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THE MODERATING ROLE OF A HOPEFUL CAREER STATE AND THE MEDIATING
ROLE OF WORK ENGAGEMENT IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOB DEMANDS
AND TURNOVER INTENTIONS OF HOTEL FRONT OFFICE EMPLOYEES IN THE
UNITED STATES

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by
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ABSTRACT

The strategic importance of employee turnover is well documented; it leads to losses of efficiency and effectiveness, higher expenses, decreasing service quality levels and loss of sustainable competitive advantage. Especially in times of low unemployment, turnover becomes one of the most pressing employee-related problems in organizations. The hospitality industry is characterized by its emphasis on customer service and therefore by the relatively large number of people it employs. At the same time, its wages and salaries tend to be lower than in other industries, especially at the hourly levels, and employee turnover rates are double the rates found in other industries. Whereas employee turnover is a big problem in the economy overall, it is especially pressing in the hospitality industry at the moment; finding ways to reduce turnover, both in theory and in practice, has taken on an increased sense of urgency.

Scholars have investigated the antecedents of turnover and found that the majority of them are mediated by employee work engagement: the higher employee work engagement, the lower intentions to leave their positions voluntarily are. Work engagement is affected by job demands: in general, the higher the job demands, the lower the work engagement. This study of hotel front-office employees investigated whether this relationship between job demands, work engagement and turnover intentions could be moderated by hopeful career state. It found that employees exhibiting a high level of hopeful career state and saw long-term career perspectives with the organization, exhibited higher levels of work engagement and were less inclined to leave their positions. Based on the results of this study, a next step would to determine how to improve employees' hopeful career state and for practitioners and scholars to create effective interventions.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Employee turnover has reached an all-time high, costing American companies over \$600 billion in 2018 (Mahan, Nelms, Bearden, & Pearce, 2019), thus making an organization's ability to reduce turnover a critical strategic imperative. To better address turnover and its causes, it is important for organizations to understand that employee turnover happens for a variety of reasons. These different reasons have led to turnover being categorized as preventable, unpreventable, or involuntary. Involuntary turnover means that an employee is fired for cause. Unpreventable turnover can be due to retirement, corporate downsizing, death, and the relocation of a partner or spouse. Preventable turnover is due to aspects of the workplace that cause an employee to seek better working conditions elsewhere. The Work Institute's 2019 Retention Report (Mahan, et al., 2019) provided the results of interviews with over 230,000 employees who left their positions in 2018. Seventy-seven percent of the reported turnover was due to preventable reasons such as career development, work-life balance, managerial behavior, or compensation/benefits (Mahan, et al., 2019). Of these reasons, career development was the most frequently reported at 21% of the total (Mahan, et al., 2019).

In March 2018, the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AH&LA) announced that it would pay select hotel industry workers to pursue two-year online associate degrees and that it would cover much of the cost of the workers' bachelor's degrees as well. This decision was made based on the assumption that strong educational backgrounds are necessary for line employees to secure higher-level employment opportunities. This initiative came partially in response to a boom in hotel demand and development, which has left the industry scrambling to

attract more workers in one of the tightest labor markets in decades. It was also in response to the issue of turnover in the hotel industry, which had crept to above 31% (Fuhrmans, 2018; Compdata, 2018). This is nearly double the average level of turnover, 15%, in other industries in the United States (Bares, 2017; Compdata, 2018). With this tuition reimbursement program, the hotel industry sought to attract and retain employees, and to develop a better-qualified talent pool from within the line employee ranks of the hotel companies (Fuhrmans, 2018). According to Fuhrmans (2018),

The hotel initiative is one of the most ambitious efforts to date: ten companies with a collective 50,000 employees—including Red Roof Inns, Wyndham Hotels and Resorts and New Castle Hotels & Resorts—are participating in the two-year pilot tuition reimbursement program with the AH&LA. (para 1)

Exiting employees represent a significant cost for their employers, given the investments that the employers have made in hiring, training, and certifying the employees over the course of their employment (Bares, 2017). The benefits to the employers who have invested in their employees disappear the moment the employees resign. In today's tight labor market, turnover costs are rising (Bares, 2017), and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the turnover of a single employee may cost the employer 33–40% of the exiting employee's total compensation, including wages and benefits. The Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) estimates that the average annual turnover rate across all industries in the United States will approach 19% in 2019, which means that turnover will remain an important challenge for the hotel industry.

Various human resource management (HRM) practices targeted at improving employees' experiences at work have been studied with respect to their impact on employee engagement and subsequently on turnover, job performance, and job satisfaction (Allen, Shore, & Beebe, 2003).

Job involvement, job design, employee autonomy, and co-worker and supervisor support have all been shown to lower employee turnover intentions and increase job performance and satisfaction (Barrick & Zimmerman, 2005).

Statement of the Problem

Low levels of employee work engagement and high rates of turnover persisted for nearly two decades before Gallup reported an increase in the level of work engagement, reaching 34% in 2018. This is the highest level of engagement that Gallup has reported since beginning to track the national figure in 2000. Despite this improvement, only one-third of the workforce is considered engaged; more than half of workers remain in the “not engaged” category. Employees who are “not engaged” are “not cognitively and emotionally connected to their work and workplace; meaning they will perform to minimum expectations and will quickly leave their company for a slightly better offer” (Gallup, 2018, p. 1). When the voluntary turnover level at an organization is high, the functioning of the organization (Lwendo & Isaacs, 2018) is affected; a study of government agencies found that high levels of voluntary turnover reduce productivity, efficiency, and service delivery (Pietersen, 2014).

The impact of voluntary turnover on service delivery is of particular interest in this study of front-office hotel employees. Service delivery is a key performance indicator in hospitality organizations and critical to their competitive positions (David, 2016). Employee turnover has been shown to have negative effects on consistency and the timely delivery of service (Lwendo & Isaacs, 2018). This is especially detrimental in the hospitality industry, where human resource managers are working harder than ever to attract and retain talent (Deloitte, 2018), yet turnover is more than double the average of other industries and “the corresponding impact on service delivery and competitive advantage is dramatic” (Rose, 2014, p. 1).

Research has also shown a negative correlation between job demands and quality customer service delivery; less stressed employees provide better customer service than more stressed ones (Varca, 1999). Customer service employees reporting chronic stress exhibit particularly poor job performance (Beehr, Jex, Stacy, & Murray, 2000). In general, work-related stress has been shown to result in employees who have a decreased quality of job performance (Gilboa, Shirom, Fried, & Cooper, 2008; Lepine, Podakoff, & Lepine, 2005), increased levels of exhaustion, a decreased ability to learn, more depressive symptoms, and feelings of hostility (Motowidlo, Packard, & Manning, 1986) and withdrawal (Gupta & Beehr, 1979).

Significance of the Study

Turnover intentions refer to the subjective probability that an individual will leave their organization; it is considered a reflection of the employee's attitude towards the organization (Cohen, Blake, & Goodman, 2016). Actual employee turnover represents an outflow of skills and may seriously hinder competitiveness, efficiency, and quality delivery (Campion, 1991). Both practitioners and researchers have sought to gain a better understanding of turnover. Practitioners do not want to lose employees to voluntary turnover because of the high costs incurred by organizations when employees quit (Deloitte, 2018; Lwendo & Isaacs, 2018). Scholars have studied turnover because of its link to motivation, which enhances the scholarly understanding of particular aspects of volitional behavior (Barrick & Zimmerman, 2005). Scholars and managers' consensus that turnover is largely detrimental to an organization (Barrick & Zimmerman, 2005; Lwendo & Isaacs, 2018) begs the question: Can human resource practices help prevent turnover? There is evidence that some turnover is avoidable (Barrick & Zimmerman, 2005). The 2018 Retention Report of the Work Institute, for example, found that 77% of employee turnover is preventable (Mahan, et al., 2019).

Both Allen, Shore, and Beebe (2003) and Barrick and Zimmerman (2005) have shown that supportive human resource practices play a crucial role in influencing employee attitudes and behavior. Allen et al. (2003) identified supportive human resource practices that contribute to employee development and enhanced employee retention, including selection policies, training, integrated performance appraisals, competitive rewards, and employee empowerment in decision-making. These practices lead employees to feel positive about their job performances, recognizing that they are able to do their best to satisfy customers and can successfully carry out their tasks. Barrick and Zimmerman (2005) and Allen et al. (2003) went so far as to conclude that supportive human resource practices are a unique source of customer satisfaction and can be a competitive advantage to an organization.

In the last decade, a relatively new approach to addressing the problem of turnover has been developed. This approach examines how organizations' career development practices impact employees' perceptions of organizational support, as well as serve to increase engagement and reduce turnover intentions (Tan, 2008). Research has shown that action-oriented hope is an important component of career development programming because of the positive influence that a hopeful mindset has on employees' perceptions of career development opportunities (Tan, 2008) within their current places of employment.

Hope action theory (HAT) represents a positive approach to career development (Yoon, Bailey, Amundson, & Niles, 2019, p. 7). Career development practices anchored in HAT seek to foster among employees a set of competencies, called hope-action competencies, such as hope, self-reflection, self-clarity, visioning, goal-setting, implementation, and adaptation (Yoon et al., 2019). Employees experiencing HAT based career development programming achieve a hopeful career state whereby they believe the work they are doing is important for their long-term career

prospects (Yoon et al., 2019). Thus far, the model has been shown to have an impact on hope and related positive workplace outcomes for internationally trained health professionals (Clarke, Amundson, Niles, & Yoon, 2018), unemployed individuals (Amundson, Goddard, Yoon, & Niles, 2018), and post-secondary students (Yoon et al., 2015). Practically speaking, if an efficacious and hopeful employee is a good performer, accepting significant challenges and expending the necessary effort to achieve their goals (Bandura, 1997), then the employee will also forecast obstacles and create plans to handle them (Luthans, Avolio, & Avery, 2007). Efficacious and hopeful employees tend not to abandon their goals when faced with setbacks and ultimately achieve their goals more often than employees who are not efficacious and hopeful (Riskind, 2006).

Given that supportive human resource practices can lower turnover, it is crucial that human resource practitioners have access to a wide variety of informed and valid approaches to reducing turnover. Therefore, if a hopeful career state can be shown to moderate the impact of job demands on engagement and subsequently turnover intentions, practitioners will have an informed strategy available to improve work outcomes for employees and thereby enhance the competitive positions of organizations (Barrick & Zimmerman, 2005; Allen et al., 2003). This study hopes to demonstrate that a hopeful career state heightens work engagement and reduces turnover intentions in demanding jobs, thereby offering a path forward for organizations struggling with high levels of turnover.

Purpose of the Study

Drawing on a sample of employees experiencing high job demands and stressors in front-office hotel positions, this study tests the moderating role of a hopeful career state on the relationship between job demands and work engagement, and subsequently turnover intentions.

The various relationships under investigation are depicted in the conceptual research framework (see Figure 1).

Conceptual Research Framework

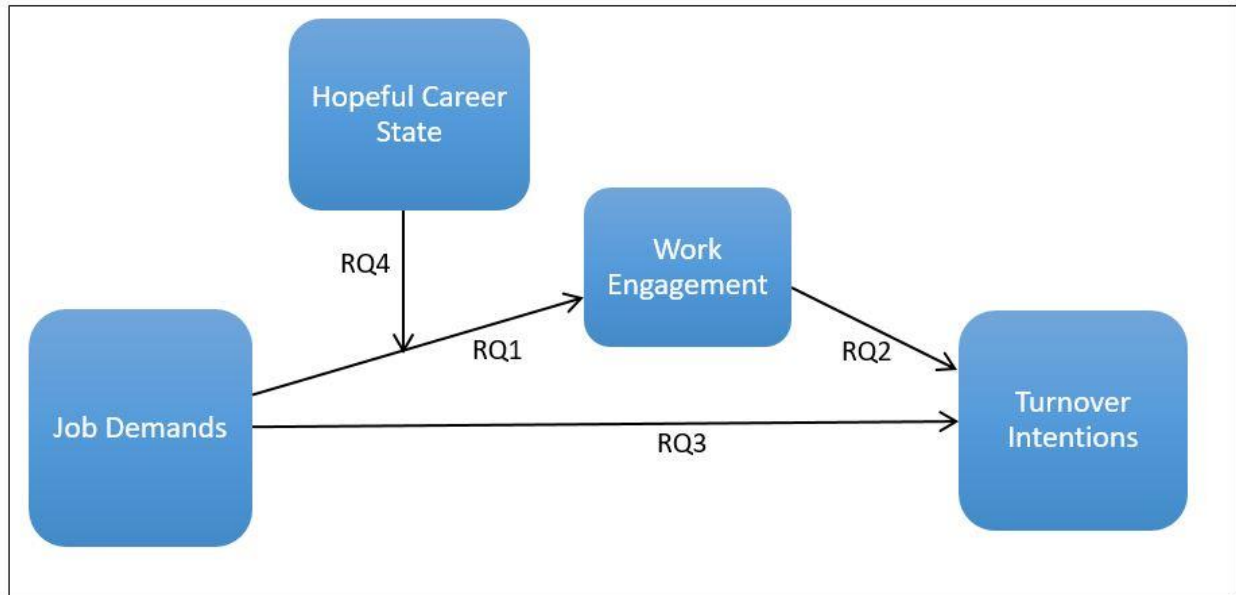


Figure 1. Conceptual Research Framework

Adapted from “Towards a model of work engagement” by A. B. Bakker & E. Demerouti (2008), *Career Development International*, 13, p. 218. Copyright 2008 by Emerald Group Publishing Limited. Reprinted with permission.

Research Questions

RQ 1. To what extent do Job Demands predict Work Engagement given the variables set in the conceptual model?

RQ 2. To what extent does Work Engagement predict Turnover Intentions given the variables set in the conceptual model?

RQ 3. To what extent do Job Demands affect Turnover Intentions given the variables set in the conceptual model?

RQ 4. To what extent does Hopeful Career State moderate the relationship between Job Demands and Work Engagement given the variables set in the conceptual model?

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A review of related literature indicates that hospitality jobs are demanding, which negatively affects work engagement and results in turnover that is higher than experienced by other industries. This understanding is fundamental to this study. To expand on this understanding, this study assessed whether a hopeful career state moderates the relationship between job demands and work engagement, leading to lower turnover, even in jobs with high demands. This chapter provides a summary of issues related to job demands, work engagement, turnover intentions, and hopeful career state, as well as the relationships among all of these variables, to provide a foundation for answering the study's research questions (Table 1).

Job Demands

This study proposed that a hopeful career state moderates the effects of job demands. Therefore, we must begin by understanding job demands and the mechanisms by which they influence workplace outcomes. This section discusses the definition of job demands, two prominent models of job demands, studies of job demands that indicate the utility of a moderator, and job demands in hospitality organizations.

Demands are things that have to be done (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Demands experienced on the job are characteristics of the work that tap energy, like workload, complex tasks, and conflicts (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018). Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) argued that job demands are those “physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological (i.e., cognitive or emotional) effort and are therefore associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs” (p. 296).

Table 1. *Research Questions and Major Studies*

| Research Question | Major Studies | Section Heading |
|---|---|---------------------|
| RQ 1: To what extent do Job Demands predict Work Engagement? | Karasek (1979); de Rijk, A. E., Le Blanc, P. M., Schaufeli, W. B., & de Jonge, J. (1998); Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Podsakoff, LePine, & LePine (2007); Salanova & Schaufeli (2008); Demerouti & Bakker, (2011); LePine, Zhang, Crawford, & Rich (2016) | Job Demands |
| RQ 2: To what extent does Work Engagement predict Turnover Intentions? | May, Gilson, & Harter (2004); Schaufeli & Bakker (2004); Riskind (2006); Saks (2006); Schaufeli & Salanova (2006); Macey & Snyder (2008); Demerouti & Cropanzano (2010); Albrecht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey, & Saks (2016) | Work Engagement |
| RQ 3: To what extent do Job Demands affect Turnover Intentions? | Campion (1991); Allen, Shore, & Griffeth (2003); Maertz & Griffeth (2004); Podsakoff, LePine, & LePine (2007) | Turnover Intentions |
| RQ 4: To what extent does Hopeful Career State moderate the relationship between Job Demands and Work Engagement? | Snyder, Sympson, Ybasco, Borders, Babyak, & Higgins (1996); Valle, Huebner, & Suldo (2006); Youseff & Luthans (2007); Deery & Jago (2009); Smith, Mills, Amundson, Niles, Yoon, & In (2014); Yoon, Bailey, Amundson, & Niles (2019) | Hope |

Other scholars have provided evidence that job demands such as high work pressure, emotional demands, work overload, role conflict, and role ambiguity may cause health problems (Lepine, Lepine, & Jackson, 2004), decreased quality of employee job performance (Podsakoff, LePine, & LePine, 2007), decreased employee ability to learn (Lepine, et al., 2016), depression and hostility (Motowidlo, Packard, & Manning, 1986).

Job Demands and Stressors

In the scholarly literature, we often find the terms “job demands” and “job stressors” are used interchangeably. It is thus important to clarify the definitions of the terms that are used in this study. In this study, stress is defined as the “physiological and psychological reaction, either consciously or subconsciously, to a perceived threat or undesirable condition beyond one’s immediate capacity to cope” (Cranwell-Ward, 1990, p. 285). Job demands and stressors are factors such as lack of control, long hours, heavy workload, insecurity, and lack of autonomy. In the workplace setting, stress is a reaction to the job demands or job stressors that are imposed on an employee (Karasek, 1979). As work stressors, job demands arise from physical work requirements (e.g., excessive workload and time constraints) and psychological aspects (e.g., repetitiveness) of a job (O’Neill & Davis, 2011). Job demands are not necessarily detrimental, but they are dynamic and can morph into stressors if meeting the demands requires such a high level of effort on the part of the employee that the employee fails to sufficiently recover from the demands and continue progressing (Meijman & Mulder, 1998). In other words, job demands become a problem only when they exceed an employee’s ability to effectively handle them (Meijman & Mulder, 1998; LePine et al., 2004).

Prominent Models of Job Demands

Two of the most influential models in the study of job demands are the job demand–control model (JD-C; Karasek, 1979) and the job demands-resource model (JD-R; Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). The JD-C model considers the interaction of two categories of job characteristics: job demands/work stressors and job control/work resources, where job control buffers the effect of job demands (Karasek, 1979). The JD-C model indicates that decision autonomy over work practices and processes reduces an employee’s stress and increases

learning, whereas psychological demands both increase stress and increase learning (Karasek, 1979). The JD-R model, on the other hand, looks at a dual process in which job resources such as social support, performance feedback, and autonomy mitigate the effects of job demands and in fact activate a motivational process, leading to job-related learning, work engagement, and organizational commitment (Demerouti et al., 2001; Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008).

The job demands-control model. Job control refers to an employee's control over their behaviors and consists of two significant dimensions: "(i) skill discretion (i.e., require high skill level, need to learn new things, non-repetitive work and creativity) and (ii) decision authority (i.e., freedom in how to work, affords various levels of decision-making and have say over what happens)" (Karasek, 1979, p. 286). Fundamental to the JD-C model is the idea that it is not the high demands of work that intrinsically cause stress, but rather, "the joint effects of the demands of a work situation and the range of decision making freedom (discretion) available to workers facing those demands" that are linked with strain (Karasek, 1979, p. 287). The JD-C model suggests that when job demands and control are combined, they may create job stress such that high-strain conditions (i.e., high demands and low control) create a high level of job stress (see Figure 2; Karasek & Theorell, 1990).

High-strain jobs (health care worker, factory worker, and service staff) are those jobs wherein the demands that employees face are not in keeping with sufficient levels of control and decision autonomy (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). Therefore, stress can occur when individuals facing high job demands are powerless to exercise freedom of choice or make autonomous decisions (low control and decision latitude) (van der Doef & Maes, 1998). However, research shows that when job control is high, high-demand jobs do not automatically result in stress.

Rather, feelings of competency and achievement may be the outcome when both job control and job demands are high (De Rijk, Le Blanc, Schaufeli, & De Jonge, 2008).

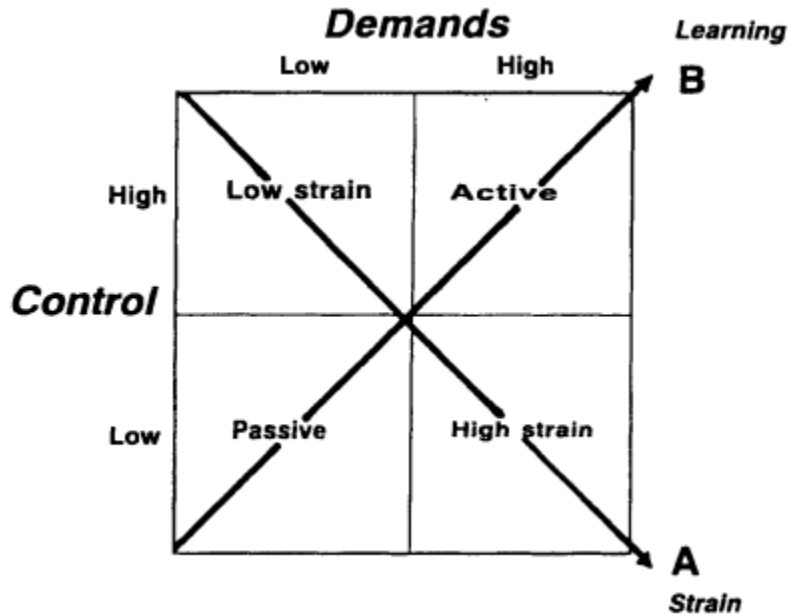


Figure 2. Job Demands-Control Model

Adapted from “Job demands, job decision latitude and mental strain: Implications for job redesign,” by R. A. Karasek (1979), *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 24, 285. Reprinted with permission.

A sense of control gives the employee a greater degree of independence and choice (Van der Doef & Maes, 2007) and affects their ability to manage and cope with work demands (De Rijk et al., 1998). When employees face continuous pressure from job demands and emotionally stressful situations, their exhaustion increases. In this sense, exhaustion is a consequence of the intensive physical, affective, and cognitive strain that results from long-term exposure to certain demands (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli, 2001). When exhausted, employees experience a lack of vigor and feel drained (Demerouti et al., 2001). Studies have shown that exhaustion is a significant predictor of employees’ turnover (De Rijk et al., 2008; Yavas, Karatepe, & Babakus, 2013).

The strain and buffering mechanisms of the JD-C model. The ‘strain’ hypothesis (indicated by the ‘strain’ diagonal) suggests that the most adverse reactions to job demands, psychological strain and physical illness, occur in a ‘high-strain’ job, which is a combination of high job demands and low decision latitude (Van der Doef & Maes, 2008, p. 911). The ‘learning’ (indicated by the ‘learning’ diagonal) hypothesis of the model is that high demands buffered by high control leads to increased learning, motivation, and skill development (Van der Doef & Maes, 2008, p. 911). However, the researchers cautioned that while some buffering effects of control do exist, the demands of the job should not be overlooked in favor of focusing on HRD interventions that aim to afford control through additional job resources (Van der Doef & Maes, 1998).

Additional empirical studies using the job demands-control model. A central question of this study is whether job demands can be moderated such that their negative effect on work outcomes is diminished. In this section, two recent studies on police officers, one in Poland and another in Australia, are offered as evidence for the argument that the effects of job demands can be moderated to improve individual and workplace outcomes.

Baka (2018). Analyzing a representative sample of 386 Polish police officers, Baka (2018) found a direct effect of job demands on ill health and depression, as well as the moderating role of job control, social support, and their joint effect (job control x social support) on the job demand-depression link. The researcher used Hayes’ PROCESS to perform a regression analysis using paper survey data (Hayes, 2018). This analysis showed that job demands were directly associated with depression and that job control and social support moderated the relationship between job demands and depression (Baka, 2018).

Brough, Drummond, and Biggs (2018). In another study of police officers, researchers found support for a moderated mediation of job demands on workplace outcomes. Using Hayes' PROCESS to perform a regression analysis of electronic survey data collected from 1,647 Australian police officers, the researchers found significant relationships among job demands, job control, work engagement, and psychological strain. They also found that coping leads to increased levels of work engagement (Brough, Drummond, & Biggs, 2018). A key finding of their study was that job demands lead to increased levels of work engagement by triggering coping mechanisms, such that the condition of high job demands can lead to increased work engagement (Brough et al., 2018). These results, as with those of Baka's (2018) study, suggest that job demands can be moderated and that a hopeful career state may serve as an effective coping mechanism in jobs with high demands.

The job demands-resource model. The main supposition of the JD-R model is that every occupation has its own unique risk factors related to job stressors (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). The model classifies these job stressors into two categories: job demands and job resources. Research has shown that job demands and job resources have unique properties and predictive value (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011).

Job demands. Job demands refer to those physical, psychological, social, or organizational features of a job that require persistent physical and/or psychological (cognitive and emotional) effort or skills and are consequently connected with certain physiological and/or psychological costs (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011).). Examples include an extraordinary workload, a harsh physical environment, and extended working hours (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Job resources. Demerouti and Bakker (2011) defined job resources as the physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of a job that:

1. are functional in achieving work goals;
2. reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs; or
3. stimulate personal growth, learning, and development. (p. 2)

This application of job resources in a motivational sense aligns with Hackman and Oldham's (1980) job characteristics model, which emphasizes the motivational potential of job resources at the task level, including autonomy, feedback, and task significance (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). It also corresponds with the conservation of resources theory (COR), which considers the maintenance and accumulation of resources a fundamental human motivation (Hobfoll, 2001; Demerouti & Bakker, 2011).

In a more specific sense, job resources may be at the organizational level (e.g., salary or wages, career opportunities, job security), interpersonal level (e.g., supervisor and coworker support, team climate), job level (e.g., role clarity, participation in decision-making), or task level (e.g., skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and performance feedback) (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011).

Dual processes. The JD–R model also suggests that two principal psychological processes affect the development of job-related stress and motivation (see Figure 3; Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). The first process suggests that demanding jobs (e.g., work overload, emotional demands) drain employees' mental and physical resources and lead to the diminution of energy (i.e., a state of exhaustion) and to health problems (e.g., general health and repetitive strain injury) (Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2003). Individuals can employ strategies to protect their performance level when in a setting with high demands (Hockey, 1993). These strategies might include narrowing what they pay attention to on the job and redefining their task

requirements. The long-term effect of these types of compensation mechanisms may lead to even further depletion of employees' energy and ability to cope and ultimately result in a breakdown (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011).

The second process proposed by the JD–R model (see Figure 3) is “motivational in nature, whereby it is assumed that job resources have motivational potential and lead to high work engagement, low levels of cynicism and excellent performance” (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011, p. 2). Job resources have intrinsic and extrinsic motivational components. The intrinsic component of job resources is related to their ability to “nurture employees’ growth, learning and development,” while the extrinsic component is related to their ability to help employees “achiev[e] work goals” (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011, p. 2). In either case, whether through the satisfaction of basic needs or through the achievement of work goals, the availability of job resources leads to engagement, whereas their absence leads to a disparaging outlook towards work (see Figure 3; Demerouti & Bakker, 2011, p. 2)

Buffering: A third process of JD-R. The JD–R model also proposes that the interaction between job demands and job resources is important with respect to job stress and motivation (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). These researchers specifically assume that job resources buffer the impact of job demands on job stress, including burnout (Bakker, Demerouti, & Euwema, 2005). The JD-R model’s conception of the buffering role of job resources is consistent with the JD-C’s model (Karasek, 1979) suggestion that autonomy may buffer the effect of work overload (i.e., job demands) on job stress (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011).

The buffer hypothesis aligns with the work of Kahn, Byosiere, & Bunnette (1992). These researchers argued that aspects of an employee’s work situation, as well as individual characteristics, can buffer the effects of a stressor. According to Kahn, et al. (1992):

The buffering variable can reduce the tendency of organizational properties to generate specific stressors, alter the perceptions and cognitions evoked by such stressors, moderate responses that follow the appraisal process, or reduce the health-damaging consequences of such responses. (p. 622)

Coping: A fourth process of JD-R. Another process of the JD-R model is called the coping process (Hakanen, Bakker, & Demerouti, 2005; Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti, & Xanthopoulou, 2007; Bakker, Van Veldhoven & Xanthopoulou, 2010). The coping hypothesis proposes that job resources particularly influence motivation or work engagement when job demands are high (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011).

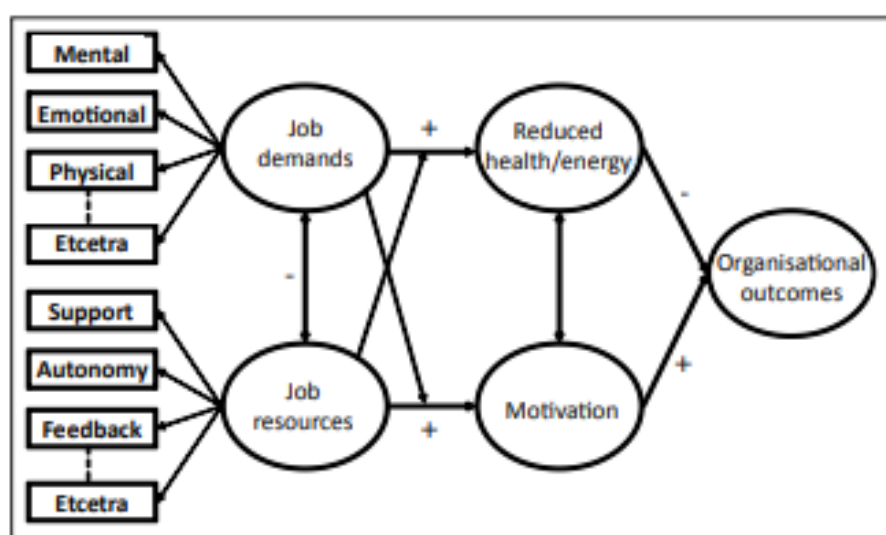


Figure 3. Job Demands-Resource Model

Adapted from “The Job Demands–Resources model: Challenges for future research,” by E. Demerouti & A. B. Bakker (2011), *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 37(2), 3. Reprinted with permission.

Studies using the JD-R. Research has shown that job demands and job resources have unique properties and predictive value (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). The JD-R model delineates how different types of job demands and job resources may interact in predicting job stress

(Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). This study sought to ascertain whether these interactions can be moderated to reduce the negative effects of job demands on work engagement and thereby lower turnover intentions.

Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti, and Xanthopoulou (2007); Demerouti and Bakker (2011). In a study of Finnish teachers, Bakker et al. (2007) found that job resources are most helpful in maintaining work engagement when job demands such as pupil misbehavior are high. Bakker et al. (2007) collected data from a large, heterogeneous sample of employees to test whether work attitudes (task enjoyment and organizational commitment) are most positive when job demands and job resources are both high. Their results provided strong support for their hypothesis: 15 of the 16 hypothesized interactions were significant for task enjoyment, while 13 of the 16 interactions were significant for organizational commitment (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). Job resources such as learning opportunities, autonomy, colleague support, leader support, performance feedback, participation in decision-making, and most importantly for this study, career opportunities were found to predict task enjoyment and organizational commitment, particularly when the workload and emotional demands of a job were high (LePine et al., 2007). This indicates that resources become most helpful when job demands are high (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). These studies lay the groundwork for this study's investigation into whether a hopeful career state can serve as a resource for improving workplace outcomes in jobs with high demands.

Podsakoff, LePine, and LePine (2007). The present study tested whether a moderated relationship exists between job demands and work engagement and the effect of the relationship on turnover intentions. A meta-analysis conducted by Podsakoff, LePine and LePine in 2007 similarly sought to uncover moderators between job demands and turnover. To perform their

meta-analysis, Podsakoff, LePine, and LePine (2007) searched the ISI Web of Knowledge database (1889–2004) of 21 peer-reviewed management psychology journals that report empirical research on work stressor-retention relationships. The researchers also contacted 30 scholars for unpublished data on the same relationships. There were three criteria that Podsakoff et al. (2007) used to decide whether an article would be included in the meta-analysis:

First, the article had to report the relationships on an individual level. Second, the article had to report a correlation coefficient (r) or information that could be used to compute r . *Third*, the article had to report a relationship between a stressor or strain and a measure of employee turnover intentions, turnover, or withdrawal behavior. (p. 441)

Working both collaboratively and independently, the researchers subsequently coded and categorized the studies according to the measures in question so that valid comparisons could be made. The results of this meta-analysis was reported in terms of a Q statistic, which allowed the researchers to isolate for the presence of moderators between job demands and retention outcomes because of statistically significant variability in the weighted-mean correlations (Podsakoff et al., 2007).

The finding of this meta-analysis demonstrated that stressors account for a significant amount of variance in turnover intentions, turnover, and withdrawal behavior. These results were found to be partially mediated through strain, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Podsakoff et al., 2007). The identification of partial mediation suggests that there could be additional mediating mechanisms at play (Podsakoff et al., 2007). The present study considered job demands and turnover intentions to be mediated by work engagement and therefore builds on our theoretical understanding of these important relationships.

Job Demands in Hospitality Organizations

Stress and exhaustion are particularly important to understand when considering frontline hotel employees who face various internal and external pressures (Yavas et al., 2013). The job demands for frontline hotel employees are overwhelming. Employees experience both physical (e.g., irregular hours/shifts, near-constant standing, relentless pace) and emotional (e.g., smiling when handling disagreeable guests, having to refrain from acting out behaviors and subduing negative feelings in the interest of good service) demands (Chan & Wan, 2012; Yavas et al., 2013). On top of those burdens is the sheer frequency of interactions where an employee must project positive emotions that are considered a standard of behavior in a service setting. Since it is not natural to be happy and accommodating all the time, employees may sometimes have to mask their true emotions and that in itself creates additional stress (Yavas et al., 2013). Moreover, regular involvement in impromptu and challenging exchanges with customers adds to stress levels (O'Neill & Davis, 2011; Yavas et al., 2013). These demands, along with the pressures to continuously and consistently deliver quality service, have been found to increase hotel employees' levels of stress and exhaustion (Yavas et al., 2013).

Job demands have long been regarded as among the most important issues facing management in the hospitality industry (Kenney, 2019). Job demands in a hospitality environment are important to understand because they cause employees to become exhausted and cynical (Demerouti & Cropanzano, 2010; Kim, 2008). This lowers their job satisfaction and job performance and increases their turnover intentions (O'Neill & Davis, 2011). Employees quit their jobs for a variety of reasons associated with job demands, including poor work relationships, cultural fit, an unhealthy work environment, and compensation that is not

commensurate with their responsibilities (Mahan, et al., 2019). This is especially relevant when considering high achievers (Smith, 2017), because these are the employees companies most like to retain (Work Institute, 2019).

Research has also shown a negative correlation between job demands and quality service delivery (Yavas et al., 2013). Employees who are less stressed provide better customer service than those who are highly stressed (Varca, 1999; Yavas et al., 2013) and service employees who report chronic stress generally exhibit poorer job performance than those reporting less stress (Beehr, Jex, Stacy, & Murray, 2000). In general, work-related stress has been shown to result in decreases in the quality of employee job performance (Gilboa, Shirom, Fried, & Cooper, 2008; LePine, Podsakoff, & LePine, 2016), increases in exhaustion, decreases in employee ability to learn, more depressive symptoms, hostility (Karasek, 1979; Motowidlo, Packard, & Manning, 1986; Yavas et al., 2013), and withdrawal (Gupta & Beehr, 1979; Cavanaugh et al., 2000). Given the nature of work in the hospitality industry, it is crucial to understand the types, levels, and outcomes of stress among hospitality industry employees (LePine et al., 2005; O'Neill & Davis, 2011; Yavas et al., 2013).

Work Engagement

The concept of engagement was first defined by Kahn (1990), who considered engagement to be “the harnessing of organizational members’ selves to their work roles. . . . In engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances,” and “in disengagement, people withdraw and defend themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performances” (p. 694). Work engagement can thus be thought of as employees’ amount of energy for and commitment to their work (Kahn, 1990). Engaged employees are physically, cognitively, and emotionally involved in their work

(Kahn, 1990; Leiter & Maslach, 1997). In contrast, employees who are disengaged are not as physically present in their work and are emotionally detached from co-workers (Kahn, 1990).

According to Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzales-Roma, and Bakker (2002), work engagement refers to “a positive fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption” (p. 74). Vigor is defined as “high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest efforts in one’s work and persistence even in the face of difficulties,” while dedication refers to “a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge” (p. 74). Absorption refers to “being fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one’s work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work” (p. 75). Studies have found a positive relationship between work engagement and various work-related outcomes and organizational performance. Engagement is related to low levels of burnout (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Schaufeli et al., 2002), low turnover intentions (Saks, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), low work stress (Britt, Castro, & Adler, 2005), better employee productivity, financial performance, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, and customer satisfaction (Richman, 2006; Saks, 2006).

Work Engagement as a Mediator

JD-R is one of the most widely used theories for explaining work engagement. Central to JD-R is the belief that a combination of job characteristics and personal resources predicts job performance through employee work engagement. In 2015, Albrecht, Gruman, Macey, and Saks “identified a number of mediating mechanisms to help explain the ‘black box’ of how an organization’s human resource management architecture influences its performance outcomes” (p. 4). They proposed a model (see Figure 4) whereby four engagement-focused human resource

practices lead to engagement and subsequently to organizational and individual performance outcomes (Albrecht et al., 2015).

This model proposes that a strategic focus on work engagement can create a competitive advantage for an organization. Describing their research, Albrecht et al. (2015) wrote:

Integrating human resource performance models (Becker et al., 1997; Guest, 1997), high performance human resource practices (HPHRP) frameworks (Kehoe and Wright, 2013; Sun et al., 2007), job-demands resources theory (Bakker and Demerouti, 2014), and SHRM-engagement frameworks (e.g. Sparrow, 2014), we map a series of organizational level, job level, and individual difference factors that help explain how engagement-focused human resource practices lead to engagement and successively to downstream performance outcomes (p. 3).

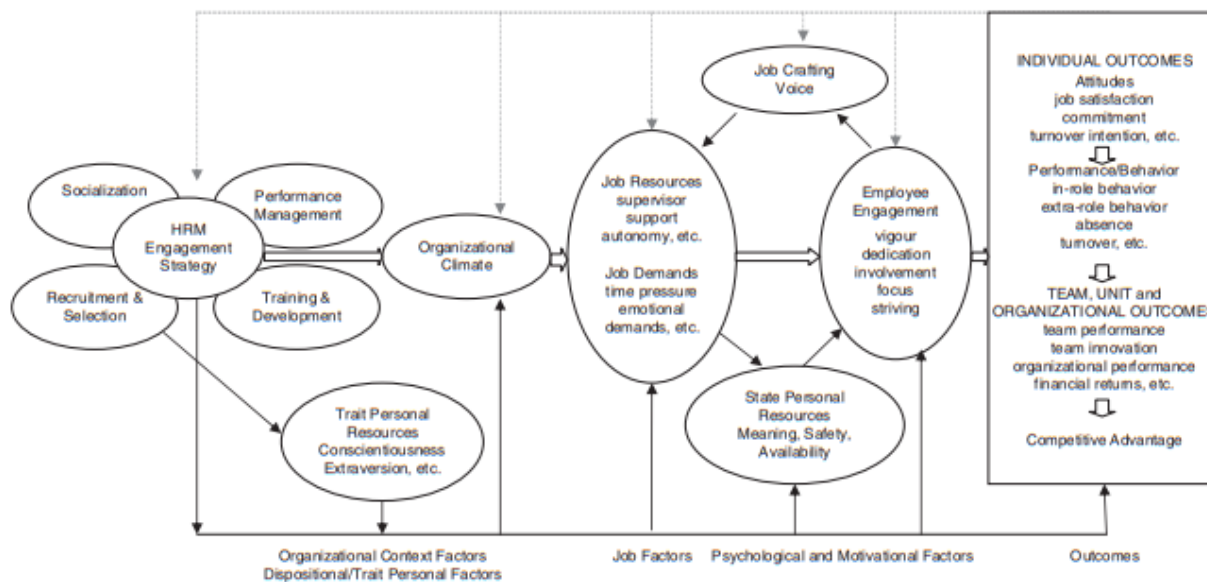


Figure 4. Strategic Engagement Model.

Strategic engagement model. Adapted from “Employee engagement, human resource management practices and competitive advantage,” by S. L. Albrecht, A. B. Bakker, J. A. Gruman, W. H. Macey, & A. M. Saks (2015), *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness*, 2(1), p. 3. Reprinted with permission.

The model in Figure 4 effectively links the JD-R model and Kahn's (1990) approach to work engagement by showing that job resources are antecedents to Kahn's (1990) psychological conditions and that the psychological conditions and job resources, together, influence work engagement (Albrecht et al., 2015).

Job Demands and Work Engagement in the Hospitality Industry

The hospitality industry has a reputation for having high levels of job demands and stress, which frequently result in disengagement and other negative outcomes for both the individual and organization (Tongchaiprasit & Ariyabuddhiphongs, 2016). Therefore, an important question for practitioners and researchers is how we can improve employee engagement in this particular sector (Tongchaiprasit & Ariyabuddhiphongs, 2016). Recently more and more research on the antecedents and outcomes of work engagement in the hospitality and tourism industries has been carried out. For example, one study found that engaged frontline hotel employees contributed to a better service environment and higher customer loyalty (Salanova et al., 2005). Employees working for quick-service restaurants were more likely to be engaged in their jobs if the employees were high in conscientiousness (Kim, Shin, & Swanger, 2009). Another restaurant industry study found that coping strategies were related to work engagement (Pienaar & Willemse, 2008). Other research indicated that in the hospitality industry, role benefits, job autonomy, and strategic importance predicted work engagement (Slatten & Mehmetoglu, 2011).

A study of frontline hotel workers in Romania found that work engagement served as a full mediator between high-performance work practices and job performance (Karatepe, 2012). High-performance work practices related to training, empowerment, and rewards help create supportive environments, that allow individuals to make decisions without fear of consequences and encourage positive feelings of self-determination and competence, can indeed provide for an

atmosphere in which engagement thrives (Heurtes-Valdivia, Llorens-Montes, & Ruiz-Marino, 2017). In a sector that is characterized by high job demands, it has been found that supportive human resource management practices (HRM) are directly and positively related to employee engagement (Karatepe, 2013).

Work Engagement and Turnover Intentions

Many studies have shown that the relationship between supportive HRM practices and turnover intentions is mediated by work engagement. The importance of these interactions is highlighted when we consider that work engagement, like turnover intentions, has been under pressure for much of the last two decades. In 2000, Gallup began tracking employee engagement in the United States with the Gallup Q¹², a 12-item engagement questionnaire (see Appendix 3). In 2018, the Gallup survey revealed an increase in work engagement from 32% to 34%. This equals the highest level of engagement since Gallup began reporting the national figure in 2000. Despite this improvement, Gallup (2018) reported that the remaining 53% of workers are in the “not engaged” category. These employees are “not cognitively and emotionally connected to their work and workplace, meaning they will perform to minimum expectations and will quickly leave their company for a slightly better offer” (Gallup, 2018, p. 1).

Turnover Intentions

Turnover intentions represent both a subjective attitude and the probability that an individual will leave their organization (Cohen, Blake, & Goodman, 2016). Turnover is an outflow of talent that may have serious consequences for competitiveness, efficiency, and quality service delivery (Campion, 1991). Therefore, researchers and practitioners are interested in explaining and decreasing employee turnover (Barrick & Zimmerman, 2005). Practitioners’ primary concern is related to the high personnel costs incurred by an organization when

employees voluntarily quit (Barrick & Zimmerman, 2005). Scholars are interested in turnover because it is an “important criterion and reflects a critical motivated behavior, one that may provide insight into volitional behavior” (Cohen et al., 2016, p. 159).

Turnover in Hospitality Organizations

Turnover in the hospitality industry, which is already much higher than average, due to the inherently stressful, 24/7 nature of work in service jobs (O’Neill & Davis, 2011). Work stress can be a particular problem in customer-oriented fields because an employee often experiences the conflicting demands of their company, supervisors, and customers, and these conflicts create dissonance and stress (Ruyter, Wetzels, & Feinberg, 2001). Stress among employees at hospitality organizations is a persistent and multidimensional sensation (Lazarus, 1993) that is costly for those organizations because it contributes to expensive voluntary turnover (Villanueva & Djurkovic, 2009).

Employee Turnover is attributed to decreases in profit and customer service as reported by the Small Business Chronicle (n.d.). This premise being when good performing employees quit and less experienced workers are retained, the quality of service and service recovery decreases (Krawjewski & Ritzman, 2018). Research has also shown that customers tend to become attached to certain employees and perceive less-experienced employees as less capable of providing exceptional customer service (Hurley & Estelami, 2007). Moreover, once the customer-employee relationship is compromised through excessive turnover, the overall competitive position of the company might be at risk (Kenney, 2019). The importance of guest interactions and the stability of service quality is especially important to the management of hospitality organizations as they seek to maintain and improve their competitive positions (Hurley & Estelami, 2007).

Apart from service quality issues, employee turnover also affects the amount of work that falls on the shoulders of those who remain after an employee quits. The additional work that others have to do may be too much and may be experienced as work overload (Jensen, Patel, & Messersmith, 2013; Lepine, Podakoff, & Lepine, 2005). The completion of daily tasks thus becomes a struggle for work teams on which employee turnover is high (Chandler & Lusch, 2015). This is especially problematic when departures are sudden and there is no time for proper coordination or exchange of information between former employees and current ones (Chandler & Lusch, 2015).

A high turnover rate can also result in an undesirable reputation for a company, as prospective employees may find it disconcerting that people are choosing to leave the organization (Kenney, 2019). Recruiters have reported that a high turnover rate makes it a challenge to attract qualified candidates to an organization (Kenney, 2019).

According to Chandler and Lusch (2015), frequent changes in employee line-ups can also produce significant negative barriers to a team's capacity to establish good relationships among its members. It can be a long and difficult process for teams to adjust to a new employee who has been hired to replace a former team member, especially if the team member had been there for a long time and the new employee is from outside the organization (Hurley & Estelami, 2007).

Individual and team productivity may also be impaired when experienced employees leave the company (Chandler & Lusch, 2015). New employees experience the learning curve at different rates and routine tasks may take longer to finish (Krawjewski & Ritzman, 2018). Consequently, work teams may face delays, as they need to rely a new team member to help them do their jobs (Hurley & Estelami, 2007).

These consequences of turnover are of special concern to management in all industries (Demerouti & Cropanzano, 2010). However, given the relatively high rates of turnover in the hotel industry and the stressful nature of its service environment, this matter is particularly pressing. It is of critical importance that hotel human resource managers proactively seek out ways to reduce the devastating effect of high employee turnover (Kenney, 2014).

Hope

Hope-related literature has indicated that hope may serve as a moderator of the relationship between job demands and work engagement. This is a particularly compelling finding in a hospitality setting where job demands may negatively affect work engagement and subsequently increase turnover intentions. With this in mind, this study explored the potential moderating effect of a hopeful career state on work engagement and turnover intentions.

To understand a hopeful career state as a potential moderating variable as it is used in this study, it is necessary to develop a fundamental understanding of hope as a concept. Hope can be conceptualized as involving two interrelated components: pathways and agency cognitions (Snyder, 2000). Pathways thinking is an individual's perceived capacity to generate successful routes to one's goals, whereas agency thinking taps an individual's perceived motivation to use those pathways to initiate and sustain movement toward those goals (Snyder, 2002). Agency reflects efficacy expectations and a perception of satisfaction-promoting control over life's outcomes (Bailey, Eng, Frisch, & Snyder, 2007). Hope, therefore, can be said to provide the "willpower" (agency) for an individual's energy and determination to achieve goals, as well as the "waypower" (pathway) that helps an individual to generate plans and create alternative paths to replace those that may have been blocked in the process of pursuing those goals (Bailey et al., 2007).

Hope and Optimism

Hope and optimism are related constructs that have received considerable attention for their roles in assessing and predicting life satisfaction (Bailey, et al., 2007). Both hope and optimism involve goal-based cognitive processes that operate in the face of a valued perceived outcome (Bailey et al., 2007).

Hope is conceptually different from the construct of optimism (Bailey et al., 2007). While optimism and hope are sometimes used interchangeably in everyday language, they have specific meanings in theory and research. Optimism is defined as the stable tendency to “believe that good rather than bad things will happen” (Scheier & Carver, 1985, p. 219). Therefore, optimists expect things to “go their way,” and these expectations are maintained over time and context. Pessimists, on the other hand, are those individuals who have persistent inclinations to believe the worst in life will happen, and they continually expect that things will not turn out well (Scheier & Carver, 1985). The differences, therefore, lie in the optimists and pessimists’ relative expectancies (Bailey et al., 2007). Outcome expectancy (Bailey et al., 2007) is used to capture what one believes will occur following certain behaviors. Efficacy expectancy is used to describe one’s beliefs in their ability to carry out specific behaviors (Bailey et al., 2007). Bandura’s (1977) theory of self-efficacy explains that the two constructs are conceptually distinct and that efficacy expectancies are a more powerful predictor of behavior than outcome expectancies.

Optimism theory postulates that outcome expectancies determine goal-directed behavior, whereas hope theory hypothesizes that efficacy expectancies are as equally necessary elements of goal-directed behavior (Snyder, 2000). Research has shown that optimists use pathways-like thought, such that they fare better with problems (Strutton & Lumpkin, 1992) and planning (Fontaine, Manstead, & Wagner, 1993), but are limited in their self-efficacy to carry out the

plans they have devised (Bailey et al., 2007). Realistic optimism, then, includes an appraisal of what one can and cannot achieve in a particular situation and adds to an individual's estimation of their own efficacy and hope (Luthans, Avolio, & Avey, 2007).

The Effects of Hope

The concept of hope has been shown to produce encouraging outcomes in life spheres such as work and education (Snyder, 2002). In a study of two separate samples of college students and non-college students, the hope and optimism constructs were compared in terms of their ability to predict life satisfaction (Bailey, et al., 2007). Using the scales of agency and pathways from the Adult Hope Scale (Snyder, 2000) the study found that pathways and optimism both showed positive correlations with life satisfaction for both the college and non-college students; but that the agency subscale of the Adult Hope Scale was the better predictor of life satisfaction in both samples (Bailey, et al., 2007).

In a study of a large cross-sectional sample of employees, hope was found to be related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job performance, and work happiness (Youssef & Luthans, 2007). Fast-food store managers' levels of hope were correlated with employee retention and job satisfaction (Peterson & Luthans, 2003). The hope level of Chinese factory workers was also found to be related to supervisory-rated performances and merit salary increases (Luthans, Avolio, Walumbwa, & Li, 2005). The hope levels of production workers in a small Midwestern factory were related to job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Larson & Luthans, 2006).

Complementing these findings on the relationship between hope and desirable work attitudes is some evidence suggesting that hope may be related to organizational performance. The aforementioned fast-food managers' levels of hope were correlated with the financial

performances of their unit (Peterson & Luthans, 2003). In a study that included ongoing surveys of employees from a variety of organizations, it was found that organizations with respondents reporting higher levels of hope tended to be more successful and have better profitability than those with employees who had lower levels of hope (Adams, Synder, Rand, King, Sigmon, & Pulvers, 2002). Other empirical studies support a positive relationship between entrepreneurs' hope and their satisfaction with business ownership (Luthans & Jensen, 2002), as well as between organizational leaders' hope and the productivity of their units and the satisfaction and retention of their employees (Petersen & Luthans, 2003).

There are limited findings on the effect of hope on work engagement (Othman & Nasurdin, 2011). A study of public hospital nurses in Malaysia hypothesized that hope is positively and strongly related to work engagement. Clearly, the demands on most nurses are high, given that they are continuously confronted with suffering, death, and grief, all while having to complete the routine tasks required of them in their position (McGrath, Reid, & Boore, 2003). That nurses remain high in hope and work engagement, suggests that hope and resilience are two of the most useful and essential resources (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) for employees managing stressful work conditions (Othman & Nasurdin, 2011) and are consistent with those of previous researchers (Bakker, Gievelde, & Rijswijk, 2006). These studies provide a theoretical framework for investigating the relationship between hope and work engagement.

The Moderating and Mediating Roles of Hope. Researchers have theorized that individuals who are higher in hope are better able to envision and execute adaptive coping strategies when faced with significant life stress (Horton & Wallander, 2001; Lewis & Kliever, 1996). An investigation into whether hope can serve as a psychological strength for middle- and high-school students found that hope could moderate the impact of stressful life events (Valle,

Huebner, & Sueldo, 2006). One of the specific results of this study was that adolescents reporting higher initial levels of hope were more likely to report higher levels of global life satisfaction a year later, even after controlling for initial levels of life satisfaction (Valle et al., 2006). The results of this study support the argument that adolescent hope levels function to moderate the relationship between stressful or negative life events and mental health outcomes. The interaction effects found in this study are aligned with the buffering effects seen in the JD-C and the JD-R models (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000), in which the major impact of the moderator occurs when the stressors are at their highest (Valle et al., 2006).

A study of an ethnically diverse sample of college students examined potential moderators of the association between negative life events and depressive symptoms. Negative life events were shown to be significantly associated with greater levels of depressive symptoms. Higher levels of hope attenuated this relationship, such that those with greater hope reported fewer depressive symptoms related to potentially traumatic events (Visser, Loess, Jeglic, & Hirsch, 2013). Importantly, the moderating effect of hope did not differ across ethnic groups. These findings provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role that hopefulness might play in the linkage between the experience of life stress and consequent psychopathology (Visser et al., 2013).

Research conducted using a sample of 320 Chinese adults found that hope fully mediated the relationship between self-compassion and life satisfaction (Yang, Zhang, & Kou, 2015). Another study found that hope fully mediated the effect of resilience on subjective well-being and partially mediated the relationship between psychological vulnerability and subjective well-being in a sample of 332 undergraduate students in Turkey (Satici, 2016). Additional research pointed to the mediating role of hope with respect to adaptive variables such as life satisfaction

and maladaptive variables like psychological distress (Rustoen, Cooper, & Miastowski, 2010). Therefore, hope might play a significant role in the influence of resilience and psychological vulnerability on subjective well-being.

Hope has been shown to serve as a psychological strength that influences people such that they have positive expectations of reaching desired goals and believe that the goals can actually be met (Satici, 2016). Highly hopeful individuals are confident and energized, and they evaluate stressful situations as challenges rather than threats (Snyder, 1999; Rubin, 2001). These individuals experience lower levels of depression and assess life situations in more positive ways (Snyder, 1999; Satici, 2016).

Hopeful Career State

Research on hope, resilience, optimism, and efficacy suggests that they are developable capabilities (Snyder, 2002). Several steps to enhance hopefulness about one's career have been identified by scholars. These include identifying goals, imagining success, identifying potential pathways to achieving goals, acting out ways to address barriers to goal attainment, and positively interpreting failures (Riskind, 2006). There is empirical support for interventions that increase hopefulness (Riskind, 2006). The use of positive self-statements, the identification and enhancement of personal strengths, effective goal-setting, and the discussion of personal narratives of successful hope have been shown to give an individual more confidence in their ability to achieve goals and an increased ability to summon the resources necessary for goal accomplishment (Riskind, 2006). This has many practical implications for HRD management in today's workplace. Employees who are more hopeful, optimistic, efficacious, and resilient may be more likely to "weather the storm" of dynamic circumstances than their counterparts with lower levels of hopefulness (Snyder, 2002). Practical approaches for developing a hopeful career

state include setting challenging “stretch” goals, contingency planning, and “re-goaling” when necessary to avoid false hope (Luthans & Avey et al., 2006; Snyder, 2000).

Hope Action Theory (HAT)

Hope action theory (HAT; Niles, Amundson, & Yoon, 2019) is a positive approach to one’s career development. HAT integrates three theories: Bandura’s (2001) Human Agency Theory, Hall’s (1996) Career Meta-Competencies, and Snyder’s (2002) Hope Theory. It seeks to foster a set of competencies, called hope-action competencies, in an employee. These include hope, self-reflection, self-clarity, visioning, goal-setting, implementation, and adaptation. Firmly situated within the positive psychology approach to human development, the model is strengths-based and incorporates innovative methods to foster these competencies, including kinesthetic activities, storytelling, visualization, and metaphor (Niles et al., 2011). HAT represents a positive approach to career development (Yoon et al., 2019). Career development practices anchored in HAT seek to foster a set of competencies, called hope-action competencies, such as hope, self-reflection, self-clarity, visioning, goal setting, implementation, and adaptation (Yoon et al., 2019).

Employees experiencing HAT-based career development programming achieve a hopeful career state whereby they believe the work they are doing is important for their long-term career prospects (Yoon et al., 2018). Thus far, the model has been shown to have positive workplace outcomes for internationally trained health professionals (Clarke, Amundson, Niles, & Yoon, 2018), unemployed individuals (Amundson, Goddard, Yoon, & Niles, 2018), and post-secondary students (Yoon et al., 2015).

Hope to Work Career Development Program (H2W)

The Hope to Work (H2W) career development program is based on the HAT model of career development and measures seven hope-centered career competencies: hope, self-reflection, self-clarity, visioning, goal-setting, planning, implementing, and adapting (Yoon et al., 2019). A study of U.S. and Canadian college students found that hope plays a significant role in the development of a vocational identity; sense of clarity with respect to career interests, talents, and goals; and to a lesser extent, academic performance, as measured by grade-point average (GPA; Yoon et al., 2015). This study also indicated the mediating role of student engagement (Yoon et al., 2015) between hope and the two-outcome variable of GPA and vocational identity. The mediating role of student engagement is of particular interest because in many studies, student engagement is used as an outcome variable (Yoon et al., 2015). Viewing student engagement in a mediator role may provide insight into the processes by which students can achieve positive academic and career outcomes.

In a study of under-employed, internationally trained health professionals in Canada, researchers found that interventions based on developing the competencies measured in H2W improved the progress of the study's participants toward licensure and full-employment (Clarke et al., 2018). The study found that those participants who participated in the hope-based interventions reported a stronger ability to effectively employ pathways, agency, and goal-directed thinking (Clarke et al., 2018) than the participants who did not. This in turn allowed them to “reflect, strategize, and persevere as they moved forward on their pathway to licensure in health careers” (Clarke et al., 2018).

Summary

HAT and the outcomes of the H2W career development program demonstrate that hope is a state-like quality that is open to change and development (Yoon et al., 2019). There is evidence that individuals high in hope and/or learned hope achieve a hopeful career state that facilitates positive career outcomes (Snyder, 2000; Luthans et al., 2007; Yoon et al., 2019). The literature supports the possibility that a hopeful career state moderates the relationship between job demands and work engagement (Horton & Wallander, 2001; Lewis & Kliewer, 1996). This finding is particularly compelling in an industry such as the hospitality sector, which is characterized by high job demands and turnover. For this reason, this study examined the possibility for supportive HRM practices based on the concept of a hopeful career state to nurture the feeling of self-efficacy and perhaps mitigate the influence of job demands on employee work engagement and reducing turnover intentions.

This review of scholarly literature related to the present study's core constructs and the relationships among them found that job demands (or job stressors) have a negative impact on work engagement, which in turn has a negative impact on employee turnover intentions. Hopeful career state is a relatively new construct that has shown some promising impact on vocational identity and academic performance among students and has helped the underemployed in their search for full-time employment. Recognizing this potential, this study tested the moderating role of hopeful career state on the relationship between job demands and work engagement in the hospitality industry, specifically among front-office employees in full-service hotels, where job demands and stress are high because of low pay, long hours, and continuous guest service interactions. If a hopeful career state has a positive influence work engagement, it perhaps could also reduce employee turnover intentions.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to test the moderating role of a hopeful career state on the relationship between job demands and turnover intentions, a relationship that is mediated by work engagement. The target population for the study was employees experiencing high job demands (or stressors) in front office, full-service hotel positions. This chapter presents the (a) research questions, (b) population and sample, (c) survey design, (d) research variables, (e) instrumentation, (f) study plan timeline, (g) and a description of study plan phases: pilot study, institutional review and approval, data collection, input, and data analysis.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

RQ 1. To what extent do Job Demands predict Work Engagement, given the variables set in the conceptual model?

RQ 2. To what extent does Work Engagement predict Turnover Intentions, given the variables set in the conceptual model?

RQ 3. To what extent do Job Demands affect Turnover Intentions, given the variables set in the conceptual model?

RQ 4. To what extent does Hopeful Career State moderate the relationship between Job Demands and Work Engagement, given the variables set in the conceptual model?

Population and Sample

The sampled population for this study consisted of front office employees in U.S. full-service hotels. The December Current Employment Statistics report of United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018) reported that there were 234,700 hotel, motel, and resort front-office employees. Many of them are listed on LinkedIn, a social network of and for professionals that is primarily used for its virtual professional networking characteristics. Given its popularity and widespread use among professionals, the study decided to use this networking tool to collect its

sample subjects. The population of front-office employees in full-service hotels who were registered on LinkedIn as of March 1, 2019 was 23,148.

The process of estimating a sample size with a 95 percent confidence interval and a 5 percent margin of error for the complete population of 234,700 front-office employees yielded a desired sample size of 383 subjects. Doing the same for the population of 23,148 front-office employees listed on LinkedIn yielded a comparable desired sample size of 377 subjects (Krueger, 2001). To allow for data cleaning and incomplete responses, it was decided that the target sample for this study would consist of 450 front-office employees in U.S. full-service hotels as listed on LinkedIn.

In order to appreciate the unique aspects of this sample, some industry context is appropriate. Many hotels describe themselves as “full-service hotels” on their websites, but few outside the hospitality industry may truly understand what that means. Full-service hotels are those that operate food and beverage outlets in addition to offering guestrooms and hotel companies offer three general categories of brands based on service levels: full-service, select-service, and limited-service. A variety of cosmetic, budgetary, and amenity-related differences distinguish a full-service hotel from its select-service and limited-service counterparts (Rose, 2014).

A full-service hotel typically needs a larger staff and more expansive facilities to accommodate guests who are expecting amenities that are labor-intensive to provide (Rose, 2014). Typically, a full-service hotel offers its guests services such as bed turndown, newspaper delivery, security guards, wake-up calls, room service, and a shuttle to and from the local airport or other nearby attractions. Conversely, a limited-service hotel generally offers only a few services; guests receive accommodations but few amenities. Travelers who opt for a full-service

hotel stay expect consistency in the service they receive as well as greater attentiveness from the hotel's staff. One of the biggest differences between a limited-service hotel and a full-service hotel is the limited-service hotel's lack of in-house drinking and dining options; full-service hotels often have at least one cocktail lounge and restaurant. High-end full-service hotels also often offer facilities such as spas and banquet rooms, dry cleaning, and 24-hour valet service, although not all of them do.

Front office jobs in any hotel are characterized by high levels of customer interaction and process flexibility (Krawjewski & Ritzman, 2018). The person working the front office is often the very first person a guest encounters. Since the hotel only has one chance to make a first impression, the employee at the front office is a significant determinant of a guest's overall perception of the hotel and of his/her experience (Hendersen, 2019).

The intensity and frequency of the level of customer interaction at the front desk increases with the hotel's service levels. A front office employee at a limited service property, like Motel 6, primarily checks guests in and out. However, a front office employee at a high-end service property, like the Ritz Carlton, not only checks guests in and out, but also advises them on meal options, room service, spa treatments and, in the absence of a dedicated concierge, proposes visits to local attractions and the theatre for instance. Moreover, the nature of the guest changes with service levels: a guest in a limited service property expects a lower level of service than a guest in a full-service hotel.

A front office employee in a full-service hotel needs to have strong communicative and problem-solving skills in order to provide the level of service and support expected by guests. Moreover, his/her service support may also be focused internally and pertain to the hotel's policies and billing (Hendersen, 2019). The full-service front office employee coordinates with

housekeeping, maintenance, bell staff, valet, and room service and is the first point of contact for a guest encountering a service failure. Front office experience in a full-service hotel is often considered a solid and sometimes even necessary foundation for a career pathway to management and is therefore a useful place for individuals who hope to launch their careers in the hotel industry (Hendersen, 2019).

Research Variables

The research model for this study included four variables that were derived from, and based on, the research questions presented earlier. These variables were job demands (or stressors), work engagement, hopeful career state, and turnover intentions. The associations between the research variables and instrument items in this survey are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. *Association between Research Variables and Instrument Items*

| Research Variable | Instrument Items |
|----------------------|------------------|
| Job Demands | Items 1–5 |
| Work Engagement | Items 6–14 |
| Hopeful Career State | Items 15–23 |
| Turnover Intentions | Items 24–26 |

Survey Design

This research study was conducted using quantitative methods and interpreted using a statistical model of moderated mediation. Moderated mediation, also known as conditional process analysis, is used when the researcher seeks to understand the conditional mechanisms by which one variable transmits an effect on another. The survey questionnaire used in this study combined inventory items from four validated instruments: five items from the Job Demands Scale (Cavanaugh et al., 2000); the nine-question Utrecht Work Engagement Survey (Schaufeli

et al., 2002); nine items from the Hopeful Career State measure (Yoon et al., 2019); and three items from the Turnover Intentions Scale (Colarelli, 1982). In addition, seven descriptive items were used to gather demographic data about the subjects, including: (a) age, (b) the number of years with the current industry employer, (c) gender identity, (d) number of hours worked per week, (e) ethnicity, (f) educational level, and (g) career development opportunities. The full survey instrument can be found in Appendix B.

Instrumentation

As described above, the survey instrument found in Appendix B was comprised of items from four separate instruments. All of these instruments were validated in previously published studies (Cavanaugh et al., 2000; Colarelli, 1982; Schaufeli et al., 2006; Shuck, 2011; Yoon et al., 2018).

Instrument for job demands. The measures related to job demands have been shown to have significant relationships with several criteria, including job satisfaction and turnover intentions, which provide evidence of predictive validity. Scale items taken from Cavanaugh et al. (2000) and Boswell et al. (2004) to measure job demands (e.g., “*It often feels like I have too much to do for one person*” and “*I have to deal with or satisfy too many people*”) were found to have an internal consistency with Cronbach’s alphas ranging from .87 to .90.

Instrument for work engagement. The Utrecht Work Engagement Survey (UWES) is a self-reporting survey and measures employee work engagement along three dimensions: vigor, dedication, and absorption. The data from the instrument can be analyzed using a combination of all three subscales or by means of each of the subscales independently. There are three forms of the UWES instrument—the UWES-17, the UWES-9, and the UWES-6—with the integer indicating the number of items included in the survey.

In a study of 14,521 people in 10 different countries, Schaufeli, Bakker and Salanova (2006) found that the UWES-17 questionnaire could be reduced to 9 items, the UWES-9, the items of which “have acceptable psychometric properties” (p. 701). Moreover, “[t]he factorial validity of the UWES-9 was demonstrated using confirmatory factor analyses, and the three scale scores have good internal consistency and test-retest reliability” (Schaufeli et al., 2006, p. 701). The authors found that the UWES-9 had a higher internal consistency than the UWES-17 with Cronbach’s alphas ranging from .80 to .93 (Schaufeli et al., p. 709).

The UWES-9 instrument was also used in this study and was represented by items such as “*I am enthusiastic about my job*” and “*When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.*” It is one of the most popular instruments for measuring employee work engagement: it has been translated into 21 languages and includes student versions. According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2010), presently “an international database exists that currently includes engagement records of over 60,000 employees” (p. 16).

Instrument for hopeful career state. The Hopeful Career State (HCS) scale was developed to assess how hopeful employees are at work with respect to future career opportunities (Yoon, Niles, & Amundson, 2017). It includes nine items, two of which are “*What I am doing now is helping me to build skills and experiences for the future*” and “*I am hopeful that what I am doing now will help me in my career journey.*” In a study of actively job-seeking, Arab-speaking refugees in Canada, the HCS scale reported a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.958 (Yoon et al., 2019).

Instrument for turnover intentions. To measure employees’ turnover intentions, many studies have used a scale developed by Colarelli (1982). Shuck et al. (2011) examined the links between job fit, affective commitment, psychological climate, employee engagement, and the

dependent variables discretionary effort and intention to turnover with scale items such as “*I frequently think about quitting my job*” and “*I am planning to search for a new job in the next 6–12 months.*” The authors found a Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.81$ (Shuck et al., 2011). In another study, Kim (2014) used the same instrument and found an internal consistency of $\alpha = 0.71$.

Study Plan

The plan for completing this study involved a series of steps that had a target completion date of August 31, 2019. (See Appendix C).

Description of Study Plan Phases

The following action steps, as set forth in Table 3, were completed in support of the project plan timeline, with the goal of having all survey data collected by August 31, 2019 and having all data analyzed by September 5, 2019.

Table 3. *Start/End Dates for Project Phases*

| Task | Start Date | End Date | Duration (days) |
|--|------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Phase I: Review SHM Alumni List for Target Sample Criteria | 1/20/2019 | 3/20/2019 | 59 |
| Phase II: Develop Survey Instrument | 2/15/2019 | 5/1/2019 | 75 |
| Phase III: Pilot Test | 5/15/2019 | 5/20/2019 | 5 |
| Phase IV: IRB Approval | 5/20/2019 | 7/15/2019 | 56 |
| Phase V: Survey Distribution | 7/15/2019 | 8/30/2019 | 46 |
| Phase VI: Data Collection | 7/18/2019 | 8/31/2019 | 44 |
| Phase VII: Data Input | 8/20/2019 | 9/2/2019 | 13 |
| Phase VIII: Data Analysis | 8/21/2019 | 9/5/2019 | 15 |

Phase I: Target sample identification. Completed review of School of Hospitality Management alumni list for individuals with target sample criteria, specifically front office employees of full-service hotels. This list, in Microsoft Excel format, was obtained from the

Penn State School of Hospitality Management's director of Corporate and Alumni Relations.

Phase II: Survey questionnaire. Based on the review of alumni characteristics, a survey instrument was developed as described above.

Phase III: Pilot test. Pilot tests are used to refine research instruments (Sampson, 2004) and help the researcher identify any barrier to data collection before conducting the survey on the target population (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). A pilot test helps assess whether the survey can address its purpose and provide the desired information (Gupta, Sleezer, & Russ-Eft, 2007). Schreiber (2008) noted that response rate issues in survey research make it “advisable and best practice” to perform a pilot study (p. 625). The benefits of the pilot study for this research were: (a) to demonstrate that an adequate sample was obtainable for inferential statistical analysis; (b) to establish if survey subjects understood the questions and the nature of the survey; (c) to evaluate whether the proposed survey and contact methods could achieve the desired response rate; and (d) to determine the time it took the respondents to complete the survey.

In a pilot study, the number of participants is generally smaller and the length of time used to collect data is shorter as compared to a full study. With respect to the appropriate sample size for a pilot investigation, scholars have determined, that a minimum 12 subjects per group should be considered for pilot studies (Julious, 2005). For this research study, a sample of front office employees of full-service hotels were given the hyperlink to the survey and were asked to complete the pilot survey.

The hyperlink connected the pilot participants to the survey that was created using Qualtrics. Qualtrics is a web-based research survey software program. It is a powerful online survey tool that allows researchers to build complex surveys, distribute surveys and analyze responses from any device connected to the internet, thus fulfilling a variety of research needs

(Carr, 2013). According to Boas, Christenson, and Glick (2018), Qualtrics is more demographically and politically representative compared to Facebook and Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk).

All twenty pilot study subjects who were invited completed the survey within 5 days, a 100% participation rate. The pilot study respondents were given the chance to provide feedback and express any problems with the survey and its administration. This effort revealed that there was one question that forced a fill in the blank response where it was not indicated. The respondents indicated that the survey took them an average of 8 minutes to complete. The forced answer glitch was corrected prior to complete survey distribution to the full target group and the invitation to participate in the study was updated to indicate that the survey would take less than 10 minutes to complete.

Phase IV: IRB approval. Before the data collection process could begin, the survey and research protocol were submitted electronically to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the Office of Research Protection (ORP) at The Pennsylvania State University on May 16, 2019. The IRB reviewed this study for the protection of human subjects and research protocol and on May 23, 2019, requests for several clarifications were sent back by the IRB and are presented in Figure 5 below.

On June 9, 2019, responses to the requests for clarifications listed were returned electronically to the IRB. On June 17, 2019, additional clarifications were requested regarding the site permissions for the research. When it was clarified that there were not actual sites, but rather individuals recruited from several sites, all that was needed at that point was a short title for the study. The proposal was approved on June 28, 2019 as it did not pose any significant risk to the participants and had met all the ethical considerations for the protection of human subjects.

Phase V: Survey distribution. The survey was distributed during the months of July and August 2019. In keeping with the pilot study, the survey questionnaire was developed using Qualtrics on-line survey software. For the recruitment process, different vehicles of social media, primarily LinkedIn, and personal messages via e-mail were used to distribute a hyperlink to the survey, initially to individuals on the SHM alumni list and then to other industry contacts of the investigator. In working through this process, it was found that the LinkedIn messaging function was especially efficient because it provided the mechanism to search beyond Penn State alumni for the target sample criteria, particularly front office employees of full-service hotels. More specific information on the advantages and limitations of using LinkedIn for participant recruitment will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Over the course of six weeks, 625 invitations to complete the survey were sent out to individuals with front office positions in full-service hotels using the following message:

“I am collecting data for my PhD research on how people feel about their careers in Hospitality. I really need input from people like you who are front office employees in a full-service hotel. I have to get 400 surveys filled out by August 31. If you can complete it yourself and get 1 or 2 others you know, who also work in the front office of a full-service hotel to do it as well, it will be huge!! The survey should take 10 minutes or less to fill out and all submissions are anonymous. Here is the link:

https://pennstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eDM8ZzUvwwnwzhX

Thanks for your help with this!”

1. **Please make the following changes to your submission:**
 - a. **Study Team Members Page:**
 - i. Do you have an advisor or other faculty member providing oversight to your research? If so, please add them to Item #1 of the Study Team Members Page and add their qualifications to the Study Team Member Qualification Document.
 - b. **Study Scope Page:**
 - i. Please revise Item #1 on this page to “yes” and fill in as much information as possible on the Research Locations Page.
 - c. **Local Site Documents Page:**
 - i. Please separate the consent form from the data collection instrument and upload the consent form only to Item #1 of this page and the data collection instrument to Item #3 of this page.

2. **Please address and revise the following items within the protocol document:**
 - a. Please use tracked changes as described above.
 - b. Please update the version date on the first page of the protocol to reflect the date of resubmission.
 - c. **Section 3.2 (Exclusion Criteria):** Please also add individuals who are not front office employees, managers, supervisors, or individual contributors of a full-service hotel in the United States to the list of exclusion criteria.
 - d. **Section 5.1 (Consent Process):** Please also check the “Exempt Research” box, as your study may be eligible for review at the exempt level.
 - e. **Section 10.0 (Risks):** Loss of confidentiality is always a risk when conducting human subject research. Please revise to address this risk.
 - f. **Section 11.0 (Potential Benefits):** There must be some benefit to either society/others or the subject in order to conduct the research. Please revise accordingly.
 - g. **Section 16.0 (External Approvals):** Do you have permission from the hotels to recruit among their employees?
 - h. **Section 22.2 (Paper Research Records):** where will you be storing the paper copies of the surveys? How will they be secured, and how long will they be stored (University guidelines specify a minimum of three years from the completion of the study). How will you restrict access to the paper records to authorized project personnel?
 - i. **Section 22.3 (Electronic Data):** Will you be storing electronic data for this study? If so, please fill out this section.

Figure 5. IRB Request for Clarifications

Request for clarifications received on May 23, 2019.

Upon opening the survey, the respondents were asked to read the informed consent form (See Appendix B) before starting the questionnaire. This form outlined the ethical aspects and purpose of the study and provided the participants with a contact email addresses and phone numbers for the Office of Research Protection at Penn State and the principal investigator in case they had questions, complaints, concerns, or believed they might have been harmed by participating

the research study. They were further informed that: “*Your participation implies your voluntary consent to participate in the research.*”

Phase VI: Data collection. During the 6 weeks of data collection 390 responses were received. However, 76 of the respondents failed to provide demographic information and their responses were discarded. The 314 useable responses represented a very efficient response rate of 50.2%. In consultation with the dissertation chair, data collection was discontinued on August 31, 2019 in order to analyze the data and to meet the Graduate School deadlines for dissertation defense. Figure 6 below provides a time line of invitations sent and completed useable responses during the data collection period of July 14, 2019 to August 31, 2019.

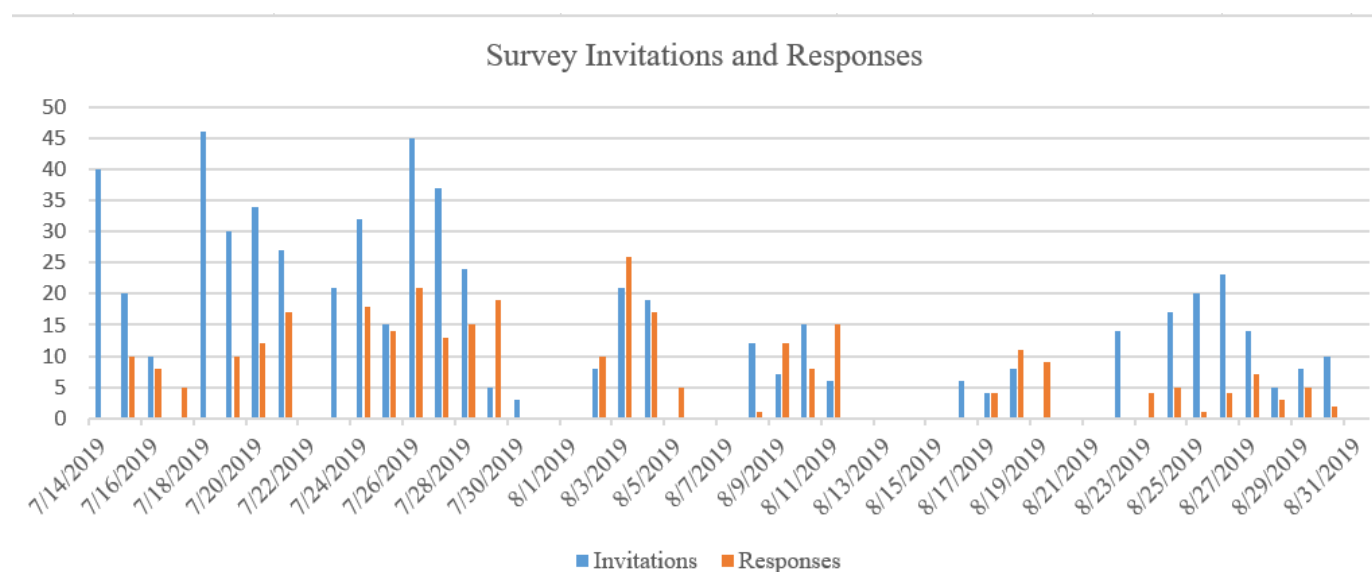


Figure 6. Survey Invitations and Responses

Phase VII: Data input. The collected responses from the Qualtrics surveys were downloaded in to a csv file. A Comma Separated Values (csv) file is a plain text file that contains a list of data. The idea is that you can export complex data from one application to a *csv file*, and then import the data into another application. The csv file was imported into SPSS, and

then cleaned to remove those respondents whom did not complete the demographic information, of which there were 76.

Phase VII: Data analysis. The approach used to analyze the survey data is presented in summary form below and in detail in Chapter 4. The quantitative data analysis performed as part of this study incorporated descriptive and inferential statistics. The IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 25 was used to perform descriptive analysis and reliability tests to check the internal consistency of each scale. The PROCESS package was installed in SPSS and was used to perform the analysis of moderated mediation effect proposed by this study (Hayes, 2012; Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes). PROCESS is a software program used in conditional process analysis, also known as the analysis of moderated mediation (Hayes, 2018).

Since this study aimed to analyze the mediation effect of Work Engagement between Job Demands and Turnover Intention when Work Engagement is moderated by Hopeful Career Statement, Hayes' Model 7 with 5,000 bootstrapped sample approaches were used to analyze the proposed research model. The bootstrapping method is a powerful approach as it can construct asymmetric confidence intervals for indirect effects in moderated mediation models and need fewer assumptions about the sampling distribution (Briggs, 2006; Williams & MacKinnon, 2008).

Summary

This chapter discussed the research purpose of the study and presented the research questions it set out to answer. It provided a detailed justification for the selection of the target population (full-service hotel front-office employees) and the survey design, utilizing four previously validated scales to measure the key variables in the study model: job demands, work engagement, hopeful career state and turnover intentions. In the study timeline, a detailed

discussion of the data collection process was presented, a process that lead to a usable sample of 314 responses. The results of the analysis of the responses are presented and discussed in chapter 4.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

The self-reported data for this research were collected in a cross-sectional study that was conducted by means of web-based surveys developed in Qualtrics. This study addressed the following research questions:

RQ 1. To what extent do Job Demands predict Work Engagement given the variables set in the conceptual model?

RQ 2. To what extent does Work Engagement predict Turnover Intentions given the variables set in the conceptual model?

RQ 3. To what extent do Job Demands affect Turnover Intentions given the variables set in the conceptual model?

RQ 4. To what extent does Hopeful Career State moderate the relationship between Job Demands and Work Engagement given the variables set in the conceptual model?

This chapter reports on (a) descriptive analysis of demographic features, (b) reliability tests for each construct, (c) moderated mediation effects of the main research model, and the (d) moderated mediation effect when the main model is controlled for age.

Descriptive Analysis of Demographic Features

Almost all (312/314) of the respondents provided usable information about their gender. It was found that 53.3% of the participants in this study was male, 47.3% was female, with the remaining participants (1.6%) opting for the “other” designation. In terms of education level, 3.2% of the participants had a high school/GED degree, 11.5% had taken some college courses, 9.6% had an associate’s degree, 72.3% had a bachelor’s degree, and the rest (3.5%) had a master's degree. The study found that 75.8% of the participants was Caucasian, 8.6% was Hispanic, 6.1% was African-American, 5.4% was Asian, 2.9% had “other ethnicity,” and the remainder (1.3%) preferred not to answer. Regarding their current positions, 8.9% of the survey participants was at the intern level, 14.0% was at the entry level, 15.0% was an individual

contributor, 8.0% was team leader/supervisor, and the rest (54.1%) of the participants was at the manager level. The details of the demographic distribution are captured in Table 4.

Reliability Testing

Table 5 shows the mean, standard deviations, item-total correlation and the Cronbach's alpha values for each construct. Two questions that were negatively worded were coded reversely before being entered to the reliability test: the first question under the construct of Job Demands (JD-q1 "I am given enough to do what is expected of me"); and the last question under the construct of Turnover Intention (TI-q3 "I want to still be working for this company one year from now"). The values under these two questions were subtracted from a constant one value higher than the highest value on the scale. As presented in Table 5, the standardized Cronbach's alpha values ranged from .637 to .932. Except for the construct of Job Demands, all scales exceeded the acceptable threshold of .700 indicating a sufficient internal consistency among each construct. In order to obtain a better scale for Job Demands that contained items with higher internal consistency, JD-q1 and JD-q5 were excluded from the construct measurement based on their relatively low correlation with the other items. The standardized Cronbach's alpha of Job Demands reached .715 after excluding JD-q1 and JD-q5 successively.

Mean values show that a majority of the respondents did not consider their jobs overly demanding, as the overall mean value was slightly lower than 3.00 (Mean=2.88). Participants generally felt engaged with their work with a mean of 5.321 on the 7-point scale for work engagement measurement. The sampled participants had a high level of hopeful career state (Mean=3.539 on 4-point scale) and a low level of turnover intention (Mean=2.532 on 5-point scale).

Table 4. *Participant Demographics*

| | Full Data | | Non-Manager | | Manager | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|
| | Frequency | Percent | Frequency | Percent | Frequency | Percent |
| Gender | <i>N=312</i> | <i>Missing=2</i> | <i>N=143</i> | <i>Missing=1</i> | <i>N=169</i> | <i>Missing=1</i> |
| Male | 167 | 53.5 | 73 | 51.0 | 94 | 55.6 |
| Female | 140 | 44.6 | 66 | 46.2 | 74 | 43.8 |
| Non-binary | 1 | .3 | 1 | .7 | 0 | 0 |
| Other | 4 | 1.3 | 3 | 2.1 | 1 | .6 |
| Education | <i>N=314</i> | | <i>N=144</i> | | <i>N=170</i> | |
| Less than high school | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| High school/GED | 10 | 3.2 | 7 | 4.9 | 3 | 1.8 |
| Some college courses | 36 | 11.5 | 26 | 18.1 | 10 | 5.9 |
| Associates (2-3 year college) | 30 | 9.6 | 19 | 13.2 | 11 | 6.5 |
| Baccalaureate (4-year university) | 227 | 72.3 | 88 | 61.1 | 139 | 81.8 |
| Master level | 11 | 3.5 | 4 | 2.8 | 7 | 4.1 |
| Doctoral level | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Ethnicity | <i>N=314</i> | | <i>N=144</i> | | <i>N=170</i> | |
| Caucasian | 238 | 75.8 | 108 | 75.0 | 130 | 76.5 |
| Hispanic | 27 | 8.6 | 13 | 9.0 | 14 | 8.2 |
| African American/Black | 19 | 6.1 | 10 | 6.9 | 9 | 5.3 |
| Asian | 17 | 5.4 | 8 | 5.6 | 9 | 5.3 |
| American Indian | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Pacific Islander | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Prefer Not to Answer | 4 | 1.3 | 1 | .7 | 3 | 1.8 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|------------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|------|
| | Other | 9 | 2.9 | 4 | 2.8 | 5 | 2.9 |
| Position | | <i>N=314</i> | | <i>N=144</i> | | <i>N=170</i> | |
| | Intern | 28 | 8.9 | 28 | 19.4 | - | |
| | Entry Level | 44 | 14.0 | 44 | 30.6 | - | |
| | Individual Contributor | 47 | 15.0 | 47 | 32.6 | - | |
| | Team Leader/Supervisor | 25 | 8.0 | 25 | 17.4 | - | |
| | Manager | 170 | 54.1 | - | | 161 | 100% |
| Participation in Career Develop Programs | | <i>N=314</i> | | <i>N=144</i> | | <i>N=170</i> | |
| | Yes | 165 | 52.5 | 77 | 53.5 | 88 | 51.8 |
| | No | 149 | 47.5 | 67 | 46.5 | 82 | 48.2 |
| Age | | <i>N=311</i> | | <i>N=144</i> | | <i>N=167</i> | |
| | Min=18 | Max=68 | Min=18 | Max=68 | Min=21 | Max=68 | |
| | Mean=29.17 | SD=10.192 | Mean=25.25 | SD=7.461 | Mean=32.55 | SD=11.010 | |
| Working Hours | | <i>N=314</i> | | <i>N=144</i> | | <i>N=170</i> | |
| | Min=9.0 | Max=112.0 | Min=10.0 | Man=69 | Min=9 | Max=112 | |
| | Mean=48.158 | SD=10.377 | Mean=43.580 | SD=8.646 | Mean=52.035 | SD=10.158 | |
| Employed (months) | | <i>N=314</i> | | <i>N=144</i> | | <i>N=170</i> | |
| | Min=1.0 | Max=458.0 | Min=1.0 | Max=168 | Min=1 | Max=458 | |
| | Mean=42.041 | SD=66.970 | Mean=23.931 | SD=28.266 | Mean=57.38 | SD=84.345 | |
| Current Position (months) | | <i>N=314</i> | | <i>N=144</i> | | <i>N=170</i> | |
| | Min=.25 | Max=306.0 | Min=.5 | Max=150 | Min=.25 | Max=306 | |
| | Mean=22.259 | SD=38.002 | Mean=17.517 | SD=22.721 | Mean=26.275 | SD=46.931 | |

The inconsistencies that were found in the relationships among the items in the Job Demands scale with retention-related criteria are corroborated by Podsakoff, Le Pine & Le Pine (2007) in their meta-analysis of 183 independent samples. Their meta-analysis hypothesized that viewing job demands as a two-dimensional construct, consisting of hindrance demands that negatively affect retention criteria and challenge demands that positively affect retention-related criteria, could help explain the differential effects of Job Demands observed in some studies (Podsakoff, et al., 2007).

Moderated Mediation Effects

Moderated mediation analysis is used when the researcher's analytical goal is to understand the conditional nature of the mechanisms by which a variable transmits an effect on another (Hayes, 2013). Many models are available for the purpose of accommodating and evaluating a variety of conditional relationships. PROCESS Model 7 was used in this study (See Figure 7).

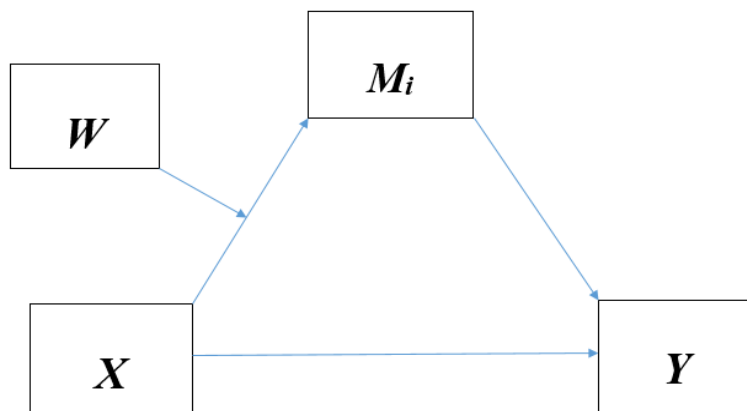


Figure 7. PROCESS Model 7

Adapted from *Introduction to Mediation, Moderation and Conditional Process Analysis: A Regression-Based Approach* by A. F. Hayes (2018). Used with permission.

As indicated in 4.1, when the effect of X on Y through M_i is moderated by W , the mediation of the effect of X on Y is moderated; in other words, *moderated mediation* has occurred. Moderated mediation focuses on the conditional nature of an indirect (or mediated) effect (Hayes, 2018). This analysis first estimates the indirect effect and then tests how that effect varied as a function of the moderator. As such, the PROCESS analysis of the conditional indirect effect of X on Y through M_i , conditioned on W , is able to quantify the estimated amount by which the two cases with a given value of W that differ by one unit on X differ on Y . More specifically, the estimate of the indirect or mediating effect is used to check for statistically significant differences between the direct effect of X on Y and the indirect effect of X on Y through M_i .

A relationship between two variables is considered to be moderated when the size or sign of the association between them depends on a third variable (Hayes, 2018). Moderation analysis, also known as *probing the interaction*, is typically tested for by looking at the linear interaction between X and Y along various values of W (Hayes, 2018).

The Conceptual Model

The study aimed to analyze the mediation effect of Work Engagement between Job Demands and Turnover Intention when Work Engagement was moderated by Hopeful Career State. Figure 8 presents the conceptual model that captures the proposed relationships as highlighted in the research questions.

Table 5. *Construct Reliability Test*

| | Construct | Mean | Std. | Item-total correlation | Cronbach's Alpha |
|-------|---|-------|-------|------------------------|------------------|
| | Job Demands (5-point scale) | 2.88 | .727 | | .611 |
| JD-q1 | I am given enough to do what is expected of me (<i>reverse coded</i>) | 2.11 | .936 | .643 | .715 (q1 out) |
| JD-q2 | It often seems like I have too much work to do for one person | 2.96 | 1.173 | .524 | |
| JD-q3 | I have to deal with or satisfy too many people | 2.94 | 1.200 | .457 | |
| JD-q4 | Extent to which my position presents me with conflicting demands | 2.95 | 1.146 | .482 | |
| JD-q5 | The number of phone calls or guest interactions I have in a shift | 3.43 | 1.305 | .651 | .637 (q5 out) |
| | Work Engagement (7-point scale) | 5.321 | 1.115 | | .932 |
| WE-q1 | At my work I feel bursting with energy | 5.18 | 1.300 | .921 | |
| WE-q2 | At my job, I feel strong and vigorous | 5.23 | 1.315 | .921 | |
| WE-q3 | I am enthusiastic about my job | 5.39 | 1.433 | .915 | |
| WE-q4 | My job inspires me | 5.07 | 1.562 | .917 | |
| WE-q5 | When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work | 4.90 | 1.582 | .922 | |
| WE-q6 | I feel happy when I am working intently | 5.71 | 1.208 | .924 | |
| WE-q7 | I am proud of the work I do | 5.87 | 1.252 | .926 | |
| WE-q8 | I am immersed in my work | 5.66 | 1.319 | .922 | |
| WE-q9 | I get carried away when I am working | 4.88 | 1.471 | .938 | |
| | | 3.539 | .558 | | .932 |

| Hopeful Career Statement (4-point scale) | | | | |
|---|--|-------|-------|------|
| HC-q1 | My current work will be helpful for my future career | 3.61 | .665 | .916 |
| HC-q2 | My current work will enable me to be a better worker in the future | 3.66 | .599 | .918 |
| HC-q3 | I feel I am getting closer to better career opportunities | 3.48 | .742 | .916 |
| HC-q4 | I can think of new employment options because of my current job | 3.39 | .788 | .924 |
| HC-q5 | My current job provides resources (e.g., skill development, network, finances) for the next steps in my career journey | 3.29 | .877 | .929 |
| HC-q6 | What I am doing now is helping me build skills and experiences for the future | 3.60 | .667 | .914 |
| HC-q7 | What I am doing now is an important step in my career journey | 3.54 | .706 | .912 |
| HC-q8 | What I am doing now will help me in my career journey | 3.59 | .678 | .912 |
| HC-q9 | I am hopeful that what I am doing now will help me in my career journey | 3.69 | .557 | .918 |
| Turnover Intention (5-point scale) | | 2.532 | 1.093 | .770 |
| TI-q1 | I frequently think of quitting my job | 2.35 | 1.237 | .664 |
| TI-q2 | I am planning to search for a new job during the next 6-12 months | 3.00 | 1.440 | .684 |
| TI-q3 | I want to still be working for this company one year from now (reverse coded) | 2.25 | 1.283 | .713 |

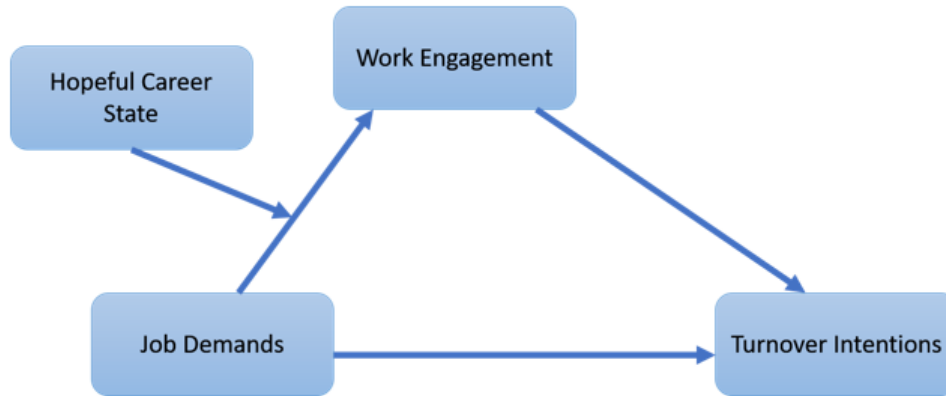


Figure 8. Conceptual Model

The Research Model

The conceptual model can be translated into a statistical format and will result in two regression models to represent the processes examined in this research (See Figure 9):

$$WE = i_{WE} + a_1JD + a_2HCS + a_3JD * HCS + e_{WE} \quad (\text{Regression 1})$$

$$TI = i_{TI} + b WE + c JD + e_{TI}, \quad (\text{Regression 2})$$

The direct effect of Job Demands on Turnover Intention is indicated by the coefficient c . The conditional indirect effect of Job Demands on Turnover Intention through the mediator Work Engagement and represented by the function $(a_1 + a_3 * HCS) * b$, where $a_3 * b$ indicates the moderated mediation effect.

Table 7 presents the model fitting results. Both regression models are significant as the p-values for the F statistics are smaller than 0.0001. Based on the R-square statistics, Regression 1 accounted for 31.72% of variance in Work Engagement and Regression 2 for 35.16% of variance in Turnover Intention. Coefficient estimation of Regression 1 revealed that the influence of Job Demands on Work Engagement was contingent on Hopeful Career Statement as the interaction of Hopeful Career Statement and Job Demands was significant and negative. When Hopeful

Career State was held constant, an increase in Job Demands decreased Work Engagement ($a_3 = -.2610$, $p\text{-value} = .0078$).

Results of Regression 2 showed a significant direct effect of Job Demands on Turnover Intention. A one-point increase in Job Demands directly raised the Turnover Intention by .2619 point ($c = .2619$, $p\text{-value} = .0000$).

The indirect effect of Job Demands on Turnover Intention through Work Engagement depends on Hopeful Career State and is represented by $(.7109 - .2610 * HCS) * (-.4798)$. The moderated mediation effect is only marginally significant at the 90% confidence interval (CI) ($a_3 * b = .1252$; 90% CI: [.0044, .2351]; 95% CI: [-.0216, .2560]). An increase in Hopeful Career State increases the interaction of Job Demands and Hopeful Career State and further decreased work engagement, thus resulting an increase in Turnover Intention. Results of all paths are presented in Figure 10.

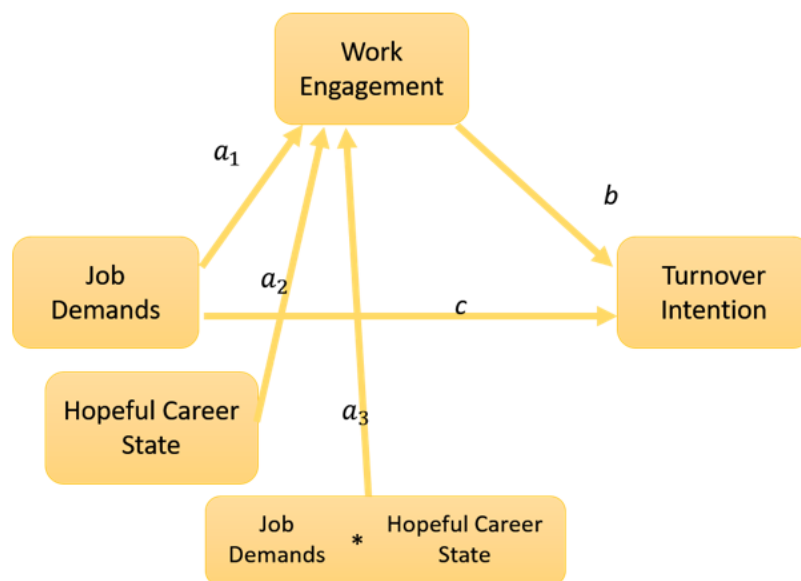


Figure 9. Research Model in Statistical Form

To detect the overall effect of the moderated mediation, the conditional direct and indirect effects of Work Engagement were examined using a pick-a-point approach. The 16th, 50th, and 84th percentiles of the distribution of Hopeful Career State were chosen to represent the “low” (HCS = 3.000), “moderate” (HCS=3.7778), and “high” (HCS=4.000) Hopeful Career State level. For those with a relatively low level of hopeful career state, Job Demands were no longer a significant predictor of Turnover Intention (95% CI: [-.0649, .1524]). Job Demands imposed a significant effect on Turnover Intentions among the respondents with medium to high levels of hopeful career state, and such effect became stronger with higher hopeful career state. (See Table 6).

Effect of Age

According to Schein (1996) and Hernández (2017), age has been found to significantly influence Work Engagement. In his seminal study of career development, using several decades of longitudinal research, Schein (1990) concluded that how one feels in relation to one’s work is an evolving concept and is not fully developed until one has worked for a number of years, roughly five to ten, and has relevant feedback from those experiences.

Thus, age was added as a covariate to perform Hayes’ Process Model 7. The updated regression models were refined as below to represent the process:

$$WE = i_{WE} + a_1JD + a_2HCS + a_3JD * HCS + dAge + e_{WE} \quad (\text{Regression 3})$$

$$TI = i_{TI} + b WE + c JD + d'Age + e_{TI} \quad (\text{Regression 4})$$

Table 8 presents the model fitting results after controlling for the effect of Age. Both regression models are significant based on the significant F statistics. Regression 3 accounted for 42.12% of the variance in Work Engagement and Regression 4 for 34.95% of the variance in Turnover Intention. Except for *b*, all estimated effects became stronger as compared to the

results in Table 7. For example, the results of Regression 3 showed that the unstandardized effect of the interaction of Hopeful Career State and Job Demands increased from $-.2610$ to $-.3309$ ($a_3 = -.3309$, $p\text{-value} = .0003$), indicating a stronger contingent effect of Hopeful Career State on the relationship between Job Demands and Work Engagement. **Age also significantly increased Work Engagement ($d = .0373$, $p\text{-value} = .0000$), which is consistent with the findings in Schein (1996) and Hernández (2017).** Results of Regression 4 showed a relatively stronger direct effect of Job Demands on Turnover Intention as c increased from $.2619$ to $.2631$ ($c = .2631$, $p\text{-value} = .0000$). Age was insignificant in influencing Turnover Intention in Regression 4.

Table 6. *Pick-a-Point Analysis for Overall Effect of Job Demands*

| Hopeful Career State | Effect | Bootstrapping Standard Deviation | Bootstrapping Lower Level CI | Bootstrapping Upper Level CI |
|----------------------|--------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 3.0000 (Low) | .0346 | .0549 | -.0649 | .1524 |
| 3.7778 (Medium) | .1320 | .0300 | .0771 | .1933 |
| 4.0000 (High) | .1599 | .0371 | .0905 | .2341 |

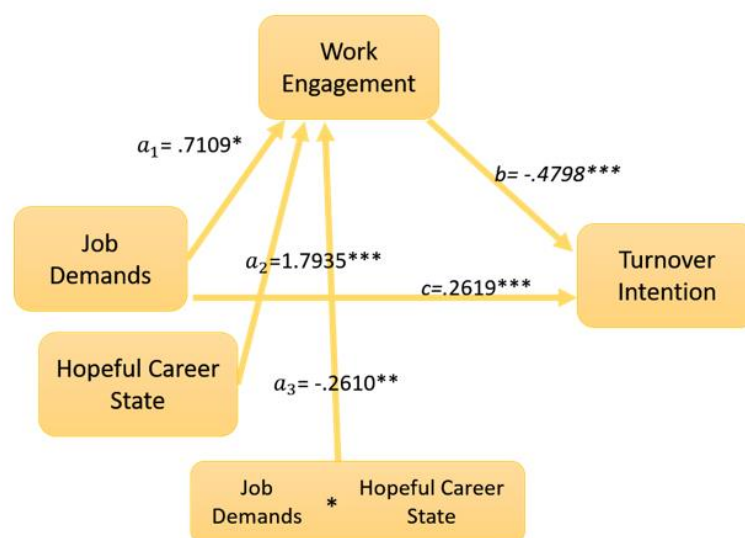


Figure 10. Regression Results

Table 7. *Regression Analysis*

| Work Engagement (M) | | | | | | Turnover Intention (Y) | | | | |
|---------------------|----------|--------|-------------|-----------|---------|------------------------|--------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| | | Coef. | Std. Coef. | SE | p | | Coef. | Std Coef. | SE | p |
| X (JD) | a_1 | .7109 | .011 | .3504 | .0433 | c | .2619 | .056 | .0555 | .0000 |
| M (WE) | | | | | | b | -.4798 | .047 | .0466 | .0000 |
| W (HCS) | a_2 | 1.7935 | .030 | .3243 | .0000 | | | | | |
| X*W | a_3 | -.2610 | .003 | .0975 | .0078 | | | | | |
| Constant | i_{WE} | -.4263 | .077 | 1.1835 | .7189 | i_{TI} | 4.3116 | .337 | .3372 | .0000 |
| N=314 | | | $R^2=.3172$ | F=48.0149 | P<.0001 | $R^2=.3516$ | | | F=84.3107 | P<.0001 |

Furthermore, the moderated mediation effect was significant at the 95% CI level with an unstandardized effect of .1562 (95%CI: [.0252, .2675]). Results of the pick-a-point analysis are consistent with the findings when Age was not controlled. As Table 9 shows, Job Demands had a critical and increasing impact on Turnover Intention among the respondents with medium to high levels of Hopeful Career State. For those with a relatively low level of Hopeful Career State, Job demands did not significantly affect their Turnover Intentions (95% CI: [-.0708, .1116]). Results of all paths are presented in Figure 11.

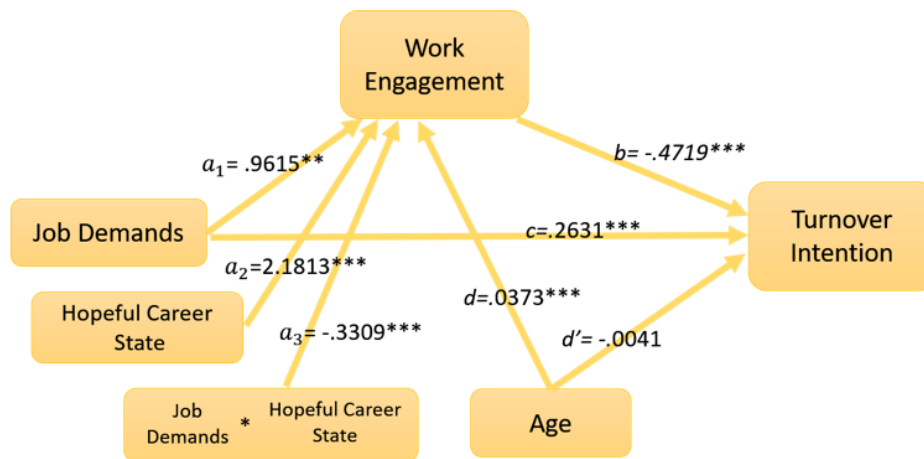


Figure 11. Regression Results after Controlling for Age

To compare the direct and indirect effects of Job Demands visually, estimated effects for various values of Hopeful Career State using the functions $(.9615 - .3309 * HCS) * (-.4719)$ were plotted as shown in Figure 12. The Y-axis in Figure 12 corresponds to the estimated effect size of Job Demands on Turnover Intention where 0.00 indicates no effect. Overall, the direct effect of Job Demands accounted for more predictive power on Turnover Intention as compared to the indirect effect of Job Demands through Work Engagement conditional on Hopeful Career Statement.

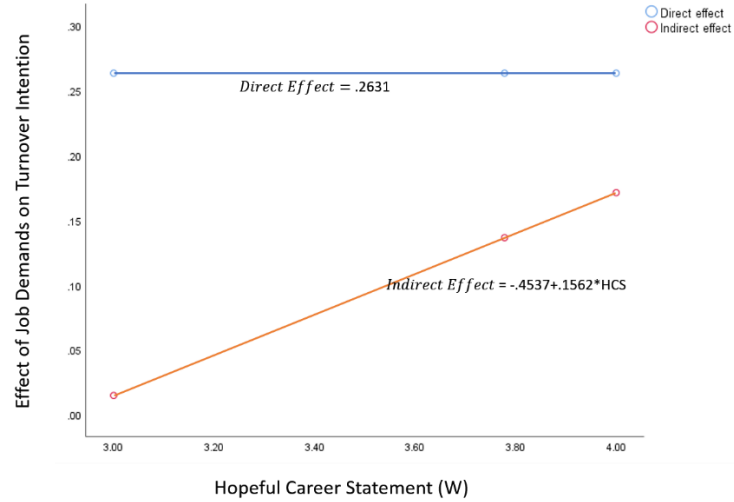


Figure 12. Direct and Indirect Effects of Job Demands.

Table 8. Regression Analysis with Age as Control Variable

| | | Work Engagement (M) | | | | Turnover Intention (Y) | | | | |
|----------|----------|---------------------|-------------|-----------|---------|------------------------|------------|-------------|-----------|---------|
| | | Coef. | Std Coef. | SE | p | Coef. | Std. Coef. | SE | p | |
| X (JD) | a_1 | .9615 | .010 | .3257 | .0034 | c | .2631 | .056 | .0562 | .0000 |
| M (WE) | | | | | | b | -.4719 | .048 | .0479 | .0000 |
| W (HCS) | a_2 | 2.1813 | .032 | .3048 | .0000 | | | | | |
| X*W | a_3 | -.3309 | .003 | .0907 | .0003 | | | | | |
| Age | d | .0373 | .001 | .0049 | .0000 | d' | -.0041 | .005 | .0050 | .4156 |
| Constant | i_{WE} | -2.9080 | .093 | 1.1442 | .0115 | i_{TI} | 4.3849 | .348 | .3485 | .0000 |
| N=311 | | | $R^2=.4212$ | F=55.6785 | P<.0001 | | | $R^2=.3495$ | F=54.9766 | P<.0001 |

Table 9. *Pick-a-Point Analysis for Indirect Effect after Controlling Age*

| Hopeful Career Statement | Effect | Bootstrapping Standard Deviation | Bootstrapping Lower Level CI | Bootstrapping Upper Level CI |
|--------------------------|--------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 3.0000 (Low) | .0147 | .0465 | -.0708 | .1116 |
| 3.7778 (Medium) | .1361 | .0302 | .0798 | .1981 |
| 4.0000 (High) | .1708 | .0371 | 1.000 | .2471 |

Summary

Chapter 4 presented the analysis of the data obtained in the study. After a brief description of the demographics of the survey respondents, which found an almost even split between males and females and high education levels among respondents, its focus was on answering the research questions that stood at the basis of the study. The final chapter will offer further discussion of the purpose, results, limitations, suggestions for future research, and a conclusion.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This final chapter will discuss the purpose and results of the study. It will highlight its implications for theory and practice and its limitations, and provide recommendations for future research. The chapter will conclude with general remarks about the utility of a hopeful career state among employees as an important new tool to reduce one of the most prominent labor force issues facing managers today, employee turnover.

Purpose

An organization's ability to reduce turnover is a critical strategic capability due to its significant negative impact on cost, operational efficiency, and the quality of service delivery (Mahan, et al., 2019). To better address turnover and its causes, it is important for organizations to understand that employee turnover happens for a variety of reasons. In consideration of the fact that employees leave organizations for different reasons, turnover is categorized as either preventable, unpreventable, or involuntary. The reasons for preventable turnover lie within the organization: unsafe work conditions, long hours, low pay, and poor managerial practices for example cause an employee to seek better working conditions elsewhere. Unpreventable turnover is due to retirement, corporate downsizing, death, and the relocation of a partner or a spouse. Involuntary turnover occurs when an employee is fired for cause. The Work Institute's 2019 Retention Report (Mahan, et al., 2019) reported on a study based on interviews with over 230,000 employees who had left their positions in 2018. The study found that 77% of all reported turnover was due to preventable reasons such as career development opportunities, work-life balance issues, managerial behavior, or compensation/benefits (Mahan, et al., 2019). Of these preventable reasons for leaving, the Work Institute's 2019 Retention Report found that

the top reason why employees left their organization was a lack of career development opportunities. One in five respondents (21%) gave this as their reason for leaving their organizations (Mahan, et al., 2019).

Scholars investigating employee turnover have found that jobs characterized by high demands have higher levels of turnover than jobs with lower demands (LePine, et al., 2005). Studies specific to employees in hospitality organizations have confirmed that the demanding nature of hospitality work leads to negative relationships with retention related criteria. (O'Neill & Davis, 2011). A meta-analysis of turnover studies conducted by Bakker, et al. (2018) has shown that these relationships are virtually always mediated by work engagement, a positive behavior or state of mind at work that leads to positive work-related outcomes (Shaufelli & Bakker, 2004). Employees that report higher levels of work engagement are less likely to leave, making any human resource intervention that can be done to increase employees' work engagement of critical importance to the organization.

This research focused on turnover in hospitality organizations, in particular among front office employees of full-service hotels. The sample was chosen for two reasons: first, because turnover in the hotel industry is above 31% (Fuhrmans, 2018; Compdata, 2018) and double the average level of turnover in other industries in the United States (Bares, 2017; Compdata, 2018). Second, and this might partially explain why turnover in the hotel industry is so high, because of the demanding nature of front office work in full-service hotels.

Working from a sample that was inclined to turn over more than average, and taking into consideration that 21% of all preventable turnover is due to a lack of career development, this study sought to test a relatively new approach to addressing the problem of turnover in hospitality jobs. This new approach has examined how organizations' career development

practices impact employees' perceptions of organizational support, which in turn increases engagement and reduces turnover intentions (Tan, 2008). Further, and central to this study, scholars have found that a hopeful career state is an important outcome of career development programming because of the positive influence that this mindset has on employees' perceptions of career development opportunities in their current places of employment which serves to increase work engagement and reduce turnover (Tan, 2008). A hopeful career state was selected as a variable for this study because of its potential to positively moderate the relationship between job demands and work engagement.

Hope Action Theory (HAT; Niles, Amundson, and Yoon, 2019) provides the theoretical basis of a hopeful career state and represents a positive approach to career development. Career development practices anchored in HAT seek to foster a set of competencies, called hope-action competencies, such as hope, self-reflection, self-clarity, visioning, goal setting, implementation, and adaptation (Yoon et al., 2019). Employees engaged in HAT-based career development programming achieve a hopeful career state whereby they believe the work they are doing is important for their long-term career prospects (Yoon et al., 2019).

This model has been shown to have a positive impact on workplace outcomes for internationally trained health professionals (Clarke et al., 2018), unemployed individuals (Amundson et al., 2018), and post-secondary students (Yoon et al., 2015). The goal of this study was to examine whether front office employees with a hopeful career state had higher levels of engagement and lower levels of turnover intentions than others in similar positions. The following discussion will focus on each of the four research questions that guided the research process, and on the results that were found in answering those questions.

Results

The research questions originated from the research model as presented in Figure 4.1. The first research question investigated the relationship between job demands (the Independent Variable (IV) in the model) and work engagement, the mediating variable in the relationship between the IV and the DV (turnover intentions).

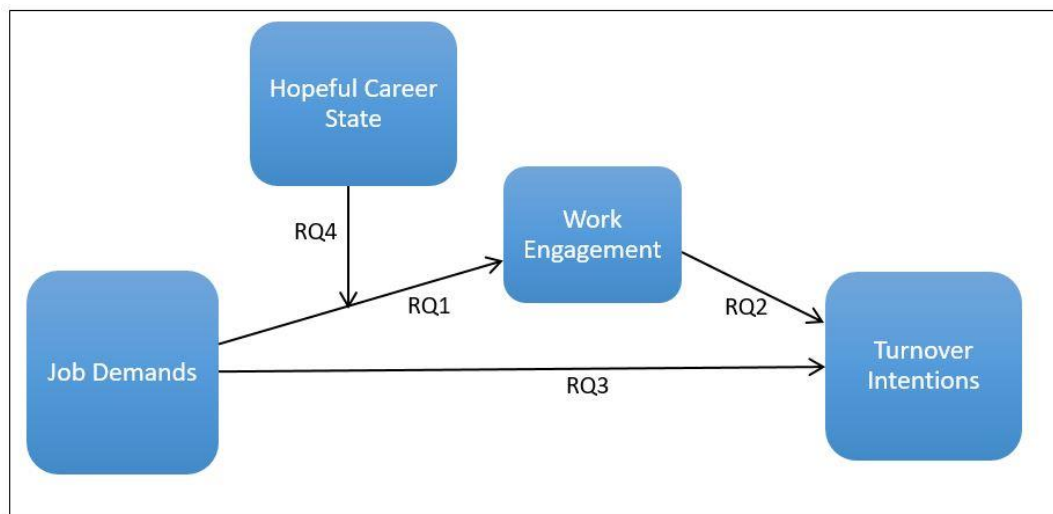


Figure 13. Duplicate of Figure 1 Conceptual Research Framework

Adapted from “Towards a model of work engagement” by A. B. Bakker & E. Demerouti (2008), *Career Development International*, 13, p. 218. Copyright 2008 by Emerald Group Publishing Limited. Reprinted with permission.

This relationship has been investigated extensively over the years and most studies have found that higher job demands tend to lead to lower work engagement (Karasek, 1979; de Rijk, A. E., Le Blanc, P. M., Schaufeli, W. B., & de Jonge, J., 1996; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008; Demerouti & Bakker, 2011), and higher turnover intentions (Campion, 1991; Allen, Shore, & Griffeth, 2003; Maertz & Griffeth, 2004). However, Podsakoff, et al. (2007), sometimes found an opposite effect. The inconsistency they found between job demands and turnover intentions was attributed to the dual nature of job demands. It was found that there are challenge demands and hindrance demands as they relate to retention

criteria (Podsakoff, et al., 2007; Akkermans, Schaufeli, Brenninkmeijer, & Blonk, 2013). When differentiated by the individual, challenge demands are perceived as important for growth and achievement, whereas hindrance demands are perceived as a constraint to personal development and work-related accomplishment (Podsakoff, et al., 2007). As reported by Podsakoff, et al. (2007) and, challenge stressors had a significant negative relationship with turnover intentions ($\beta = -.10, p < .05$), whereas hindrance demands had a significant positive relationship with turnover intentions ($\beta = .53, p < .05$). Since this study did not distinguish between these two types of job demands, its results, as presented in chapter 4, corroborated the findings of Podsakoff, et al., 2007 and Akkermans, Et al., 2013 studies and ran contrary to what most studies have found over the years and to what might even be expected intuitively. A reason for this might be that front office employees in full-service hotels do not perceive job demands as necessarily negative and that they tend to follow what was found by Podsakoff, et al., 2007, in that their job demands are a necessary aspect of their personal growth and achievement at work.

The second research question looked at the impact of work engagement on turnover intentions, which is also an extensively researched relationship (May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Riskind, 2006; Saks, 2006; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007; Macey & Snyder, 2009; Demerouti & Cropanzano, 2010; Albrecht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey, & Saks, 2016). In this study, work engagement (M) was used as a mediating variable in the relationship between job demands (X) and turnover intentions (Y). This research corroborated all previous work and found work engagement had a significant mediating effect on the relationship ($a_1 * b = .7109 * (-.4719) = .3355, p < .05$) between the two in a hospitality setting: the lower an employee's work engagement, the higher his/her turnover intentions.

The third research question addressed the main effect between job demands (X) and turnover intentions (Y). This too has been heavily researched and reported on in the literature (Campion, 1991; Allen, Shore, & Griffeth, 2003; Maertz & Griffeth, 2004); Podsakoff, LePine, & LePine, 2007). The study found a significant direct effect of job demands on turnover intentions ($c=.2619$, $p < .05$): the higher an employee's job demands, the higher his/her intentions to leave the organization.

The final research question captured this study's main contribution: Can a hopeful career state moderate the relationship between job demands (X) and work engagement (M) so that it has a positive and significant impact on turnover intentions (Y)? This study found a marginal significant moderated mediation effect of hopeful career state. Hopeful career state had, significant impact on the relationship between job demands (X) and work engagement (M) ($a_3 = -.2610$, $p < .1$). When hopeful career state is held constant, higher job demands decreased work engagement. Further, as the work engagement (M) had a significant negative effect on turnover intention (Y) ($b = -.4719$, $p < .05$), the moderated mediation effect of hopeful career state (W) on turnover intention (Y) is resulted to be positive ($a_3 * b = -.2610 * (-.4719) = .1242$). Such effect means that job demands imposed a stronger effect on turnover intention for hospitality employees who have a higher hopeful career state because for those people with a higher hopeful state, the job demands decreased work engagement to a larger extent. However, through the bootstrapping method with 5,000 samples, the moderated mediation effect is only significant at the 90% level for this sample (90% CI: [.0044, .2351]; 95% CI: [-.0216, .2560]). It is worth noting that hopeful career state itself will increase the work engagement (M) and further decreases the turnover intention (Y). Figure 14 and Table 10 show that the direct effect of hopeful career state on turnover intention is significant and negative ($a_1 = -.4737$, $p < .05$). The

indirect effect of hopeful career state on turnover through the mediator of work engagement is represented by $a_1 * b = -.4343$ (95% CI: [-.5948, -.2974]; std. mediation effect = $-.2218$, 95% CI: [-.2911, -.1556]).

However, when interacted with job demands, hopeful career state (W) had a positive moderated mediation effect on the relationship between job demands (X) and turnover intention (Y) through the mediator of work engagement (M). This positive sign of hopeful career state does not mean that a higher career state would lead to a higher turnover intention, rather for people with higher hopeful career state; the job demands had a stronger effect on turnover intention through a lower work engagement.

Table 10. *Direct Effect of a Hopeful Career State*

| | | Work Engagement (M) | | | | Turnover Intention (Y) | | | |
|----------|----------|---------------------|--------------|-----------|-------|------------------------|-------------|-----------|-------|
| | | Coef. | Std. Coef. | SE | p | Coef. | Std Coef. | SE | p |
| X (HCS) | a_1 | 1.0383 | .5198 | .3461 | .0000 | a_2 | -.4737 | .1050 | .0000 |
| M (WE) | | | | | | b | -.4266 | .0525 | .0000 |
| Constant | i_{WE} | 1.6460 | | .3461 | .0000 | i_{TI} | | | .0000 |
| N=314 | | $R^2=.2702$ | $F=115.5234$ | $P<.0001$ | | $R^2=.3479$ | $F=82.9440$ | $P<.0001$ | |

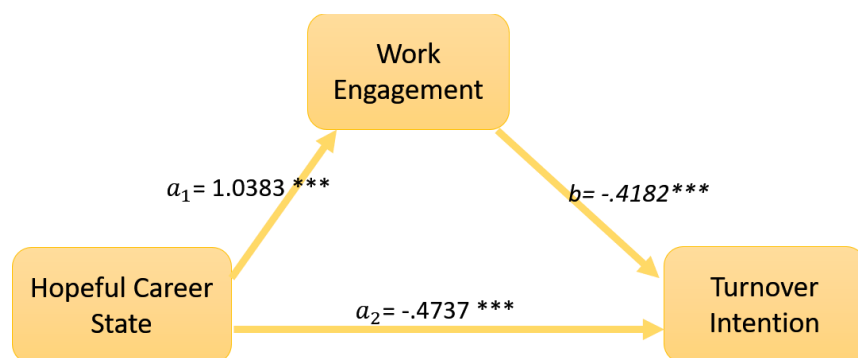


Figure 14. Direct Effect of a Hopeful Career State

On the other hand, Table 11 shows the effect of hopeful career state on work engagement when holding job demands constant using the pick-a-point approach. The 16th (JD=2.0000), 50th (JD=3.0000), and 84th (JD=4.0000) of the distribution of job demands were chosen to represent the low, moderate and high job demands level. When hopeful career state is held constant, higher demands makes the positive effect of hopeful career state weaker on work engagement. Further, a lower work engagement and higher job demands may aggravate the turnover intention in the next state of the model.

Table 11. *Pick-a-point Analysis for overall Hopeful Career State*

| Job Demands | Effect of HCS on WE | se | p-value | Lower Level CI | Upper Level CI |
|-----------------|---------------------|-------|---------|----------------|----------------|
| 2.0000 (Low) | 1.2715 | .1496 | .0000 | .9771 | 1.5659 |
| 3.0000 (Medium) | 1.0105 | .0974 | .0000 | .8188 | 1.2021 |
| 4.0000 (High) | .7494 | .1248 | .0000 | .5038 | .9950 |

A final analysis was done on the effect of the respondents' age on the relationship between hopeful career state and work engagement. This was done in reference to the work of Schein (1996) and Hernandez (2017) who found that age had a significant positive impact on work engagement. Schein (1990) in particular found that how one feels in relation to one's work is an evolving concept and is not fully developed until one has worked for a number of years, roughly five to ten, and has relevant feedback from those experiences. In other words, employees need longer work experience in order for them to fully understand the ups and downs of their current positions in the context of their careers (Schein, 1996). Consistent with previous studies, age was found to have a significant positive effect on work engagement ($d = .0373$, $p < .05$), thus a negative indirect effect on turnover intention. This study also found a significant moderated mediation effect of hopeful career state at the 95% significance level when it controlled for

age($a_3 * b = .1562, p < .05$). Holding the age constant, for people with a higher hopeful career state, the job demands further increases turnover intention due to a lower level of work engagement.

Implications for Theory and Practice

This research relates to assertions, discussed in the literature, regarding the relationships between job demands, hopeful career state, work engagement, and turnover intentions. The connections between these constructs and the implications for theory and practices are explained in the next sections below.

Implications for Theory

As no empirical studies were found which examined the moderating effect of a hopeful career state on the relationship between job demands and work engagement, this study adds to the existing OD and workforce education literature in its discussion of its moderating effect. Furthermore, empirically examining the relationship in the hospitality sector establishes a way forward for additional research in the hospitality industry, an industry known for its high job demands and high turnover.

This study corroborated the findings of mainstream studies that looked at the relationships between job demands and turnover intentions, between work engagement and turnover intentions and the effect of age on work engagement. Where it did not support the mainstream literature was in its findings on the effect of job demands on work engagement. There it supported findings that there might actually be an opposite effect than what is usually found, and it provides further evidence that the various types of job demands need further study (Podsakoff, et al., 2007; Akkerman, et. al., 2013). That said and warranting additional consideration is that the scale items making up the construct of job demands used in this study

had a relatively lower Cronbach's alpha value (0.714), indicating insufficient internal consistency among the contained items. Future studies need to employ more scale items with higher internal correlations to increase the reliability of the construct as an antecedent of work engagement.

The results of this study demonstrated that, when controlled for age, participants with a hopeful career state were more engaged and less likely to turn over, despite the high job demands that exist in the hospitality industry. This has implications for the literature on the constructs of hopeful career state, employee work engagement and turnover intentions.

Implications for Organizations and OD Practitioners

An organization's ability to reduce turnover is a critical financial and strategic imperative. Employee turnover has reached an all-time high and in 2018 cost American companies over \$600 billion (Mahan, Nelms, Bearden, & Pearce, 2019). The good news for practitioners is that this report also indicated that human resources practices could take a proactive role in reducing the impact of this trend. The Work Institute's 2019 Retention Report (Mahan, et al., 2019) provided the results of interviews with over 230,000 employees who left their positions in 2018 and found that seventy-seven percent of the reported turnover was due to preventable reasons such as career development, work-life balance, managerial behavior, or compensation/benefits. Of these reasons, career development was the most frequently reported at 21% of the total (Mahan, et al., 2019).

The scholarly literature also supports the notion that supportive human resource practices can lower turnover (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010), and it is crucial that OD practitioners continue to evaluate the utility of wide variety of valid approaches to address the issue. Prior research provided organizations with the knowledge that employee engagement is related to turnover intention and performance results for the individual and the organization (Bakker & Demerouti,

2009; Kim, 2014a; Kim et al., 2013; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). Clearly. Building on this knowledge, this research offers a new variable, hopeful career state that improves work engagement by specifically focusing on career development, the most frequently reported reason for voluntary turnover (Mahan, et al., 2019). It is expected that hospitality organizations in particular would choose to further examine this study's results for practical benefit. This research demonstrates that a hopeful career state can enhance the work engagement of employees in front office positions in full-service hotels, and subsequently reduce their turnover intentions. Furthermore, these results provide knowledge to assist OD practitioners of all industries in assessing various career development interventions. Given the utility of a hopeful career state, OD practitioners will have an informed and valid strategy available to improve work outcomes for employees and thereby enhance the competitive positions of organizations (Barrick & Zimmerman, 2005; Allen et al., 2003).

Limitations

This study was purposefully limited to front-office employees of full-service hotels in the United States. It does not include individuals who work in other departments in hotels or who are employed outside of the hotel industry. Therefore, the study's generalizability is limited. Studies on other positions within the hotel, other types of hotel properties, and hotels in different countries would be necessary to expand our understanding of employee turnover in the hotel industry and the effect of hopeful career state.

The survey responses collected for this study constitute self-reported data. This is a limitation of the study, since self-reporting may lead to social desirability bias in responses. Social desirability bias is a type of response bias in which survey respondents answer questions in a way that they believe will be viewed favorably by others (Fisher, 1993). If self-reported responses tend to over-reporting good behavior or under-reporting bad or undesirable behavior, it

can pose a serious problem when conducting research with self-reports, especially questionnaires, and interferes with the interpretation of average tendencies as well as individual differences (Gove & McGeerken, 1977, p. 1289).

This research study was also cross-sectional in nature and its results indicate only what the respondents feel about their experiences and their organizations at a particular point in time. While cross-sectional studies have advantages in terms of time and cost, they provide a picture that may shift depending on the timeframe (Levin, 2006).

Another limitation of the study is the small sample size. Due to the constrained time and resources, the study was only able to obtain 314 usable responses. The sample size required to demonstrate significant results depends on the effect size of the association between both the predictor and the mediator and between the moderator and the mediator (Fritz & MacKinnon, 2007). According to Karazsia et al. (2013), a sample larger than 450 may still be necessary in the context of small associations (i.e., $std. \beta = .14$ in Karazsia et al. (2013)). Although bootstrapping method helps alleviate the influence of small sample size to some extent (Fritz & MacKinnon, 2007), a larger sample is still necessary to achieve statistical power for the research questions considering that the effect size of all associations of interest are smaller than 0.1. It is suggested that researchers continue to investigate the focal issues using a larger sample.

Recommendations for Future Research

Longitudinal studies using this research instrument with support from archival data on hope to work, H2W, career development programming are recommended. In addition, research across a larger sample; in other areas of the hotel; public vs. private organizations, in other fields, and in non-U.S. settings would provide an enhanced perspective on the generalizability of these results to hospitality organizations.

Future research could also further explore (a) the influence of education levels, (b) the type of job, (c) gender, and (d) personality type, in order to delineate when a hopeful career state is most effective in increasing work engagement and lowering turnover intentions. Given that this sample was 54% manager, and 46% non-manager it would also be recommended to collect a sample representing a higher percentage of non-managers to see if study outcomes are significantly different. Also, examining the characteristics of managerial positions that might be particularly influential on employee engagement may be helpful in devising appropriate strategies to increase engagement in non-managerial employees.

Since the study determined the positive effect of hopeful career state on work engagement and turnover, a next logical development step would be to determine what interventions could be created to achieve a hopeful career state. As part of that process, future research could benefit not only from studies similar to the one presented here, but also from focus group discussions with employees and organizational leaders in order to gain their perspectives on how to create interventions that most effectively and practically develop a hopeful career state.

Conclusion

Employee turnover is one of the most pressing issues in the workplace today, in particular for the hospitality industry where hourly wages are lower than average and the work is demanding, such as the front office, an area with intense employee-customer service interactions. Finding possible solutions to this problem is of paramount importance, and this study presented one possible avenue for future investigation: the effectiveness of a hopeful career state in reducing turnover intentions. That said, the study only provided insight in the moderating role of hopeful career state and did not make any suggestions as to what specific interventions should

look like to achieve that state. That, I am glad to say in this the last sentence of my dissertation,
is for future research.

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Appendix A

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Absorption. Absorption is defined as “being fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one’s work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work” (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 75).

Autonomy. Autonomy is referred to “the degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence, and discretion to the individual in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out” (Hackman & Oldham, 1976, p. 258).

Hotel amenity. A hotel amenity is something of a premium nature provided when renting a room at a hotel, motel, or other place of lodging. Amenities provided in each hotel vary depending on service and price levels. In some places of lodging, certain amenities may come standard with all rooms (AH&LA, 2018).

Dedication. Dedication is defined as “a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge” (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 74).

Exhaustion. Exhaustion is a consequence of intensive physical, affective, and cognitive strain, resulting from long-term exposure to certain demands (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli, 2001; Janssen, Lam, & Huang, 2010).

Full-service hotels. Full service hotels maximize offerings to the guest to provide an all-in-one experience, albeit at a higher price point than limited service hotels. They often provide laundry and shuttle services, full restaurants, spa or fitness facilities, room service, and a concierge, and they have extra staff to help with luggage.

Front office. The front office represents the customer-facing function of a hotel. The functions of the front office generate most of the revenue for the hotel. Front-office employees facilitate the check-in/check-out process and provide service and support to hotel guests (Dollarhide, 2019).

Hope Action Theory (HAT). HAT (Niles, Yoon, Amundson, 2019) is a positive approach to one's career development. HAT integrates three theories: Bandura's (2001) Human Agency Theory, Hall's (1996) Career Meta-Competencies, and Snyder's (2002) Hope Theory. It seeks to foster a set of competencies, called hope-action competencies, in an employee. These include hope, self-reflection, self-clarity, visioning, goal-setting, implementation, and adaptation. Firmly situated within the positive psychology approach to human development, the model is strengths-based and incorporates innovative methods to foster these competencies, including kinesthetic activities, storytelling, visualization, and metaphor (Niles et al., 2011).

Hope. According to Snyder (2002), hope is defined by three elements: goals, the capacity to identify pathways to desired goals, and the capacity to motivate oneself to use those pathways.

Human resource management (HRM). Human resource management is the practice of recruiting, hiring, deploying, and managing an organization's employees. HRM is often referred to simply as human resources (HR). A company or organization's HR department is usually responsible for creating, putting into effect, and overseeing policies governing workers and the relationship of the organization with its employees (Sutner, 2019).

Job resources. Job resources are defined as "those psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that (a) are functional in achieving work-related goals, (b) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs, and (c) stimulate

personal growth and development” (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2007, p. 122). Autonomy, performance feedback, and skill variety are job resources for an employee.

Employee retention. Employee retention refers to the ability of an organization to retain its employees. Employee retention can be represented by a simple statistic. A retention rate of 80% usually indicates that an organization has kept 80% of its employees in a given period (McDougall, 2018).

Rooms Division. The Rooms Division is composed of departments and functions that play essential roles in providing the service guests expect during a hotel stay. The front office is the most visible department in the hotel, with the greatest amount of guest contact. Other departments in the rooms division are maintenance, valet, bell service, and concierge.

Turnover intentions. Turnover intentions refer to “conscious and deliberate willfulness to leave the organization” (Tett & Meyer, 1993, p. 262).

Vigor. Vigor is defined as “high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one’s work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties” (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 74).

Work engagement. Work engagement is defined as “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption” (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 74). It includes three components: vigor, dedication, and absorption.

Appendix B

SURVEY INSTRUMENT



**Summer 2019 Hospitality Workplace
Experiences Study**



Summer 2019 Hospitality Workplace Experiences Study

Greetings!

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the Hospitality *Workplace Experiences Study* being conducted by researchers at Penn State University. The purpose of this study is to determine how individuals' experiences on the job impact their feelings about their work and career.

For each of the questions on the following pages, indicate the response that best reflects your thoughts and opinions. We are not looking for "perfect scores," but rather an honest assessment of your perceptions. Mark only one response choice. If you need to change your response, clearly erase your initial choice. The survey should take approximately 10-20 minutes to complete.

Your participation is voluntary, but we hope you choose to participate. Please see the full consent to research that outlines your protections at the end of the survey questionnaire. To further ensure your anonymity, do not write your name on the survey.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Ms. Ruth Ann Jackson at jacksonruthann@gmail.com or (814) 863-4257.

Thank you for your time.

To what extent do the following statements describe your experiences on the job?

| | Not at all | To a limited extent | To some extent | To a considerable extent | To a great extent |
|--|------------|---------------------|----------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. I am given enough to do what is expected of me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. It often seems like I have too much work to do for | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. I have to deal with or satisfy too many people | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. The extent to which my position presents me with | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. The number of phone calls or guest interactions I have in a shift | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

The following nine statements are about how you feel at work. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel/felt this way about your most recent job. If you have never had this feeling, select the '0' (zero) in the space after the statement. If you have had this feeling, indicate how often you feel/felt it by clicking on the number (from 1 to 6) that best describes how frequently you feel that way.

| | Never | Almost Never (Only a few times in a given year) | Rarely (Less than once a month) | Sometimes (Once a month) | Often (Once a week) | Very Often (Several times a week) | Always (Every Day) |
|---|-------|--|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 6. At my work I feel bursting with energy | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 8. I am enthusiastic about my job | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 9. My job inspires me | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 10. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 11. I feel happy when I am working intently | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 12. I am proud of the work I do | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 13. I am immersed in my work | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 14. I get carried away when I am working | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding your current employment situation?

| | Definitely False | Somewhat False | Somewhat True | Definitely True |
|---|------------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 15. My current work will be helpful for my future career | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 16. My current work will enable me to be a better worker in the future | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 17. I feel I am getting closer to better career opportunities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 18. I can think of new employment options because of my current job | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 19. My current job provides resources (e.g., skill development, network, finances) for the next steps in my career journey | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 20. What I am doing now is helping me build skills and experiences for the future | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 21. What I am doing now is an important step in my career journey | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 22. What I am doing now will help me in my career journey | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 23. I am hopeful that what I am doing now will help me in my career journey | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

The following statements are about you and your job. Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement.

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| 24. I frequently think of quitting my job | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. I am planning to search for a new job during the next 6-12 months | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26. I want to still be working for this company one year from now | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Background Information

Please provide some background about yourself. This information will be used to aid in the statistical analysis of the data. In **no way** will this information be used to personally identify you.

Position in Organization

Which best describes your position in the company?

- Intern
- Entry Level
- Individual Contributor
- Team Leader / Supervisor
- Manager

Hours per Week

How many hours do you actually work per week on average? _____

Organizational Tenure

How long have you been employed with the company?

How long have you been in your current position?

_____ year(s), _____ month(s)

_____ year(s), _____ month(s)

Educational level

What is the highest level of education achieved?

- Less than High School
- High School/GED
- Some College Courses
- Associates (2-3 year college)
- Baccalaureate (4-year university)
- Master level
- Doctoral level

If yes, have you participated in any company sponsored career development programs?

- Yes
- No

Why or why not? _____

Ethnicity

- Caucasian
- Hispanic
- African American / Black
- Asian
- American Indian
- Pacific Islander
- Prefer Not to Answer
- Other

Age _____

Gender

- Male
- Female
- Non-Binary
- Other

The survey is now complete. Thank you for your time.

Consent for Research

The Pennsylvania State University

Title of Project: The moderating role of a hopeful career state and the mediating role of work engagement in the relationship between job demands and turnover intentions of front office employees in full-service hotels in the United States

Principal Investigator: Ruth Ann Jackson

Address: 225 Mateer Building, University Park, PA 16802

Telephone Number: 814-933-9128

Faculty Advisor: Hyung Joon Yoon

Faculty Advisor Telephone Number: 814-865-1876

We are asking you to be in a research study. This form gives you information about the research.

Whether or not you take part is up to you. You can choose not to take part. You can agree to take part and later change your mind. Your decision will not be held against you and there will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled.

Please ask questions about anything that is unclear to you and take your time to make your choice.

1. Why is this research study being done?

We are conducting a survey study to find out if employees with a hopeful career state are more engaged in their work and therefore less likely to think about leaving their jobs.

Approximately 400-450 people will take part in this research study nationwide.

2. What will happen in this research study?

You will be asked to provide responses to a short survey about your workplace experiences. You are free to skip any question in the survey that you would prefer not to answer.

3. What are the risks and possible discomforts from being in this research study?

There is a risk of loss of confidentiality if your information or your identity is obtained by someone other than the investigators, but precautions will be taken to prevent this from happening. The confidentiality of your electronic data created by you or by the researchers will be maintained as required by applicable law and to the degree permitted by the technology used. Absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

4. What are the possible benefits from being in this research study?

4a. What are the possible benefits to you?

You are not likely to benefit from participating in this research study.

4b. What are the possible benefits to others?

Your input may help the hospitality industry address high levels of industry turnover.

5. What other options are available instead of being in this research study?

You may decide at any time to not participate in this study.

6. How long will you take part in this research study?

If you agree to take part, it will take you about 10-20 minutes to complete this research study.

7. How will your privacy and confidentiality be protected if you decide to take part in this research study?

7a. What happens to the information collected for the research?

Paper surveys will be converted to electronic spreadsheet form, in order to facilitate data analysis. However, electronic versions will contain only a code number, and no personally-identifying information. However, absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

We will do our best to keep your participation in this research study confidential to the extent permitted by law. However, it is possible that other people may find out about your participation in this research study. For example, the following people/groups may check and copy records about this research.

- The Office for Human Research Protections in the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services
- The Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies) and Penn State's Office for Research Protections.

7b. What will happen to my research information and/or samples after the study is completed?

The electronic data will be stored indefinitely with identifiers removed. The paper surveys will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the principal investigator's office during the study. Upon completion of the study, the paper surveys will be shredded.

We may use the data collected for future research studies or may share the data collected with other investigators here or at other institutions for future research without your additional informed consent. Future research may be similar to this study or completely different.

8. What are the costs of taking part in this research study?

None.

9. Will you be paid or receive credit to take part in this research study?

You will not receive any payment or compensation for being in this research study.

10. Who is paying for this research study? N/A

11. What are your rights if you take part in this research study?

Taking part in this research study is voluntary.

- You do not have to be in this research.
- If you choose to be in this research, you have the right to stop at any time.
- If you decide not to be in this research or if you decide to stop at a later date, there will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled.

12. If you have questions or concerns about this research study, whom should you call?

Please call the head of the research study (principal investigator), Ruth Ann Jackson at 814-933-9128 if you:

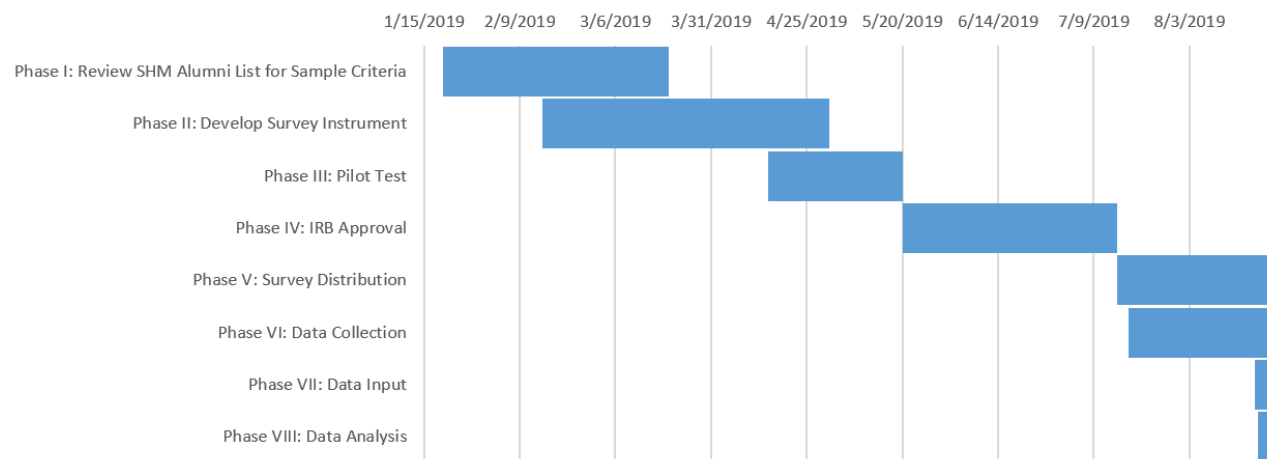
- Have questions, complaints or concerns about the research, including questions about compensation.
- Believe you may have been harmed by being in the research study.

You may also contact the Office for Research Protections at (814) 865-1775, IRB-ORP@psu.edu if you:

- Have questions regarding your rights as a person in a research study.
- Have concerns, complaints, or general questions about the research.
- You may also call this number if you cannot reach the research team or wish to offer input or to talk to someone else about any concerns related to the research.

INFORMED CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN RESEARCH

Your participation implies your voluntary consent to participate in the research. Please keep or print a copy of this form for your records.



VITA

Earned Degrees

Ph.D. The Pennsylvania State University
Workforce Education
December 2019

M.B.A. The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania
Finance and Economics
May 1987

B.S. The Pennsylvania State University
Finance
May 1980

Academic Experience

Jan 1995 - Present **Instructor**
School of Hospitality Management
The Pennsylvania State University

Professional Experience

1994 - 1996 **Director of Client Relations**
Penn State Executive Programs

1989 - 1993 **Director of Trade Show Productions**
Houston Astrodome

1980 - 1987 **Senior Financial Analyst**
Sun Company

University Service:

SHM Professional Masters Ad-hoc Committee 2016-Present
SHM COYLE Ad-hoc Committee 2016-Present
SHM MEMC Committee-2016- Present
SHM Curriculum Committee 2017-2019
SHM Outreach Committee 2005 - 2018
SHM Diversity Committee 2005 - 2010