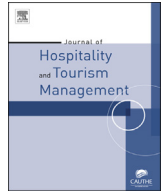




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Perceived organizational support, employee creativity and proactive personality: The mediating effect of meaning of work



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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effects of perceived organizational support (POS) and proactive personality on meaning of work and employee creativity in hotel businesses. Data was collected through a survey of 274 hotel employees, and structural equational model (SEM) was used to test the research hypotheses. The results indicate that both POS and proactive personality have positive effects on the meaning of work and employee creativity. While the mediating effect of meaning of work on the relationship between proactive personality and employee creativity is fully supported, the mediating effect of meaning of work on the relationship between POS and employee creativity is only partially supported.

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1. Introduction

In today's competitive business environment, supporting creativity and creating perceived support helps to improve creativity in many organizations (Diliello, Houghton, & Dawley, 2011; Ibrahim, Isab, & Shahbudin, 2016) while also increasing job satisfaction and reducing turnover intention (Cheng, Yang, Wanc, & Chu, 2013). Specifically, creativity involves the generation of new and useful ideas while innovation involves the application of these ideas to new products and processes. The process by which creative ideas are transformed into new products and services is significantly influenced by changes in the external environment (Saroghi, Libaers, & Burkemper, 2015). Organizations view employee creativity as a source of competitive advantage because it enables employees to increase organizational performance and investigate new processes, techniques or products (Ibrahim et al., 2016).

Because a supportive environment for creativity is an important determinant of organizational performance (King, Chermont, West, Dawson, & Hebl, 2007), organizations have to attach importance to creativity. Therefore creativity is an important variable in order to increase organizational performance. However, there is a lack of research about creativity in business environments because

creativity is often associated with artistic activities, such as film making, acting, painting, composing music or writing novels and poetry, which are recreational rather than business activities. Empirical research also usually focuses on routine operational tasks and meeting the needs of tourists in hotel organizations (Wong & Ladkin, 2008). However, in order to develop employees' creative and innovative behaviours in hotel businesses, where communication with customers is essential, the antecedents of these behaviours need to be determined.

The dependent and independent variables of this research are as follows: employee creativity, proactive personality, perceived organizational support and meaning of work. Proactive personalities are defined as those who identify and use opportunities and take initiative until a meaningful change is achieved (Crant, 1995). They are also referred to as those who use initiative to improve existing conditions or create new conditions (Crant, 1995). Businesses support innovation to create new conditions, which increases the importance of encouraging, valuing and rewarding businesses for promoting creativity and innovation. Recruiting creative personalities or improving the creativity of employees are two ways of promoting creativity in the workplace (Kandampully, Bilgihan, & Zhang, 2016: 158; Chang & Teng, 2017: 134). Meaning of work is defined as the balance or harmony between the characteristics of the employees and expectations of the employees (Morin & Dassa, 2006), which happens when employees dedicate themselves to a valuable and meaningful job (Steger, 2012). Perceived organizational support is the general belief that the

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organization care for the contributions and welfare of its employees (Eisenberger et al., 1986). In other words, employees feel secure in their organizations and use the support they have. Many studies in the literature (e.g. Diliello et al., 2011; Ibrahim et al., 2016; Zhou & George, 2001) have shown that high perceived organizational support enhances employee creativity. Joo, Hahn, and Peterson (2015) also found that employees state that they will continue to work in their organizations as long as their organizations care about their well-being and give them important operational tasks (Joo et al., 2015).

According to Arefin, Raqui, and Ari (2015), organizational concern for their welfare encourages employees to show proactive behaviours. However, employees with proactive personalities also change the work environment and encourage positive organizational outcomes, such as supervisory support (Li, Fay, Freze, Harms, & Gao, 2014). Such individual differences can be explained through personality traits, which conceptualize how people are psychologically different from each other (Uppal & Mishra, 2014). Proactive personality is an important factor for increasing personal creativity in organizations (Kim, Hon, & Lee, 2010) so organizations that wish to emphasize creativity and innovation may be more successful if they attract people with these traits (Kim, Hon, & Crant, 2009). In the hospitality sector, services are produced through employees' personal interactions with customers, which highlights the importance of employee personality in this sector. That is, employee personality traits are the main variables determining the quality of their relationships with customers and the level of customer satisfaction (Ekinici & Dawes, 2009). In the hospitality industry, meaning of work increases employees' organizational commitment (Jung & Yoon, 2016) so offering employees' work that is meaningful to them and consistent with their personal preferences improves their work performance (Duffy, Autin, & Bott, 2015).

Given this background, this study has three objectives: (1) to investigate the effects of perceived organizational support and proactive personality on meaning of work; (2) examine the impacts of perceived organizational support, proactive personality and meaning of work on employee creativity; (3) determine whether meaning of work mediates these relationships. This study contributes to existing knowledge by filling several gaps in the literature on employee creativity and meaning of work. First, only a handful of empirical studies of the hospitality sector have examined the antecedents and/or consequences of meaning of work. Second, a literature search revealed a lack of studies into the relationship between meaning of work and creativity. The present study therefore focuses on employee creativity as one of the outcomes of meaning of work. Third, from a human resource management perspective, employee creativity is an important outcome of perceived organizational support. Given the need for employee creativity in the tourism sector to provide customer satisfaction by responding to customer requests as effectively as possible, it is important to encourage administrative practices that ensure employee creativity. Lastly, this study investigates meaning of work's role as a mediator because organizations have more chance to attract talented employees if they offer meaningful work that leads to employee creativity.

2. Theoretical foundations and hypothesis formulation

2.1. Perceived organizational support

Social Exchange Theory (SET), developed by Blau (1964), explains social changes in societies and human behaviours. It also explains the contributions of employees to their organizations and their expectations as a result of their interactions. According to SET,

when a person does a favour to someone, s/he expects that the favour will be returned in the future (Demir, 2009). Accordingly, employees display positive behaviours (Ibrahim et al., 2016) and contribute to their organizations (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986) with the expectation that their favours will be rewarded (Demir, 2009). This suggests that if organizations satisfy employee needs, value their contributions and pay attention to their interests then employees will experience job satisfaction, which in turn will benefit the organization and increase perceived organizational support.

The increased job satisfaction resulting from these behaviours on the part of the organization also stimulate reciprocal emotions. As organizations value their employees more so the employees engage in more positive organizational behaviours (Çakar & Yıldız, 2009). According to perceived organizational support theory, employees attribute personality traits to their organizations and they attach importance to their contributions to their organization and the level of organizational well-being.

Eisenberger et al. (1986) applied SET to explaining employees' belief in and commitment to their organization. They found that employees with a strong social exchange ideology show greater organizational commitment, want to contribute to the organization, experience higher perceived organizational support and have low absenteeism. As employees' perceived organizational support increases, they feel more obliged to contribute to the organization's prosperity and help their organization to achieve its goals.

The social exchange theory change includes the external benefits, psychological needs, advice and information sharing between both parties (either the employee or the employer). According to this theory, developing and maintaining relationships among individuals are based on utility and finance. Individuals want to maintain the benefits and financial relationships they perceive in mutual relationships (Park et al., 2016). Social exchange theory argues that people compare their achievements with those of other people or institutions. If a person perceives that organizational support is high then s/he contributes more to the organization (Demir, 2009). According to the organizational support theory of perception, when employees feel that they are supported by their organizations, their sense of responsibility for the welfare and goals of organization improves (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

They also report that when employees get help from their colleagues within the organization, they feel more responsible for them. According to the theory, when somebody displays a positive behaviour, employees feel obliged to respond to this behaviour positively. Thus, employees try to help those who previously helped them and display positive behaviours towards them (Gouldner, 1960). According to Yu and Frenkel (2013), perceived organizational support has positive consequences for both employees (e.g. increased job satisfaction and positive mood) and organizations (e.g. increased employee emotional commitment, improved performance and reduced unwanted behaviour). Employees with high perceived organizational support show greater creativity (Shantz, Alfes, & Latham, 2014), commitment (Gupta, Agarwal, & Khatri, 2016), work performance (Vatankhah, Javid, & Raoofi, 2017) and reduced turnover intention (Park, Newman, Zhang, Wu, & Hooke, 2016; Torre-Ruiz, Vidal-Salazar, & Cordón-Pozo, 2017) or undesirable behaviours (Pomirleanu & John Mariadoss, 2015).

2.1.1. Perceived organizational support and meaning of work

According to SET (Blau, 1964), if employees perceive that they are supported by their organization, they contribute more to organizational outcomes as a way to respond to that organizational support. Employees are empowered by knowledge, support, resources and opportunities like formal and informal power provided by their organization (Tolay, Sürgevil, & Topoyan, 2012).

Empowered employees experience meaning of work (Spreitzer, 1995), which also leads to high intrinsic motivation (Fook, Brinten, Sidhu, & Foo, 2011; Lashley, 2001; Özaralli, 2015). This leads to the following hypothesis.

H1. Perceived organizational support (POS) increases meaning of work.

2.2. Proactive personality

Proactive personality, a personality trait producing strong intrinsic motivation and defined as taking initiatives to reach desired goals (Presbitero, 2015), is a characteristic of people who are unconstrained by situational forces, initiate meaningful changes to their environment and show initiative (Bateman & Crant, 1993). The most important characteristic of a proactive personality is taking all possible future consequences into consideration (Parker & Collins, 2010). Proactive personality is positively correlated with salary increases (Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001), and performance target orientation, strategic proactive behaviours and several proactive job behaviours (Parker & Collins, 2010).

Employees with proactive personality may display positive behaviours such as innovation (Seibert et al., 2001), intrinsic motivation (Horng, Tsai, Yang, Liu, & Hu, 2016; Joo & Lim, 2009), performance target orientation (Parker & Collins, 2010), job commitment (Li et al., 2014), career adaptability (Hou, Wu, & Liu, 2014; Tolentino et al., 2014), voice behaviour (Xie, Chu, Zhang, & Huang, 2014), self-esteem and the ability to work independently (Cai et al., 2015). In short, proactive personality makes employees more likely to produce the positive outcomes that benefit their organizations.

2.2.1. Proactive personality and meaning of work

Employees with a proactive personality actively try to reorganize their work life (Campbell, 2000) because they take the initiative instead of giving up in the face of challenges (Liguori, McLarty, & Muldoon, 2013). Because such individuals are open to new work experiences, they gravitate to jobs and organizations that provide a high level of meaning of work. These individuals will therefore take risks if necessary to find new jobs aligned with their personality traits (Bergeron, Schroeder, & Martinez, 2014). Thus, employees who work in hotels and have a proactive personality will attach great value to the meaning of work, which leads to the following hypothesis:

H2. Proactive personality increases meaning of work.

2.3. Meaning of work

Work is an important part of modern life (Baumeister, 1991; Brown, 1996; Wrzesniewski, 2003) and individuals attribute significant meaning to this activity on which they spend most of their time (Baumeister, 1991). Accordingly, people want their work to entail more than earning money or spending time; more than previously, people are more interested in the time they spend at work (Steger, Dik, & Duffy, 2012). It is therefore impossible to discuss the meaning of life for an individual without knowing exactly what their work means for them (Baumeister, 1991).

There are many definitions of meaning of work in the literature. According to Hackman and Oldham (1980), it is related to finding work meaningful, valuable and worth spending time on. Arnoux-Nicolas, Sovet, Lhotellier, Di Fabio, and Bernaud (2016) include three components in their definition: meaning of life and work experience, direction of life and employee future plans, and

employees' perceptions of themselves and their environments. According to Rosso, Dekas, and Wrzesniewski (2010), meaning of work consists of four resources: self-esteem (values, motivation and beliefs), work environment (work design, mission, financial conditions, non-business environment and national culture), spiritual life (spirituality and sacred calling) and others (colleagues, leaders, groups, society and family) (Rosso et al., 2010).

Meaning of work has also been defined as one of the four dimensions of perceived psychological empowerment (meaning, competence, self-determination and impact) (Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Conger and Kanungo (1998) define psychological empowerment itself as the delegation of authority to employees by managers. The significant dimension of empowerment relates to agreement between the organization's needs and the employees' values, beliefs and behaviours, as well as the way employees evaluate their work in terms of their own ideas and standards (Ergeneli, Ari, & Metin, 2007). Lashley (2001) argues that empowered employees are committed to organizational success and use their full range of talents and experience to achieve organizational goals. Psychological empowerment also increases employee performance and organizational support (Chow, Lo, Sha, & Hong, 2006). Ergeneli et al. (2007) emphasize that empowered employees are better at meeting customer needs and caring about dissatisfied customers. In their job characteristics framework, Hackman and Oldham (1980) define meaningfulness in terms of meaningfulness of work, competence as knowledge and skills, and self-determination as autonomy.

An active orientation is reflected more than a passive orientation in the four dimensions of work roles (Spreitzer, 1995). Of these, the meaning dimension is defined as the value of a work goal judged in relation to an individual's own ideas and ideals (Arslantaş & Dursun, 2008; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990); that is, in terms of the intrinsic importance employees accord to their jobs (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990; Zhang & Bartol, 2010).

According to Lashley (2001), meaningfulness of work improves job performance and productivity. Britt, Adler, and Bartone (2001) argue that work meaningfulness depends on enriching work and matching work with the employee's personality. Similarly, for Wang and Lee (2009), the meaning of work depends on a concordance between job and employee.

2.3.1. Meaning of work and employee creativity

Creativity involves producing new and useful ideas (Joo, Yang, & Mclean, 2014). Employees work more effectively and creatively when they experience positive mood, which increases productivity and efficiency (Liu, 2016). The creativity of employees in an organization depends significantly on two different factors: career satisfaction and perceived self-esteem (Kim et al., 2009). Creativity is also related to job satisfaction. More creative workers tend to be more satisfied with their work (Tongchaiprasit & Ariyabuddhiphongs, 2016). In environments that reduce uncertainty and increase trust, there is a positive relationship between strengthening leadership and creativity (Zhang & Zhou, 2014). This indicates that an integrated strategy is needed that combines cultural change, leadership development and redesign of work to increase employee creativity (Joo et al., 2014). There is also a strong positive relationship between creativity and innovation (Saroghi et al., 2015).

In contrast with goods production, the service sector often requires employees to interact with consumers face-to-face; hence developing a strong brand in this sector depends on employees' interactions with customers (Ekinici & Dawes, 2009). Employees who perform tasks involving customers are more creative than employees who perform other complex tasks. However, concentrating on the more routine tasks of back office workers is believed to hinder creativity (Wang, Tsai, & Tsai, 2014). Additionally,

fostering creativity in services often faces challenges due to the intangible nature of service delivery. It is therefore accepted that the service sector should conceptualize creativity across all areas and develop new approaches to promoting it (Lin & Baum, 2016).

Service employees may find it difficult to develop creative ideas when interacting with customers face-to-face due insufficient cognitive resources to develop creative skills for their work area (Geng, Liu, Liu, & Feng, 2014). A meaningful workplace is one where an individual is supported, encouraged and enabled to achieve an integrated integrity (Dimitrov, 2012). According to Jaramillo, Mulki, and Boles (2013), jobs that are interesting and creative, and offer opportunities for developing and learning are preferred to jobs that only offer the opportunity to earn money.

While values, beliefs and attitudes do not change much, behaviour changes according to circumstances. Here, 'meaning' is considered as the sum of the relations between variables that affect the behaviour of individuals (Misumi, 1990). From a survey conducted in several countries, Kuchinke et al. (2011) found similar job meaning dimensions. Overall, meaning is significantly and positively related to engagement and material well-being (Soane et al., 2013). Additionally, people with the ability to create good meaning can use knowledge management processes effectively and improve their creativity (Yeh & Lin, 2015).

Thus, if organizations in the hospitality industry can create meaningful work conditions they can not only reduce employee turnover but also increase employee satisfaction and gain a competitive market advantage through customer loyalty (Dimitrov, 2012). The main aim of hotel managers is to ensure that customers are satisfied with the services provided, especially accommodation, catering and entertainment. This leads to the following hypothesis (see also Fig. 1).

H3. Work meaningfulness increases employee creativity.

2.4. Mediating effects on employee creativity

Hotel managers demand enthusiastic and proactive employees. If a hotel manager can manage the environmental factors supporting the employee creativity, this will increase the intrinsic motivation of employees and their creativity (Hornig et al., 2016). Employees with a proactive personality are more enthusiastic about improving their job performance through their own efforts, contacts with supervisors and feedback (Li et al., 2014). Proactive employees are also more determined about identifying opportunities and reaching their goals without feeling restricted by internal or external constraints (Presbitero, 2015).

Intrinsic motivation directly increases employee creativity whereas extrinsic motivation only increases it if employees perceive their jobs as meaningful (Yoon, Sung, & Choi, 2015). That is, when employees perceive their jobs are meaningful then their

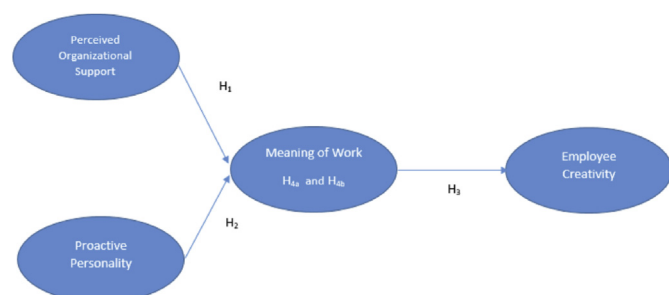


Fig. 1. The conceptual framework.

intrinsic motivation and creativity also increase. Meaningfulness is regarded as an important component of intrinsic motivation (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Additionally, aspects of psychological empowerment (overall meaning, competence, self-determination and impact) correlate positively and significantly with intrinsic work motivation (Fook et al., 2011). The purpose of psychological empowerment is to take advantage of the employees' talents, abilities and creativity.

According to Locke (2000), sufficiently competent and motivated employees can achieve their organizations' goals and perform as required without managerial supervision. Although employee motivation is increased by managerial psychological empowerment, if managers are too directive and controlling then employee motivation decreases (Morgan, 1967). Thus, as long as an organization's top management delegate authority, those subordinates who wish to benefit from these opportunities will try harder to cooperate with management (Eren, 2008).

Psychological empowerment increases the employees' desire to be involved creatively (Zhang & Bartol, 2010). Employees who find their job meaningful and important, and who believe that they are capable, feel creative, which demonstrates that meaning of work as a dimension of psychological empowerment directly affects employee creativity (Brown et al., 2000; Sun, Zhang, Qi, & Chen, 2012; Çavuş & Akgemci, 2008).

Employees who feel restricted by the organization and perceive that their creativity is unsupported cannot achieve their creativity potential (Diliello et al., 2011). According to Akgündüz (2013), internally motivated individuals generate more creative ideas, exhibit attitudes and behaviours that increase customer satisfaction, and show positive behaviours for achieving organizational goals. According to Shalley, Zhou, and Oldham (2004), the complex structure of the job and the support employees receive from managers and the organization increase employee creativity, which is also supported by several empirical studies (Diliello et al., 2011; Ibrahim et al., 2016; Zhou & George, 2001). Given these findings, the following hypotheses can be suggested:

H4a. Meaning of work mediates the positive influence of perceived organizational support on employee creativity.

H4b. Meaning of work mediates the positive influence of proactive personality on employee creativity.

3. Research methodology

3.1. Sample and data collection

The sample consisted of workers employed in 5-star hotels in Izmir city centre, Turkey, during 2016. Deliberate sampling was used to recruit participants. Because business hotels operate throughout the year and their employees are permanent rather than seasonal, they were chosen as the site for data collection. Accordingly, this study targeted six 5-star hotels serving business tourists. During data collection, we first e-mailed the questionnaire to the hotels' human resources departments. Four hotels accepted to participate while two declined. Nevertheless, sufficient answers were received from employees to answer our research questions.

Since there was no certain information about the number of employees working in these six business hotels, the number was estimated based on bed numbers. The six hotels have 3240 beds in total (turizm.gov.tr) while the average ratio of employees per bed is 0.80 in Turkey (Çakıcı & Yılmaz, 2012). Based on this ratio, the study universe was 2592 employees, of which 335 employees were selected for the sample. The researchers visited the hotels that agreed to participate in this research and 286 questionnaires were

collected. Of these, 12 responses were excluded due to disqualification (n = 4) or incompleteness (n = 8), leaving 274 questionnaires to be coded and analysed. Regarding the participants (see Table 1), 63% were male and 61% single. A clear majority (78%) had a high school or university degree while 66% were 36 years old or above. Regarding work experience, 76% had five years of experience or less and 34% worked in F&B (food and beverage) departments.

3.2. Instrument development

The instrument included following five sections: perceived organizational support (POS), proactive personality, meaning of work, employee creativity and respondent demographics. Questions were originally developed in English before translation into Turkish. Back-translation (Van de Vijver & Hambleton, 1996) was used to translate the Turkish version of the questionnaire to English by a bilingual scholar to ensure to content validity.

A five-point Likert-type scale (from 1-Strongly Disagree to 5-Strongly Agree) was used to measure items in four factors: POS, proactive personality, meaning of work and employee creativity.

POS was measured by 8 items (α = 0.97) from Eisenberger et al. (1986). A sample item is “The organisation really cares about my well-being”. The scale for Proactive Personality included ten items (α = 0.87) from Bateman and Crant (1993). A sample item is “Wherever I have been, I have been a powerful force for constructive change”.

The employees’ creativity scale included four items (α = 0.87) from Jaiswal and Dhar (2015). A sample item is “I seek new ideas and ways to solve problems”. Meaning of work included three-items (α = 0.85) from Spreitzer (1995). A sample item is “My job activities are personally meaningful to me”. All questionnaire items are presented in Table 2.

3.3. Data analysis

Frequency analysis was used to determine the demographic characteristics of the sample, following the two-stage data analysis using the Lisrel program recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). Explanatory factor analysis was used to test the construct validity of the measurement model while structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to test the hypotheses and validity of the model.

4. Findings

4.1. Measurement model

In the first confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), the t values of one item from the POS scale and two items from the Proactive Personality Traits Scale were below 1.96 so they were omitted from further analysis, and CFA was repeated. In the repeated CFA, the t

values of the observed variables ranged between 10.45 and 17.97 while the standardized analysis values ranged between 0.61 and 0.88. The Chi-square value was 466.21 (df = 203, RMSEA (Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation) = 0.069). Goodness of fit was as follows: NFI (Normed Fit Index) = 0.95, NNFI (Non-Normed Fit Index) = 0.97, CFI (Comparative Fit Index) = 0.97, IFI = 0.97, GFI (Goodness Fit Index) = 0.87 and AGFI (Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index) = 0.83. Composite construct reliability (CCR) estimates ranged between 0.75 and 0.89 while the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) exceeded the recommended 0.50 threshold. Cronbach’s Alpha values ranged from 0.87 to 0.90. All variable means, standard deviations and correlations are presented in Table 3.

4.2. Structural equation modelling

SEM was used to test the hypotheses (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). Fig. 2 shows that the estimated model and the estimated standardized path coefficient showed a good bias for testing the hypothesized paths. The χ² statistic indicated an adequate fit with the data (χ² = 466.21, df = 203, p < 0.001, χ²/df = 2.30, NFI = 0.95, CFI = 0.97, GFI = 0.87, AGFI = 0.83, RMSEA = 0.069).

The values for the path estimates are shown in Fig. 2. Perceived organizational support significantly increases work meaningfulness (β = 0.22, t = 4.46, p < 0.001), which supports Hypothesis 1. The expected relationship between proactive personality and work meaning (Hypothesis 2) was also supported by the positive standardized path coefficient (β = 0.74, t = 12.43, p < 0.001). In addition, employees’ perceptions of the meaningfulness of work increased their creativity (β = 0.34, t = 2.87, p < 0.05), which supports Hypothesis 3.

SEM analyses were then conducted to test the mediating effects of meaning of work on the influence of perceived organizational support and proactive personality on creativity (H4a, H4b). Baron and Kenny’s (1986) test for mediation effects was used as follows: (1) the first condition was satisfied if the independent variables (perceived organizational support and proactive personality) were significantly correlated with the dependent variable (employee creativity); (2) the second condition was satisfied if the independent variables (perceived organizational support and proactive personality) were significantly correlated with the mediator (meaning of work); (3) the third condition was satisfied if the independent variables (perceived organizational support and proactive personality) and the mediator (meaning of work) were significantly correlated with the dependent variable (employee creativity).

Proactive personality characteristics had a significant path coefficient with employee creativity (β = 0.76, t = 12.90, p < 0.001). Similarly, perceived organizational support had a significant path coefficient with employee creativity (β = 0.21, t = 4.52, p < 0.001).

In the full-mediation model, there was a significant coefficient

Table 1 Respondent characteristics.

Gender	n	%	Marital status	Age	n	%
Male	167	63	Married	35 Years and Under	87	34
Female	100	37	Single	36 Years and Above	169	66
Education			Department	Work Experience		
Primary Education	58	22	F&B	5 Years and Under	189	76
Secondary Education	74	28	Support services	6 Years and Above	61	24
Higher education (Bachelor's degree)	52	20	Front office			
Postgraduate education	82	30	Management			
			House keeping			
			Accounting-Finance			

Table 2
Reliability and confirmatory factor analysis properties.

Items	Loadings	t-values	AVE	CCR	Alpha
Employee Creativity			.63	0.80	.87
This subordinate identifies opportunities for new ways of dealing with work	0.75	13.83			
This subordinate seeks new ideas and ways to solve problems	0.82	15.76			
This subordinate generates novel but operable work-related ideas	0.77	14.49			
This subordinate demonstrates originality in his/her work	0.82	15.94			
Perceived Organizational Support			.52	.87	.90
The organisation values my contribution to its well-being.	0.71	13.18			
The organisation fails to appreciate any extra effort from me. (R)	0.83	16.39			
The organisation would ignore any complaint from me. (R)	0.82	16.24			
The organisation really cares about my well-being.	0.70	12.94			
Even if I did the best job possible, the organisation would fail to notice. (R)	0.60	10.56			
The organisation cares about my general satisfaction at work.	0.81	15.90			
The organisation shows very little concern for me. (R)	0.77	14.63			
The organisation takes pride in my accomplishments at work. ^a					
Proactive Personality			.53	.89	.90
I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve my life.	0.63	11.18			
Wherever I have been, I have been a powerful force for constructive change.	0.78	15.31			
Nothing is more exciting than seeing my ideas turn into reality.	0.61	10.45			
If I see something I don't like, I fix it.	0.78	14.87			
No matter what the odds, if I believe in something I will make it happen.	0.75	13.71			
I love being a champion for my ideas, even against others' opposition.	0.69	12.38			
I excel at identifying opportunities.	0.77	15.06			
I am always looking for better ways to do things.	0.75	15.52			
If I believe in an idea, no obstacle will prevent me from making it happen. ^a					
I can spot a good opportunity long before others can see it. ^a					
Work Meaning			.73	.75	.89
The work I do is very important to me.	0.88	17.97			
My job activities are personally meaningful to me.	0.82	16.10			
The work I do is meaningful to me.	0.86	17.43			

Not: AVE = Average Variance Extracted CCR=Composite Construct Reliability Alpha = Cronbach's Alpha ^a = Dropped during CFA.

Table 3
Correlation analysis.

Scale	Mean	SD	EC	POS	PP	MW
Employee Creativity (EC)	4.078	0.91	1			
Perceived Organizational Support (POS)	3.321	1.05	.36**	1		
Proactive Personality (PP)	4.056	0.83	.68**	.38**	1	
Meaning of Work (MW)	4.053	0.97	.68**	.50**	.82**	1

Note: **p < 0.01 SD=Standard Deviation.

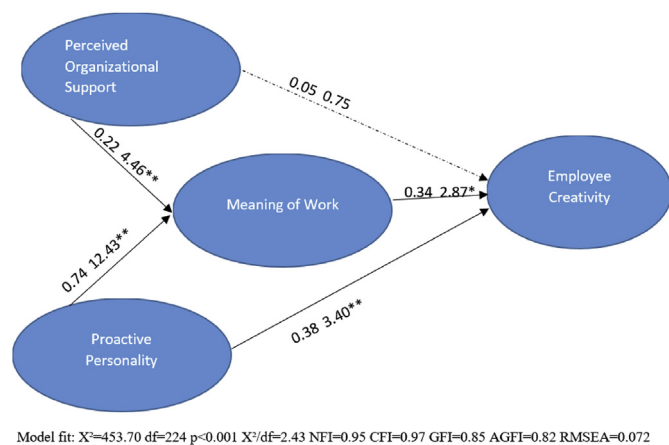


Fig. 2. Path results of structural model.

between proactive personality and meaning of work ($\beta = 0.76$, $t = 12.90$, $p < 0.001$). In addition, there was a significant coefficient between perceived organizational support and meaning of work

($\beta = 0.21$, $t = 4.52$, $p < 0.001$). Thus, these results conform to the first and second steps in Baron and Kenny's (1986) test for mediating effects.

According to the partial mediation model (see Table 4), perceived organizational support did not significantly influence employee creativity whereas perceived organizational support significantly affected it through the effects of work. This indicates that meaning of work partially mediates the effects of perceived organizational support on employee creativity, thereby partially supporting Hypothesis 4a.

According to the partial mediation model (see Table 4), proactive personality increased employee creativity ($\beta = .38$, $t = 3.40$). Moreover, proactive personality indirectly effected employee creativity through meaning of work ($0.74 \times 0.34 = 0.25$). However, the latter effect was smaller than the direct effect of proactive personality on employee creativity ($0.38 > 0.25$). In addition, the difference in the χ^2 values between the full-mediation model ($\chi^2_{(df=205)} = 479.09$) and the partial-mediation model ($\chi^2_{(df=203)} = 466.21$) was statistically significant ($\Delta \chi^2_{(\Delta df=2)} = 12.88$). Therefore, hypothesis H4b was supported. In other words, in this hypothesized (H4b) model, the meaning of work fully mediated the relationship between proactive personality and employee creativity.

Table 4
Results of SEM.

Stated as alternative hypothesis		Direct effects model		Full mediation model		Partial mediation model (research model)	
		β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value
Perceived Organizational Support	Meaning of Work	.13	2.10*	.21	4.52***	.22	4.46***
Proactive Personality	Meaning of Work	.63	8.75***	.76	12.90***	.74	12.43***
Meaning of Work	Employee Creativity			.71	10.30***	.34	2.87**
Perceived Organizational Support	Employee Creativity					.05	.75
Proactive Personality	Employee Creativity					.38	3.40***
X ²		359.20		479.09		466.21	
df		149		205		203	
X ² /df		2.41		2.38		2.30	
RMSEA		0.072		0.70		0.069	
NFI		0.95		.95		.95	
CFI		0.97		.97		.97	
GFI		0.88		.86		.87	
AGFI		0.84		.83		.83	

Note: Standardized estimate = β -value; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; NFI=Normed Fit Index; CFI=Comparative Fit Index; GFI = Goodness of Fit Index; AGFI = Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index; *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001.

5. Discussion

This study, based on social exchange theory, was conducted with employees of business hotels to investigate the mediator role of meaning of work in the effect of POS and proactive personality on employee creativity. The first hypothesis, that the POS would increase employees' meaning of work, was supported. The study's second hypothesis, which predicted that proactive personality would increase employees' meaning of work, was also supported. In other words, employees who seize opportunities, take initiatives, and take action experience their work as more meaningful. The third hypothesis, that employees' perceived meaning of work would increase their creativity, was also supported. The fourth hypothesis, that meaning of work mediates the effect of POS and proactive personality on employee creativity, was fully supported for POS and partially supported for proactive personality.

5.1. Theoretical contributions

This study tested the assertions of Gouldner (1960) and Blau (1964) that people help those who help them and that people do not harm those who help them. Goldner and Blau argue that, in forming social relations, people respond to those who behave well towards them in a similar way.

Our results show that POS does indeed strengthen employees' meaning of work, confirming earlier findings from Bufuguin, Dipetro, Orłowski, and Parlow (2017) and Garg and Dhar (2014). Our study showed that employees who receive organizational support consider their work to be more meaningful.

In this study of hotel businesses, it was hypothesized that employees who feel their organization is doing them a favour by providing support will show more positive attitudes and behaviours towards their organizations in order to respond in turn. One of these positive behaviours is employee creativity.

This study also showed that both POS and proactive personality traits increase work meaningfulness, which confirms earlier work by Kanten and Ulker (2012). The results also confirm the argument (Karatepe, 2009; Tian, Zhang, & Zou, 2014) that employees with proactive personality traits seek different work experiences until they find a meaningful job while preferring to work in jobs that are valuable to them.

Our findings show that creativity increases as employees accept or appreciate that their work is meaningful. This suggests that if employees complete a task that is important and valuable to them,

they use their skills fully to be successful or further develop themselves in the job. At the same time, this result also proves that by assigning suitable tasks that match the qualifications of the employees, managers can encourage more creative behaviours, which confirms Oldham and Cummins (1996). Bono and Judge (2003) argue that individuals who think that there is concordance between their work and their individual goals, thereby developing self-harmony, have high motivation and satisfaction, and thus perform better. When the meaning of work is evaluated from this perspective, it suggests that the organization's vision and mission can enhance employee performance by establishing a bond between the work and personalities of employees.

Additionally, the mediating effect of meaning of work was partially supported by this study, thereby increasing our understanding of the way that POS increases employee creativity. Similarly, this study confirmed a positive relationship between meaning of work and POS. This mediating role of meaning of work indicates that employee perceptions regarding their work are important determinants of creative behaviours in hotel businesses. That is, hotel employees' creativity is also affected by individual factors such as perceived meaning of work.

Finally, these research findings support the argument that meaning of work plays a fully mediating role in the relationship between proactive personality and employee creativity. This study offered a comprehensive concept of the meaning of work and provided evidence that proactive personality leads to higher levels of employee creativity through the meaning of work. Moreover, this study proved that meaning of work is correlated with creativity, thereby supporting earlier findings from Cai et al. (2015) and Jiang (2017), who concluded that meaning of work has a mediating effect and that creative behaviours may differ depending on the environment.

5.2. Practical applications

These findings provide a framework for managers in the hotel industry in order to enhance employee creativity by affecting their POS and proactive personality traits through meaning of work. As the results indicate, POS increases the meaning of work so managers should emphasize that they support their employees. In order to increase POS of employees, managers could provide career development opportunities (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004), exchange of ideas (Wong & Ladkin, 2008), recognition, promotion, wage increases and better work conditions, such as job

security, autonomy and training (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

The fundamental motivations for employees to be involved in an organization are material and non-material gains. When they get the benefits that meet their expectations, the work becomes more meaningful. Therefore, it is important that managers create opportunities that increase employees' well-being and welfare. Managers should establish a fair wage system within the scope of material expectations; it may be useful to establish promotion conditions based on merit, such as non-material gains, and to ensure parallelism between personal abilities and tasks.

Depending on their performance, employees think that they are supported by their organizations even if they have won awards (Ahmed, Ismail, Amin, Ramzan, & Khan, 2012). Therefore, managers can reward successful employees and increase POS, thereby ensuring that work is meaningful and employee creativity is increased.

The findings of this study show that the creativity of the employees increases when the level of meaningfulness of work increases. The main reason for this is that employees strive to increase their creativity in order to contribute to their work significantly. For this reason, managers should implement practices that increase the importance and meaning that employees attach to their goals and duties. Managers can accomplish this by choosing participatory management, which can help employees use vertical and horizontal communication channels within the organization effectively and make them feel that they are a part of the team.

This study also shows that meaning of work enhances creativity of hotel employees. Therefore, by enhancing the employees' meaning of work, managers can improve their creativity. To increase the meaning of work, managers should share knowledge and authority with employees and provide feedback on their performance (Robbins, Crino, & Fredendall, 2002). In addition, involving employees in decision making, giving them space to manage their tasks and determining aims that can motivate employees can also increase the meaning of work (Luthans, 2000).

Personality is influential in people's assessment of events and situations. This research shows that proactive people find work in hotel business meaningful. As employees who find work meaningful have high levels of creativity, managers should find ways to benefit from employees with proactive personality more effectively within the organization. In order to ensure that they display proactive personality behaviours, managers should provide employees with theoretical and practical training opportunities about decision-making, crisis management, team work and communication.

Since meaning of work fully mediates the relationship between proactive personality and employee creativity, hotel managers should aim to directly increase employees' meaning of work and proactive personality traits to increase employee creativity. By increasing the meaning of work for employees, managers can increase their creativity. In order to increase meaning of work, hotel managers should increase the meaning that employees place on their jobs, goals and duties, for example by including employees in decision-making processes and taking their individual requests regarding the work into consideration.

In this study, meaning of work partially mediated the effect of POS on employee creativity. In hotel businesses, several factors may lead employees who perceive that they are supported by their organization to display creativity behaviour, with meaning of work being one of the most important. Businesses can therefore take several measures to enhance the meaning of work, such as rewarding employees' individual contributions, making tasks more appealing or connecting tasks with each other. Hotel managers can benefit from these strategies to increase employee creativity and perceived organizational support, and strengthen the meaning of work.

5.3. Limitations and future research

There are several limitations to this study. First, it is difficult to generalize the findings as data collection was limited to 5-star hotels one city in Turkey. Further studies can therefore explore other types of hotels, such as resorts and boutique hotels, and in different cities (Antalya, Istanbul or Ankara) or other countries. Thus, the findings from such studies could then be generalized, allowing comparisons to be made between different regions and hotel types. Secondly, the sample size was only 274 employees so the results may differ with larger samples. Future research can therefore include larger samples. Finally, this study only investigated organization support perceptions and employee creativity from the perspective of employees. Future studies could investigate employees' creative behaviours and activities supporting fellow employees from the perspective of managers.

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