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# The effects of family support and work engagement on organizationally valued job outcomes

## Abstract

*There are calls for more empirical research about the antecedents and outcomes of work engagement in frontline service jobs in the hospitality management literature. With this realization, using the precepts of the motivational process of the Job Demands-Resources model, the present study aims to develop and test a conceptual model that examines work engagement as a mediator of the effect of family support on organizationally relevant and valued job outcomes. Turnover intentions, job performance, and extra-role customer service are the outcomes investigated in this study. Data collected from frontline employees with a time lag of two weeks in the international five-star chain hotels in Turkey were used to gauge these relationships. The results from structural equation modeling provide empirical support for all hypothesized relationships. Specifically, frontline employees who receive sufficient support in the family domain are highly engaged in their work. These employees in turn are less inclined to leave the current organization. They also display in-role and extra-role performances at elevated levels in the workplace. In short, work engagement functions as a full mediator of the impact of family support on turnover intentions, job performance, and extra-role customer service. Implications of the results and future research directions are discussed in the article.*

**Key words:** *extra-role customer service; family support; job performance; turnover intentions; work engagement; Turkey*

## Introduction

Frontline employees are the main actors in service delivery and complaint handling processes. Not surprisingly, frontline employees have boundary-spanning roles and deliver quality services to customers, manage a number of customer requests and problems effectively, and contribute to customer retention (Ali, 2015; Emir & Kozak, 2011; Homburg & Furst, 2005). They are expected to provide creative ideas for service improvement and novel customer problems (Karatepe, 2012). Such employees represent the organization to outsiders such as customers and foster the image of the organization (Bettencourt, Gwinner & Meuter, 2001; Karatepe & Tekinkus, 2006). Frontline employees in the hotel industry in Turkey also play a crucial role in this process (cf. Karatepe, 2011a). Given that frontline employees play a significant role in service delivery and complaint handling processes, management has to retain frontline employees who are engaged in their work and can make a substantial contribution to these processes.

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As a motivational construct, work engagement refers to "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption" (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzáles-Romá & Bakker, 2002, p. 74). Employees who feel energetic, are enthusiastic and are immersed in their work have desirable job outcomes such as reduced turnover intentions, quality performance in the workplace, and high levels of job and career satisfaction (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Karatepe, 2012, 2013a). The presence of social support stimulates work engagement and therefore leads to various positive outcomes (Karatepe, 2012; Siu *et al.*, 2010).

Against this background, this study develops and tests a conceptual model that investigates work engagement as a mediator of the effect of family support on organizationally relevant and valued job outcomes. These outcomes are turnover intentions, job performance, and extra-role customer service. The objectives of this empirical study are to: (a) examine the relationship between family support and work engagement; (b) investigate the impact of work engagement on turnover intentions, job performance, and extra-role customer service; and (c) assess work engagement as a mediator between family support and the aforementioned job outcomes. Data obtained from frontline employees with a two-week time lag in the international five-star chain hotels in Turkey are utilized to gauge the abovementioned relationships.

This study expands current knowledge by addressing three important issues. First, work engagement is a hot topic among researchers and practitioners (Mills, Fleck & Kozikowski, 2013). It has been shown that employees who are actively disengaged in their work seem to result in \$450 to \$550 billion in lost productivity per year in the United States (Sorenson & Garman, 2013). Therefore, investigating the antecedents and outcomes of work engagement among employees in frontline service jobs is relevant and significant (Karatepe, Beirami, Bouzari & Safavi, 2014; Lee & Ok, 2015).

Second, a plethora of empirical studies have linked job resources (e.g., colleague support, performance feedback, training) to various employee outcomes through work engagement (e.g., Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Karatepe, 2012; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). In other words, work engagement has been shown to be the underlying mechanism through which job resources are linked to employee outcomes. However, there is a dearth of empirical research about role resources that may activate work engagement. As convincingly discussed by Siu *et al.* (2010), family support is a role resource that can foster employees' work engagement. Therefore, the present study tests the relationship between family support and work engagement.

Third, job performance and extra-role customer service are the two important performance variables for frontline service jobs. This is due to the fact that management needs to make sure that frontline employees fulfill the requirements of the job based on job descriptions and go above and beyond the formal role requirements to meet and exceed customer expectations (Karatepe, 2013b; Liang, 2012; Ma & Qu, 2011). Extra-role customer service is also important for effective service recovery. Then, testing whether work engagement *simultaneously* leads to job performance and extra-role customer service is relevant and significant (Christian, Garza & Slaughter, 2011; Karatepe, 2013b). In short, this study assesses the relationship between work engagement and the aforesaid performance outcomes.

Fourth, studies show that high employee turnover is still an ongoing challenge in the hospitality industry (e.g., Park & Levy, 2014; Yavas, Karatepe & Babakus, 2013). For example, the average turnover rate among non-managerial hotel employees in the United States is about 50% (Mohsin, Lengler &

Kumar, 2013). Such a high turnover rate is observed in other countries such as Australia and New Zealand (Magnini, Lee & Kim, 2011). This is also valid for the Turkish hotel industry (cf. Aksu, 2008). Frontline employees with intentions to leave the organization erode other employees' morale and motivation and lead to tangible costs (Aksu, 2008; Karatepe, 2013b); ergo there is a need for additional empirical studies that seek what factors mitigate frontline employees' turnover intentions (Karatepe & Karadas, 2014).

The next section of the article presents the theoretical background and hypotheses. This is followed by the conceptual model. Then, the article delineates discussions of the method and findings of the empirical study. The article concludes with theoretical and management implications on the basis of study findings.

## Theoretical background and hypotheses

Work engagement is a relatively emerging motivational variable that has started to receive empirical attention in the hospitality management literature. Most of the empirical studies have used samples derived from frontline service jobs in various countries such as Romania, China, Spain, Northern Cyprus, and South Korea. Table 1 presents sample empirical studies that have investigated work engagement as a mediator. Specifically, in a sample of frontline employees in the hospitality industry in Spain, Salanova, Agut and Peiró (2005) showed that organizational resources, as manifested by training, autonomy, and technology, enhanced work engagement that in turn led to a better climate for service. Lee, Kim and Kim's (2014) study among frontline hotel employees in South Korea indicated that the impact of internal branding on job satisfaction was fully mediated by work engagement. The results of a study conducted with frontline employees in the hospitality industry in Norway showed that autonomy, strategic attention, and role benefit were linked to innovative behavior only through work engagement (Slåtten & Mehmetoglu, 2011). In a study of frontline hotel employees in Romania, Karatepe and Karadas (2015) found that work engagement partially mediated the effects of self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism as the indicators of psychological capital on job, career, and life satisfaction. Likewise, Paek, Shuckert, Kim and Lee's (2015) study conducted in South Korea demonstrated that self-efficacious, hopeful, resilient, and optimistic frontline hotel employees had higher work engagement and therefore exhibited high levels of job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment.

Table 1  
Sample empirical studies using work engagement as a mediator

Source	Country	Sample	Main findings
Karatepe (2011b)	Nigeria	Frontline hotel employees	Work engagement fully mediated the impact of procedural justice on affective organizational commitment, job performance, and extra-role customer service.
Karatepe (2012)	Cameroon	Frontline hotel employees	Both coworker and supervisor support influenced career satisfaction, service recovery performance, job performance, and creative performance only via work engagement.
Karatepe (2013a)	Iran	Frontline hotel employees	Work engagement functioned as a full mediator of the effects of perceptions of organizational politics on affective organizational commitment, extra-role performance, and turnover intentions.

Table 1 continued

Source	Country	Sample	Main findings
Karatepe (2013b)	Romania	Frontline hotel employees	Training, empowerment, and rewards as the indicators of high-performance work practices were linked to job performance and extra-role customer service only via work engagement.
Karatepe and Karadas (2015)	Romania	Frontline hotel employees	Work engagement acted as a partial mediator of the effects of self-efficacy, hope, resilience and optimism as the indicators of psychological capital on job, career, and life satisfaction.
Karatepe <i>et al.</i> (2013)	Northern Cyprus	Frontline hotel employees	The effect of polychronicity on job performance and extra-role customer service was fully mediated by work engagement.
Karatepe <i>et al.</i> (2014)	Northern Cyprus	Frontline hotel employees	Work engagement fully mediated the effects of work overload and job responsibility as the indicators of challenge stressors on affective organizational commitment and job performance.
Lee <i>et al.</i> (2014)	South Korea	Frontline hotel employees	Work engagement fully mediated the relationship between internal branding and job satisfaction.
Li <i>et al.</i> (2012)	China	Frontline hotel employees	Leader-member exchange was linked to job performance only via work engagement.
Moliner, Martínez-Tur, Romos, and Cropanzano (2008)	Spain	Frontline hotel employees	Work engagement acted as a full mediator of the effects of procedural and interactional justice on extra-role customer service.
Paek <i>et al.</i> (2015)	South Korea	Frontline hotel employees	Psychological capital, as manifested by self-efficacy, hope, resilience and optimism, influenced job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment directly and indirectly via work engagement.
Salanova <i>et al.</i> (2005)	Spain	Frontline employees in the hospitality industry	Training, autonomy, and technology as the indicators of organizational resources were linked to service climate only through work engagement.
Slåtten and Mehmetoglu (2011)	Norway	Frontline employees in the hospitality industry	Work engagement fully mediated the impacts of autonomy, strategic attention, and role benefit on innovative behavior.
Yeh (2013)	Taiwan	Frontline hotel employees	The effect of tourism involvement on job satisfaction was partially mediated by work engagement.

In addition, in a sample of frontline hotel employees in China, Li, Sanders and Frenkel (2012) showed that the effect of leader-member exchange on job performance was fully mediated by work engagement. In another empirical study in Northern Cyprus, Karatepe, Karadas, Azar and Naderiadib (2013) demonstrated that polychronic employees were highly engaged in their work and therefore displayed job performance and extra-role customer service at elevated levels. In the same service setting, Karatepe *et al.* (2014) reported that work overload and job responsibility as the indicators of challenge stressors fostered work engagement that in turn resulted in higher job performance and affective organizational commitment.

The aforementioned empirical studies have shed significant light on the antecedents and outcomes of work engagement in frontline service jobs in the hotel industry. However, there is still a need for empirical research about the left side of work engagement. For example, as stated by Siu *et al.* (2010),

there is a dearth of empirical research about the relationship between nonwork resources/role resources and work engagement. Though there are empirical studies about the consequences of work engagement, this study expands current research by linking family support to three organizationally relevant and valued job outcomes via work engagement. That is, work engagement is the underlying mechanism that links such a role resource to turnover intentions, job performance, and extra-role customer service. The hypothesized relationships are discussed below.

## Hypotheses

Social support refers to "an interpersonal transaction that involves emotional concern, instrumental aid, information, or appraisal" (Carlson & Perrewé, 1999, p. 514). Family support is a nonwork-related social support. As a role resource, family support can stimulate employees' work engagement. Specifically, family members such as spouses and siblings can show emotional support toward work-related issues. This can be in the form of emphatic understanding and sensitivity toward work-related issues (cf. Yildirim & Aycan, 2008). Further, employees who are capable of receiving sufficient instrumental support from family members can spend more time and energy. For example, employees can obtain assistance and advice regarding work-related issues in the family domain to achieve work goals (cf. Siu *et al.*, 2010). Under these circumstances, they feel energetic, are inspired by their job, and are immersed in their work. Siu *et al.*'s (2010) empirical investigation in China provided support for such an argument. That is, they found family support to be significantly and positively related to work engagement. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is advanced:

*H1:* Family support will be positively related to frontline employees' work engagement.

Employees who are highly engaged in their work have heightened energy while working, are involved and feel happily absorbed in their work (Karatepe, 2012). Such employees display desirable job outcomes and positively influence organizational performance. In a past empirical study, work engagement was reported to be negatively associated with turnover intentions (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Moliner, Martínez-Tur, Romos and Cropanzano (2008) reported that work engagement elevated extra-role customer service among frontline hotel employees in Spain. Christian *et al.*'s (2011) meta-analytic investigation demonstrated that work engagement increased both task and contextual performances. In a study conducted with frontline hotel employees in Iran, Karatepe (2013a) showed that work engagement mitigated turnover intentions, while it fostered extra-role customer service. Takawira, Coetzee and Schreuder's (2014) study in South Africa also provided support for the negative relationship between work engagement and turnover intentions.

Grisseman, Pikkemaat and Weger's (2013) study conducted in the Alpine region showed that employee engagement stimulated the innovative behaviors of hotels. In a study of frontline hotel employees in Romania, Karatepe (2013b) found that work engagement simultaneously enhanced job performance and extra-role customer service. Karatepe's (2012) empirical study conducted in the hotel industry in Cameroon also indicated that work engagement boosted job performance. Therefore, the following hypotheses are advanced:

*H2:* Work engagement will be negatively related to frontline employees' (a) turnover intentions and will be positively related to frontline employees' (b) job performance and (c) extra-role customer service.

The motivational process of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model provides guidelines to develop the family support → work engagement → job outcomes relationships (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2007). Broadly speaking, the motivational process of the JD-R model contends that the availability of job resources, due to their intrinsic and extrinsic roles, fosters goal accomplishment, activates personal growth, learning and development that leads to work engagement. Work engagement in turn gives rise to positive job outcomes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Xanthopoulou *et al.*, 2007). This study goes one step further and incorporates family support as a resource into the motivational process of the JD-R model because of its extrinsic role. As Siu *et al.* (2010) state, "...family support may also play a resource role by providing love and expectation to motivate employees, specifically those from collectivistic societies, to work harder at their jobs" (p. 472).

Using the motivational process of the JD-R model in linking resources to job outcomes via work engagement is also relevant and viable. For example, Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) pointed out that work engagement functioned as full mediator of the effects of job resources on turnover intentions. Siu *et al.* (2010) documented that work engagement partially mediated the relationship between family support and family-work enrichment. Karatepe (2012) indicated that both supervisor and coworker support affected attitudinal (i.e., career satisfaction) and behavioral outcomes (e.g., job performance) only via work engagement. Karatepe (2013b) also found that training, empowerment, and rewards as the indicators of high-performance work practices jointly increased job performance and extra-role customer service only through work engagement.

As shown in Table 1, most of the empirical studies have found work engagement as a full mediator (e.g., Karatepe, 2011b; Li *et al.*, 2012; Lee *et al.*, 2014; Moliner *et al.*, 2008). In light of the tenets of the motivational process of the JD-R model and empirical evidence given above, the following hypotheses are advanced:

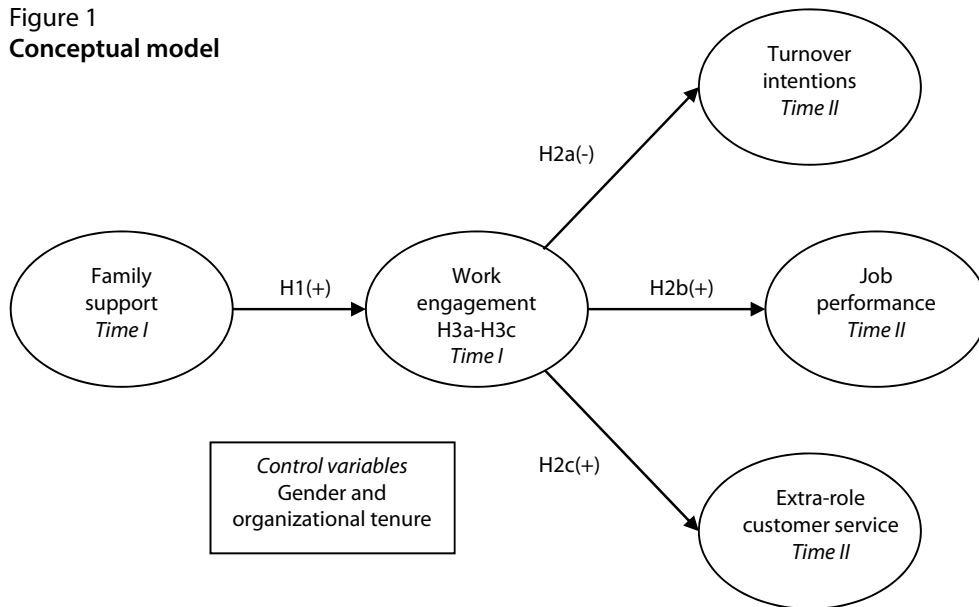
*H3: Work engagement will fully mediate the impact of family support on (a) turnover intentions, (b) job performance, and (c) extra-role customer service.*

## Conceptual model

Figure 1 presents the conceptual model that consists of the hypothesized relationships. The model proposes that family support is a role resource emerging from the family domain that bolsters work engagement. Employees having emotional and instrumental support in the family domain can concentrate more on their duties and responsibilities. Under these circumstances, they feel vigorous and dedicated and are engrossed in their work. Such employees in turn display desirable job outcomes such as diminished turnover intentions, high levels of job performance, and extra-role customer service at elevated levels. Simply put, as a motivational construct, work engagement weakens turnover intentions, while it fosters both job performance and extra-role customer service. In technical terms, work engagement acts as a full mediator of the impact of family support on turnover intentions, job performance, and extra-role customer service.

In accord with other empirical investigations (e.g., Karatepe, 2013b; Karatepe & Karadas, 2014; Siu *et al.*, 2010), the current study also incorporates gender and organizational tenure as control variables into the conceptual model. This is due to the fact that gender and organizational tenure may lead to statistical confounds.

Figure 1  
Conceptual model



## Method

### Participants and procedure

This study used judgmental sampling, which refers to "picking cases that are judged to be typical of the population in which we are interested, assuming that errors of judgment in the selection will tend to counterbalance one another" (Judd, Smith & Kidder, 1991, p. 136). Accordingly, the current study used data obtained from frontline employees (i.e., front desk agents, reservation agents, waiters/waitresses, bartenders, door attendants, guest relations representatives, bell attendants) in the international five-star chain hotels in Istanbul, Turkey.

Selection of the abovementioned hotel employees was based on two criteria. First, data were collected from full-time frontline hotel employees. Second, this study did not limit its sample to only employees married with or without children. This is due to the fact that single individuals in Turkey tend to live with their parents and are expected to spend time with their parents, siblings, and/or relatives. Under these circumstances, they have a number of family responsibilities and can obtain support from their family members. As stated by Siu *et al.* (2010), "...the skills and perspectives that young workers develop at home regarding how to maintain a good relationship with family members may help them to have a better relationship with supervisors and coworkers, and vice versa." In short, what is done regarding the selection of the sample is consistent with various studies (e.g., Choi & Kim, 2012; Karatepe & Karadas, 2014; Karatepe & Kilic, 2009; Siu *et al.*, 2010).

Information received from Istanbul Directorate of Culture and Tourism at the time of this study demonstrated that there were 15 international five-star chain hotels (e.g., Four Seasons, Hilton, Sheraton, Marriott, Holiday Inn, Movenpick) in Istanbul. Human resource managers of these hotels were contacted through a letter that included permission for data collection. However, management of eight hotels agreed to participate in the study and allowed the researcher to contact their frontline employees directly. In total, these hotels had 2,216 rooms.

Consistent with potential remedies given by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee and Podsakoff (2003), this study collected data from frontline employees with a time lag of two weeks to minimize common method bias. Podsakoff *et al.* (2003) state that the researcher can collect data by introducing a time lag between the predictor and the criterion variables if it is not possible to have multiple sources of data. Therefore, this study utilized a time lag of two weeks to gather data from frontline hotel employees. The use of a two-week time lag is also observed in empirical studies whose samples have consisted of hotel employees (e.g., Karatepe & Karadas, 2014; Yavas *et al.*, 2013).

In addition, it was assured that there were no right or wrong answers to items in the Time I and Time II questionnaires. This gives strong signals to respondents that they should answer questions as honestly as possible (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). The researcher prepared a list that included an identification number assigned to each respondent. This identification number was written on an obscure part of each questionnaire. The researcher was also able to match the questionnaires with each other via identification numbers. All employees filled out the questionnaires in a self-administered manner. They put the questionnaires in sealed envelopes and placed them in a special box. The researcher then collected the questionnaires from this box. This procedure assured respondents of anonymity and confidentiality.

A total number of 252 Time I questionnaires were distributed to frontline employees. Two hundred and twenty Time I questionnaires were received with a response rate of 87.3%. Two hundred and twenty Time II questionnaires were distributed to the same frontline employees. The response rate was 95.9% of the sample at Time II. That is, 211 Time II questionnaires were returned. Receiving data in two waves, using identification numbers to match the questionnaires with each other, and obtaining strong management support and cooperation led to the response rate given above. Such high response rates are also observed in empirical studies whose samples have consisted of frontline employees in the hotel industry in South Korea (Choi & Kim, 2012) and Romania (Karatepe & Karadas, 2014) and in another empirical study whose sample has included frontline employees in the travel agency industry in Northern Cyprus (Karatepe & Kilic, 2015).

The sample consisted of 133 (63%) male and 78 (37%) female respondents. In terms of educational achievement, 35 (17%) respondents had secondary and high school education. The sample included 91 (43%) respondents with two-year college degrees and 83 (39%) respondents with four-year college degrees. The sample also included one respondent with primary school education and one respondent with graduate degree. With regard to age, the sample was comprised of 115 (55%) respondents who were aged between 18 and 27 years. Seventy-seven (37%) respondents were aged between 28 and 37 years. The rest were older than 37. The overwhelming majority of the respondents (82%) had tenures below five years. The rest had been with their hotel for more than five years. One hundred and fifty-six (74%) respondents were single or divorced. The rest were married with or without children.

## Measurement

Family support was measured with four items taken from Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet and Farley (1988). Sample items are 'My family really tries to help me' and 'I get the emotional help and support I need from my family'. This study utilized the shortened version of the Utrecht work engagement scale to measure work engagement (Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova, 2006). This scale included nine items. Sample items are 'At my job, I feel strong and vigorous', 'My job inspires me', and 'I am immersed in my work'.



Three items came from Singh, Verbeke and Rhoads (1996) to operationalize turnover intentions. One sample item for the three-item turnover intentions scale is 'I often think about quitting'. Five items adapted from Babin and Boles (1998) were used to assess frontline employees' job performance. The sample items for the job performance scale are 'I am a top performer' and 'I get along better with customers than do others'. A five-item scale taken from Bettencourt and Brown (1997) was used to measure frontline employees' extra-role customer service. Sample items are 'I voluntarily assist customers even if it means going beyond job requirements' and 'I frequently go out the way to help a customer'. Responses to the family support, turnover intentions, job performance, and extra-role customer service items consisted of a five-point scale that ranged from 5 (*strongly agree*) to 1 (*strongly disagree*). Responses to the work engagement items ranged from 6 (*always*) to 0 (*never*). Gender was coded as a binary variable (0 = male and 1 = female). Organizational tenure was measured in five categories (i.e., below one year, one to five years, six to ten years, eleven to fifteen years, sixteen to twenty years). Higher scores showed higher family support, work engagement, turnover intentions, job performance, and extra-role customer service. Higher scores also indicated longer tenure. The Appendix presents the scale items and their sources used in this empirical study.

The Time I and Time II questionnaires were prepared in light of the guidelines of the back-translation method. The researcher initially prepared the Time I and Time II questionnaires in English. Then, one of the academicians of a Turkish university fluent in English and Turkish independently translated these questionnaires into Turkish. Another academician in the same university fluent in English and Turkish also independently translated the Time I and Time II questionnaires back to the original language. The researcher compared them for any inconsistencies (McGorry, 2000). The Time I and Time II questionnaires were subjected to pilot studies for the understandability of items. Specifically, the Time I and Time II questionnaires were tested with two different pilot samples of 10 frontline employees. In short, no changes were deemed necessary as a result of back-translation and pilot studies.

## Strategy of data analysis

This study used Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) two-step approach to gauge the measurement model and test the relationships in the hypothesized model. Covariance matrix was used for the assessment of each model. In the first step all measures were subjected to confirmatory factor analysis to assess convergent and discriminant validity (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Fornell & Larcker, 1981) as well as composite reliability (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). In the second step the relationships were tested via structural equation modeling. Before this, the hypothesized model was compared with the partially mediated model.

The mediation analysis was employed based on the guidelines given by James, Mulaik and Brett (2006). Specifically, the hypothesized model was compared with the partially mediated model through the  $\chi^2$  difference test. That is, the hypothesized model proposed that family support influenced job outcomes only via work engagement. However, in the partially mediated model, the direct effect of family support on job outcomes in addition to its indirect effect was tested. Since the hypothesized model was a fully mediated model, the direct relationship between the predictor variable (i.e., family support) and the criterion variables (i.e., job performance) was not tested (James *et al.*, 2006). Sobel test was also used for testing the significance of mediating effects.

According to Kline (2005), 10 to 20 respondents per parameter appear to give rise to sufficient sample size. The sample size of this study is 211 and seems to meet the criterion given by Kline (2005). The overall  $\chi^2$  measure, comparative fit index (CFI), parsimony normed fit index (PNFI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) were used to assess model fit. These analyses were made using LISREL 8.30 (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1996).

## Results

### Measurement results

Several items were dropped due to low standardized loadings and correlation measurement errors during confirmatory factor analysis. As shown in the Appendix, two items each from the work engagement and extra-role customer service measures and one item from the job performance measure were discarded. The results demonstrated that the five-factor measurement model fit the data well ( $\chi^2 = 277.60$   $df = 179$ ;  $\chi^2 / df = 1.55$ ; CFI = 0.95; PNFI = 0.74; RMSEA = 0.051; SRMR = 0.055). All loadings were significant. The magnitudes of the loadings ranged from 0.45 to 0.95. The preponderance of the loadings was equal to or greater than 0.70. The average variance extracted by family support, work engagement, turnover intentions, job performance, and extra-role customer service was 0.65, 0.49, 0.76, 0.50, and 0.58, respectively. The results collectively showed that there was evidence of convergent validity (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criterion was used to check the issue of discriminant validity. The average variance extracted by each latent variable was greater than the shared variances between pairs of constructs. The results provided evidence of discriminant validity. All measures were reliable since composite reliability for each construct was greater than 0.60 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Specifically, composite reliability score for family support, work engagement, turnover intentions, job performance, and extra-role customer service was 0.88, 0.87, 0.90, 0.80, and 0.80, respectively. Table 2 presents means, standard deviations, and correlations of observed variables.

Table 2  
Means, standard deviations, and correlations

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Gender	-						
2. Organizational tenure	-0.141*	-					
3. Family support	0.104	-0.028	-				
4. Work engagement	-0.041	0.120*	0.264**	-			
5. Turnover intentions	0.058	-0.153*	-0.118*	-0.221**	-		
6. Job performance	-0.091	0.140*	0.117*	0.179**	-0.059	-	
7. Extra-role customer service	-0.035	0.038	0.069	0.143*	-0.058	0.307**	-
Mean	0.37	1.85	4.39	4.79	2.43	3.97	3.68
Standard deviation	0.48	0.85	0.76	0.91	0.99	0.61	0.84

Notes: Composite scores for each variable were computed by averaging scores across items representing that variable.  
\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$  (one-tailed test).

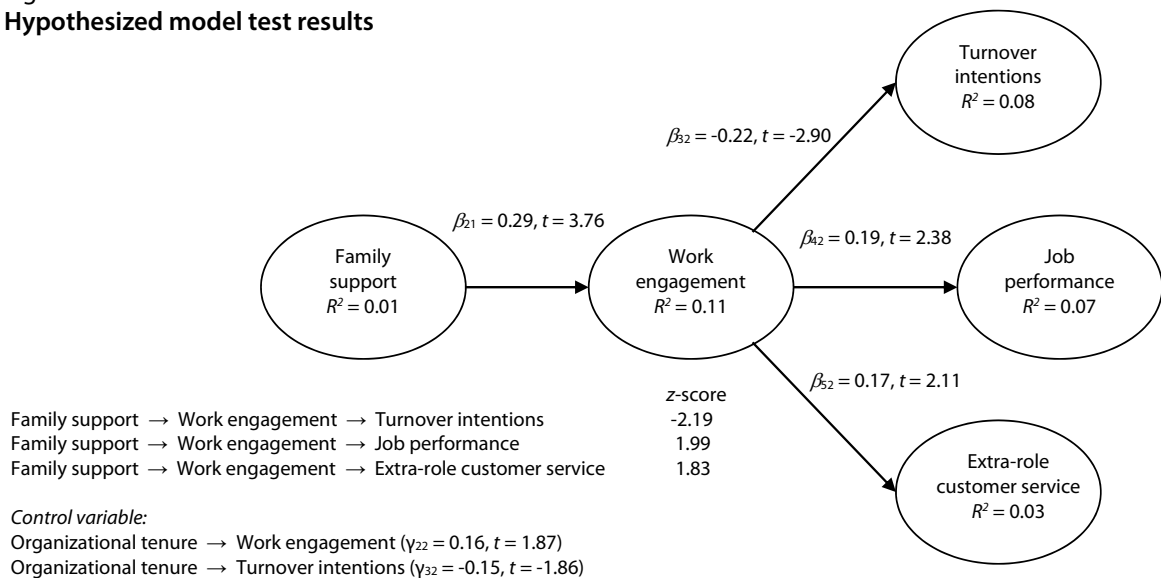
## Hypothesized model test results

Normality of data was tested via skewness. The skewness value for family support, work engagement, turnover intentions, job performance, and extra-role customer service was -1.595, -0.799, 0.555, -0.196, and -0.691, respectively. All values which fell between -2.00 and +2.00 were deemed acceptable (Lee & Yom, 2013).

When the hypothesized model ( $\chi^2 = 298.43$ ,  $df = 216$ ) was compared with the partially mediated model ( $\chi^2 = 295.86$ ,  $df = 213$ ), the results revealed that the hypothesized model seemed to have a better fit than the partially mediated model. This was due to the fact that there was a non-significant difference in fit ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 2.57$ ,  $\Delta df = 3$ ). In short, the results in Figure 2 illustrated that the hypothesized model fit the data well on the basis of a number of fit statistics ( $\chi^2 = 298.43$ ,  $df = 216$ ;  $\chi^2 / df = 1.38$ ; CFI = 0.95; PNFI = 0.74; RMSEA = 0.043; SRMR = 0.053).

The results in Figure 2 demonstrate that family support significantly and positively affects work engagement ( $\beta_{21} = 0.29$ ,  $t = 3.76$ ). Hence, hypothesis 1 is supported. The results further indicate that work engagement is significantly and negatively related to turnover intentions ( $\beta_{32} = -0.22$ ,  $t = -2.90$ ), while it has a significant positive impact on job performance ( $\beta_{42} = 0.19$ ,  $t = 2.38$ ) and extra-role customer service ( $\beta_{52} = 0.17$ ,  $t = 2.11$ ). Therefore, hypotheses 2a, 2b, and 2c are supported.

Figure 2  
Hypothesized model test results



Model fit statistics:  
 $\chi^2 = 298.43$ ,  $df = 216$ ;  $\chi^2 / df = 1.38$ ; CFI = 0.95; PNFI = 0.74; RMSEA = 0.043; SRMR = 0.053

Notes: CFI = Comparative fit index; PNFI = Parsimony normed fit index; RMSEA = Root mean square error of approximation; SRMR = Standardized root mean square residual. T-values: one-tailed test  $t > 1.65$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; and  $t > 2.33$ ,  $p < 0.01$ .

The results provide support for the mediating role of work engagement. Specifically, the indirect effect of family support on turnover intentions ( $z = -2.19$ ), job performance ( $z = 1.99$ ), and extra-role customer service ( $z = 1.83$ ) through work engagement is significant based on Sobel test. Since work

engagement fully mediates the effect of family support on the aforementioned job outcomes, hypotheses 3a, 3b, and 3c are supported.

Only organizational tenure depicts a significant association with two of the study variables. That is, organizational tenure is negatively related to turnover intentions ( $\gamma_{32} = -0.15$ ,  $t = -1.86$ ), while it is positively related to work engagement ( $\gamma_{22} = 0.16$ ,  $t = 1.87$ ). The results suggest that employees with longer tenure have lower intentions to leave the current organization. The results further suggest that employees with longer tenure are more engaged in their work. The control variables do not result in any statistical confounds. The results explain 1% of the variance in family support, 11% in work engagement, 8% in turnover intentions, 7% in job performance, and 3% in extra-role customer service.

## Discussion and conclusions

### Evaluation of findings and strengths of the study

Using the motivational process of the JD-R model as the theoretical framework (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008), this study developed and tested a conceptual model that examined the mediating role of work engagement in the relationship between family support and three organizationally relevant and valued job outcomes. These job outcomes were turnover intentions, job performance, and extra-role customer service. Based on data gathered from frontline hotel employees with a time lag of two weeks in Turkey, the results from structural equation modeling suggest that all hypothesized relationships are supported.

This study tests family support as an antecedent of work engagement, while it gauges turnover intentions, job performance, and extra-role customer service as outcomes of work engagement. By testing the antecedents and outcomes of work engagement in frontline service jobs, the current study contributes to the hospitality management literature. Specifically, as a role resource, family support activates frontline employees' work engagement. Frontline employees with emotional support in the form of empathic understanding, listening, and sensitivity concerning work-related issues and instrumental support in the form of assistance and advice regarding work-related issues feel energetic and dedicated and are immersed in their work. As convincingly discussed by Siu *et al.* (2010), family support provides love and expectation to motivate employees and enables them to accomplish work-related goals. The finding concerning the relationship between family support and work engagement adds to current knowledge in the work engagement research.

Frontline service jobs require quality performance in the workplace. That is, frontline employees are expected to deliver quality services to customers and go the extra mile for customers. Job performance and extra-role customer service appear to be the immediate consequences of work engagement (Christian *et al.*, 2011; Karatepe, 2013b). Therefore, frontline employees who are highly engaged in their work are expected to display higher levels of performance in the workplace. The findings regarding the impact of work engagement on job performance and extra-role customer service are congruent with the abovementioned statement (Karatepe *et al.*, 2013). The size of the effect of work engagement on job performance and extra-role customer service also seems to be the same. Therefore, higher work engagement simultaneously results in job performance and extra-role customer service at elevated levels, and frontline employees do not tend to prioritize in-role or extra-role tasks (Christian *et al.*, 2011).

Work engagement is also an antidote to employees' intentions to leave the organization. That is, employees who feel energetic, are inspired by the job, and are engrossed in their work display lower intentions to leave the organization. The finding pertaining to the relationship between work engagement and turnover intentions is in line with other studies (Karatepe, 2013a; Takawira *et al.*, 2014). Since high employee turnover results in low employee morale and motivation and gives rise to tangible costs for the organization, acquiring and retaining a pool of frontline employees who are highly engaged in their work appears to be a remedy.

Consistent with the work of Siu *et al.* (2010), this study includes family support as a role resource in the motivational process of the JD-R model and tests its indirect effect on job outcomes through the mediating role of work engagement. The presence of family support motivates employees to deal with a number of customer requests and go beyond the formal role requirements of their job. Since it appears that family members of employees provide support to them for spending time and energy in the workplace, employees are highly engaged in their work and therefore are unlikely to have quitting intentions. In technical terms, work engagement fully mediates the relationship between family support and the aforementioned job outcomes. In short, the current study contributes to existing body of knowledge by linking a role resource/nonwork resource to organizationally relevant and valued job outcomes through work engagement.

## Methodological concerns and avenues for future research

The present study has several limitations that underscore useful directions for future research. First, this study used turnover intentions, job performance, and extra-role customer service as organizationally relevant and valued job outcomes. Though these job outcomes have already been used in similar empirical studies (cf. Karatepe, 2013b; Moliner *et al.*, 2008), future research can consider other potential critical attitudinal and behavioral outcomes such as tardiness, leaving work early, life satisfaction, and creative performance. Second, this study collected data from employees with a time lag of two weeks. This seems to provide evidence pertaining to the issue of causality. However, it is not enough. With this realization, future research should obtain data from employees through a longer period of time than it was done in the current study.

Third, a cross-national study based on data to be collected in Turkey, the United States, and China is likely to present a better understanding of the relationships depicted in the conceptual model. That is, such a study is likely to provide evidence about whether the model's effects are similar across samples.

## Management implications

The results of this study also provide several useful implications for business practice. First, the results reported here suggest that family support activates frontline employees' work engagement. With this realization, management can invite employees' family members to specific workshops and ask for their ideas about how to increase emotional and instrumental support provided by them. This is important, because seeking family members' advice will make them feel valued. Under these circumstances, they are likely to give support to employees for spending more time and energy in the workplace. Frontline employees who perceive that their family members provide emotional and instrumental support to

them are likely to be engaged in their work at elevated levels. As stated earlier, single individuals in Turkey tend to live with their parents and are expected to spend time with their parents, siblings, and/or relatives. Employees in the Turkish hotel industry who are single and/or married with or without children will demonstrate high levels of work engagement as a result of support emerging from their family members.

Second, the results suggest that work engagement mitigates turnover intentions, while it activates job performance and extra-role customer service. Such findings refer to the critical role of hiring individuals who are highly engaged in their work. By taking into account the vital role of engagement, management can utilize the Utrecht work engagement scale during the selection process. This will enable management to ascertain whether job candidates are likely to display higher work engagement. Management can use this scale to follow up current employees' work engagement. This is important, because management is expected to retain employees high in work engagement. Employees high in work engagement also generate a demonstration effect among employees with low work engagement.

Third, management should consider frontline employees who do not perform effectively in service delivery and complaint handling processes. Employees who are likely to impede effective and efficient customer service should be trained. Specifically, management should use a number of case studies in training programs to make their employees learn from mistakes and understand customer expectations in detail. Such training programs should also enable management to obtain employees' feedback and suggestions to solve novel customer problems. By doing so, it may be possible to increase employees' in-role and extra-role performances.

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## Appendix

### Scale items and their sources

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Family support (Zimet *et al.*, 1988)

My family really tries to help me.

I get the emotional help and support I need from my family.

I can talk about my problems with my family.

My family is willing to help me make decisions.

Work engagement (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2006)

At my work, I feel bursting with energy.

At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.

I am enthusiastic about my job.

My job inspires me.\*

When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.

I feel happy when I am working intensely.

I am proud of the work that I do.

I am immersed in my work.

I get carried away when I am working.\*

Turnover intentions (Singh *et al.*, 1996)

It is likely that I will actively look for a new job next year.

I often think about quitting.

I will probably look for a new job next year.

Job performance (Babin & Boles, 1998)

I am a top performer.

I am in the top 10 percent of frontline employees here.

I get along better with customers than do others.

I know more about services delivered to customers than others.\*

I know what my customers expect better than others.

Extra-role customer service (Bettencourt & Brown, 1997)

I voluntarily assist customers even if it means going beyond job requirements.

I help customers with problems beyond what is expected or required.\*

I often go above and beyond the call of duty when serving customers.\*

I willingly go out of my way to make a customer satisfied.

I frequently go out the way to help a customer.

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Notes: \* Dropped during confirmatory factor analysis.

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