

WORK AND FAMILY ISSUES IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY: PERSPECTIVES OF ENTRANTS, MANAGERS, AND SPOUSES

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With smaller, more efficient workforces, hotel organizations are competing to retain highly valued managers. Work stress and burnout are often cited as precursors to work and family stress, and together these factors influence employee intentions to leave an organization. However, work and family issues have received little attention in the hospitality and tourism literature. Using focus groups and semistructured interviews with three groups of participants (new entrants into the hotel industry, hotel managers, and their spouses), the authors explore the connections among work characteristics, work stress, and the work–family interface. Results of the multisource qualitative research suggest that long, unpredictable hours create individual and family-related stress. Furthermore, there is agreement among the three sources regarding the stressors and benefits associated with working in the hotel industry. Discussion of future research and practice is presented.

KEYWORDS: *family; hotel; stress; work; work characteristics*

Declines in business travel and tourism in 2001 through 2003 challenged hotel organizations to critically examine operations and performance and to reassess strategies for gaining advantage in this highly competitive sector of the economy. Turnover is one of the most prevalent, longstanding concerns in the hotel industry, which has been characterized as having a “turnover culture” (Deery & Shaw, 1997, p. 377; Wasmuth & Davis, 1983a, 1983b, 1983c). High turnover rates have an enormous effect on the industry’s bottom line. This is a

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critical concern, especially within the context of a shrinking skilled labor force (Pitt-Catsouphes & Smyer, 2005). For example, more than a decade ago, Marriott estimated that with each 1% increase in its employee turnover rate, the company lost between US\$5 and \$15 million in profits (Schlesinger & Heskett, 1991). Simons and Hinkin (2006) found that each 1% increase in employee turnover rate was associated with a mean \$7,550 in lost profits at the hotel unit level. Furthermore, the health care costs associated with work-related stress have increased dramatically in recent years. Insurance premiums have increased 73% from 2000 to 2005, in comparison to an inflation rate increase of 14%. Health insurance premiums for a family of four average to roughly the wages of an employee working full-time at minimum wage, almost \$11,000 (Kaiser Family Foundation/Health Research and Educational Trust, 2005).

Current models of turnover increasingly include nonwork factors, such as conflict between work and family, as possible "shocks" that may influence employees' decisions to remain with or leave an organization (T. W. Lee & Mitchell, 1994). Job stress and burnout are frequently cited as antecedents of work and family stress, which together influence employee intentions to leave an organization and have implications for health care costs. J. C. Thomas and Herson (2002) cited job stress and/or burnout and work and family conflict as two major sources of stress.

A review of the literature reveals that work and family issues, which are increasingly popular topics in contemporary organizational research, have received little attention in hospitality and tourism journals (Mulvaney, O'Neill, Cleveland, & Crouter, 2006). Despite the paucity of research, many characteristics of jobs in the hospitality industry have long been associated with work-family conflict and stress concerns in other literatures (e.g., long hours scheduled at nonstandard times, on-call hours, emphasis on face time and geographic mobility as a prerequisite for career advancement). Moreover, there is evidence that these work characteristics are potential work stressors associated with turnover intentions (Hom, 2002). Furthermore, work characteristics are often antecedents to work-family conflict.

The goal of the current research is to illuminate work and family issues affecting managers in the hotel industry. To gain a comprehensive understanding of such issues, we collected qualitative and quantitative data from three sources: managers currently employed in the industry, the spouses of those current managers, and students who were about to enter the industry. Having data on the same topics from three important and distinct perspectives gives us a unique vantage point on these issues. Specifically, we explore the connections among work characteristics, work stress, and the work-family interface within an industry known for high turnover by drawing from previous work that has been conducted on work characteristics, work withdrawal, and work and family issues.

Work Characteristics, Work Stress, and Work-Family Conflict

Evidence from the organizational stress literature suggests there are five major categories of sources of job stress (J. C. Thomas & Herson, 2002). First,

there is stress associated with the job itself, including work overload, the hours of working, decision-making latitude, and the physical work environment. Second, role-based stress includes role conflict, role ambiguity, and job responsibility. Third, there is stress associated with the changing nature of interpersonal relationships, including those with managers, supervisors, subordinates, and coworkers. Fourth, career stress refers to the lack of opportunity for career development and promotion, as well as job insecurity. Finally, there are stressors associated with the work–family interface, including conflicts of loyalty, spillover of demands from one domain to the other, and life events.

Consistent with stressors associated with the job itself and work demands, shift work (essentially defined as work during nonstandard hours) and the number of hours worked have a significant effect on the physical, psychological, and emotional well-being of employees. Shift work is significantly related to greater marital disagreements and child-related problems (Presser, 2004), and work schedules that involve weekends and holidays (Almeida, 2004), common in hotel work, pose challenges for people trying to negotiate the work–family interface.

The sheer number of working hours has also been linked to the extent to which employees are effective performers at work, the quality of marital interaction, and parent–child relationships (Staines & Pleck, 1983). Furthermore, M. D. Lee, MacDermid, and Buck (2002) found that workload reduction was associated with enhanced well-being, including a decrease in perceptions of stress and fatigue, and fewer reports of health problems such as headaches, eye strain, and high blood pressure. There were also reports of enhanced life satisfaction, and increased involvement and improved relationships with children.

In addition to long hours and nonstandard schedules, some researchers argue that the changing contexts of work, including telecommuting, multiple job holding, and working at home, have increased the intensity of work in peoples' lives (Hochschild, 1997). Such intensity can be characterized by the constant interruptions that describe many of today's jobs and workplaces (Perlow, 1997), including typical hotel environments. Furthermore, pressures and demands of work lead to feelings of being overworked that include fast pace, not having enough time to get everything done, and having to work on too many tasks simultaneously ("multitasking") (Galinsky, Kim, & Bond, 2001). Karasek (1979) suggested that the combination of high job demands and low decision-making latitude is associated with job strain and decreased job satisfaction. Job factors in the immediate hotel work environment that influence stress include high demands for responsiveness and emotional control in customer service (Hochschild, 1997) and norms about the importance of "face time" (Munck, 2001). These factors may operate in an additive way such that as these risk factors increase, an employee's ability to adapt to his or her environment is jeopardized. Therefore, we ask:

Research Question 1: What work characteristics do hotel managers identify as the most prevalent stressors?

Work-Related and Nonwork Support as Buffers to Stress

Negative effects may be buffered by positive features of the work environment such as having control over the timing of work, supervisor and coworker support (Greenberger, Goldberg, Hamill, O'Neil, & Payne, 1989), and having a manager who encourages flexible scheduling and innovative problem solving. In addition, the work–family culture that prevails within an organization is an important factor in employee perceptions of work–family conflict and balance. Thompson, Beauvais, and Lyness (1999) defined *work-family culture* as “the shared assumptions, beliefs and values regarding the extent to which an organization supports and values the integration of employees’ work and family lives” (p. 394). Research has shown that unsupportive work cultures may undermine any formal policies and programs designed to aid employees in balancing work and nonwork demands (Allen, 2001; Anderson, Coffey, & Byerly, 2002; Starrels, 1992; Thompson et al., 1999; Thompson, Thomas, & Maier, 1992). Presumably, in hotels, perceptions of general managers are important variables in shaping managers’ work–family conflict. We see, therefore, that a positive organizational culture and managerial support for the reconciliation of work and family is an important influence on the manager’s perception of family support. Thus, we ask:

Research Question 2: What work factors do hotel managers identify as positive and instrumental in shaping the extent to which the hotel is perceived as family supportive?

MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES IN PERCEPTIONS OF WORK STRESSORS AND WORK–FAMILY ISSUES

Work and family issues have been examined through two distinct “lenses” (Crouter & McHale, 2005). One lens, common in the industrial/organizational psychology and management literatures, approaches such issues from a work perspective with an emphasis on employee perceptions of work and family conflicts and their links to work attitudes and/or health. Reports of spousal perceptions of work–family issues are much less frequently found in these literatures (for an exception, see Allen, 2001). In contrast, a second approach to understanding the work–family interface is to examine such issues from a family perspective. This perspective is vital to consider because it encourages the researcher to widen the set of perspectives under study and to collect, for example, spousal perceptions of the effects of work on marital satisfaction, family well-being, and/or parent–child relationships.

Value of Multisource and Multimethod Data

In the industrial/organizational psychology and management literatures, complex organizational problems are increasingly seen as requiring input from multiple perspectives. For example, in individual employee performance assessment, the use of multiple raters, often referred to as 360-degree feedback, has become popular. This type of feedback provides a relatively comprehensive

picture of an individual's performance because it includes assessment of his or her performance by supervisors, subordinates, peers, and through self-ratings (London & Smither, 1995). Because different people provide different perspectives, ratings may not always be in complete agreement. Indeed, discrepancies in perceptions are common and often meaningful, providing employees with an opportunity to enhance their self-awareness of performance (Atkins & Wood, 2002).

Similarly, attribution theory provides insight into multiple perspectives. According to attribution theory, actors and observers make different judgments regarding the same issues. Observers of a scene tend not to notice situational constraints but rather emphasize the role of the person in the action. In contrast, actors tend to take situational constraints into consideration when making judgments (Arkin & Duval, 1975). Applying this perspective to the domain of work and family, it is conceivable that an employee (actor) may be more aware of work constraints that interfere with family, while his or her spouse (observer) may tend to attribute the conflict to personal characteristics of the employee.

We designed our exploratory study to capitalize on assessing multiple perspectives of work and life issues. Like 360-degree performance feedback, we would not necessarily expect complete agreement between managers and their spouses because each party views various aspects of the industry through a different lens. On the other hand, we would expect some level of consistency. Not only do spouses provide an interesting perspective but also the extent to which managers and their spouses agree or disagree may be revealing.

In the current research, we obtained spouses' perspectives to better understand their points of view and to collect a second perspective regarding the non-work aspects of hotel managers' lives. We believe that by considering and identifying spousal concern, hospitality organizations can better understand the needs of their employees and gain strategic advantage by retaining desired employees and minimizing costly and high rates of turnover. Thus, we ask two additional research questions:

Research Question 3: What work characteristics do hotel managers' spouses identify as major stressors for the family?

Research Question 4: What work characteristics do hotel managers' spouses identify as positive and instrumental in shaping the extent to which the hotel is perceived as family supportive?

Unmet Expectations as a Work Stressor and Predictor of Turnover

In addition, we asked hospitality management college seniors (new entrants to the industry) to rate their anticipated job demands, decision-making latitude, and role stress 10 years hence. To achieve a new level of insight into work and family issues and have greater effect on workplaces and families, it is essential to collect relevant work and family perceptions not only from current incumbents but also from entrants into an occupation (Cleveland, 2005). Tapping the views of entrants provides valuable information regarding work and family expectations.

Although entrants to the field may have some firsthand experience of hotel work via part-time or summer employment, much of their work and family experiences are either secondhand via family members or observations of others in the industry. The extent to which these expectations are realistic and realized (or not met) may play a critical role in subsequent employee health and attachment to the organization.

According to the met-expectation hypothesis, an individual is more likely to be dissatisfied or absent from work and even leave an organization or industry when actual work experiences violate his or her expectations (Wanous, Poland, Premack, & Davis, 1992). Unmet expectations are one category of stressors (Burke, 1988). Unmet job challenges, job demands, and underemployment were consistently related to more negative work outcomes including greater helplessness and lower work adjustment (Saks & Ashford, 2000). In a meta-analysis that examined correlates of burnout, R. T. Lee and Ashford (1996) found that unmet expectations were linked to emotional exhaustion.

Gaining individuals' perspectives of work and life issues before they enter the workforce can provide insights into factors that predict negative outcomes. The career expectations literature suggests that new entrants have fairly realistic ideas about what their careers will be like. However, studies have shown that this same degree of planning is not developed for handling multiple roles, including work and family. For example, Peake and Harris (2002) found that individuals reported scant planning in the area of dealing with work and non-work roles. Furthermore, college seniors expecting to have children later in life have shown little insight or awareness about career-marriage conflict (Barnett, Gareis, James, & Steele, 2003). The importance of an individual's realistic expectations regarding work is historically central to research regarding employee turnover, leading to the following research question:

Research Question 5: What expectations do entrants to the hospitality industry have about work and family?

Jick (1979) argued for the usefulness of between-method triangulation in which quantitative and qualitative techniques are combined for a more accurate representation of a phenomenon while simultaneously increasing external validity. Quantitative methodology is helpful for systematic observation, estimations of bias, and estimations of effects. On the other hand, qualitative methodologies highlight the role of context, illuminate how people interpret their life circumstances, and may be especially helpful in exploratory research and theory building. Combining such methods provides a more accurate, holistic, and rich understanding of the work and family interface. In the current research, quantitative data were obtained from managers, spouses, and new entrants on ratings of job control, decision-making latitude, and role stress, leading to our final research question:

Research Question 6: How do entrants' ratings of anticipated job demands and decision-making latitude compare with the ratings of hotel managers?

METHOD

The primary goal of the current research studies was to better understand the work–family interface in the hotel industry by examining multiple perspectives: hotel managers, their spouses, and industry entrants. Specifically, we conducted in-home, semistructured interviews with hotel managers and their spouses regarding how work in the hotel industry affects their lives off the job. In addition, we conducted focus groups with hospitality college seniors to gather information about their expectations regarding work and family issues.

Because students may be less realistic in their expectations and have fewer firsthand experiences regarding family issues, we used a series of focus groups to facilitate greater idea generation and provide a comfortable group setting for students to interact. Students may not have had extensive firsthand experiences with some of the subject matter; therefore, we believed that more structured one-on-one interviews were not appropriate. In general, focus groups allow researchers to concentrate on a single topic in depth, and to encourage interaction between participants in a regulated way. The primary disadvantage of focus groups is that they usually result in less extensive information regarding each individual participant. Given the undeveloped state of the field, we were comfortable with the trade-off, believing that idea generation was the most important goal. In addition to semistructured qualitative data from each source (managers, spouses, and students), we collected quantitative data regarding work characteristics.

Hotel Managers and Spouses

Hotel managers. The 33 hotel managers were located through a university alumni association, industry referrals, and networking via an advisory council of industry executives. The participating managers were employed in urban or suburban hotels in several metropolitan areas in the northeastern United States. We traveled to these metropolitan areas to conduct the interviews in person.

Participants were sampled along several dimensions including gender, family structure, and occupational niche. Work and life issues typically look very different from the perspectives of men and women because both domains of life are so inextricably woven with gendered expectations and norms. By making certain that our hotel manager sample included men and women, we also ensured that the sample included male and female spouses who could reflect on their experience living with a hotel manager. Approximately 60% of the hotel managers were male.

All participants had at least one child age 12 years or younger. Our rationale for focusing on parents was that, because parenting roles and responsibilities often heighten awareness of work–family conflict, parents would be particularly articulate about their decisions and trade-offs. However, because the timing of family formation differs across couples, the sample spanned a wide range of

ages and levels of experience, which we see as a strength. In addition to managers with spouses, we included three managers who were single parents.

The managers represented four broad occupational niches: (a) rooms or food and beverage ($n = 9$); (b) sales and marketing ($n = 6$); (c) human resources, engineering, and accounting ($n = 10$); and (d) general manager ($n = 8$). These niches were sampled to represent a variety of industry conditions. Hotel managers reported having experienced full-time employment at a mean of 4.4 hotels, at 3.2 different hospitality organizations, and in 2.7 different metropolitan areas. On average, participants had been employed full-time for 15.0 years, 14.7 years of which had been in the hospitality industry. Participants had spent an average of 9.3 years in their current metropolitan area, 6.5 at their current organization, 5.3 at their current hotel property, and 3.9 in their current position. Most managers (67%) had completed a bachelor or master's degree. In terms of ethnicity, 73% were White, 10% Black, 10% Hispanic, and 3% Asian and Indian. At the time of our research, participants were employed by Marriott, Hilton, Starwood, InterContinental, Radisson, Ramada, Sofitel, Choice-branded hotels, and independent properties.

Spouses of hotel managers. Twenty-six spouses of the above hotel managers participated in this project. Of the 26 spouses, 18 were female and 8 were male. Six spouses were currently employed in the hotel industry, 8 had previous work experience in the industry, and 12 had no experience in the industry.

In-Home Structured Interview Procedure

Semistructured, in-depth interviews were designed to identify work–family themes specific to the hotel industry, especially those linked to decisions regarding work, family and/or personal, leisure/spiritual/other needs, and family-career planning. Two-person teams of trained interviewers conducted in-home interviews, which lasted approximately 2 hours, with hotel managers and spouses interviewed separately. The audio-taped interviews focused on several different work-related topics including aspects of the hotel industry and work characteristics that enhance or interfere with life off the job; the attractive aspects of the job or industry; typical career tracks in the industry; the possible erosion of boundaries by technologies such as pagers, cell phones, and the Internet; how decisions about promotions and moves are made; and industry norms such as “face time” and geographic mobility. Information about participants' family lives also was obtained and focused on participants' social networks, participation in children's school and extracurricular activities, extended family relationships, leisure activities, and civic engagement. Respondents were asked for stories, narratives, or anecdotes that exemplify what it means to work as a manager in the hotel industry, or to live with a spouse who is a hotel manager.

The interviews were transcribed and coded by trained graduate research assistants. Interviews were analyzed for qualitative themes using the software program NVIVO 3.0. NVIVO allows researchers to identify the recurring

themes of interviews or other conversations, code those themes, and then store and retrieve portions of interview transcripts based on those themes.

College Seniors Majoring in Hotel and Restaurant Management

Approximately 50 college seniors majoring in hospitality management at a large public university participated in the current study. All of the students had employment experience in the hospitality industry, either through internships or through more traditional work experiences that are required as part of the degree program. Most of the students planned to become managers in either hotels or restaurants following graduation. Each focus group consisted of 6 to 8 students with an average of 7 participants. Six focus groups were either all male or all female participants whereas two were mixed sex to maximize opportunities for discussion. Of the 50 focus group participants whose responses were taped and used in the qualitative analyses, there were 31 females and 19 males. Forty-five were White, 4 were non-White, and 1 person's ethnic background is unknown. Given the small number of non-White respondents, we report the gender of those responsible for specific quotations but do not report ethnic information.

Focus group procedure. The focus group instrument included a series of relevant questions, which were intended to ask students to consider (a) the positive and negative features of work in the hotel industry and (b) work and family issues from different vantage points. The questions were categorized into four main topic areas:

1. Immediate career expectations and plans, including expectations about the types of positions they would like to hold, skills needed to succeed, and career mobility. Similarly, we asked students to identify what positive features of the industry or hotels attracted them to the field, and the features they believe to present challenges.
2. Family plans and expectations of partner and/or spouse, number and timing of children, delaying or sequencing of work and family commitments, and expectations regarding the division of labor in the home.
3. Work and family concerns.
4. Suggestions regarding corporate human resource innovations within the hospitality industry.

Participation in the sessions was voluntary. In addition, to prevent less vocal respondents from being excluded from the discussion, the facilitators took steps to ensure the involvement of all students.

Facilitators were trained graduate research assistants. Although the focus groups were conducted and audio-taped at the university campus, the facilitators were not affiliated with the hospitality school to enhance confidentiality. All students responded to at least some of the questions.

Each focus group session lasted approximately 1 hr and 15 min and was transcribed and coded by trained graduate research assistants. Transcripts were analyzed for qualitative themes using the software program NVIVO 3.0.

Qualitative and Quantitative Coding and Analyses

When data collection was completed and the tapes had been transcribed, the coding scheme for the focus groups and hotel managers (and spouses) was developed through an iterative process. After reading the transcripts, the principal investigators and the project manager met three times to develop thematic categories. Simultaneously, a subset of focus group transcripts were reviewed to ensure that coding categories were defined clearly and that coders could reliably code passages from the focus groups. After each successive meeting, coding categories were modified for clarity and completeness to enhance reliability.

Qualitative data analysis. With the coding scheme in hand, the project manager and research assistant separately coded four focus group transcripts. The resulting coded transcripts were compared for reliability; the percentage of interrater agreement was more than 70%. After remaining inconsistencies were resolved, the rest of the focus group transcripts were coded. The coded transcripts were then entered into NVIVO for analysis. A similar procedure was used to code and analyze data from the semistructured interviews.

Quantitative Ratings of Work Characteristics and Role Strain

Quantitative data for hotel managers and partners were collected using three scales. Two scales involved the widely recognized Karasek (1979) occupational stress scales: job demands and decision-making latitude. There has been extensive research (Karasek & Theorell, 1990) on these scales and the links between job demands and work strain or stress. For the college senior sample, students were instructed to respond based on what they expected their job in the hospitality industry to be like in 10 years. The third scale reflects seven items from a job-family role strain scale (Bohen & Viveros-Long, 1981). For the college senior sample, students were instructed to respond based on what they expected when having a job in the hospitality industry, a spouse or partner, and at least one child.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What Work Characteristics Do Hotel Managers Identify as the Most Prevalent Stressors?

Based on our analysis of the qualitative interviews, work hours and emotional control emerged as the top work characteristics that hotel managers perceived as the most prevalent stressors. A total of 32 of 33 (96%) of hotel managers reported some negative aspect of the working hours required by their jobs without being prompted about working hours. Specifically, many managers described stress relating to working hours in the hotel industry that fall outside of a more typical 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. workday. Furthermore, managers usually indicated that the average number of hours they worked in a week significantly

exceeded 40 hr. For example, participants described the stress associated with the unconventional hours involved in the industry and the fact that hotels never close:

Spending too much time there. Just being at the hotel. I'm away from the house more than 12 hours a day . . . on top of that, my wife works a full day and she works from home and takes care of my son, so I'm out before he leaves. (Hotel manager, male, rooms)

The hours and the whole atmosphere of the hotel is long hours. The better person you are, the better manager you are, the better everything is how many hours you work. And they expect it. (Hotel manager, female, sales/marketing)

The time consuming is negative, the job, the industry requires a lot of hours obviously 60 to 65 hours a week . . . plus Saturdays . . . a hotel is open 7 days a week, 365 day a year and never closes its doors, so someone has to be there. (Hotel manager, male, rooms)

There is the long hours, especially if you are in the catering industry. You are there before the meeting starts, which is usually 6 or 6:30, and meetings go until 5 or even 10 at night. So, you burn both ends of the candle and you're here a lot on the weekends with parties and weddings. (Hotel manager, female, sales/marketing)

Managers described hours as irregular and unpredictable in addition to being long:

If you are a manager and you have line employees or line associates that aren't as conscientious and don't care as much as you and they decide that they don't want to show up for work Thanksgiving morning's shift, guess what? You're there. (Hotel manager, female, rooms)

You know with a hurricane, remember all of the other businesses are closed, all of our folks brought their stuff and spent the night at the hotel. Because you need all hands on deck to help other people in the hotel. Like snow works the same way. Instead of hunkering down at home, you go to the hotel and help dig people's cars out. (Hotel manager, female, accounting/finance)

Despite the long and unpredictable hours, some managers explained that as they achieved rank and status in the business, the hours became somewhat more manageable:

Work, the hours . . . right now, I have a very convenient job, but the hours in the past have been very trying. It is just really hard to have a family and work the hours. (Hotel manager, female, sales/marketing)

I know I worked nights in the beginning and I liked that [at that time]. (Hotel manager, female, human resources)

Also associated with long, unconventional hours are the expectations regarding availability. Many managers noted the stress associated with being available to their organization even while not on the hotel property or during scheduled work hours:

You could be having a barbeque in the backyard and your pager goes off. (Hotel manager, male, food & beverage)

I am really MOD [Manager on Duty] 24 hours a day because I carry my leash [cell phone] with me. (Hotel manager, male, sales/marketing)

Even if I'm home, my phone is near by me. I can be called any minute, any time. My family and my wife know that if the phone rings, "Uh oh, that's Dad's phone." (Hotel manager, male, general manager)

Overall, it appears that the timing of work and availability expectations outside of nonwork hours are the most prevalent stressors of hotel managers. In addition to work hours, however, hotel managers described interactions with guests as stressful. Specifically, 94% of the hotel managers described the emotional control necessary in the hotel industry as stressful:

We deal with a lot of guest issues. . . . Sometimes guest aren't nice either. They're just downright rude. (Hotel manager, female, rooms)

He was talking so loud and yelling at me so much in rage . . . I just had to stand and I was listening. And I said to myself, "Don't go off on this man." (Hotel manager, female, food & beverage)

You have to remember, you always have to smile. You always have to be, "Oh, hi" and deep inside after a while of that, it's just like, you just feel like taking this person maybe and choking them. (Hotel manager, female, food & beverage)

There's been days I think where the stress of work would change the way I acted when I go home, sure. I remember cursing at my kids one time because my boss was on the phone cursing at me and I told my son "don't come in the room while I'm on the phone with the boss, close the door." He opened the door while, [my boss is cursing me], and I cursed at him [my son] and said get out of the room. . . . That was pretty sad. (Hotel manager, male, engineering)

Research Question 2: What Work Factors Do Hotel Managers Identify as Positive and Instrumental in Shaping the Extent to Which the Hotel Is Perceived as Family Supportive?

Factors such as the general manager, coworker support and friendship networks, and opportunities for flexibility were most often discussed. When

discussing work and family challenges, managers mentioned the role the culture created by the general manager played in shaping the family supportiveness of the hotel:

We do have a work/life balance department and we do have an associate resource line and we promote personal satisfaction and taking care of our associates' needs and what not. We are very skilled . . . living through the kind of thinking where long hours equals the . . . dedication. So now that we have a new generation coming in and we are recruiting from a younger crowd . . . it is becoming very difficult to explain to someone who is just graduating from college that you need to put in 50-hour weeks and that you might not have your weekends off [laughs]. . . . That face time is very important in our culture. (Hotel manager, male, human resources)

I feel comfortable that if I had a family issue, I could tell my boss and she would never say anything. She doesn't micromanage, which is great. (Hotel manager, male, general manager)

In addition to the influence the general manager has on the hotel environment, approximately 70% of hotel managers described the influence of their coworkers in creating a positive workplace climate. Several managers reported that their closest friends are people with whom they work, or whom they met through their employment in the hotel industry. The hotel environment was frequently described as "like a family," and many interviewees described a large overlap between coworker and friendship networks.

For some reason, the amount of time you spend with people, the closer you become as friends and I would easily say some of our dearest friends are hotel people and they are dearest friends because of the amount of time we spent with each other. I mentioned before, a successful hotel person has a true sense of caring for people, so I think that kind of comes back to the friend thing. They just seem to be more genuine people and caring people in this industry. I think that is why your friendships and bonds are stronger with these people. (Hotel manager, male, rooms)

Finally, approximately 83% of managers discussed positive aspects of workplace flexibility. Managers suggested that the opportunities for flexibility in their scheduling enabled them to manage work and family and contributed to the family friendliness of their hotels.

I was a director of catering at a hotel in [city]. That was perfect for me when my son was born. It wasn't a busy hotel. They didn't do a lot of weekend or evening business, so that was more a sales type job. I was free to come and go as I pleased and that was perfect for me. It worked out great. (Hotel manager, male, human resources)

Schedule . . . that was the best thing in the world to me to have that flexibility where I didn't have to work five straight days . . . with working weekends, I'm always off one day during the week. (Hotel manager, male, rooms)

In sum, the general manager support, friendly and supportive coworkers, and work schedule flexibility contributed to their ratings of the family friendliness of the hotel.

Research Question 3: What Work Characteristics Do Spouses Identify as Major Stressors for the Family?

Whereas the first research question focuses on work characteristics hotel managers identify as stressors, the third question focuses on those identified by spouses. Similar to hotel managers, 92% of spouses identified time demands as a negative challenge for the family. In addition to the quantity of hours worked, spouses also suggested that unpredictable and weekend or holiday work was very stressful for the family:

What it makes it hard is the hours, how long they can be and how unpredictable they can be. So it makes it, it can make it harder to make plans if you don't know for sure and things can change at the last minute if he gets called in. (Spouse, female)

In the beginning, it was very hard because it's not a nine-to-five job. It's not a Monday to Friday where he can work different shifts. He can work four weekends out of the month and I only see him one. That's the worst part of it . . . because it's never the same day off. (Spouse, female)

Well, if there is a crisis and because we have people working around the clock, since it is a 24-hour thing, if the evening guy who works from 3 to 11, if he just calls up at 2:30 saying that he cannot make it, then the general manager, which is [spouse], he has to take over the shift. (Spouse, female)

I think the time away is what debilitates the family life. The lack of a structured schedule really disallows us from making any kind of trips, any kind of scheduled weekend activities. There have often been times where I've just gone off and done something with him [son], not waiting for her, because I just got tired of waiting. It's an awful feeling to sit there and you love your spouse dearly, and you don't want to do something cruel as to going to the park without her. But the anger swells and you're thinking, "Well, you know what, she's not here, she's going to miss out, and I'm going to let her feel guilty." And it's really not fair. I know it's not fair, but when you're dealing with the emotions in the moment they sort of take control of you and you make some rash decisions sometimes. (Spouse, male)

Probably the biggest would be the time commitment. A hotel never closes. Christmas it still has to be open. To be in management in a hotel, you have to commit that you're going to give up some of your, that personal time. (Spouse, female)

In addition, spouses discussed the accessibility of the hotel manager to the hotel as stressful for the family. Spouses reported that managers were frequently "on call." Approximately one third of spouses mentioned the need for their spouses to be fully accessible to the hotel:

24-7 on call. You know he always has his cell phone, and you know he can get a call. We're in the middle of doing something you know at the beach on vacation, and he gets a call. (Spouse, female)

Because it's a 24-hour operation, it doesn't stop. So even though we may be off the clock, so to speak, and at home, that doesn't mean that he or I, mostly he, will get a call to go into work and take care of a problem. So that wrecks . . . I mean you just can't have a structured family life. (Spouse, female)

Research Question 4: What Work Characteristics Do Hotel Manager Spouses Identify as Positive and Instrumental in Shaping the Extent to Which the Hotel Is Perceived as Family Supportive?

Similar to hotel managers' responses, spouses mentioned the general manager's role in facilitating a positive or negative environment for managing work and family. Spouses identified the general managers as critical in shaping the family-friendly organizational climate in a given hotel. In supportive hotels, people are encouraged to talk about their families; there is a belief that employees need to know their families are happy and are well taken care of for them to be productive at work; it is acceptable to leave during the day for doctor's appointments and so on; and the managers understand employee family issues because typically, the manager has a family, as well. Nearly one half of the spouses (46%) indicated that supervisory and management support was very important. In addition, the immediate supervisor is critical to creating a supportive workplace, especially when friendships are developed, so there is awareness, as well as understanding, regarding the importance of flexibility when a family need arises.

All I can say is that her boss makes a lot of difference. He is great. We've gotten to the point where we can be friends, that is how good of a guy he is. (Spouse, male)

I think it depends on the general manager who's there. There was a history in this hotel of general managers changing quickly for a while and some of them were not so nice, according to what people said, and were less flexible and more likely to try to make people feel bad if they didn't go along as far as hours and whatever they were required to do. (Spouse, female)

I don't know about every hotel, I think it really comes down to the administrator, like any business, if you have management that loves its staff then everything is facilitated. It would truly become management's call from my perspective. (Spouse, male)

The management support can come from top management and be conveyed by discussions regarding family. Participants believe that it is critical that top management support for work and family is clearly communicated throughout an organization.

Well, he [hotel manager] has a new president who upon introducing himself, talked about his children and sat in [spouse's] office and commented on the pictures of [spouse's] children. Where in the past, that has never happened. (Spouse, female)

They know that family comes first. They're still demanding, but it's in a better way. . . . The general manager definitely takes the lead, but it's everyone. It's a whole different atmosphere. (Spouse, female)

Research Question 5: What Expectations Do Entrants Have About Work and Family?

The fifth research question focuses on the work and family expectations of entrants to the industry. Entrants indicated awareness of work expectations of the industry. Specifically, participants mentioned long hours, holiday work, and being on call.

When guest speakers come in and say you're not gonna be able to get Christmas off, you're gonna have to work holidays your first couple of years until someone comes in underneath you to take that. So it takes some getting used to. (Entrant, male)

A 40-hour week, they're long gone, they're not even an option anymore. (Entrant, female)

I mean, I had a representative from [hotel management company] tell me for the first five years of her life she was on call every minute like a doctor. And I was like, I'm turning green. "Oh my God, that's going to be my life." (Entrant, female)

Entrants also were concerned regarding the toll the industry might take on their future health:

I think what concerns me is kind of the same thing like at what point can I just not work 80 hours a week and you just collapse. I think going into it, I'm very excited and "oh yeah, I'll work 80 hours a week." But you can only do that for so long until you just physically can't do it anymore. (Entrant, female)

I think another issue that they're always cautioning us against is the alcohol and drug dependencies are really big in this major. I know we even say it now, "We work hard and we play even harder." And when you're working until 11 o'clock at night and then you go out and have a couple of drinks and then you're back in again . . . the next morning, you know. It tends to take a heavy toll on you. (Entrant, female)

Entrants seemed aware of the long and unpredictable hours and understood that this situation potentially creates a problem for family. In response to these demands, several entrants reported that they would wait until later in life to have children.

I think I want to wait long enough that I have worked enough, and especially once I find out if she's pregnant, really bust my ass like the first four or five months before when she can still do everything herself and then try to have enough time off for a while. (Entrant, male)

Eventually I'd like to settle down and have a family. I don't see it happening soon. Right now my focus is more career-oriented. I'd like to get a good start before I get involved in a family. (Entrant, male)

I know I'm going to take time off, just a little bit to have a break, but I think it's something I'd want to try and balance with my husband so that we both could still work if we wanted to and just work it out that way. Maybe by that time we'd have good friends that would help me out or you know. . . . Hopefully by that point I won't be traveling as often so that I could have a stable environment for my children. (Entrant, female)

It is interesting to note that several entrants in several different focus groups expressed resistance to conventional daycare:

I definitely think having the grandparents around. . . . Like my grandparents lived in the same town as me growing up and I never had a babysitter. They always came over to watch us and I definitely enjoyed that like all the time I got to spend with them and everything like that. That's how I want it to be. (Entrant, female)

I personally like to stay home when my children are born and wait until they go to preschool and then go back to work. I don't want them being taken care of by someone . . . all those babysitting horror stories. You don't want them to be at that risk. I think I would stay home for a little while. (Entrant, female)

Table 1 summarizes the qualitative responses from hotel managers, spouses, and entrants regarding the first five research questions. As shown in the table, all three groups cited time demands and availability requirements as the most prevalent workplace stressors. In particular, working long and unpredictable hours and being "on call" or receiving calls from the hotel during nonwork hours was consistently named as a great source of stress. In addition, hotel managers underscored the emotional demands of working in a service industry. In terms of work support, managers and spouses cited the general manager or immediate supervisor as a powerful supportive influence. Furthermore, managers also cited coworker support, friendship networks, and flexibility in scheduling as helpful in reducing stress.

Research Question 6: How Do Entrants' Ratings of Anticipated Job Demands and Decision-Making Latitude Compare With the Rating of Hotel Managers?

To compare the entrants' rating of job demands and decision-making latitude (quantitative data), *t* tests were conducted. There was no significant difference

Table 1
Qualitative Comparison of Hotel Managers', Spouses', and Entrants' Most Commonly Reported Themes Related to Stress and Support

	Hotel Managers	Spouses	Entrants
Perceptions of work stressors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Time demands including long, irregular, and unpredictable work hours 2. Availability requirement 3. Emotional control in dealing with guests 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Time demands including long, unpredictable, and weekend or holiday work hours 2. Availability requirement 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Time demands including long, unpredictable, and weekend or holiday work hours 2. Availability requirement
Perceptions of work support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. General manager support 2. Coworker support 3. Friendship networks 4. Opportunities for flexibility in scheduling 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. General manager support 	

Note: Entrants reported on the expectations about working in the hotel industry.

between managers' reported job demands and students' anticipated job demands, $t(103) = -1.43, p > .05$. Specifically, hotel managers reported facing high levels of job demands ($M = 4.08$), and students expected similar levels ($M = 4.26$). Similarly, there was no significant difference, $t(103) = 1.82, p > .05$, between hotel managers' reported decision latitude ($M = 4.44$) and entrants' expected decision latitude ($M = 4.16$) or between hotel managers' reported role strain ($M = 3.81$) and entrants' anticipated role strain ($M = 3.70$), $t(103) = .55, p > .05$. Thus, at least for these relatively small samples, it appears that entrants' expectations about job-related demands, decision-making latitude, and role strain were not significantly different from those reported by actual hotel managers.

DISCUSSION

The need or requirement to work long, irregular, and unpredictable hours emerged consistently as the most prevalent job stressor for managers in a variety of types of hotels and locations. Managers and spouses largely agreed on this point, and entrants were well aware of these expectations. Yet there was variability across hotel occupations in these perceptions. For example, managers assigned to rooms and food and beverage reported being particularly challenged by long, nonstandard hours, including weekends and holidays. Note, however, that these operations positions are also the traditional "routes to the top." In contrast, managers in human resources, engineering, and accounting tended to have 8 a.m. or 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. or 6 p.m. schedules that are probably more compatible with life off the job, yet these positions typically are not viewed as pathways to becoming general manager. Thus, there are clearly work-family trade-offs in each occupational category: More upwardly mobile hotel managers must make more significant compromises in their lives outside of work. Furthermore, general managers also reported working relatively long hours, yet they enjoyed considerable flexibility and control in determining those hours.

Hotel management poses a number of challenges for people's lives off the job, which may underlie the high turnover in the industry. These industry challenges may also underlie stress, burnout, and health problems of hotel managers, issues that have implications for companies' health care costs. Hotel entrants, managers, and spouses expressed concerns about the length and unpredictability of hours, which they believe contributed to physical and mental exhaustion, marital disruptions, and less positive familial interactions. There was widespread concern among spouses about the physical toll of work on their partner. Entrants also voiced concerns about burnout and long-term physical health problems.

In the extant management research literature (e.g., Thompson & Prottas, 2006), negative work characteristics, such as long and unpredictable hours, have been associated with higher levels of turnover. Given that turnover is of great concern in the hotel industry, reducing voluntary turnover can translate into lower managerial recruitment and training costs and create a larger, more experienced pool of managers to promote into high-level leadership positions.

Strategic corporate programs that provide opportunities for managers to control long and unpredictable hours by taking advantage of contemporary knowledge management technologies may benefit managers and, indirectly, organizations (e.g., health care expenses) by addressing stress and related health problems. Moreover, to the extent that manager stress is reduced, the climate of the workplace may improve, with positive trickle-down effects for hourly employees.

Hotel industry turnover may be reduced through the implementation of realistic job previews. Strategically, hotel companies can use the positive and the challenging features of hotel management work as part of a realistic job preview when recruiting employees. Our results suggest that though hospitality management students understood hotel management work demands, they did not carefully consider how they would balance family needs with the job requirements as hotel managers. This finding is consistent with previous career entrant literature, which has demonstrated that young adults appear to have limited planning for and awareness of marriage-career balance (Barnett et al., 2003; Peake & Harris, 2002). As they began to form families, managers reported that they continued to value many of the positive features of the hotel industry, particularly their relationships with their coworkers. However, managers and their spouses agreed that the long, unpredictable hours were increasingly problematic with the arrival of children.

The majority of spouses (14 of 26, or 54%) worked or had previous work experience in the hotel industry. These spouses perceived a number of positives associated with the industry, including discounted vacation accommodations, glamorous hotels at which to stay, and the chance to meet and/or work with interesting and diverse people. They also displayed a greater depth of understanding regarding the hotel management work lives of their spouses. A promising area for future research is to evaluate whether innovative interventions such as spousal orientations and enculturation programs might increase spouses' familiarity with the hotel industry and, in so doing, increase their understanding regarding the challenges their partners face on the job. A crucial question to ask is whether such orientation and enculturation interventions for hotel industry spouses yield benefits for the organization in the form of lower rates of management turnover.

It is important to point out that the couples in the current study were "survivors"; that is, they had progressed through at least 10 years of employment in the hotel industry, were married, and had at least one child younger than age 12 years, our criteria for participation in the study. Although these managers in many respects reflected the "success" stories of the industry, they nevertheless experienced considerable stress, exhaustion, and work-family conflict. They had realistic expectations about hotel work, and they were concerned about how to integrate their work with the needs of their families.

If anything, our decision to focus on managers with children may mean that our interviews yielded a more positive picture of the work-family interface than would have been the case had we sampled more broadly. The decision to have children appears to be a difficult one in this industry. Few spouses or managers

we interviewed knew many other hotel managers who had children. Consistent with T. W. Lee and Mitchell's (1994) approach to turnover, managers may consider leaving the industry when they experience "shocks" to their nonwork life system such as the birth of a child coupled with the unpredictable, long hours; that is, they may consider leaving the industry during the early months of parenthood when balancing work and family is trying even for those with fairly flexible schedules. Hotel companies wanting to be perceived as "family friendly" (a possible strategic advantage in this industry, for the reasons we outline) may wish to consider instituting policies, programs, and practices, such as parental leave and child care referral, that underscore their support for employees' multiple roles. Previous research has shown that family-supportive work policies such as flexible scheduling positively influence employee perceptions of control, which in turn decreases work-family conflict (L. T. Thomas & Ganster, 1995). In addition, if hotel companies want employees to use family-friendly programs, management training programs should emphasize that such policies and practices are more than "window dressing." Based on previous research that indicates that an organization's culture plays a large role in family friendliness (Thompson et al., 1999), the informal culture of the workplace or work team should support employees who wish to take advantage of these policies and practices, and managers' performance evaluations should reflect, at least in part, whether they are creating a supportive environment for the supervisees.

Our multisource, qualitative research suggests the need for applied research that evaluates the impact of family-friendly policies and practices on hotel managers and employees and their families. The effort by Munck (2001) to reduce unnecessary face time for managers at Marriott, for example, could be replicated with a research intervention that examines a broad set of outcomes, as well as some of the hypothesized processes that might mediate the effects of the intervention. Relevant outcomes need to be assessed at multiple levels including the organization (e.g., turnover, health care costs), the hotel workplace (e.g., climate), the individual manager (e.g., mental and physical health, productivity, turnover intentions), managers' direct reports (e.g., perceptions of supervisor support), managers' spouses or partners (e.g., perceptions of the manager's mental and physical health, attitudes about the manager remaining in the position, hotel, and company), and managers' children (e.g., quality of relationship with parent-manager). Future research could implement some of the ideas we suggested here, such as improved managerial training regarding contemporary knowledge management technologies and realistic job previews not only for new hotel employees but also for their family members, as well. Ideally, such research would be carried out by multidisciplinary research teams with experience in relevant domains including hotel management, organizational psychology, family studies, child development, and health. Our own research team has launched such a program, and we hope others will join us on what promises to be an intellectually exciting and socially worthwhile adventure.

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