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Transformational leadership and restaurant employees customer-oriented behaviours

The mediating role of organizational social capital and work engagement

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to propose and test a sequential mediation model in which transformational leadership engenders organizational social capital (OSC), which, in turn, enhances customer-oriented behaviours through work engagement.

Design methodology approach – The study's model was tested using a sample of 229 floor staff from 23 casual dining restaurants in the UK. Multiple source data were used where transformational leadership, OSC and work engagement were rated by employees, while employees' customer-oriented behaviours were rated by supervisors.

Findings – The results of generalized multilevel structural equation modeling provided support for the proposed model and revealed that OSC and work engagement sequentially mediate the link between transformational leadership and customer-oriented behaviours.

Originality value – The study addresses calls for research on the link between leadership and customer-oriented behaviours and the potential mechanisms through which this relationship may take place.

Keywords Transformational leadership, Customer-oriented behaviours, Organizational social capital, Work engagement, Casual dining restaurants

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Customer-oriented behaviours are the useful behaviours of employees directed towards organizational customers (Bettencourt and Brown, 1997). Such behaviours promote more effective service delivery, enhance customer satisfaction and help the organization fulfil the changing needs of customers (Bettencourt *et al.*, 2001; Tang and Tang, 2012; Teng and Barrows, 2009). In the recent years, customer-oriented behaviours have gained increased attention by scholars (Teng and Barrows, 2009). However, the effect of leadership on these behaviours is still "inconclusive" and the process through which leadership behaviours could influence customer-oriented behaviours is still "ambiguous" (Auh *et al.*, 2014, p. 558,559). Accordingly, this study examines the relationship between transformational leadership and customer-oriented behaviours, and sheds light on the potential mechanisms through which this relationship may take place.

Transformational leadership is generally regarded as the "most effective" form of leadership (van Knippenberg and Sitkin, 2013, p. 2). Because of its effectiveness, this leadership style has gained more attention by scholars than any other leadership style (Chuang *et al.*, 2012;

Kovjanic *et al.*, 2012). Prior studies have consistently revealed that transformational leadership encourages employees to "go the extra mile", and motivates them to display behaviours that are beneficial to the organization and its stakeholders (Bottomley *et al.*, 2016, p. 390). Drawing on social learning theory (Bandura, 1986) and work engagement theories (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008; Kahn, 1990), this study proposes that transformational leadership creates organizational social capital (OSC) which, in turn, enhances customer-oriented behaviours through work engagement. Figure 1 presents this study's conceptual model.

By examining the suggested model, this study contributes to the literature in a number of ways. First, even though several studies have tested the processes through which transformational leadership enhances positive employee outcomes, there are still calls for more research that investigates the mediators of the link between transformational leadership and beneficial work behaviours (Aryee *et al.*, 2012; Kovjanic *et al.*, 2012). This is mainly because, as argued by Yukl (1998, p. 328), there could be "a variety of different influence processes through which transformational leaders influence followers". This study responds to these calls and illuminates the processes through which transformational leadership enhances employee customer-oriented behaviours.

Second, this study contributes to the OSC literature. OSC can be viewed as a resource that reflects the character of social relationships within the organization (Leana and Van Buren, 1999). In spite of its benefits to both the organization and its members, very little attention has been directed to how OSC could be fostered (Chuang *et al.*, 2013; Mostafa and Bottomley, 2018; Parzefall and Kuppelwieser, 2012; Pastoriza *et al.*, 2008). Particularly, there have been calls for research on "how individual managerial behaviours could facilitate social capital development" (Pastoriza *et al.*, 2008, p. 330). Therefore, by testing the role of transformational leadership behaviours on social capital formation, this study extends prior OSC research and provides managers in the hospitality industry with guidance on enhancing OSC in organizations.

This study also contributes to the literature on the association between transformational leadership and work engagement. Work engagement represents a work-related state of mind that reflects high degrees of intrinsic motivation (Salanova and Schaufeli, 2008). Even though previous studies have shown that transformational leadership is an important predictor of work engagement, there are calls for research on the potential underlying mechanisms through which this relationship takes place (Aryee *et al.*, 2012; Besieux *et al.*, 2015; Ghadi *et al.*, 2013). As concluded by Besieux *et al.* (2015, p. 13), the link between transformational leadership and work engagement is "paved with explanatory mechanisms" that could and need to be addressed. The present study, therefore, contributes to research in this area by testing the mediating role of social capital on the link between transformational leadership behaviour and employee work engagement.

Finally, in spite of the vital role played by frontline employees for superior service delivery, very little attention has been paid by scholars to the predictors and outcomes of work engagement in frontline service jobs (Karatepe, 2011, 2013a; Slåtten and Mehmetoglu, 2011). As stated by Karatepe (2013a, p. 133), "empirical research pertaining to the antecedents and consequences of work engagement in frontline service jobs is still scarce". The present study fills this void by testing the proposed relationships using a sample of floor staff in casual dining restaurants in the UK.
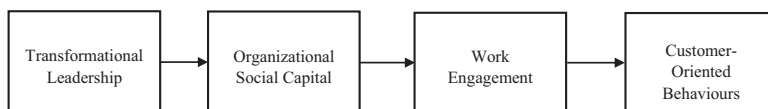
Figure 1.
Conceptual model

Organizational social capital as a mediator of the transformational leadership–work engagement link

Transformational leadership is mostly conceptualized as a group of interconnected behaviours comprising idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1985). *Idealized influence* involves displaying respect and trust to followers and helping them develop pride in the organization. *Inspirational motivation* involves articulating an appealing vision for the future and energizing subordinates to undertake challenging tasks and achieve purposeful goals. *Intellectual stimulation* involves encouraging subordinates to question previously held presumptions and think in new ways. *Individualized consideration* involves identifying and addressing followers' individual needs and helping them achieve their ambitions. Collectively, these behaviours inspire followers to act beyond self-serving interests and exceed their work expectations (Bass, 1985; Bass and Avolio, 1990).

Work engagement is a positive motivational work-related state that is comprised of three dimensions: vigour, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Schaufeli *et al.*, 2006). *Vigour* refers to experiencing high degrees of energy, persistence and mental resilience while working; *dedication* means feeling enthusiastic about work and having a sense of pride in it; and *absorption* involves being concentrated and deeply engrossed in work (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004).

Transformational leadership is believed to contribute to work engagement because of its inspirational appeal and motivational power (Tims *et al.*, 2011). Transformational leadership stimulates followers to "exceed their work expectations" (Bottomley *et al.*, 2016, p. 392). It satisfies followers' higher psychological needs and develops their potential (Kovjanic *et al.*, 2012; Kovjanic *et al.*, 2013; Zhu *et al.*, 2009). It also increases employees' level of identification with work and enhances their feeling that they are making significant contributions to the organization (Zhu *et al.*, 2009). All this is likely to lead to increased satisfaction and involvement with one's job and consequently higher levels of resilience, intensity, and enthusiasm while working. In line with these assumptions, previous studies have shown that transformational leadership is positively associated to work engagement (Aryee *et al.*, 2012; Tims *et al.*, 2011; Zhu *et al.*, 2009).

As mentioned before, research is needed on the mechanisms through which transformational leadership influences work engagement (Aryee *et al.*, 2012). This study proposes that the transformational leadership-work engagement relationship is mediated by OSC.

OSC is the sum of actual and potential resources rooted in relationships among individual members of the organization (Leana and Van Buren, 1999). Social capital consists of three dimensions which are highly interrelated: structural, relational, and cognitive (Leana and Pil, 2006; Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998). The *structural dimension* relates to the connections between organizational members, particularly the frequency with which they share information. This flow of information helps create a competitive advantage by facilitating individual learning and enhancing cooperation and mutual accountability (Leana and Pil, 2006). The *relational dimension* relates to the type of personal relationships individuals have developed with each other through a history of interactions (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998). One of its key features is the level of trust among organizational members (Leana and Van Buren, 1999). Trusting relations facilitate cooperative behaviours and allow the transmission of valuable information among members. Finally, the *cognitive dimension* relates to the shared vision for the organization and the common goals that are developed when organizational members interact. Shared vision and common goals help create a sense of common responsibility and collective action. As mentioned before, the three dimensions of social capital mutually reinforce each other, where people who share the

same values about work are likely to have good relations and regularly share information (Leana and Pil, 2006).

Bandura's (1986) social learning theory could help explain the linkage between transformational leadership and OSC. Social learning theory represents one of the most important models for understanding human behaviour. It mainly focuses on the learning of behaviours (i.e. how people learn behaviours) within social contexts. Social learning theory posits that individuals can learn expected behaviours via observing role models. The theory further postulates that models high in prestige and power are likely to have an influential effect on observers. This means that because of their power and status in organizations, leaders could influence followers through modelling (Brown et al., 2005).

Transformational leaders are known to be role models whom followers respect, trust and attempt to emulate (Carmeli et al., 2013). Because of their care, concern and fair treatment of subordinates, transformational leaders have good relationships with their subordinates. Such relationships are supported by the richness of communication, mutual trust and openness. Transformational leaders promote cooperation, group cohesion and friendship which, in turn, result in stronger ties between group members (Burke et al., 2006; Schaubroeck et al., 2007; Zohar and Tenne-Gazit, 2008). They also promote collective goals, common values and shared vision. Furthermore, they transform the "individualistic" self-concept of followers into a "group-oriented" identification with the objectives and mission of the group (Zohar and Tenne-Gazit, 2008, p. 748). As a result of all this, and in line with the assumptions of social learning theory, followers will develop high quality relationships with their co-workers. They will respect them, trust them, feel empathy towards them and offer them constructive feedback so as to successfully achieve group and organizational goals. These assumptions are in line with previous research findings which demonstrate that transformational leadership improves the quality and frequency of communication between employees, fosters trustful relationships between co-workers and enhances shared employee perceptions (Chen et al., 2016; Jung and Avolio, 2000; Men, 2014; Zohar and Tenne-Gazit, 2008). Hence, it is proposed that transformational leadership will contribute to the formation of social capital in the organization.

H1. Transformational leadership will be positively related to OSC.

High quality relationships within organizations, as indicated by social capital, have also been identified as one of the key predictors of work engagement (Chen et al., 2011; Liao et al., 2013; May et al., 2004). As proposed by Kahn's (1990) work engagement theory, good interpersonal relationships enhance work engagement by: (1) producing feelings of safety at work, where employees admit mistakes and expose their true selves to others without fearing any negative consequences; and (2) fostering a strong sense of belonging and enhancing perceptions of the meaningfulness of work.

In addition, as suggested by the job demands-resources model of work engagement, social support from colleagues represents a major job resource that helps employees become more engaged in work (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004).

Whilst previous studies have not examined the association between OSC and work engagement, there is some support fort the link between interpersonal relationships and employee attitudes within organizations. For instance, Ferres et al. (2004) found that trust relationships at the co-worker level were a significant predictor of constructive employee attitudes. Also, Liao et al. (2013) found that high quality relationships with co-workers positively predicted work engagement. Accordingly, it is hypothesized that:

H2. OSC will be positively related to work engagement.

Based on the above arguments it could be concluded that OSC could mediate the transformational leadership-work engagement relationship. Hence, the following hypothesis is also proposed:

H3. OSC will mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement.

Work engagement as a mediator of the organizational social capital–customer-oriented behaviours link

Customer-oriented behaviours refer to the specific behaviours demonstrated by employees during service encounters to increase customer satisfaction (Pimpakorn and Patterson, 2010). Such behaviours are generally viewed as a type of prosocial organizational behaviour directed towards customers (Bettencourt and Brown, 1997; Brief and Motowidlo, 1986). Employees displaying customer-oriented behaviours usually put customers' interests first but without excluding those of other stakeholders so as to help enhance organizational efficiency and effectiveness (Bellou and Andronikidis, 2008; Brief and Motowidlo, 1986).

Based on the social exchange view, it could be argued that OSC is positively related customer-oriented behaviours (Bolino *et al.*, 2002; Mostafa and Bottomley, 2018; Parzefall and Kuppelwieser, 2012). When employees perceive that the organization creates an environment in which they could trust, like and understand each other, they will be eager to "go beyond the call of duty" and more inclined to display behaviours that support the organization's social structure (Bolino *et al.*, 2002, p. 516).

This study proposes that the link between OSC and customer-oriented behaviours is mediated by work engagement. Engaged employees are believed to be "service-minded and client-oriented" in work (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008, p. 214). Two reasons may help explain why employees with high work engagement are likely to display customer-oriented behaviours. First, employees engaged at work usually experience positive feelings such as joy, happiness and enthusiasm. Such emotions cause individuals to be more creative, outgoing, empathetic and helpful to others (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008; Shantz *et al.*, 2013). Second, engaged employees often experience good physical and mental health (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). This enables them to perform their jobs well and display proactive prosocial behaviours that help contribute to organizational success (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008; Karatepe, 2013a; Salanova and Schaufeli, 2008).

Prior research findings provide support for these assumptions and suggest that work engagement is positively linked to behaviours that are not required formally as part of the job but facilitate the psychological and social contexts of the organization such as customer-oriented behaviours (Christian *et al.*, 2011; Karatepe, 2011, 2013a; Shantz *et al.*, 2013). Accordingly, it could be proposed that:

H4. Work engagement will be positively related to customer-oriented behaviours.

H5. Work engagement will mediate the relationship between OSC and customer-oriented behaviours.

Method
Procedure and sample
Data for this study were collected from a sample of casual dining restaurants floor staff and their managers in the UK. Casual dining restaurants account for only 4 per cent of the total

foodservice market in the UK. However, such restaurants are increasing in popularity among UK consumers because they provide good food at a reasonable cost in a pleasant environment. Convenience sampling was used and restaurants were included based on their accessibility. However, this means that the results of this study are not as representative as results based on random sampling.

Two different questionnaires were used. The first collected data on staff perceptions of their managers transformational leadership behaviours, OSC and work engagement, while the second collected data about the floor managers' perceptions of their employees' customer service behaviours.

Thirty restaurants were contacted to take part in the study. In each of these restaurants, ten of the floor staff members were requested to complete the first questionnaire, and one floor manager was requested to complete the second questionnaire. Out of the 30 restaurants approached, 23 chose to participate. From 230 floor staff, 229 completed the questionnaires, giving an effective response rate of 76.33 per cent. Of the 229 respondents, 52.8 per cent were male, 32.7 per cent were under 20 years old, 59 per cent were between 20 and 30 years old and the remainder were above 30 years old. As regards to education, 64.6 per cent had a bachelor's degree, 10.5 per cent had a master's degree and 19.2 per cent had completed A Levels. As for the length of service in the restaurants, 93.9 per cent had worked for less than five years in their restaurants and the remainder had worked for more than five years.

Measures

Responses to all the items in the questionnaire were on a 7-point Likert scale wherein 1 = "Strongly disagree" and 7 = "Strongly agree."

Transformational leadership. Fifteen items developed by Podsakoff *et al.* (1990) were used in this study to measure the different dimensions of transformational leadership behaviour. Sample items are "My floor manager leads by "doing" rather than simply by "telling"" (idealized influence), "My floor manager inspires others with his plans for the future" (inspirational motivation), "My floor manager has stimulated me to think about old problems in new ways" (intellectual stimulation) and "My floor manager behaves in a manner that is thoughtful of my personal needs" (individualized consideration). Cronbach's alpha for the measures of the four transformational leadership dimensions ranged between 0.75 and 0.84.

Organizational social capital. Fifteen items from Leana and Pil (2006) were used to measure the three OSC dimensions (i.e. structural, relational, and cognitive dimensions). Sample items are "Waiting staff at this restaurant have no hidden agendas or issues" (the structural dimension), "I can rely on the waiting staff I work with in this restaurant" (the relational dimension) and "Waiting staff share the same ambitions and vision for the restaurant" (the cognitive dimension). Cronbach's alpha was 0.81 for the structural dimension, 0.87 for the relational dimension and 0.89 for the cognitive dimension.

Work engagement. Fifteen items from Schaufeli and Bakker (2003) were used to measure the three work engagement dimensions (i.e. vigour, dedication, and absorption). Sample items are "At work, I feel bursting with energy" (vigour), "My job inspires me" (dedication) and "It is difficult to detach myself from my job" (absorption). The alpha coefficient was 0.87, 0.85 and 0.81 for vigour, dedication and absorption respectively.

Customer-oriented behaviours. The 6-item scale developed by Peccei and Rosenthal (2001) was used to measure customer-oriented behaviours. A sample item is "This employee often goes out of he/her way to help customers." The alpha coefficient was 0.86.

Controls. Prior studies have shown that an employee's age and organizational tenure are likely to explain why frontline workers may vary in their levels of work engagement and

customer-oriented behaviours (Auh *et al.*, 2014; Liao *et al.*, 2013; Liaw *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, these variables were controlled for in the analysis to prevent potential alternative explanations for the findings (Carlson and Wu, 2012; Spector and Brannick, 2011).

Data analysis
The analysis was in two stages. In the first, the measurement model was validated, whereas in the second, because of the nested nature of the data, generalized multilevel structural equation modeling (GMSEM) in Stata was used to test the study's hypotheses (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988).

Measurement model validation
The sample size in relation to the measurement items was relatively small. Therefore, and to minimize estimation problems, item parcels were used as indicators of the latent variables in the study (Bandalos, 2002; Landis *et al.*, 2000). For the multidimensional constructs (transformational leadership, social capital and work engagement), parcels were formed by averaging the items measuring each dimension to keep explicit the multidimensional nature of each construct and maximize the parcels internal consistency (Little *et al.*, 2002). Accordingly, four parcels were created for transformational leadership, three were created for social capital and three for work engagement. This is in line with previous studies (Bottomley *et al.*, 2016; Karatepe, 2011; Kovjanic *et al.*, 2012; Leana and Pil, 2006; Li *et al.*, 2013; Salanova and Schaufeli, 2008) in which transformational leadership, OSC and work engagement were treated as higher order constructs.

Following the recommendations of Kishton and Widaman (1994), the parcels' internal reliability was assessed by Cronbach's alpha, and dimensionality was estimated by conducting an exploratory factor analysis (EFA). All the alpha values were between 0.75 and 0.89. Furthermore, one component only was extracted for each parcel and the variance explained percentage was greater than 57 per cent for all parcels. Accordingly, all parcels fulfil the minimum criteria for reliability and dimensionality.

For the unidimensional construct, customer-oriented behaviours, three parcels were created by averaging the highest loading items and the lowest loading items sequentially so as to generate balanced parcels and decrease the residual covariance between them (Little *et al.*, 2013).

Then, the discriminant validity of the constructs was assessed using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The comparative fit index (CFI), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) were used to evaluate model fit. A CFI value of 0.90 or more along with RMSEA and SRMR values of 0.08 or less suggest good fit (Byrne, 2010; Hu and Bentler, 1999; Williams *et al.*, 2009).

The fit of the hypothesized four-factor measurement model (transformational leadership, social capital, work engagement and customer-oriented behaviours) was good (x^2 (df = 77) = 185.88, $p < 0.01$; CFI = 0.930, RMSEA = 0.079 and SRMR= 0.049). Furthermore, as shown in Table I, the hypothesized four-factor model fitted the data significantly better than other plausible models with less factors such as a three-factor model in which work engagement and customer-oriented behaviours were combined into one factor ($\Delta x^2 = 403.37$, Δdf = 5, $p < 0.01$), another three-factor model in which social capital and work engagement were combined into one factor ($\Delta x^2 = 63.14$, Δdf = 5, $p < 0.01$), a two-factor model in which transformational leadership and social capital were combined into one factor and work engagement and customer-oriented behaviours were combined into another factor ($\Delta x^2 = 483.70$, Δdf = 9, $p < 0.01$), and a one-factor model in which all the variables were combined

Model	χ^2	df	$\Delta\chi^2$	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR
Four-factor Model	185.877	77	–	0.930	0.079	0.049
Three-factor Model: combined WE and COB	589.249	82	403.372**	0.674	0.165	0.173
Three-factor Model: combined OSC and WE	249.013	82	63.136**	0.893	0.095	0.058
Two-factor Model: combined TSFL and OSC, and combined WE and COB	669.573	86	483.696**	0.625	0.173	0.176
One-factor Model: combined all four constructs	683.761	89	497.884**	0.618	0.171	0.123

Table I.
Measurement models comparison

Notes: TSFL, transformational leadership; OSC, organizational social capital; WE, work engagement; COB, customer-oriented behaviours. The $\Delta\chi^2$ is in relation to model 1; ** $p < 0.01$

($\Delta x^2 = 497.884$, $\Delta df = 12$, $p < 0.01$). This supports the distinctiveness of the variables used in the conceptual model.

Common method bias

To lessen common method bias (CMB) concerns, a number of procedural steps was followed such as including data from multiple sources, assuring respondent anonymity and reducing item ambiguity (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003, 2012). Yet, because transformational leadership, OSC and work engagement were measured from the same source, the likelihood of CMB influencing the associations between variables remained. Therefore, CMB was tested for using the unmeasured latent method factor approach. This approach involved estimating a measurement model in which the items of transformational leadership, OSC and work engagement loaded on both their theoretical constructs and a common factor. This model provided an acceptable fit to the data [x^2 (df = 897) = 2,016.50, $p < 0.01$; CFI = 0.800, RMSEA = 0.074 and SRMR= 0.067]. However, the average variance extracted by the common factor was 0.28 which is less than the 0.50 threshold that has been suggested as indicative of the presence of method bias (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Hence, CMB is unlikely to be a serious concern in this study.

Descriptive statistics

The means, standard deviations, correlations among variables, square root of the average variance extracted estimates and the composite reliability estimates are presented in Table II. As argued by McCormack (1956), constructs could have very high correlations and still maintain distinct patterns of associations with other variables. Therefore, even though the results of the CFA showed that the study constructs are different and distinct, the zero-order correlations showed that they are correlated. As shown in Table II, consistent with the research hypotheses, the four main constructs (transformational leadership, OSC, work engagement and customer-oriented behaviours) were positively related. The correlations among the constructs are not more than 0.80, suggesting that multicollinearity is unlikely (Kline, 2005).

The table also shows that the correlation between OSC and work engagement was relatively high ($r = 0.78$, $p < 0.01$). Therefore, to provide additional evidence on the distinctiveness of the study constructs, the square root of the variance extracted estimate for all constructs was compared with the correlations between them (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

As Table II shows, the square root of the variance extracted for all constructs was more than the corresponding inter-construct correlations. This provides further evidence that all study constructs, including OSC and work engagement, are conceptually distinct from each other. Finally, all composite reliability estimates were higher than 0.75, which suggests that the internal consistency of the study constructs was also high (Bagozzi and Yi, 2012).

Hypotheses tests

As mentioned before, GMSEM in Stata was conducted to test the hypotheses so as to account for the nested nature of the data. The intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) for customer-oriented behaviours was only 0.04 and the F-value from the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was marginally significant (1.46, $p < 0.10$). This indicates that there is *some minor* between-group variance in terms of customer-oriented behaviours (Bliese, 2000). However, the ICC values for transformational leadership, OSC and work engagement were 0.14, 0.21 and 0.16 respectively, which suggests that multilevel structural equation modelling is appropriate for testing the study hypotheses (Muthén, 1997; Selig *et al.*, 2008). Figure 2 presents the results of testing the study's model.

As Figure 2 shows, transformational leadership was significantly and positively related to social capital ($\beta = 0.797$, $SE = 0.105$, $p < 0.01$). Thus, *H1* was supported. In addition, OSC was positively related to work engagement ($\beta = 0.757$, $SE = 0.133$, $p < 0.01$), providing support for *H2*. Moreover, work engagement was positively related to customer-oriented behaviours ($\beta = 0.315$, $SE = 0.152$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, *H4* also received support.
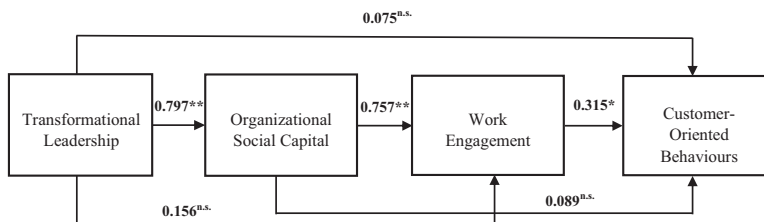
The direct paths from transformational leadership to both work engagement and customer-oriented behaviours, and from OSC to customer-oriented behaviours were non-significant. The indirect effects of transformational leadership on work engagement, and

Construct	1	2	3	4
1. Transformational Leadership	0.70 (0.79)			
2. OSC	0.69**	0.79, (0.83)		
3. Work Engagement	0.60**	0.78**	0.83, (0.87)	
4. Customer-oriented Behaviours	0.18*	0.27**	0.32**	0.84, (0.88)
Mean	5.40	5.33	5.15	5.53
SD	0.69	0.82	0.84	0.92

Notes: Sub-diagonal entries are the latent construct inter-correlations. The first entry on the diagonal is the average variance extracted square root and the second entry (in parentheses) is the composite reliability score; $^*p < 0.05$; $^{**}p < 0.01$

Table II.
Descriptive statistics, Intercorrelations and reliability estimates

Notes: $^* p < 0.05$; $^{**} p < 0.01$ (two-tailed)

Figure 2.
Generalized structural model results

OSC on customer-oriented behaviours were tested using the nonlinear combination of estimators command (nlcom) in GMSEM in Stata which estimates the magnitude of the indirect effect with respect to the standard error of the indirect effect (Hayes, 2009; Kelly and Updegraff, 2017). The indirect path of transformational leadership via social capital to work engagement was significantly different from zero ($\beta = 0.603$, $SE = 0.121$, $p < 0.01$), and the corresponding 95 per cent confidence interval (CI) ranged between 0.367 and 0.840. Similarly, the indirect path of OSC via work engagement to customer-oriented behaviours was significant ($\beta = 0.239$, $SE = 0.121$, $p < 0.05$), and the 95 per cent CI ranged between 0.001 and 0.476. These findings suggest that OSC mediates the transformational leadership-work engagement relationship and that work engagement mediates the OSC-customer-oriented behaviours relationship, providing support for *H3* and *H5*.

Discussion and conclusions

There have been calls for research on the relationship between transformational leadership and customer-oriented behaviours and the potential mechanisms through which this relationship may take place. This study tried to address these calls by testing a mediation model in which transformational leadership creates OSC, which, in turn, enhances customer-oriented behaviours through work engagement. Overall, the findings revealed that transformational leadership is indirectly linked to customer-oriented behaviours through the sequential mediation of OSC and employee work engagement.

Theoretical implications
Besides contributing to the literature on the relationship between transformational leadership and customer-oriented behaviours, this study also contributes to the OSC literature and the literature on the link between transformational leadership and work engagement. The findings revealed that OSC played a key role in the link between transformational leadership and work engagement as it mediated this relationship. Thus, transformational leadership is related to work engagement because of its influence on the development of social relationships within the organization. In fact, results revealed that almost 50 per cent of the variance in social capital was explained by transformational leadership, suggesting that transformational leadership is a strong predictor of OSC. This finding is consistent with social learning theory (Bandura, 1986) and confirms that transformational leaders are role models whom followers respect, trust and attempt to emulate (Carmeli *et al.*, 2013). It also provides some empirical support for prior research suggesting that transformational leadership enhances the quality and frequency of communication between employees, fosters trustful relationships between co-workers and enhances shared employee perceptions (Jung and Avolio, 2000; Men, 2014; Zohar and Tenne-Gazit, 2008). OSC, on the other hand, was positively and strongly related to work engagement ($\beta = 0.757$), lending support to Kahn's (1990) work engagement theory, which suggests that good interpersonal relationships enhance work engagement by generating feelings of safety at work and fostering a strong sense of belonging. Furthermore, this confirms one of the central presumptions of the job demands-resources model; that social support from colleagues represents a major job resource that helps employees become more engaged in work (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004).

Moreover, the findings revealed that work engagement mediated the link between OSC and customer-oriented behaviours. This suggests that the positive effects of high quality relationships among individual members of the organization on the useful behaviours of employees directed towards organizational customers occur through work engagement. The positive association between work engagement and customer-oriented behaviours confirms

that engaged employees are "service-minded and client-oriented" in work (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008; 214). However, it is important to note that this association was modest ($R^2 = 0.12$). Thus, despite the fact that work engagement is an important predictor of customer-oriented behaviours, it is not at all the main predictor. Previous studies have shown that factors such as psychological empowerment and organizational climate are also essential for the promotion of customer-oriented behaviours (Auh et al., 2014; Tang and Tang, 2012).

Practical implications
The findings of this research provide a number of practical implications. First, organizations in the hospitality industry need to nurture the presence of transformational leaders. Specifically, they should seek to hire supervisors who have the potential to display transformational leadership and promote staff with useful qualities and skills related to this leadership style (Chen and Wu, 2017; Patiar, and Wang, 2016). Organizations also need to put emphasis on the development of supervisors' transformational leadership skills. This could be achieved through coaching interventions and training programmes that help supervisors develop strategies on clarifying their visions and understanding how to offer constructive feedback (Bass and Avolio, 1990). In particular, action-oriented approaches such as role playing can be useful in this regard (Bass, 1999).

Second, organizations in the hospitality industry need to put emphasis on the development and nurturing of social relationships between employees. Specifically, an organizational culture that emphasizes teamwork, shared learning and collective work is viewed as essential for the creation and maintenance of social capital (Leana and Van Buren, 1999). This could be achieved through the implementation of employment practices that encourage stability in employees' relationships such as selecting employees with teamwork and interpersonal abilities and skills, providing new employees with orientation programmes that communicate organizational values and culture, organizing social and knowledge exchange events, investing in teamwork and relationship-building training programmes, job rotation and group compensation (Parzefall and Kuppelwieser, 2012; Pastoriza et al., 2008).

Finally, managers need to enhance employee levels of work engagement as this is more likely to result in behaviours that facilitate the psychological and social contexts of the organization such as customer-oriented behaviours. Besides social support, work engagement could also be enhanced by other factors such as task variety, autonomy, empowerment, the availability of learning opportunities and performance feedback (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008; Liu et al., 2017). Managers could also ensure high levels of engagement by recruiting and selecting individuals with an engaging personality such as those who are conscientious and self-efficacious (Liu and Cho, 2018). They could also use employee recognition programmes together with financial bonuses, profit sharing schemes and paid time off (Lu et al., 2016). Furthermore, maintaining a transparent, fair and equitable work environment with fair promotional and career opportunities is also viewed as important for the retention of engaged frontline employees in the hospitality industry (Karatepe, 2013b).

Limitations and future research directions
The study has a number of limitations that need to be considered. First, this study's cross-sectional design makes it hard to draw any conclusions about causality. Despite the fact that the study model was developed on the basis of theory and existing empirical research, studies using experimental or longitudinal designs are required to test causality. The second limitation pertains to common method bias. This study attempted to alleviate this limitation

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by including data from multiple sources (transformational leadership, OSC and work engagement were rated by employees, while employees customer-oriented behaviours were rated by supervisors). However, to circumvent concerns of common method bias, future research could collect data on the variables at different points of time. For instance, data on employee perceptions of transformational leadership could be collected at Time 1, and data on OSC perceptions and work engagement could be collected at Time 2. The final limitation is related to external validity. This study used a sample of floor staff in casual dining restaurants in the UK and used a convenience sample, which makes the generalizability of the findings limited. Future research in different contexts is required to determine the generalizability of the findings.

In spite of these limitations, this study has shown that both OSC and work engagement play vital roles in the relationship between transformational leadership and customer-oriented behaviours. The study also provides a better understanding of the connections between leadership behaviours, social relationships within organizations and employee outcomes in the hospitality industry.

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