI = 0.935, GFI = 0.947, NFI = 0.970), which confirmed the construct validity. We performed Harman's single-factor test on the employee survey's common method bias (CMB) to check for any potential CMB in the proposed model. The finding revealed no CMB problem in the study, as the highest variance explained for all items was 45.63%, less than 50% (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). Therefore, we concluded that no CMB issue was presented in the current study.

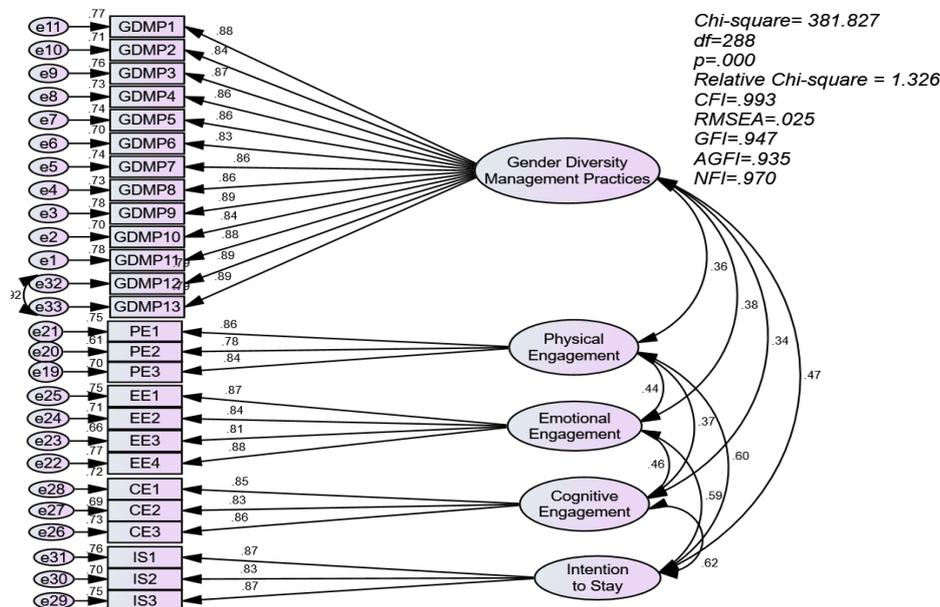


Figure 4. The CFA results

### Hypotheses testing

The study's hypotheses were tested using SPSS AMOS 21 analyses utilizing maximum likelihood. Demographic variables were controlled for direct, indirect, and moderating effects to minimize the impact of the independent variable on the mediators and the dependent variable. The findings (Table 3) found that all control variables have no significant effects on the mediators and dependent variable except age has significant effect on physical engagement. H1, 2, 3 and H4 indicate that GDMPs implementation positively impacts physical engagement, emotional engagement, cognitive engagement, and intention to stay respectively. The findings in Table 3 indicated that GDMPs implementation significantly ( $p < 0.01$ ) influences physical engagement ( $\beta = 0.345$ ), emotional engagement ( $\beta = 0.357$ ), cognitive engagement ( $\beta = 0.300$ ), and intention to stay ( $\beta = 0.195$ ) respectively, supporting H1, H2, H3, and H4. The study also mentioned that intention to stay is influenced by physical engagement (H5), emotional engagement (H6), and cognitive engagement (H7). The findings revealed that intention to stay is significantly ( $p < 0.01$ ) affected by physical engagement ( $\beta = 0.318$ ), emotional engagement ( $\beta = 0.274$ ), and cognitive engagement ( $\beta = 0.356$ ), supporting H5, H6 and H7.

Table 3. The AMOS results for the direct and indirect effects

	Physical Engagement			Emotional Engagement			Cognitive Engagement			Intention to Stay		
	$\beta$	s.e	T	B	s.e	T	$\beta$	s.e	T	$\beta$	s.e	T.value
<b>Job level</b>	.086	.052	1.654	-0.001	0.054	-0.019	-0.056	0.053	-1.057	0.065	0.046	1.413
<b>Tenure</b>	.057	.062	0.919	0.045	0.061	0.738	0.054	0.062	0.871	-0.095	0.053	-1.792
<b>Age</b>	-.126	.056	-2.250	-0.091	0.057	-1.596	-0.018	0.060	-0.300	0.054	0.049	1.102
<b>Education</b>	.051	.039	1.308	0.023	0.041	0.561	0.031	0.042	0.738	0.024	0.037	0.649
<b>GDMPs</b>	.345	.037	9.324	0.357	0.039	9.154	0.300	0.039	7.692	0.195	0.040	4.875
				<b>PE</b>						0.318	0.050	6.360
				<b>EE</b>						0.274	0.054	5.074
				<b>CE</b>						0.356	0.052	6.846
	<b>Indirect effects</b>						<b><math>\beta</math></b>	<b>s.e</b>	<b>T.value</b>	<b>95% confidence</b>		
	<b>Total indirect effect</b>									<b>Lower</b>	<b>Upper</b>	
<b>GDMPs <math>\rightarrow</math> PE <math>\rightarrow</math> IS</b>							0.293	0.027	10.852	0.242	0.347	
<b>GDMPs <math>\rightarrow</math> EE <math>\rightarrow</math> IS</b>							0.110	0.022	5.000	0.069	0.156	
<b>GDMPs <math>\rightarrow</math> CE <math>\rightarrow</math> IS</b>							0.098	0.023	4.261	0.056	0.147	
							0.107	0.019	5.632	0.071	0.145	

Moreover, these findings partially supported the mediating hypotheses; physical engagement (H8), emotional engagement (H9), and cognitive engagement (H10) mediate the relationship between GDMPs implementation and intention to stay, for

three reasons (Baron & Kenny, 1986). First, the relationships (H1, H2 and H3) between the independent variable (GDMPs implementation) and mediators are significant (physical engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement). Second, the associations (H5, H6 and H7) between the mediators and dependent variable (intention to stay) are significant. Third, the association between the independent and dependent variables (H5), making the mediation partially supported.

As an additional test, the bootstrapping test was used to check the indirect effects (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). The indirect relationships between GDMPs implementation and intention to stay through physical engagement ( $\beta=0.110$ , 95% CI [0.069, 0.156]), emotional engagement ( $\beta=0.098$ , 95% CI [0.056, 0.147]), and cognitive engagement ( $\beta=0.107$ , 95% CI [0.071, 0.145]) are significant, do not include zero, confirming H8, H9 and H10. The total indirect effect of GDMPs implementation on intention to stay through the three mediators is significant ( $\beta=0.293$ , 95% CI [0.242, 0.347]).

For moderating and moderated mediating hypotheses, initially, the paths coefficient were set from GDMPs implementation and controlling variables to each mediator and intention to stay, and from GDMPs implementation, controlling variables and the moderators to intention to stay, to be equal. Then, the test freely evaluated the path coefficients of male and female employees for the hypotheses' links. The study reported that gender moderates the relationship between GDMPs implementation and the mediators, including physical engagement (H11), emotional engagement (H12), and cognitive engagement (H13). For H11, the findings in Table 4 illustrate that the significant association between GDMPs implementation and physical engagement is higher in female employees ( $\beta=0.578$ ,  $t=12.042$ ) than in males ( $\beta=0.151$ ,  $t=2.097$ ). The chi-square variance is significant ( $\Delta\chi^2(1)=24.83$ ) among the constrained and unconstrained modes. Thus, the results support H11.

For H12, the findings indicate a significant relationship between GDMPs implementation and emotional engagement is higher in female employees ( $\beta=0.591$ ,  $t=11.820$ ) than in males ( $\beta=0.149$ ,  $t=1.987$ ). The chi-square variance is significant ( $\Delta\chi^2(1)=30.281$ ) among the constrained and unconstrained modes. Thus, the results support H12. For H13, the results reveal a significant relationship between GDMPs implementation and cognitive engagement is significant in female group ( $\beta=0.523$ ,  $t=10.460$ ) and insignificant in male group ( $\beta=0.103$ ,  $t=1.392$ ). The chi-square variance is significant ( $\Delta\chi^2(1)=22.234$ ) among the constrained and unconstrained modes. Thus, the results support H13.

In terms of the moderated mediation hypotheses, we measured the significant differences in the indirect effect of GDMPs implementation on intention to stay through physical engagement (H14), emotional engagement (H15), and cognitive engagement (H16) between male and female groups. For H14, the results find the indirect effect of GDMPs implementation on intention to stay through physical engagement is significant in the female group ( $\beta=0.124$ ,  $t=7.294$ ) and insignificant in the male group ( $\beta=0.045$ ,  $t=0.556$ ). The chi-square variance is significant ( $\Delta\chi^2(2)=26.569$ ) among the constrained and unconstrained modes. Thus, the results support H14.

For H15, the findings indicate the indirect effect of GDMPs implementation on intention to stay through emotional engagement is significant in the female group ( $\beta=0.178$ ,  $t=11.867$ ) and insignificant in the male group ( $\beta=0.034$ ,  $t=0.430$ ). The chi-square variance is significant ( $\Delta\chi^2(2)=30.453$ ) among the constrained and unconstrained modes. Thus, the results support H15. For H16, the findings find the indirect effect of GDMPs implementation on intention to stay through cognitive engagement is significant in the female group ( $\beta=0.094$ ,  $t=6.267$ ) and insignificant in the male group ( $\beta=0.034$ ,  $t=0.430$ ). The chi-square variance is significant ( $\Delta\chi^2(2)=28.054$ ) among the constrained and unconstrained modes. Thus, the results support H16. Appendix 3 (<https://shorturl.at/faaMJ>) summarizes the results of the current study.

Table 4. The AMOS results of moderation and moderated mediation hypotheses

Hypotheses	Male (n = 349)			Female (n= 173)			Unconstrained model $\chi^2$	(df)	Constrained model $\chi^2$	(df)	$\Delta\chi^2$ ( $\Delta df=1$ )
	$\beta$	s.e	T	$\beta$	s.e	T					
GDMPs $\rightarrow$ PE	.151	.072	2.097	.578	.0480	12.042	232.064	10	256.894	11	24.83***
GDMPs $\rightarrow$ EE	.149	.075	1.987	.591	.050	11.820	227.128	10	257.410	11	30.282***
GDMPs $\rightarrow$ CE	.103	.074	1.392	.523	.050	10.460	250.446	10	272.680	11	22.234***
GDMPs $\rightarrow$ PE $\rightarrow$ IS	.045	.081	0.556	.124	.017	7.294	232.064	10	258.633	12	26.569***
GDMPs $\rightarrow$ EE $\rightarrow$ IS	.034	.079	0.430	.178	.015	11.867	227.128	10	257.581	12	30.453***
GDMPs $\rightarrow$ CE $\rightarrow$ IS	.034	.079	0.430	.094	.015	6.267	250.446	10	278.500	12	28.054***
Total indirect effect	.114	.069	1.652	.339	.031	10.935	88.885	6	175.282	12	86.397***

### Discussion of study 1

Our findings affirmed that GDMPs implementation positively impacts physical engagement, emotional engagement, cognitive engagement, and employees' intention to stay in the hotel. This is in line with Brien et al. (2021), Elkhwesky et al. (2019), Kossek et al. (2017), and Sabharwal (2014). Besides, our results indicated that physical engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement positively affect intention to stay. This finding is consistent with Pereira & Mohiya (2021), Redondo et al. (2021), and Reissová & Papay (2021). Another important finding of the current study is that gender moderates the relationship between GDMPs implementation and physical engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement. To illustrate, the significant association between GDMPs implementation and physical engagement is higher in female employees than in males. In addition, the significant relationship between GDMPs implementation and emotional engagement is higher in female employees than in males. Also, the relationship between GDMPs implementation and cognitive engagement is significant in female group and insignificant in male group.

This means that women employees need effective GDMPs more than men to enhance their engagement in hotels. Previous research stated that women have a better perception of GDMPs and are more emotionally involved since the

practices address equity and diversity, aspects that may have a negative impact on them (e.g., King et al., 2012). Study 1 focused on investigating the association between specific GDMPs implementation and related outcomes including engagement and intention to stay. This is a limitation of the current study 1. Therefore, the following study 2 explores diverse GDMPs and their different outcomes in hotels. This is important for theory, practice, and future research in hospitality.

### **Study 2: The qualitative study - Aim**

A qualitative research design was chosen to explore GDMPs in Egyptian hotels. Qualitative research is a well-established methodology in hospitality diversity research (see Manoharan & Singal, 2017). Further, qualitative research is appropriate for exploratory purposes (Marshall & Rossman, 2014) and offers richness and lived meaning (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Hence, a qualitative design was appropriate for this study, which explores GDMPs and their outcomes from the perspective of Egyptian hotel managers, supervisors, and entry-level staff.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The interview protocol consisted of three parts. First, data related to respondent's demographic variables such as gender, age, religion, and job-related information. Second, questions related to specific GDMPs and their outcomes. Last, an open-ended question to collect additional data related to GDMPs in the Egyptian hospitality industry. The questions were developed based on the literature (Ali, 2016). The interview protocol was distributed to five academic experts and ten hotel employees to check for the content and clarity of the questions. As a result, some modifications related to the order of the questions were made. Also, we added the last question and some demographic questions such as type of contract of each employee.

The current study was conducted in the Egyptian hotels. The travel and tourism industry in Egypt contributed about 389 billion EGP to the economy in 2018. In addition, this sector will contribute 601 billion EGP to the economy in Egypt by 2028 (Elkhwesky et al., 2023). According to Elkhwesky et al. (2019), there is gender diversity in Egyptian hotels that requires proper management practices. Besides, little is known about diversity, equity, and inclusion in the Egyptian hospitality. Researchers have explicitly called to explore DEI outside the commonly studied USA context (Manoharan & Singal, 2017). An understanding of GDMPs will advance the hospitality DEI literature and offer valuable practical implications. The sample frame included hotel entry-level staff, supervisors, and managers. The invitation was sent to 20 individuals, and 15 confirmed their interest in participation. Data was collected through telephonic interviews. Due to the shift work and busyness of the Egyptian hotels, telephonic interviews were conducted over face-to-face interviews.

The interview with eleven respondents was stopped due to data saturation. Further, two more interviews were performed, and no new themes were formed. So, in total, 13 interviews were conducted. Interviews were conducted in Arabic, the first language of hotel employees, and lasted 45-60 minutes. One of the authors recorded the interviews in Arabic and transcribed the text from the voice records in Arabic. Another author revised the extracted text to be the same as in the voices received. Two Arabic-English teachers revised the extracted texts in both Arabic and English and confirmed that the translation was correct and proper for analysis. Figure 2 summarizes methodology of the study.

## **RESULTS**

Inductive thematic analysis was used to identify GDMPs in the Egyptian hotels. Thematic analysis enables us to gain insights into complex data sets and diverse respondents (Braun & Clarke, 2006). An inductive method is a 'bottom-up exploration that allows the data to direct the process' (Manoharan et al., 2021, p.10). A six-stage thematic analysis was performed to analyze the data. In step 1, the transcribed interviews were read multiple times to get familiarity with the data. In step 2, in the data reduction process, 34 codes emerged concerning GDMPs and 41 codes related to the outcomes of GDMPs. Step 3 combined the codes with overarching themes to understand the recurring phenomena. At this stage, no themes were abandoned. In step 4, the themes were reviewed and refined. In step 5, the themes were named and defined to give clarity. Four themes were identified with GDMPs, and three themes were identified with GDMPs and their outcomes. In the final step, the themes were presented with supporting quotes in the following section.

### **Gender-diversity management practices (GDMPs)**

All respondents unanimously confirmed that there is no discrimination against gender diversity. However, they specified GDMPs. Four sub-themes were identified as GDMPs, which include gender diversity-sensitive recruitment and selection system, gender diversity training, gender-neutral performance management, and gender-neutral reward management.

*Gender diversity-sensitive recruitment and selection system.* It was noted that hotels had policies to increase women employees. Both managers, supervisors, and entry-level staff confirmed that hotels have gender-specific recruitment activities and blind recruitment and selection practices such as structured interviews. As participants stated:

'Implement blind recruitment practices where personal information such as name, gender, and age are removed from resumes during the initial screening process.' (Front office manager) [my] '*hotel employs structured interviews and standardized assessment criteria to ensure a fair selection process.*' (Room division manager)

Specifically, managers and supervisors pointed out the recruitment activities such as targeting diverse recruitment channels such as '*career fairs, webinars and networking events for women*' (Restaurant manager), '*collaborating with the organization which promotes gender*' (Sales manager), and job advertisements are specifically designed to attract women. Further, a manager mentioned that hotels offer all roles to men and women, giving equal opportunities. Entry-level staff mentioned that having women in the interview panel facilitates the selection of women in hotels.

**Gender diversity-sensitive training.** All respondents confirmed that hotels offer unconscious bias training. Further, managers and supervisors confirmed that hotels offer regular workshops and seminars on gender-related topics and training on gender harassment and discrimination. One respondent (housekeeping manager) stated that they provide online training on gender diversity and inclusion. The same manager pointed out that hotels also offer training programs to develop women leaders. As one respondent mentioned, *‘Hotel offer[s] programs specifically aimed at developing women leaders within the organization’* (Housekeeping supervisor). A front office manager also pointed out that:

*‘The training environment may be discouraging or uncomfortable for women, leading to a lack of participation. Some women may feel unsafe or discriminated against during training sessions.’*

**Gender-neutral performance management.** Managers and supervisors confirmed that the performance management process is gender-neutral and anonymous, as stated by one manager.

*‘Our hotel set clear, measurable, and gender-neutral performance goals that are directly tied to job responsibilities. This helps ensure that evaluations are based on objective criteria rather than subjective judgments.’* (Front office manager)

Entry-level staff confirmed the same, stating that the performance management process is fair and common for all staff. One supervisor suggested more frequent performance appraisals and a manager suggested offering awards for diversity initiatives. *‘Our hotel should conduct regular performance check-ins rather than relying solely on annual reviews. This allows for timely feedback and course corrections, promoting continuous improvement.’* (Front office supervisor)

*‘Create award categories that celebrate diverse achievements and contributions. This can include awards for teamwork, innovation, customer service, and leadership, among others.’* (Sales manager)

**Gender-neutral reward management.** All the respondents confirmed that the reward system is transparent and based on performance. *‘Hotel implementing a gender diversity-sensitive reward management system is essential for creating a fair and inclusive workplace. By adopting these practices, your hotel can ensure that all employees are recognized and rewarded based on their contributions, fostering a culture of equity and inclusion.’* (Front office manager)

Respondents also mentioned that they have a hotel-specific rewards system, and the rewards system must be reviewed. A supervisor highlighted this: *‘Our hotel should conduct regular reviews of reward practices that help maintain fairness and equity, ensuring that any disparities are quickly addressed. This responsiveness can significantly enhance employees’ satisfaction as they see the organization is committed to continuous improvement.’*

However, some hotels offer specific rewards to women, such as *‘offering inclusive benefits such as parental leave, childcare support, and health benefits that cater to diverse needs.’* (Room division manager)

### Gender diversity management outcomes

All respondents confirmed that GDMPs lead to positive outcomes. This is grouped into three themes: organizational-, group-, and employee-level outcomes. However, they vary in the number of these outcomes at all these levels, as presented in Figure 5.

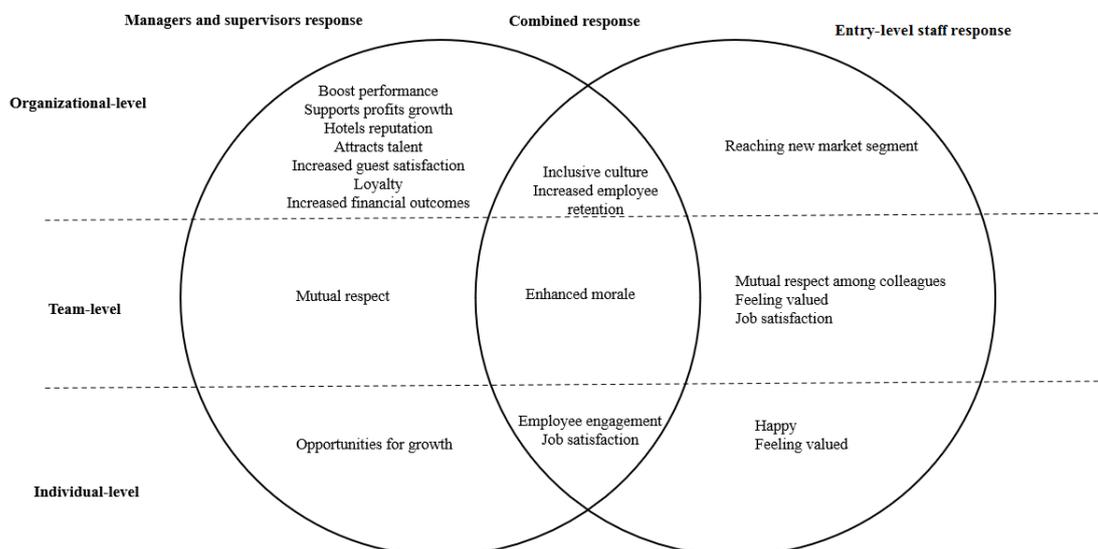


Figure 5. Gender diversity management outcomes

### Discussion of study 2

Our study affirmed that there is no discrimination against gender diversity in the Egyptian hotels. GDMPs that were identified include gender diversity-sensitive recruitment and selection system, gender diversity training, gender-neutral performance management, and gender-neutral reward management. Previous research affirmed there are diverse GDMPs (e.g., Elkhwesky et al., 2019; Talukder et al., 2024).

Our findings showed that not only engagement and intention to stay within the hotel are the outcomes of implementing GDMPs, but also there are other positive outcomes. These consequences include organizational-, group-, and employee-level outcomes. To illustrate, GDMPs implementation in hotels could lead to job satisfaction, feeling happy, feeling valued, mutual respect, morale enhancement, financial benefits, and profits growth, among others.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

A mixed-methods sequential explanatory research design (Wang et al., 2022) has been employed through the collection of quantitative data via a structured questionnaire (study 1) and subsequently supplemented by qualitative data obtained from comprehensive interviews (study 2). Both study 1 and study 2 were executed within the hotel industry in Egypt, encompassing the perspectives of hotel personnel, which included managers, supervisors, and entry-level staff.

### Theoretical contributions

This study gives major theoretical insights into Egypt's hotel sector, specifically in terms of gender diversity management, engagement, and intention to stay. This study provides a new framework based on the TPB (Ajzen, 1991; Magoshi & Chang, 2009) and attachment theory (Ainsworth, 1979; Bowlby, 1973). This framework investigates how GDMPs affect employee engagement and intention to stay in the hotel industry, emphasizing the complex relationships among physical, emotional, and cognitive engagement, as well as the moderating effects of gender within a culturally specific context (Wang et al., 2024). The findings of the study add to the TPB (Ajzen, 1991; Magoshi & Chang, 2009) and attachment theory (Ainsworth, 1979; Bowlby, 1973) by confirming that GDMPs implementation positively impacts physical engagement, emotional engagement, cognitive engagement, and intention to stay. In addition, employee engagement positively impacts intention to stay. Besides, gender moderates the relationship between GDMPs implementation and employee engagement. Our findings confirm that gender-specific tactics could be necessary to improve engagement and retention, especially in the hotel sector where service quality is critical (Rasool et al., 2023).

The favourable associations shown between GDMPs and the various characteristics of engagement suggest that existing engagement models be linked with diversity management frameworks. This integration can provide a more complete picture of how diversity programs can improve employee commitment and performance in high-stakes settings such as hotels (Viterouli et al., 2024). The current study highlights the need to take cultural context into account in the Egyptian hotel industry when utilizing theoretical frameworks. The distinctive socio-cultural factors in Egypt may influence how global diversity management practices are perceived and implemented, indicating that theories of diversity and engagement must be flexible to local conditions to be effective. Furthermore, the findings carry important implications for management within hotels. These insights can contribute to human resource management theories by emphasizing the significance of GDMPs in shaping employee experiences and outcomes (Wesley et al., 2024).

Human resources management strategies should prioritize gender diversity as a crucial tactic for enhancing employee engagement and retention, particularly in the highly competitive hotel sector. Our study indicates that gender significantly influences the connection between organizational practices and employee outcomes (Karatepe et al., 2022; Lu et al., 2023). For instance, women may respond differently to diversity initiatives compared to men, which can affect their engagement and commitment to the organization (Khalifa et al., 2025). This highlights the necessity for gender-sensitive strategies to enhance the effectiveness of GDMPs. The current study provides a foundation for further research on the long-term benefits of GDMPs on employee engagement and retention in a variety of hospitality settings. It also encourages scholars to examine the relationship between GDMPs and employee outcomes across geographical and cultural contexts.

### Practical implications

Hotels in Egypt should prioritize the deployment of GDMPs to enhance employee engagement and the intention to stay. Hotels that build an inclusive workplace that celebrates diversity can boost physical, emotional, and cognitive engagement among employees, which is critical for providing a high-quality service in a competitive market. Effective GDMPs could enhance employee engagement and retention rates, which are critical in the hotel industry, where turnover is often high (Elkhwesky et al., 2019). Hotel managers should create specialized engagement methods that take into account the distinct requirements and preferences of different gender groups. Understanding how gender influences the relationship between GDMPs and engagement can help hotel managers develop focused efforts that resonate with their employees. For example, providing flexible work arrangements or recognition programs that cater to the preferences of both male and female employees can boost overall engagement levels (Elkhwesky et al., 2019).

Our findings confirmed the importance of implementing GDMPs to increase physical engagement among employees. Managers could strive to create a work atmosphere that promotes active participation and involvement in hotels. This could be accomplished by team-building activities and inclusive workplace regulations that encourage collaboration and physical presence in job-related tasks (Karatepe et al., 2022). Furthermore, GDMPs have a positive impact on emotional engagement, which is essential for developing a supportive workplace culture. Managers are recommended to prioritize measures that promote and celebrate diversity, such as diversity training and awareness campaigns. Hotels that create an emotionally supportive workplace can boost employee morale and job satisfaction, resulting in improved retention rates (Javed, 2024).

The current study found that using effective GDMPs increases cognitive engagement. Hotel management should encourage staff to express their views and to participate in a decision-making process. Regular feedback meetings and brainstorming sessions could help employees feel valued and invested in their work (Siyal et al., 2023). Furthermore, the positive correlation between GDMPs and intention to stay emphasizes the necessity of maintaining talents in the hotel industry. Hotel managers should create retention strategies that address the different demands of their employees (Aguinis et al., 2024). This includes providing opportunities for professional growth and promotion tailored to different employee populations. Hotel managers are recommended to enhance physical, emotional, and cognitive engagement by focused actions. Mentorship programs, for example, can build emotional and cognitive engagement, enhancing employees' desire to stay with the hotel. As a result of the influence of gender on the relationship between GDMPs and various forms

of engagement, hotel management needs to use gender-sensitive techniques in the diversity programs. This could entail adjusting engagement techniques to the unique needs and preferences of different gender groups, ensuring that all employees feel included and supported (Talukder et al., 2024). Regularly reviewing the success of GDMPs and their impact on employee engagement is critical. Hotels could use feedback mechanisms like surveys and focus groups to get information from employees about their experiences with diversity programs (Malik et al., 2023). This continual feedback loop can help develop initiatives and ensure they suit the changing needs of the workforce.

Fostering a healthy organizational culture that embraces diversity and inclusion has a substantial impact on employee engagement and retention. Hotels could actively develop a culture in which all employees feel appreciated and included, which could result in enhanced loyalty and a stronger desire to stay with the hotel. This is important in the hotel market, as employee interactions directly influence customer experiences and satisfaction. Hotels should have purposeful recruitment policies that promote diversity. Hotels that actively seek a diverse workforce can enhance their organizational culture and service delivery. Diverse teams are frequently more imaginative and better prepared to fulfill the needs of a diverse clientele, which is critical in the global hospitality sector (Salama et al., 2022).

### Limitations and future research

The present study possesses certain limitations. Our investigation concentrated on personnel within the hotel sector in Egypt to examine GDMPs and their resultant effects. Consequently, alternative diversity management practices warrant exploration, including variables such as age and religion, and may extend to different sectors, such as the restaurant industry or tourism organizations. Furthermore, prospective researchers could apply the proposed model within varying cultural frameworks. It is important for future research to investigate the link between workforce diversity and sustainable development, especially in MSME restaurants. This sector requires more studies in Egypt (Elkhwesky et al., 2025).

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