

Work-family conflict management in international chains and private owned Nigerian luxury hotels: Implication for internal marketing strategy

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Abstract

This study examines the problem of work family conflict among international and private owned luxury hotels in South-South Nigeria. The study determined the prevalence of work conflict in luxury hotels, the management strategies of hotel management in handling family work conflict confronting the hotel workers, and the effect of management strategies on worker's effectiveness. A judgmental sample of six private owned and four international chain hotels scattered across the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria was used for the study. Data for the study was obtained from management and front-line workers of the selected hotels with the aid of structured questionnaire. The study measured the prevalence of work family conflict, management response to work family conflict in luxury hotels, and the effect of management responses on worker's effectiveness. The study revealed that front-line employees of Hospitality industry in Nigeria (private-owned and international chain) are faced with work family, role conflict, alongside the negative effects associated with it and that management response to dealing with the issue helps the employee in managing these effects. The study also revealed that management of international chain hotels in Nigeria have slightly imbibed the culture of their counterpart hotels in developed nations of the world while management of private owned hotels show little or no concern in amelioration these effects even in the midst of its prevalence and these attitude was attributed to lack of institutionalized social support system and poor government policy in regards to employment standards. It was therefore recommended that management of private owned hotels in Nigeria should imbibe strategies and tools used by international chain hotel in ameliorating work family conflict alongside the formulation of strategies peculiar to them and that Nigerian government should enforce laws that check employee welfare in the hospitality industry.

Keywords: Work family conflict, Management response, International Chain Hotels, Internal Marketing, private-owned hotels.

1. Introduction

The concept of work-family conflict had long gained the interest of researchers in the western world. The early studies in this area were credited to Greenhaus and Beutell and dates back to as far as 1980's (Garmor, Amissah, & Boakye, 2014). Front office employees in the hotel industry are very important actors in service delivery and complaint handling processes. For internal marketing to be effective, front office staff in the hospitality sector is

expected by management and customers to be mentally bright and sharp, and proactive in creating satisfaction or solving problem for customers. They are expected to work hard and perform well. The primary function of the front office in the hotel is to sell the rooms and other products of the property. This is not surprising, because front office employees have boundary-spanning roles and their attitudes and behaviours determine customers' perceptions of service quality. However, studies have showed that they often carry heavy workload and experience work-family conflict in the work-family interface (Davidson et. al., 2011; Choi and Kim, 2012; Deery, 2008; Karatepe, 2013).

To cope with the problem of work family conflict in hotel management, it is reported that, international chains in developed tourism countries make provision for strategies, methods and tools that would reduce work-family conflict to the barest minimum among their staff in accordance with research recommendations (such as establishing and maintaining a family-supportive work environment, practices of hiring frontline employees which are effective, and mentorship programs or the use of senior employees as potential mentors who will provide professional assistance to employees). However not much is really known of the incidence and effect of work family conflict on hotel staff performance and even strategies in place to cope with the phenomenon in private-owned and international chain hotels in Nigeria. There is a need to closely examine what strategies and effort hotels in Nigeria are employing to bring work-family conflict among front-desk officers in the hospitality sector in Nigeria to the barest minimum. The need to investigate management response to these problems in the hospitality sector in Nigeria provides necessity for this study.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

1. investigate the prevalence of work family conflict among front office staff in luxury hotels in south-south, Nigeria;
2. investigate the effect of work family conflict on work effectiveness of front office staff in luxury hotels in South-South, Nigeria;
3. investigate the effect of management response to work family conflict on front office staff effectiveness in luxury hotels in South- South, Nigeria.
4. compare the difference in management response to work family conflict in international chain hotels and privately owned hotels in luxury hotels in South- South, Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Framework

2.1.1 Meaning of work- family conflict

In our world today, it is obvious that an individual is simultaneously involved in two domains of life, work and family. Thus, each domain has an influence on the behavior of the individual and how he performs in the other. In the instance that an individual experience some difficulties at home with spouse, wards, or other domestic responsibilities, this difficulty can influence the individual's behavior in the work place. Family-Work conflict refers to lack of compatibility between the roles one plays at work and in the family such that family-related role pressure obstructs work performance. Work-family conflict exists when pressures from work and family roles are mutually incompatible. Work-family conflict is a kind of conflict when family responsibilities hinder work responsibilities or vice versa (Greenhouse and Powel 2003:292). It could also be referred to as the lack of balance between work and family roles or responsibilities. In other words, the lack of work-family balance potentially could lead to work-family conflict. The conflict could be time-based, behavior-based, or role-based (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985; Roche & Haar, 2010).

2.1.2 Prevalence of Work-family conflict in the Hotel Industry in Nigeria

Conflict between work and family domains and burnout are prevalent among employees in front-line service jobs. Employees who cannot manage work and family responsibilities effectively experience heightened burnout (Karatepe & Uludag, 2008). According to Karatepe and Aleshinloye, (2009), many employers are beginning to realize that it is in their best interest to help their employees balance their work and family lives. Although the tourism industry is one of the high-potential industries in Nigeria with regard to creating revenue and employment opportunities, it is also one of the most problematic industries for employee benefits and working conditions, in particular during peak season. At the same time, those who work in the hospitality industry are generally low waged and work in irregular, long, heavy working conditions and they also have to work with demanding and difficult customers. This is a potential and ripe situation for stressors which in turn bring about work-family conflict. This view was supported by Yıldız (2011) who stressed that people working in tourism industry were under pressure because of private working conditions, long working hours, working weekends and holidays which bring in many problems and decrease morale and the level of enthusiasm of employees.

In his studies, Akanji (2013) observe that Nigeria's social and economic challenges are capable of bringing about work-life conflict for persons in the corporate sector including the hotel industry in Nigeria. This view is supported by French (1973), he showed that it was discovered that there was a prevailing misfit between the people and their working environments because of the failing culture of insensitivity to the work-life plights of the working class in the country. Role conflict situations was not solely originating from the workplace but a dynamic interactions caused by the culture in Nigeria that gives little recognition to work and life balance policies and practices in organizations. However, there are no empirical studies to substantiate the incidences of work family conflict and effect on workers performance in Nigeria.

2.1.3 Effect of work-family conflict on work effectiveness of front office staff

It is evident from studies that front office employees specifically in the service industry are consistently engaging in a face-to-face contact with customers. They are the main actors in the provision of service to customers. Thus it is imperative that an effective management of these personnel should be enforced to ensure success in today's competitive environment (Bowen & Ford, 2004). Similarly, front office employees also face difficulties in

balancing their work related roles and that of family (Yavas, Babakus & Karatepe 2008). Several studies have on the issue of work family conflict showed effects on both employee and the organization.

The employee (front office staff): As chronicled in several studies on work family conflict, it is evident that work family conflict has a negative consequence on the employee performance. As opined by Yavas, Karatepe & Babakus, (2008), the employee is usually exhausted emotionally when they consistently face work family conflict which lead to employee turnover intention. Similarly, Beauregard (2006) stated in his study that as employee experiences much of the conflict between work and family their stress increases and productivity also decreases. Several studies have examined the relationship between work-family conflict and job performance with mixed results. Frone et al. (1997) found a significant relationship using a self-rated measure of job performance. Aryee (1992) used a self-rated measure of work quality and found that it was related to job-parent conflict but not to job-spouse or job-homemaker conflict. Karatepe and Sokmen (2006) conducted a study in Ankara, Turkey on frontline hotel employees and found a significant negative relationship between both work-family conflict and family-work conflict with job performance. Netemeyer et al. (2005), in their study on customer service employees, customers and supervisors, found direct and indirect effects between work-family conflict and employee performance rated by supervisor. The study on work family conflict by Ozkan, Esitti & Koleoglu, investigated the impact of work-Family conflict on hospitality industry workers in Izmir Province. This study tries to identify the variables that hospitality organizations can take to help their employees resolve their work-family challenges. A total of 248 respondents were selected for the study using simple sampling technique. The Instrument used for data collection is Work-Family conflict scale which was developed by Netemeyer, Boles and McMurrian (1996). Demographic characteristics and Logistic Regression Analysis were used to test hypotheses that were generated for the study at 0.05 alpha levels. Finding reveals that there was a significant level of work-family conflict in the hospitality industry in Izmir province. Also, it was found that a significant difference exists between age groups, title of the employee, genders, having children, married and single respondents' experience of work-family conflict.

The organization's marketing performance: The end result of low occurrence of work-family conflict (which by implication means a work-family balance situation) is higher income and profits for the company and satisfaction for users of their products and services. On the hand, work-family conflict could potentially reduce effectiveness and performance of staff leading to poor performance on the job by the staff, emotional and psychological problems on the home (family) front for the staff, bringing about lower and poorer output from that staff or group of staff concerned. Employees' experiencing role conflicts often encounter high levels of stress from both domains (work and family) of their life. The end result is lower and poorer output by those staff for the company, leading to dissatisfaction of users of their products and services, poor image for the company and possibly losses. In reality, attaining this balanced status between work and domestic life still portrays a central challenge for employees and employers which both parties (employee and employer) with united and concerted effort should work to achieve across various occupational contexts (Greenhuas, Collins, & Shaw, 2003; Valour, 2007).

2.1.4 Management Practices for Work-Family Conflict

Hospitality industry is traditionally known with its long working hours (Cushing 2004: 14). This may naturally cause employees to become exhausted psychologically (Buick and Thomas 2001: 309). This suggests that the more management are committed to compensation and support of their staff (which for obvious reasons include reducing the occurrence and negative effects of work-family conflict to the barest minimum), the more those staff are likely to be more job-embedded. Poor training, insufficient pay, excessive job demands, conflicts in the work-family interface, unsocial work hours, and job insecurity appear to be among problems facing the global hospitality

industry including Nigeria (Davidson et al., 2011; Poulston, 2008; Ryan et al., 2011; Yang et al., 2012). All these are capable of inducing stressors upon the staff and reduce his job-embeddedness and/or effectiveness. Much responsibility lies with the management in overcoming these challenges in work setting of the hospitality industry in Nigeria.

Therefore, it is the duty of management to create and make available work-life balance incentives such as compressed hours, flexible arrangements, paid maternity leave, re-entry schemes, paternity leave, part-time work, home commuting and so on to help employees find a reasonable integration between their employments and non-work (i.e. life and family) aspects of their lives (Crompton & Lyonette, 2006; Akanji, 2013). Management should make it a duty to eliminate stressful conditions through effective deployment of coping strategies for their employees (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Hospitality organizations should try to create a work atmosphere that supports improvement of work-family fields and strengthen individuals' energies to successfully achieve their objectives in both fields (Zhao ve Namasivayam, 2012). These recommendations are consistent with research recommendations of previous studies such as Karatepe and Aleshinloye, (2009).

2.2 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for this study is anchored on Frederick Herzberg's well-known two-factor theory. The theory was designed in 1959 based on 200 engineers and accountant's feedback collected in the U.S.A. regarding their personal feelings towards their working environment. Herzberg defined two sets of factors in deciding employees working attitudes and level of performance, named "motivation and hygiene factors" (Robbins, 2009).

They assumed that, motivation factors are intrinsic factors that will increase employees' job satisfaction; while hygiene factors are extrinsic factors that prevent any employee's dissatisfaction. Herzberg furthered that full supply of hygiene factors will not necessarily result in employee's job satisfaction (Yusoff, Kian & Idris, 2013). The implication for organization to use this theory is that meeting employee's extrinsic or hygiene factors will not only prevent employees from being actively dissatisfied but will not motivate them to contribute additional efforts towards better performance. To motivate employees, organizations should focus on supplying intrinsic or motivation factors (Robbins, 2009). According to Herzberg, the motivation factors pertain to the job content; they are intrinsic to the job itself and do not result from "carrot and stick incentives". They comprise of the physiological need for growth and recognition. The absence of these factors does not prove highly dissatisfying but when present, they build strong levels of motivation that results in good job performance. They are therefore called satisfiers or motivators.

The design elements of a hotel fall within the domain of motivators. Work family conflict pertains to issues related to the work design in the organization. The theory is relevant to the study to the extent that a good work environment will impact positively on front office staff performance in luxury hotels in the study area.

2.3. Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated based on the preceding discussion.

H1. Front office staff of luxury hotels in South- South, Nigeria do not experience work family conflict.

H2. Work family conflict does not significantly influence work effectiveness of front office staff in luxury hotels in South- South, Nigeria.

H3. Management response to work family conflict does not significantly affect work effectiveness of front office staff of luxury hotels in South-South, Nigeria.

H4. There is no significant difference in management response to work family conflict in International chain hotels and privately owned luxury hotels in South- South, Nigeria.

3. Methodology

The study took place in the South-South zone of Nigeria. The south-south zone is known for its richness in oil and other business activities such as hospitality and Tourism, events and festivals etc. The South-South geo-political zone is blessed with wonderful natural attraction and authentic cultural attractions and festivals. Descriptive research design was used to guide data collection and analysis. The data was collected from front office staff of selected privately owned and international chain hotels in four selected states in the South-South geo-political area of Nigeria (Cross River, Akwa-Ibom, Rivers, Bayelsa). According to statistics, there are several hospitality establishments (Hotels, Motels, Inns, guesthouses, bed & Breakfast etc.), but for the context of this study, concentration was given to luxury hotels. Specifically, there are 5 international chain hotels and very few private luxury hotels. However, there is no statistics to show the exact number of luxury hotels in the zone. Similarly, apart from Lagos and Abuja, this zone accounts for almost forty percent of the international chain hotels in Nigeria. A convenient sampling design was used to collect a sample size of 120 front office staff from four International chain hotels and six privately owned luxury hotels. The instrument used for the study was made up of questions adopted from validated work-family conflict scale by Netemeyer, Boles & Mcmurrian (1996) and Esson (2004). The instrument was divided into two components. The 'A' component contained the demographic variables such as: gender, age, marriage statue, and number of Children and position of office. The 'B' component contained the major constructs in the study such as: prevalence of work-family conflict, management response and effect on work effectiveness. The Likert scale was used in designing the variable measuring scale with 1 representing strongly disagree and 5 representing strongly agree. The scales showed adequate levels of internal consistency, dimensionality, and discriminant validity across three samples Netemeyer, Boles & Mcmurrian (1996). A total number of 120 questionnaires were distributed across the specific hospitality establishment within a two-month time lag and a total number of fifty-three copies questionnaire were returned. Eight respondents were from international chains and forty-four respondents were from private owned luxury hotels. The data were organized by the use of the Scientific Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Simple frequency analysis and reliability tests were conducted on the gathered responses. The univariate one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Ordinary Least Squares regression technique were conducted as means of validating or refuting the stated hypothesis.

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive statistics

Mean rating of perceived presence of work family conflict in luxury hotels

Table 1 shows that front office staff of luxury hotels experience varying levels of work family conflict. Mean rating of the respondents' perception of the type of conflict that is commonly experienced by the staff shows that

conflicting work schedule is rated as the most frequent factor. The second rated factor is frequent changes in departmental plans and thirdly followed by fatigue after work.

Table 1. Mean rating of perceived presence of work family conflict in luxury hotels

Work family conflict items	Mean	Std. Deviation
Conflicting Schedules	4.00	1.255
Tired from work	3.88	1.248
Personal interest	3.71	1.458
Preoccupied with work	3.27	1.469
Irritable at home	3.25	1.313
Unrelaxed at home	3.29	1.398
Takes up family time	3.31	1.355
Non-ideal spouse	3.48	1.238
Frequent plan changes	3.90	1.225
Unfulfilled family responsibilities	3.44	1.382
Strain	3.31	1.355

Table 2 shows respondent's perception of the management response to work family conflict experienced by staff and the strategies to cope with such phenomenon. The result shows that respondents rated awareness highest and management understanding of the phenomenon second strategies. Strategies such as flexible working hours, establishment of assurance policy and family supportive environment were rated average. Lastly, strategies such as children service, mentorship programs and vocational and psychological programs were rated least.

Table 2. Mean rating of the management responsiveness (strategies) to cope work family conflict

Management responsiveness items	Mean	Std. Deviation
Awareness of WFC	3.31	1.203

Understands WFC	3.29	1.218
Flexible working hours	2.76	1.334
Life assurance	2.51	1.424
Childcare service	1.91	.874
Family supportive environment	2.44	1.253
Mentorship programs	2.13	.991
Vocational/Psychological programs	2.22	1.042
Employ unfit staff	2.44	1.358
Transfer unqualified staff	2.40	1.286

Table 3 shows the respondents' evaluation of their work effectiveness in the hotels. The result shows that front office staff competence was rated highest, followed the tendency to leave for another job and then by career building.

Table 3. Mean rating of respondents' work effectiveness

Work effectiveness items	Mean	Std. Deviation
Satisfied with job	3.22	1.254
Stay longer in job	3.18	1.337
Leave for another job	3.78	1.083
Highly competent	4.06	.988
Cares for welfare	2.86	1.265
Concerned with life	2.90	1.269
Part of the organization	3.29	1.205
Build career	3.41	1.268

4.2 Test of hypotheses

Majority of the respondents agreed that they were experiencing work family conflict. The result shows that the prevalence of work family conflict was prevalent in both international chains and private owned luxury hotels. Chi-square test (χ^2) result was not significant indicating that both types of luxury hotels were facing the problem of work family conflict (international and privately owned luxury hotels). ($t = .269$, $p \geq 0.05$) respectively.

Table 4. prevalence of work family conflict in international and private owned luxury hotels.

Model	Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by nominal Phi	.829	.269
Cramers V	.829	.269
N valid Cases	53	

Source: Researchers' computation

Test of hypotheses two and three

The test for hypotheses two and three using multiple regression analysis that work family conflict and the management responsiveness have a significant effect on work effectiveness of front office workers luxury hotels. The result revealed that 36.4% of the work effectiveness of front office staff is influence by the variation in the level of work family conflict experienced by staff and the strategies put in place by management in response to the phenomenon ($R^2 = .364$; $F = 14.315$; $p \geq 0.05$). See table 5. The beta coefficient indicate that the higher the work family conflict experienced by staff, the lower the work effectiveness of the staff ($b = -.273$). On the other hand, the higher management responsiveness to work family conflict, the higher the work effectiveness ($b = .488$). This can be explained by the fact that most of the management items implementation was rated lower by respondents.

Table 5. Effect of work family conflict and management responsiveness to work family conflict on staff effectiveness

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		standardized coefficients	t	sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1. (constants)	3.056	.413		7.402	.000
Work family conflict	-.273	.077	-.399	-3.533	.001
Management responsiveness	.488	.119	.464	4.1114	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Mean effect

$$R^2 = .364, F = 14.315, p \geq 0.05$$

Test of hypothesis four

Table 6 shows the significant difference in the perceive rating of the prevalence of work family conflict, management responsiveness and strategies and perceived work effectiveness between international hotels chains and private owned hotels. the result revealed that

Table 6. Comparison of mean effect of work family conflict, management responsiveness work conflict and work effectiveness.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Meanwfc					
Between Groups	3.377	1	3.377	3.065	.086
Within Groups	56.197	51	1.102		
Total	59.575	52			
MeanMRtwfc					
Between Groups	5.904	1	5.904	15.553	.000
Within Groups	19.362	51	.380		
Total	25.266	52			
Meaneffect					
Between Groups	2.531	1	2.531	5.645	.021
Within Groups	22.872	51	.448		
Total	25.403	52			

Source: Researchers' computation

The test for hypothesis 4 which compared the difference in management response between international chains and privately owned luxury hotels in Nigeria revealed that there was a significant difference between groups. The mean management response of privately owned luxury hotels was greater than that of international hotels. This could be interpreted to mean that management of international chain hotels have not fully and actively employed those strategies used by counterpart hotels in developed countries as suggested by several research such as Karatepe, (2013). Thus, one can infer that there are little or no government policies that are concerned with hospitality workers in Nigeria. This finding supports the assertion of Akanji (2013); Xiao & Cooke (2012) as revealed stated that lack of institutionalized social support systems, disregard for a culture that encourages work life balance solutions and effective enforcement of employment standards by the national government makes it possible for Nigerian employers of labor to circumvent the ideals of work life balance practices and policies. This unfortunately serves as one of the reasons for poor economic performance that has encumbered the maintenance of a sustainable and ethical business environment in Nigeria for decades.

5. Discussion and Practical implications

Interestingly, extensive research has been carried out in the area of work family conflict and its effect on employee perception, intention to leave, job embeddedness and job performance. These studies suggested solutions by recommending that management of the hotels should take into consideration the establishment and maintenance of a family-supportive work environment, effective hiring practices for frontline service jobs, and mentors or senior employees as potential mentors providing professional assistance to employees Karatepe, (2013). These

suggestions were outcome of studies carried out in hotels in developed nations but the issue of work family conflict is all embracing as a result of the holistic dynamism of the hospitality all over. As a result, it was necessary to investigate management response in two categories of hotel ownership available in Nigeria. Accordingly, the result of the study shows that workers of hospitality industry whether in a privately owned or international chain hotel experience work family conflict. Similarly, the result of this study has revealed that less work family conflict will lead to an increase in work effectiveness. Thus, the higher the level of work family conflict incidence, the lesser the work effectiveness of the hospitality worker. This confirms that work family conflict significantly influences work effectiveness of the staff of the hospitality industry. More so, the indication that management response to work family conflict significantly affect work effectiveness of staff in the hospitality industry has been revealed by this study. Thus, an increased response would lead to work effectiveness irrespective of the management or ownership category. Most interestingly, this study has revealed the level of management response to work family conflict in both management categories. The result shows a significant difference in management responses to work family conflict between international chain and privately owned luxury hotels. This could be interpreted to mean that management of international chain hotels have not fully and actively employed those strategies used by counterpart hotels in developed countries as suggested by several research such as Karatepe (2013). Thus, one can infer that there are little or no government policies that are concerned with hospitality workers in Nigeria. This finding supports the assertion of Akanji (2013); Xiao & Cooke (2012) as revealed stated that lack of institutionalized social support systems, disregard for a culture that encourages work life balance solutions and effective enforcement of employment standards by the national government makes it possible for Nigerian employers of labor to circumvent the ideals of work life balance practices and policies. This unfortunately serves as one of the reasons for poor economic performance that has encumbered the maintenance of a sustainable and ethical business environment in Nigeria for decades. This study therefore recommends that management of international chain hotels operating in Nigeria should imbibe strategies and tools used by counterpart hotels of developed nations in ameliorating work family conflict alongside the formulation of strategies peculiar to them and that Nigerian government should enforce laws that check employee welfare in the hospitality industry. This activity will of a surety lead to high job embeddedness, high job performance and job satisfaction. The implication of this on internal marketing is an outcome of high service delivery in hospitality industry in Nigeria.

5.2 Limitations and Future Research Recommendations

This study focused on participants in privately owned and international chain hotels in south-South region in Nigeria. Further studies should include other regions of the country and other hotel categories. Data for the study was obtained from management and front-line workers. Further studies should include other workers in the hotel industry. Based on the outcome of this study, it is suggested that further studies should be carried out on government responsiveness to work situation of hospitality workers in Nigeria.

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