

Work-Family/Family-Work Interference of Back-Area- Managers: The Effect on Job and Life Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

Work and family are domains of greatest importance to individuals. Both work and family roles can have meaningful impact on psychological well being and satisfaction. Moreover, the hospitality industry has been recognized as one where managers sometimes have to sacrifice their family responsibilities and personal lives for ensuring performance and service quality at work. As a result, work-family interference (WFI) and family-work interference (FWI) may occur. This is a critical cause of high labor turnover, poor morale, and ultimately low performance.

Meanwhile, Egypt has witnessed several changes in the work force demographics, like rising number of women, escalating number of dual income families, single parent families and escalating proportion of divorces. These rapid transitions put substantial strain on men and women to balance their work and family life. Traditionally, family is considered the most central element of Egyptian culture; an important factor that raises the need to ‘work-life balance’.

The current study attempts to explore whether hotel back-area managers are experiencing (WFI) and (FWI) and to investigate the impact of (WFI), as well as, (FWI) on job and life satisfaction among these managers. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to back area managers in five-star hotels in Cairo and Alexandria.

The study contributes to better understanding of the interrelationships between work, family and job/life domains. This is practically important as it provides implications for employers to attract and retain the most skilled human resources by increasing their job and life satisfaction. Hotel management should pay more attention to work and life balance, and implement effective family-friendly human resources policies.

Keywords: Work-Family Interference (WFI), Family-Work Interference (FWI), Job/Life Satisfaction, Back-Area Managers, Egypt

1 INTRODUCTION

Both work and family roles can have meaningful impact on psychological well-being and satisfaction. Employers and employees attempt to strike a balance between the two domains in order to minimize the clashing conflicts between both of them. This is coinciding with the changes in the Egyptian work force demographics, like rising number of women, escalating number of dual income families, single parent families and escalating proportion of divorces. In addition, the current economic situation in Egypt is adversely affected after 25th January revolution, causing increased levels of downsizing and unemployment, particularly within the tourism and hotel industry. (Zalaky, 2011) These transitions put substantial strain on employees to balance their work life and family.

Literature on work–family issues has revealed that industry context plays a critical role in shaping the relationships between employees, their jobs, and their families. (Harris et al., 2007 and Kossek et al., 2011) Research on work/family issues also includes both the impact of the workplace on home responsibilities and the impact of personal lives in the workplace. Repeatedly, it has been observed that work-to-family and family-to-work conflict negatively influence various individual and organizational outcomes. (Netemeyer et al., 2004; Grandey et al., 2005; Judge et al., 2006 and Lam et al., 2012) In WFC and FWC research, job and life satisfaction were two common attitudinal consequences in work and family domain respectively. (Shen et al., 2012)

The current research seeks to (1) explore whether hotel back-area managers are experiencing (WFI) and (FWI), (2) to investigate the impact of work family interference on job satisfaction among these managers, as well as, (3) the impact of (FWI) on life satisfaction. The affective component of job satisfaction, as opposed to the cognitive one, will be comprehensively studied. Eventually, the research would (4) provide implications for employers in the Egyptian hospitality industry to attract and retain the skilled human resources by lessening work and family inter-role conflict and increasing job and life satisfaction.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 WFI and FWI

Work-family interference or conflict is the term often used to characterize the interfering between the work and family domains that occur when demands from the work role conflict with demands from the family role. (Ilies et al., 2009) WFC has been defined as a form of inter-role conflict in which the role demands and pressures from work and family domains are mutually incompatible. On the other side, family-work interference refers to a form of inter-role conflict in which the demands of, time devoted to, and strain created by the family interfere with performing work-related responsibilities. A reciprocal relation is noted to exist between WFI and FWI; they mutually affect each other. (Netemeyer et al., 2004 and Zhao & Qu, 2009)

Several researchers discussed the antecedents and consequences of WFI and FWI. Antecedents of WFI include long hours, lack of supervision, and other work role stressors and characteristics. Antecedents of FWI are more likely to be family role stressors such as elder care, or single parenting. (Boyar et al., 2008 and Lizano & Barak, 2012) Research also highlighted individual and organizational outcomes of work-to-family and family-to-work interference such as job performance, job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and family satisfaction. (Netemeyer et

al., 2004; Grandey et al., 2005; Judge et al., 2006 and Lam et al., 2012) Allen et al. (2000) and Grzywacz & Carlson (2007) explained how WFI influences depression, physical health problems and hypertension. Huang et al. (2004) noted that FWI is also related to lower levels of job satisfaction, higher levels of absenteeism, tardiness at work, and intentions to quit.

2.2 WFI & FWI in Hospitality Industry

Several studies noted that characteristics of the hospitality industry make it a prolific ground for Work-Family conflict, where workers are highly susceptible to strain-based conflict. (Namasivayam & Mount, 2004; Netemeyer et al., 2005 and Kong et al., 2012) Hospitality industry is known for its demanding nature, where employees are often confronted with role stress, heavy workloads, long work hours, irregular work schedules, and job insecurity. (Karatepe, 2010 and Chu et al., 2012) Further, many work schedules in the hospitality sector are countercyclical to the work schedules of most other industries. That is, the busiest shifts in hotels and restaurants are often when most other people are off from work (e.g., weekends and holidays). (Choi and Kim, 2012)

Thus, hospitality employees have to deal with incompatible role conflicts between work and family domains, which increase individuals' job tension. (Wong and Ko, 2009 and Zhao & Mattila, 2013) This issue is particularly germane to hoteliers because empirical evidence suggests that, in the service sector, employee satisfaction is directly correlated to customer satisfaction and retention. (Chu et al., 2012) Similarly, because WFI is associated with job dissatisfaction, it is also highly correlated with management turnover, which is a costly problem for the industry due to its high human component. (Matzler and Renzl, 2007; Chi and Gursoy, 2009 and Russo & Buonocore, 2012)

2.3 Hotel Back-Area Managers

The managerial work is busy, demanding, and stressful for all levels of responsibility down from supervisors up to general managers. (Karatepe, 2010) Back area managers are responsible for departments that have no or limited contact with guests, although major components of their work are to influence the quality of a guest stay; these include food and beverage manager, sales manager, human resources manager, accounting manager, chief engineer, laundry manager and chief security officer.

Employees and managers of hotel back area work in poor physical working environments, such as noise, poor lighting conditions, exposing to high temperatures and humidity, toxic substances, poor air quality and working in standing positions. They also work between rooms on different stairs with more potential accidents and health problems, if compared to front-of-the-house employees. Moreover, they have less levels of payrolls and sense of respect and self-identity as well as having fewer chances for advancement and promotion routes to upper management level (Karatepe & Uludag, 2008; Karatepe & Aleshinloye, 2009; Karatepe & Olugbade, 2009 and Wong & Ko, 2009). Given that, the working environment of back-area managers, not only affects their job satisfaction, but also influences their lives and subjective well-being.

2.4 WFI & FWI and Job Satisfaction: Affective Reaction

Job satisfaction is defined as a kind of pleasant or positive affection state, which grows in the process of evaluating an individual's work experience. (Zhu, 2013) The job satisfaction is gradually taken as an affective reflection to the work, i.e. like or dislike of a job.

Several studies found diverse relationships between the two dimensions of WFI, FWI and job satisfaction. (Howard et al., 2004 and Ilies et al., 2009) Fisher (2002) studied the affective foundations of job satisfaction for better understanding of the permeability of work and family domains. Others provided support for the importance of affect in job satisfaction based on the notion that job satisfaction is built on three related, but distinct constructs. These are evaluation of the job, beliefs about the job and affective experiences on the job. (Ilies & Judge, 2002; Weiss, 2002 and Singh & Mini Jain, 2013)

Given that, the current study proposes that both WFI and FWI have a significant negative impact on the affective reaction of job satisfaction; and this is hypothesized as forward:

Hypothesis 1: WFI is negatively correlated to the affective reaction of job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: FWI is negatively correlated to the affective reaction of job satisfaction.

2.5 Job Satisfaction and Life Satisfaction

Individuals experience life satisfaction when their perceived life circumstances match their self-imposed standard or set of standards. Greater levels of WFI were associated with lower degrees of job satisfaction, thereby, leading ultimately to life imbalance. (Ghiselli et al., 2001 and Shen et al., 2012) The research findings of Karatepe & Baddar (2006) and Ilies et al. (2009) supported the positive spillover from affective job satisfaction to life satisfaction and well-being. Mishra et al. (2014) suggest that job and life satisfaction have bi-directional causality. Green et al. (2011) and Hammer et al. (2011) suggest that negative feelings of working at a job could reduce an individual's life satisfaction, and vice versa. It seems logical that when individuals feel good about their job, they will evaluate their quality of life better. Thus, a hypothesis can be formulated as follows,

Hypothesis 3: The affective reaction of job satisfaction is positively correlated to life satisfaction.

2.6 Family-Work Interference and Life Satisfaction

Many studies predicted that conflict between work and non-work roles would be negatively related to life satisfaction. (Netemeyer et al., 2004; Zhao et al., 2011 and Shen et al., 2012) Meanwhile, Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran (2005) found that FWC is a stronger predictor of life satisfaction than WFC. Karatepe & Baddar (2006) reported that "Family Interfering with Work" was more strongly related to turnover intentions than "Work Interfering with Family" in a sample of Jordanian hotel employees. In the same context, Judge & Ilies (2004) suggested that positive emotions experienced at work spill over onto the emotions experienced at home; individuals who are in a good mood at work should engage in both thoughts and actions that make it more likely to carry this positive affect home with them. Bearing in mind that family is considered the most central element of Egyptian culture, probable family-work conflict would lessen individuals' value of life satisfaction; this could be hypothesized as follows:

Hypothesis 4: FWI is positively correlated to life satisfaction.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Sampling and Procedure

Sample for the current study consists of total population of back area managers in five star hotels in Cairo and Alexandria. These proposed destinations were selected due to their high population density and high rate of immigration, as well as, being similar in population distribution, demographic features, society, and working environments. In fact, these two cities could be the ideal scale to investigate the relationship among work-family conflict, job satisfaction and life satisfaction. Two hundred and ninety-four questionnaires (seven back area managerial positions in forty-two hotels) were distributed to back area managers through the human resources manager in subject hotels (via e-mail). Two hundred and twenty-seven questionnaires returned valid providing 77% response rate.

3.2 Measurement

The measurement items were obtained from established scales and further the validity of the questionnaire translation was assured by the back-translation processes. The questionnaire is made up of four parts. The first part consists of demographic items, the second part related to the scale for family-work and work-family interference including ten items; scale reliability was 0.82 and 0.90, respectively. (Netemeyer et al., 2004) The third part related to the scale of affective job satisfaction including four items; scale reliability was 0.76 (Grandey et al., 2005 and Zhao et al., 2011) Finally, the fourth part which is related to the scale of life satisfaction including five items derived from Diener et al.'s (1985) inventory; scale reliability was 0.82. The statements in the questionnaire were initially prepared in English and then translated into Arabic; to ensure that the statements were cross-linguistically comparable the instrument translation was reviewed by three faculty members of Alexandria University fluent in both languages.

3.3 Analysis of Results and Discussion

The demographic data of the studied sample showed that the most frequent age group was 35-45 years. Males represented (86%) of the sample and the majority of the participants were married (76.2%). The most frequent degree of education was college graduate (67.0).

Table (1) Distribution of the Studied Sample Regarding the WFI / FWI Score

General score of WFI	Number	%	General score of FWI	Number	%
Strongly agree or agree	89	39.2	Strongly agree or agree	77	33.9

Neutral	77	33.9	Neutral	82	36.1
Strongly disagree or disagree	61	26.9	Strongly disagree or disagree	68	30.0
Total No.	227	100.0	Total No.	227	100.0

Table (1) shows the distribution of the studied sample regarding the total general score of WFI. It was clear that 39.2% of the studied sample were experiencing WFI, while 33.9% of them were experiencing FWI.

Table (2) Distribution of the Studied Sample Regarding the Score of Affective Job Satisfaction

General score of affective job satisfaction	Number	%
More or most favorable	41	18.1
Neutral	40	17.6
Less or least favorable	146	64.3
Total No.	227	100.0

It was clear from table (2) that 64.3% of the participants had low affective reaction towards their jobs.

Table (3) Distribution of the Studied Sample Regarding the Life Satisfaction Score

General score of life satisfaction.	Number	%
Strongly agree or agree	44	19.4
Neutral	51	22.5
Strongly disagree or disagree	132	58.1
Total No.	227	100.0

Table (3) shows that 58.1% of the participants had low levels of life satisfaction.

Table (4) Relation between WFI and Affective Reaction of Job Satisfaction

General score of affective job satisfaction	WFI						Total
	Strongly Agree or agree		Neutral		Strongly disagree or disagree		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
More or most favorable	6	6.7	3	3.9	32	52.5	41
Neutral	10	11.2	28	36.4	2	3.3	40
Less or least favorable	73	82.0	46	59.7	27	44.3	146
Total No.	89		77		61		
X2	12.65						
P	0.001*						

Table (4) shows that the majority of the participants who experienced high levels of WFC experienced low levels of affective reaction towards their jobs. This indicated a significant negative correlation between WFC and affective reaction component of job satisfaction as (p =

0.001*). Thus hypothesis (1) is supported. In the same context, [Allen et al.'s \(2000\)](#), [Ghiselli et al. \(2001\)](#), [Grandey et al. \(2005\)](#) and [Zhao et al., \(2011\)](#) depicted a negative relationship between job satisfaction and inter-role conflict. [Ford et al. \(2007\)](#) assumed that when heavy work requirements prevent an employee from fulfilling family responsibilities this reduces the ability to concentrate on work tasks, and an individual may have negative feelings about work (i.e., negative affective reaction).

Results of table (5) showed no significant correlation between FWC and affective reaction component of job satisfaction as ($p > 0.05$). This does not support hypothesis (2). In the same context, [Howard et al. \(2004\)](#) and [Anafarta \(2010\)](#) found that WFC was negatively related to carrying out job tasks, while the relationship with FWC was not consistent. Meanwhile, [Edwards & Rothbard \(2000\)](#) claim in their spillover theory of WFC that individuals tend to generate similarities between work and family domains and both WFC and FWC could influence job satisfaction.

Table (5) Relation between FWI and Affective Reaction of Job Satisfaction

General score of affective reaction	FWC						Total
	Strongly Agree or agree		Neutral		Strongly disagree or disagree		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
More or most favorable	18	23.4	16	19.5	7	10.3	41
Neutral	18	23.4	16	19.5	6	8.8	40
Less or least favorable	41	53.2	50	61.0	55	80.9	146
Total No.	77		82		68		
X2	0.89						
P	0.649						

Table (6) Relation between Affective Reaction of Job Satisfaction and Life Satisfaction

General score of life satisfaction	General score of affective reaction						Total
	More or most favorable		Neutral		Less or least favorable		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Strongly Agree or agree	32	78.0	6	15.0	6	4.1	44
Neutral	5	12.2	32	80.0	14	9.6	51
Strongly disagree or disagree	4	9.8	2	5.0	126	86.3	132
Total No.	41		40		146		
X2	22.85						
P	0.001*						

Table (6) showed a significant positive correlation between affective reaction of job satisfaction and life satisfaction as ($p = 0.001^*$). These results were in agreement with the

hypothesis (3). Judge & Ilies (2004) and Zhu (2013) found that employees' satisfaction with their job influences the affective states experienced by employees in their daily life.

Table (7) Relation between FWI and Life Satisfaction

General score of life satisfaction.	FWI						Total
	Strongly Agree or agree		Neutral		Strongly disagree or disagree		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Strongly Agree or agree	18	23.4	11	13.4	15	22.1	44
Neutral	20	26.0	15	18.3	16	23.5	51
Strongly disagree or disagree	39	50.6	56	68.3	37	54.4	132
Total No.	77		82		68		
X2	0.85						
P	0.771						

It was apparent from results of table (7) that there was no significant correlation between FWI and life satisfaction as ($p > 0.05$). This result is in disagreement with hypothesis (4). However, Zhao and Qu (2009) found that work interfering with family had negative effects on job satisfaction but not life satisfaction, whereas, family interfering with work had negative effects on life satisfaction rather than job satisfaction. Meanwhile, Hill (2005) found that work to family and family to work facilitation were each positively and significantly related to life satisfaction. Moreover, Zhao et al. (2011), suggest that FW Conflict has stronger association with subjective well-being than WF Conflict does. Interestingly, Adkins & Premeaux (2012) and Singh & Jain (2013) suggest that people from poly-chronic-time cultures, as opposed to mono-chronic-time ones, would have unclear boundaries between their work and non-work life, thereby, suffering adverse effects from family issues interfering with work. Middle-Easterners, Latin Americans, and South Asians are characterized as poly-chronic-time oriented.

4 CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Cultural expectations prescribe that Egyptians place family above work. Collectivism and the relative importance of work and family are likely to influence work-family experiences. In addition, the recent critical working conditions within the tourism and hotel industry, which was adversely affected after 25th January revolution, make hotel employees struggle to manage their work and family responsibilities. As a result they are experiencing conflict between their work and family life that is affecting their job and life satisfaction.

WFC is not just a concern to social life of back-area managers but also influences job attitudes. In the current study FWI and WFI had a great influence on their affective reaction component of job satisfaction and life satisfaction. Thus, hotel organizations should be aware of the costs of WFI. It seems reasonable that family friendly hotels will achieve greater beneficial returns if their employees feel better about their job, family, and life overall. Consequently, Hotels

that focus on establishing a family friendly work environment are more likely to attract, motivate and retain talented people, and obtain greater business efficiencies by balancing labor cost, performance and employee attitudes.

Thus, a number of strategies are recommended to reduce WFI and eliminate its adverse consequences. For instance, one strategy is providing child care assistance such as on-site child-care centers. A compressed workweek is another strategy of work schedule that allows a full-time job to be completed in less than the standard 5 days of 8-hour shifts. Its most common form is the "4-40," that is, accomplishing 40 hours of work in four 10-hour days. This benefits the individual through more leisure time and lower commuting costs. Job sharing can be also applicable to some jobs in the hotel industry, whereby one full-time job is split between two or more persons. Job sharing often involves each person working one-half day, but it can also be done on weekly or monthly sharing arrangements. In addition hotel chains could place employees closer to their families thus making it easier to reduce work family conflict and keep talented employees. Flexible work schedule further can be applicable to some jobs in the hotel industry. It is possible for the employees to set their own work schedules as part of an effort to also increase employee empowerment. Consequently, they will have a positive spillover from their jobs, increased levels of job and life satisfaction.

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