

## **The impact of demographic factors on work-family conflict and turnover intentions in the hotel industry**

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**Abstract:** Family and work are the most important aspects in an individual's life, and the primary goal is to find a balance between these two. Given the characteristics of working in the hotel industry, employees in this industry very often face a conflict between family and work. This study aims to measure the impact of socio-demographic characteristics (gender, age, education and marital status) on work-family conflict (WFC) and turnover intentions (TI). On the sample of 1.100 employees in different hotel facilities by applying t-test and analysis of variance ANOVA, it was found that tested socio-demographic characteristics are not significant indicators of experiencing WFC, but age and marital status are proven to be significant determinants of turnover intentions. Results obtained in this study can help managers to understand antecedents and consequences of experiencing work-family conflict and to undertake activities to reduce these conflicts and turnover intentions of employees.

**Keywords:** services, hotel industry, lodging, work-family conflict, turnover intentions

**JEL classification:** L83, J63, J24, Z31

## **Uticaj socio-demografskih karakteristika na konflikt između posla i porodice i namere o napuštanju posla u hotelijerstvu**

**Sažetak:** Porodica i posao su među najvažnijim sferama života pojedinca, a primarni cilj je nalaženje ravnoteže između njih. S obzirom na osobenosti rada u hotelijerstvu, zaposleni se često susreću sa konfliktom uzrokovanim obavezama u porodičnom životu i na poslu. Cilj rada je merenje uticaja socio-demografskih karakteristika (pol, starosna dob, nivo obrazovanja i bračni status) na konflikt posao-porodica i namere o napuštanju posla. Na uzorku od 1.100 ispitanika u različitim hotelijerskim objektima primenom t-testa i analize varijanse ANOVA, pokazalo se da nema razlika u doživljavanju konflikta posao-porodica u odnosu na testirane socio-demografske karakteristike, ali kada je u pitanju namera napuštanja posla, postoje statistički značajne razlike u odnosu na starosnu dob i bračni status. Rezultati dobijeni ovim istraživanjem mogu pomoći menadžerima da razumeju antecedente i posledice

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doživljavanja konflikta između posla i porodice i da preduzmu aktivnosti kako bi smanjili ove konflikte i namere o napuštanju posla kod zaposlenih.

**Ključne reči:** usluge, hotelijerstvo, konflikt posao-porodica, namere o napuštanju posla  
**JEL klasifikacija:** L83, J63, J24, Z31

## 1. Introduction

As the two most important spheres in the lives of individuals, work and family often come into conflict, and their influence is an indicator of success and life satisfaction in general. Work is usually necessary for the normal functioning of the family, but it often happens to affect the disintegration and instability of the family members. The increased number of employed women reduces the time that spouses spend participating in joint family activities. This development has led to a series of problems that inevitably affect the emergence of conflicts between these two spheres of human life. As stated by [Netemeyer et al. \(1996\)](#) family-work conflict (FWC) is a kind of interrole conflict in which the overall demands of the family, as well as time dedicated to it, and the pressure created by the family interfere with completing work-related duties. On the other hand, the same authors defined work-family conflict (WFC) as a type of interrole conflict in which the overall demands of the work, as well as time dedicated to it, and the pressure created by the work interfere with completing family-related duties. The existence of conflicts between family and work, as well as between work and family, negatively affects work performance, health, but also the satisfaction with various aspects of life. Due to this, it is important to strive to establish work-life balance. As claimed by several authors, work-life balance could be characterized as an absence of work-family conflict along with high levels of work-family enrichment ([Duxbury & Higgins, 2001](#); [O'Driscoll et al., 2006](#)). In many industries, the aim is to reduce the time spent at work and away from the family, while in the hospitality industry this is not the case because most jobs are impossible without a key factor - people. In addition to the above, work in the hospitality industry is different from work in other industries because employees in hotels and restaurants work when most employees in other industries are free (e.g. at weekends and national holidays). Studies that have addressed this issue show that employees in the service sector are more susceptible to family and work conflict ([Furnham, 2002](#); [Netemeyer et al., 2005](#)). Susceptibility to these conflicts can be explained by the fact that customer relationships are often very fierce and stressful, which is later transferred to employees' homes ([Netemeyer et al., 1990](#); [Netemeyer et al., 2005](#)). On the other hand, some authors believe that not only work is a factor which affects the existence of this conflict, but also those family duties can affect the disruption of work obligations ([Choi & Kim, 2012](#); [Poelmans et al., 2003](#)).

Employees who are faced with a conflict between family and work become emotionally exhausted, and these two forms of conflict (WFC and FWC) are notable predictors of employment change ([Yavas et al., 2008](#)). The occurrence of problems at work has immediate and negative effects on the family ([Turliuc & Buliga, 2014](#)). The same authors state that the conflict between family and work is the main antecedent of the turnover intention (TI), which explains the high rate of labour turnover in the hotel industry.

## 2. Literature review

### *Impact of gender on work-family conflict and turnover intentions*

Research that has addressed gender differences and conflicts between work and family has yielded various conclusions. Some studies have shown that women express the presence of

these conflicts more than men (Frankenhaeuser et al., 1989; Lundberg et al., 1994), while others pointed out that gender has no effect on the conflict between family and business life (Akinayo, 2010; Frone, 2003; Karatepe et al., 2010). Research in the field of hospitality industry indicated that female employees report higher levels of WFC and FWC than male (Fiksenbaum et al., 2010; Tromp & Blomme, 2014; Yavas et al., 2008). In addition, some authors have indicated that gender is a factor of turnover intention, i.e. that women show a higher degree of turnover intention than men (Emiroğlu et al., 2015). Contrastingly, Carbery et al. (2003) and Yavas et al. (2008) found no influence of gender on turnover intention. Chen et al. (2018) found out that male hotel employees who experienced a higher level of WFC have higher intention to leave an organization than female hotel employees.

Based on this, the authors proposed the following hypotheses:

- H<sub>1</sub>: There are significant differences in experiencing WFC according to gender.
- H<sub>2</sub>: There are significant differences in expressing TI according to gender.

### ***Impact of age on work-family conflict and turnover intentions***

Age has been found as a factor that contributes to experiencing WFC and intent to leave an organization. Specifically, Gordon and Berry (2007) have indicated that, in the early stage of their careers, people are frequently willing to forfeit their personal lives in light of legitimate concern for their professional progression. Various researches indicated inconsistency in findings. For example, several authors pointed to negative association between age and WFC (Andreassi & Thompson, 2007; Grzywacz & Marks, 2000; Hsu, 2011). Contrary to their results, Mjoli et al. (2013) found positive association between age and WFC. On the other hand, Karatepe et al. (2010) did not find any significant correlation between WFC and age. Age was found as a determinant of turnover intention; and the turnover intention is generally lower among older employees (Blomme et al., 2010; Carbery et al., 2003; Karatepe et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2010; Pizam & Thornburg, 2006).

Based on this, the authors proposed the following hypotheses:

- H<sub>3</sub>: There are significant differences in experiencing WFC according to age.
- H<sub>4</sub>: There are significant differences in expressing TI according to age.

### ***Impact of education level on work-family conflict and turnover intentions***

The influence of education level on WFC has been recognized in the literature. Higher educated people would acquire more chances of advancement or working away, which increases the possibility of WFC (Adams et al., 1996). Anafarta and Kuruüzüm (2012) found that increasing the level of education in both males and females leads to an increase in the level of WFC they face with. Contrary to this, Carnicer et al. (2004) indicated that level of education has no evident effect on WFC. In some studies, the relationship between education level and turnover intentions has been examined. There is a positive relationship between the level of education and turnover intention, i.e. people with a lower level of education have a less pronounced intention to leave the organization (Carbery et al., 2003). On the other hand, in the study of Karatepe et al. (2006), a negative connection was found between education level and TI, i.e. that more educated employees express less turnover intention. Blomme et al. (2010) explore the association between flexibility in the workplace, organizational support, WFC, and the turnover intention among highly educated employed respondents in hotels. Their results indicate that the WFC and organizational support significantly explain the intentions of highly educated employed respondents to leave the organization.

Based on this, the authors proposed the following hypotheses:

H<sub>5</sub>: There are significant differences in experiencing WFC according to education level.

H<sub>6</sub>: There are significant differences in expressing TI according to education level.

### ***Impact of marital status on work-family conflict and turnover intentions***

Various studies have examined the impact of marital status on WFC and intentions to leave an organization. In several studies, a negative impact of marital status on WFC was found (Beutell, 2010; Mukanzi & Senaji, 2017; Rathi & Barath, 2013). On the other hand, Liu et al. (2020) found no significant association between marital status and WFC. Besides its impact on WFC, marital status is one of the determinants for leaving an organization (Carbery et al., 2003). The rate of leaving the organization is lower among married people than among singles (Carbery et al., 2003; Emiroğlu et al., 2015).

Based on this, the authors proposed the following hypotheses:

H<sub>7</sub>: There are significant differences in experiencing WFC according to marital status.

H<sub>8</sub>: There are significant differences in expressing TI according to marital status.

## **3. Methodology**

The research was carried out on the territory of the Republic of Serbia among employees in various types of hotel facilities. The study included 64 hotels, 21 garni hotels, 3 tourist resorts, 3 motels and 1 pension. The employees were surveyed using a face-to-face technique in order to increase the response rate, as well as to eliminate potential ambiguities during the completion of the questionnaire. A total of 1,130 employees in different positions and in different sectors were surveyed. 30 questionnaires were eliminated from further processing due to missing data, so responses of 1,100 employees were included in further analysis. The questionnaire used to measure WFC and TI of hotel employees in Serbia consisted of two parts. The first part referred to sociodemographic data of respondents (gender, age, level of education, marital status). The second part contained items that were grouped into five factors (*Work - Family Conflict – WFC*, *Family - Work Conflict – FWC*, *Emotional Exhaustion*, *Job Performance* and *Turnover Intentions*). The research was based on the study of Yavas et al. (2008) who conducted the research among employees in executive positions in hotels with 3\*, 4\* and 5\*. The factors were taken completely and there was no need for their modification. The first factor, *Work-Family Conflict* included 5 items that referred to the inability to perform family obligations due to work. Given that this conflict is two-way, the second factor *Family-Work Conflict*, consisted of 5 items that are related to the lack of work obligations performance due to family. The *Emotional Exhaustion* factor consisted of 8 items related to burnout and exhaustion at work. Within the *Job Performance* factor, employees expressed their perceptions of commitment at work through 5 items. The last factor, *Turnover Intentions*, consisted of 3 items related to the intentions of employees to leave the organization. A five-point Likert scale was used to express the degree of agreement with the statements within the factors (1 - I do not agree at all, 5 - I completely agree). Higher scores indicate a higher degree of presence of these conflicts, emotional exhaustion, perception of work performance, as well as turnover intention.

## **4. Results**

Out of a total of 1,100 respondents, approximately the same number of employees are male (47%) and female (53%). Most respondents belong to the age category between 26 and 35 years (39.1%) and the least are older than 55 years (4.5%). Pertaining to marital status, almost half of the total number of employed respondents are married (48.8%), and a very

small percentage are widowed (1.6%) as well as those in other types of partnerships (1.7%). Observing the level of education of the respondents, it can be noticed that the majority of respondents have completed high school (56.3%), but the share of highly educated (33.8%), as well as those with completed magistrate/master studies (9.6%) is also satisfactory (Table 1).

Table 1: Sociodemographic characteristics of respondents

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>
Male	529
Female	571
<b>Age</b>	
Up to 25 years	156
26 – 35 years	430
36 – 45 years	302
46 – 55 years	162
Over 55 years	50
<b>Marital status</b>	
Married	537
Single/Unmarried	436
Divorced	90
Widowed	18
Other	19
<b>Education</b>	
High School	619
College/Faculty	372
Magistrate/Master	106
PhD	3

Source: Author's research

The results of the descriptive statistical analysis are given in Table 2. Analysing the values of each factor, it is found that the factor with the highest mean is JP (3.3593), while the factor with the lowest mean is FWC (1.9565). Comparing the mean values of factors FWC (1.9565) and WFC (2.5324), it could be concluded that employees in the hotel industry in Serbia face WFC more than FWC. Guided by the fact that work in the hotel industry is very intense and specific, because employees make daily contacts with guests and working with people, it was assumed that respondents would express a high level of emotional exhaustion. Factor EE has the mean value is 2.6095, and such low value were not expected. Statements within the factor TI have almost equal values that are very low. In addition to descriptive statistical analysis, the reliability of the questionnaire was also analysed. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the overall scale is 0.919, and the values of the coefficients of individual factors are shown in Table 2. Reliability analysis found that the Cronbach Alpha coefficient for all factors exceeds the recommended value of 0.7 (Kaiser, 1974), indicating that all factors are in the high-reliability domain.

Table 2: Results of descriptive statistical analysis

<b>WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT (<math>\alpha=0.894</math>)</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
The demands of my job have effects on my home, family and social life.	2.7127	1.22278
Due to my job, I can not maintain close relationships with family, spouse/partner and friends.	2.4400	1.13631
The things I want to do at home I cannot do because of obligations that my job imposes on me.	2.5100	1.12660
I often have to miss family and social gatherings because of my job.	2.7073	1.25891
There is a conflict between my job and my responsibilities to family, spouse/partner or friends.	2.2918	1.10558
<b>FAMILY – WORK CONFLICT (<math>\alpha=0.864</math>)</b>		
The demands of my family, spouse/partner and friends interfere with my job activities.	2.0091	0.99677
Sometimes, I have to miss my job to fulfil family and social duties.	2.1227	1.09612
I fail to complete obligations at work due to family, spouse/partner, friends.	1.8691	0.98909
My family and social life interfere with my job responsibilities such as coming to work on time, completing work tasks, overtime.	1.8545	0.99440
My colleagues and associates do not like my preoccupation with family and social life.	1.9273	1.05628
<b>EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION (<math>\alpha=0.915</math>)</b>		
The job exhausts me emotionally.	2.6191	1.21314
I feel worn out at the end of the working day.	3.0209	1.25702
I feel tired when I get up in the morning and I have to face a long day at work.	2.8027	1.25182
Working with people all day is an effort for me.	2.5036	1.16242
I feel tired from work.	2.6973	1.17147
My job frustrates me.	2.2682	1.15964
I feel like I work too hard at work.	2.7655	1.18969
I feel that I am on the edge of my nerves.	2.1991	1.18969
<b>JOB PERFORMANCE (<math>\alpha=0.781</math>)</b>		
I commit to work.	4.0182	1.10159
I am among the 10% of the best employees.	3.4564	1.04968
I get along better with guests than other employees.	3.1173	1.06558
I know more than others about the services provided to guests.	3.1218	1.09581
I know better than others what the guests expect.	3.0827	1.11873
<b>TURNOVER INTENTIONS (<math>\alpha=0.917</math>)</b>		
I will probably look for another job soon.	2.3555	1.18299
It would not take me long to leave this organization.	2.3945	1.19095
I often think about leaving the organization.	2.3297	1.20265

Source: Author's research

In relation to the gender of the respondents (Table 3), t-test showed that there are no notable differences between male and female respondents for all observed factors. Based on the obtained results,  $H_1$  and  $H_2$  were not confirmed.

Table 3: T-test according to the gender of respondents

Factors	Male (n=530)	Female (n=570)	t value	p
WFC	2.493	2.566	0.511	0.396
FWC	1.951	1.962	0.986	0.708
EE	2.547	2.668	0.248	0.716
JP	3.378	3.342	0.389	0.842
TI	2.316	2.402	0.385	0.700

Source: Author's research

One-way analysis of variance examined whether there were differences in respondents' responses in relation to certain socio-demographic factors (age, level of education and marital status). ANOVA variance analysis in relation to the age of the respondents (Table 4) determined the presence of significant differences in responses within the factors FWC, EE, JP and TI. No significant differences were found within WFC factor. This result did not provide support for H<sub>3</sub>. By applying LSD post-hoc test, it was determined between which age groups there are differences. Within the FWC factor (F=7,828, p = 0.000), it is evident that respondents from the category up to 25 years give significantly lower grades than respondents from all other age categories. Within the factor EE (F=6,223, p = 0.000), it is noticeable that respondents from the category up to 25 years express a lower degree of emotional exhaustion compared to respondents from all other age categories. Within the factor JP (F= 3,329, p = 0.016), respondents from the category up to 25 years give significantly lower grades than respondents from the categories 26 - 35 years and 36 - 45 years. The last factor, TI (F= 3,064, p = 0.016) indicates that employees in the category of 46 - 55 years express significantly lower intention to leave the organization compared to younger employed respondents.

Table 4: ANOVA according to age

Factors	Age groups					F value	p	LSD post hoc test
	Up to 25 years	26 – 35 years	36 – 45 years	46 – 55 years	Over 55 years			
WFC	2.331	2.529	2.613	2.553	2.629	2.305	0.057	-
FWC	1.656	1.945	2.103	1.988	2.012	7.828	0.000	1<2,3,4,5
EE	2.333	2.561	2.764	2.669	2.773	6.223	0.000	1<2,3,4,5
JP	3.246	3.434	3.400	3.226	3.257	3.329	0.016	1<2,3
TI	2.417	2.347	2.478	2.158	2.095	3.064	0.016	4<1,2,3

Source: Author's research

Using the ANOVA test in relation to the level of education (Table 5), it was found that there is a notable difference only within the factor JP (F = 8,497, p = 0.000). LSD post-hoc showed that employees with completed high school perceive a significantly lower work performance than those with a college or university degree, as well as those with a master's degree. The obtained results did not confirm H<sub>5</sub> and H<sub>6</sub>.

Table 5: ANOVA according to education level

Factors	Education level				F-value	p	LSD post-hoc
	High School	College/ Faculty	Magistrate/ Master	PhD			
WFC	2.491	2.569	2.670	1.733	1.900	0.128	-
FWC	1.940	1.987	1.955	1.733	0.320	0.811	-
EE	2.560	2.641	2.579	1.833	0.860	0.461	-
JP	3.255	3.480	3.538	3.600	8.497	0.000	1<2,3
TI	2.336	2.394	2.406	1.778	0.556	0.644	-

Source: Author's research

Using marital status as an independent variable in the application of the ANOVA test, it was calculated that there was significant difference between the factors FWC ( $F = 4,037$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ), EE ( $F = 2,557$ ,  $p = 0.037$ ) and TI ( $F = 3,084$ ,  $p = 0.015$ ). To determine among which groups of respondents there are differences in responses, the LSD post-hoc test was applied (Table 6). In the case of the FWC, respondents who are divorced express a higher level of this conflict than those who are married and unmarried. In terms of EE, married employees express a significantly lower level of exhaustion and burnout at work compared to divorced employees. The TI is least pronounced among married employees. The LSD post-hoc test indicated that those employees who are not married and those who are in other types of partnerships express a higher degree of turnover intention than employees who are married. The obtained results provided confirmation of  $H_8$ . No significant difference was found within WFC, which did not confirm  $H_7$ .

Table 6: ANOVA according to marital status

Factors	Marital status					F-value	p	LSD post-hoc
	Married	Unmarried	Divorced	Widowed	Other			
WFC	2.531	2.477	2.791	2.378	2.758	2.287	0.058	-
FWC	1.992	1.867	2.211	2.022	1.758	4.037	0.003	3>1,2
EE	2.631	2.523	2.839	2.715	2.809	2.557	0.037	1<3
JP	3.331	3.386	3.400	3.267	3.432	0.454	0.769	-
TI	2.259	2.442	2.444	2.407	2.912	3.084	0.015	1<2,5

Source: Author's research

## 5. Discussion and conclusions

Nowadays, the conflict between family and work life is more and more frequent, and it is especially expressed in service activities such as the hotel industry with overtime work, inflexible working hours, work in shifts, but also work during holidays and weekends. Working with people is often very stressful, which is later projected onto other spheres of life. No matter how much effort is put into creating a balance between these two spheres,



there will always be situations that will demand priority at some point. Reconciling work with private life is very important for the quality of life overall. The question is often asked whether this conflict arises because work takes too much time, so people overcome fatigue after a hard day, or it is difficult to concentrate on work due to family obligations. When it is not possible to strike a balance between these two spheres in an individual's life, there are numerous negative consequences - poor family relationships, poorer performance at work, less motivation to work and more. It is wrong to assume that the conflict between work and family life and the establishment of a balance between these two spheres is a phenomenon that is unique to women. Also, the experience of these conflicts should not be associated with the individual, because the problems caused by this conflict affect both the individual and the organization.

The findings of the conducted research show that gender is not a significant indicator of differences in experiencing WFC, nor the intention to leave the organization. The  $H_1$  stems from the assumption that gender has an influence on experiencing WFC, because women, although accomplished in the career, are still the ones who are most engaged in family life. By applying t-test according to gender it was found that there are no notable differences in experiencing WFC between males and females. These results did not give support for  $H_1$ , but confirmed results obtained in previous studies (Akintayo, 2010; Frone, 2003; Karatepe et al., 2010). Given the fact that several studies identified the impact of gender on intention to leave an organization (Chen et al., 2018; Emiroğlu et al., 2015), in this study the authors tested if gender has an influence on turnover intentions. Results showed no significant differences according to gender when it comes to intentions to leave an organization, which rejected  $H_2$ . In several studies, no significant impact of gender on turnover intentions was found (Carbery et al., 2003; Yavas et al., 2008), so the results obtained in this study are in accordance with them. Taking into account the age of employees as a variable, it was found that significant differences exist in four of the five factors (*FWC*, *EE*, *JP* and *TI*). As in the study of Karatepe et al. (2010), in this study no significant differences were found in responses related to WFC according to age, which rejected  $H_3$ . With reference to turnover intentions, younger employees express a higher degree of turnover intention compared to older ones, which is in accordance with previous studies (Blomme et al., 2010; Carbery et al., 2003; Karatepe et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2010; Pizam & Thornburg, 2006). As an alternative explanation for such results, the fact of greater readiness of young people for new experiences and easier spatial and business change could be mentioned. This confirms  $H_4$ .

The level of education proved to be significant only for the JP factor. Respondents with completed high school perceive their work performance lower than employees with higher education. Highly educated employees are mostly engaged in performing more complex work tasks, which results in a higher perception of their own performance. Employees with a lower level of education usually perform operational tasks, which require fewer skills and qualifications, and therefore the perception of work performance is lower. Since the literature recognized the influence of education level on WFC (Adams et al., 1996; Anafarta & Kuruüzüm, 2012), in this study no evident relationship between education level and WFC was determined. These results rejected  $H_5$ . Based on results of many studies (i.e. Carbery et al., 2003; Karatepe et al., 2006), the initial assumption was that highly educated employees express a higher degree of turnover intention. In this study no significant impact of education level on turnover intention was found, which did not provide support for  $H_6$ . Although several studies found relationship between marital status and WFC (Beutell, 2010; Mukanzi & Senaji, 2017; Rathi & Barath, 2013), the findings of this research showed no notable relationship between marital status and WFC, which rejected  $H_7$ . However, obtained results are in line with the results of Liu et al. (2020) study, who found no significant association between marital status and experiencing WFC. When it comes to the relationship between

marital status and intentions to leave an organization, some papers point out that the level of turnover intention is higher among single people than among married people (Carbery et al., 2003; Emiroğlu et al., 2015). The obtained results indicate that married respondents have lower intention to leave the organization than single ones, which confirms H<sub>8</sub>. These findings could be possibly explained by the fact that married employees do not make easy decisions to leave the organization, especially if there are children in the family, because it would jeopardize financial stability.

The recommendation for future research is to include variables such as job satisfaction and work autonomy (Gözükara & Çolakoğlu, 2016), a type of work and spousal support (Gamor et al., 2014) as well as different cultural backgrounds in order to contribute to the literature in this field, as well as a more complete understanding of this phenomena in the hotel industry.

## Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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