# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT AND TURNOVER INTENTIONS AMONG EMPLOYEES IN HOTEL HOUSEKEEPING

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**Abstract**
Purpose – Balancing the demands of work and family life is considered as a major problem in modern society. Impossibility of balancing these two spheres leads to emotional exhaustion of employees and the occurrence of intentions to leave organization. Due to this, the purpose of this research was to investigate the relationship between work-family conflictand turnover intentions.
Methodology – The research was conducted among employees in the housekeeping department in the hotel industry in Serbia. The sample was mostly made up of women, which is not surprising because of the structure of gender employment in hotel housekeeping. The research was conducted in hotels of all categories, but the majority of respondents work in hotels with 3* and 4*.
Findings – The results indicated there is no statistically significant differences according to gender when it comes to isolated factors. Beside this, correlation analysis showed statistically significant correlation between factors work-family conflict and turnover intentions, as well as between family-work conflict and turnover intentions. The significant high correlation was calculated between emotional exhaustion and turnover intentions, but the high positive correlation also exists between factors family-work conflict and emotional exhaustion, as well as between work-family conflict and family-work conflict.
Contribution – Since there is a lack of research who deals with hotel housekeeping employees, this research gives a contribution to literature in this field. Establishment of a family-supportive environment can help organization to successfully manage conflicts between work and family and decrease turnover intentions of employees.
**Keywords** work-family conflict, hotel housekeeping, employees, turnover intentions

## INTRODUCTION

Balancing the demands of work and family life is a major problem in the modern society. Changes in employment structure have created more dual-career couples who contribute equally to family incomes. An increasing number of career women as well as dual-earner families are some of the factors that can cause work-family conflict of family-work conflict (McElwain et al., 2005). Consequently, it is a common occurrence that employees are trying to balance the demands of family and work life. Complexity of work and family issues are increasingly popular topics in contemporary organizational research, and many researchers dedicated their attention to the research of this issue in hotel industry (Carlson and Kacmar, 2000; Karatepe and Baddar, 2006; Karatepe and Sokmen, 2006; Karatepe and Kilic, 2007; Karatepe and Uludag, 2008; Namasivayam and Zhao, 2007; Zhao and Namasivayam, 2012). Hotel industry is labour intensive and needs to provide high quality services to their customers (Furunes, 2005), which include

delivering services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (Deery and Jago, 2009; Furunes and Mykletun, 2007). Work-family conflict in hospitality industry has increased due to demands of hotels work characteristic colliding with family life (Hsieh et al., 2009). Research of work and family conflicts are fueled by its negative consequences for both organization and individuals (Aryee, 1992; Frone et al., 1992). Economic, social, technological and global changes have a great impact on work-family imbalance. Due to balancing those two spheres of life, a lower level of work-family conflict, as well as a higher level of work-family facilitation, are recommended (Rotondo and Kinckaid, 2008). Considering the characteristics of employment in hospitality industry, employees are often confronted with overtime, working on weekends and holidays, low wages and irregular shifts, which necessarily leads to conflict between work and family life. Due to the fact that hotels, as service-based organizations, base their success on customer satisfaction, it is necessary to provide a high-quality service. Satisfied employees are crucial in providing quality service, so it is very important to create a business environment that will ensure the satisfaction of employees. Based on previous research in this field, the purpose of this study is to examine the presence of work-family conflict among hotel housekeeping employees as well as to identify the relationship between work-family conflict and turnover intentions. The employees in hotel housekeeping department are often neglected, which results in lack of research related to problems of housekeeping employees. The work-family conflict and its impact on turnover intentions is a frequently researched topic in the hotel industry, but there is a deficiency of research dealing with problems of housekeeping employees. Based on this and characteristics of work in housekeeping, the authors were motivated to examine the work-family conflict and its impact on turnover intentions in order to contribute to the literature in this field.

## 1. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1.1. Work-family and family work conflict

Work-family conflict (further in text WFC) and family-work conflict (further in text FWC) are distinct; however, they are conceptually related varieties of interrole conflict (Frone et al., 1992; Netemeyer et al., 1996; Yavas et al., 2008). WFC may be a growing challenge for contemporary societies, as a colossal majority of males and females report that their job interferes with their family responsibilities (Glavin and Schieman, 2002). Some researchers indicated that work-family conflict is created bidirectionally – work to family conflict and family to work conflict (Duxbury et al, 1992; Gutek et al., 1991; Goldsmith, 2007). In their study, Koyncu et al. (2012) found positive correlation between work-life and FWC. Recent research has shown that supervisor support has an effect on reducing WFC among employees (Anderson et al., 2002). Research conducted by O'Driscoll et al. (2003) indicated that employees who are receiving supervisor support express lower level of these conflicts. Frye and Breaugh (2004) also confirmed negative relationship between WFC and supervisor support.

## 1.2. Emotional exhaustion

Karatepe and Uludag (2007) conducted a research among frontline employees in Northern Cyprus hotels. Their results showed that the presence of emotional exhaustion among frontline employees leads to job dissatisfaction, decreased affective organizational commitment as well as higher turnover intentions. Yavas et al. (2008) found a positive correlation between WFC and employees' emotional exhaustion. In the same study, positive correlation was found between FWC and emotional exhaustion of employees. Karatepe (2010) examined effects of work-family interaction on exhaustion and found positive correlation between WFC and emotional exhaustion of employees, as well as FWC and emotional exhaustion.

## 1.3. Job Performance

Job performance can be defined as "the level of productivity of an individual employee, relative to his or her peers, on several job-related behaviors and outcomes" (Babin and Boles, 1998, p.82). Some empirical research indicated that work-family conflict has a harmful influence on job performance (Aryee, 1992; Frone et al., 1997; Netemeyer et al., 2004). WFChas an effect on decreasing employees' work-related performance (Frone et al., 1997; Netemeyer et al., 2004). Christen et al. (2016) indicated that employees' effort and ability are determinants of job performance level. In their study, Karatepe and Kilic (2007) found significant negative correlation between WFC and job performances. Yavas et al. (2008) found positive correlation between WFC and job performance, but negative correlation exists between FWC and job performance. Kengatharan (2017) indicated that the level of income is amoderator of relationship between WFC and employee performance.

## 1.4. Turnover intentions

Elangovan (2001) considered intention to quit as one of the most important antecedents of turnover. Blomme et al. (2010) investigated the correlation between workplace flexibility, organizational support, work-family conflict and intention to leave the organization among highly educated hotel employees. Their results indicate that conflict between family and work and organizational support substantially explain the turnover intentions. Karatepe and Sokmen (2006) determined that presence of work-family and family-work conflicts induce frontline hotel employees' turnover intentions. In another study, Karatepe and Baddar (2006) determined a positive correlation between work-family conflict and turnover intentions. On the other hand, Karatepe and Uludag (2007) did not found any significant correlation between work-family conflict and intention to leave organization.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The questionnaire used in this research, for examining the work-family conflict among employees in hotel housekeeping consists of two parts. The first part is related to the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, such as gender, age, education level and years of service in hospitality, while the second part consists of items for measuring work-family conflict, family-work conflict, emotional exhaustion, job performance and turnover intentions. The items were adopted from the study of Yavas et al. (2008) who adapted the methodology of Netemeyer et al. (1996) and Boles et al. (2001) when measuring WFC and FWC, Maslach and Jackson (1981) when measuring emotional exhaustion of employees, Babin and Boles (1998) when measuring their job performance, and finally Boshoff and Allen (2000) when measuring possibility of employee´s turnover intentions. For expressing the level of their agreement/disagreement with the items, respondents provided their answers using the five-point Likert scale (1–I completely disagree to 5–I absolutely agree).

Based on reviewing the existing literature, the following hypotheses were set:
H1: There is positive correlation between work-family conflict and turnover intentions.
H2: There is negative correlation between work-family conflict and job performance.
H3: There is positive correlation between emotional exhaustion and turnover intentions.
H4: There is positive correlation between work-family conflict and emotional exhaustion.

The survey was conducted during 2018 using face-to-face technique in hospitality facilities in Serbia. This technique was chosen due to the fact that interaction between authors and respondents can help in obtaining more relevant answers. The research was conducted in hotels of all categories. Hotels were randomly selected and the sample contains of 156 respondents employed in housekeeping department who accepted to participate in the research voluntarily.

T-test is an inferential statistical test that determines whether there is a statistically significant difference between the arithmetic means in two unrelated groups. This test was used for determining if there were significant differences in the responses obtained by male and female respondents. In aim of confirming the set hypotheses, a correlation analysis was used, which evaluates the strength of relationship between two variables. High correlation coefficient indicates that two or more variables have a strong relationship with each other, while a weak correlation means that observed variables are hardly related.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following table presents the sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents.

Table 1: **Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents**

| Socio-demographic characteristics | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | | |
| Male | 33 | 21.2 |
| Female | 123 | 78.8 |
| **Age** | | |
| Up to 25 | 17 | 10.9 |
| 26 – 35 | 55 | 35.3 |
| 36 - 45 | 48 | 30.8 |
| 46 – 55 | 31 | 19.2 |
| Over 55 | 5 | 3.2 |
| **Education** | | |
| High school | 106 | 67.9 |
| Graduate | 43 | 27.6 |
| Master | 7 | 4.5 |
| **Years of service in hospitality** | | |
| Up to 1 year | 23 | 14.7 |
| 1-3 years | 42 | 26.9 |
| 3-5 years | 37 | 23.7 |
| 5-10 years | 33 | 21.2 |
| Over 10 years | 21 | 13.5 |

Source: Authors´ research

The majority of sample are women (78.8%), which is not surprising because of the structure of gender employment in housekeeping department. It can be noticed that 66.1% of respondents are consisted of employees aged between 26 and 45 years. If we consider the education level of employees, it can be seen that the most of respondents have completed high school (67.9). The majority of tasks in hotel housekeeping do not require high level of education, which results in many employees with lower level of education.The most of respondents work in hospitality industry between 1 and 3 years (26.9), followed by employees with 3-5 years of service (23.7) and 5-10 years of service (21.2).

Table 2: **Representation of employees by hotel category**

| Hotel category | Number of respondents | % |
|---|---|---|
| 1* | 6 | 3.8 |
| 2* | 6 | 3.8 |
| 3* | 56 | 35.9 |
| 4* | 79 | 50.6 |
| 5* | 9 | 5.8 |

Source: Authors´ research

The representation of employees by hotel category is presented in Table 2. It is visible that the majority of respondents are employed in 3* (35.9) and 4* (50.6) hotels.

Table 3: **Results of descriptive statistical analysis**

| FACTORS AND VARIABLES | Mean | SD. |
|---|---|---|
| **WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT** ($\alpha = 0.741$) | **2.50** | **0.92** |
| The demands of my work interfere with home, family, and social life. | 2.64 | 1.15 |
| Because of my job, I cannot involve myself as much as I would like in maintaining close relations with my family, spouse/partner, or friends. | 2.34 | 1.09 |
| Things I want to do at home do not get done because of the demands my job puts on me. | 2.53 | 1.09 |
| I often have to miss important family and social activities because of my job. | 2.67 | 1.21 |
| There is a conflict between my job and the commitments and responsibilities I have to my family, spouse/partner, or friends. | 2.30 | 1.06 |
| **FAMILY-WORK CONFLICT** ($\alpha = 0.748$) | **2.03** | **0.82** |
| The demands of my family, spouse/partner, or friends interfere with work-related activities. | 2.04 | 0.94 |
| I sometimes have to miss work so that family and social responsibilities are met. | 2.17 | 1.02 |
| Things I want to do at work do not get done because of the demands of my family, spouse/partner, or friends. | 1.95 | 1.00 |
| My home and social life interfere with my responsibilities at work such as getting to work on time, accomplishing daily tasks, and working overtime. | 1.93 | 0.98 |
| My co-workers and peers at work dislike how often I am preoccupied with my family and social life. | 2.05 | 1.08 |
| **EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION** ($\alpha = 0.704$) | **2.75** | **0.92** |
| I feel emotionally drained from my work. | 2.73 | 1.18 |
| I feel used up at the end of the workday. | 3.20 | 1.17 |
| I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job. | 2.89 | 1.23 |
| Working with people all day is really a strain for me. | 2.48 | 1.09 |
| I feel burned out from my work. | 2.87 | 1.09 |
| I feel frustrated by my job. | 2.53 | 1.20 |
| I feel I am working too hard on my job. | 2.90 | 1.22 |
| I feel like I am at the end of my rope. | 2.41 | 1.21 |
| **JOB PERFORMANCE** ($\alpha = 0.823$) | **3.20** | **0.76** |
| I am a top performer. | 4.03 | 1.01 |
| I am in the top 10 percent of frontline employees here. | 3.17 | 1.05 |
| I get along better with customers than do others. | 2.94 | 1.07 |
| I know more about services delivered to customers than others. | 2.94 | 1.05 |
| I know what my customers expect better than others. | 2.92 | 0.99 |
| **TURNOVER INTENTIONS** ($\alpha = 0.730$) | **2.44** | **1.05** |
| I will probably be looking for another job soon. | 2.45 | 1.66 |
| It would not take much to make me leave this hotel. | 2.44 | 1.13 |
| I often think about leaving this hotel. | 2.43 | 1.11 |

Source: Authors´ research

According to the research results presented in table 3, the highest mean value was recorded for the factor Job Performance (3.20), while the lowest mean value was recorded for the factor Family-Work Conflict (2.03). Table 3 presents the items that are grouped within each factor. Besides this, table 3 presents the Cronbach Alpha coefficients for every factor. The values for all factors exceed the recommended value 0.7, which indicate they are in the domain of high reliability (Kaiser, 1974).

Factor Work-Family Conflict (2.50) consisted of five items. The highest mean value within this factor was recorded for the item "I often have to miss important family and social activities because of my job" (2.67).The lowest mean value was recorded for the item "There is a conflict between my job and the commitments and responsibilities I have to my family, spouse/partner, or friends" (2.30). Relatively low scores of all items indicate on low conflict between work and family expressed by hotel housekeeping employees.

Factor Family-Work Conflict (2.03) consisted of five items related to existence of conflict in family life because of work. The lowest mean value within this factor was recorded for the item "My home and social life interfere with my responsibilities at work such as getting to work on time, accomplishing daily tasks, and working overtime" (1.93), while the highest mean value was recorded for the item "I sometimes have to miss work so that family and social responsibilities are met" (2.17). What can be noticed is that respondents expressed lower level of conflict between family and work compared to work and family conflict. These results indicated greater consequences on family life than on business life, respectively Work-Family Conflict is more frequent than Family-Work Conflict.

Factor Emotional Exhaustion (2.75) obtained eight items which measuring the level of employees' emotional exhaustion. The highest mean value was registered for the item "I feel used up at the end of the workday" (3.20), while the lowest mean value was registered for the item "I feel like I am at the end of my rope" (2.41). Working in the housekeeping department often requires multi-tasking, which can result frequently in emotional exhaustion.

Factor Job Performance (3.20) consisted of five items related to measuring the level of productivity of an individual employee. The highest mean value within this factor was recorded for the item "I am a top performer" (4.03). The lowest mean value was registered for the item "I know what my customers expect better than others" (2.92).
Within the factor Turnover Intentions (2.44) are three items referred to intention of employees to leave the organization. The answers for all of three items are almost equal, approximately about 2.4. The scores of all items are relatively low, which provides a conclusion that turnover intentions of hotel housekeeping employees are low.

T-test of independent samples was applied to determine if there is a statistically significant differences in factors measuring WFC, FWC, EE, JP, TI, between male and female hotel housekeeping employees (Table 4).

Table 4: **T-test of independent samples according to gender**

| Factors | Gender | | t | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male N=33 | Female N=123 | | |
| WFC | 2.32 | 2.54 | -1.227 | .222 |
| FWC | 2.00 | 2.04 | -.222 | .825 |
| EE | 2.82 | 2.73 | .473 | .637 |
| JP | 3.30 | 3.17 | .839 | .403 |
| TI | 2.56 | 2.41 | .709 | .479 |

Source: Authors´ research

The results of t-test indicated that there are no statistically differences in any of factors measuring WFC, FWC, EE, JP, TI according to gender.

Furthermore, the authors used Pearson`s correlation coefficient in order to determine if there is a statistically significant correlation between the factors. Representation of correlation coefficients is presented in table 5.

Table 5: **Correlation analysis**

| Factors | WFC | FWC | EE | JP | TI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| WFC | 1 | .566** | .588** | .155 | .470** |
| FWC | | 1 | .547** | .139 | .473** |
| EE | | | 1 | .353** | .614** |
| JP | | | | 1 | .318** |
| TI | | | | | 1 |

Source: Authors´ research
**correlation is significant at level 0.01

The results indicate that WFC has medium positive impact (Cohen, 1988) on TI, which supports the H1. The highest positive correlation was calculated between factors EE and TI ($r = 0.614$), supporting H3. This means that increasing of EE leads to increase of TI. High positive correlation (Cohen, 1988) was calculated between WFC and FWC ($r = 0.566$), as well as between WFC and EE ($r = 0.588$), which provides support for H4. Beside this, there is significant positive impact (Cohen, 1988) of FWC on EE ($r = 0.547$) and significant positive impact of JP on TI ($r = 0.318$). Medium positive correlation (Cohen, 1988) exists between EE and JP ($r = 0.353$). Although different results were expected, there is no correlation between WFC and JP ($r = 0,155$), hence, H2 is not supported. Also, there is no correlation between FWC and JP ($r = 0.139$).

**CONCLUSION**

Conflict between work and family life demands as well as impossibility of balancing between these two dimensions, cause stress for the employees. In this study the authors used T-test in order to determine the possible existence of significant differences among male and female employees in the hotel housekeeping department. The results have shown that there are no statistically significant differences in answers provided by respondents. Positive correlation found between WFC and EE is in line with the results

obtained in study by Yavas et al. (2008). This means that higher level of experienced WFC leads to higher degree of EE. Many researchers found significant correlation between WFC and employees' performances (Yavas et al., 2008; Katarepe and Kilic, 2007; Netemeyer et al., 2004) but results obtained in this study did not show any significant correlation between these two factors. Consistent with the previous research, the authors of this research determined a positive correlation between WFC and WFC (Netemeyer et al., 1996, Boyar et al., 2005). Furthermore, there is a significant positive correlation between WFC and TI is congruent with findings obtained in previous studies (Karatepe and Baddar, 2006; Karatepe and Sokmen, 2006). On the other hand, Karatepe and Uludag (2007) did not found any significant relationship between these two factors. Positive correlation between EE and TI indicate that increasing of EE leads to increasing TI. Higher level of EE can produce unsatisfied and reluctant employees, which leads to higher turnover intentions. These findings match with findings of Karatepe and Uludag (2007).

Although this research has provided useful insights and contributed towards understanding the work-family conflict, there are limitations, i.e. the sample size. This research will be repeated in the future on a larger sample in order to get a clearer insight into the situation. Also, it is advisable to conduct this research in all hotel departments in order to get a more concrete conclusions about the nature of this conflict.

In terms of practical implications, based on the results of this research, hotel organizations can form a HRM model which will emphasize the importance of the balance of work and family life. Turnover intentions of employees are of growing concern for organizations. In aim to decrease turnover intentions of employees, organizations should establish a more supportive environment for all employees, especially the ones who are experiencing either of these two conflicts.

This paper contributes to the literature in the field of work-family conflict among hotel housekeeping employees. This study confirmed the findings of existing studies that also emphasized the importance of work-family conflict and its relationship with emotional exhaustion of employees, job performances and turnover intentions.

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