Research Article

Effective of Work-Life Balance, Work-Family Boundary Management Performance and Career Withdrawal Intention on Hotel Employee Service Performance in JiangSu Province, China

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Xingran Li[*] *and*
Parkorn Chobharn
Faculty of Business Administration (International Program),
Southeast Asia University

Abstract

As competition intensifies within China's hotel industry, frontline employees increasingly face challenges related to work-life conflict. This study aims to develop and test a theoretical model that examines the effects of work-life balance (WLB), work-family boundary management (WFBM), and career withdrawal intention (CWI) on service performance, with work engagement (WE) serving as a mediating variable. A mixed-methods approach was employed, including literature review, interviews, and a questionnaire survey conducted with 412 frontline hotel employees in Jiangsu Province. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to analyze the data. Key findings reveal that WLB significantly improves both work engagement and service performance, while CWI negatively impacts both outcomes. WFBM has a negative effect on work engagement but no significant direct effect on service performance. Notably, work engagement mediates the relationship between WLB and CWI with service performance, but not between WFBM and service performance. These results emphasize the critical role of psychological engagement as a pathway linking work-life conditions to employee performance. Practically, the study offers actionable insights for hotel managers to enhance employee performance by promoting flexible work arrangements, developing engagement-focused HR practices, and identifying early signs of withdrawal intention to improve staff retention and service quality in the hospitality sector.

Keywords: Work-Life Balance, Work-Family Boundary Management Preferences, Career Withdrawal Intentions, Work Engagement, Service Performance

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* Corresponding Author: napapornk@sau.ac.th

Introduction

In recent years, China's hotel industry has undergone rapid transformation, driven by urban expansion, rising domestic tourism, and the growing presence of global hospitality brands (Zhang & Zhu, 2020). These changes have intensified market competition, forcing hotel operators to prioritize service quality and operational efficiency. As the industry continues to evolve, frontline employees-those who directly interact with customers-have become central to delivering exceptional service. However, they also face increasing job-related pressures such as long working hours, emotional labor, and irregular schedules, which often lead to work-family conflict and psychological strain (Karatepe & Uludag, 2008; Wong & Ko, 2009).

Work-life balance (WLB), work-family boundary management (WFBM), and career withdrawal intention (CWI) are three psychological and behavioral constructs that have attracted scholarly interest in recent years, especially in high-pressure service industries. WLB is generally associated with positive outcomes such as improved job satisfaction and employee retention (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011), while poor WFBM has been linked to stress, disengagement, and diminished productivity (Bulger, Matthews, & Hoffman, 2007). CWI, which reflects an employee's intention to leave their profession altogether rather than merely changing employers, has also emerged as a critical predictor of employee disengagement and poor performance in hospitality settings (Kim, Im, & Hwang, 2015).

Although prior studies have examined the individual effects of these variables, there is limited empirical research that integrates all three into a single model to assess their combined impact on service performance (Deery, 2008; Kaliannan, Ayub, & Ashari, 2016). Furthermore, the mediating role of work engagement a state of psychological investment characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker, 2002) - has been acknowledged in the literature but remains underexplored as a mechanism linking these variables to performance outcomes in hospitality contexts (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Without such integration, current models fall short of capturing the complex interplay between personal resources, boundary preferences, career intention, and service behavior.

To address this research gap, the present study proposes a conceptual model that examines the effects of WLB, WFBM, and CWI on the service performance of frontline hotel employees, with work engagement as a mediating variable. This model is grounded in Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989), which posits that individuals strive to conserve and invest personal resources, and Boundary theory (Clark, 2000), which explains how individuals manage competing work and family roles. Both frameworks offer theoretical support for the examination of resource-based strain and behavioral outcomes in service environments.

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How do work-life balance, work-family boundary management, and career withdrawal intention affect the service performance of frontline hotel employees?

2. What are the underlying path mechanisms through which these variables influence service performance via work engagement?

Accordingly, the objective of this study is to empirically test a conceptual model using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), which links work-life balance, work-family boundary management, and career withdrawal intention to service performance, with work engagement acting as a mediating variable. The results are expected to contribute to both theory and practice by clarifying how psychological and organizational factors interact to influence service quality in the hospitality sector.

Research Objectives

The purpose of this study is to construct a theoretical model to explore the effects of work-life balance, work-family boundary management effects, and career exit willingness of frontline employees on their service performance and their path mechanisms, and to empirically test the theoretical model based on a large sample of questionnaire data.

The main questions examined in this study are:

1. The Effect of Work-Life Balance, Work-Family Boundary Management effects, and Career Withdrawal Intentions affect Employee Service Performance

2. To Investigation the path mechanisms through which Work-Life Balance, Work-Family Boundary Management effects, and Career Withdrawal Intentions affect Employee Service Performance

Expected benefits from the research

This research is expected to yield both theoretical and practical contributions in the context of human resource management and organizational behavior within the hospitality industry, particularly in relation to employee well-being and service performance.

1. Theoretical Contributions

This study enriches the academic literature on work-life balance, work-family boundary management, and career withdrawal intention by integrating these constructs into a single theoretical framework and examining their direct and indirect effects on service performance through work engagement.It extends the application of Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory (Hobfoll, 1989) and Boundary Theory (Clark, 2000) by providing empirical evidence on how psychological resources and boundary preferences influence frontline service employees' engagement and performance in the hospitality sector.The findings offer a nuanced understanding of the mediating role of work engagement, which has been underexplored in existing models, thereby contributing to the refinement of existing engagement-performance frameworks.

2. Practical Contributions

1) The research provides hotel managers and HR practitioners with evidence-based insights on how to enhance employee service performance through targeted interventions such as work-life support policies, flexible scheduling, and boundary management training.

2) By identifying the negative effects of poor boundary management and high career withdrawal intention, the study highlights the importance of organizational strategies that foster retention and minimize burnout, especially in high-pressure customer service roles.

3) The results can guide the development of employee engagement programs, helping hotel organizations cultivate a more motivated, committed, and service-oriented workforce.

4) Ultimately, the findings may assist hospitality businesses in reducing turnover, Improving, improving advantage through improved service quality.

Literature Review

1. Theoretical Background

Conservation of Resources Theory (COR Theory)

Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, developed by Hobfoll (1989), posits that individuals strive to acquire, retain, and protect valuable resources such as time, energy, and emotional support. When these resources are threatened or lost, stress arises, leading to diminished well-being and work outcomes. In the hospitality industry, where employees often face intense work demands and role conflict, the depletion of personal resources can result in reduced work engagement and service performance (Hobfoll, 1989; Zhao, 2018). COR theory provides a robust framework for understanding how work-life balance and career withdrawal intention affect service outcomes by influencing the availability of psychological and emotional resources.

Boundary Theory

Boundary Theory explains how individuals manage the boundaries between work and personal life (Clark, 2000). It distinguishes between integration and segmentation preferences-where some individuals prefer clear separation between domains, while others allow fluid transitions. Poorly managed boundaries can lead to inter-role conflict and emotional strain, impacting job performance and engagement (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000; Kreiner, 2006). This theory is essential in understanding the effects of work-family boundary management on frontline hotel employees' ability to maintain focus and deliver high service quality.

2. Review of Related Literature

1. Work-Life Balance and Work Engagement Service Performance

Work-life balance (WLB) has been widely linked to enhanced job satisfaction, lower burnout, and greater employee engagement in service industries (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). In the hospitality context, Deery (2008) found that WLB initiatives contributed to higher employee

retention and improved service quality. Furthermore, Wong and Ko (2009) showed that hotel staff with higher perceived WLB were more emotionally engaged and displayed proactive customer service behavior. These studies support the notion that WLB positively influences both work engagement (WE) and service performance (SP).

H1: Work-life balance positively affects employees' work engagement.

H2: Work-life balance positively affects employees' service performance.

2. Work-Family Boundary Management and Work Engagement Service Performance

Boundary theory suggests that individuals manage work and family roles through integration or segmentation (Clark, 2000). However, when the boundary management approach does not align with job demands, employees experience strain and disengagement (Kreiner, 2006). Empirical research by Bulger et al. (2007) showed that misaligned boundary preferences reduce psychological involvement at work. However, the relationship with service performance remains ambiguous; Liao and Chuang (2004) suggest that frontline performance may not decline immediately due to structured job expectations. Therefore, WFBM may negatively affect WE but have an unclear effect on SP.

H3: Work-family boundary management negatively affects employees' work engagement.

H4: Work-family boundary management does not significantly affect employees' service performance.

3. Career Withdrawal Intention and Work Engagement / Service Performance

Career withdrawal intention (CWI) reflects an individual's psychological detachment from their profession. Kim et al. (2015) found that high CWI among hotel staff predicted emotional exhaustion and disengagement. Similarly, Carless and Arnup (2011) noted that employees intending to exit their careers showed reduced performance and lower motivation. These studies empirically support the negative influence of CWI on both WE and SP.

H5: Career withdrawal intention negatively affects employees' work engagement. H6 Career withdrawal intention negatively affects employees' service performance.

4. Work Engagement and Service Performance

Work engagement, a construct characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption, is positively associated with service-oriented outcomes (Schaufeli et al., 2002). In a hospitality study, Karatepe (2013) confirmed that work engagement significantly predicted service performance metrics such as responsiveness and customer satisfaction. These results suggest that WE is a key predictor of frontline effectiveness.

H7: Work engagement positively affects employees' service performance**.**

5. Mediation Role of Work Engagement

The mediating role of work engagement is supported by the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, which suggests that personal resources (e.g., WLB) and stressors (e.g., CWI)

influence performance through engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). In hotel settings, Salanova, Agut and Peiró (2005) found that engaged employees translate internal motivation into better customer service, acting as a bridge between psychological state and behavior.

H8: Work engagement mediates the relationship between work-life balance and employees' service performance.

H9: Work engagement mediates the relationship between work-family boundary management and employees' service performance.

H10: Work engagement mediates the relationship between career withdrawal intention and employees' service performance.

Research framework

Based on the above analyses, this study explores the mechanisms by which Work-Life Balance, Work-Family Boundary Management Preferences, and Career Withdrawal Intentions affect the service performance of front-line employees in hotels based on resource conservation theory and boundary theory, and further explores the relationship between the three by introducing Work Engagement as a mediating variable.

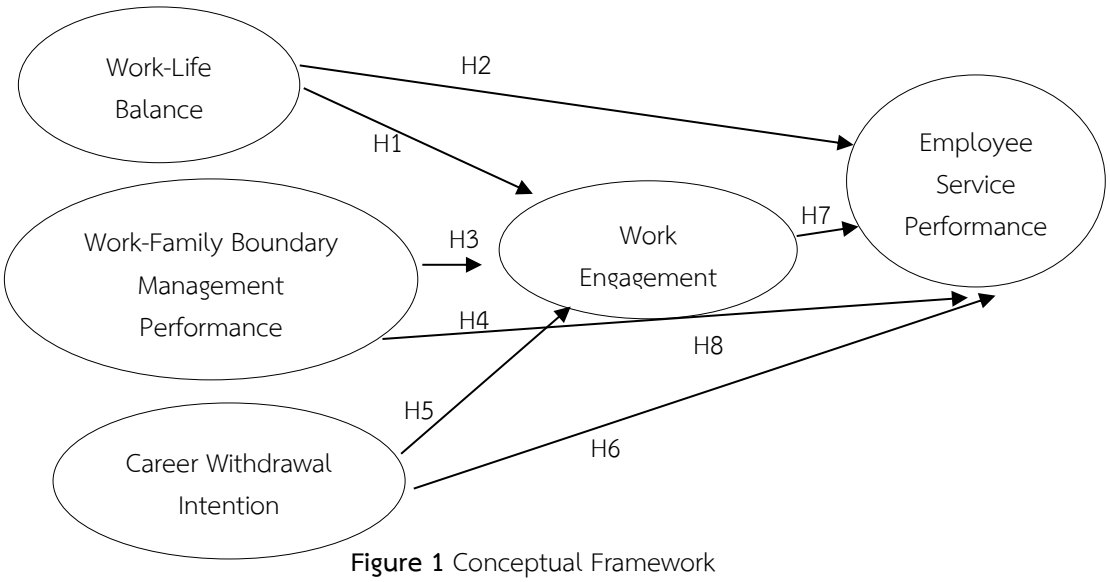

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Hypothesis

H1: Work-Life Balance positively affects employees' Work Engagement

H2: Work-Life Balance positively affects employees' service performance.

H3: Work-Family Boundary Management effect negatively affects employees' Work Engagement

H4: Work-Family Boundary Management Effect positively affects employees' service performance

H5: Career Withdrawal Intentions negatively affects employees' Work Engagement

H6: Career Withdrawal Intentions negatively affects employees' service performance

H7: Work Engagement positively affects employees' service performance

H8: Work Engagement mediates the relationship between Work-Life Balance and employees' service performance

H9: Work Engagement mediates between Work-Family Boundary Management effects and employees' service performance

H10: Work Engagement mediates the relationship between Career Withdrawal Intentions and employees' service performance

Research method

This study employed a quantitative research design to examine the effects of work-life balance (WLB), work-family boundary management (WFBM), and career withdrawal intention (CWI) on service performance (SP), with work engagement (WE) as a mediating variable.

Population and Sample

The target population consisted of frontline hotel employees working in three- to five-star hotels in Jiangsu Province, China. A stratified random sampling method was employed to ensure representation across hotel categories and geographic locations. According to Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson (2010), the recommended sample size for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is at least 10–20 times the number of observed variables. With 30 observed variables in the proposed model, a minimum of 300 respondents was required. In total, 500 questionnaires were distributed, and 412 valid responses were retained for analysis.

Research Instruments

structured questionnaire was developed to collect data for this study, comprising six major sections. The first section focused on demographic information, which included six items capturing respondents' age, gender, education level, job position, years of experience, and hotel rating.

The second section measured **Work-Life Balance (WLB)** using five items adapted from Brough, Timms, O'Driscoll, Kalliath, Siu, Sit, and Lo (2014). An example item is "I am able to balance the demands of my work and personal life." The internal consistency of this scale, as indicated by Cronbach's alpha, was 0.84.

The third section assessed **Work-Family Boundary Management (WFBM)** through six items adapted from Kreiner (2006). A representative item from this construct is "I maintain clear boundaries between my job and home life." This scale demonstrated acceptable reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.81.

Career Withdrawal Intention (CWI) was evaluated in the fourth section using four items derived from the scale developed by Kim et al. (2015). An example item is "I often think about leaving the hospitality industry." The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this construct was 0.85, indicating strong internal consistency.

The fifth section measured **Work Engagement (WE)**, consisting of nine items based on the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) developed by Schaufeli et al. (2002). An example item is "I am enthusiastic about my job." The reliability coefficient for this scale was found to be 0.89.

Finally, **Service Performance (SP)** was assessed using five items adapted from Liao and Chuang (2004). An illustrative item is "I provide prompt service to customers." This scale achieved a Cronbach's alpha of 0.86, confirming its reliability.

All items across the scales were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), ensuring consistency in response measurement.

All items were rated on a **5-point Likert scale** ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS 26.0 and AMOS 26.0. Analyses included descriptive statistics, reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha), correlation coefficients, and structural equation modeling (SEM). Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) were not conducted and are therefore not reported in this study.

Research Results

1. Demographic Profile

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the 412 respondents. The majority were female (56%), aged between 26–35 years (48.3%), and had 1–5 years of work experience in the hotel industry (62.1%).

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n = 412)

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage%
Gender		
- Male	181	44.0
- Female	231	56.0
Age		
- Below 25	76	18.4
- 26–35	199	48.3
- 36–45	95	23.1
- Over 45	42	10.2
Years of Experience		
- Less than 1 year	38	9.2

Table 1 (continued).

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage%
- 1–5 years	256	62.1
- Over 5 years	118	28.6

2. Reliability Analysis

Table 2 shows the internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) of all scales. Each value exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978), indicating acceptable to high reliability.

Table 2 Reliability Statistics

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Work-Life Balance (WLB)	5	0.84
Work-Family Boundary Mgt.	6	0.81
Career Withdrawal Intention	4	0.85
Work Engagement (WE)	9	0.89
Service Performance (SP)	5	0.86

3. Correlation Analysis

Table 3 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients among the study's main variables. The results show significant and theoretically consistent relationships. For example, work-life balance positively correlates with both work engagement and service performance, while career withdrawal intention negatively correlates with both.

Table 3 Correlation Matrix

Variable	WLB	WFBM	CWI	WE	SP
WLB	1				
WFBM	.35**	1			
CWI	-.28**	-.21**	1		
WE	.52**	-.19*	-.44**	1	
SP	.49**	-.09	-.45**	.51**	1

*p < .05, **p < .01

Pearson correlation coefficients showed: Work-life balance positively correlated with work engagement (r=0.52, p<0.01)

Career withdrawal intention negatively correlated with service performance (r=–0.45, p<0.01)

Work-family boundary management had a weak correlation with service performance (r=0.09, p>0.05)

4. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

In this study, the fit was assessed through structural equation modeling and the results showed that the model fit well. Specifically, the chi-square value (χ^2) was220.331, the degree of freedom (DF) was 179, and the ratio of chi-square to degree of freedom (χ^2/DF) was 1.231, which is lower than the recommended criterion of 2.0 or 3.0, indicating that the model fit was good. Other fit indices also met the common criteria: the GFI was 0.958, the AGFI was 0.946, the NFI was 0.971, the IFI was 0.994, the TLI was 0.993, and the CFI was 0.994, all of which were greater than the thresholds of 0.90 and 0.95, showing a good fit of the model.The RMSEA value of0.022 was much lower than the ideal value of 0.05. further validates the excellent fit of the model. Taken together, the structural model has a good fit and meets all the criteria for structural equation modeling analysis.

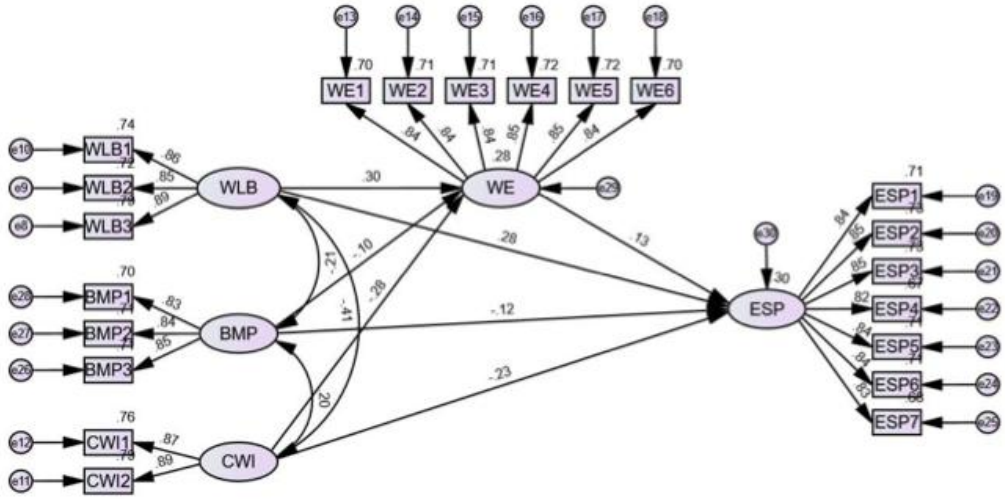

Figure 2 Structural equation model-model fit

Table 2 Results of structural models

Model Fit Testing									
X^2	DF	X^2/DF	GFI	AGFI	NFI	IFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
220.331	179	1.231	0.958	0.946	0.971	0.994	0.993	0.994	0.02

Structural Equation Model-path analysis

In this study, path analysis was performed using AMOS to test the significance of the path relationships. The results of the path analysis showed that WLB had a positive and significant effect on WE with a path coefficient of 0.301 (p<0.001), and hypothesis H1 was established.BMP had a negative and significant effect on WE with a path coefficient of -0.104 (p=0.025), and hypothesis H3

was established.CWI had a negative and significant effect on WE with a path coefficient of -0.282 (p<0.001), and hypothesis H5 holds.

In the analysis of the effect of ESP, BMP had a negative and significant effect on ESP with a path coefficient of -0.118 (P=0.01), and hypothesis H4 was not established.CWI had a negative and significant effect on ESP with a path coefficient of -0.229 (P<0.001), and hypothesis H6 was established.WLB had a positive and significant effect on ESP with a path coefficient of 0.28 (P<0.001), hypothesis H2 holds.WE has a positive and significant effect on ESP with a path coefficient of 0.128 (p=0.012), hypothesis H7 holds.

These results indicate that the relationships between the paths in the model are mostly as expected and the significance of the path coefficients support the research hypotheses.

Table 3 Results of the pathway relationship analysis of each variable

Path Analysis Results					
Path	**Std**	**Ustd**	**S.E.**	**C.R.**	**P**
WLB -> WE	0.301	0.285	0.049	5.872	***
BMP -> WE	-0.104	-0.103	0.046	-2.246	0.025
CWI -> WE	-0.282	-0.257	0.048	-5.383	***
BMP -> ESP	-0.118	-0.113	0.043	-2.589	0.01
CWI -> ESP	-0.229	-0.201	0.047	-4.311	***
WLB -> ESP	0.28	0.255	0.048	5.344	***
WE -> ESP	0.128	0.123	0.049	2.506	0.012

*=p <0.05,**=p<0.01,***p=<0.001

Structural equation model-Mediation Effect Analysis

The Bootstrap mediated effects analysis of this study showed that all mediating paths in the model were significant.The indirect effect estimate of WLB on ESP via WE was 0.039 with 95% confidence intervals of [0.006, 0.079] (BootCI) and [0.006,0.008] (Percentile), and the confidence intervals for both methods did not contain zeros, and the p-value was significant (p=0.008), indicating that this mediating effect was significant.The estimated indirect effect of BMP on ESP via WE was-0.013, with 95% confidence intervals of [-0.034, -0.002] (BootCI) and [-0.031,-0.001] (Percentile), which again did not contain zeros, and the p-value was significant (p=0.033), validating the significance of this mediating effect.The estimated indirect effect of CWI on ESP via WE was -0.036 with 95% confidence intervals of [-0.069, -0.009] (BootCI) and [-0.069, -0.008] (Percentile), which did not contain zeros and had a significant P-value (p=0.008), suggesting that the mediating path holds significantly and hypothesis H8 holds.

Table 4 Results of the mediation effect analysis

Path	Estimates	S.E.	Bootstrap Mediation Effect					
			Bias			Percentile		
			Lower	Upper	P	Lower	Upper	P
WLB ->WE ->ESP	0.039	0.018	0.009	0.079	0.006	0.008	0.077	0.008
BMP ->WE ->ESP	-0.013	0.008	-0.034	-0.002	0.016	-0.031	-0.001	0.033
CWI ->WE ->ESP	-0.036	0.016	-0.07	-0.009	0.006	-0.069	-0.008	0.008

The above results show that work-life balance, work-family boundary management effect and career Withdrawal Intentionsall play a significant mediating role in the effect on service performance through work input, while work input also plays a significant mediating role in the effect of work-life balance, work-family boundary management effect and career Withdrawal Intentions on service performance, which provides empirical evidence for the theoretical hypotheses of the research model Support.

Conclusion

Qualitative Analysis Result

In this study, 55 hotels above the star level in Jiangsu Province were selected as the research object, and each star-level hotel selected 5 supervisors and 10 front-line service employees, including the front office, guest rooms, food and beverage, sales, security and other departments, i.e., 275 departmental supervisors and 550 front-line service employees were researched and investigated.

Before the formal research, in order to ensure the efficiency and quality of the research, interviews and pre-surveys were conducted first. The researchers conducted interviews with frontline employees of five hotel companies under the theme of “Improving the imbalance between work and life”. Through organizing the interviews, it was found that hotel service employees often encountered pressure from work and family, were unable to balance work and family activities, and were

Physically and mentally exhausted, which made them unable to complete their service work with high quality, and had low confidence and even confusion about their career prospects in this industry. The interview results further support the rationality of the model design of this study.

Conclusion

This research explored the effects of Work-Life Balance (WLB), Work-Family Boundary Management (WFBM), and Career Withdrawal Intention (CWI) on Service Performance (SP) of frontline hotel employees in Jiangsu Province, China, with Work Engagement (WE) as a mediating variable. The model was tested using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), and the results contribute to both theoretical development and practical strategies in the field of human resource management and service operations in hospitality.

1. Work-life balance (WLB) plays a foundational role in enhancing frontline service performance. The study confirms that employees who experience greater balance between their work and personal life are significantly more engaged and, in turn, deliver higher service performance. This implies that WLB is not merely a "welfare" concept but a strategic performance enhancer in service-oriented industries.

2. Work-family boundary management (WFBM) has a more nuanced effect. It significantly affects work engagement negatively, suggesting that boundary conflict consumes psychological energy needed for work involvement. However, it does not directly influence service performance. This might indicate that employees maintain their observable task performance even when internally strained-potentially due to role expectations or fear of disciplinary actions.

3. Career withdrawal intention (CWI) emerged as a critical psychological barrier to both engagement and performance. Employees who are mentally detaching from their careers display reduced commitment and diminished service delivery. This underlines the importance of understanding not just turnover behavior but turnover intention, which often manifests through reduced productivity before actual resignation occurs.

4. Work engagement (WE) is the central mechanism through which personal and contextual factors influence service quality. Employees who are emotionally and cognitively invested in their roles are more likely to exceed customer expectations and sustain high service standards. This finding supports prior research and reinforces engagement as a key organizational asset.

5. The mediating role of work engagement highlights that improving employee experience (through WLB) or minimizing psychological withdrawal (through CWI interventions) must focus not only on reducing stress but also on amplifying engagement to yield real performance gains. Notably, engagement mediates between WLB and SP, and between CWI and SP, but not significantly between WFBM and SP.

Discussion

The findings of this study offer important insights into the psychological mechanisms influencing service performance among frontline hotel employees. Specifically, work-life balance (WLB) was found to have a significant positive effect on both work engagement (WE) and service

performance (SP), reinforcing the view that employees who perceive balance between their personal and professional lives are more psychologically invested and productive at work. This supports the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989), which posits that when individuals conserve and replenish their psychological resources, they are better positioned to engage in demanding work roles.

Work-family boundary management (WFBM) also showed a statistically significant, though negative, relationship with work engagement. This indicates that employees who struggle to manage the interface between work and home - especially those with rigid segmentation preferences-may find it harder to maintain emotional and cognitive energy for their roles. Interestingly, although WFBM did not directly impact service performance in this model, its indirect effect via WE was significant, suggesting that boundary stress influences performance outcomes through diminished engagement.

Career withdrawal intention (CWI) had a strong negative effect on both WE and SP. Employees who mentally disengage from their profession are less likely to invest effort in their work and more likely to reduce service quality, customer interaction, and productivity. This finding aligns with prior studies emphasizing the importance of retaining psychological commitment, especially in customer-facing roles (Kim et al., 2015).

Importantly, the mediating role of work engagement was confirmed across all three antecedents-WLB, WFBM, and CWI-demonstrating that engagement acts as a bridge between internal psychological conditions and observable work behaviors. The structural model thus provides empirical support for the argument that employee experience and internal motivation significantly shape frontline service outcomes. The theoretical contribution of this study lies in its integration of COR theory and Boundary theory within a hospitality-specific model, extending the existing literature by revealing the mediating function of work engagement in a high-pressure service context.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, several practical recommendations can be proposed to enhance employee well-being, engagement, and service performance in the hospitality industry.

First, hotel organizations should prioritize the promotion of work-life balance through flexible work arrangements. This may include shift-swapping systems, predictable scheduling, or hybrid policies where appropriate. Managers should be trained to recognize signs of work-life imbalance and to offer support that enables employees to manage competing personal and professional demands. These efforts are likely to yield improvements in both engagement and performance.

Second, human resources departments should offer targeted training on work-family boundary management. Employees can benefit from understanding whether they are “segmenters” or

"integrators" and learning strategies that align with their preferences. Supervisors should be educated on how to accommodate diverse boundary styles without compromising organizational standards. This can help reduce internal stress and protect against engagement loss.

Third, it is vital to monitor and address career withdrawal intention early. Organizations should implement "stay interviews," regular well-being check-ins, or anonymous feedback systems to detect psychological withdrawal before it manifests in turnover or poor performance. Offering clear career development pathways and mentoring programs can reinvigorate employees' sense of long-term professional purpose.

Lastly, engagement should be embedded as a core organizational metric, not merely an HR issue. Designing work environments that support autonomy, purpose, and recognition will strengthen emotional investment in work and contribute to sustainable service quality.

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