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Role Stress, Emotional Exhaustion, and Job Satisfaction in the Hotel Industry: The Moderating Role of Supervisory Support

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate supervisory support as a moderator of the effects of role conflict and role ambiguity on emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction. This study also examines the moderating role of supervisory support on the relationship between emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction. Data were collected from a sample of frontline hotel employees in Northern Cyprus. The aforementioned relationships were tested based on hierarchical multiple regression analysis. The results demonstrate that supervisory support mitigates the impact of role conflict on emotional exhaustion and further reveal that supervisory support reduces the effect of emotional exhaustion on job satisfaction. There is no empirical support for the rest of the hypothesized relationships. Implications of the empirical results are discussed, and future research directions are offered.

Keywords

Emotional exhaustion, Hotel employees, Job satisfaction, Northern Cyprus, Role stress, Supervisory support

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By Osman M. Karatepe

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INTRODUCTION

Employees having frequent face-to-face or voice-to-voice interactions with customers play a pivotal role in delivering service and establishing strong relationships with customers. Therefore, it is important to retain a pool of motivated, satisfied, and committed frontline employees for delivery of service quality and effective resolutions of customer complaints (Bowen & Ford, 2004; Karatepe, Yorganci, & Haktanir, 2009). Despite their critical role in frontline service jobs in the hotel industry, such employees often suffer from emotional exhaustion due to role conflict and role ambiguity. Role conflict and role ambiguity are the two main dimensions of role stress frontline employees are faced with (Babakus, Yavas, & Karatepe, 2008; Kim, Murrmann, & Lee, 2009; Ross & Boles, 1994).

Role conflict occurs when an individual receives incompatible job demands from his or her role partners, such as customers, co-workers, and managers, and is incapable of satisfying all the demands simultaneously (Churchill, Ford, & Walker, 1976). Role ambiguity occurs when an individual lacks information about his or her job and experiences a great deal of uncertainty about how to perform job-related tasks (Churchill et al., 1976). Such role stressors lead to emotional exhaustion (Babakus et al., 2008), which is the first stage of the burnout syndrome (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Maslach & Jackson, 1981) and refers to the

lack of energy and depletion of emotional resources due to excessive psychological demands (Boles, Dean, Ricks, Short, & Wang, 2000). In addition, frontline employees experiencing elevated levels of role stress and emotional exhaustion are dissatisfied with the job (Karatepe et al., 2009; Kim et al., 2009). One of the job resources that can reduce the abovementioned relationships is *supervisory support* (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Hobfoll, 1989, 2001). That is, supervisory support as a moderator can attenuate emotional exhaustion for employees who are confronted with high levels of role stress. Such a job resource can also mitigate the detrimental effects of role stress and emotional exhaustion on job satisfaction.

A recent review on the relationship between occupational stress and social support indicates that empirical evidence concerning the moderating role of supervisory support has been weak and inconsistent (Haly, 2009). As a matter of fact, similar findings have already been reported in past empirical studies (Beehr, Farmer, Glazer, Gudanowski, & Nair, 2003; Viswesvaran, Sanchez, & Fisher, 1999). In addition, the buffering role of job resources in the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model has received little empirical attention in the relevant literature (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). A more recent study reveals that very little is known about the moderating role of supervisory support on the relationship between stressors and strain in the hospitality management literature (Karatepe, 2010).

Against this backdrop, this study examines *supervisory support* as a moderator of the impacts of role conflict and role ambiguity on emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction. The current study also investigates supervisory support as a moderator in the relationship between emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction. The abovementioned relationships are tested using data obtained from frontline hotel employees in Northern Cyprus.

ROLE STRESS, EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION, AND JOB SATISFACTION

Employees in frontline service jobs of the hotel industry are confronted with role conflict and role ambiguity, which are the two most widely used indicators of job demands. Such employees also often experience elevated levels of emotional exhaustion. Empirical studies in the hospitality management literature delineate the relationships between various job demands and strain. For example, it was shown that the relative frequency of serving demanding guests increased emotional exhaustion among frontline hotel employees in New Zealand

(Ledgerwood, Crotts, & Everett, 1998). Babakus et al. (2008) reported that job demands, which included role conflict and role ambiguity, heightened emotional exhaustion among frontline hotel employees in Turkey. The findings of another study revealed that job stress intensified frontline employees' burnout in both restaurant and hotel/motel settings (Gill, Flaschner, & Shachar, 2006). A recent study found that frontline hotel employees faking emotions (surface acting) experienced more exhaustion and cynicism, and employees trying to invoke the proper feelings (deep acting) were faced with less cynicism and had high levels of professional efficacy (Kim, 2008). In the same study, it was also demonstrated that the display rules to show positive emotions had significant positive effects on professional efficacy. According to the findings of a more recent study, emotional dissonance exerted a significant positive impact on emotional exhaustion among frontline hotel employees in Nigeria (Karatepe & Aleshinloye, 2009).

Empirical studies in the hospitality management literature also reveal that role stress and emotional exhaustion result in negative job outcomes, such as job dissatisfaction. Specifically, in a study of food servers, Ross and Boles (1994) found that role conflict influenced job satisfaction deleteriously, but role ambiguity did not significantly affect job satisfaction. In a recent study of hotel employees in Taiwan, Yang (2010) demonstrated similar results and further reported that burnout alleviated job satisfaction. In another empirical study of frontline hotel employees in Northern Cyprus, customer verbal aggression and emotional dissonance aggravated emotional exhaustion, while emotional exhaustion eroded job satisfaction (Karatepe et al., 2009). On the other hand, Karatepe and Sokmen (2006) found that two dimensions of role stress reduced frontline hotel employees' job satisfaction in Turkey. Kim et al. (2009) also reported similar findings for a sample of hotel employees in the Republic of Korea.

The abovementioned findings have been summarized using several empirical studies in the hospitality management literature. These studies indicated that role stress exacerbates emotional exhaustion and further demonstrate that role stress and emotional exhaustion have detrimental effects on job satisfaction. Supervisory support is one of the job resources that can be used for reducing the aforementioned relationships. Empirical evidence concerning the moderating role of supervisory support in this research stream in the relevant literature is weak and mixed (e.g., Haly, 2009; Viswesvaran et al., 1999). In addition, empirical evidence in this research stream in the hospitality management literature is scarce (Karatepe, 2010).

SUPERVISORY SUPPORT AS A MODERATOR

The Conservation of Resources (COR) theory and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model provide viable guidelines for developing the relationships in this empirical study. Specifically, the COR theory posits that object, personal, condition, and energy resources are the fundamental resources individuals seek to acquire, maintain and preserve (Hobfoll, 1989). Individuals invest their resources to deal with threatening/stressful situations and prevent themselves from negative outcomes such as emotional exhaustion/burnout and job dissatisfaction (Hobfoll, 1989). The JD-R model also contends that in addition to the main effects of job demands and resources, several different job demands may interact with several different job resources based on the specific job characteristics to predict strain and motivation (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Relying on the precepts of two well-endorsed frameworks (the COR theory and the JD-R model), it is posited that the availability of job resources can help employees to deal more effectively with stressful situations and prevent them from negative outcomes such as emotional exhaustion/burnout and job dissatisfaction (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2007). In empirical terms, Karatepe (2010) reported that the interaction of work-family conflict and work social support alleviated exhaustion among frontline hotel employees in Albania.

In addition, the COR theory contends that employees have negative job outcomes as a result of resource loss and emotional exhaustion/burnout (Lee & Ashforth, 1996). Employees with supervisory support can cope with problems emerging from emotional exhaustion, and such a job resource reduces the detrimental impact of emotional exhaustion on job satisfaction. That is, the effect of emotional exhaustion on job satisfaction can be moderated by supervisory support.

Role conflict and role ambiguity are the two job demands/stressors examined in this study. This selection is supported by prior research, which shows that these stressors are unavoidable aspects of frontline service jobs (Babakus et al., 2008; Hartline & Ferrell, 1996; Ross & Boles, 1994). Supervisory support, which is “self-defining and instrumental in protecting existing resources and obtaining new ones” (Seiger & Wiese, 2009, p. 27), is the job resource investigated in the present study. This selection is based on the fact that frontline employees often need support from their supervisors in order to be able to deal with problems associated with role conflict and role ambiguity (Babakus et al.,

2008; Babin & Boles, 1996). Such a job resource would also be important for dealing with aggressive customers, conflict between work and family roles, and heavy workloads. As argued by Bakker and Demerouti (2007), having quality relationships with supervisors may reduce the effects of job demands on strain, and supervisors' appreciation and support may help employees to cope with job demands and facilitate performance.

In short, frontline employees with adequate support arising from their supervisors are faced with low levels of role conflict and role ambiguity and thus have less emotional exhaustion and job dissatisfaction. The presence of such a job resource can also alleviate the detrimental impact of emotional exhaustion on job satisfaction.

Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1. Supervisory support moderates the effects of (a) role conflict and (b) role ambiguity on emotional exhaustion such that the effects are weaker among frontline employees with high levels of supervisory support.
- H2. Supervisory support moderates the effects of (a) role conflict and (b) role ambiguity on job satisfaction such that the effects are weaker among frontline employees with high levels of supervisory support.
- H3. Supervisory support moderates the effect of emotional exhaustion on job satisfaction such that the effect is weaker among frontline employees with high levels of supervisory support.

METHOD

Sample and Procedure

Data were gathered from a judgmental sample of frontline employees in the three-, four-, and five-star hotels in Northern Cyprus, which is a small island destination in the Mediterranean Sea. The Northern Cyprus hotel industry has a number of problems emerging from low occupancy rates, poor service quality, limited qualified staff, pollution, and inadequate infrastructure (Altinay & Bowen, 2006; Karatepe et al., 2009; Kilic & Okumus, 2005). The chronic problems of the global hotel industry, such as low pay, heavy workloads, long work hours, and high turnover are also endemic to Northern Cyprus (Karatepe et al., 2009; Karatepe & Kilic, 2007).

At the time of this study, there were 28 three-, 8 four-, and 6 five-star hotels in Northern Cyprus. Hotel types in the research location included independently/family-owned and -operated hotels and chain hotels. The overwhelming majority of the hotels (83.3%) were independently/family-owned and -operated hotels, while the rest were chain hotels. The research team contacted the managements of the abovementioned hotels to explain the purpose of the study and obtain permission for data collection. In light of the information received from the managements of the hotels, the total number of frontline employees was 943. However, the managements of 3 three-star hotels and 3 four-star hotels chose not to participate in this empirical study. Therefore, a total number of 872 self-administered questionnaires were personally distributed to frontline hotel employees. All respondents were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. By the cut-off date for data collection, a total number of 677 questionnaires were retrieved, yielding a response rate of 77.6%.

51% of the respondents were between the ages of 18 and 27, 31% were between 28 and 37, and the rest were older than 37. 57% of the respondents were male. 32% of the respondents had secondary and high school education, and 56% had a university education. The rest had primary school education. 29% of the respondents had tenures of less than 1 year and 48% had tenures of 1-5 years. The rest had tenures above 5 years. 40% of the respondents were married, whereas the rest were single or divorced. 65% of the respondents had no children, 35% had 1-4 children, and the rest had more than 4 children.

Measurement

Existing scales in the relevant literature were used in this study. Role conflict and role ambiguity were measured using items from Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970). Specifically, role conflict was operationalized via eight items and role ambiguity was measured using six items. Sample items for role conflict included “I receive an assignment without adequate resources and materials to execute it” and “I work with two or more groups who operate differently.” Sample items for role ambiguity included “I know exactly what is expected of me” and “I know what my responsibilities are.”

Eight items from Maslach and Jackson (1981) were used to measure emotional exhaustion. Sample items included “I feel emotionally drained from my work” and “I feel used up at the end of the workday.” Job satisfaction was operationalized through eight items from Hartline and Ferrell (1996). The job satisfaction construct assessed eight facets of

job satisfaction, such as overall job, coworkers, supervisor(s), hotel's policies, support given to frontline employees, pay, opportunities for advancement with the hotel, and hotel's customers. Five items from Babin and Boles (1996) were used to measure supervisory support. Sample items for supervisory support included "Supervisors tend to talk down to employees" and "Supervisors usually give full credit to ideas contributed by employees." The items in role conflict, role ambiguity, emotional exhaustion, and supervisory support were rated on five-point scales ranging from 5 (*strongly agree*) to 1 (*strongly disagree*). The items in job satisfaction were rated on a five-point scale ranging from 5 (*extremely satisfied*) to 1 (*extremely dissatisfied*). Higher scores demonstrated higher role conflict, emotional exhaustion, and job satisfaction. After the positively worded items in role ambiguity and the negatively worded items in supervisory support had been reverse scored, higher scores indicated higher role ambiguity and supervisory support. As a control variable, gender was coded as a binary variable (0=male and 1=female).

The questionnaire was originally prepared in English and then translated into Turkish by using the back-translation method (McGorry, 2000). The survey instrument was tested with a pilot sample of 30 frontline employees. No changes were made to the instrument as a result of this pilot test because frontline employees did not have any difficulty understanding the items.

Data Analysis

All measures were subjected to a series of confirmatory factor analyses using LISREL 8.30 in order to address issues of convergent and discriminant validity (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Joreskog & Sorbom, 1996). The values of χ^2 / df , GFI (Goodness of fit index), CFI (Comparative fit index), RMSEA (Root mean square error of approximation), and SRMR (Standardized root mean square residual) were used to assess the results of the fit statistics. The χ^2 / df value between 2 and 5 indicates a good fit (Marsh & Hocevar, 1985). Generally, fit indices with values equal to or greater than 0.90 indicate a good fit (Bentler & Bonett, 1980). RMSEA with values smaller than or equal to 0.08 indicates a good fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). SRMR with values smaller than 0.10 is indicative of a good fit (Sumer, Sumer, Ciftci, & Demirutku, 2000).

The internal consistency reliability was evaluated via the commonly accepted cut-off value of 0.70. Composite scores for each construct were created by averaging all items in that particular construct. The moderating effects were tested via the guidelines suggested by Baron

and Kenny (1986). All predicting variables were centered prior to multiplication. In predicting emotional exhaustion, the control variable was entered in step 1, role conflict in step 2, supervisor support in step 3, and the interactive term (role conflict * supervisory support) in step 4. This procedure was also used for the rest of the moderating relationships.

RESULTS

Measurement Results

Two items from the supervisory support construct were removed due to low standardized loadings based on the initial results of confirmatory factor analysis. The final results of confirmatory factor analysis demonstrated the following results: ($\chi^2_{2963.18} / df_{485} = 6.11$; GFI = 0.79; CFI = 0.77; RMSEA = 0.087; SRMR = 0.078). Although the results for RMSEA and SRMR fell within a range of acceptable values, the rest of the model fit statistics were poor. However, a close scrutiny of the results indicated that the magnitudes of the loadings ranged from 0.38 to 0.87, and all *t*-values were larger than 2.00. In addition, eighteen out of 33 loadings were above 0.60. Consequently, the magnitudes of the loadings and their significant *t*-values provided evidence of convergent validity (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

A two-dimensional model for each pair of constructs was first fit, and then items representing each construct were forced into a single-factor solution. The χ^2 difference test produced a significant result for each pair of measures. Thus, imposing a single factor solution on the two sets of items representing different constructs demonstrated a significant deterioration of the model fit. These results provided evidence of discriminant validity (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

Common method bias was checked with a confirmatory factor analysis approach to Harman's single-factor test (Kandemir, Yaprak, & Cavusgil, 2006). If common method bias were a serious problem to the analysis and interpretation of the data, a single latent factor would account for more than 50% of the total variance of the measures (McFarlin & Sweeney, 1992). The results for a single-factor model showed the following fit statistics: $\chi^2 = 9320.72$, $df = 495$; GFI = 0.54; CFI = 0.44; RMSEA = 0.162; SRMR = 0.13. The single-factor model accounted for only 21% of the total variance. The chi-square test also demonstrated that the five-factor model was superior to the single-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2 = 6357.54$, $\Delta df = 10$, $p < 0.001$). In short, common method bias was not a significant problem in this study.

Means, standard deviations, and correlations of study variables are demonstrated in Table 1. According to the results in Table 1, gender has significant effects on role conflict and job satisfaction. That is, female employees experience less role conflict, but they are more satisfied with the job. As also indicated in Table 1, all coefficient alphas exceeded the minimum standard of 0.70, excluding supervisory support, whose coefficient was 0.55.

Table 1
Means, standard deviations, correlations of study variables,
and Cronbach's Alpha (n = 677)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Gender	1.000					
2. Role conflict	-.119**	1.000				
3. Role ambiguity	-.041	.108**	1.000			
4. Emotional exhaustion	-.063	.460**	.299**	1.000		
5. Job satisfaction	.079*	-.121**	-.340**	-.339**	1.000	
6. Supervisory support	.052	-.282**	.038	-.290**	.094*	1.000
Mean	.43	3.22	2.05	2.72	3.41	2.70
Standard deviation	.50	.72	.65	.97	.83	.82
Cronbach's alpha	-	.80	.80	.90	.87	.55

Note: Composite scores for each measure were obtained by averaging scores across items representing that measure. The scores range from 1 to 5. Gender was coded as a binary variable (0=male and 1= female).

* Correlations are significant at the .05 level.

** Correlations are significant at the .01 level. Correlations without asterisks are not significant.

Test of Hypotheses

The results of the hypothesized relationships are presented in Tables 2, 3, and 4. As can be seen in Table 2, the interaction of role conflict and supervisory support has a significant negative effect on emotional exhaustion ($\beta = -0.07, p \leq 0.05$). There is an increment in R^2 of the model ($\Delta R^2 = 0.01, p \leq 0.05$). Therefore, hypothesis 1a is supported. However, the results in Table 2 show that the interaction of role ambiguity and supervisory support does not significantly influence emotional exhaustion. Therefore, hypothesis 1b is not supported.

The results regarding supervisory support as a moderator of the effects of role conflict and role ambiguity on job satisfaction are demonstrated in Table 3. The interaction of role conflict and supervisory support is not significantly related to job satisfaction. Therefore, hypothesis 2a is not supported. In addition, the results indicate that the interactive term (role ambiguity * supervisory support) does not have a significant effect on job satisfaction. Therefore, hypothesis 2b is not supported.

The results in Table 4 reveal that the interaction of emotional exhaustion and supervisory support significantly and negatively influences job satisfaction ($\beta = -0.12, p < 0.01$). A significant increment in R^2 of the model is also observed ($\Delta R^2 = 0.01, p < 0.01$). Therefore, hypothesis 3 is supported. The results of the hypothesized relationships do not change with or without gender as a control variable.

DISCUSSION

Several inferences emerge from the results of this study. First, the result regarding the moderating role of supervisory support on the relationship between role conflict and emotional exhaustion suggests that the impact of role conflict on emotional exhaustion is weaker among frontline hotel employees with high levels of supervisory support. Employees with sufficient supervisory support can cope effectively with incompatible demands arising from their managers, coworkers, or customers, and thus experience less emotional exhaustion. Supervisory support appears to protect employees from the stressful situations and strain, such as emotional exhaustion.

Table 2
Hierarchical multiple regression analysis:
supervisory support as a moderator of the effects of
role conflict and role ambiguity on emotional exhaustion

		Dependent variables and standardized regression weights							
		Emotional exhaustion				Emotional exhaustion			
		Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Independent variables		Independent variables				Independent variables			
(I)	Control variable Gender								
(II)	RC	-.06	-.01	-.01	.00				
(III)	SUPPORT	.46**	.41**	-.17**	-.17**				
(IV)	RC * SUPPORT								
F		2.70	177.22**	24.57**	3.85*				
R ² at each step		.00	.21	.23	.24		2.70	65.42**	73.59**
ΔR ²		-	.21	.02	.01		.00	.09	.18
								.09	.09
									.00

Note: Gender was coded as a binary variable (0=male and 1=female). RC=Role conflict; RA=Role ambiguity; SUPPORT=Supervisory support. The results regarding variance inflation factors did not demonstrate any problems of multicollinearity.
 *p≤.05, **p<.001

Table 3
Hierarchical multiple regression analysis:
supervisory support as a moderator of the effects of
role conflict and role ambiguity on job satisfaction

Independent variables		Job satisfaction				Job satisfaction			
		Dependent variables and standardized regression weights				Job satisfaction			
		Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
(I)	Control variable Gender	.08*	.07	.06	.06	-.08*	.07	.06	.06
(II)	RC		-.11**	-.10*	-.09*		-.34***	-.34***	-.34***
(III)	SUPPORT			.06	.06			.10**	.10**
(IV)	RC * SUPPORT				.04				-.02
F		4.19*	8.65**	2.54	1.09	4.19*	87.26***	8.28**	.39
R ² at each step		.01	.02	.02	.02	.01	.12	.13	.13
ΔR ²		-	.01	.00	.00	-	.11	.01	.00

Note: Gender was coded as a binary variable (0=male and 1=female). RC=Role conflict; RA=Role ambiguity; SUPPORT=Supervisory support. The results regarding variance inflation factors did not demonstrate any problems of multicollinearity.
 p*<.05, *p*<.01, ****p*<.001

Table 4
Hierarchical multiple regression analysis:
supervisory support as a moderator of the effect
of emotional exhaustion on job satisfaction

		Dependent variable and standardized regression weights			
		Job satisfaction			
Independent variables		Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
(I)	Control variable				
	Gender	.08*	.06	.06	.07
(II)	EEXHAUST		-.34***	-.34***	-.35***
(III)	SUPPORT			-.01	-.04
(IV)	EEXHAUST * SUPPORT				-.12**
F		4.19*	85.48**	.04	10.20**
R ² at each step		.01	.12	.12	.13
ΔR ²		-	.11	.00	.01

Note: Gender was coded as a binary variable (0= male and 1= female). EEXHAUST=Emotional exhaustion; SUPPORT=Supervisory support. The results regarding variance inflation factors did not demonstrate any problems of multicollinearity.
 * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Second, the result concerning supervisory support as a moderator of the impact of emotional exhaustion on job satisfaction suggests that supervisory support reduces the detrimental effect of emotional exhaustion on job satisfaction. The availability of adequate support surfacing from supervisors appears to be a viable source in protecting employees from emotional exhaustion and weakening the impact of emotional exhaustion on job satisfaction. The results reported above are also consistent with the precepts of the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) and the COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001).

On the other hand, the results demonstrate that there is no empirical backing for supervisory support as a moderator of the impacts of role conflict and role ambiguity on job satisfaction and the effect of role ambiguity on emotional exhaustion. As a matter of fact, most of the empirical studies in the relevant literature report weak and inconsistent findings in this research stream (e.g., Haly, 2009; Viswesvaran et al., 1999). Using longitudinal designs in future research could be a remedy for a better understanding of such relationships.

Managerial Implications

The results of this study provide a number of useful implications for hotel managers for business practice. First, the result of an imbalance between job demands and job resources is emotional exhaustion/burnout. With this realization, the top managements of the hotels should establish and maintain a work environment where imbalance between job demands and job resources is minimized (Babakus et al., 2008). Specifically, they can devise policies and procedures that do not place frontline employees in unmanageable situations with customers or coworkers. They can also prepare and/or revise job descriptions and provide frontline employees with training programs in problem-solving and communication skills for minimizing problems associated with role conflict (cf. Kusluvan, Kusluvan, Ilhan, & Buyruk, 2010). Such training programs should focus on when frontline employees should ask for immediate support from their supervisors.

Second, management may organize specific workshops to make employees discuss problems emerging from role conflict and emotional exhaustion and provide suggestions for solving them. In these workshops, the importance of supervisory support acting as a protector against role conflict and emotional exhaustion should also be stated. Third, it is important to recruit and select the most suitable candidates in frontline service jobs. Otherwise, when there is no fit between the demands of the job and employees' personality traits (e.g., self-efficacy

and job resourcefulness), it would be difficult for these employees to cope with role conflict and emotional exhaustion under job resource-depleted conditions. Finally, job insecurity is one of the problems in the hotel industry. Research indicates that such a problem leads to emotional exhaustion/burnout (cf. Tennant, 2001). Therefore, provision of greater job security, coupled with attractive promotional and career opportunities, would enable management to acquire and retain employees needed for frontline service jobs.

Limitations and Implications for Future Research

Though this study expands the existing knowledge regarding supervisory support as a moderator in the stress-strain/strain-outcome relationship in the hospitality management literature, several limitations and viable prospects for future research remain. First, the relationships in this study were tested using self-report data. This is susceptible to common method bias. Although common method bias was checked with a confirmatory factor analysis approach to Harman's single-factor test, in future research it would be better to obtain data from multiple sources to minimize problems associated with common method bias. Second, this study used cross-sectional data to evaluate the relationships among the study constructs. However, using such data does not make it possible to determine the directions of the causal relationships. Therefore, conducting longitudinal studies in future research would be beneficial for establishing the directions of the causal relationships. As a closing note, to broaden and generalize the database, researchers need to replicate studies in different hospitality settings of similar tourism destinations.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the present study was to examine supervisory support as a moderator of the impacts of role conflict and role ambiguity on emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction. This study also aimed to investigate the moderating role of supervisory support on the relationship between emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction. These hypothesized relationships were tested using data from frontline hotel employees in Northern Cyprus.

The results demonstrated that the effect of role conflict on emotional exhaustion was weaker among frontline employees with high levels of supervisory support. The results further revealed that supervisory support reduced the detrimental impact of emotional exhaustion on job satisfaction. Such findings, which are consonant with the JD-R model and the COR theory, are useful additions to the current

knowledge base due to the paucity of empirical research in this research stream in the hospitality management literature (Karatepe, 2010). On the other hand, the results showed that supervisory support did not moderate the effects of role conflict and role ambiguity on job satisfaction and the relationship between role ambiguity and emotional exhaustion. These findings appear to be consistent with prior meta-analytic studies and reviews in the relevant literature (Beehr et al., 2003; Haly, 2009; Viswevaran et al., 1999). Despite such nonsignificant findings, future studies employing longitudinal designs could be helpful for shedding further light on our understanding concerning supervisory support as a moderator in this research stream.

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