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The Relationships Between Workload, Service Orientation, Employee Performance, and Job Satisfaction: A Study on 4 and 5-Star Hotels in Antalya

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Abstract. *The study aims to examine the relationships between workload (work overload), service orientation, employee performance and job satisfaction among frontline employees working in 4 and 5 star hotels in Antalya. Furthermore, the study explores the role of service orientation in explaining the relationship between workload and employee outcomes. In this study, employing a quantitative research design, data were collected from 493 frontline personnel working in 4 and 5-star hotels operating in the Antalya region via survey technique. In data analysis, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) were applied using the LISREL 8.80 program. According to the structural model analysis results, work overload was found to negatively affect job satisfaction, while service orientation positively influenced employee performance. Contrary to the common expectation in the literature, work overload showed a positive association with service orientation, which may reflect the possibility that some employees perceive high workload as a challenge rather than a hindrance. The findings further revealed that service orientation mediated the relationship between work overload and employee performance. This study contributes to the literature by demonstrating that work overload does not necessarily reduce employee performance in service-oriented work settings. The findings suggest that service orientation may function as an important mechanism through which workload is associated with employee performance. By integrating workload, service orientation, employee performance and job satisfaction within a single structural model, the study provides a more comprehensive understanding of employee outcomes in the hospitality industry.*

Keywords: *work overload, service orientation, employee performance, job satisfaction, structural equation modeling, hospitality industry*

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İş yükü, xidmət yönümlülüyü, işçilərin fəaliyyət səmərəliliyi və iş məmnuniyyəti arasındakı əlaqələr: Antalyadakı 4 və 5 ulduzlu otellər üzrə tədqiqat

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Xülasə. *Tədqiqatın məqsədi Antalyada 4 və 5 ulduzlu otellərdə çalışan ön cəbhə işçiləri arasında iş yükü, xüsusilə həddindən artıq iş yükü xidmət yönümlülüyü, işçi performansı və iş məmnuniyyəti arasındakı əlaqələri araşdırmaqdır. Bundan əlavə, tədqiqat iş yükü ilə işçi nəticələri arasındakı*

əlaqəni izah etməkdə xidmət yönümlülüyünün rolunu araşdırır. Kəmiyyət tədqiqat dizaynından istifadə edən bu tədqiqatda, Antalya bölgəsində fəaliyyət göstərən 4 və 5 ulduzlu otellərdə çalışan 493 ön cəbhə işçisindən sorğu texnikası vasitəsilə məlumatlar toplanmışdır. Məlumatların təhlilində LISREL 8.80 proqramından istifadə edərək Təsdiqləyici Faktor Təhlili (CFA) və Struktur Tənlik Modelləşdirməsi (SEM) tətbiq edilmişdir. Struktur model təhlilinin nəticələrinə görə, iş yükünün həddindən artıq olması iş məmnuniyyətinə mənfi təsir göstərdiyi, xidmət yönümlülüyün isə işçilərin performansına müsbət təsir göstərdiyi aşkar edilmişdir. Ədəbiyyatdakı ümumi gözləntinin əksinə olaraq, iş yükünün xidmət yönümlülüyü ilə müsbət əlaqəsi var idi ki, bu da bəzi işçilərin yüksək iş yükünü maneə deyil, çətinlik kimi qəbul etmə ehtimalını əks etdirə bilər. Nəticələr daha sonra göstərdi ki, xidmət yönümlülüyü iş yükü ilə işçilərin performansı arasındakı əlaqəni vasitəçi rol oynayır. Bu tədqiqat, iş yükünün xidmət yönümlü iş şəraitində işçilərin performansını mütləq azaltmadığını nümayiş etdirməklə ədəbiyyata töhfə verir. Nəticələr göstərir ki, xidmət yönümlülüyü iş yükünün işçilərin performansı ilə əlaqələndirildiyi vacib bir mexanizm kimi fəaliyyət göstərə bilər. İş yükünü, xidmət yönümlülüyünü, işçilərin performansını və iş məmnuniyyətini vahid struktur model daxilində birləşdirməklə, tədqiqat qonaqpərvərlik sənayesində işçilərin nəticələrini daha əhatəli şəkildə anlamağa imkan verir.

Açar sözlər: *iş yükü, xidmət yönümlülüyü, işçilərin performansı, iş məmnuniyyəti, struktur tənlik modelləşdirməsi, qonaqpərvərlik sənayesi*

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Introduction

Achieving a sustainable competitive advantage for modern enterprises, especially in the service sector, depends largely on the performance exhibited by their employees and their customer-oriented approaches. In today's rapidly changing and competitive business environment, the increasing duties and responsibilities expected of employees have brought the concept of "workload" to the center of organizational behavior literature (Johan & Satrya, 2023, p. 545; Mony & Priyastiwi, 2025, p. 106). Work overload is considered a critical stress factor that directly and negatively affects both job satisfaction and overall performance by straining the physical and psychological capacities of employees (Herawati et al., 2023, p. 17; Paliga, 2023, p. 5111).

However, the effect of workload on performance does not always occur directly; this relationship is shaped through various psychological and behavioral mechanisms. Current international studies in the literature empirically prove that job satisfaction plays a fundamental mediating role in this relationship (Mony & Priyastiwi, 2025, p. 115). On the other hand, in service-oriented businesses where value creation and customer interaction are intense, another vital element determining performance stands out as "service orientation" (Sadiq et al., 2022, p. 50; Handayani & Nabhan, 2025, p. 15). Service orientation refers to employees' tendencies to meet customer needs and derive natural enjoyment from providing service, and it acts as the driving force of high performance (Saura et al., 2005, p. 497; Kenar & Yeşiltaş, 2024, p. 237).

When the literature is reviewed, although the effects of workload on job satisfaction and performance are generally examined with one-dimensional models (Johan & Satrya, 2023, p. 545), studies addressing the simultaneous mediating roles of both "job satisfaction" and "service orientation" in the multidimensional effect of perceived workload on employee performance in a holistic model are

limited. There is a need to explain organizational dynamics with multivariate structural models based on strong theoretical foundations (e.g., the Job Demands-Resources Model and Social Exchange Theory). Accordingly, the primary purpose of this study is to examine the relationships between workload, service orientation, employee performance and job satisfaction among frontline employees working in the hospitality sector. In addition, the study investigates the role of service orientation in explaining the relationship between workload and employee performance.

Literature Review And Hypotheses

In today's competitive service and hospitality sector, employee well-being and its impact on organizational outcomes have become one of the main focal points of researchers. Current studies in the literature show that workload plays a determining role in employees' psychological states and ultimate service performances (Johan & Satrya, 2023, p. 545). Particularly in labor-intensive sectors, to achieve organizational goals, there is a need for holistic models that consider employee attitudes (job satisfaction) and individual abilities (service orientation) as a whole (Kenar & Yeşiltaş, 2024, p. 237). In this context, the main variables of the research—workload, job satisfaction, service orientation, and employee performance—are briefly explained below.

Workload (work overload): Workload refers to the situation where an employee faces job demands that exceed the amount, intensity, and capacity of the work they must perform within a specific time frame (Paliga, 2023, p. 5111). Although an optimal level of workload can motivate an employee, continuous work overload exceeding capacity creates stress and burnout, acting as a primary pressure element that directly reduces both psychological satisfaction and productivity (Herawati et al., 2023, p. 17; Johan & Satrya, 2023, p. 545).

Job Satisfaction: Job satisfaction is a state of positive psychological and emotional fulfillment that an employee feels as a result of evaluating their job, experiences in the work environment, and the opportunities provided by the organization (Latifah et al., 2023, p. 724). Individuals with high job satisfaction show greater commitment to their organizations, cope more easily with stress factors, and are more inclined to exhibit customer-oriented proactive behaviors (Mony & Priyastiwi, 2025, p. 115).

Service Orientation: Service orientation is an individual's inherent tendency to be willing to meet customer needs, communicate effectively, and derive natural enjoyment from providing service (Kim et al., 2025, p. 1018). This trait is a critical skill, especially in highly interactive sectors like hospitality, enabling employees to exhibit behaviors centered on customer satisfaction and to achieve a natural fit with the work environment (Murray, 2022, p. 119; Handayani & Nabhan, 2025, p. 15).

Employee Performance: Employee performance is an outcome showing the extent to which an individual successfully and with the desired quality fulfills their assigned duties and responsibilities in line with the organization's goals (Deb et al., 2023, p. 630). In the service sector, performance encompasses not only technical skills but also the quality of service provided to the customer, extra-role behaviors, and productivity (Kenar & Yeşiltaş, 2024, p. 237).

Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

Shaped on the basis of the Job Demands-Resources Model and Social Exchange Theory, this study examines the multidimensional effect of workload on employee performance. Although the literature indicates that work overload directly leads to performance losses (Mony & Priyastiwi, 2025, p. 106), it also emphasizes that this relationship is indirectly shaped through the employee's job satisfaction and service orientation (Sadiq et al., 2022, p. 51; Johan & Satrya, 2023, p. 545).

In line with this theoretical network of relationships, the following hypotheses have been developed:

H1: Work overload has a significant and negative effect on service orientation.
H2: Work overload has a significant and negative effect on employee performance.
H3: Work overload has a significant and negative effect on job satisfaction.
H4: Service orientation has a significant and positive effect on employee performance.
H5: Service orientation has a significant and positive effect on job satisfaction.
H6: Employee performance has a significant and positive effect on job satisfaction.
H7: Service orientation has a full mediation role in the effect of work overload on employee performance.

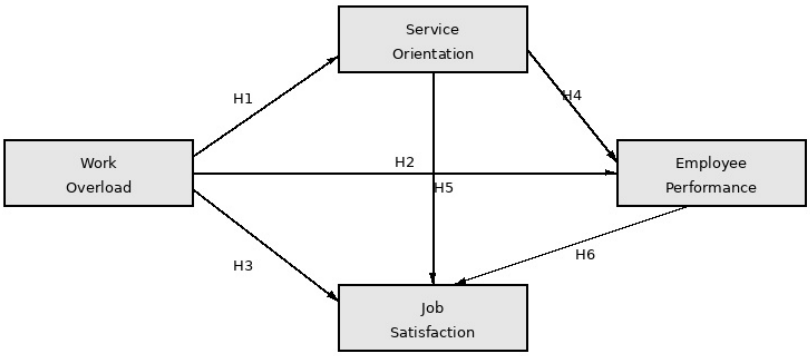


Figure 1
Conceptual framework

Source. Authors' own creation.

Methods

Research Locale
This research was conducted in 4- and 5-star hotel enterprises operating in the Antalya region, which is considered the tourism capital of Turkey and where labor-intensive service dynamics are experienced at the highest level. Particularly, 4- and 5-star hotels are considered the most suitable study areas in the context of multivariate organizational behavior research, such as employee performance and service orientation, due to their corporate management structures and higher capacities to adopt service-oriented human resource practices (Kenar & Yeşiltaş, 2024, p. 238).

Research Design
In this study, a quantitative and explanatory research design was adopted to test the multidimensional causal relationships among workload, job satisfaction, service orientation, and employee performance. The "cross-sectional survey" method was preferred because it reflects the state of phenomena within a specific timeframe and allows for the collection of statistically generalizable data from large populations (Mishra et al., 2023, p. 31).

Nature of the Data and Sampling Design
The primary data of the research were collected through questionnaires consisting of structured and closed-ended questions. The data collection process was carried out during the summer period of 2025, when tourism activities and consequently the workload of employees are at their peak. Considering the busyness of the participants during working hours, the drop-and-collect technique was used to maximize the response rate and avoid creating time pressure while answering the

questionnaires. This self-administered method minimizes possible response biases by allowing respondents to express themselves away from external pressures (Mishra et al., 2023, p. 31).

In sample selection, the convenience sampling method was used to reach frontline employees who are in direct face-to-face interaction with customers, in accordance with the main problem of the research. After excluding incomplete or incorrectly filled questionnaires from those distributed via the drop-and-collect technique, a total of 493 valid questionnaires were obtained. In the literature, it is emphasized that a sample size between 200 and 400 is ideal for robust analysis in order to ensure statistical power and convergence in models using Structural Equation Modeling (Deb et al., 2023, p. 630). The sample size of 493 reached in the study more than meets these methodological requirements.

Research Instruments

The measurement tools used in the research were adapted from empirical studies whose validity and reliability had been previously proven in the international literature. All statements in the questionnaire (four scales) were measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

1. *Service Orientation:* A 5-item scale adapted from the study by Susskind et al. (2003) was preferred to measure employees' tendencies to meet customer needs and their customer orientation.
2. *Employee Performance:* A 5-item performance scale based on the study by Wong et al. (2021) was used to evaluate employees' task success, productivity, and extra-role behaviors within the hotel.
3. *Job Satisfaction:* A 4-item job satisfaction scale, also used by Wong et al. (2021), was utilized to measure the internal fulfillment and happiness employees feel from their current duties and working conditions.
4. *Workload:* A 4-item scale used by Karatepe (2013) was preferred to measure the task demands exceeding employees' capacities and the time pressure (perceived work overload) on them (However, during construct validity analyses, one item with a low factor loading was excluded from the model, and the analyses were continued with 3 items).

In order to reduce the risk of Common Method Bias, which is frequently encountered in self-report survey applications, it was explicitly stated to the participants at the beginning of the questionnaire form that the data obtained would be used solely for scientific research purposes, and the names of individuals and institutions would strictly not be shared with third parties (Sadiq et al., 2022, p. 52).

Data Analysis And Results

Demographic Profile

The demographic characteristics of the 493 hotel employees participating in the research are summarized in Table 1. According to the descriptive statistical data obtained, the vast majority of the participants are male (71.60%) and single (68.76%). When the age distribution is examined, the largest group consists of young adults in the 20-29 age range (46.45%), followed by the 30-39 age group (22.11%). Regarding the departments where the participants work, employees in the food and beverage (F&B) department, where direct customer contact is most intense, have the highest share in the sample (72.62%), followed by front office employees (22.72%).

In terms of industry experience, the participants show a relatively balanced distribution. The most concentrated group is those with 5-10 years of experience (25.35%), followed by those with 10-15 years (24.14%), less than 1 year (22.92%), and 1-5 years (21.50%). This situation indicates that the personnel participating in the research consist of both a dynamic group newly entering the sector and a competent group with significant sectoral experience.

Table 1
Demographic profile of respondents

Category	Label	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	353	71.60
	Female	140	28.40
Age	Under 20	59	11.97
	20–29	229	46.45
	30–39	109	22.11
	40–49	74	15.01
	50 and above	22	4.46
Marital Status	Single	339	68.76
	Married	154	31.24
Department	Food and Beverage	358	72.62
	Front Office	112	22.72
	Management	23	4.67
Experience	< 1 year	113	22.92
	1–5 years	106	21.50
	5–10 years	125	25.35
	10–15 years	119	24.14
	15–20 years	11	2.23
	20+ years	19	3.85
Total	Total	493	100.0

Source. Authors' own creation.

Central Tendency Measurement of Constructs
The lowest and highest mean and standard deviation values belonging to each variable (construct) are shown in Table 2. The item means of all constructs in the research range from 3.34 to 4.54. This situation indicates that the participants generally preferred to respond to the statements at the "agree" level. In addition, the standard deviation values of the responses given to the items range between 0.733 and 1.349.

Table 2
Central tendencies' measurement

Constructs	Lowest Mean	Highest Mean	Lowest SD	Highest SD
1. Workload	3.34	3.35	1.283	1.349
2. Job Satisfaction	4.08	4.34	0.854	0.946
3. Service Orientation	4.28	4.54	0.808	0.923
4. Employee Performance	4.42	4.54	0.733	0.781

Source. Authors' own creation.

Measurement Model Evaluation

Reliability Analysis
To test the internal consistency and convergent validity of the constructs in the research model, reliability and confirmatory factor analyses were conducted. In the literature, it is emphasized that for scales to be considered to have a high level of internal consistency, Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) values must be above the 0.70 threshold; and to prove that convergent validity is achieved, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values must generally exceed the 0.50 threshold.

The analysis results regarding the measurement model are summarized in Table 3. According to the findings obtained, Cronbach's Alpha values of all variables in the model ranged from 0.778 to 0.888, and Composite Reliability (CR) values ranged from 0.780 to 0.889. Both reliability values were well above the acceptable limit of 0.70, proving that the scales have strong internal consistency. In the context of convergent validity; the AVE values of the workload, service orientation, and employee performance variables successfully exceeded the 0.50 threshold (ranging from 0.567 to 0.661). The AVE value of the job satisfaction variable was 0.470, just below the limit. However, in the structural equation literature, it is accepted that convergent validity is confirmed in cases where the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is not significantly lower than 0.50 and the factor loadings belonging to the relevant construct are sufficient. As a matter of fact, the fact that the Composite Reliability (CR) value of the job satisfaction variable is at a very strong level such as 0.780 supports that the internal consistency and validity of this dimension are ensured. As a result, it was determined that the measurement tools in the research model are highly reliable and valid.

Table 3
Reliability and convergent validity

Construct	Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE
Service Orientation	5	0.888	0.889	0.617
Employee Performance	5	0.862	0.866	0.567
Job Satisfaction	4	0.778	0.780	0.470
Workload	3	0.833	0.852	0.661

Note. AVE = Average Variance Extracted; CR = Composite Reliability.

Source. Authors' own creation.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

To test the construct validity of the scales used in the research, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed using the LISREL 8.80 program. During the analysis process, one item with a low factor loading (AIY1) was removed from the model, thereby increasing the goodness of fit of the model. The goodness of fit indices of the measurement model consisting of four latent variables (service orientation, employee performance, job satisfaction, and work overload) and 17 observed variables were examined. According to the CFA findings, the goodness of fit values of the measurement model are as follows: $\chi^2 = 265.08$, df = 113, $\chi^2/df = 2.34$, RMSEA = 0.052, CFI = 0.99, NFI = 0.97, NNFI = 0.98, IFI = 0.99, GFI = 0.94, AGFI = 0.92, and SRMR = 0.036. In the literature, a χ^2/df ratio below 3, an RMSEA value below 0.08, and indices such as CFI, NFI, NNFI, and GFI exceeding the 0.90 threshold are considered indicators that the model fits the data perfectly (Deb et al., 2023, p. 630). These values obtained prove that the established measurement model is highly compatible with the empirical data. As seen in Table 4, the standardized factor loadings of all items in the measurement model range from 0.65 to 0.92, and all t-values (between 11.65 and 23.45) are statistically significant at the 0.001 significance level. These results confirm convergent validity, showing that the survey items measure the variables they are related to in a strong and valid way.

Table 4

Confirmatory factor analysis results

Construct	Items	Standardized Factor Loading	t-value
Service Orientation	HVY1	0.81	21.22
	HVY2	0.84	22.43
	HVY3	0.71	17.50
	HVY4	0.76	19.34
	HVY5	0.80	20.97
Employee Performance	IP1	0.79	20.29
	IP2	0.71	17.37
	IP3	0.83	21.93
	IP4	0.77	19.78
	IP5	0.65	15.70
Job Satisfaction	IM1	0.69	15.74
	IM2	0.65	14.58
	IM3	0.72	16.49
	IM4	0.68	15.41
Workload	AIY2	0.67	15.84
	AIY3	0.92	23.45
	AIY4	0.83	20.76

Note. All t-values are significant at $p < 0.001$. Model Fit Indices: $\chi^2/df = 2.34$; RMSEA = 0.052; CFI = 0.99; NFI = 0.97; NNFI = 0.98; IFI = 0.99; GFI = 0.94; AGFI = 0.92; SRMR = 0.036.

Source. Authors' own creation.

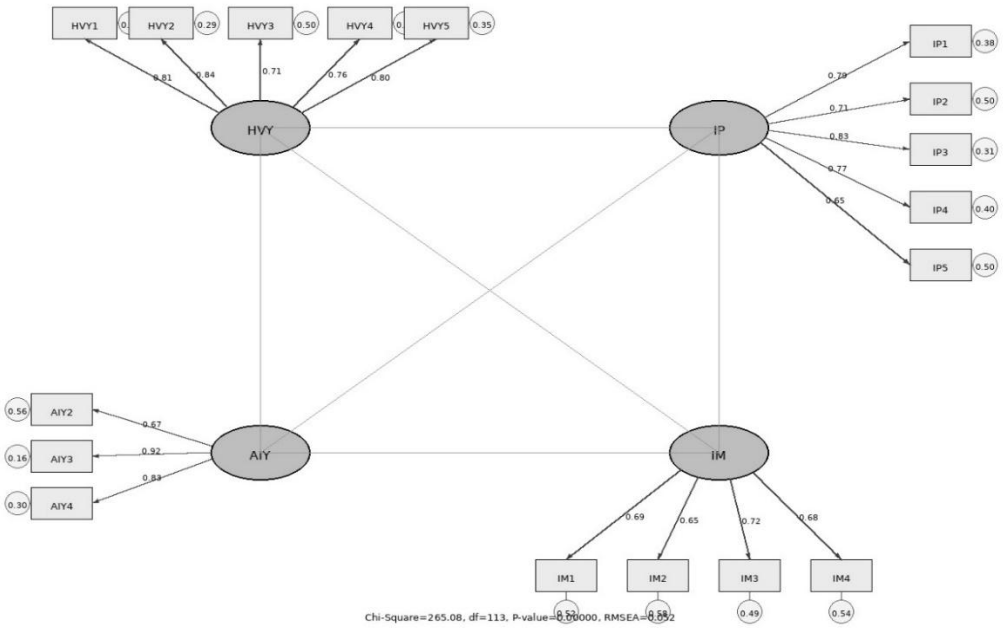


Figure 2

Confirmatory factor analysis model

Source. Authors' own creation.

Discriminant Validity

As the final stage in the evaluation of the measurement model, discriminant validity, which shows how empirically distinct the constructs are from each other, was tested. In the literature, discriminant validity is used to evaluate how different and unique a variable in the model is from other variables. In this research, whether discriminant validity was achieved or not was examined with the Fornell-Larcker criterion, one of the most widely accepted methods in the literature. According to the Fornell and Larcker (1981) rule, to ensure this validity, the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value of each latent variable must be higher than the correlation coefficients of that variable with all other variables.

When the diagonal values highlighted in bold in Table 5 are examined, it is clearly seen that these values (0.818, 0.775, 0.833, and 0.805) are higher than all other inter-construct correlation values in their respective rows and columns. Even the correlation between employee performance and service orientation (0.761), which shows the closest relationship to each other, was found to remain below the diagonal values of the relevant constructs (0.805 and 0.833). These results prove that the concepts in the research model are not confused with each other, each variable measures a unique construct within itself, and the discriminant validity condition is successfully met.

Table 5
Discriminant validity results

	Workload	Job Satisfaction	Service Orientation	Employee Performance
Workload	0.818	-	-	-
Job Satisfaction	-0.128	0.775	-	-
Service Orientation	0.059	0.446	0.833	-
Employee Performance	0.060	0.563	0.761	0.805

Note. Bold diagonal values represent the square root of AVE.

Source. Authors' own creation.

Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing
After the measurement model met the reliability and validity conditions, the structural model evaluation was initiated to test the direct and indirect (mediating) causal relationships in the conceptual model. In structural equation modeling (SEM), the explanatory power R^2 (Explained Variance) values of the model, the direction of the established hypotheses, and their statistical significance (standardized β coefficients and t-values) are examined.

When the goodness of fit indices obtained as a result of the structural model analysis performed via LISREL are examined ($\chi^2 = 265.08$, df = 113, $\chi^2/df = 2.34$, RMSEA = 0.052, CFI = 0.99, NFI = 0.97, IFI = 0.99, GFI = 0.94), it is seen that the model is in perfect harmony with the empirical data. When the R^2 values indicating the predictive power of the model are evaluated; it was determined that the established model strongly explains 75% ($R^2 = 0.75$) of the variance in employee performance and 47% ($R^2 = 0.47$) of the variance in job satisfaction.

According to the results of the direct effect hypothesis tests presented in Table 6; it was confirmed that work overload has a significant and negative effect on job satisfaction in accordance with expectations in the literature (β = -0.14, t = -2.99), thus H3 is accepted. When other strong relationships in the model are examined; it was proven that service orientation affects employee performance very strongly and positively (β = 0.86, t = 11.94), and increased employee performance also positively increases job satisfaction (β = 0.80, t = 5.85), thus H4 and H6 are accepted.

On the other hand, it was determined that work overload has a significant positive effect on service orientation (β = 0.12, t = 2.38), contrary to the general expectation (negative effect) in the literature, and therefore H1 is rejected (The theoretical justifications for this specific situation will be discussed in the context of "challenge stressors" in the discussion section). Furthermore, the direct effect of work overload on employee performance (β = 0.02, t = 0.66) and the direct effect of service orientation on job satisfaction (β = -0.14, t = -1.12) were not found to be statistically significant, and therefore H2 and H5 are also rejected.

When the mediation hypothesis of the research is examined; the mediating role of service orientation in the relationship between work overload and employee performance (H7) was evaluated. According to the analysis results; it was observed that work overload significantly affects service orientation (β = 0.12) and service orientation directly increases performance (β = 0.86). In contrast, the direct effect of work overload on performance is statistically insignificant (t = 0.66). According to the structural equation literature, this statistical table, which shows that the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable occurs entirely through the mediator variable, proves the "full mediation" effect. Therefore, H7 is supported and accepted.

Table 6
Hypothesis testing results

H	Path	Std. β	t-value	Expected Direction	Decision
H1	Workload → Service Orientation	0.12	2.38	Negative	Rejected
H2	Workload → Employee Performance	0.02	0.66	Negative	Rejected
H3	Workload → Job Satisfaction	-0.14	-2.99	Negative	Accepted
H4	Service Orientation → Employee Performance	0.86	11.94	Positive	Accepted
H5	Service Orientation → Job Satisfaction	-0.14	-1.12	Positive	Rejected
H6	Employee Performance → Job Satisfaction	0.80	5.85	Positive	Accepted
H7	Workload → Service Orientation → Employee Performance	Indirect	Full Mediation	Mediation	Accepted

Note. Std. β = Standardized Beta Coefficient. R^2 (Employee Performance) = 0.75; R^2 (Job Satisfaction) = 0.47. Model Fit: $\chi^2/df = 2.34$; RMSEA = 0.052; CFI = 0.99; GFI = 0.94.

Source: Authors' own creation.

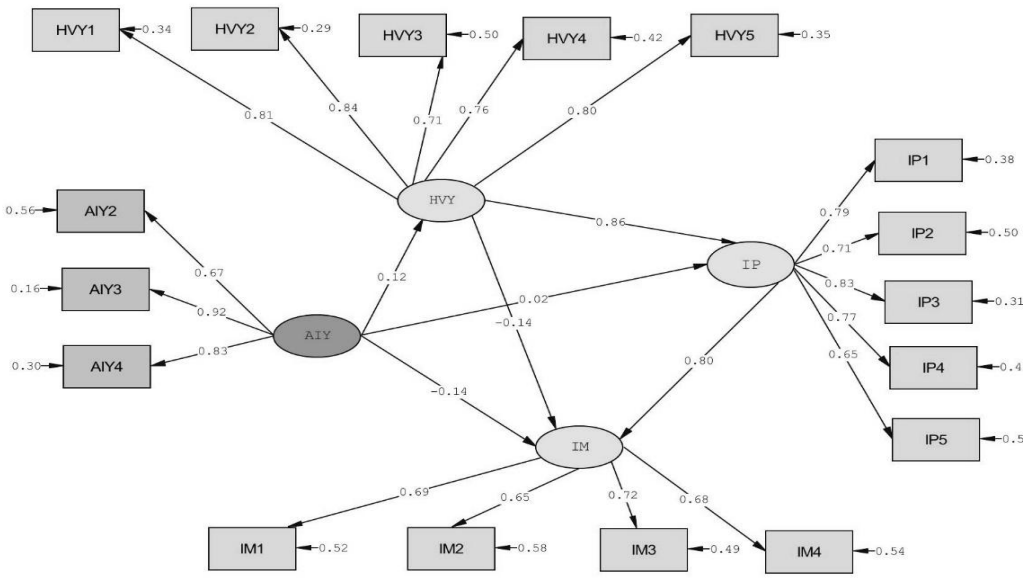


Figure 3
Structural equation model

Source. Authors' own creation.

Discussion and Conclusion

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between workload, service orientation, employee performance and job satisfaction among frontline employees in the hospitality sector using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). While the analysis results largely support the conceptual model of the research, they offer vital theoretical contributions to the hospitality marketing and organizational behavior literature that challenge conventional wisdom.

When the direct effect hypotheses of the research are examined, the results indicate that work overload negatively and significantly affects job satisfaction (H3 Accepted). This finding is consistent with recent studies (Johan & Satrya, 2023, p. 545; Mony & Priyastiwi, 2025, p. 106) asserting that increasing job demands and workload reduce the intrinsic fulfillment of employees. On the other hand, the strongest relationship in the model was found between service orientation and employee performance (H4 Accepted). The fact that employees who enjoy service delivery and prioritize customer needs have much higher performance levels is consistent with the core assumptions of the service orientation literature (Donavan et al., 2004, p. 128; Alagöz, 2023, p. 78). It was also observed that increased employee performance positively fosters job satisfaction (H6 Accepted). Contrary to H5, service orientation did not have a statistically significant effect on job satisfaction. One possible explanation is that job satisfaction in the hospitality industry is shaped more strongly by organizational factors such as compensation, working conditions, managerial support and career opportunities than by employees' customer-oriented tendencies. Therefore, although service-oriented employees may exhibit higher performance levels, this orientation alone may not be sufficient to increase job satisfaction.

However, one of the most noteworthy findings of the study concerns the effect of work overload on service orientation. The traditional expectation in the literature (the H1 hypothesis that workload would damage service orientation) was rejected in this study as the relationship was significant and in the opposite direction (positive). In other words, it was found that as the workload of hotel employees in the Antalya region increased, their service orientation also increased. Although this finding may appear counterintuitive at first glance, is explained by the concepts of "Activation Theory" and "Challenge Stressors" emphasized by Haldorai et al. (2022). Hospitality employees do not perceive heavy workload as a hindrance to their performance; on the contrary, they see it as a goal and a challenge where they can demonstrate their professional competence, which allows them to reach an optimum level of arousal and focus more on customer service. These findings are consistent with the mediation hypothesis of the study (H7 Accepted). No direct negative effect of work overload on employee performance was found (H2 Rejected). Workload converts into performance only when it triggers the employee's "service orientation". This "full mediation" finding offers a unique mechanism explaining how stressors may translate into performance through positive attitudes (service orientation), moving beyond simple linear models (Alagöz, 2023, p. 78).

Theoretical Implications

This study provides theoretical contributions to both the Job Demands-Resources Model and Social Exchange Theory. First, the study demonstrates that work overload, which is usually coded as a "destructive" element in traditional literature, does not always result in performance decline in service-oriented sectors. Second, the findings suggest that "service orientation" is more than just a personality trait or recruitment criterion (Kuşluvan & Eren, 2011, p. 139); it may function as a psychological buffer (full mediator) that helps maintain employee performance during periods of high workload and work intensity (peak seasons). In addition, the study contributes to the hospitality literature by demonstrating that service orientation functions not only as an employee characteristic but also as a mechanism through which job demands may be translated into positive performance outcomes. The findings indicate that service orientation helps employees maintain high performance

levels even under demanding work conditions. This contribution expands previous studies that primarily examined service orientation as a direct antecedent of employee performance.

Managerial Implications

In the tourism industry, it is almost impossible to avoid work overload, especially during high seasons. Based on this reality, the findings provide important practical strategies for hotel managers:

Human Resources and Recruitment: Instead of trying to eliminate the workload entirely, businesses may benefit from focusing on hiring individuals with high "service orientation" (those who enjoy helping customers and are empathetic) who do not compromise on service quality under high intensity.

Training and Development: To improve the service orientation of existing employees, hotel management may provide psychological support and organize training (service culture) programs where employees perceive the workload not as a "threat" but as a professional "challenge" (Haldorai et al., 2022).

Limitations and Future Research

In addition to its contributions to the literature and the sector, this study has some limitations. First, the data were collected through a cross-sectional survey design and only from 4- and 5-star hotels operating in the Antalya region. It is suggested that future research should use longitudinal designs and include different destinations and alternative service sectors (e.g., restaurants, airlines) to increase the generalizability of the findings. Second, all variables in this research are based on the self-reports of the employees. In future studies, designing models where "employee performance" and "service orientation" are evaluated by supervisors or customers (multi-source) will further reduce possible common method biases (Podsakoff et al., 2003, p. 879).

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