The Moderating Effects of Job and Personal Life Involvement on the Relationship Between Work–Personal Life Conflict and Intention to Quit

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This study expands research on work–personal life conflict and intention to quit by exploring the moderating effects of job involvement and personal life involvement on the relationship between work–personal life conflict and an employee's intention to quit. The sample consisted of 295 hotel managers. Personal life involvement was found to have a moderating effect on the relationship between work interference with personal life and intention to quit. The relationship between work interference with personal life and intention to quit was strongest among respondents with the highest levels of personal life involvement. However, employees' job involvement did not moderate the relationship between work–personal life conflict and intention to quit. Recommendations are offered to monitor impacts of work on personal life and to address the retention challenges facing the industry.

KEYWORDS Work–personal life conflict, work interference with personal life, personal life interference with work, job involvement, personal life involvement, intention to quit

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INTRODUCTION

The lodging industry has continuously suffered from a high employee turnover rate. Estimates of average annual turnover rates are well above 100%: for line employees, 158%; for supervisors, 136%; and for management, 129% (Hensdill, 2000). The costs associated with the high turnover rate impact the industry's profitability and reduce its competitive advantages in the market. Factors that contribute to the high turnover rate in the lodging industry include long working hours, working irregular hours and weekends, a comparatively low pay compared to non-service industries, few opportunities for career advancement, and dissatisfaction with employer, or with the industry in general (Carberry, Gararvan, O'Brien, & McDonnell, 2003; Stalcup & Pearson, 2001).

The hospitality and tourism industries are characterized by long and erratic work hours, which create an enormous amount of work/family stress and offer a challenge for managers who wish to advance in their careers and to be involved in family activities at the same time (Berta, 2002; Dean & Hildreth, 1999). Unlike most other business sectors, the hospitality industry expects its employees and managers to provide products and services to consumers around the clock, every day of the year. Focusing on a career as intense as hotel management leaves little time for outside activities; therefore, work and personal life may be particularly difficult to balance in this industry. Many managers do not have much time for themselves or their families; some even change careers to other industries to seek a balance between work and personal life (Dean & Hildreth, 1999; Munck, 2001). In early 2000, Marriott International was experiencing difficulties in recruiting talented people. In addition, it noticed that some of its best managers were quitting their jobs because they wanted to spend more time with their families (Munck, 2001). According to "Trends in Hospitality 2004," conducted by Careerbuilder.com, of more than 285 hospitality workers, about 4 out of 10 respondents reported high levels of stress at work, while one-third of the respondents indicated dissatisfaction with their work and life balance (Careerbuilder, 2004).

There are many compelling reasons to study the balance between work and personal life in hospitality industry workers. First, social and demographic changes over the last two decades have had a great impact on the lodging industry. One of these changes is the increasing number of women in the workplace. Diaz and Umbreit (1995) found that 41% of hospitality managers in the United States were women. Woods and Viehland (2000) indicated in their study that the percentage of female managers in the hospitality industry had increased to 46%. Data from the 2002 National Study of the Changing Workforce conducted by the Families and Work Institute reveal that women are still much more likely to assume primary responsibilities for family work than men (Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, & Prottas,

2002). In addition to the increasing number of women in the workplace, a report from the U.S. Department of Labor (2003) reveals that the structure of the American family has been shifting in favor of dual-career, single-parent households over dual earner couples. Men are now sharing more of the home-related, childcare and elder-care responsibilities and are vulnerable to the stresses from work–personal life conflicts like women once were (Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, & Prottas, 2002). The number of individuals facing the challenge of balancing responsibilities of work and family is rising.

Second, change in social values poses another challenge to the lodging industry. In 1990, a survey found that 41% of Americans rated leisure time as their highest priority, even higher than their jobs. Only 36% of the respondents rated their job as the most important priority in their lives (Nelson-Horchler, 1991). Furthering this trend, many Generation X employees (those born after 1963; Tulgan, 1996) now occupy managerial positions in the lodging industry. Unlike their baby-boomer (those born before 1963) parents for whom work took precedence over leisure and family, Gen Xers put a premium on quality of life ("The International Hotel and Restaurant Association Paris," 1999; Witham, 2005). In other words, the rising generation of managers is even more concerned about life outside of the workplace.

Previous studies have indicated work–family conflict tends to produce low levels of job satisfaction and career satisfaction, which may stimulate withdrawal behaviors (Burke,1988; Grandey & Cropanzano,1999; Greenhaus, Collins, Singh, & Parasuraman, 1997; Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996); however, none of the studies focus on lodging managers. Very little research investigates factors such as job involvement and personal life involvement that might buffer the relationships between work–personal life conflict and turnover intention. Hence, this study contributes to theory by testing the moderating effect of job involvement and personal life involvement on the relationship between work–personal life conflict and the employee's turnover intention.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Previous research on work–family conflicts relied on a variety of theoretical conceptualizations. The study's hypotheses were based on the literature of work and family conflicts as well as conservation of resources theory and identity theory.

Work and Personal Life Conflict

Early research on work and personal life conflict focused on work and family conflicts (Burke, 1988; Greenglass, Pantony, & Burke, 1988; Googins, 1991; Kanter, 1977). Work and family conflict has been defined

as a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respects (Beutell &Greenhaus, 1983). Beutell and Greenhaus (1983) theorized that the more important a role is to an individual, the more time and energy that person will invest in it, and the less time and energy will be available for other roles. They also proposed three forms of conflict: time based, strain based, and behavior based.

Frone, Russell, and Cooper (1992) expanded the work–family conflict research by empirically demonstrating that work–family interface is bidirectional—meaning work interferes with family, and family interferes with work. Conflict can originate in the workplace and then interfere with personal life (WIP), and conflict can originate in personal life and interfere with work (PIW). Prior research established no consensus on the definition of work–family conflict. Some work–family conflict scale items refer to family as "home life" or "things I want to do at home" (Duxbury, Lee, Higgins, & Mills, 1992; Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991), while others refer to "family life," "family responsibilities," or "spouse/partner" (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992; Stephens & Sommers, 1996). However, employees without family responsibilities might have interference from nonwork life upon work. They may have household responsibilities, interests and hobbies, community activities, or religious activities that might interfere with work. Hence, instead of using the term "family," this study adopts a broader approach by using the term "personal life."

Conservation of Resources Theory

Conservation of resources theory postulates that individuals seek to acquire and maintain resources (Hobfoll, 1989). Resources could be objects (e.g., homes, clothes, food), conditions (e.g., marital status and tenure), personal characteristics (e.g., self-esteem), or energies (e.g., time, money, knowledge; Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999). A loss of necessary resources or a threat of such a loss could cause individuals to experience a feeling of stress. Stress is a reaction to an environment in which one is threatened by a potential loss in resources, an actual loss in resources, or lack of expected gain in resources. Oftentimes, as resources become scarce, individuals change their situations to safeguard themselves (Hobfoll, 1988, 1989). Conservation of resources theory suggests that inter-role conflict leads to stress because resources are lost in the process of juggling between work and family roles. When employees believe that their work interferes with their personal lives, they eliminate this drain on their resources by leaving the organization. Based on conservation of resources theory, it was hypothesized by the authors that:

1. **H1a:** The higher the level of WIP, the higher the level of intention to quit the job.

Because the most substantial determinants of personal life–work conflicts reside within the personal life domain, employees who experience the conflict from personal life to work were less likely to leave their jobs to eliminate this drain. Hence, it was hypothesized that

1. **H1b:** There was no association between PIW and employees' intention to quit.

Identity Theory

Identity theory proposes that the self consists of a collection of identities, each of which is oriented toward a particular role (Stryker, 1968; Stryker & Burke, 2000). Identities can be defined as one's answers to the question "who am I "(Stryker & Serpe, 1982). Most of these answers are linked to the roles we occupy—for example, "I am a mother" and "I am a manager." The identities give individuals a set of associated meanings and expectations, and provide them with purpose and behavioral guidance (Burke & Reitzes, 1981). Stryker (1968), the originator of identity theory, indicated that the various identities within a self exist in a hierarchy of salience. The salience of a particular role helps to determine a person's overall perception of self.

Stryker explained identity salience by giving the example of a former New York mayor who decided not to run for another term in order to maintain favorable relationships with his sons. At that time, some people disbelieved the mayor's rationale. Stryker argued that the mayor most likely had a family identity that was high in his salience hierarchy. On the contrary, those who did not believe the mayor's rationale most likely had a family identity that was low in their salience hierarchy (Stryker, 1968). In many cases the individual who holds the family value higher than the work value may suffer when work responsibilities interfere with family. Based on identity theory, it was hypothesized by the authors that:

1. **H2a:** The relationship between WIP and the intention to quit would be stronger for managers who are highly involved in their personal lives than for managers who are relatively uninvolved in their personal lives.
2. **H2b:** The relationship between WIP and the intention to quit would be stronger for managers who are less involved in their work than for those who are highly involved in their work.

METHODOLOGY

This research was part of a study on lodging managers' perceptions of work and personal life balance (Hsieh, 2004). The participants were managers

from 83 hotels under one management company. This company has properties in nine states, which are widely spread across the continental United States. These hotels range from 50 to 615 rooms, representing different types of lodging operations: business hotels, convention hotels, airport hotels, resort hotels, and residence hotels. Surveys were distributed to 535 general and mid-level managers holding the job titles of General Manager, Resident Manager, Front-Office Manager, Reservations Manager, Controller, Executive Housekeeper, Engineer, Sales (Marketing) Director, Senior Sales Manager, Sales and Marketing Manager, Catering Manager, Security Manager, Personnel Manager, Food and Beverage Manager, Executive Chef, Sous Chef, Banquet Chef, Executive Steward, and Restaurant Manager.

Survey Instrument

The levels of WIP and PIW were measured by six questions. These questions were adopted from previous research in work and family life conflict. All of the measures used in this study have been validated in previous research. A pretest was conducted on six hospitality and tourism graduate students who had at least 3 years managerial experience in the hospitality industry. Since previous questions focused on the conflict between work and family life instead of work and personal life, minor modifications to the wording of family life were made so that questions would fit into the broader view of the balance of work and personal life in the current study.

The three statements used to measure WIP were (a) "Because of my job, I did not have enough time to participate in nonwork activities [that] I find relaxing and enjoyable" (Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, & Prottas, 2002); (b) "My job made it difficult to maintain the kind of relationships with my family and friends that I would have liked" (Stephens & Sommers, 1996); (c) "Because of my job, I didn't have the energy to do things with my family or other important people in my life" (Bond et al., 2002).

The three statements used to measure PIW were (a) "The schedule demands of my personal responsibilities kept me from getting work done on time at my job" (Bond et al., 2002); (b) "I was preoccupied with personal responsibilities while I was at work" (Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991); (c) "I was too tired to be effective at work because of personal responsibilities" (Gutek et al., 1991).

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Overall WIP and PIW were determined by averaging their respective items, so that a higher score indicated higher levels of interference. Internal consistency reliability estimates obtained in the present study were 0.87 for the WIP scale and 0.78 for the PIW scale.

Job involvement was measured by three questions adopted from Lodhal and Kejner's job involvement scale (1965). The three questions were (a)

"Most of the important things that happen to me involve my job," (b) "I am very personally involved in my job," and (c) "The majority of satisfaction in my life comes from my job." Each of these questions was assessed on a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Lodhal and Kejner's study reported a reliability coefficient of 0.79. The reliability coefficient for this study was 0.70.

Personal life involvement was assessed with a parallel set of three items, with the substitution of the words "nonwork life" for "job." This scale has been successfully used in studies by Parasuraman, Greenhaus, and Granrose (1992). The three questions were "Most of the important things that happen to me involve my nonwork life," "I am very personally involved in my nonwork life," and "The majority of satisfaction in my life comes from my nonwork life." Parasuraman et al.'s studies reported an acceptable internal reliability coefficient, ranging from 0.84 to 0.86. The reliability coefficient for this study was 0.81.

Intention to quit was measured by two questions adopted from the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (Seashore, Lawler, Mirvis, & Cammann, 1982). Participants were asked to respond to these items on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The two questions were "I will probably look for a new job within the next 12 months" and "I frequently think of quitting this job." An overall intention to quit score was computed by taking the average of managers' responses to the two items. The coefficient alpha was 0.91 by a previous study (McClough, Rogelberg, Fisher, & Bachiochi, 1998). Internal consistency reliability estimates were 0.82 for current data.

Statistical Method

Correlation analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between the work–personal life conflict and employee turnover intention (H1a and H1b). H2a through H2d predicted the interaction between personal life involvement and job involvement on the relationship between PIW and the intention to quit, respectively. Multiple regression analyses were employed to test the moderating effects (Aiken & West, 1991). The regression equation used to analyze and interpret the two-way interaction was

$$Y = b_0 + b_1(X) + b_2(Z) + b_3(XZ) + e$$

where Y is the dependent variable of intention to quit. X is the independent variable of WIP (in H2a and H2b). Z is the moderating variable of personal life involvement (in H2a and H2b) and XZ is the product of WIP and personal life involvement (in H2a and H2b). Before performing the analysis, all main effect variables were mean-centered to reduce possible multicollinearity and

TABLE 1 Correlation Matrix, Means and Standard Deviations of the Variables ($N = 264$)

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Mean	SD
(1) WIP	1					3.058	0.875
(2) PIW	0.384**	1				1.909	0.553
(3) Intention to quit	0.362**	0.124*	1			2.481	1.182
(4) Job involvement	0.055	−0.128*	−0.213**	1		3.311	0.798
(5) Personal life nvolvement	−0.091	0.080	−0.028	−0.344**	1	3.559	0.857

Note: ** $p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$.

to facilitate model estimation when main effects and interactive effects were both present (Aiken & West, 1991).

RESULTS

Two hundred ninety-five questionnaires were returned, yielding a response rate of 55%. Of these respondents, approximately 50% were males and 50% were females. Ages ranged from 21 years to 62 years with a mean of 33 years. About 54% of the respondents were married. Over half of the respondents (54%) held a title of department head, 21% of the respondents were General Managers, and 15% were holding a director's position, such as Director of Food and Beverage, Director of Sales and Marketing, and Director of Human Resources.

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the variables of interest. Table 2(a) and 2(b) present the results of the regression analyses. The results of correlation analysis indicated that WIP was positively associated with employee turnover intention ($r = 0.362$, $p < 0.01$), whereas PIW was unrelated to employee turnover intention ($r = 0.124$, $p > 0.01$). Both H1a and H1b were supported.

H2a was tested by conducting a multiple regression analysis predicting intention to quit from WIP, personal life involvement, and their product. The overall model predicted 17% of the variance in intention to quit, F (3,260) = 18.12, $p < 0.01$. WIP was a significant predictor. A higher level of WIP was associated with a stronger intention to quit ($\beta = 0.49$, $t = 6.35$, $p < 0.01$). The

TABLE 2(a). Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Intention to Quit ($N = 264$)

Variable	β	t value
WIP	0.486 **	6.351
Personal life involvement	−0.029	−0.370
WIP x Personal life involvement	0.301 **	3.62
F statistic 18.116 **		

Note. $R^2 = 0.173$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.163$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$.

TABLE 2(b). Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Intention to Quit ($N = 264$)

Variable	β	t value
WIP	0.502 **	6.627
Job involvement	−0.344 **	−4.139
WIP x Job involvement	−0.074	−0.945
F statistic 20.138 **		

Note. $R^2 = 0.189$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.179$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$.

interaction between WIP and personal life involvement was significant. Personal life involvement moderated the relation between WIP and employee's intention to quit ($\beta = 0.30$, $t = 3.62$, $p < 0.01$). To further explore the moderating effects, the regression lines that scored one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below the mean on high personal life involvement and low personal life involvement were plotted. Figure 1 depicts the interaction between WIP and personal life involvement. The graph shows that the effect of WIP on employee's intention to quit was more positive as the level of personal life involvement increased. The relationship between WIP and intention to quit was weakest for those respondents who had the lowest levels of personal live involvement, providing support for H2a.

H2b was tested by conducting a multiple regression analysis predicting intention to quit from WIP, job involvement, and their product. The overall model predicted only 19% of the variance in intention to quit, F $(3,260) =$ 20.14, $p < 0.01$. WIP ($\beta = 0.50$, $t = 6.63$, $p < 0.01$) and job involvement ($\beta = -0.34$, $t = -4.14$, $p < 0.01$) were significant predictors of intention to quit (see Table 2[b]). The more the employees were involved in their jobs, the less likely they were to quit. No interactions were observed between job involvement and WIP ($\beta = -0.07$, $t = -0.95$, $p > 0.05$). Job involvement did not moderate the relationship between WIP and intention to quit. H2b was not supported.
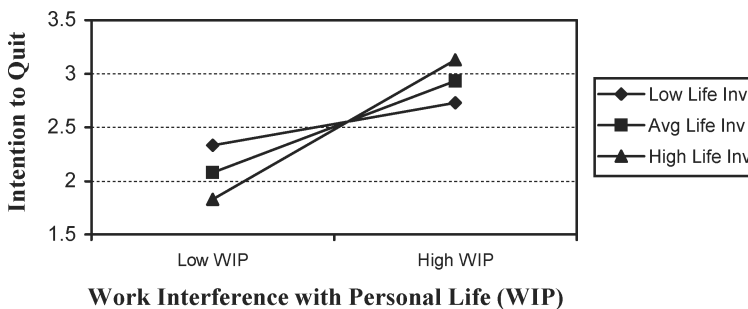

FIGURE 1 Interaction Between WIP and Personal Life Involvement Predicting Employee's Intention to Quit.

CONCLUSIONS/IMPLICATIONS

The results indicated that WIP had a weaker but significant relationship to an employee's intention to quit but that PIW did not have a significant relationship to an employee's intention to quit. The results suggested that when employees experienced interference from work on their personal life, they eliminated this drain on their resources by leaving the company. Since the source of WIP arose primarily from the stressors within the work environment, leaving a job that interfered with personal life was likely to reduce an individual's level of stress and maintain his/her resources. This finding was in line with conservation of resources theory.

However, PIW was not found to be significantly related to turnover intention. Employees who experienced extensive PIW were less likely or unlikely to withdraw from their jobs. It is possible that since source of the conflict was in the nonwork life domain, quitting the job may not relieve the conflicts primarily arising from the personal life environment and may even increase those pressures without the "escape value" of the work environment. This is consistent with Namasivayam and Mount (2004) who found that a greater degree of family-to-work conflict had a direct relationship with higher job satisfaction. Piotrkowski (1979) noted that, within working-class families, men who were dissatisfied at home tended to find satisfaction at work. Hence, when employees experienced PIW, they were unlikely to choose quitting a job as a way to cope with the conflict. This may explain why PIW was not associated with employee's turnover intention.

These findings imply that hotel companies can reduce turnover intention by alleviating the interference of work on employees' personal lives. Hotel companies should acknowledge that assisting employees to achieve a better work–personal life balance is a significant factor in employee retention. Strategies that may be employed by hotels to reduce work pressure and assist employees in managing the work–personal life interface include

1. Assessing job assignments to avoid systematic work overload and burnout in the long run.
2. Restructuring the everyday work environment to allow employees the autonomy to accommodate their own work and personal life needs and giving employees more choices about work arrangements and schedules so that they can adjust them to their own needs.
3. Promoting a supportive work–life balance company-culture. Companies should recognize that employees are human beings, not machines or robots. In addition to work roles, employees have other roles to play in their lives. Hotel companies should promote a company culture that encourages employees to seek a balance between work and personal life. Managers who stay late or work overtime are no longer seen as super

achievers but rather as power time-managers. Policies and reward systems should be upgraded to support this work–personal life balance culture. For example, companies should reward results rather than face time on the job.

4. Promoting a social support system within the workplace so that coworkers can help each other when there is a problem occurring in an employee's personal life.

5. Providing training programs in time management and conflict management to assist employees in coping with the conflicts arising from work or personal life.

6. Establishing policies and benefits that reduce the impact of both on-the-job or personal stressors.

This study contributes to the field of work and personal life by empirically investigating the moderating effects of personal job involvement and personal life involvement in determining an employee's intention to quit when facing work–personal life conflicts. Both personal life involvement and job involvement were a salient part of these employees' self-identity ($\overline{X}$ of Job Involvement = 3.31; $\overline{X}$ of Personal-Life Involvement =3.56). Personal life involvement was not associated with employee's intention to quit, but it enhanced the intention to quit in the presence of WIP. WIP and intention to quit were stronger for employees who were highly involved in their personal lives than for those who were not. Those more involved in their personal lives received satisfaction from their personal lives and agreed that the important things that happened to them involved their personal lives. Therefore, they were more sensitive to work intrusions and tended to react to threats by quitting their jobs in order to resume their personal life satisfaction. The findings suggest that employees who value their personal lives may quit their jobs when work threatens their personal lives.

Hotel companies that want to prevent talented and experienced employees from leaving due to personal life issues should be aware of the personal life needs and family obligations of all the employees and develop applicable strategies to assist those employees into satisfying and fulfilling their personal life needs. Practices that provide support for the personal lives of employees include access to employee assistance programs that provide consulting for employees to solve work–personal life conflict, day care to make the organization more attractive to current and potential employees, flexible time and job sharing to allow employees to schedule their working hours to accommodate their personal lives, and extended educational benefits to create a skilled labor pool and fulfill employees' sense of self-achievement.

Job involvement was not found to moderate the relationship between WIP and intention to quit. However, job involvement was found to be significantly correlated to intention to quit. The more employees were involved in their jobs, the less likely they were to quit. To better understand the

TABLE 3. Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Intention to Quit ($N = 264$)

Variable	β	t value
WIP	0.539**	6.546
PIW	−0.129**	−0.981
Job involvement	−0.360	−4.278
F statistic 20.167**		

Note. $R^2 = 0.189$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.179$, **$p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

predictability of job involvement, WIP, and PIW on employees' intention to quit, a multiple regression analysis was conducted. The results indicate that these factors can only predict 19% of the variance on intention to quit. WIP and job involvement are significant predictors of intention to quit (Table 3). These results imply that hotel companies can reduce turnover by having employees who are highly involved in their jobs.

Several approaches can be adopted to achieve this goal. The first is to recruit employees who are highly involved in their jobs. Hotel companies should sharpen their interview skills and incorporate personality tests into their recruiting processes that screen for an employee's propensity to be highly involved with his/her job. Second, the hotel companies should take great care to place employees in the right position according to their abilities to increase the likelihood that the employees will be happy with their jobs and become more involved with them. Finally, the companies should provide training programs to help employees be successful in their jobs, along with adequate reward and recognition polices to encourage them to commit to their jobs.

LIMITATIONS / FUTURE STUDIES

This study has several limitations. First, the sample included only hotel employees who were holding managerial positions, and the results cannot necessarily be extended to include all employees, especially line-level employees. Second, the samples were all taken from one hotel-management company, and the results may be different for other companies. In addition, this study was based on the data set collected from the Lodging Managers' Perceptions on Work and Personal Life Balance study (Hsieh, 2004) rather than being designed to test a comprehensive model of intention to quit. Other variables related to employees' withdrawal behavior were not investigated in this study. The low variances of three regression models revealed that work–life conflict could have an impact on employee's intention to quit but not a major one. Other variables that related to employees' withdrawal behavior were not investigated in this study. It is suggested that future studies on turnover intention include work-related variables and personal life–related

variables, with other variables identified in previous studies, and build a complete model to investigate their influence on employees' intention to quit.

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