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Determinants of readiness for strategic value co-creation in hospitality and tourism organisations

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines how servant leadership influences an organisation's readiness for strategic value co-creation through service climate, innovation climate, locus of control and self-efficacy. A model that draws on servant leadership and social cognitive theories is tested by surveying 222 hospitality and tourism business managers operating in France and the UK, and the data is analysed with structural equation modelling and ordinary least squares. The study contributes to personality research showing that servant leadership practices influence a manager's internal locus of control and self-efficacy. We demonstrate that service climate and innovation climate mediate between servant leadership and readiness for strategic value co-creation, and moderate between a manager's beliefs and the firm's readiness for strategic value co-creation. The findings show that servant leadership has a stronger effect on innovation climate than on service climate, and that innovation climate has more influence on readiness for strategic value co-creation than on service climate.

1. Introduction

Servant leaders play a pivotal role in helping businesses accomplish two primary objectives: first, co-creating value with multiple stakeholders, and second, elevating their offerings from services to memorable experiences. Servant leadership is a management philosophy that places the growth and well-being of employees and stakeholders at the forefront by serving the relational, emotional, and ethical needs of stakeholders above a leader's self-interest (Stone et al., 2004). This focus on employees as a priority cultivates a positive service climate (Huang et al., 2016) and an innovation climate (Karatepe et al., 2020), which then contribute to the customer experience. Studies in hospitality and tourism have stressed the importance of servant leadership in enhancing customer value co-creation (Hsiao et al., 2015), and have shown that the personality and beliefs of managers can influence their decisions and strategic choices (Leung and Law, 2010). This aligns with the fundamental concept of value co-creation, which underscores that servant leadership can enhance the collaborative creation of value between businesses and customers (Lusch et al., 2007; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004a).

However, the existing literature has not effectively bridged the gap between external factors, such as customers' perceptions of value co-creation (Solakis et al., 2022) and internal organisational dynamics, including procedures, practices, and policies geared towards fostering a climate of strategic value co-creation (Albinsson et al., 2016). While it is acknowledged that locus of control and self-efficacy influence servant leadership traits (Eva et al., 2019), there has been a noticeable dearth of research examining the impacts of servant leadership on the leaders themselves and their self-perceptions (Gui et al., 2021). Furthermore, the current body of literature has yet to fully explore how these internal changes subsequently influence the strategic orientation of organisations. Finally, hospitality and tourism researchers have mostly focused their attention on the customer perspective during experience co-creation (Domínguez-Quintero et al., 2020; Prebensen and Xie, 2017), whereas few scholars have studied the experience co-creation from a business perspective (Hosany et al., 2022).

This study aims to bridge this knowledge gap by integrating three concepts of servant leadership, social cognitive theory, and organisational culture theory. We delve into the intricate relationships between servant leadership and two sets of factors: i) environmental factors, such as service and innovation climates; and ii) personal factors, namely locus of control and self-efficacy. By doing so, this study offers six

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contributions. Firstly, we present empirical evidence that the relationship between servant leadership and innovation climate holds greater strength compared to the relationship between servant leadership and service climate. Secondly, we shed new light on the DART (Dialogue, Access, Risk, and Transparency) model of co-creation, showcasing its utility as a valuable business tool for scrutinising the practices underpinning value co-creation. Thirdly, we put forth a theoretical framework, substantiated by empirical findings, illustrating that both service and innovation climates serve as mediating mechanisms in the nexus between servant leadership and readiness for strategic value co-creation. Fourthly, we enrich the field of personality research by elucidating how servant leadership exerts an impact on an individual's beliefs and subsequently shapes the strategic orientation of the leader's organisations. Fifthly, we highlight how the effects of leaders' personal beliefs on value co-creation are contingent upon the effects of service climate and innovation climate. Lastly, our findings carry substantial managerial implications, both for businesses aiming to generate value for their customers and for leaders seeking to enhance their capacity to create value for their organisations.

2. Theoretical background and hypotheses

2.1. Servant leadership

Social behaviour theories allow us to conduct a fine-grained analysis of servant leadership mechanisms in organisations. The social learning theory, for instance, posits that employees are prone to learning from and emulating the servant leadership behaviours demonstrated by their leaders, which encompass qualities like humility, servanthood, and empathy (Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara and Ruiz-Palomino, 2019). However, this theory falls short in explaining variations in workplace behaviour and tends to overlook the pivotal roles played by intrinsic motivation and self-perception. To address these limitations, Bandura (1991) expanded upon the social learning theory by introducing the concept of self-efficacy, denoting an individual's belief in their own capabilities. This expansion led to the formulation of social cognitive theory, which underscores the nexus between an individual's personal convictions and their conduct, particularly within the realm of servant leadership (Liden et al., 2014). Furthermore, it is well-established that environmental factors shape the overall context within which individuals operate and influence their attitudes and behaviours. Social cognitive theory offers a unique perspective by linking the organisational climate with the personalities and behaviours of managers, emphasising that a manager's ability to drive change within an organisation is dependent on both their perception of the organisational climate and their personal beliefs (Roy and Gupta, 2012).

2.2. Servant leadership and environmental factors: Service climate and innovation climate

By incorporating the principles of servant leadership into their organisational climates, leaders foster a positive and supportive work environment. This ambiance invariable boosts employee engagement, motivation and overall well-being (Parris and Peachey, 2013). Within the broader spectrum of organisational culture, two pivotal components come to the forefront: service climate and innovation climate. *Service climate* takes centre stage in organisations where the focus skews towards delivering an unparalleled customer experience. Schneider et al. (1998) articulate that the service climate serves as a mirror, reflecting the organisation's collective ethos concerning rewards, expectations, and support directed toward customer service. When viewed through the prism of servant leadership, leaders fashion an environment where every employee feels not just a 'cog in the machine' but an essential part of the overarching organisational vision (Spears, 2005). When employees feel cherished and understood, their drive to elevate customer service magnifies manifold. The very core of servant leadership - rooted in listening, empathy, and stewardship - seamlessly dovetails with nurturing a strong service climate (Öner, 2012). Such alignment has far-reaching consequences: not only does it uplift customer interactions, but it also increases customer satisfaction (Huang et al., 2016). Taking this trajectory further, superior service delivery invariably translates into bolstered customer loyalty, which becomes an indicator of organisational growth and stability (Salanova et al., 2005). Thus, we propose:

Hypothesis 1. Servant leadership positively influences service climate.

An organisational environment that supports innovation becomes a crucial for fresh ideas and perspectives. Scott and Bruce (1994) and Van Dierendonck and Rook (2010) suggest that an *innovation climate* thrives on risk-taking behaviour and creativity in the workplace. Servant leaders, through their attributes of humility and foresight, create a safe environment for experimentation and learning. Their focus on the holistic growth of the team members ensures that innovative ideas are not just encouraged but celebrated. This, in turn, bolsters the organisation's ability to adapt, evolve, and remain competitive (Karatepe et al., 2020). According to the servant leadership theory, leaders' commitment to growth and community building ensures a continuous flow of innovative ideas, which are generated, discussed and implemented among managers and employees (Van Dierendonck and Rook, 2010). Indeed, servant leaders play a significant role in influencing their own innovative behaviour (Lan et al., 2021) as well as that of their employees (Li et al., 2021). However, the existing literature has not adequately explored the relationship between servant leadership and innovation climate. Drawing on insights from servant leadership theory and the above discussion, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2. Servant leadership positively influences innovation climate.

2.3. Servant leadership and personal factors: Managers' beliefs in locus of control and self-efficacy

Social learning theory posits that individuals' beliefs about their control over outcomes profoundly influence their behaviour, attitudes and well-being (Rotter, 1966). Within an organisational setting, leaders embodying servant behaviours act as potent role models. Their actions, driven by empathy and altruism, can shape the perceptions of other members of their organisation, consequently moulding their beliefs about control and enhancing self-efficacy. The self-determination theory further enriches this perspective. As delineated by Ryan and Deci (2000), individuals have intrinsic psychological needs such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Meeting these needs drives behavioural and motivational tendencies. By extension, servant leadership, grounded in empowering others and prioritising their growth, offers opportunities for leaders to satisfy these psychological needs. This fulfilment can increase their self-perception, amplifying their sense of self-determination and potentially heightening their internal *locus of control*. Furthermore, current organisational literature underscores the proficiency of managers with a pronounced internal locus of control. Such managers often demonstrate adeptness in decision-making, foster productive leader-follower dynamics (Dumitriu et al., 2014), and handling crises more effectively (Mahmoud et al., 2021). Contrary to the traditional belief that locus of control remains stable, recent studies have identified its malleability (Galvin et al., 2018). Moreover, the extant literature tends to view servant leadership as cascading top-down. However, a critical examination reveals a glaring oversight: the potential bottom-up influence exerted by followers on a leader's locus of control (Galvin et al., 2018). Based on the above reasoning, we hypothesise:

Hypothesis 3. Servant leadership positively influences a manager's internal locus of control.

Social cognitive theory posits that *self-efficacy* is vital for servant leaders navigating dynamic and volatile environments (McCormick, 2001). People's belief in their capabilities to succeed in specific tasks or situations significantly impacts their motivation and overall performance (Bandura, 1977). Servant leadership, characterised by its intent to empower and support followers, can bolster a leader's self-efficacy. By cultivating a culture of growth, providing more opportunities to undertake new challenges and responsibilities, and supplying the necessary resources for success, such leadership paves the way for success in diverse endeavours. It is worth noting that the existing literature associates high levels of self-efficacy with transformational leadership (Dwyer, 2019), which resonates with the empowerment ethos at the heart of servant leadership (Stone et al., 2004). Supporting this view, leadership development programmes emerged as catalysts for nurturing leader self-efficacy and amplifying their effectiveness (Dwyer, 2019). We, thus, hypothesise:

Hypothesis 4. Servant leadership positively influences a manager's self-efficacy.

2.4. Servant leadership and the behavioural factor of readiness for strategic value co-creation

The concept of 'readiness for strategic value co-creation' encompasses an organisation's capacity to transition from product-centric strategies to experience-centric strategies. This transition involves proactively engaging with customers and co-creating value alongside them (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004b). The DART model, a higher-order construct, comprises Dialogue, Access, Risk and Transparency (Albinsson et al., 2016). Specifically, *dialogue* refers to the business' capability initiate communication with their customers, fostering an interaction that leads to mutual understanding. *Access*, in this context, signifies that data - including business processes and resources - are freely available for customer review. Organisations incorporate practices that empower customers to contribute to the *risk* assessment strategies of their products and services. This ensures that customers understand both the costs and benefits associated with their participation. The last dimension, *transparency* of information, is transversal to the business strategy as it relates to providing counterintuitive details, including pricing, margins and non-compulsory product specifics. Nevertheless, there is a gap in the literature between customers' perception of value co-creation (Solakis et al., 2022) and organisations' procedures and practices for value co-creation (Albinsson et al., 2016). We argue that servant leadership could bridge this gap by providing the missing link to explain the readiness of an organisation for strategic value co-creation. Therefore, we hypothesise:

Hypothesis 5. Servant leadership positively influences an organisation's readiness for strategic value co-creation.

2.5. Environmental factors and readiness for strategic value co-creation

Organisational culture theory (Schein, 2017) argues that the culture of an organisation has a significant impact on its ability to achieve its goals and objectives. Service climate and innovation climate are two important components of organisational culture that can influence an organisation's overall performance. Similarly, the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory (Barney, 1991) can be applied to the concept of strategic value co-creation. The RBV theory suggests that a firm's resources, capabilities and organisational culture are key determinants of its competitive advantage and its ability to create value. In this context, service and innovation climates enhance an organisation's ability to co-create value with its stakeholders. A *service climate* facilitates customer value co-creation (Hsiao et al., 2015). Therefore, we propose:

Hypothesis 6. A service climate positively impacts an organisation's readiness for strategic value co-creation.

Further, it is known that an *innovation climate* fosters openness to change which enhances innovative work behaviours (Karatepe et al., 2020), aiding managers in improving organisational performance (Shanker et al., 2017) and encouraging employees to be more creative and share knowledge (Newman et al., 2020). However, there is limited understanding of whether an innovation climate promotes the development of organisational co-creation capabilities. Thus, we propose:

Hypothesis 7. An innovation climate positively impacts an organisation's readiness for strategic value co-creation.

2.6. Personal factors and readiness for strategic value co-creation

According to social learning theory (Rotter, 1966), individuals with an internal locus of control believe that their own actions, skills and abilities determine the outcomes they experience, while individuals with an external locus of control believe that external factors, such as luck or fate, are responsible for the outcomes they experience. To date, organisational research has studied locus of control from an employee perspective but has underestimated the importance of a manager's locus of control (Leung and Law, 2010). The literature suggests that individuals with an internal locus of control are more likely than those with an external locus of control to engage in proactive behaviours that can lead to improved organisational outcomes (Bateman et al., 1993). While we know that locus of control can impact tourism entrepreneurs' innovativeness and creativity (Omerzel, 2015), this study aims to explore the influence of locus of control on value co-creation. Hence, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 8. A manager's internal locus of control positively influences their organisation's readiness for strategic value co-creation.

In the context of organisational behaviour, it is likely that a manager's level of self-efficacy plays a significant role in shaping their organisation's readiness for strategic value co-creation. For example, managers who have high levels of self-efficacy may be more likely to engage in innovative behaviours and take calculated risks to drive strategic value co-creation than those who have low levels of self-efficacy. They may also be more effective at leading and motivating their teams to achieve desired outcomes. Qiu et al. (2020) suggest that a manager's high self-efficacy can moderate the relationship between servant leadership and service quality in the hotel and restaurant industry. More evidence is required to understand how managers' perceptions of their abilities to lead may influence their business's co-creation capabilities. In keeping with this line of reasoning, we argue that a manager's self-efficacy directly influences their business's readiness for strategic value co-creation. Therefore, we hypothesise the following:

Hypothesis 9. A manager's self-efficacy positively influences their organisation's readiness for strategic value co-creation.

2.7. The mediating effects of environmental and personal factors

Previous research suggests that servant leadership can shape the work environment and influence the climate within an organisation, which in turn influences organisation performance (Linuesa-Langreo et al., 2017). By including these variables as potential mediators, we aim to explore the underlying mechanisms through which servant leadership influences the organisation's readiness for strategic value co-creation. According to Schein (2017), organisational culture refers to a system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviours, and artefacts that characterise an organisation. In this context, an organisation's service climate and innovation climate can be seen as subcultures within the organisation that shape its employees' attitudes and behaviours in relation to service and innovation respectively. Numerous studies have demonstrated the indirect effects of leadership styles on employees and customers through organisational climate. We know that a service

climate mediates the link between servant leadership and organisational citizenship behaviour (Walumbwa et al., 2010a, b) and that the relationship between servant leadership and employees' innovative behaviours is mediated by an innovation climate (Karatepe et al., 2020). Furthermore, a service climate also mediates the link between servant leadership and customer service performance (Linuesa-Langreo et al., 2017). Given that an organisation's readiness for strategic value co-creation is concomitant to the behaviour of both its employees and customers (Hsiao et al., 2015), we anticipate environmental factors mediate the relationship between servant leadership and value co-creation. Hence, we hypothesise the following:

Hypotheses 10. (a, b): The relationship between servant leadership and an organisation's readiness for strategic value co-creation is mediated by a) its service climate, and b) its innovation climate.

Likewise, we consider the mediating effects of personal beliefs. Self-efficacy and locus of control have a well-established theoretical foundation in social cognitive theory. According to Bandura (1977), individuals with high levels of self-efficacy are more likely to engage in proactive behaviours (such as taking initiative and persisting in the face of challenges) that contribute to organisational effectiveness. Similarly, research has shown that individuals with an internal locus of control are more likely to be proactive and have a greater sense of self-determination, which can also contribute to organisational effectiveness. Research in this area has shown that personality and beliefs are relatively stable along the course of a person's lifetime (Hampson and Goldberg, 2006), although recent insights in the field have suggested that they can evolve over time (Roberts, 2018). Personality traits and managers' beliefs are usually considered as antecedents to servant leadership (Eva et al., 2019). However, recent work has suggested that servant leadership influences employee beliefs; thus, personality could be somewhat malleable and could develop via a follower-centric approach to leadership (Tischler et al., 2016). Furthermore, self-efficacy (Djourova et al., 2020) and locus of control (Rahman, 2018) were found to mediate between leadership and work-related outcomes. Based on the above reasoning, we anticipate that personal factors mediate the relationship between servant leadership and strategic value co-creation. Thus, we hypothesise the following:

Hypotheses 11. (a, b): The relationship between servant leadership and an organisation's readiness for strategic value co-creation is mediated by managers with a) internal locus of control, and b) high self-efficacy.

2.8. The moderating effects of environmental factors

In addition to the mediating effects discussed above, we examine the moderating effects of environmental factors on the relationship between servant leadership and an organisation's readiness for strategic value co-creation. By doing so, we aim to gain insights into how these environmental factors enhance or diminish the impact of a manager's internal locus of control and high self-efficacy on an organisation's readiness for strategic value co-creation. This study will provide a more nuanced understanding of the complex dynamics between individual characteristics and the organisational context in the co-creation process. The service and innovation climates have been linked to contingency theories of organisations; the latter suggest that the relationships between leadership and other organisational outcomes may be contingent on the context in which they occur (Neubert et al., 2016). One of the earliest contingency theories is the Fiedler contingency model, which proposes that the best leadership style is contingent upon the leader's relationship with their subordinates and the nature of the task at hand (Miller et al., 2004). Another well-known contingency theory is the resource dependence theory, which proposes that the success of an organisation depends upon its ability to obtain and manage resources from its environment (Hillman et al., 2009). Therefore, the service and innovation climates can be seen as contextual variables that moderate the relationship between servant leadership and strategic value co-creation.

Social psychology research acknowledges that personality is in part shaped by socio-structural factors (Bandura, 1999), which opens the path for a fine-grained analysis of cognitive and self-regulatory processes in the workplace. Several studies have suggested that a service climate can act as a moderator between an individual's beliefs and their work-related outcomes (Chen and Kao, 2014; Ma et al., 2017; Walumbwa et al., 2010a,b). Contrary to these findings, some research has not supported the hypothesis whereby the influence of self-efficacy on organisational behaviour is more positive when service climate is high (Walumbwa et al., 2010a,b). However, further work is required to identify the effect of service climate in the relationship between managers' beliefs and environmental factors. Thus, we hypothesise that:

Hypotheses 12. (a, b): The relationships between a manager with a) internal locus of control, and b) high self-efficacy, and an organisation's readiness for strategic value co-creation are moderated by a service climate, such that the relationships are stronger when there is a higher service climate.

Finally, recent research argues that an innovation climate can play a moderating role in certain aspects of businesses both at the organisational and individual levels. For instance, an innovation climate mitigates the negative effects of work demands on organisational performance (King et al., 2007). At the individual level, the relationship between an employee's organisational-based self-esteem and their creativity behaviour has been found to be higher when the climate for innovation is also high (Ghafoor and Haar, 2020). Besides, the relationship between leadership perception and follower performance is stronger when innovation climate is high (Charbonnier-Voirin et al., 2010), and the relationship between employees' personality and their innovative work behaviour is stronger when the innovation climate is supportive (Zuraik et al., 2020). Therefore, based on the above discussion we propose that innovation climate can enhance the relationship between leaders' personal factors and organisation's readiness for strategic value co-creation:

Hypotheses 13. (a, b): The relationships between a manager with a) internal locus of control, and b) high self-efficacy, and an organisation's readiness for strategic value co-creation are moderated by an innovation climate, such that the relationships are stronger when there is a higher innovation climate.

The proposed theoretical framework is depicted in Fig. 1.

3. Material and methods

3.1. Study context, participants and data collection procedure

Data were collected from entrepreneurs who were owners and/ or managers of all tourism sub-sectors including accommodation, food and beverage, visitor attractions, arts and culture, transportation, and events venues. Conducting research that includes multiple national samples within the same study is highly encouraged (Eva et al., 2019; Ribeiro et al., 2021). For this reason, we targeted businesses from two regions with relatively similar characteristics: the southern coast of England and the northern coast of France, both alongside the English Channel. The choice of the UK and France as the study's context is based on four key reasons. First, they are both developed countries (home to Europe's second and third largest economies respectively (World Bank, 2023)), and are culturally similar, as demonstrated by the Hofstede Insights (2023) cultural value metrics. Second, in terms of business environments, both countries are considered liberal market economies that have well-established institutions and rely on market-driven approaches with a focus on customers and stakeholders (Ibrahim et al., 2023). Third, both the regions studied are mature tourism destinations with excellent

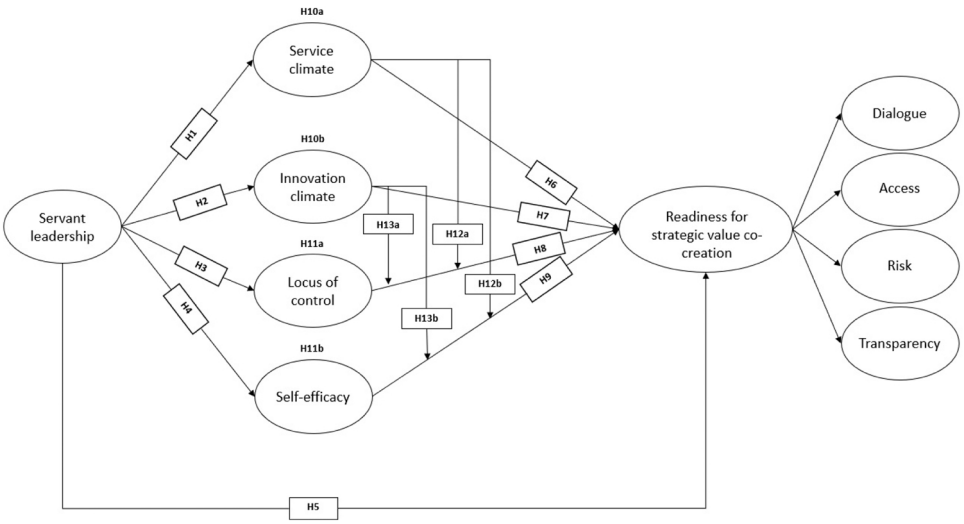

Fig. 1. Theoretical framework.

infrastructure and high-quality amenities. Fourth, in terms of business ecosystem, there is a predominance of small and medium-sized enterprises that need to develop innovative products and services to continue attracting visitors.

Survey data were gathered by homogeneous convenience sampling method, which provides a clearer generalisation than conventional convenience sampling techniques (Jager et al., 2017). Multiple strategies were used to reach out to the respondents. First, business listings were compiled from various sources, including destination management organisations (DMO), open datasets, and chambers of commerce, to create a sampling frame for each country. Then, collaborations were established with business associations and DMOs in both countries to facilitate the distribution of the survey links - developed and hosted on Qualtrics - to tourism businesses. These organisations shared the survey link through newsletters specifically targeting tourism-related enterprises. Finally, the survey link was broadly disseminated through various channels, including social networks, email campaigns, project partners, and the social media platforms of county councils. This comprehensive approach aimed to ensure the inclusion of a diverse and representative sample of respondents from the tourism industry in the selected regions of both countries.

A pilot study was conducted during Autumn 2020, involving 50 French and UK managers to ensure the clarity, understandability and appropriateness of the survey items and wording. Given the survey's length, a pilot-testing phase was essential. Through this process, redundant items were removed, and certain scales were rephrased to better align with the study's context, ultimately aiming to enhance the response rate. Subsequently, data collection was carried out simultaneously in each country, spanning from June to October 2021. This effort resulted in a total of 222 valid responses, with 100 from France and 122 from the UK, all of which were retained for subsequent data analysis. The minimum sample size was calculated using G*Power software (Erdfelder et al., 2009). Given that the proposed model featured a maximum of five predictors to assess readiness for strategic value co-creation, an effect size of medium magnitude (0.15) was assumed. The desired power level was set at 0.95, and the alpha level was established at 0.05. Based on these criteria, the calculated minimum sample size amounted to 138 respondents. The total sample size of 222 respondents, encompassing both France and the UK, was deemed sufficient to conduct covariance-based structural equation modelling employing the maximum likelihood estimation method, as outlined by Kline (2016).

3.2. Survey instrument design

All the measurement items used in this study have been rigorously validated in previous studies. *Servant leadership* was measured with seven items (Liden et al., 2015). This scale was selected due to its demonstrated internal consistency, factor analysis, construct validity and replicability in previous studies (e.g., Eva et al., 2019). A five-point Likert scale (1 = 'strongly disagree' to 5 = 'strongly agree') was used to measure each item. *Internal locus of control* was evaluated with four items adapted from (Spector et al., 2002) and it was found suitable for this work context. The items were scored using a six-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (disagree very much) to 6 (agree very much). *Leader self-efficacy* was assessed using the scale developed by Ng et al. (2008), with the eleven items measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = 'strongly not confident' to 5 = 'strongly confident'). Unlike general self-efficacy, leader self-efficacy is better suited to explore leadership mechanisms, as reinforced by Hannah et al. (2008).

Service climate was assessed using four items-scale from Salanova et al. (2005) with five-point Likert scale (1 = 'strongly disagree' to 5 = 'strongly agree'). This scale was suitable to collect data from managers as was demonstrated in previous work (Schneider et al., 1998). *Innovation climate* was measured using a construct developed by King et al. (2007) chosen for its alignment with the organisation's focus and cultural context as highlighted by Newman et al. (2020). The nine items on this scale used with a five-point Likert scale (1 = 'strongly disagree' to 5 = 'strongly agree'). The factor of *the readiness for strategic value co-creation* factor was assessed using the DART (Dialogue, Access, Risk assessment, Transparency) framework, conceptualised by Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004a) and effectively applied in in previous studies (e.g., Albinsson et al., 2016). The 18-items scale employed a five-point Likert scale (1 = 'strongly disagree' to 5 = 'strongly agree'). Finally, *control variables* were used to ensure the validity of the results; these included demographic and businesses variables that have been found in previous studies to affect perceptions of servant leadership (respondent's age, gender, organisational tenure) and readiness for strategic value co-creation (number of employees, age, and gender) (Hsiao et al., 2015).

Given that data were collected in both the UK and France, the survey instrument (originally designed in English) was translated into French for the French respondents. The back-translation technique was also used to ensure accuracy, following the recommendations put forth by Brislin (1970). Afterwards, the survey instrument underwent scrutiny by scholars and industry managers, and a pilot test was conducted to guarantee clarity and comprehensibility. Based on the results of the pilot test, certain survey items were refined, leading to the final version of the

instrument.

3.3. Data analysis strategy

The proposed research model underwent testing using SPSS AMOS Version 28.0, applying structural equation modelling (SEM) based on the two-step approach with maximum likelihood estimation, as recommended by previous researchers (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). First, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to assess the reliability, validity, fitness and unidimensionality of the latent constructs proposed in the research model (Kline, 2016). Second, the significance of the hypotheses was determined following three steps (Cole et al., 2008): i) the direct effects (H1-9) and ii) the indirect effects of servant leadership on the readiness for strategic value co-creation (H10a-11b) were tested using SPSS AMOS Version 28.0; and iii) the moderating effects of service climate and innovation climate (H12a-13b) were tested using PROCESS macro (model 1) with 10,000 bootstrap resamples (Hayes, 2018).

3.4. Common methods bias, no-response bias and data normality

We employed self-reporting methods, which can be susceptible to common method bias (CMB) and social desirability. To mitigate these potential issues, we implemented several measures during the survey design phase before data collection commenced. Firstly, in the survey, we avoided any indication of a preferred or desired answer in the statements, following the guidance of Steenkamp and Maydeu-Olivares (2021). This helped reduce the likelihood of respondents providing answers based on perceived expectations rather than their genuine views. Secondly, we ensured the anonymity of respondents' responses, maintaining their privacy and confidentiality. Additionally, we took care to keep predictor and outcome variables in the survey distinct and separate, as recommended by Jordan and Troth (2020). This separation helps diminish the possibility of response bias due to the interplay of predictor and outcome variables in the survey instrument.

After the data were collected, post-hoc analyses were employed to check variance in the data using Harman's single-factor test and a marker variable approach (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Steenkamp and Maydeu-Olivares, 2021). The results of the exploratory factor analysis showed that the highest variance explained by a single unrotated factor was 22.8 %. However, since Harman's single-factor test has some limitations (Chin et al., 2012), a marker variable approach was also used to address the concern of CMB (Steenkamp and Maydeu-Olivares, 2021). To operationalise the marker variable, we selected a variable from our dataset that was theoretically unrelated to the six primary constructs being investigated in this study (Williams et al., 2010). This variable served as our marker variable. The logic behind this approach was that any significant correlation of this unrelated variable with other constructs would be indicative of CMB. Two structural models, one with and one without the marker variable, were estimated, with the marker variable serving as an exogenous variable predicting each construct. First, the correlations between the marker variable and all other constructs were found to be low, ranging from − 0.012–0.154. Second, the effects of the marker variable on the endogenous constructs were also found to be low and statistically insignificant, except for a small effect on readiness for co-creation ($\beta = 0.072$; $p = 0.047$). Last, there were no substantial differences observed when comparing the results between the two structural models, i.e., with and without the marker variable. All hypothesised paths maintained similar path estimates and significance levels. As such, the results of the post-hoc analyses indicated that CMB did not represent a threat to the data collected in either France or the UK.

In addition to addressing CMB, this study also examined the potential for non-response bias using Armstrong and Overton (1977). Specifically, we compared demographic variables such as gender, age, marital status, and education between two groups of respondents: the earliest 10 % of respondents and the latest 10 % of respondents. The results of chi-square tests revealed no significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the characteristics of these two groups of respondents. Furthermore, we assessed the normality of the data and found no major issues. The values of skewness and kurtosis, as provided by the AMOS software (see Appendix B), were both below the required thresholds of 3.0 for skewness and 7.0 for kurtosis. This observation indicates that the data satisfied the normality conditions necessary for the maximum likelihood approach used in structural equation modelling (Kline, 2016).

4. Results

4.1. Sociodemographic profile

The research model (Fig. 1) was tested using a sample of managers and/or owners representing a total of 222 businesses in both the UK ($n = 122$) and France ($n = 100$). Among the participants, 56.2 % were female, and 42.9 % were male. Most respondents were senior managers, with 34.8 % falling into the age group of 46–55 years old and 24.3 % in the 56–65 years old category. Regarding educational qualifications, most respondents were well-educated, with 46.7 % holding an undergraduate degree and 40.9% having a post-graduate degree. The surveyed managers had substantial tenure, as 20.5 % had been in their current business for 5–10 years, and nearly half (48 %) had tenures of 10 years or more. In terms of business size, 31.1 % of the businesses were categorised as medium-sized enterprises, with 11–25 employees, and 20.7% had between 26 and 49 employees. The managers surveyed represented various sectors within the tourism industry, including accommodation (54.8 %), attractions (8.6 %), food and beverage (8.1 %), and tourism activities (6.2 %). The sociodemographic data of managers and the characteristics of their businesses are summarised in Appendix A.

4.2. Descriptive statistics

To assess potential differences between the data collected in the UK and France, we conducted an independent sample t-test on the ten variables used in this study. The results, as presented in Table 1, indicated that there were no statistically significant mean differences between the data collected in the two countries. This suggests that respondents in both the UK and France did not significantly differ in their responses, supporting the use of a pooled sample for subsequent analysis.

4.3. Testing the measurement model

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to assess both the convergent and discriminant validity of the constructs. Initially, a nine-factor measurement model comprising 53 items was examined. However, the results indicated that this model did not fit the data well. Several fit indices, including the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and the standardised root mean square residual (SRMR), exceeded the recommended threshold values of 0.08 and 0.08, respectively (Hu and Bentler, 1999). Specifically, the RMSEA was 0.101, and the SRMR was 0.88. Additionally, other fit indices such as the adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI), goodness of fit index (GFI), incremental fit index (IFI), comparative fit index (CFI), and the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) all fell below the suggested cut-off values of 0.80 and 0.90 (Kline, 2016). Their respective values were 0.77, 0.82, 0.85, 0.82, and 0.86. As a result of these inadequate fit indices, the model required respecification to enhance its quality (Meyers et al., 2017). During the respecification process, two items (SL6 and SE9) were removed from the model because their factor loadings ranged from 0.36 to 0.49, which was below the recommended minimum value of 0.50 (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). This adjustment aimed to improve the overall goodness-of-fit of the model and enhance convergent validity.

Table 1
T-test results.

	UK (n = 122)		France (n = 100)		Difference		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t-value	Mean difference	Results
Servant Leadership	4.05	0.57	3.99	0.50	0.38 ^{ns}	0.06	Not Significant
Service Climate	4.10	0.76	4.03	0.62	0.45 ^{ns}	0.07	Not Significant
Innovation Climate	3.98	0.66	4.02	0.68	0.62 ^{ns}	-0.04	Not Significant
Locus of Control	3.75	0.87	3.60	0.71	0.15 ^{ns}	0.15	Not Significant
Self-Efficacy	4.18	0.62	4.23	0.56	0.55 ^{ns}	-0.05	Not Significant
Dialogue	4.23	0.68	4.31	0.67	0.38 ^{ns}	-0.08	Not Significant
Access	2.95	0.88	2.86	0.92	0.47 ^{ns}	0.09	Not Significant
Risk	3.05	0.10	3.11	0.99	0.65 ^{ns}	-0.06	Not Significant
Transparency	3.97	0.70	4.14	0.68	0.06 ^{ns}	-0.17	Not Significant

SD = Standard deviation; ns = not significant

The remaining nine-factor modified model with 51 items was reanalysed via CFA; goodness-of-fit indices demonstrated that the measurement model sufficiently suited the data collected in France and the UK: $\chi^2 = 1290.37$, $df = 910$, $\chi^2/df = 1.42$, $p < .001$, AGFI = 0.84, GFI = 0.92, IFI = 0.93, TLI = 0.92, CFI = 0.93, RMSEA= 0.043 and SRMR= 0.055. Factor loadings were equal or higher than 0.60 (ranging from 0.60 to 0.93) and significant at 0.001 level. Furthermore, the Cronbach Alpha (α) values of all the constructs were greater than the threshold of 0.70, establishing the reliability of all latent factors (Hair et al., 2019) as summarised in Appendix B. Table 2 presents the composite reliability (CR), with values ranging from 0.75 to 0.93, and the average variance extracted (AVE), with values ranging from 0.54 to 0.60. These values were greater than the respective thresholds of 0.70 and 0.50, providing evidence for the convergent validity of the latent constructs (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). Finally, the square root of AVE was higher than the correlations among the constructs, providing evidence for the discriminant validity of the measurement model (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

4.4. Testing the structural model

After conducting a confirmatory factor analysis that demonstrated the satisfactory levels of internal consistency, indicator reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity of the latent constructs, the structural model was assessed. The fit indices of the structural model fit the data reasonably well: $\chi^2 = 1352.61$, $df = 916$, $\chi^2/df = 1.48$, $p < 0.001$, AGFI = 0.82, GFI = 0.92, IFI = 0.92, TLI = 0.91, CFI = 0.92, RMSEA = 0.046 and SRMR = 0.075. The standardised path coefficients and the percentages of variance (R^2 value), presented in Table 3 demonstrated that seven of the nine direct hypotheses proposed were supported.

The results revealed that servant leadership substantially predicted service climate (β = 0.19, $p < 0.05$), innovation climate (β = 0.64, $p < 0.001$), locus of control (β = 0.18, $p < 0.05$), and self-efficacy (β = 0.38, $p < 0.001$), lending support to hypotheses H1, H2, H3 and H4. Furthermore, the direct relationship between servant leadership and the readiness for strategic value co-creation was also significant (β = 0.21, $p < 0.05$), therefore, providing support for H5. Both service climate (β = 0.16, $p < 0.001$) and innovation climate (β = 0.73, $p < 0.001$) significantly predicted the readiness for strategic value co-creation factor; thus, supporting hypotheses H6 and H7. However, the direct relationships between locus of control and co-creation (β = 0.01, $p > 0.05$ and self-efficacy and co-creation (β = 0.03, $p > 0.005$) were not statistically significant; thus, hypotheses H8 and H9 were rejected. The R^2 values demonstrated that the model explained 40 % of variance in service climate, 41 % in innovation climate, 30 % in locus of control, 14 % of the variance in self-efficacy, and 86 % in co-creation. Therefore, the results suggest that the proposed model linking servant leadership, organisational climate (service climate and innovation climate), managers' beliefs (locus of control and self-efficacy) and the readiness for strategic value co-creation is both theoretically and empirically valid.

Table 3
Results of the structural model.

Relationships	Standardise estimate	T-value	Results
H1: Servant Leadership → Service Climate	0.19*	2.26	Supported
H2: Servant Leadership → Innovation Climate	0.64***	5.58	Supported
H3: Servant Leadership → Locus of Control	0.18*	1.95	Supported
H4: Servant Leadership → Self-Efficacy	0.38***	4.13	Supported
H5: Servant Leadership → Co-creation	0.21*	2.35	Supported
H6: Service Climate → Co-creation	0.16***	2.96	Supported
H7: Innovation Climate → Co-creation	0.73***	7.42	Supported
H8: Locus of Control → Co-creation	0.01^{ns}	0.21	Rejected
H9: Self-Efficacy → Co-creation	0.03^{ns}	0.65	Rejected

^{ns}not significant.
* $p < 0.05$.
*** $p < 0.001$ level.

4.5. Testing the mediating effects

Mediation analysis was executed to test the indirect effects of servant leadership on the readiness for strategic value co-creation via service climate, innovation climate, locus of control and self-efficacy. IBM

Table 2
Discriminant Validity.

	CR	AVE	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Servant Leadership	0.88	0.54	**0.73**					
2. Service Climate	0.84	0.57	0.09	**0.75**				
3. Innovation Climate	0.92	0.55	0.62	0.22	**0.74**			
4. Locus of Control	0.83	0.56	0.15	-0.02	0.20	**0.75**		
5. Self-Efficacy	0.93	0.58	0.34	0.53	0.27	0.09	**0.76**	
6. Readiness for strategic value co-creation	0.86	0.60	0.69	0.35	0.68	0.15	0.37	**0.77**

CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted. The bold elements, diagonal in the matrix, are the square root values of AVE.
Note: All correlations are significant at the $p < 0.001$ level.

AMOS Version 28.0 was used with 10,000 bootstrap resamples for this analysis. The results of the mediation analysis are summarised in Table 4, and indirect effects are considered significant when the 95 % confidence interval (CI) does not include zero. The analysis found that servant leadership had a significant indirect effect on the readiness for strategic value co-creation via both service climate (β =.153, 95 % CI = [.003,.096]) and innovation climate (β =.825, 95 % CI = [.369,.990]); thus, supporting hypotheses $H10_a$ and $H10_b$. However, servant leadership did not have a significant indirect effect on the readiness for strategic value co-creation factor via locus of control (β =.001, 95 % CI = [−.048,.044]) or via self-efficacy (β =.020, 95 % CI = [−.035,.172]) since the CIs included zero; thus, hypotheses $H11_a$ and $H11_b$ were rejected. Therefore, the results indicate that service climate and innovation climate mediate the relationship between servant leadership and co-creation, while the mediating effects of manager's beliefs (comprising locus of control and self-efficacy) were not significant.

4.6. Testing the moderating effects

Moderation analysis was executed to test the strength effects of service climate and innovation climate on the relationships between locus of control and self-efficacy with co-creation. PROCESS macro model 1 (Hayes, 2018) was used and the results of the moderating effects are summarised in Table 5.

Service climate had a significant, positive moderating effect on locus of control (β =.223, 95 % CI = [.018,.428], Fig. 2) such that the relationship between locus of control and co-creation was higher when service climate was high, thus supporting hypothesis H12a. Service climate had no moderating effect on the relationship between self-efficacy and co-creation (β = −.066, 95 % CI = [−.155,.022]) since the CI included zero; thus, hypothesis H12b was rejected. Innovation climate had a significant and positive moderating effect on the relationship between locus of control and co-creation (β =.074, 95 % CI = [.024,.123], Fig. 3) such that the effect was higher when innovation climate was high, thus supporting hypothesis H13a. And lastly, innovation climate had a significant and negative moderating effect on the relationship between self-efficacy and co-creation (β = −.053, 95 % CI = [−.084, −.022], Fig. 4) demonstrating that the relationship between self-efficacy and co-creation was higher when innovation climate was low; thus, partially supporting hypothesis H13b. Despite the insignificant direct and indirect effects between managers' beliefs and co-creation, the moderating effects of the work environment (service climate and innovation climate) on managers' beliefs (locus of control and self-efficacy) demonstrate the fitness of the research model and pave the way for a profound analysis of servant leadership mechanisms.

Table 4
Results of the indirect effects of servant leadership on the readiness for strategic value co-creation.

Indirect effect	Effect (β)	95% bootstrap CI LLCI	ULCI
$H10_a$: Servant leadership → Service climate → Co-creation	.153 *	.003	.096
$H10_b$: Servant leadership → Innovation climate → Co-creation	.825**	.369	.990
$H11_a$: Servant leadership → Locus of control → Co-creation	.001 ns	-.048	.044
$H11_b$: Servant leadership → Self-Efficacy → Co-creation	.020 ns	-.035	.172

β = Standardised coefficient; SE = standard error; LLCI = lower level of confidence interval; ULCI = upper level of confidence interval

Table 5
Results of the tests for moderating effects.

Relationships	Effect (β)	SE	95 % CI LLCI	ULCI
H12a: (Locus of control x Service Climate) → Co-creation	.223*	.104	.018	.428
H12b: (Self-efficacy x Service Climate) → Co-creation	-.066ns	.045	-.155	.022
H13a: (Locus of control x Innovation Climate) → Co-creation	.074**	.025	.024	.123
H13b: (Self-efficacy x Innovation climate) → Co-creation	-.053***	.016	-.084	-.022

β = Unstandardised coefficient; SE = standard error; LLCI = lower level of confidence interval; ULCI = upper level of confidence interval

* $p < 0.05$.
** $p < 0.01$.
*** $p < 0.001$ level.

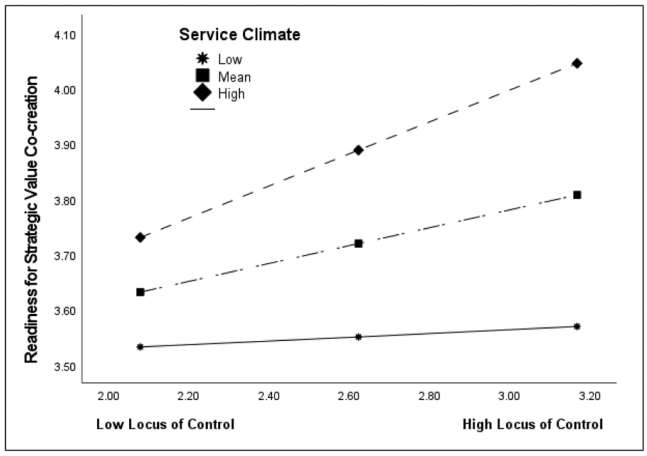

Fig. 2. The moderating effect of service climate on the relationship between locus of control and value co-creation.

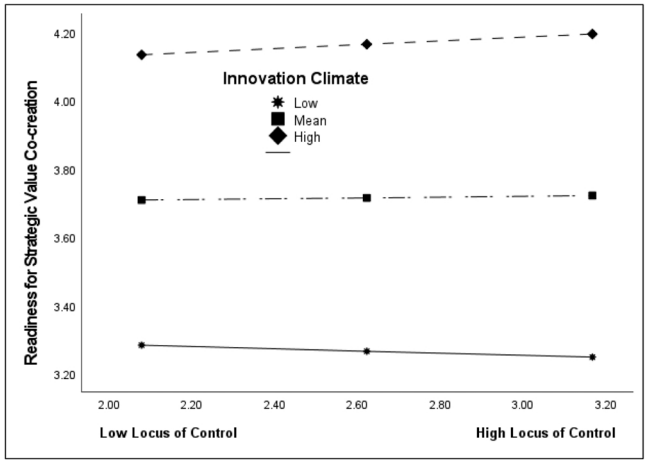

Fig. 3. The moderating effect of innovation climate on the relationship between locus of control and value co-creation.

5. Discussion and conclusions

Drawing from servant leadership, social behavioural, and organisational theories, this research aimed to contribute to the organisational, personality, and tourism literature by providing evidence of the interconnected relationships between personal factors (managers' beliefs)

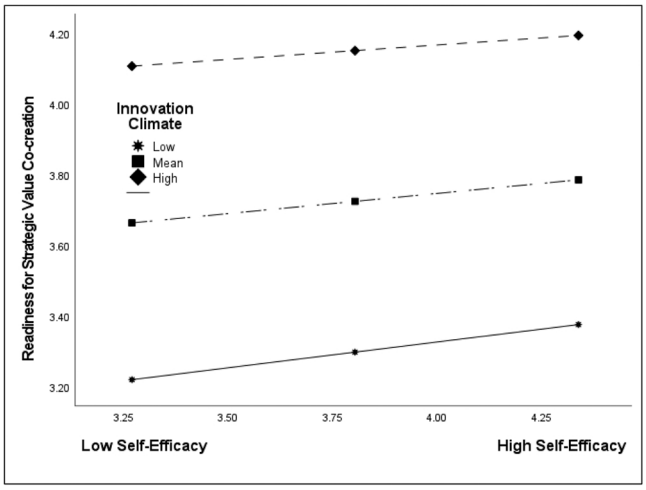

Fig. 4. The moderating effect of innovation climate on the relationship between self-efficacy and value co-creation.

and environmental factors (organisational climate) in the context of servant leadership. The goal was to understand how this management style influences an organisation's co-creation capabilities, specifically its readiness for strategic value co-creation. To test the research model (Fig. 1), data were collected from business managers operating in various tourism sectors in France and the UK.

The findings reveal that servant leadership has direct positive effects on both service climate and innovation climate. These results align with previous literature demonstrating the impact of servant leadership on service climate (Gui et al., 2021; Huang et al., 2016) and innovation climate (Karatepe et al., 2020), although the direct effects are significantly stronger in an innovation climate than in a service climate. The study also finds that servant leadership influences managers' beliefs regarding locus of control and self-efficacy, complementing previous research showing that servant leadership is influenced by beliefs (Eva et al., 2019). Surprisingly, our results show that managers claim to have low internal loci of control, which differs from previous studies (Dumitriu et al., 2014; Roy and Gupta, 2012), yet remains consistent with research conducted during the uncertain period of the COVID-19 pandemic (Würtzen et al., 2021). Our results demonstrate that servant leadership has a direct influence on an organisation's readiness for strategic value co-creation, which is a novel finding. Moreover, this finding acknowledges the role of servant leadership style in the co-creation value chain.

We find that the direct effect of innovation climate is stronger than the effect of service climate on an organisation's readiness for strategic value co-creation. Recent studies have demonstrated that organisations with a strong innovation climate are more likely to be proactive in exploring new opportunities, taking risks and experimenting with new ideas (e.g., Newman et al., 2020), all of which are critical factors for driving strategic value co-creation. Organisations with a strong service climate may be focused on maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction and service quality (Bowen and Schneider, 2014), which are important, but these capabilities alone may not be sufficient to drive strategic value co-creation. Nonetheless, our results indicate that there were no significant effects of locus of control and self-efficacy on an organisation's readiness for strategic value co-creation, indicating that a leader's beliefs do not play a significant role in shaping their organisation's ability to engage in strategic value co-creation.

The results also indicate the mediating effects of service climate and innovation climate between servant leadership and an organisation's readiness for strategic value co-creation. We find that the indirect effects are significantly higher through innovation climate than through service climate. This is because service climate focuses more on maintaining the status quo rather than encouraging the development of new ideas. There is an abundance of literature demonstrating how a service climate mediates the link between servant leadership and organisational performance, for example, in relation to customer service (Linuesa-Langreo et al., 2017) or a firm's performance (Huang et al., 2016). However, few studies have investigated the mediating effect of innovation climate (Karatepe et al., 2020), which is what makes our findings valuable to advance the literature on the indirect effect of servant leadership on strategic orientations.

We found that there is no mediating effect of servant leadership through locus of control and self-efficacy on an organisation's readiness for strategic value co-creation. This could be because these factors are influenced by contextual factors, such as the organisation's culture and climate, which have a strong impact on individual attitudes and behaviours. Indeed, the findings indicate that the relationships between managers' beliefs (locus of control and self-efficacy) and an organisation's readiness for strategic value co-creation become significant when they are moderated by organisational climate (service climate and innovation climate). Such observations can be interpreted considering the trait activation theory (Tett and Burnett, 2003), which states that the impact of personality traits on behaviour depends on the interaction between the environment and the traits and beliefs of servant leaders. These results suggest that to enhance the effectiveness of servant leadership, organisations could focus on developing the personal characteristics of their leaders (locus of control and self-efficacy) and on creating a supportive service and innovation climate that fosters the creation of strategic value. By doing so, they may be able to increase the effectiveness of their co-creation efforts and, ultimately, achieve their strategic goals.

5.1. Theoretical implications

Firstly, in contrast to most of the existing tourism literature that primarily focuses on customers, this study advances the research on value co-creation by shifting its emphasis to the service provider. This study underscores the pivotal role played by tourism managers in shaping environmental factors and guiding transformations towards customer-centric strategies. Drawing upon the principles of service-dominant logic (Lusch et al., 2007), this research builds upon prior work (Hsiao et al., 2015) by elucidating the direct and indirect impacts of servant leadership on an organisation's readiness for strategic value co-creation. Rooted in environmental psychology and organisational theories, this research further enriches our comprehension of how the contextual elements within a work environment can shape the efficacy of servant leadership in generating strategic value for organisations. Consequently, our research resonates with what seminal authors referred to as 'the infrastructure for interaction between companies and consumers' (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004b, p. 6) and the 'evolving structure' (Vargo and Lusch, 2004, p. 12).

Secondly, the findings of this study show that servant leadership impacts a manager's locus of control and self-efficacy. The framework highlights the importance of individual self-beliefs and attitudes, such as locus of control and self-efficacy, in shaping the relationship between servant leadership and strategic value co-creation. The findings suggest that managers with a higher level of self-efficacy and an internal locus of control are more likely to lead organisations towards strategic value co-creation, especially in the presence of supportive service and innovation climates. This bidirectional view can be interpreted via the agentic perspective of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2001), which states that moral standards, and self-regulatory and self-reflective processes, link thoughts to actions. Servant leaders display moral values, including a desire to serve the interests of employees and customers and to guarantee that organisational resources are available to support their strategic vision and leadership. Hence, we argue that the relationships between their thoughts and actions are determined by their perception of organisational resources. This research introduces service climate and

innovation climate as new moderators between managers' beliefs and organisational outcomes, demonstrating the interplay between personal and socio-structural determinants of leader behaviour. Thus, contributing to new structuralism current within organisational theory, which emphasises the interplay between structure, agency, and discourse in shaping organisational phenomena (Langas, 2023; Lounsbury and Ventresca, 2003).

Thirdly, this research introduces a novel and dynamic perspective to personality research by advancing the connections between workplace environments and the beliefs held by managers. While personality traits are typically considered relatively stable throughout an individual's life (Hampson and Goldberg, 2006), this study contends that, over time, servant leaders possess the capacity to influence the personalities of their followers (Tischler et al., 2016). These findings push the boundaries of personality research by proposing that the practice of servant leadership can bolster individuals' self-confidence in leadership and, consequently, shape their belief systems. Moreover, the results reveal moderation effects driven by organisational climate, indicating that the link between managers' locus of control and co-creation was more pronounced in settings characterised by a high service climate. This study adds to the growing body of personality research in which organisational climate plays a moderating role in the relationships between individual attributes (beliefs, attitudes, behaviours) and organisational outcomes (Ghafoor and Haar, 2020). Managers' perspectives of their work environment not only influence their leadership practices but also have an impact on their own beliefs and behaviours. Additionally, it is worth noting that the influence of managers' self-efficacy on co-creation was more significant when the innovation climate was less pronounced, suggesting a potential compensatory role for servant leaders in achieving an organisation's readiness for strategic value co-creation.

5.2. Managerial implications

The framework developed in this study, aimed at guiding the transition towards an experience-oriented business model, carries clear managerial implications. This research provides valuable insights into how servant leadership can influence an organisation's readiness for strategic value co-creation. Business owners should consider personality assessments, mentoring capabilities, and leadership styles when selecting managers, as individuals with an internal locus of control and high self-efficacy are more likely to enhance customer-centric strategies. Furthermore, this study underscores the pivotal roles played by innovation climate and service climate in shaping an organisation's readiness for strategic value co-creation. Servant leadership can assist organisations in fostering a culture of collaboration and cooperation, which can ultimately lead to stronger customer relationships and increased customer loyalty. Additionally, servant leadership can help organisations establish an environment characterised by trust and respect, thereby encouraging employees to take risks and unleash their creativity as they strive to meet customer expectations. Our findings suggest that servant leadership is particularly effective within an innovation climate, as compared to a service climate. Decision-makers should take proactive measures to ensure the development and maintenance of these two climates to harness their full potential for value creation. Lastly, this research highlights the importance of managers strengthening their own internal locus of control and self-efficacy, as these attributes can significantly contribute to their ability to effectively manage their organisation's readiness for strategic value co-creation.

5.3. Limitations and future research directions

This research has several limitations that open avenues for further studies. Firstly, while there was no statistically significant difference in the data collected between the two countries, further validation of this model is necessary, particularly in countries with low power distance between leaders and employees. Secondly, the sample size and the sampling strategy (convenience) should be considered as limitations. The current cross-sectional study inherently and inevitably suffers from a low level of reliability and validity of its findings. Both multi-level analysis and qualitative research could help to better understand the link between servant leadership and other stakeholders, such as suppliers, customers, and the community, to determine for whom the leaders act as servants. Thirdly, previous studies have suggested that the DART model is too simplistic since it assumes a unidimensional structure with only four factors (Mazur and Zaborek, 2014). Further validations should be conducted in the tourism sector. Fourthly, the research findings should be interpreted carefully due to the difference between 'traits' that are long-term patterning of states and 'states' that are an immediate reaction to one's thoughts and behaviours (Roberts, 2018). Some results might be attributed to a reaction to a situation at a specific moment; hence, longitudinal research should be conducted to understand how servant leadership traits evolve over time and to what extent this evolution guides behavioural changes. Besides, the results should be interpreted attentively because data were collected during COVID-19 pandemic and businesses did not operate normally.

Future research is necessary to investigate other antecedents of co-creation and the conditions under which co-creation capabilities can be generated. Firstly, we recommend investigating and comparing the effects of different leadership styles, such as transformational leadership and ethical leadership, that are known to positively influence innovation climate in tourism organisations (Chen and Hou, 2016; Mohamed, 2016). Secondly, future research should consider other mediating variables that could lead to an organisation's readiness for strategic value co-creation, such as a knowledge-sharing climate (Song et al., 2015) or procedural justice climate (Walumbwa et al., 2010a,b). Finally, future research interested in exploring how organisational and individual factors interact, should consider personal variables such as manager resilience (Djourova et al., 2020) and emotional intelligence (Miao et al., 2021).

Declaration of Competing Interest

None.

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Appendix A. Respondent profiles

	Pooled sample (n = 222)		UK (n = 122)		France (n = 100)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Gender (n = 210)						

(continued on next page)

(*continued*)

	Pooled sample (n = 222)		UK (n = 122)		France (n = 100)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Female	118	56.2	64	55.2	54	57.4
Male	90	42.9	51	44	39	41.5
Prefer not to say	2	0.9	1	0.9	1	1.1
Age (n = 210)						
18–25	3	1.4	3	2.6	0	0
26–35	31	14.8	13	11.2	18	19.1
36–45	44	21.0	19	16.4	25	26.6
46–55	73	34.8	37	31.9	36	38.3
56–65	51	24.3	37	31.9	14	14.9
66 +	8	3.7	7	6	1	1.1
Education (n = 210)						
Secondary school	10	4.8	10	8.6	0	0
High school	16	7.6	8	6.9	8	8.5
Undergraduate education	98	46.7	59	50.9	39	41.5
Post-graduate education	86	40.9	39	33.6	47	50
Business size (n = 222)						
1–5 employees	43	19.4	18	14.8	25	25
6–10 employees	29	13.1	21	17.2	8	8
11–25 employees	69	31.1	44	36.1	25	25
26–49 employees	46	20.7	21	17.2	25	25
50 + employees	35	15.7	18	14.7	17	17
Tenure in business (n = 210)						
1 year or less	14	6.7	7	6	7	7.4
1–2 years	22	10.5	13	11.2	9	9.6
3–4 years	30	14.3	19	16.4	11	11.7
5–10 years	43	20.5	21	18.1	22	23.4
10 years or more	101	48.0	56	48.3	45	47.9
Business type (n = 210)						
Accommodation	115	54.8	59	50.9	56	59.6
Visitor attraction	18	8.6	13	11.2	5	5.3
Food and beverage	17	8.1	10	8.6	7	7.4
Activity provider	13	6.2	13	11.2	0	0
Arts and culture	7	3.3	1	0.9	6	6.4
Retail	5	2.4	2	1.7	3	3.2
Transport	3	1.4	0	0	3	3.2
Events venue	2	1	2	1.7	0	0
Other	30	14.2	16	13.8	14	14.9

Appendix B. Descriptive statistics, reliability and convergent validity

Constructs and their indicators	Mean (SD)	SK	KU	t-value	β
Servant Leadership[a] (α = 0.75)					
I can tell my employees if something work-related is going wrong.	4.51 (.66)	-1.86	6.21	N/A	0.80
I make employee career development a priority.	3.81 (.90)	-.89	1.15	6.42	0.70
Employees would seek help from me if they had a personal problem.	4.02 (.83)	-.92	1.20	7.05	0.77
I emphasise the importance of giving back to the community.	4.02 (.79)	-.55	.57	6.97	0.75
I put employees' best interests ahead of my own.	3.87 (.85)	-.63	.38	6.14	0.63
I would NOT compromise ethical principles to achieve success.	4.38 (.82)	-1.78	4.16	6.12	0.78
Service Climate[a] (α = 0.84)					
Employees in our business have knowledge of the job and the skills needed to deliver superior quality work and service.	4.17 (.78)	-1.57	4.86	N/A	0.78
Employees receive recognition and reward for delivery of superior work and service.	3.86 (.95)	-1.05	1.15	10.43	0.72
The overall quality of service provided by our business to customers is excellent.	4.23 (.78)	-1.53	4.59	11.60	0.81
Employees are provided with the tools, technology and other resources they need to support the delivery of quality work and service.	4.00 (.89)	-1.27	2.03	10.14	0.70
Innovation Climate[a] (α = 0.91)					
The business I work for is always moving towards the development of improved customer services.	4.07 (.92)	-1.08	1.15	N/A	0.70
People in the business are always searching for new ways of delivering customer services.	3.89 (.91)	-.80	.48	11.73	0.71
The business uses feedback from customers to change its services.	4.23 (.74)	-1.14	2.63	10.74	0.79

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(*continued*)

Constructs and their indicators	Mean (SD)	SK	KU	t-value	β
In the business, we take the time needed to develop new customer services.	3.81 (.91)	-.65	.20	10.30	0.75
Staff in the business cooperate to help develop and apply new ideas.	4.00 (.83)	-.96	1.26	8.96	0.65
The business is responsive to customers' views and suggestions.	4.31 (.74)	-1.44	3.64	11.05	0.80
The business actively gathers customers' views on services.	4.10 (.94)	-.97	.44	9.58	0.72
The business provides practical support for new ideas and their application.	3.85 (.89)	-.68	.45	11.64	0.78
The business has a range of initiatives in place to ensure that customers' views are considered.	3.72 (.96)	-.49	-.13	8.76	0.73
Locus of Control[b] ($\alpha = 0.74$)					
The main difference between people who make a lot of money and people who make a little money is luck.	3.89 (1.08)	-.61	-.23	N/A	0.78
It takes a lot of luck to be an outstanding employee in most jobs.	3.77 (1.09)	-.56	-.01	6.12	0.77
Promotions are usually a matter of good fortune.	3.66 (1.02)	-.32	-.15	6.93	0.73
Getting the job you want is mostly a matter of luck.	3.41 (1.11)	-.11	-.44	6.90	0.71
Self-Efficacy[a] ($\alpha = 0.93$)					
Planning ability	4.26 (.78)	-1.43	3.82	N/A	0.72
Setting direction	4.21 (.75)	-1.09	2.77	11.43	0.68
Delegating and assigning tasks	4.00 (.82)	-1.00	1.70	9.73	0.68
Coordinating tasks	4.22 (.75)	-1.36	4.13	12.77	0.73
Ability to communicate	4.23 (.72)	-1.17	3.12	10.56	0.81
Leading by example	4.39 (.72)	-1.32	3.03	11.14	0.78
Ability to motivate others	4.17 (.75)	-1.21	2.94	11.63	0.85
Creating team spirit	4.17 (.75)	-1.06	2.67	11.41	0.80
Confidence to lead a team	4.23 (.76)	-1.36	3.18	10.08	0.71
Overall leadership effectiveness	4.13 (.72)	-1.08	3.28	11.71	0.82
Dialogue[a] ($\alpha = 0.80$)					
Dialogue with customers enables the business to learn about their experiences with our products/services.	4.50 (.69)	-2.18	6.80	N/A	0.81
We communicate with customers to receive input on improving the product/service experience.	4.29 (.86)	-1.34	1.75	12.60	0.80
We are interested in communicating with the customer about the best ways to design and deliver a quality product/service experience.	4.02 (.83)	-.90	1.37	10.49	0.69
Access[a] ($\alpha = 0.85$)					
We offer opportunity to customers to share in the design process of service.	2.91 (1.05)	.14	-.53	N/A	0.92
We offer opportunity to customers to share in the development process of service.	2.90 (1.06)	.17	-.51	17.70	0.93
We let customers decide how they receive the product/service offering.	2.92 (.97)	.07	-.23	9.95	0.60
Risk[a] ($\alpha = 0.90$)					
We provide customers with comprehensive information pertaining to how risks and benefits were assessed for the product/service experience.	3.06 (1.06)	-.17	-.30	N/A	0.89
Customers receive comprehensive information pertaining to the risks and benefits of the product/service experience.	3.09 (1.03)	-.23	-.16	11.67	0.91
Transparency[a] ($\alpha = 0.83$)					
We fully disclose to customers, information that might be helpful to improve the outcomes of the product/service experience.	3.78 (.99)	-.71	.24	N/A	0.74
We make clear to customers about the service/product-related information.	3.95 (.87)	-.80	.79	11.77	0.81
We build trust among customers through transparent information.	4.20 (.78)	-1.12	2.00	11.87	0.82
All information that we disseminate (including online) is reliable.	4.27 (.76)	-1.35	3.05	8.67	0.73
Readiness for strategic value co-creation - *Second-order*					
Dialogue	3.82 (.52)	-1.87	5.37	N/A	0.91
Access	3.03 (.92)	.13	-.39	6.54	0.66

(*continued on next page*)

(*continued*)

Constructs and their indicators	Mean (SD)	SK	KU	t-value	β
Risk	2.92 (.90)	-.24	-.05	3.62	0.67
Transparency	4.64 (.70)	-1.22	4.35	9.13	0.83

* **p < 0.001 level (Two-tailed). SK = Skewness; KU = Kurtosis.
a Items measured on 5-point scales.
b Items measured on 6-point scales.
N/A - In Amos, one loading had to be fixed to 1; hence, a t-value cannot be calculated for this item.

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