The Journal of Behavioral Science (TJBS)

Original Article

Effects of Work-Family Conflict and Work-Family Facilitation on Employee Burnout during COVID-19 in the Thai Hotel Industry

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Abstract

An aspect neglected in the hotel industry is the work-family connection of the staff members, which has been depleted especially after the 'Phuket Sandbox' model in Phuket, Thailand was implemented, many hotels started to operate with a limited number of staff to provide high-quality service. This caused hotel employees to be under high pressure, and is a prime factor in leading to burnout. This research investigates the effects of work-family conflict (WFC) and work-family facilitation (WFF) on employee burnout and examines the effects of marital status and job function on WFC and employee burnout. This research used survey questionnaires to collect data from 420 hotel employees working at safety and health administration plus (SHA) certified hotels in Phuket. The results showed by the structural equation model indicate that WFC is positively related ($\beta = .53$, $p < .001$) while WFF is negatively related ($\beta = -.16$, $p < .001$) with employee burnout. Furthermore, job function was found to have a significant effect on WFC ($\beta = .11$, $p = .02$), as was marital status on burnout ($\beta = .12$, $p < .001$). However, both job function and burnout ($\beta = .06$, $p = .11$) and marital status and WFC ($\beta = -.05$, $p = .27$) were found not to be significant. In terms of behavioral science, these findings would benefit hotels and employees as the hotels could help minimize employee burnout by helping to maintain the balance between the employee's work and family life to remain productive and efficient during a crisis.

In the service industry, having happy employees is a crucial part of running any business (Bibi et al., 2021). Therefore, it is vital that all staff members feel satisfied with their work and, more importantly, show this when they are at work. Having a happy workforce also gives the organization a competitive edge over competitors in the industry (Guest, 2017; Tepayakul & Rinthaisong, 2018). Moreover, it enables staff members to be more productive and efficient with their time at work (Zeffane & Bani Melhem, 2017). However, one of the greatest threats to staff satisfaction in the hotel industry is work-family conflict (WFC), and ultimately staff may experience burnout (Weerakit & Eason, 2022).

One way the hotel industry attempted to deal with this problem was to introduce facilitation programs to help employees balance work and family life (Chan & Ao, 2018). However, when the COVID-19 crisis began, hotels had to cut salaries and remove all benefits due to the drop-in guest numbers; subsequently, hotel employees suffered extreme states of anxiety and felt stressed about their workplace employment during the COVID-19 pandemic (Wong et al., 2021). This pressure increased when the "Phuket Sandbox" model was implemented, as many hotels in Phuket attempted to open but were only able to offer minimal staff salaries with no additional benefits. Additional pressures were put on staff as they were required to work harder and multitask more (Weerakit & Eason, 2022). These are key stressors for triggering a WFC.

Additionally, any work-family facilitation (WFF) programs have been suspended due to the hotels trying to decrease their losses. Both of these factors trigger employee burnout (Molina, 2020).

Globally, WFC is viewed as a frequent dilemma in the workplace among employees (Choi & Kim, 2012). WFC is a form of conflict between the two roles in which the requirements of work and family roles clash with each other (Greenhaus & Nicholas, 1985; Molina, 2020). For example, around 40% of all employees who are also parents have experienced WFC at one time in their careers (Allen et al., 2000). Additionally, frontline employees could have a greater chance of experiencing WFC due to them having to deal with demanding customers on a day-to-day basis, as this can lead to dramatic increases in stress levels, which are brought home. This can lead to conflict within the employee's family, which can result in the employee burning out (Ledgerwood et al., 1998; Mete et al., 2014). The conflict is further amplified when the employees have to work extremely hard while multitasking for long hours each day, which has become a common occurrence during the COVID-19 crisis (Yacoub & ElHajjar, 2021).

As a preventative measure, WFF can be used to halt the onset or progression of WFC (Hill, 2005; Wattoo et al., 2018). Some international hotel chains have introduced different programs designed to help employees cope with conflicts. Examples of these can be found in the Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide Inc. chain. Some of these initiatives include flexibility at work, corporate social responsibility programs, pension plans, and health and wellness education (Marriott International Newscenter, 2015). These initiatives are recognized as WFF programs that counteract WFC and prevent staff from burning out by maintaining the balance between the employee's work and life (Grzywacz & Bass, 2003; Wattoo et al., 2018). This is particularly important as when the working environment can support employees to effectively minimize their burnout, WFF can increase productivity, job satisfaction, and engagement, especially during a crisis (Anjum et al., 2018; Wuttaphan, 2022). However, during the COVID-19 crisis, WFF has decreased due to hotel cutbacks, and WFC has increased (Adisa et al., 2021). Although many studies have focused on employee behavior and turnover intention during the COVID-19 crisis, few studies have been conducted to measure the effects of WFC and WFF on employee burnout which could occur due to the additional pressure hotel employees faced during the COVID-19 crisis. Additionally, most studies to do with the COVID-19 crisis have taken place in a Western context (Neo et al., 2022). This leaves a gap in the literature for the Asian context, most notably Thailand.

In terms of behavioral science, this study will be helpful for hotel employers and could encourage a greater understanding of their employee's work–life circumstances during a crisis. Hotel employers could implement strategies to reduce employee burnout which could arise due to extremely high-stress levels experienced by hotel employees as a result of WFC. WFF programs could be implemented as interventions to minimize burnout and ensure employees are productive, satisfied, and engaged. Furthermore, this study will focus specifically on hotel employees' marital status and job function during a crisis and how these factors can impact their WFC and employee burnout.
Therefore, the research objectives were:

1. To investigate the relationships between work-family conflict, work-family facilitation, and employee burnout.
2. To examine the effects of marital status and job function on work-family conflict and employee burnout.

Literature Review

In this section, previous research from the existing literature will be discussed in terms of WFC, WFF, and employee burnout. Furthermore, the impact of marital status and job function on WFC and how WFC and WFF influence employee burnout are reviewed to develop the hypotheses.

Work-Family Conflict

Staines (1980) proposed the mutual pattern-spill over theory, which argued that increased work hours could lead to more conflict with employees' families. This theory supports that WFC develops when job or family roles put more strain on the other (Greenhaus & Nicholas, 1985; Karimi et al., 2011; Molina, 2020). This kind of tension is reflected in work-family spheres, which have become incompatible (Netemeyer et al., 1996). This is a key issue in the hospitality industry, as WFC is considered a frequent occurrence in the work environment and is an occupational amplifier for stress globally (Choi & Kim, 2012; Wuttaphan, 2022). To reinforce this point, one cause of tension that increases the likelihood of WFC is time-based conflicts. These are when a scheduled number of hours dedicated to the individual's employment impedes the personal responsibilities that an individual employee may have. In the hotel industry, working on holidays, overtime, and rapid shift working adjustments are common and can increase WFC (Netemeyer et al., 1996; Chen et al., 2018). These demands on time are considered the general demands of a job role which refers to the responsibilities, requirements, expectations, duties, and commitments of a job role (Netemeyer et al., 1996; Obrenovic et al., 2020). These demands can reduce employees' quality and amount of family time (Guest, 2002) and can significantly affect employees' lives as family and work are two of the most important aspects of adulthood life (Netemeyer et al., 1996; Perry-Jenkins & Wadsworth, 2017). The breakdown of the work-life balance may have knock-on effects such as less time to care for elderly relatives or children (Guest, 2002), causing further WFC.

More organizations are now taking this concept more seriously as the occurrence of WFC has grown over time (Harjanti, 2019; Olson et al., 2019). Further research has been conducted in this field. For example, a study in Korea found that 73.8% of 663 participants were experiencing elevated stress levels due to the number of WFCs that were occurring in their lives (Choi & Kim, 2012). It has also been found that WFC has increased among workers in the United States, with around 70% of workers reporting some conflict occurring between work and their personal lives (Kelly et al., 2014). Furthermore, high levels of WFC can progress into a multitude of problems and issues for the employee such as leaving the family role unfulfilled (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). According to Weerakit and Eason (2022) this happened extensively throughout the COVID-19 crisis due to crisis's only exacerbating work-family conflict.

Work-Family Facilitation

Work-family facilitation aims to reduce WFC, where work and family roles interweave together to produce a positive level of satisfaction for the employee (Choi et al., 2012). WFF also has the added benefit of counteracting and preventing WFC from occurring (Grzywacz & Bass, 2003; Wattoo et al., 2018). Many scholars have found positive associations between good family facilitation factors and increased work quality, loyalty to the organization, and overall employee morale (Karatepe & Kilic, 2009). Lunau et al. (2014) revealed that 90% of workers have mounting concerns about not spending enough time with their relatives. Therefore, companies should provide WFF programs to help employees balance their work and family life. For example, some companies offer a training program to all staff members about how to cope with stress and the pressure of conditions (e.g. dementia and Alzheimer's disease) that may be affecting an old relative under the individual's care (Tinglin, 2013). Another key initiative is social recreation day programs for seniors and children. Employees who utilize initiatives such as these gain peace of mind because they know that their family members are being cared for while they are working. This also makes employees less prone to take leave from work to care for their family who may be going through a crisis (Tinglin, 2013). Research has also indicated that WFF programs can help reduce the risk of an employee suffering from depression by 15% and reduce the risk of alcohol abuse by 38%, which are two common symptoms of employee burnout (Grzywacz & Bass, 2003; Mikolajczak et al., 2020). However, due to the financial saving policies implemented by hotels during the COVID-19 crisis, the work-family facilitation of hotel employees has declined due to fewer programs and initiatives being available to employees (Fisher et al., 2020).

Employee Burnout

Employee burnout is defined as significant pressure and stress being placed on an employee that can have a negative impact on the mental health and physical health of the employee (Schaufeli et al., 2009). Burnout is also renowned for causing great psychological exhaustion, which can diminish the employee's emotional capabilities (Jackson & Schuler, 1983; Maslach & Leiter, 2008), and is usually caused by workplace stressors that can accelerate the effects of burnout (Khamisa et al., 2015; Maslach & Jackson, 1981). It is a major concern for employers as it decreases employee productivity and increases staff turnover (Jackson & Maslach, 1982; Singh & Singh, 2018). This will, in turn, affect the company or organization as a whole. For example, when an employee suffering from burnout is required to care for or deal with a customer, the level of service in the interaction between the employee and the customer will be a lower standard than what the organization expects and lower than what the customer expects to receive (Shoshan & Sonnentag, 2019). This is especially relevant if the employee's workplace is a 5-star hotel or a fine–dining restaurant. This could result in the customer being less likely to return to the establishment or spreading negative feedback about the establishment (Boonsiritomachai & Sud-On, 2020). Consequently, due to burnout, poor customer service could be a significant factor that could harm a business and stop clients from visiting. According to Weerakit and Eason (2022), the COVID-19 crisis has seen an unprecedented amount of hotel employees suffer from burnout because key factors have compiled that are known to trigger employee burnout. Examples of these are a high-level workload (James et al., 2005), heightened time pressure (Rabatin et al., 2015), and a lack of supplies or staff members (Puleo, 2011).

Effects of Work-Family Conflict and Work-Family Facilitation on Employee Burnout

Many previous studies have found a connection between WFC, WFF, and employee burnout. For example, Ledgerwood et al. (1998) and Wattoo et al. (2018) found that WFF programs helped to reduce mental exhaustion and employee burnout. Karatepe and Bekteshi (2008) also found that hotel frontline employees who experience good WFF feel they have more control over their work, perform better, gain greater satisfaction, and have a lower chance of initiating burnout. It has also been noted that WFF programs can benefit not only the employee but also their family by reducing stress and WFC (Tinglin, 2013). The programs can also help to make the employee more productive and efficient at work (Innstrand et al., 2008). Karatepe (2010) discovered that WFC had a significant impact on burnout and was related to an individual's fatigue, which is one of the burnout components. Therefore, the following hypotheses were developed:

> H1: Work-family conflict will negatively impact employee burnout during the COVID-19 crisis.
> H2: Work-family facilitation will positively impact employee burnout during the COVID-19 crisis.

The Effects of Marital Status and Job Function on WFC and Employee Burnout

Marital status can be defined as an individual's relationship status, which can be married or living with an intimate partner, or being single, separated, divorced, or widowed (Manfredini et al., 2017). Many studies have reported that around 90% of mothers and 95% of fathers in the United States have experienced WFC (Kelly et al., 2014; Williams & Boushey, 2010). This is most common among the working population who have children. In contrast, Lewis et al. (2007) and Panisoara and Serban (2013) found that marital status poses little threat to increased WFC. Although, it has been found that the job itself or the satisfaction of the employee doing the job can affect the quality of the individual's marriage or relationship with their partner (Bedeian et al., 1988; Tarcan et al., 2016; Wu et al., 2010). Another study has challenged the common belief that employees who are single have a better work-life balance than those who are married or in relationships (Keeney et al., 2013). However, research has found that there were similar levels of WFC between single female employees and those who were in a relationship with an intimate partner (Hamilton et al., 2006). Therefore, it may not be marital status that affects WFC; instead, having younger siblings or aged parents that must be cared for could also affect WFC, which is more widely reported in Asian cultures (Amazue & Onyishi, 2015).

In terms of the hospitality industry, research has been conducted to investigate the differences in the type of WFC that employees can suffer from by considering whether they are single or in a relationship. Findings suggest that marital status does not have any significance in determining whether an employee is more likely to experience WFC and later burnout (O'Neill & Davis, 2011; Wang et al., 2017). However, research does highlight that the strain and pressures felt by employees working in the hotel industry can leave them mentally drained, making it hard for them to connect with their spouse or partner when at home. This can be a starting sign of a potential WFC and burnout (Magnini, 2009). Additionally, Schieman et al. (2021) found that married and employees in a relationship are more likely to suffer from WFC, which can lead to burnout. Therefore, the following hypothesis was developed:

> H3: Marital status will positively effect work-family conflict and employee burnout during the COVID-19 crisis.

In the hotel industry, there are two main areas where employees work. These two areas are called the front of the house and the back of the house. Staff who work in the front of the house area have direct contact with guests on a day-to-day basis, and departments include the front office, reception, and food and beverage departments. The back-of-house staff rarely have contact with the guests, and these can include the accounting and engineering departments (Mamesa, 2012). Research suggests that front-of-house employees are more susceptible to stress and incurring problems when compared to back-of-house employees. This is partly due to them having to deal with unpredictable situations and problems that guests may place on them (Belotti, 2017; Syazreena et al., 2016). Due to the complexities and differing levels of stress experienced by front-of-house employees, it is common for stressed-out employees to bring the problems and stress of the day back home with them, creating a spill over effect (Syazreena et al., 2016). This can therefore trigger hostilities between work and family, resulting in employee burnout (Karimi et al., 2011).

In contrast, some research findings suggest that there are no significant differences in stress levels between employees in the front and back of houses which could produce WFC or burnout (Thomas et al., 2016). Furthermore, it would appear that work stressors may be similar between front- and back-of-house employees, as many back-of-house employees have to work shift-work hours and handle different kinds of stress and conflicts as their front-of-house counterparts (Mamesa, 2012; Thomas et al., 2016). Therefore, the following hypothesis was developed:

> H4: Job function will positively effect work-family conflict and employee burnout during the COVID-19 crisis.

Method

This research utilized a quantitative methodology by using survey questionnaires for data collection. The questionnaires were adapted from previous studies. An item objective congruence (IOC) review and a pilot test were conducted to check the validity and reliability of the instruments.

Participants

The target of this study were employees working at safety and health administration plus (SHA Plus) certified hotels in Phuket, Thailand. The SHA Plus is a certificate given by the tourism authority of Thailand (TAT) to hotels and services that meet pandemic-level health and safety standards (Bumyut et al., 2022). The SHA Plus certificate is simply an upgraded and stricter version of SHA. Being a SHA Plus hotel means that more than 70% of the employees are fully vaccinated and that no unvaccinated employees are allowed to be in close contact with guests. It also requires each employee to be prepared with COVID-19 emergency solutions.

On July 1, 2021, Phuket implemented the "Phuket Sandbox" program to allow foreign travellers to visit without having to undergo quarantine, they were required to only stay at certified SHA Plus hotels in Phuket (Ushakov, 2021). This stay was to last at least seven nights, and then travellers were allowed to visit other destinations in Thailand (Huabcharoen & Thongorn, 2022). All hotels that operated during that time were required to have a SHA Plus certificate to welcome both domestic and international guests. In this study, employees at luxury SHA Plus hotels were selected because of the high level of service they are expected to provide to their guests. During the COVID-19 crisis, all hotels implemented a downsizing policy to operate with the minimum number of staff and at the lowest labor cost while trying to attract more paying guests. However, the total number of hotel employees working at luxury SHA Plus certified hotels is unknown. Therefore, Cochran's sample size formula was used, which indicated that a minimum of 382 questionnaires should be used (Stuart & Cochran, 1965).

Instruments

The survey questionnaires were developed to collect data, and it consists of five parts, including demographic information, job profile, WFC, WFF, and employee burnout. To measure WFC, a total of nine attributes were formulated using research by Dai et al. (2016), Frone and Yardley (1996), Netemeyer et al. (1996), Rabenu et al. (2016), and Taşdelen-Karçkay and Bakalım (2017). A total of six attributes were formulated using research by Jang (2009), and Livingstone et al. (2011) to measure WFF. Employee burnout used a total of nine attributes that were formulated using research by Campos et al. (2012), Freudenberger (1974), Guedes and de Souza (2016), and Maslach and Jackson (1981). A 4-point Likert scale was used, with responses ranging from "1 = strongly disagree" to "4 = strongly agree".

The IOC was conducted to maximize the validity of the instruments by three lecturers who specialize in this field, and the results showed that all attributes were suitable and could be used. The pilot test was conducted to check the reliability of the instruments. According to Cronbach's formula, the acceptance score can be .70 or above (Bland & Altman, 1997). In this study, the overall Cronbach's alpha scores for WFC (0.74), WFF (0.74) and employee burnout (0.87) were above 0.70. All attributes in the questionnaire were translated by a professional translator from the English language to the Thai language to allow all participants to answer the questionnaires. A professor specializing in English to Thai translation then checked the translation to ensure that the meaning remained the same.

Data Collection

Senior managers in the human resources department or the general managers in 27 luxury SHA Plus certificated hotels were contacted and asked for their support to collect data from December 1, 2021. Nineteen hotels agreed to take part in this study. In total, 420 survey questionnaires were collected from 14 SHA Plus certified hotels in Phuket, Thailand. Between 10–30 questionnaires were distributed to these hotels based on the hotel size. A simple random sampling method was used to recruit participants. The researcher also made it abundantly clear that the respondents' anonymity would be protected, confidentiality measures would be in place, and that this research was for academic purposes only. It was also stated that all respondents could voluntarily withdraw at any time during the research study for any reason they deem necessary.

Once the participants completed the paper questionnaires, they were kept in a box that was located outside the human resources office. This was done to maintain the confidentiality of the respondents. The researcher visited each establishment once every two weeks to collect the completed questionnaires until all distributed questionnaires were returned. This was done to minimize the risk of the questionnaire results becoming known to others outside the research team. Each questionnaire was estimated to take around 10–15 minutes to complete. Finally, 445 questionnaires were returned, and 420 questionnaires were deemed usable.

Data Analyses

After the data was collected, it was rechecked and cleaned for analysis. First, the validity and reliability of the study variables were examined via a series of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Next, the structural equation modelling (SEM) technique was applied to test the hypotheses. The fitness of the model was confirmed through standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), unweighted least squares discrepancy (dULS), and geodesic discrepancy (dG). As per the recommendation of Henseler (2017), SRMR values that are .08 or lower are acceptable, in this study the structural model was found to be satisfactory (SRMR = .08, dULS = 1.33, dG = .31) (see Table 1).

Table 1
Model Fit Summary

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	.08	.08
dULS	1.33	1.33
dG	.31	.31
Chi-Square	728.58	728.58
NFI	.83	.83

Ethical Consideration

In terms of ethical consideration, the study was put forward to an institutional review board for an ethics consideration certificate from the Faculty of Nursing, Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai, Thailand. After minor changes were made to the way the questionnaires were distributed and returned to the research after their completion, the committee agreed to award the research an IRB ethics certificate of approval on November 22, 2021 (ethics document number 2021/ St - Fht – 034).

<div align="center">

Results

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This section shows the demographic data of the participants of this study, followed by the measurement model using confirmatory factor analysis to check the distinctiveness of all measure variables. Average variance extracted (AVE), construct validity, and composite reliability (CR) was analyzed before testing the hypothesis. The heterotrait-monotrait ratio was also presented. Lastly, the hypotheses were examined by testing the hypothesized structural model using partial least squares software.

Demographic Data

The demographic data shows that out of 420 respondents, most were female (*n*=239, 56.9%), the majority were between the ages of 31–40 years (*n*=203, 48.3%), most were single/divorced/widowed/single parent (*n*=239, 56.9%). Regarding education level, the majority hold a bachelor's degree (n=225, 53.7%), and majority had jobs in the back of the house (e.g. Accounting, engineering, sales and marketing, administration) (*n*=296, 70.0%).

The Measurement Model

Prior to testing the hypotheses, confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) was conducted using partial least squares software to evaluate the distinctiveness of the key variables. Hair et al. (2017) suggested that any item loading below .40 should be deleted. The results show that under WFC, three variables had factor loading below .40 so they were deleted. Table 2 shows that all the items' loadings were more than .59. Additionally, three variables had composite reliability (CR) of more than .70. Furthermore, the average variance extracted (AVE) was more than .50 for all three variables. Thus, the measurement model perfectly meets all the criteria, such as AVE >.05; loading >.50, and CR >.70 (Benitez et al., 2020; Hair et al., 2017).

Table 2
Factor Loadings, AVE and CR

	Items	Loading	CR	AVE
Burnout	BO1	.68	.91	.54
	BO2	.78		
	BO3	.78		
	BO4	.61		
	BO5	.78		
	BO6	.62		
	BO7	.77		
	BO8	.79		
	BO9	.82		
Work-family conflict	WFC1	.70	.88	.56
	WFC2	.79		
	WFC3	.72		
	WFC4	.82		
	WFC6	.78		
	WFC9	.70		
Work-family facilitation	WFF1	.59	.87	.54
	WFF2	.78		
	WFF3	.69		
	WFF4	.80		
	WFF5	.74		
	WFF6	.79		

Note. All the factor loadings were significant at the $p < 0.001$ level; AVE = Average Variance Extracted; CR = Composite Reliabilities; WFC = Work-Family Conflict; WFF = Work-Family Facilitation; BO = Burnout

Additionally, to test the divergent or discriminant validity, the HTMT ratio of the relationship was tested. Hair et al. (2019) and Henseler et al. (2014) suggested that HTMT ratio should not go beyond .85. This study's model indicated that HTMT is only .62 (see Table 3).

Table 3
Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

|	1	2	3
1. Burnout	-		
2. Work-family facilitation	.28	-	
3. Work-family conflict	.62	.22	-

The Structural Model

As strong support was found for the validity and reliability of the measurement instruments, a structural modelling technique in partial least squares was applied to test hypotheses. Table 4 and Figure 1 show the path coefficient, *t*-values, and *p*-values. The results show that WFC is positively related ($\beta = .53$, $p < .001$) with employee burnout while WFF is negatively related ($\beta = -.16$, $p < .001$) with employee burnout. Furthermore, job function was found to have a significant effect on WFC ($\beta = .11$, $p = .02$), as was marital status on burnout ($\beta = .12$, $p < .001$). However, both job function and burnout ($\beta = .06$, $p = .11$) and marital status and WFC ($\beta = -.05$, $p = .27$) were found not to be significant.

Table 4

Hypothesized Results

Hypothesis	Path	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
H1	Work–Facilitation → Burnout	-.16	3.90	.00
H2	Work–Family Conflict → Burnout	.52	14.25	.00
H3	Marital Status → Burnout	.11	3.01	.00
	Marital Status → Work–Family Conflict	-.05	1.09	.27
H4	Job Function → Burnout	.06	1.61	.10
	Job Function → Work–Family Conflict	.11	2.26	.02

Note. First hypothesis = H1; Second hypothesis = H2; Third hypothesis = H3; Forth hypothesis = H4

Figure 1

Structural Equation Model Results
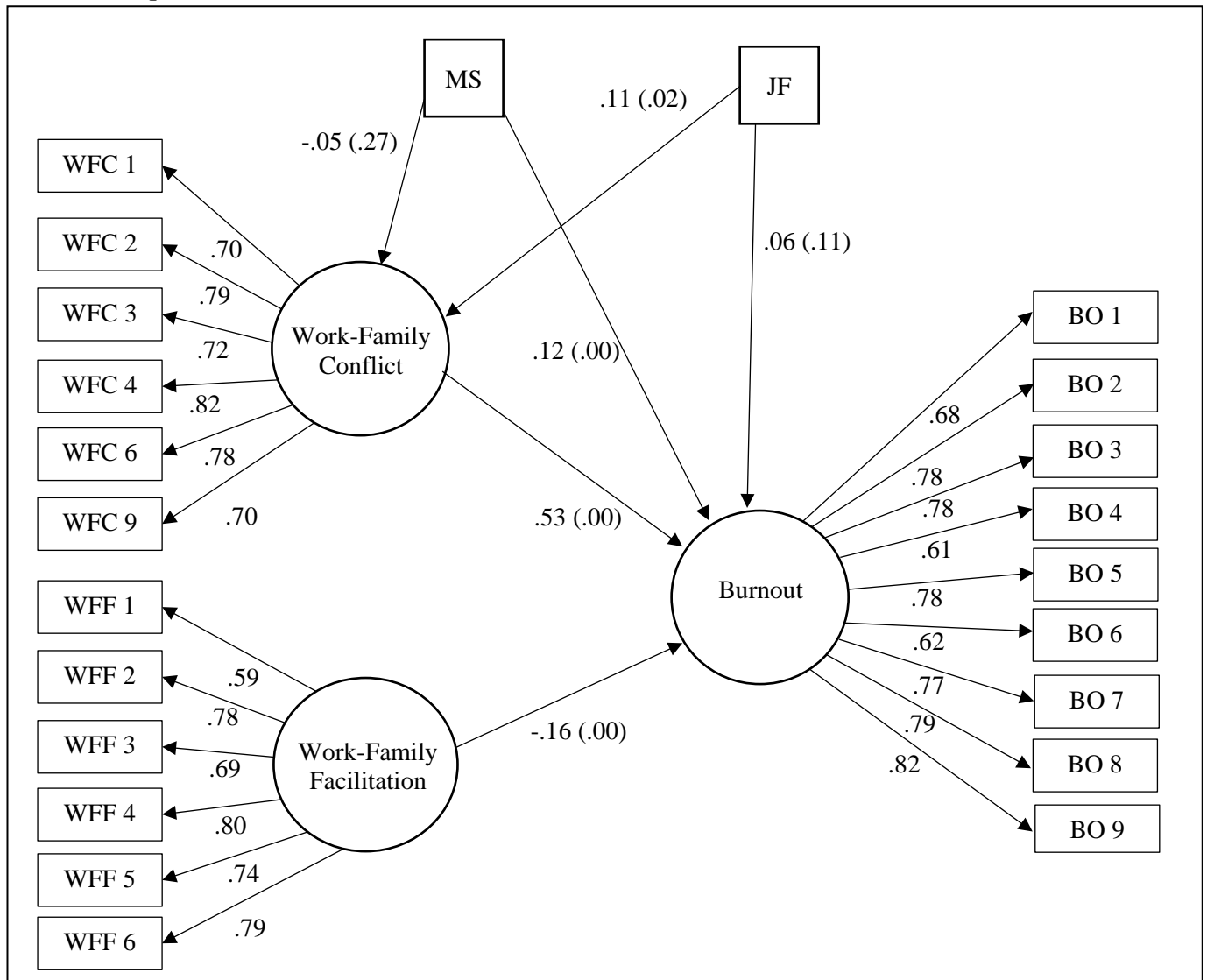
Note. Path coefficients are standardized; Dashed lines represent non-significant paths; WFC = Work-Family Conflict; WFF = Work-Family Facilitation; BO = Burnout; MS = Marital Status; JF = Job Function

Discussion and Conclusion

Work–family conflict is a key issue in the hotel industry and is considered a frequent occurrence in the work environment and also an occupational amplifier for stress in a global sense (Choi & Kim, 2012). This study found that the more WFC an employee suffers, the more likely the employee will burn out. However, the more WFF the employee experiences, the less likely the employee will burn out. This result corresponds with Karatepe (2010), who found that WFC has a significant relationship with employee burnout and fatigue. It also supports findings from Ledgerwood et al. (1998) and Woranetipo and Chavanovanich (2021), who found that having a supportive organization with good WFF can help to reduce mental exhaustion and employee burnout. Moreover, the results show that WFC has a higher magnitude than WFF. This means that hotel employees suffer from WFC to the extent that WFF cannot counteract it. It shows that WFC is more prominent and has a more significant impact on employee burnout than WFF on reducing employee burnout. As previously mentioned, a possible reason for this could be the increased stressors that the employees face due to the downsizing of the workforce in the hotels across Phuket (Dirani et al., 2020).

Considering WFF has been found to have a lesser effect on employee burnout, this could be due to hotels having cut back on any WFF programs to save costs and reduce the spread of COVID-19 in society. For example, all schools, daycare centers, and other social facilities were closed, which would have decreased any WFF that hotel employees had, and WFC increased due to the COVID-19 crisis (Fisher et al., 2020). Additionally, the COVID-19 crisis would have caused disruptions to the employees' work schedules, which were often changed due to staff members resigning, taking extended periods of leave, or being made redundant by the hotel (Giuntella et al., 2021; Jiskrova, 2022).

Previous research shows that the marital status of an employee poses little significance when looking at WFC (Bedeian et al., 1988; Lewis et al., 2007; Panisoara & Serban, 2013; Wu et al., 2010). Similarly, the results of this study showed that there was no relationship between martital status and WFC during COVID-19. Hotel employees who are married or in a relationship do not have a higher likelihood of having WFC, especially in terms of changing family plans for work and attending social activities with the family. The results also showed that there was a significant relationship between job function and WFC. This study supports Mamesa (2012) and Thomas et al. (2016), who confirmed that there was no significant difference between the WFC of the front-of-house and back-of-house employees.

Conclusion

This research hopes to provide a clearer insight into how hotel employees have been feeling and their behavior during the COVID-19 crisis. Moreover, how the effects of the crisis have contributed to them suffering from burnout. Owners, managers, and human resources managers should be aware of the additional strain the crisis has incurred to staff members and how the stress of the crisis is reducing staff productivity. If left unchecked, this will cause the organization to lose potential revenue and clientele due to the strain effecting the employee's behavior. However, more importantly, it will cause employees to suffer from significant mental strains which could potentially lead to physical deterioration.

Implications for Behavioral Science

This study aims to identify the relationship between work-family conflict, work-family facilitation and employee burnout. The results would be useful for the study of the behavioural science of hotel employees. During the COVID-19 crisis, the "Phuket Sandbox" allowed tourists to enter Thailand again. However, until now, hotels were experiencing labor shortages and difficulty recruiting new staff due to the decrease in salaries and loss of benefits, and the work required more multitasking with longer working hours (Abhasakun, 2022). Therefore, this left more work and less staff for the employees remaining at hotels. Additionally, the pandemic has made it difficult for hotels to recruit new staff members as they fear being infected by COVID-19 (Goh & Baum, 2021; Karatepe et al., 2021). This research gives strong insight into how marital status and job function can affect the amount of WFC an employee will suffer from and how staff members' WFC and WFF influenced burnout levels during the COVID-19 crisis. Hotel managers

should pay more attention to facilitating their staff to reduce conflict between work and family and help their staff to minimize burnout. More social support should be offered to these employees, which could consist of more convenient days off which coincide with family events.

As Mamesa (2012) and Thomas et al. (2016) suggested, supportive supervisors and managers are key to maintaining staff satisfaction and a good balance between work and family life. Also, team-building activities that allow staff members to communicate with each other to express their problems are a good way to develop personal life skills, which can lower WFC (Mamesa, 2012; Wolor et al., 2021). Since WFC is a significant influencer in triggering employee burnout, WFF helps prevent employee burnout. Hotel managers should make sure that they are constantly listening to their staff's feelings, promoting team-building activities, and ensuring that all jobs are distributed equally in terms of the amount of work and shift planning. Also, giving the employees decision-making power has been known to reduce stress which could cause WFC and burnout (Kanten, 2014). For example, these could include allowing staff to participate in making the staff schedule by setting their holidays and being able to spend more time with their families. This would also benefit those experiencing conflicts due to their marital status, as they could allocate their days off to family events.

According to Ellis et al. (2020), allowing employees to spend more time with their families should decrease the stress and pressures they feel at work. Another method for hotels to minimize employee burnout could be to increase staff incentives such as a voucher for a family dinner or a full-day pass for the use of the swimming pool as a way to increase their WFF and decrease WFC. This could promote positive behavior from the staff as they can spend more time with their families after they have finished work. This would also lessen employees' financial burden (Ellis et al., 2020) and increase satisfaction by reducing the prospects of employee burnout.

Another way to combat employee WFC could be to provide surveys on staff feelings and thoughts about work and family life. This survey should be conducted once every three months during a crisis which could give a clearer understanding of what problems the staff members are facing. This could also determine which departments are suffering or under the most pressure. Employees should also be recognized more for the work that they have done for a hotel. Also, consideration must be made for the employees' welfare as they will have to remain at work longer to complete all their tasks since the hotels are seeing an increase in demand while they are experiencing labor shortages (Goh & Baum, 2021; Karatepe et al., 2021). This can also play a part in the job function of employees in different departments, and managers should ensure that new employees are given the appropriate training to work in the department they have been placed in. This can be done by the managers, more experienced staff members, or by outgoing staff members that know the job well and are experienced.

Limitation

Work-family conflict, work-family facilitation and employee burnout during the COVID-19 crisis were the focus of this study. A limitation of the study was that only hotel employees in Phuket were used which was the only province in Thailand to welcome international tourists during the COVID-19 crisis. Another limitation to the study was that the study asked the samples to recall their past feelings from before the COVID-19 crisis. Future studies should expand into different factors affecting work-family conflict and employee burnout, for example shift work schedules. Additionally, looking at whether the employee has more than one occupation. Another factor to look into could be whether the employee is a care giver to either elderly relatives or children. Any future study should also be conducted in other provinces or other countries, as to give a wider perspective on the research topic. Also, other industries could be compared to the hotel industry, most notably the airline industry.

Ethical Consideration

In terms of ethical consideration, the study was put forward to an institutional review board for an ethics consideration certificate from the Faculty of Nursing, Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai, Thailand. After minor changes were made to the way the questionnaires were distributed and returned to

the research after their completion, the committee agreed to award the research an IRB ethics certificate of approval on November 22, 2021 (ethics document number 2021/ St - Fht – 034).

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