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Workload, generic and work–family specific social supports and job stress

Mediating role of work–family and family–work conflict

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Abstract

Purpose – The present study aims to investigate the mediating role of work–family conflict (WFC) and family–work conflict (FWC) on the effects of workload and the generic and specific work–family social support in job stress.

Design/methodology/approach – Using AMOS 20 through bootstrap analysis for indirect effect, the study assessed the abovementioned relationships based on data collected from 258 respondents in the hospitality industry in Quebec.

Findings – The findings indicate that workload increases job stress via WFC and FWC. Both generic and specific work–family social support decrease job stress through WFC and FWC. Organizational support for reconciling work and family life is more significant than generic supervisor support. Family support reduces job stress via WFC but not via FWC.

Research limitations/implications – In future studies, it would be interesting to explore the effects of variables such as gender, marital status, hotel category and the job category, as well as cultural origin.

Practical implications – The results of this research should alert employers in the hospitality industry to engage in family-friendly policies that include not only practices such as working time arrangements, family leave and onsite child care services, but also to be committed to create a family-friendly culture and to adopt the best forms of supportive policies at work.

Originality/value – By emphasizing cross-domain effects, the present research contributes to the existing knowledge by testing the mediating role of WFC and FWC in the effects of workload and various resources of social support on job stress.

Keywords Hospitality management, Human resource management, Job stress, Family-friendly policies, Specific work–family social support, WFC, FWC

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

The tourism industry and specifically the hospitality industry must constantly improve the quality of services to satisfy the needs of customers and to remain competitive. The increased competition between companies and higher customer expectations for service induce high demands in the workplace as concerns employees. Indeed, employees in the hospitality industry and more particularly frontline staff are the image of the firm and of the industry. However, they often have a heavy workload (Karatepe, 2008; Karatepe and Aleshinloye, 2009; Mansour, 2012), have long and irregular working hours (Zhao *et al.*, 2014) and experience difficulty in reconciling work and family life, which



translates into family–work conflict (FWC) (Namasivayam and Zhao, 2007; Yavas *et al.*, 2008; Choi and Kim, 2012). These employees are inevitably exposed to stress at work (Kim *et al.*, 2009), constituting a major challenge observed in the hospitality industry (Hsieh and Eggers, 2011). Research has shown that job stress has a negative effect on quality of service (Varca, 1999), leading to emotional exhaustion and cynicism (O’Neill and Davis, 2011). Moreover, factors such as job stressors, stress at work and working conditions lead employees to consider leaving their work (Tsauro and Tang, 2012; Sharma *et al.*, 2010; Burke, 2003). This makes it all the more difficult to attract and retain workers, reduce staff turnover and recruit skills in a number of key areas, as employment in the hospitality industry is characterized by poor conditions, low pay, a high level of labor drawn from socially disadvantaged groups, poor status and absence of professionalism (Marco-Lajara and Úbeda-García, 2013). The issue of work–family balance is all the more important as the hospitality industry is 59 per cent female. Also, the hospitality industry is important for Canada, counting 10,340 workers in 2,269 establishments, with Québec counting 37,561 workers (in 2012), representing 11 per cent of the tourism industry. It is a growing industry, as jobs have increased 16 per cent in Québec from 2004 to 2014, while hours of work increased 17 per cent, to 62 million hours. In Canada, the tourism, hospitality and restaurant sector is the second largest after retail trade, with 1.66 million workers and for Québec it is the fifth export sector with \$10.6bn in total income [CQRHT (Conseil québécois des ressources humaines en tourisme), 2015].

Researchers have been increasingly interested in research on work–family interface over the past several decades (Barnett, 1998; Greenhaus and Powell, 2006), and this increase in research is “due in large part to the increasing representation of dual-earner partners and single parents in the workforce” (Greenhaus and Allen, 2011, p. 165). The interest in the work–family interface area continues to increase (Greenhaus and Allen, 2011) and extends more and more to the analysis of specific professions or sectors (Tremblay, 2012; Fusulier, 2011), as the diversity in working conditions needs to be taken into account.

The high demands of work in the hospitality industry can thus develop a conflict between work and family (Grzywacz *et al.*, 2007). Moreover, as reported by Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran (2006), organizations that offer family-friendly policies without having a culture that is favorable to these practices have a higher rate of turnover, reduced satisfaction at work and higher conflict between work and family (Behson, 2002; Flye *et al.*, 2003). Indeed, employee perceptions of a family-friendly culture are related to the use of work/family programs (Flye *et al.*, 2003), meaning that these programs are not necessarily the main factor in work–family interface (Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran, 2006). According to Geurts *et al.* (2003), there is increasing confirmation that WFC mediates the effects of specific stressors and psychosocial outcomes (Geurts *et al.*, 2003).

Based on the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, our study proposes and tests whether work–family conflict (WFC)/FWC can mediate the effects of workload, supervisor support, family support and organizational support in terms of reconciling work and family.

Our study adds value to the hospitality management literature in several ways. First, while the hospitality industry presents many constraints (Hsieh and Eggers, 2011), very little research has focused on WFC. Also, there is little empirical support for the proposition that WFC influences employees’ job stress or burnout, and the results of

studies in this field are inconsistent (Zhao *et al.*, 2014), thus needing to be tested further.

Second, few studies have examined the mediating role of WFC and FWC on the effects on job stress of the workload and various resources at work such as support of workers, supervisors, family and support of the organization in terms of reconciling the work–family interface. Indeed, researchers have usually viewed work interference with family and family interference with work as having distinct antecedents and outcomes (Zhao *et al.*, 2014). According to Özbağ and Ceyhan (2014), given that FWC is more likely to have a negative effect on the family sphere, such as lower life satisfaction, research has found that the experience of WFC tends to be more dominant than the experience of FWC (Frone *et al.*, 1992; Burke and Greenglass, 1999). Therefore, as recommended by researchers such as Kelly *et al.* (2008) and Maertz and Boyar (2011), future research incorporating WFC in the service sectors is needed. Our study fills this gap by studying the antecedents and outcomes of this conflict in both directions: WFC and FWC. In our view, both these role conflicts have an effect on workers' attitudes and behaviors. This is consistent with Zhao *et al.* (2014, p. 2) who note that:

[...] when family matters inhibit the work flow, employees would blame the job for not allowing them to meet family demands, thus resulting in negative attitudes and withdrawal behaviors. However, when work duties prevent employees from enjoying family life, employees might feel more stressed about their jobs.

Third, as shown by Selvarajan *et al.* (2013), work–family research has primarily studied relationships between work-domain social support such as supervisor support and WFC and family domain social support such as spousal support and FWC (Amstad *et al.*, 2011; Michel *et al.*, 2011). In their recent meta-analysis, Michel *et al.* (2011) indicate that scholars should now put the emphasis on cross-domain effects when exploring the effect of social support on WFC (Selvarajan *et al.*, 2013). In the same vein, academics have differentiated between generic social support and social support related to WFC (Kossek *et al.*, 2011). According to these authors, “general work support is the degree to which staff perceives that supervisors or employers care about their overall well-being on the job by supplying positive social resources” (Kossek *et al.*, 2011, p. 292), while work–family-specific support is “the degree to which staff perceives supervisors or employers care about their aptitude to balance work–family relationships by providing helpful social resources” (Kossek *et al.*, 2011, p. 292). Similarly to Selvarajan *et al.* (2013), our research aims to examine the cross-domain impacts of both generic and work–family-specific social support.

Using a meta-analytic approach based on 38 studies, Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran (2006) divided the programs and policies relative to family-friendly work environments into two conceptually distinct categories:

- (1) work–family practices including working time arrangements (flextime, compressed workweek [...]); family leave (maternal/paternal leave [...]); dependent care and assistance (childcare [...]); and
- (2) family-friendly culture, e.g. perceptions of supportive work–family culture, supportive supervisors and co-workers, etc. (Flye *et al.*, 2003; Frone, 2003).

According to Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran (2006), these features of family-friendly policies may have a direct effect, although not mediated by WFC, on job

outcomes. According to [Barnett et al. \(2012\)](#), however, WFC and FWC mediate relations between the requirements-resources of work and those of the family and psychological distress. We therefore decided to study their mediating role; however, to differentiate our investigation from previous research, we will test the mediating role of both WFC and FWC between social support (generic and specific) and job stress.

Our research extends the work of [Kossek et al. \(2011\)](#) and [Selvarajan et al. \(2013\)](#) as they studied same domain effects of generic and work–family-specific social support ([Kossek et al., 2011](#)) and cross-domain indirect effects of generic and work–family-specific social support on FWC via WFC ([Selvarajan et al., 2013](#)). However, our research not only takes into account the two domains (WFC/FWC) but also it is conducted in the hotel sector and differs from their research by taking into account other variables such as workload and job stress. In addition, we test the mediating role of WFC and FWC as concerns workload, social support and job stress.

Research model and hypotheses

Research model

The research model and the relationships among constructs are presented in [Figure 1](#). According to the model, workload, supervisor support, family support to manage work and family interface and organizational support to help reconcile work and family life are four factors that can have an effect on employees' stress at work.

Work–family conflict and family–work conflict: similarities and differences

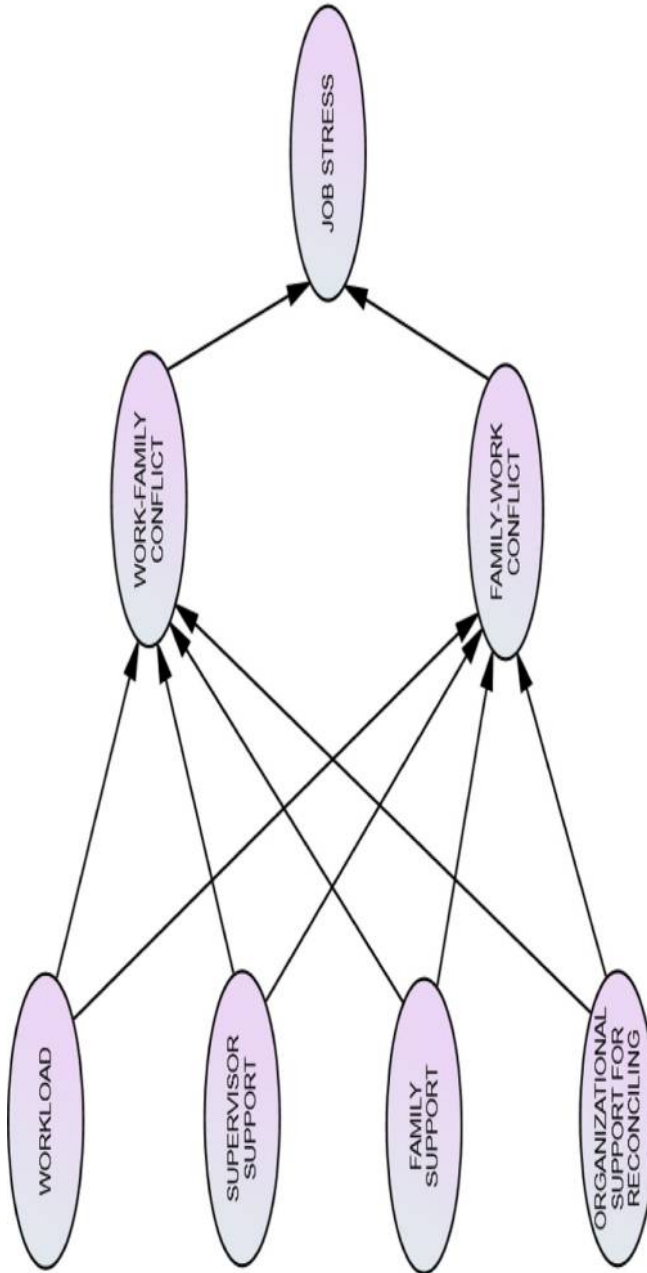
The conflict between work and non-work roles takes place when the roles are unbalanced at work and in life ([Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985](#)). WFC has been conceptualized by [Greenhaus and Beutell \(1985\)](#) as three sources of conflict, namely, time-, strain- and behaviour-based conflicts. A time-based conflict occurs when “time devoted to one role makes it difficult to fulfill requirements of another role”. Strain-based conflict occurs when “strain from one role makes it difficult to fulfill requirements of another role”. Behaviour-based conflict occurs when specific “behaviours required in one role makes it difficult to fulfill requirements of another role” ([Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985, p. 78](#)). [Netemeyer et al. \(1996\)](#) distinguish between WFC and FWC. WFC refers to “a form of inter-role conflict in which the general demands of, time devoted to, and strain created by the job interfere with performing family-related responsibilities” ([Netemeyer et al., 1996, p. 401](#)). FWC refers to “a form of inter-role conflict in which the general demands of, time devoted to, and strain created by the family interfere with performing work-related responsibilities” ([Netemeyer et al., 1996, p. 401](#)).

Conservation of resources theory

[Hobfoll's \(1989\)](#) COR theory provides a fairly comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding the nature of stress at the individual level, in the professional and non-professional contexts. [Hobfoll \(1989, p. 516\)](#) defines stress as a:

[...] reaction to the environment that leads to: the threat of loss of resources, the net loss of resources, and a lack of resource gain following a significant investment of resources.

With this theory, [Hobfoll](#) proposes a motivational model to explain behavior in the presence of stressors and in the absence of stressors. Founded on the belief that individuals seek to build and protect their resources, this theory emphasizes the role of



Indirect effects	
H1: workload	---WFC---job stress
H2: workload	---FWC---job stress
H3: supervisor support	---WFC---job stress
H4: supervisor support	---FWC---job stress
H5: family support	---WFC---job stress
H6: family support	---FWC---job stress
H7: organizational support	---WFC---job stress
H8: organizational support	---FWC---job stress

Figure 1.
Conceptual model

resources to cope with stressful events, and not as the result of an imbalance between work demands and resources, contrarily to the classical model of stress (Karasek, 1979; Siegrist, 1996). There are four categories of resources:

- (1) personal resources (e.g. self-esteem);
- (2) object resources (e.g. car, house);
- (3) condition resources (e.g. employment); and
- (4) energy resources (e.g. money).

Hobfoll (1998, p. 81) explains the spiral of loss of resources stating that “those who lack resources are not only vulnerable to the loss of resources, but the initial loss results in future losses”. Hobfoll (1998, p. 82) also states that “those with a lot of resources are more likely to win new resources and initial gains lead to future gains”. This is the spiral of gain of resources. Moreover, recently, Hobfoll (2011, 2012, 2014) proposes an extension of his theory by presenting the notion of “resource caravan passageways” which refers to the:

[...] the environmental conditions that support, foster, enrich, and protect the resources of individuals, sections or segments of workers, and organizations in total, or that detract, undermine, obstruct, or impoverish people’s or group’s resource reservoirs (Hobfoll, 2011, p. 129).

While most stress theories take into account only one role at a time (Karasek, 1979), Hobfoll considers simultaneously the professional and private domains (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2009; Grandey and Cropanzano, 1999). The job demands–resource model (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001) is similar to the COR theory, but it does not consider family-related resources and demands (Barnett *et al.*, 2012). Thus, we build on the COR theory to explain work and family roles.

Mediating role of work–family conflict/family–work conflict between workload and job stress

Excessive workload is a source of stress at work (Faulkner and Patiar, 1997; Lo and Lamm, 2005) and of emotional exhaustion (Karatepe, 2013). Higher demands at work drain precious resources such as time, energy and emotions, which are essential to fulfill family obligations (Lapierre and Allen, 2006).

Based on the COR theory (Hobfoll, 2002), WFC and FWC can lead to stress at work where resources are lost in the process of managing both work and family roles. However, although the WFC can generate negative stress at work, research has been more interested in the determinants of work and non-work conflict than in its effects (St-Onge *et al.*, 2002). In the hospitality industry, job stress has been related to difficulties encountered by staff to combine work and family life (Namasivayam and Zhao., 2007; Yavas *et al.*, 2008). In the same vein, other investigations have confirmed that both of these situations (WFC and FWC) significantly increase employees’ exhaustion levels (Karatepe *et al.*, 2010; Yavas *et al.*, 2008).

Perceived workload relates to employees’ perspective of objective work overload when they consider they have too many tasks (Leiter and Marie Durup, 1996) or insufficient time to finish the tasks (Greenglass *et al.*, 2003). Based on Hobfoll’s (1989) COR theory, we consider that employees in the hospitality industry face a heavy workload and therefore tend to lose precious resources (energy, time and emotions).

Consequently, they have less resources and become unable to meet their professional and family roles, resulting in WFC. This is consistent with Hobfoll's principle of the "spiral of loss of resources". Gorgievski and Hobfoll (2008) also explain this spiral by the fact that the loss of resources is accompanied by emotions and negative feelings and a deterioration of mental and physical health of the individual. Faced with this loss of resources, people can hardly meet simultaneously their professional and family responsibilities because of lack of resources, resulting in WFC (Mansour and Commeiras, 2015). As concerns the amount of resources available, the COR theory postulates that an individual who has limited resources may be more vulnerable to subsequent losses (Hobfoll and Shirom, 2001). The WFC can create a new potential loss of resources, inducing stress. Empirical research has shown that WFC mediates the link between job demands or workload and burnout. For example, Geurts *et al.* (2003) conclude that WFC mediates the effect of workload on workers' wellbeing. Peeters *et al.* (2005) and Janssen *et al.* (2004) indicate that WFC mediates the relationship between job demands and burnout.

In the hospitality industry, we have seen little empirical investigation concerning the proposition that WFC plays a mediating role between workload or overload and job stress. Among the very few investigations, the work of Karatepe *et al.* (2010) conducted in the hospitality sector in Turkey shows that WFC mediates the relationship between work overload and burnout. Recently, Mansour and Commeiras (2015) investigated the mediating role of WFC between workload and job stress with a sample of 648 hotel employees in France and confirmed that WFC partially mediates the relationship between workload and job stress.

We thus put forward the following hypothesis for our own research in the hospitality sector:

- H1.* The work–family conflict mediates the relationship between workload and job stress.

High job demands deplete much of the mental and emotional resources of individuals. As reported by Wright and Hobfoll (2004), individuals try to minimize the loss of resources by selecting coping strategies that help them maintain their meager resources. In other words, faced with this loss of resources at work because of high work demands, employees adopt defensive strategies, leading them to protect their resource at work. Indeed, they try to adopt a strategy of disengagement (e.g. spend less time with the family) to decrease the loss of work resources. However, such a strategy may lead to threatening family resources and the employee will find fulfilling family demands more difficult than work demands, causing FWC. For Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) the conflicts in the domain of work and family can be objective or psychological. For example, an employee may give up an evening with the family or at a restaurant to rest and go to work the next day. This leads to an objective conflict. Although this strategy can temporarily provide other resources such as time and energy needed to keep working, this employee loses his family resources (e.g. emotional support from family), and feels psychological conflict because of higher family obligations. Therefore, he suffers from FWC and becomes more stressed at work. Empirically, Barnett *et al.* (2012) find that the effect of work demands on distress is completely mediated via FWC. Thus, we suggest the following hypothesis:

H2. The family–work conflict mediates the relationship between workload and job stress.

Mediating role of work–family conflict/family–work conflict between social support and job stress

Earlier research on family and work was mainly interested in the direct effects of social support (generic and specific) in decreasing WFC (Allen, 2001; Kossek *et al.*, 2011; Michel *et al.*, 2010; Anderson *et al.*, 2002; Wadsworth and Owens, 2007). Few studies focus on the mediating effect of WFC between organizational support and job stress. Barnett *et al.* (2012) identified a partial mediation of WFC in the relationship between support at work and psychological distress. Many studies have revealed that perception of supervisor support to work–family balance reduces WFC, diminishes absenteeism, turnover and burnout and increases organizational commitment (Carlson and Perrewé, 1999; Warren and Johnson, 1995).

For a better understanding of the issues of stress and family in the hospitality industry, Cleveland *et al.* (2007) collected qualitative and quantitative data from three sources: managers, the spouses of these managers and students about to enter the industry. Their results clearly show the role of a family-supportive culture created by the general management of the hotel. According to the COR theory, individuals not only attempt to protect their resources but also accumulate them to reduce or prevent the loss of resources which can contribute to stress at work. Thus, they try to minimize the loss of resources in selecting coping strategies that help them maintain their scarce resources (Wright and Hobfoll, 2004). Hobfoll (1989) recommends establishing meaningful social relationships to increase the “pool” of available resources or to replace or reinforce other resources that could be lost or diminished; these can be considered as “caravan passageways” (Hobfoll, 2011, 2012). Indeed, support from supervisors, family or organization to balance work and family obligations constitutes “resource passageways” which enhance or develop new resources (a stable family and work life for example) which, in turn and according to the “spiral of gains of resources” of Hobfoll (1998, p. 82), contribute to one’s gaining more new resources (well-being). As reported by Selvarajan *et al.* (2013, p. 489), when employees obtain resources, “they may optimally allocate available resources to achieve overall well-being”.

Supervisor support, work–family conflict and job stress

Work resources such as supervisors’ support may have a beneficial effect on job stress by decreasing WFC. Employees who perceive that their supervisors care for their family matters (e.g. working time arrangements, allowing employees to take care of family obligations) may feel that work demands are less overwhelming. Supervisors’ support can play the role of “passageways” that permit employees to have more resources at home and/or at work and therefore, experience lower stress due to lower WFC. Therefore, the following hypothesis was explored:

H3. The work–family conflict mediates the relationship between supervisor support and job stress.

Supervisor support, family–work conflict and job stress

Support from supervisors is considered as a socio-emotional resource that can reduce stress from FWC. The COR theory is based on the principle that individuals are

motivated to protect their current resources (conservation) and to acquire new resources (acquisition) (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014). Furthermore, individuals invest in resources to adapt to stressful situations threatening their well-being. Thus, when employees face high family demands, they try to obtain supervisor's support to diminish loss of family resources or to gain more resources. They feel less objective and psychological conflicts, and therefore less stress at work. One can take children to school and be a little late for work because there is support from the supervisor. Thus, we put forward the following hypothesis:

H4. The family–work conflict mediates the relationship between supervisor support and job stress.

Family support, work–family conflict and job stress

Family resources may provide emotional assistance and financial aid that can decrease stress through reduced WFC. As Barnett *et al.* (2012) indicate, “employees who feel that they have enough time to get everything done at home may have feelings of competence that help reduce threats of work resource depletion” (Barnett *et al.*, 2012, p. 135). These authors indicate that WFC mediates the link between family resources and distress. Thus:

H5. The work–family conflict mediates the relationship between family support and job stress.

Family support, family–work conflict and job stress

Researches show that support in the family domain such as spouse/partner support diminishes FWC (Byron, 2005). Support from family members can be considered as “resource passageways” and can lead to the perception of reduced stress because of FWC. Indeed, sharing family responsibilities can provide more resources such as time and energy for the family. According to the spiral of gain of resources (Hobfoll, 1998), this gain of resources can lead to reinforcing resources available in the work domain, reducing stress at work. Family support may not directly help in decreasing stress at work, but may reduce it indirectly by decreasing FWC. Barnett *et al.* (2012) show that family resources are linked to distress through FWC. Thus:

H6. The family–work conflict mediates the relationship between family support and job stress.

Organizational support for reconciling work and family, work–family conflict and job stress

Consistent with the COR theory and particularly the concept of “resource caravan passageways” (Hobfoll, 2012, 2014), the ability of individuals and families to build and maintain their “pool” of resources (or conversely to lose their resources) is largely dependent on circumstances outside their control (Hobfoll and De Jong, 2013). Indeed, organizational support in terms of reconciling work and family can be viewed as “resource passageways” that can provide social and psychological resources to balance work and family (Kossek *et al.*, 2011). Employees feeling that their supervisor or organization is attentive to the issue of reconciling work and family and provides a policy for this, perceive having more resources at work. They can thus transmit

resources to the family domain and therefore reduce family resources depletion. This results in less stress related to WFC. We suggest this hypothesis:

- H7.* The work–family conflict mediates the relationship between organizational support in terms of reconciling work and family and job stress.

Organizational support for reconciling work and family, family–work conflict and job stress

Similar to the rationale for the indirect effects of supervisory support on stress via FWC, when employees feel that the organization cares for them and for their family life, they invest more resources in the family domain which can reduce family pressure and decrease stress due to FWC. Thus:

- H8.* The family–work conflict mediates the relationship between organizational support for reconciling work and family and job stress.

Method

Sample and procedure

The study was conducted in the hospitality industry in the province of Quebec (Canada). We worked in partnership with a sectorial association, and also put in a call for participants on the LinkedIn website. The sample is quite representative of the diversity of the hospitality industry, as we have contacted personnel working in different hotel categories, independent or franchised, located everywhere in Quebec and there is a wide diversity of hotels in the respondents. There is an overrepresentation of the 4-star and 5-star hotels as well as hotel chains. [Table I](#) presents sample characteristics.

We have collected 258 responses. Our sample consists of 37.2 per cent management personnel (96 respondents), 35.7 per cent frontline staff (92 respondents) and 27.1 per cent supervisors or intermediary jobs (70 respondents). Of these 258 persons, 185 work in hotel chains and 73 in small hostels, motels or autonomous hotels. There are 148 women and 110 men, which is perfectly representative of the industry, 57 per cent (59 per cent in industry).

Measures

We used scales from previous research to measure our concepts. Workload and supervisor support were operationalized with nine and four items, respectively from [Karasek \(1998\)](#). We measured WFC and FWC with five items from the scales by [Netemeyer et al. \(1996\)](#). Job stress was measured with the psychological stress measure

Industry	Hospitality
Sample size	258
Hotel classification (%)	0-1 star: 1.2% 2 star: 1.6% 3 star: 10.9% 4 star: 51.6% 5 star: 34.9%
Hotel type (%)	Chain: 71.7% Independent Hotel 28.3%
Gender (%)	Women: 57.4% Men: 42.6%
Age (%)	Under 20 years: 1.2% 20-30 years: 28.7% 31-40 years: 35.7% 41-50 years: 22.1% > 50 years: 12.4%
Occupation (%)	37.2% management positions, 35.7% of frontline staff (reception, housekeeping . . .). 27.1% supervision positions

Table I.
Sample characteristics

of Lemyre and Tessier (2003). Family support and organizational support for reconciling work and family were measured with two items from previous research (Tremblay and Larivière, 2009). Responses to items for all variables were based on five-point scales that ranged from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). Data do conform to the assumptions of normality. Means, standard deviations and correlations between the composite variables are presented in Table III.

Data analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis was led to check dimensionality, convergent and discriminant validity issues (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988) and the same was done for items of each scale for a stringent psychometric testing (Joreskog and Sorbom, 1996). The effective sample size was 258. The results of confirmatory factor analysis are shown in Table II. To ensure the reliability and validity of the questionnaires, the measurement model was assessed with the sample of 258 respondents and examined by maximum likelihood test.

To test the fit of the measurement and structural model, we included comparative indices considered to be very sensitive to sample size such as goodness-of-fit index (GFI) and adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI) (Joreskog and Sorbom, 1993) and comparative fit index (CFI) (Bentler, 1990). Also, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and χ^2 adjusted to the degree of freedom were used to evaluate model fit. The χ^2 value “assesses the magnitude of discrepancy between the sample and fitted covariance matrices” (Hu and Bentler, 1999, p. 2). Root RMSEA means fit the population covariance matrix (Byrne, 1998). GFI calculates the proportion of variance that is accounted for by the estimated population covariance (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007, cited in Hooper *et al.*, 2008). AGFI adjusts the GFI based upon degrees of freedom, with more saturated models diminishing fit (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). Normed-fit index (NFI) “assesses the model by comparing the χ^2 value of the model to the χ^2 of the null model” (Hooper *et al.*, 2008, p. 55). The CFI (Bentler, 1990) is a revised index of the NFI which considers sample size (Byrne, 1998). The cutoff values for this index are: $\chi^2/df = 5, 3$ or 2 , GFI, AGFI, NFI and CFI > 90 , RMSEA ≤ 0.08 (Kim *et al.*, 2015).

To test the hypotheses of our research and particularly the effects of mediation, we chose to use the method of the indirect effects test based on a bootstrap analysis (Preacher and Hayes, 2004), which overcomes the limitations of the approach of Baron and Kenny (1986) traditionally used in the analysis of mediation, specifically the problem of statistical power (Edwards and Lambert, 2007) and the decrease in Type I error (Preacher and Hayes, 2008). Bootstrapping can deal with the multivariate non-normality of the data (Byrne, 2001). Kim *et al.* (2015) suggest to researchers to use bootstrapping when the sample size is insufficient or to perform power analysis. In addition, in mediation models with structural equation modeling (SEM), it is recommended for researchers to use the bootstrapping method, particularly bias-corrected (BC) estimation with 1,000 (or more) resampling and 95 per cent confidence intervals (Kim *et al.*, 2015). BC performs better than other methods (Cheung and Lau, 2008). Our analyses are based on 1,000 replications generated by the bootstrap method with a confidence interval of 95 per cent. These analyses were complemented by a Sobel test for the significance level. All these analyses were conducted using the AMOS v.20 software (Arbuckle, 2011). While other software such as LISREL, SEPATH, PRELIS, SIMPLIS, MPLUS, EQS and SAS are available to analyze SEM, the AMOS

Variable	Item	IR	CR	AVE	Social supports and job stress
<i>Workload</i>					
My job requires working very fast	WOLD1	0.82	0.8	0.5	1789
My job requires working very hard	WOLD2	0.78			
I am not asked to do an excessive amount of work	WOLD3	0.64			
I have enough time to get the job done	WOLD4				
I am free from conflicting demands others make	WOLD5	–			
My job requires long periods of intense concentration on the task	WOLD6	–			
My tasks are often interrupted before I can finish them so that I have to go back to them later	WOLD7	–			
My job is very hectic	WOLD8	0.56			
Waiting on work from other people or departments often slows me down on my job	WOLD9	–			
<i>Work–family conflict</i>					
The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life	WFC1	0.78	0.91	0.66	
The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfill family responsibilities	WFC2	0.83			
Things I want to do at home do not get done because of the demands my job puts on me	WFC3	0.76			
My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfill family duties	WFC4	0.81			
Due to work-related duties. I have to make changes to my plans for family activities	WFC5	0.87			
<i>Family–work conflict</i>					
The demands of my family or spouse/partner interfere with work-related activities	FWC1	0.67	0.84	0.56	
I have to put off doing things at work because of demands on my time at home	FWC2	0.64			
Things I want to do at work don't get done because of the demands of my family or spouse/partner	FWC3	0.84			
My home life interferes with my responsibilities at work such as getting to work on time, accomplishing daily tasks, and working overtime	FWC4	0.84			
Family-related strain interferes with my ability to perform job-related duties	FWC5	–			
<i>Job stress</i>					
I feel calm	–		0.89	0.58	
I feel rushed; I do not seem to have enough time	–				
I have physical aches and pains: sore back, headache, stiff neck, stomachache	JS3	0.63			
I feel preoccupied, tormented, or worried	JS4	0.84			
I feel confused; my thoughts are muddled; I lack concentration; I cannot focus	JS5	0.84			
I feel a great weight on my shoulders	JS6	0.78			
I have difficulty controlling my reactions, emotions, moods, or gestures	JS7	0.66			
I feel stressed	JS8	0.81			
				(continued)	Table II. Assessment of the measurement model

Variable	Item	IR	CR	AVE
<i>Supervisor support (generic)</i>				
My supervisor is concerned about the wellbeing of those under him	SUPS1	0.70	0.89	0.67
My supervisor pays attention to what you say	SUPS2	0.87		
My supervisor is helpful in getting the job done	SUPS3	0.89		
My supervisor is successful in getting people to work together	SUPS4	0.81		
<i>Family support</i>				
I have the feeling of being supported by my family in the exercise of my professional duties and responsibilities	FAMS1	0.98	0.72	0.59
I have the feeling of being supported by my family in the exercise of my domestic chores and responsibilities	FAMS2	0.48		
<i>Organizational support for reconciling</i>				
I have the feeling that my supervisor is attentive to the issue of reconciling work and family	ORSR1	0.98	0.8	0.67
In my workplace, I find a policy to promote work-family balance	ORSR2	0.61		

Table II.

Notes: IR = item reliability; CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted

graphical interface is the most user-friendly because it requires essentially the ability “to drag and drop boxes (manifest variables) and eggs (latent variables) on the screen” (Nachtigall *et al.*, 2003, p. 12). AMOS allows researchers to interface with SPSS datasets and to draw, instead of entering commands, and test their own model taking into account the complexity of relationships and the mediating effects (Kim *et al.*, 2015). Finally, we calculated composite scores for each independent and dependent variable to report means, standard deviations and correlations.

Results

Measurement model results

The first results of the confirmatory factor analysis demonstrated low model fit statistics. Therefore, according to the modification indices in Amos, several items were dropped because of low standardized loadings (<0.50), high standard residues or correlation measurement errors. Specifically, two items from job stress and one item from FWC were removed from further analysis. Also, covariances between measurement errors were observed between WFC1 and WFC5. The results show that the suggested six-dimensional measurement model fit the data correctly ($\chi^2/df = 2.01$; GFI = 0.86; AGFI = 0.82; CFI = 0.917; RMSEA = 0.063). We have verified item reliability by a standardized factor loading. Results indicate that reliability is between 0.48 and 0.98, with a significance level ($t > 1.96$). In the analysis of constructs reliability (Table II) for the dimensions, composite reliability exceeded 0.70 (range 0.72-0.91), indicating satisfactory internal consistency. Every factor loading needs to exceed 0.70 to be considered as having sufficient loading values (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Moreover, in the assessment of convergent validity, the average variance extracted (AVE) is used to estimate the average explained variance of measurement to scales; values above 0.5 mean a good convergent validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). In Table II, AVE of each scale exceeded 0.50 (range 0.50-0.67). These results revealed that there was evidence of

convergent validity (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988; Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Discriminant validity was supported, because squared correlation between pairs of variables were not larger than the AVE by each latent variable (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Table III shows means, standard deviations and correlations of variables. We have deleted several items having low loading. For workload, we deleted four items:

- (1) "I have enough time to get the job done".
- (2) "I am free from conflicting demands others make".
- (3) "My job requires long periods of intense concentration on the task".
- (4) "My tasks are often interrupted before I can finish them so that I have to go back to them later".

From FWC, one item: "Family-related strain interferes with my ability to perform job-related duties". Two items from job stress: "I feel calm"; "I feel rushed; I do not seem to have enough time".

Structural model results

Tables IV and V illustrate the results of two models:

- (1) Model 1 (where WFC is the mediator); and
- (2) Model 2 (where FWC is the mediator).

Model 1 fits data correctly ($\chi^2/df = 2.548$; GFI = 0.843; AGFI = 0.805; CFI = 0.892; RMSEA = 0.078) and Model 2 as well ($\chi^2/df = 2.563$; GFI = 0.849; AGFI = 0.81; CFI = 0.883; RMSEA = 0.078). No model is better than the other. The results of SEM in Table IV demonstrate that all standardized indirect effects are significant, and therefore, all hypotheses regarding mediating effects of WFC are maintained.

Specifically, the results of bootstrap, which give us the value of the indirect effect and the level of significance, indicate that the indirect impacts of workload (0.224, $p < 0.01$, $Z = 4.371$), supervisor support (-0.207, $p < 0.01$, $Z = -4.486$), family support (-0.165, $p < 0.01$, $Z = -3.63$) and organizational support for reconciling (-0.302, $p < 0.01$,

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Workload	3.86	0.81	1						
Supervisor support	3.48	0.94	-0.199**	1					
Family support	3.89	0.93	-0.045	0.137*	1				
Organizational support for reconciling	2.97	1.19	-0.211**	0.448**	0.176**	1			
Work-family conflict	3.3	1.09	0.346**	-0.362**	-0.202**	-0.476**	1		
Family-work conflict	2.04	0.9	0.300**	-0.333**	-0.181**	-0.274**	0.419**	1	
Job stress	2.91	1.07	0.238**	-0.336**	-0.317**	-0.363**	0.544**	0.408**	1

Notes: Composite scores for each variable were computed by averaging respective item scores; the scores for study variables ranged from 1 to 5; higher scores demonstrated higher levels; M = Mean; SD = Standard deviation; *correlation is statistically significant at the 0,05 level; **correlation is statistically significant at the 0,01 level

Table III. Means, standard deviations and correlations

Table IV.
Results of bootstrap:
Model 1 WFC as
mediator

Variable	Work-family conflict		Job stress		Type of mediation	Z-values	P
	β direct effect	t-values	β direct effect	t-values			
Workload	0.375***	5.171	-0.043ns	-0.638	0.224**	4.371	0.00
Supervisor support	-0.388***	-5.623	-0.122ns	-1.913	-0.207**	-4.486	0.00
Family support	-0.307***	-4.118	-0.148*	-2.387	-0.165**	-3.63	0.00
Organizational support for reconciling	-0.565	-7.275	-0.084ns	-1.2	-0.302**	-4.912	0.00
Work-family conflict	-	-	0.56***	8.031	-	-	-
R^2	χ^2/df	GFI	AGFI	CFI	0.319	RMSEA	
Model 1 fit	2.548	0.843	0.805	0.892	0.978		

Notes: N = 258 (standardized coefficients are reported); * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$; two-tailed probability

Variable	Standardized parameter estimates						Z-values	P
	Family-work conflict		Job stress		Type of mediation			
	β direct effect	t-values	β direct effect	t-values	Indirect effect	Type of mediation		
Workload	0.295***	3.861	0.066ns	0.919	0.115**	Full	3.068	0.00
Supervisor support	-0.337***	-4.615	-0.214***	-3.115	-0.114**	Partial	-3.255	0.000
Family support	-0.137*	-1.943	-0.261***	-3.807	-0.052*	Partial	-1.822	0.068
Organization support for reconciling	-0.28***	-3.864	-0.294***	-4.364	-0.092**	Partial	-2.98	0.00
Family-work conflict	-	-	0.42***	5.616	-	-	-	-
R^2	-	0.128	-	-	0.241	-	-	-
Model 2 fit	χ^2/df	GFI	AGFI	CFI	RMSEA	0.078	-	-
	2.563	0.849	0.81	0.883	0.078	-	-	-

Notes: $N = 258$ (standardized coefficients are reported); * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; two-tailed probability

Table V.
Results of bootstrap:
Model 1 FWC as
mediator

$Z = -4.912$) on job stress through WFC are significant, based on bootstrap and Sobel tests.

The results also show that part of the variance is over 33 per cent in WFC and over 31 per cent in job stress. These results suggest that *H1*, *H3*, *H5* and *H7* are supported and WFC fully mediates the effects of workload, supervisor support and organizational support for reconciling on job stress, and partially mediates the effect of family support on job stress.

Table V shows that except for the indirect effect of family support on job stress through FWC, all other standardized indirect effects are significant, and therefore, all hypotheses about the mediating effects of WFC are validated except for *H6*.

Indeed, the results established on bootstrap and Sobel tests reveal that the indirect influences of workload ($0.115, p < 0.01, Z = 3.068$), supervisor support ($-0.114, p < 0.01, Z = -3.255$), family support ($-0.052, p < 0.05, Z = -1.822$) and organizational support for reconciling ($-0.092, p < 0.01, Z = -2.98$) on job stress through FWC are significant. The variance explained in FWC is of 0.128 and of 0.241 in job stress. Together, these results indicate that *H2*, *H6* and *H8* are supported. *H4* is rejected because the indirect effect is too small and the Sobel test is not significant. FWC therefore fully mediates the effect of workload on job stress and partially the effects of supervisor support and organizational support for reconciling on job stress.

Discussion

The present study proposed and tested a research model that investigated the role of WFC and FWC as mediators of the impacts of workload, supervisor support, family support and organizational support for reconciling on job stress, based on data collected from employees in the hospitality industry in Quebec (Canada). Many contributions emerge from our study. First, as there is little research on work and family conflicts in the hospitality industry (Hsieh and Eggers, 2011), a sector with important challenges, our research presents empirical results regarding the effects of WFC on employees' job stress or burnout. This is an important contribution, as previous results in this field are inconsistent (Zhao *et al.*, 2014).

Second, Selvarajan *et al.* (2013) have called for research to examine the relationship between social support systems (generic support, to allow employees to have better well-being and specific support, to permit them to balance between work and family obligations) and work–family balance. They indicate that “such research would also be consistent with COR theory since the focus would be on how employees optimize their resources in order to balance role responsibilities in different domains” (Selvarajan *et al.*, 2013, p. 497). Our study has filled this gap. We used the COR and particularly the “resource caravan passageways” to explain the effects of workload and resources such as supervisor support, family support and organizational support for reconciling on job stress with WFC and FWC as mediating variables. Our results indicate that workload has an indirect positive effect on job stress, being mediated by WFC and FWC. Indeed, workers in the hospitality industry who are confronted with high workloads or overload and have few resources at work will lose resources such as time and physical and psychological health; they become vulnerable to lose other resources such as a better family life because of WFC, according to the spiral of loss of resources, as per the COR theory. In such a situation, if these employees fail to resolve this conflict, they lose more resources such as well-being at work. This may lead to emotional exhaustion, which

decreases job embeddedness and poses obstacles to high-quality performance in service delivery processes (Karatepe, 2013).

Likewise, this work overload translates into a reduction in energy and time, two resources that make it difficult for workers to face their family obligations. Therefore, instead of enjoying family life, the employees use up their energy to meet family responsibilities and may become incapable to allocate more precious resources such as time and energy to their professional role, leading them to feel more overload at work, creating more stress. The theory of COR suggests a reallocation of resources, and our research confirms the usefulness of this theory and its validation within the context of multiple roles.

Third, our research shows that in addition to social support, other factors such as workload may be useful in improving WFC and/or FWC, as suggested by Kossek *et al.* (2011). Consequently, taking this variable (workload) into account can contribute to a better understanding of the work–family interface and a reduction in workload can alleviate WFC as well as FWC.

Four, our findings indicate that supervisor support (generic) and specific social support (in our study organizational support for reconciling includes supervisor support for work and family balance) impact negatively on job stress, with the mediating effect of WFC and FWC. Five, another interesting result is the difference between the effect of work–family-specific social support which includes supervisor support for reconciling and the effect of supervisor support in general. This finding also provides important support for the differentiation of the notions of generic and work–family-specific social supports suggested in Kossek *et al.*'s (2011) meta-analysis. We included two items in the measure of organizational support for reconciling work and family. Kossek *et al.* (2011) find that both work–family organizational support and work–family supervisor support are related to WFC. In our study, the results of bootstrap and Sobel tests for indirect effect demonstrate that, in the case of WFC, the indirect effect of organizational support for reconciling is stronger than the indirect effect of supervisor support (-0.302 for work–family-specific social support and -0.207 for supervisor support), but it is nearly the same in the case of FWC (-0.092 and -0.114 , respectively). This is not surprising when an organization is committed to a family-friendly work culture. Indeed, a supervisor may not offer particular support for employees to manage work–family responsibilities, considering it is sufficient that the organization maintains family-friendly policies/programs (Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran, 2006). Our result is consistent with the findings of Kossek *et al.* (2011) and Selvarajan *et al.* (2013) who show that work–family-specific constructs of supervisor support and organizational support are more strongly related to WFC than general supervisor support and organizational support. In the same vein, Selvarajan *et al.* (2013) find that supervisory support was negatively related to FWC via WFC and that work–family-specific social support systems were negatively related to FWC via WFC.

Finally, a surprising and very interesting result is that family support does not have an indirect effect on job stress through FWC but it does through WFC. It appears that when the family emotionally supports the employee, this socioemotional resource may favor a reduction in WFC and employee stress. However, this type of support is not beneficial in diminishing FWC. The results of Selvarajan *et al.* (2013), however, show that spousal support was negatively related to WFC via FWC.

Conclusion

The present study proposed and tested a research model that investigated whether WFC and FWC acted as mediators of the impacts of workload, supervisor support, family support and organizational support for reconciling work and family on job stress. These relationships were assessed through data gathered from workers in the hospitality industry in Quebec (Canada). The findings indicate that our model fits the data and all hypotheses except *H6* (related to the indirect effect of family support on job stress via FWC) were validated. Specifically, a higher workload increases WFC and FWC, resulting in stress at work. Social support, both generic and specific to work and family, decreases WFC and FWC and in turn job stress. Organizational support for reconciling work and family life is more significant than generic supervisor support. Family support reduces WFC but not FWC and in turn job stress. Implementation of family-friendly practices and culture thus appear vital for employers in the hospitality industry to attract and retain employees and to obtain a better performance and high quality of service. Our results can help the management of hotels to determine the most effective social support in reducing WFC or FWC.

Theoretical implications

One of the main theoretical contributions of our research is the confirmation of the importance to differentiate the various types of social support (generic for overall wellbeing and specific for reconciling work and family). Our results show that this contributes to a better understanding of the “nomological net” of social support and WFC and therefore to build a better theory (Kossek *et al.*, 2011, p. 291). Indeed, this is an important result because previous studies have examined the relationships between work-domain social support such as supervisor support and WFC and family-domain social support such as spousal support and FWC (Amstad *et al.*, 2011; Michel *et al.*, 2011).

Another important contribution is the emphasis on cross-domain effects which we highlighted by examining the effects of social support on both WFC and FWC, as recommended by Michel *et al.* (2011). Our findings reveal that social support (generic and specific) is important in reducing both WFC and FWC and consequently the resulting stress. However, the effects of social support are more significant for WFC than FWC. This is a major contribution, as societal resources are scarce. According to Selvarajan *et al.* (2013, p. 488):

[...] it is important to examine if availability of resources in one domain may help to reduce conflict originating not just in the matching domain, but also conflict originating across the domain with consequential benefits for both domains.

In addition, this finding provides support for the concept of “resource caravan passageways” (Hobfoll, 2011, 2012, 2014) which focuses on the environmental conditions that may accelerate change in resources for better or for worse. In other words, these “passageways” can either lead to negative outcomes such as “professional exhaustion and psychological health problems or lead to positive outcomes such as achievement of objectives” and the “acquisition” of other resources (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2014). This is in accordance with COR theory: “resources do not occur separately but instead tend to aggregate and create and sustain one another” (Chen *et al.*, 2015, p. 98). Indeed, when employees receive social support at work, whether generic or specific support for the reconciliation of work and family, they can devote more time and energy

to their family, which reduces the WFC. Employees feel that organizations care for their welfare and their work–family balance.

Management implications

Hotel managers can use the findings of this study to reduce the negative effects of workload on WFC/FWC and job stress. We showed that socioemotional resources play a role of “passageways” which allow employees to gain more resources to fulfill their family obligations and help employees perceive less conflict between family and work, and benefit from a better well-being at work. The hotel environment has often been described as a “second family” for workers (Cleveland *et al.*, 2007); indeed, hotel managers and their spouses often mention the role of the director general in work and family reconciliation. Nearly half of the spouses (46 per cent) indicated that support from supervisors and management was very important.

The results of our research thus should alert employers in the hospitality industry to engage in family-friendly policies that include not only practices such as working

time arrangements (flextime, compressed workweek, voluntary part time), family leave, onsite child care services, assistance to employees at work and the like, but the management of the hotel should also be committed to create a family-friendly culture that includes organizational support to reconcile work and family. As mentioned

in the introduction, Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran (2006) noted that organizations that offer family-friendly policies without having a positive culture on this issue have a higher rate of turnover, reduced satisfaction at work and higher conflict between work and family (Behson, 2002; Flye *et al.*, 2003). In other words, it is not sufficient to offer family-friendly policies; the organization also has to make it possible for workers to use these policies by establishing a work–family culture in the organization.

Furthermore, our research informs managers on the most effective type of support (generic or specific) to reduce not only conflict in the work domain (Kossek *et al.*, 2011) but also in the family domain. Thus, hotels can improve quality of life of employees at work and at home by adopting the best types of supportive policies at work (Selvarajan *et al.*, 2013). Our results can help employees in understanding how to reallocate resources between work and family for better management of work and family life. The differential effect of family support as concerns WFC and FWC may also help families become aware of the fact that the family plays a vital role in reducing the conflict in the work and family domains. If the family or partner/spouse cannot “provide instrumental support in the work domain, any emotional support provided can facilitate employee well-being (e.g. better mood), which can spill over to the work domain” (Selvarajan *et al.*, 2013, p. 497).

Limitations and future research

There are several limitations related to this research and these constitute possible avenues for future research. While studying a specific industry can remove problems related to the effects of industry differences (Hartline and Ferrell, 1996), to generalize our results, it is necessary to examine other industries and other countries. Here, we only focused on the hospitality industry in Quebec. Several

demographic variables may also play a role in our model such as gender, marital status, number of children, work of the spouse, hotel category (number of stars) and the job category of the employee (management, supervision and service), and we will analyze these in future research, as these variables can surely differentiate groups. Combining family-friendly policies and culture in future studies would enhance the understanding of the mechanisms which can reduce conflict between work and family. Employing cross-cultural approaches in future research could also be useful, as culture plays an important role in perception of WFC and the type of social support provided. Another possibility would be to test the role of supervisor and family support as mediators between FWC/WFC and job stress, in the presence of high workload (or WFC), to determine if supervisor or family support reduces individuals job stress. Such a model could be tested in the future.

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