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# Total Quality Management And Hotel Employee Creative Performance: The Mediation Role Of Job Embeddedment

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## **Abstract**

*Underpinned by social exchange and JE theory, this study proposes and tests a research model that investigates the effect of TQM on FHE's creative performance mediating by JE. The data come from FHE's who work in five star hotels in northern Iraq. The structure equation modelling results revealed that JE is the underlying mechanism through which TQM manifested by the top-management, empowerment, training, reward and teamwork practice, is linked to the FHE's CP. The empirical data support all hypothesis and research model we have proposed is practical. The results have important implications about FHE's of TQM practice and aforesaid.*

**Key words:** *TQM, job embeddedment (JE), creative performance (CP), frontline hotel employees (FHEs'), hotel sector*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Employees are the most important asset in hospitality industry (Eskildsen and Dahlgard, 2000). FHEs' have a direct connection with customers, an important role to deliver excellent service quality not surprisingly, they are the key success for organization to outperform competitors and establish long term relationship with customers that ensure sustainable competitive advantages in the hotel industry environment, Therefore, hiring and retention of qualified employees who can have high quality performance is critical for the hotel industry (Faeq et al, 2021). As an important employee retention strategy, JE refers to "the combined forces that keep a person from leaving his or her job" (Yao et al. 2004). Consist of three dimensions: link, fit and sacrifice (Mitchell et al, 2001). Links are defined as "formal or informal connections between a person and institutions or other people," While fit refers to "an employee's perceived compatibility or comfort with an organization and with his or her environment" (Mitchell et al, 2001). Finally, sacrifice refers to "the perceived cost of material or psychological benefits that may be forfeited by leaving a job" (Mitchell et al., 2001).

Employees can be embedded in their job through various organizational and community-related forces (Crossley et al. 2007). Such as employee empowerment, training, top management, teamwork and reward that considered as the main important principle of TQM (Chag et al, 2010). Total Quality Management can be defined as an integrating manger and employees in the organization to continuously improve the quality of product/service and process to meet customer need and expectation (Jaca and Psomas, 2015). Therefore, the presence of such practices seems to enhance employees' JE and results in performing effectively (Wang & Netemeyer, 2004; Karatepe, 2016; Sadq et al, 2020).

### 1.1. Purpose

Using SET and JE as a theoretical framework, the purpose of the current study is to propose and test a research model that investigates the JE as a mediator of the effect of TQM via (top-management, empowerment, training, reward and teamwork) on creative performance. Data were gathered from FHE's of five star hotels in Sulaimania city of Northern Iraq.

The specific research objectives of this study were to examine: (a) the effect of TQM on JE; (b) the relation between JE and creative performance; and (c) JE as a mediator of the impact of TQM on creative performance.

### 1.2 Contributions to existing knowledge

The current study aims to make several contributions to the hospitality management literature in following ways. First, the majority of the studies regarding TQM are at the organizational level (f.g. Financial performance (Hendricks and Singhal, 2001; Eriksson and Hansson, 2003), innovative performance (Hung et al. 2011; Ooi et al. 2012), operational performance (Samson and Terziovski, 1999). Few empirical studies have gauged the impact of TQM at the employee level (Prajogo & Cooper, 2010 and Boon Ooi et al, 2007 and Karia, 2006; Ali, 2021; Faeq et al, 2020). Especially, there is a void in current literature regarding the

association between TQM and JE. Informed by this, current study gauges the impacts of top-management, training, empowerment, reward, teamwork simultaneously on employee JE.

Second, researchers agree that TQM elements consist of the human resource management practices. However, still there is no uniform TQM element in current literature (Sila and Ebrahimpour, 2003) thus, various elements have been investigated by researchers (Arunachalam & Palanichamy, 2017; Yue et al, 2011; Chang et al, 2010; Prajogo & Cooper, 2010; Boon Ooi et al, 2007; Andavar et al, 2020). As a potential indicator of TQM elements (top management commitment, top management- leadership, employee empowerment, employee involvement, teamwork, appraisal systems, customer focus, continuous improvement, organizational trust, reward and recognition, organizational culture, and training). Though TQM practices are critical conduits for encouraging employee motivation, retention and performance. Therefore, the current study uses (top management, empowerment, training, reward and teamwork) as TQM elements based on a detailed analysis of the current literature and human resource practices of the leading companies in the service industry.

Third, JE as a retention strategy that hinders employee's voluntary withdrawal, Its important to determine the factors that foster employees JE (Ng and Feldman, 2011; Karatepe, 2013). Therefore, this study tests the effect of TQM as a main principle (top management, empowerment, training, reward and teamwork) of TQM on JE

Fourth, JE predicts affective and performance outcome (Karatepe, 2016; Karatepe & Karadas2012). However, very little is known regarding the effect of JE on creative performance. CP refers to "the extent of new ideas created and novel behaviour demonstrated by FHE's in handling customer requests and problems (Karatepe, 2016; Wang and Netemeyer, 2004). In Rudolph et al.'s (2017) there is a call for empirical research about the use of *supervisory rating of work performance*

Finally, The current study assesses the underlying mechanism through which TQM is linked to the employee's creative performance. This is important since there is still a need to investigate more on JE as a mediating variable (Wheeler et al, 2010) and More research is needed (Hon, 2012). With this realization JE is treated as a full mediator of the impact of TQM on creative performance, to bridge the void in the existing knowledge base.

Finding of this study may provide useful implication for managers in hotel industry to be encouraged to invest in TQM and retain embedded employees.

### **Background of the study**

General review of the empirical studies on TQM reveals that there is little empirical evidence pertaining to the association between TQM and employee outcomes. As discussed earlier, the overwhelming majority of the empirical studies have relied on organizational performance.

Claver-Cortés et al, (2008) Managerial factors are significantly further developed in hotels with a stronger TQM commitment, which also have higher performances in the Spanish hotel sector. Wang et al (2012) demonstrates that TQM and Market orientation positively affects hotel performance. Market orientation has the mediating effect between TQM and hotel performance. External environment factors act as a moderator between TQM, market orientation and hotel performance. Benavides-Velasco et al (2014) shows that the adoption of TQM and CSR improves the capacity of hotels to create benefits for their stakeholders, and these results have a positive effect on hotel performance. Specifically, Psomas and Jaca, (2016) show the factors describing TQM implementation in service companies' concern quality practices of top management, employee quality management, process management, employee knowledge and education and customer focus. Similarly, the performance dimensions revealed concern financial performance, operational performance, customer satisfaction and product/service quality performance. Specially, The TQM factors concerning customers, employees and top management significantly affect the performance dimensions. Bouranta et al, (2017) confirmed that most of the TQM elements of (quality practices of top management, strategic quality planning, employee quality management, customer focus and employee knowledge and education) are antecedents of hotel business performance dimensions of financial performance, customer focused performance and service quality performance in the hotel industry of Greece.

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK, HYPOTHESIS, AND RESEARCH MODEL**

### **2.1 SET theory**

Which states that the relationship between (organization and employees) develops into trust, loyalty and commitment over time if the parties perceived a certain rules of the exchanges (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005; Ali, 2021).

Social and economic exchange relationships are two types of these relationships. Social exchange is “social exchange relationships tend to involve the exchange of socioemotional benefits” that related to close “personal attachment and open-ended obligations” (Cropanzano et al, 2003). While economical exchanges are based on financial or transaction relationship is economical or financial which is short term.

When employees obtain socioemotional and economic resources in the workplace, they repay the organization via effective performance and behavioural outcomes. Organization investment in TQM practices leads FHE's to be obligated to repay the organization via high JE and contribute to organizational performance.

### **2.2 TQM and JE**

The relationship between TQM and JE can be developed via SET theory. FHE's have a direct interactions with customers. Therefore, they need to acquire required skills and knowledge to deliver excellent quality service right from the first time. Training can be considered as a “strategic value for hotels” (Wang et al, 2012) provides opportunities for FHE's to increase abilities, skill, confidence and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities. Empowerment refers

to “freedom and ability to make decisions and commitments” (Forrester, 2000). To exploit their maximum skills and knowledge to deal with customer requests and complaints in a courteous way (Prajogo and cooper, 2010). Team work refers to “mutual relations and consideration to each other” (Bari et al, 2016) employees working together to enhance motivation, self-efficacy and provide social support in the workplace (Pajigo and Cooper, 2010). Top management refers to help and support employees (Chang and Chen, 2010). Reward related to social benefit can be financial and nonfinancial from the organization based on a fair evaluation of employee performance (Demir et al, 2020).

As SET contends, Organization investment in TQM via (top management, empowerment, training, rewards and teamwork) leads employees to feel obliged to repay the organization by representing high JE.

Bergiel et al (2009) found that compensation and training enhance JE. Karatepe and Karadas (2012) reported that training, empowerment and reward increase JE among Frontline hotel employee in Romania. Karatepe (2013) argue that high performance work practice and work, social support of (supervisor support and co-worker support) is positively related to JE among FHE’s employee in Iran. Karatepe (2016) recent study suggests that co-worker support fosters JE among FHE’s in Cameroon.

The hospitality management literature is devoid of empirical research about the relationship between TQM and JE. Accordingly, the following hypothesis advanced

H1: TQM positively and significantly influence employee JE

H1a : top management of TQM has a positive significant influence on JE

H1b: empowerment of TQM has a positive significant influence on JE

H1c: training of TQM has a positive significant influence on JE

H1d: reward of TQM has a positive significant influence on JE

H1e: teamwork of TQM has a positive significant influence on JE

### **2.3 JE and creative performance**

According to JE theory, employees with high JE are linked to managerial and non managerial employees by a trusting and establishing good quality relationships as well as feeling fit to their duties in the workplace and not ready for loses of benefit that obtain from the organization and their relationship because of voluntary turnover.

Thus, they are motivated to deliver novel idea and creative behaviour while they are dealing with the customer request, However, there is a paucity of empirical evidence regarding the association between JE and CP in the current literature there is just the study by (Karatepe, 2016) found that JE can enhance employee’s CP. Accordingly the following hypothesis postulated

H2: JE positively related to creative performance

#### **2.4 JE as a full mediator**

Consistent with guidelines provided by the JE theory to establish the mediating hypothesized relationships. Organization investment in people related TQM via (top management, empowerment, training, reward and team work) develops JE that lead to decreased voluntary intention (Wheeler et al 2010; Karatepe, 2016; ALI, 2021).

Employees JE when they feel their organization care about them and try to develop their career opportunities by increasing their knowledge through training and they feel that they are part of the organization to make decisions freely by empowering them, organization ability to develop a sole of teamwork among employees to support each other through team work in delivering excellent service quality and problem solving, employees feeling that their energy and what they do for the organizations appreciated through the financial and non financial benefit and all employees needs and requests as well as supporting them it's one of the most important duty of top management.

Thus, employees feel that they are linked to the organizational social and career web through top managers and coworkers good quality relationship, fit in such a proper way with their duties which is difficult to sacrifice all the financial and nonfinancial benefit they receive for turnover intention. Not surprising such employees are expected to behave and perform their duties in an innovative and novel way when they dealing with customer's request.

However, there are a limited number of studies in the literature that provide empirical evidence of a fully or partially mediating role of JE for instance, Wheeler (2010) found that JE fully mediate the impact of human resource management on intent to turnover intention. Karatepe and Karadas (2012) showed that high performance work practice such as training and empowerment affect service recovery performance through JE. Karatepe (2016) revealed that impact of co-worker and family support on creative performance fully mediates by JE.

Consistent with the JE theory and a little empirical evidence its expected that JE acts as a full mediator of the impact of people related TQM on creative performance. Accordingly, this hypotheses is postulated

H3: JE will fully mediate the effect of TQM on creative performance.

#### **2.5 Research model**

The conceptual model and hypotheses developed using social exchange and JE theories are shown in Fig.1. The underlying premise of the model is that FHEs' with TQM manifested by (top management, empowerment, training, reward and teamwork) are embedded in their job and lead to display creative performance, shortly JE fully mediates the impact of people related TQM on creative performance.

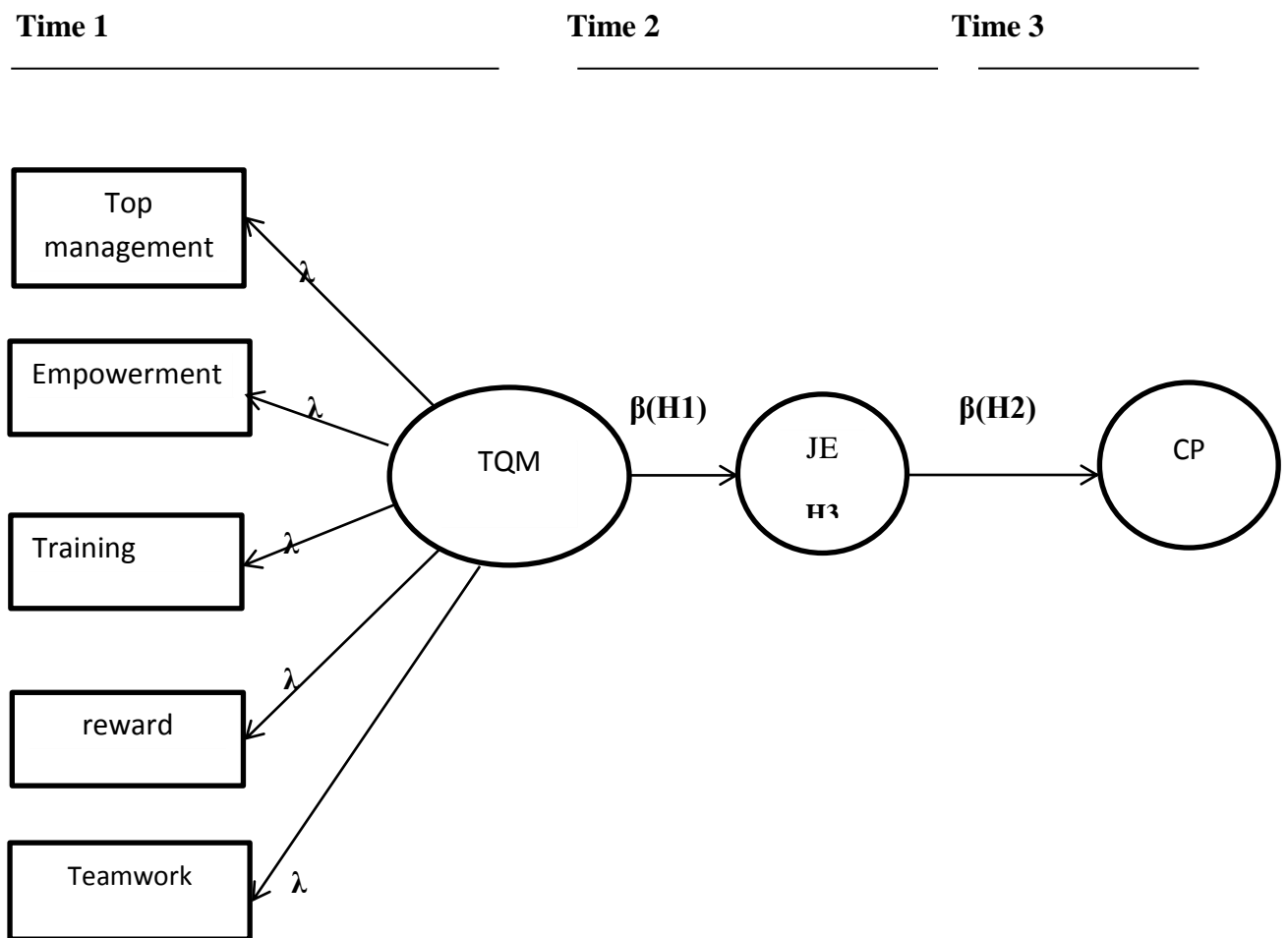


Fig. 1 Research model

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Sample and procedure

In this empirical study data were gathered from FHE's who work in five star hotels in Sulaimania city which is located in Norther Iraq.

In the time the current study has been conducted there were four five star hotels in Sulaimania that licenced by the ministry of tourism of Northern Iraq.

Management of the hotels was conducted using letters that consisted of the objective of the study and permission of data collection. However the management of all hotels agrees to participate, but not allowed the researcher directly connect the participant, they provided that a middle manager would coordinate the data collection process.

The first page of each questionnaire includes information about the assurance of anatomy and confidentiality.

Therefore, all the questionnaires for employees contained (TQM, JE and items about respondent's profile) and supervisor questionnaire contained (evaluating employee's creative performance) submitted to the middle manager. The researcher puts the identification number of employees on both questionnaires for employees and supervisors copy

After filling out each questionnaire by the employees and supervisor, they sealed it in an envelopes during the communication meeting then submitted it to the middle manager. He handled all the sealed envelopes to the researcher. Using sealed envelopes and using employee's identification number is to ensure anatomy and confidentiality (Karatepe and Choubtarash, 2014).

Then the middle manager submitted all questionnaires to the researcher, we mached both employee and supervisor questionnaire according to the employee's identification number.

(300) questionnaires (time1) were distributed to FHE's in the first waves. (280) were returned. In the second waves (380) questionnaires distributed to the same FHE's. (250) were returned. In the third wave (350) questionnaires distributed to FHE's to evaluate tardiness. (202) were received from FHEs'. The final sample included 202 samples, Yielding a response rate of 67.33%. Table 1 represents the respondents' profile.

### **3.2 The measurement instrument**

Top management- leadership consist of six items, empowerment consist of four items, training consist of five items and team work consist of three items all are adapted from (Pragio and Cooper, 2010). While reward consists of five items adopted from (Karatepe, 2013) this draw the TQM dimensions which totally consist of twenty three items

JE was measured through seven items taken from (Crossley et al, 2007). All the items of TQM and JE were anchored on five-point scales ranging from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). Six items adapted from (Wang and Netemeyer, 2004) were utilized for the operationalization of creative performance. Responses were rated on a five point scale 5 (Almost always) to 1 (Never).

All the questionnaires were prepared in English, because the participants in the current study are Kurdish speaker. Therefore the researcher used the back-translation method (Psrameswaran and Yapark, 1987) to translate the questionnaire from English to Kurdish language. The questionnaires were pretested with five employees no changes were deemed necessary

## **4. FINDINGS**

### **4.1 Measurement model check**

Initial analysis highlighted several items that possessed standardized loadings lower than 0.50 and correlation measurement errors. These items were discarded. Specifically, the items that were dropped from further analyses were from the top management, training, team work of



TQM, and JE measures. (2) Presents the items dropped as a result of confirmatory factor analysis. The overall model fit supported the measurement model ( $X^2 = 200.692$ ;  $df = 101$ ;  $X^2/df = 1.987$ ;  $CFI = 0.981$ ;  $PNFI = 0.809$ ;  $RMSEA = 0.07$ ).

As reported in Table 2, all loadings were greater than 0.50 and were significant. The average variance extracted (AVE) was also greater than 0.50. These findings collectively revealed that convergent validity was achieved (e.g., Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

All measures were reliable because each composite reliability ( $>0.60$ ) as well as coefficient alpha ( $>0.70$ ) was deemed acceptable (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988; Hair et al., 2010). The results for the reliability scores of measures are reported in Table 2. Summary statistics and correlations of observed variables are given in Table 2.

#### 4.2 Tests of research hypotheses

The normality of the data was checked through skewness. The findings were as follows: the top management of TQM - 1.945, empowerment -1.94, training -1.998, reward-1.825, teamwork -1.940. These findings demonstrated no evidence of non-normality (Lee and Yom, 2013). JE -1.664, creative performance -1.345.

The hypothesised model was fit the data  $X^2 = 246.980$ ;  $df = 116$ ;  $X^2/df = 2.129$ ;  $CFI = 0.978$ ;  $PNFI = 0.818$ ;  $RMSEA = 0.075$ ).

The results reveal that the reward of TQM ( $\lambda = 0.92$ ,  $t = 17.783$ ) appears to be the most reliable indicator, followed by the top management ( $\lambda = 0.91$ ,  $t = 17.383$ ) and teamwork ( $\lambda = 0.88$ ,  $t = 16.385$ ) and training ( $\lambda = 0.88$ ,  $t = 16.480$ ) lastly empowerment ( $\lambda = 0.84$ ,  $t = 15.45$ )

The empirical data support hypotheses H1a as top management of TQM exerts a strong positive impact on JE ( $\beta = 0.57$ ,  $t = 2.895$ ,  $p < 0.004$ ), empirical data support H1b as the empowerment of TQM was statistically significant in influencing on employee JE ( $\beta = 0.64$ ,  $t = 2.916$ ,  $p < 0.004$ ). The finding supports H1c as the training of TQM have a positive effect on JE ( $\beta = 0.75$ ,  $t = 4.598$ ,  $p < 0.00$ ), The empirical support the H1d as the reward of TQM has a positive insignificant effect on employee JE ( $\beta = 0.73$ ,  $t = 3.181$ ,  $p > 0.002$ ). Finally the results support the H1e as the teamwork of TQM has a positive effect on employee JE ( $\beta = 0.70$ ,  $t = 3.237$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). A scrutiny of the findings also indicates that the empirical data support hypotheses H2. That is, JE depicts a positive association with CP ( $\beta = 0.67$ ,  $\beta = 0.74$ ,  $t = 15.549$ )

Baron and Kenny (1986) approach was used to test the hypotheses regarding the mediating effect in the study model. The direct path of TQM on CP with and without mediator variable (JE) were calculated as reported in table (4). The results demonstrate that the regression weights of all direct paths with mediation were found to be less than the standardized regression weights of all direct paths without mediation, because some of the effect is transferred when mediation activated. In addition, the indirect path of the current study with

mediation is found to be significant. Hence the empirical data support the H3 that JE mediate the influence of TQM on CP as shown in table (4)

## 5. DISCUSSION

Using SET and JE theories as a theoretical framework, using data gathered from FHEs' and managers in Northern Iraq. The current study proposed a research model and tested three hypotheses. The result suggests that the empirical data support all proposed hypotheses and fully mediated model.

Broadly speaking, TQM (top management, empowerment, training, reward and teamwork) fosters JE. Consistent with SET theory (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005) and empirical evidence, HHEs' feel obligation to repay the organization via showing a high job embodiment, since they find that the organization invest in TQM their relationship with organizations change to, trust, loyalty and higher quality relationship.

As well as JE increases employee creative performance, to make novel recommendations for improving quality and provide solutions to deal with customer need and complain.

JE acts as a full mediator of the impact of TQM and creative performance. This is consistent with the prospect of JE theory.

Table 1

Respondents profile (n=202)

	Frequency	%
Age		
18-27	59	29.2
28-37	126	62.4
38-47	8	4
48-57	9	4.5
Total	202	100
Gender		
Male	174	86.1
Female	28	13.9
Total	202	100
Education		
Secondary and high school	140	69.3
Two- year college degree	38	18.8
Four year college degree	12	5.9
Graduate degree	12	5.9
Total	202	100
Organization tenure		

Less than 1 year	24	11.9
1-5	116	157.4
6-10	29	14.4
11-15	12	5.9
16-20	6	3
More than 20	15	7.4
Total	202	100
Martial statue		
Single or divorced	154	76.2
Married	48	23.8
Total	202	100
Note N =202		

Table (2) confirmatory factor analysis

	Standardized loading	T value	AVE	CR	Alpha
Top management (Pragio and Cooper, 2010)				0.77	0.9
Top-level managers assume responsibility for quality performance	Fixed				
Top-level managers actively participate in the continuous improvement programmes	0.76	11.44	0.61	0.84	0.89
Importance is attached to quality by top-level managers in relation to cost objectives	0.8	12.65			
Quality issues are reviewed in the company's top management meetings	0.73	11.55			
Top-level managers have objectives for quality performance	-				
The goal-setting process for quality within the company is comprehensive					
Empowerment (Pragio and Cooper, 2010)			0.66	0.88	0.951
Employees are encouraged to fix problems they find	0.78	11.91			
Employees are given the resources necessary to correct quality problems they find	0.85	13.61			
Employees have technical assistance available to them to help them solve quality problems	0.95	16.2			
A problem solving network is available to employees in solving quality related problems	0.67	9.78			

Training (Pragio and Cooper, 2010)			0.65	0.85	0.973
Resources are available for quality-related training in the company	-	-	-	-	-
Quality-related training is given to all supervisors and managers in the company	0.65	8.36			
Quality-related training is given to all employees in the company	-	-	-	-	-
Training is given in the 'total quality and continuous improvement' concepts throughout the company	0.78	10.27			
Training is given in the basic statistical techniques (e.g. Histogram and control chart) throughout the company	.76	9.94			
Reward (Karatepe, 2013)			0.71	9.94	0.99
If I improve the level of service I offer customers, I will be rewarded	0.72	13.60			
The rewards I receive are based on customer evaluations of service	0.86	18.10			
I am rewarded for serving customers well	0.85	19.11			
I am rewarded for dealing effectively with customer problems	0.93	20.15			
I am rewarded for satisfying complaining customers	0.79	15.67			
Teamwork (Pragio and Cooper, 2010)			0.68	0.86	0.998
Employees are involved in quality improvement teams	0.89	11.36			
Cross-functional teams are established for solving quality problems	0.89	11.36			
Resources are available for supporting quality-related teams	-	-	-	-	-
Job embeddedment (Crossley et al, 2007).			0.7	0.9	0.95
I feel attached to this hotel	-	-	-	-	-
It would be difficult for me to leave this hotel	0.8	9.94			
I am too caught up in this hotel to leave	0.81	10.33			
I feel tied to this hotel	0.85	11.01			
I simply could not leave the hotel that I work for	.80	10.16			

It would be easy for me to leave this hotel	-	-	-	-	-
I am tightly connected to this organization	0.81	9.93			
Creative performance(Wang and Netemeyer, 2004)			0.67	0.92	0.981
This employee carries out his/her routine tasks in ways that are resourceful	0.85	11.08			
This employee comes up with new ideas for satisfying customer needs	0.86	11.4			
This employee generates and evaluates multiple alternatives for novel customer problems	0.82	10.32			
This employee has fresh perspectives on old problems	0.78	9.07			
This employee improves methods for solving a problem when an answer is not apparent	-	-	-	-	-
This employee generate creative ideas for service delivery	0.73	8.55			
Model fit statistic: $\chi^2 = 200.692$ ; $df = 101$ ; $\chi^2 / df = 1.987$ ; $CFI = 0.981$ ; $PNFI = 0.809$ ; $RMSEA = 0.07$ ).					
Note: All loadings are significant at the 0.01 level. Ave=Average variance extracted; CR= composite reliability; $\alpha$ =Coefficient alpha; CFI= Comparative fit index; PNFI=parsimony normed fit index; RMSEA= Root mean square error of approximation, - dropped during confirmatory factor analysis					

Table (3) Mean, standard deviation, and correlation of study variables

Variables	Mean	S.D	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Top management		0.95	-						
2. Empowerment		0.93	0.775	-					
3. Training		0.94	0.797	0.734	-				
4. Reward		0.97	0.826	0.789	0.81	-			
5. Team work		0.99	0.802	0.722	0.775	0.804	-		
6. Job embeddedment		0.95	0.604	0.558	0.565	0.590	0.613	-	

7.Creative performance		0.96	0.594	0.525	0.615	0.578	0.667	0.68	-
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Table (4). Assessment of mediation effect

Hypothesis	Path	Direct without mediation	Direct with mediation	Indirect with mediation
H3	TQM →JE →CP	0.63 (0.00)	0.24 (0.00)	0.55 (0.002)

## 6.THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

There are several theoretical implications emerging from the findings of our study. First, the current study investigated the influence of TQM practice at the employees level this is important because the overwhelming majority of the empirical studies have studied TQM effect at the organizational level. By doing so current study attempts to fill gaps in hotel industry current literature.

Second, the majority of the studies in the current literature used different and few elements of TQM practices. However the current study used several and critical elements of TQM practices that related to the hospitality sector that to foster FHEs' knowledge, skill, ability, behaviour and performance.

Third, the current study examined the antecedent of JE. Top-management, empowerment, training, reward and teamwork as the indicator of TQM are treated as the antecedent of JE based on guideline provided by SET theory. As well as the current study examined the consequence of JE on employee performance,

Finally, The extant literature lacks sufficient evidence showing the underlying mechanism through which TQM practice are linked to employee performance. The organization that invests and adopt TQM practices initiate critical for success with elevated level of JE, creative performance. In other words, they utilize cues to retain employees such embedded employees also reciprocate with higher creative performance. These results suggest that JE has intervened impact in the TQM → creative performance link

### 6.1 Practical implications

The results in the current study provide several implications regarding the TQM and retention of embedded employees in the workplace. JE is a long term and accumulated process. Therefore, management in hotel industry should invest in TQM practices via top management, empowerment, training, reward and teamwork to provide a resourceful environment to foster a service climate that FHEs' will display desirable performance outcomes. The availability of quality of work life and career opportunities, leads employees

to construct their career plan and development. This enhances employees' trust in the organization to devote more effort in their job and hinders their turnover intention (Karatepe, 2013).

Management in hotel industry should provide employees with a continuous training program to improve employees' skills, abilities and knowledge. As well as give them the authority to deal with customer request and problems to deliver a service quality. Providing employees with fair reward for their efforts and performance. These activities by the organization will contribute to construct embedded employees in the workplace. As stated by Karatepe (2013) retaining embedded employees in the hotel industry is important to boost creative performance.

Management in hotel industry should hire the right employees according to their personality by depending on psychological capital questionnaire, structured interviews and customer service simulations to measure shared values (Karatepe and Karadas, 2016) that show the management commitment to service quality and retaining embedded employees that can contribute the organization's success through their performance.

## 6.2 Limitation and future research

There are several limitations of the current study. First, Insertion with of other TQM practice such as employee involvement, organization culture, organization trust, customer focus) in the research model would improve the understanding JE as a mediator in the relationship between TQM and job outcome (e.g. Job performance, team performance).

Second, This study used cross-sectional data to evaluate the hypothesis, longitudinal data can be used in future studies to test the relationships reported in this study.

Third the sample of this study may not represent the whole FHEs' in Northern Iraq. This may raise concerns about the representativeness of the study sample. As a potential remedy, in future studies, obtaining data from FHEs' in different cities in Northern Iraq would be beneficial. In closing, replication studies with large sample sizes in different service settings (f.g., travel agencies, and banks) in Northern Iraq would be useful for broadening the database for further generalizations.

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