

A Study of the Remote Work-Family Balance of Female Hotel Managers

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Abstract

This study explores the effect of remote work engagement (RWE) and fair pay on female hotel managers' work-family balance (WFB). Additionally, it investigates the mediating effect of their emotional exhaustion on RWE and WFB. Although several studies have been published during the COVID-19 crisis period that investigate WFB, only a few have reported on how RWE influences WFB. Therefore, this study addresses this gap. It uses structured questionnaires to collect data from 400 female hotel managers (five-star hotels). These data are analysed using structure equation modelling (SEM): Smart-PLS is applied to examine the relationship between the independent and dependent factors – 'vigour', 'absorption', 'dedication', 'fairness of pay', and 'work-family balance'. This study finds that RWE significantly impacts female hotel managers' WFB. Furthermore, RWE affects their emotional fatigue and has a little effect on their WFB. Additionally, RWE is not mediated by WFB, while gender pay parity influences WFB. Remote working renders female workers more absorbed in their work, thus increasing the incidence of burnout among them due to interference with their WFB. Especially in a country like India, where females play a more prominent role domestically, hotel managers must ensure that human resource practices strategically secure the effective WFB of female hotel managers, e.g. by incorporating flexible working hours, a five-day work policy, and coaching on remote work practices. These findings can assist hospitality organisations in devising effective RWE strategies that maintain female hotel managers' WFB, ultimately ensuring positive financial implications for them.

Keywords: remote work engagement; work-family balance; emotional exhaustion; smartpls; pandemic; employee experience; female managers

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic led to multiple catastrophes in the global hospitality sector, owing to the cancellations of flights, hotel bookings, conferences, and other travel-based events. The pandemic-induced slowdown in business, the subsequent salary deductions, and the attendant employee layoffs severely affected the resilience of this sector. In light of the pandemic-induced social distancing measures, switching to an online working mode resulted in employees facing new work-related challenges: isolation, social rejection, and condensed well-being (Chi & Gursoy, 2020; Hervie et al., 2022). Furthermore, coordinating, monitoring, and controlling the workflow intensified the complexity of the managers' roles during the lockdown, necessitating further research on effective human resource management policies in line with the new work conditions in the global hospitality sector. In summary, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the work-family balance (WFB) of employees as they had to switch to online modes of work (Njuga et al., 2021). The collateral damage caused by remote working



introduced disparities in gender pay, stress, insecurity regarding one's job, and other looming uncertainties, in turn forcing organisations to launch special initiatives for employee well-being (Shukla, 2020; Zhang, 2012).

Like many other sectors, the global hotel industry also had to switch to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic in order to ensure employee safety (Banerjee & Pati, 2020; Chi et al., 2021). However, despite this industry addressing the attendant challenges to employee safety through remote work engagement (RWE), over 90% of female managers in the industry faced several work-related issues. These issues included work-life imbalance, reduced salaries, and a widening gender pay gap (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2020). Furthermore, remote working was found to have several undesirable implications for employees, especially female managers, in the form of additional workload, reduced performance, and layoffs. In India, up to 83% of female employees were left unemployed during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, even as the nation's female workforce reportedly accounted for only 10.7% of its total workforce at the time (Mahesh, 2022). A concomitant Government of India survey also highlighted the high number of job losses among female employees (1.8 times more than the job losses among their male counterparts) resulting in financial setbacks and emotional stress for their families during this period (Gumbel, 2020). While income inequality existed between male and female employees across geographies even before the pandemic, it demotivated female employees to a greater extent during the pandemic (Abdou et al., 2022).

Lister (2020) focused on how the COVID-19 pandemic increased the demand for 'work from home' due to work restrictions, based on which hospitality companies encouraged managers to work remotely in order to ensure reductions in operating expenses (Chi et al., 2021). In this vein, it was also speculated that up to 50% of hospitality managers would perform their jobs remotely in the future (Gursoy, 2020). However, the adoption of remote work by frontline employees remained riddled with challenges. For example, Ma et al., (2021) explained how remote working ushered several complications and disturbances in WFB and caused incredible emotional exhaustion (EEX). Similarly, RWE and work behaviour were jointly investigated in several other studies that considered EEX as a mediator (Chen, 2020). However, the mediating roles of RWE and WFB remained unexplored in terms of their nuances.

Therefore, this study investigates the role of emotional exhaustion in female hotel managers who intended to have higher earnings while simultaneously maintaining their WFB during the COVID-19 pandemic. It addresses the abovementioned gap generated by the limited amount of studies on RWE and WFB in the hospitality industry. Hence, it points to the necessity of studying variables such as RWE, fairness in pay, EEX, and WFB, all of which affect female employees, especially during times of uncertainty like the COVID-19 crisis, and force organisations to operate virtually. Considering the preceding discussion, this study has the following objectives:

1. Investigate the relationship between RWE and WFB among female hotel managers, using EEX as a mediator.
2. Establish a relationship between fair pay and WFB among female hotel managers.

Literature review and hypothesis development

This study applies conflict theory to comprehend working women's experiences of maintaining WFB, based on the argument that the non-fulfilment of professional and personal requirements generates conflict in one's life (Das, 2020). Additionally, it uses social role theory to understand female managers' roles in their professional and family spheres. Introduced by

Eagly (1987), who pointed to the emergence of specific social roles owing of the gendered division of labour, social role theory stipulates that the significant presence of females in leadership and managerial positions transforms the way in which female managers are expected to work (Lekchiri & Eversole, 2021; Schultheiss, 2021). In higher-positioned job roles, male managers receive higher salaries than their female counterparts, as the latter represent clusters of roles: e.g. mother, wife, employee, or manager (Skalpe, 2007). Further, when a female manager works remotely, such clusters of role/behaviour exert role pressure and create conflict. During remote work, child rearing, family responsibilities, and various assigned tasks together generate role ambiguity, competition, and mixed signals regarding which task to prioritise (Adisa et al., 2021). In this context, those hospitality companies that emphasise the alignment of their female managers’ roles with company strategy are more likely to achieve positive results (Shukla, 2020).

Social role theory emphasises the allocation of tasks based on gender. Traditionally, high-visibility tasks would be allocated to male managers, whereas low-priority tasks would be given to female managers, leading to unevenness of pay between the two genders (Karim, 2021). Today, scholars emphasise that fair pay instils positive emotions in employees (Ezzedeen & Ritchey, 2009) and is a vital indicator of a healthy workplace (Hegtvedt & Killian, 1999). According to Kahn’s theory, all employees should be regarded as organisational partners who continuously engage in dialogue and decide on procedures regarding the formulation or revision of job roles, tasks, and work relationships. On their part, leaders must foster an environment in which employees can freely discuss their work experiences (Blau et al., 2007). Furthermore, Kahn argues that employees should be engaged with and treated humanely so that organisations can extract meaningful work and also maintain a remote WFB (Duffy, 2018). The conceptual framework is explained in detail in Figure 1. (High Resolution Image)

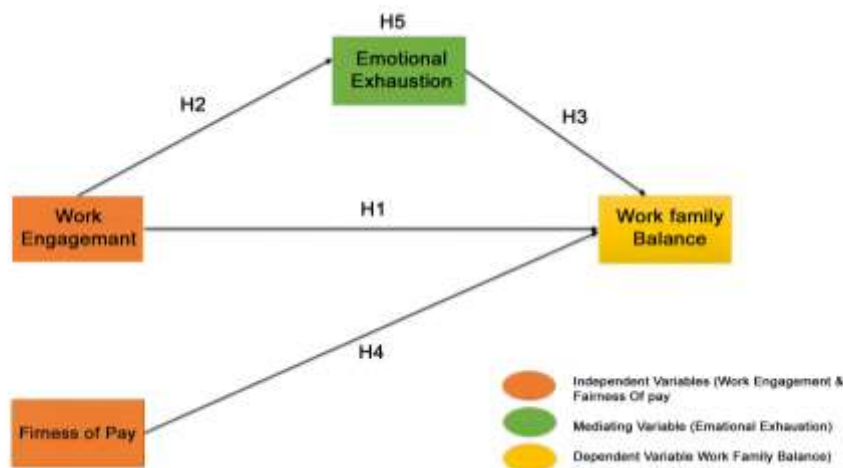


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Remote work engagement

Even though the term ‘remote work engagement’ (RWE) was being used since the 1970s, alternate words/phrases like ‘telework’, ‘remote work,’ ‘e-work’, ‘virtual work’, and ‘remote e-working’ evolved more recently to define any predetermined employee tasks carried out outside the office or in other locations, including apartments, hotels, or even resorts (Charalampous et al., 2019; Giurge & Bohns, 2020; GURSOY, 2020). Importantly, as the large-scale devastation of industrial sectors at a global level during the COVID-19 pandemic led 59 nations to adopt remote working practices (International Labour Organisation, 2020), large-



scale switching to online work during the pandemic was extensively examined by researchers across the world based on its significance for firms.

One must keep in mind that employee engagement is an emotional, physical, and psychological involvement that increases enthusiasm, dedication, and reliability among employees (Gupta & Sharma, 2018). In this light, post the COVID-19 pandemic, the evidence in favour of RWE has burgeoned owing to its positive impact on increasing productivity and promoting employee career advancement. For working mothers who have the additional responsibility of raising their children while simultaneously ensuring progress in their careers, RWE emerges as a good option regarding the mode of work. Further, remote work can also bring benefits for male employees by allowing more family time, which is impossible in the case of traditional on-site work (Abdou et al., 2022 & Eviana et al., 2022).

Remote work engagement (RWE) and work-family balance (WFB)

Some academics suggest that women have to work on multiple fronts, including domestic ones such as childcare, cooking, and housecleaning, which usher in challenges regarding their the advancement of their professional careers (Patwardhan et al., 2017). However, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, remote work is found to complicate the maintenance of WFB owing to the possibilities of family interference, worry, stress, inability to set boundaries, and workplace adjustments (Hickman & Saad, 2020). At the same time, other scholars suggest that although RWE positively impacts family relationships, it also intensifies the obstacles to overcoming the challenges of time and commitment (Park & Gursoy, 2012). In this regard, it is argued that a healthy work environment promotes RWE: small gestures like ‘positive gossip’ and warm, cordial relationships among employees positively influence work engagement to a great extent (Ugwu et al., 2021). Furthermore, Vakira et al. (2022) demonstrate how inclusive leadership, whereby leaders are emotionally well-connected with employees, positively influences RWE. The abrupt changes necessitating remote work reportedly persuade employees to expose their home and family lives to office work, thereby reducing both work and domestic privacies (Carli, 2020). Remote workers, especially women, struggle to discern between their personal and professional lives when they are expected to additionally manage their children’s online education and also perform household duties, a condition which forces them to limit their working hours or even quit their jobs (Collins et al., 2020; Giurge & Bohns, 2020).

In this context, one must consider the statement by Halpern et al. (2013) who define WFB as the equal dedication to one’s job and family. Adisa et al. (2021) add that balancing one’s work and home lives can boost job satisfaction. However, many scholars note that in the COVID-19 scenario, female managers in the hospitality industry struggled to balance their work and family lives as the pandemic decimated the hospitality industry by incurring massive layoffs, compensation cuts, and work-from-home policies (Carli, 2020; Glenza, 2020; Greenbaum, 2020). Furthermore, others state that remote work may induce emotional stress and career imbalances (Gigauri, 2020), as employees may not be able to separate their work-related commitments from their domestic responsibilities – a challenge that is more prominent among female executives with small children who have to endure many additional challenges (Collins et al., 2021). According to the above discussion, this study established the following hypotheses:

- H1. Remote Work Engagement has a significant impact on Work-Family Balance.*
- H2. Remote Work Engagement significantly impacts emotional exhaustion.*
- H3. Emotional exhaustion significantly impacts Work Family Balance.*

Fairness of pay and work-family balance



Fair pay refers to equal remuneration for similar experience, qualifications, and work requirements. 'The right to pay' also refers to salary parity in an organisation. Moreover, an 'equitable salary structure' guarantees fair wages based on explicit expectations (Connor, 2019). Further, fair compensation is proportional to an individual's efforts on her/his job (Creelman, 2020). On the other hand, according to Parlak et al. (2021), a work-family imbalance is caused by decreased remuneration and increased domestic responsibilities. In addition, remote work and pay disparities impede female hotel managers' WFB (Collins et al., 2020); for instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, female managers working in remote conditions reportedly earned 18% less than their male counterparts (Forbes, 2021). While WFB can evidently affect the career advancement of female managers and is linked to the closing of the gender-based pay gap, for the hospitality industry – which requires employees to work for various spans of time (morning, afternoon, and night) – maintaining a robust WFB is more challenging, especially for the female managers in the industry (Banerjee & Pati, 2020).

Further, fair pay and WFB are correlated, especially among hotel employees (Bloom et al., 2015). Thus, unfair pay has psychological implications, especially for female managers, such as 'burnout' and 'work-family imbalance', in turn leading to lower lifetime wages and emotional tiredness (Milliken et al., 2020). On its part, remote work exacerbates the WFB-related emotional tiredness among employees. For instance, unengaged employees afflicted by work-life imbalances report more health-related complications and poorer work performance than engaged employees (OECD, 2020). Still, the hybrid work mode does offer an economic advantage to employees as it compensates for health-related issues, offers higher flexibility, reduces the distance between work and family lives, and alleviates emotional weariness (Huang et al., 2020). However, one must remember that due to many hotels being converted to COVID care centres during the COVID-19 pandemic, those hotels' employee salaries increased from 25% to 75%, in turn generating chaos and stress among them. Additionally, these hotel employees' demanding work schedules during this period left little time for their families, eventually disrupting their WFB (Hervie et al., 2022). Based on the above literature, this study establishes the following hypothesis:

H4. Fair pay significantly impacts Work-Family Balance.

Emotional exhaustion (EEX)

Employees' lack of emotional reserve is indicated by their EEX at work (Bianchi & Schonfeld, 2016). Legg (2021) describes EEX as the tension arising from personal or professional obligations. EEX might make one feel 'trapped' or out of control; self-reliant workers may experience less emotional weariness. Employees who feel that their company supports WFB may have less overflow and emotional weariness (Khan et al., 2022). Thus, a supportive organisational culture improves job satisfaction and lowers employee turnover. Emotional tiredness, especially among female managers, also leads to work-family imbalance (Brough, 2014). Similarly, employees exposed to an emotionally taxing work environment for an extended duration (Amissah et al., 2022; Maslach & Leiter, 2016) tend to encounter emotional weariness. Specifically, long working hours cause resentment, animosity, and apprehension (Maslach & Leiter, 2008; Salama et al., 2022), leading to absenteeism, low work quality, low confidence, and increased attrition (Mivshek & Schriver, 2022; Davis et al., 2022). Additionally, EEX mediates the relationship between job insecurity and withdrawal behaviour among employees (Khan et al., 2022). In this regard, emotional weariness is associated with poor recovery from stress even after the cause of stress has ceased. Additionally, individual employees may not even identify the need to overcome stressful situations that diminish their sense of personal achievement and cause energy loss (Richter et al., 2015). To summarise, extensive work involvement leads to mental stress, health difficulties, and emotional fatigue



(Foà et al., 2020). Based on the above literature, this study established the following hypothesis:

H5. Remote Work Engagement and Work Family Balance is mediated by Emotional Exhaustion.

Method

This study explores the effects of RWE and ‘pay fairness’ on female hotel managers’ WFB and compares the results with a job demands-resources model. It also investigates the mediating effects of employees’ emotional exhaustion on their RWE and WFB. It uses SmartPLS 3.3.2 to determine the impact of the intermediating EEX on the relationship between RWE and WFB. Additionally, a two-stage disjoint approach evaluates the higher-order constructs in the study (Hair et al., 2017).

Construct measures

To conduct the study, a questionnaire is administered. The instrument constructs of the questionnaire are adopted from Anand et al. (2021), Brough et al. (2014), Ma et al. (202), and Pattusamy et al. (2016). The mediation variable EEX is added to the study of the relationship between RWE and WFB. Notably, this study examines 17 sub-variables of RWE that constitute the adopted higher-order constructs such as ‘vigour’, ‘absorption’, and ‘dedication’ (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Since pilot testing is not conducted, the questionnaire is adopted for the study without any modification. Similarly, the scale items for ‘fairness of pay’, adopted by Anand et al. (2021), include statements such as ‘The financial stability allows financial success’ and ‘Female managers agree that their compensation is fair’. Furthermore, the instrument measures the ‘work engagement’, ‘fairness of pay’, ‘WFB’, and ‘EEX’ of female managers through a 38-item scale. As mentioned, out of these 38 items, 17 items measure the adopted RWE (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Moreover, 13 other items measuring WFB are adopted (Schaufeli et al., 1996; Zhang et al., 2012). Additionally, the items measuring EEX, developed by Schaufeli et al. (1996), are adopted.

Data collection

The study sample represents 70 ‘five-star’ and ‘five-star deluxe’ classified hotels selected from a pan-India list of relevant hotels. Hotel data are collected from the Government of India’s Tourism Portal (National Integrated, 2022). The questionnaire, in its email form, is used as a survey instrument to collect data because it can ensure data collection in an economically practical way, especially data collection regarding challenging periods such as the COVID-19 crisis (Abdou et al., 2022). Hence, the questionnaire is distributed via email to 872 female hotel managers (including managers, executives, and assistant managers) on LinkedIn. Additionally, the survey questionnaire is submitted to 70 human resources (HR) managers who are asked forward it to female managers in various departments of included hospitality organisations. Consequently, 426 filled-in responses are received, of which 26 responses are rejected owing to insufficient information.

SmartPLS 3.3.2

In this study, SmartPLS (version 3.3.2) is used to apply PLS-SEM that can examine the relationships among the various abovementioned factors. For this purpose, a standard reporting method is used, considering WFB as the exogenous variable and ‘vigour’, ‘absorption’, ‘dedication’, and ‘fairness of pay’ as the endogenous variables. On its part, PLS-SEM helps assess the direct and indirect relationships among various latent and observed variables. In fact, both the inner and outer models of PLS-SEM examine the associations between various



constructs and their respective indicators. While the inner model investigates the correlation between various latent constructs, the outer model investigates the associations between the latent constructs and their empirical indicators. In addition, SmartPLS proves efficacious with regard to large sample sizes, involves complex models/indicators and more than one construct, and moreover uses latent variable scores. Hence, it provides an attractive graphical output (Hair et al., 2019). Importantly, bootstrapping is used in this study to explore how WFB is impacted by RWE and fairness of pay. Moreover, a two-stage disjoint method is used to evaluate all the constructs with the help of SmartPLS. In this study, ‘vigour’, ‘absorption’, and ‘dedication’ are taken as higher-order constructs, while ‘work engagement’ is considered as a lower-order construct. The questionnaire-based model comprises a reflective construct in which all items are considered in the reflective mode (Pattusamy & Jacob, 2016). Moreover, the reliability and validity of all the constructs are established prior to data collection. Finally, a measurement model is used to ascertain the significance of all the hypotheses tested by the study.

Results

Respondent demographics

Table I summarises the respondents’ characteristics.

Table 1: Demographic profile of respondents

Variables	Options	Frequency	Percentage
Age Group (yrs.)	15 – 25	2	1
	25 – 35	24	5
	35 – 45	98	25
	45 -55	276	69
	55 or over	----	----
Marital Status	Single	104	26
	Married	296	74
Work Experience (yrs.)	1-3	10	3
	4-6	63	16
	7-9	77	19
	10 or over	250	62
	Educational Qualifications	Primary/Secondary School	54
High School		84	20
Bachelor’s Degree		189	47
Postgraduate Certificate		73	24
Dependent	Yes	372	93
	No	28	7
Income (monthly in Rs.)	432.67\$- 556.29\$	40	10
	556.29\$-679.85\$	280	70
	679.85\$-803.46\$	73	18
	803.46\$-927.06\$	5	1
	927.06\$ or above	2	1

Predominantly 69% of the subjects belong to the age group of 45–55 years, followed by 25% in the age group of 35–45 years. Moreover, 74% of the respondents are married while 26% of them are single. Most respondents report that they have worked for over 10 years; 19% of respondents claim to have work experiences of 7–9 years; 47% possess bachelor’s degrees; 25% are undergraduates. Furthermore, 93% of the respondents reportedly have dependents, whereas 7% do not. The monthly salaries of most respondents (70%) range from 556.29\$ to 679.85\$, while 18% of respondents report a monthly salary in the range of 679.85\$ to 803.46\$.

Correlation analysis

In this study, RWE and WFB reportedly have a moderately positive correlation ($r = 0.574, p < 0.001$). Similarly, pay fairness and WFB have a minimally positive correlation ($r = 0.386, p <$



0.001). Furthermore, the correlation between EEX and WFB is found to be moderately positive ($r = 0.387, p < 0.001$), and a weaker positive correlation between RWE and EEX is observed ($r = 0.014, p < 0.001$).

Table 2. Correlation analysis (N=400)

Constructs	WFB	FOP	EEX	WE
WFB	-----	.386**	.387**	.574**
FOP	.386**	-----	.768**	-.015
EE	.387**	.768**	-----	.014
WE	.574**	-.015	.014	----

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The measurement models (MM)

Table III shows that the composite reliability for the lower-order constructs ranges from 0.223 to 0.86.

Table 3: LOC & higher order construct reliability and convergent validity

Scale	Subscale	Factor loading (LOC)	Factor loading (HOC)	Cronbach's Alpha (LOC)	Cronbach's Alpha (HOC)	Composite Reliability (LOC)	Composite Reliability (HOC)	Average Variance Extracted (LOC)	Average Variance Extracted (HOC)
Work Engagement	Vigor	0.685	0.900	0.861	0.886	0.861	0.929	0.511	0.812
		0.650							
		0.68							
			0.612						
			0.863						
			0.77						
		Dedication	0.641	0.906	0.758		0.755		0.384
			0.583						
			0.679						
			0.681						
			0.494						
		Absorption	0.679	0.898	0.817		0.815		0.427
			0.672						
	0.598								
	0.514								
		0.731							
		0.703							
Fairness of pay	-----	1.024	0.875	0.846	0.846	0.836	0.899	0.641	0.748
		0.638	0.838						
		0.684	0.881						
Work-Family Balance	-----	0.642	0.767	0.730	0.884	0.614	0.907	0.360	0.521
		-0.501	-----						
		-0.543	-----						
		-0.464	-----						
		-0.516	-----						
		0.709	0.787						
		0.564	0.754						
		0.607	0.603						
		0.66	0.644						
		0.78	0.679						
		0.679	0.656						
		0.63	0.739						
		0.394	0.837						
Emotional Exhaustion		0.497	0.916	0.913	0.913	0.223	0.939	0.499	0.749
		0.484	0.890						
		0.558	0.904						
		0.511	0.852						
		-1.201	----						

In this study, the internal consistency of the MM is computed before the data analysis. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is performed to address convergent and discriminant validity. Both convergent and discriminant validity are checked via CFA. Moreover, structural



equation modelling is employed to ensure the validity of the study; specifically, it is used to validate the study hypotheses. Further, the techniques of the two-stage disjoint approach are used to analyse the results via assessment of the ‘measurement and structural models’ (Hair et al., 2017, Ma et al., 2021).

Except for EEX, all the constructs reportedly record an outer loading of 0.5. Consequently, four items are removed from WFB: ‘Female managers feel emotionally drained at work’; ‘The female manager feels more pressure at work due to family responsibility’; ‘The female manager’s job takes away from her free time and energy’; and ‘The female manager frequently misses out on family events due to work’. Furthermore, the value of the higher-order construct reliability ranges from 0.929 to 0.939.

As shown in Table III, the final model’s significant constructs have a mean-variance value of 0.5, indicating convergent validity.

Table 4: Cross-loading of all constructs

Constructs	Absorption	Dedication	Emotional Exhaustion	Fairness of pay	Vigor	Work-Family Balance
AB12	0.704	0.649	-0.352	-0.201	0.612	0.592
AB13	0.68	0.614	-0.369	-0.105	0.616	0.494
AB14	0.69	0.424	-0.299	-0.203	0.406	0.435
AB15	0.798	0.446	-0.416	-0.338	0.515	0.623
AB16	0.729	0.446	-0.281	-0.151	0.417	0.642
AB17	0.73	0.455	-0.324	-0.129	0.392	0.645
D10	0.476	0.708	-0.243	-0.022	0.404	0.493
D11	0.449	0.721	-0.275	-0.011	0.467	0.414
D7	0.558	0.713	-0.306	-0.047	0.741	0.492
D8	0.557	0.75	-0.332	-0.174	0.649	0.477
D9	0.42	0.667	-0.259	-0.088	0.498	0.335
EE1	-0.192	-0.16	0.815	0.708	-0.222	-0.378
EE2	-0.259	-0.108	0.806	0.734	-0.147	-0.4
EE3	-0.237	-0.171	0.795	0.694	-0.262	-0.404
EE4	-0.219	-0.208	0.779	0.663	-0.214	-0.355
EE5	0.604	0.561	-0.738	-0.279	0.652	0.594
FOP1	-0.289	-0.115	0.542	0.856	-0.143	-0.414
FOP2	-0.152	-0.062	0.651	0.856	-0.109	-0.258
FOP3	-0.207	-0.06	0.665	0.895	-0.125	-0.277
V1	0.534	0.59	-0.312	-0.017	0.731	0.509
V2	0.481	0.649	-0.284	0.142	0.658	0.492
V3	0.433	0.568	-0.408	-0.149	0.788	0.432
V4	0.488	0.571	-0.324	-0.149	0.784	0.421
V5	0.576	0.614	-0.482	-0.163	0.852	0.574
V6	0.609	0.629	-0.39	-0.186	0.791	0.543
WFB1	0.608	0.397	-0.383	-0.259	0.417	0.628
WFB10	-0.292	-0.245	0.446	0.534	-0.284	-0.517
WFB11	-0.294	-0.241	0.587	0.484	-0.319	-0.57
WFB12	-0.267	-0.096	0.55	0.601	-0.205	-0.536
WFB13	-0.242	-0.165	0.598	0.676	-0.249	-0.52
WFB2	0.673	0.538	-0.335	-0.13	0.537	0.712
WFB3	0.609	0.353	-0.281	-0.159	0.36	0.662
WFB4	0.574	0.43	-0.274	-0.192	0.455	0.648
WFB5	0.615	0.534	-0.33	-0.105	0.475	0.684
WFB6	0.674	0.628	-0.428	-0.1	0.607	0.792
WFB7	0.593	0.571	-0.351	-0.071	0.512	0.723
WFB8	0.596	0.42	-0.336	-0.176	0.463	0.705
WFB9	0.396	0.383	-0.113	0.069	0.34	0.53

Collectively, all constructs account for more than half of the variance. Furthermore, when considered at a threshold, the item loadings are expected to have better values (Sarstedt, 2019). The resultant cross-loading values (CLV) are presented in Table IV and show significant values for the factor item loadings. Furthermore, the CLV of the additional latent components reportedly meet the cross-loading criterion, implying a reasonable discriminant validity.

In this study, ‘vigour’, ‘absorption’, and ‘dedication’ are taken as higher-order constructs, while ‘work engagement’ is considered as a lower-order construct. Here, discriminant validity is evaluated using the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio (Henseler,



2015). Table V presents the HTMT ratio results. Notably, as the HTMT values are found to be more significant than 0.85, this study identifies the need to examine higher-order constructs.

Table 5: Discriminant validity (HTMT) lower order & higher order constructs

Construct	AB	D	EEX	FOP	V	Construct	EEX	FOP	WE
D	0.88					FOP	0.781		
EE	0.292	0.215				WE	0.275	0.202	
FOP	0.295	0.143	0.899			WFB	0.264	0.215	0.804
V	0.809	0.962	0.26	0.179					
WFB	0.910	0.794	0.264	0.215	0.73				

Note: All values are above the threshold value of 0.85
 Note: AB- Absorption, D- Dedication, EEX- Emotional Exhaustion, FOP-Fairness of Pay, V-Vigor, WE- Work Engagement

Structural model measurement (SMM)

The SMM reports that variance, effect size, and predictive relevance factors are significant, as they contribute to 61% of the variance (R^2) in EEX and WFB. Moreover, the Q^2 for EEX and WFB balance is assessed to evaluate the cross-validation redundancy of burnout (0.047) and WFB (0.313); the redundancy is found to be higher than zero (Ranga et al., 2022).

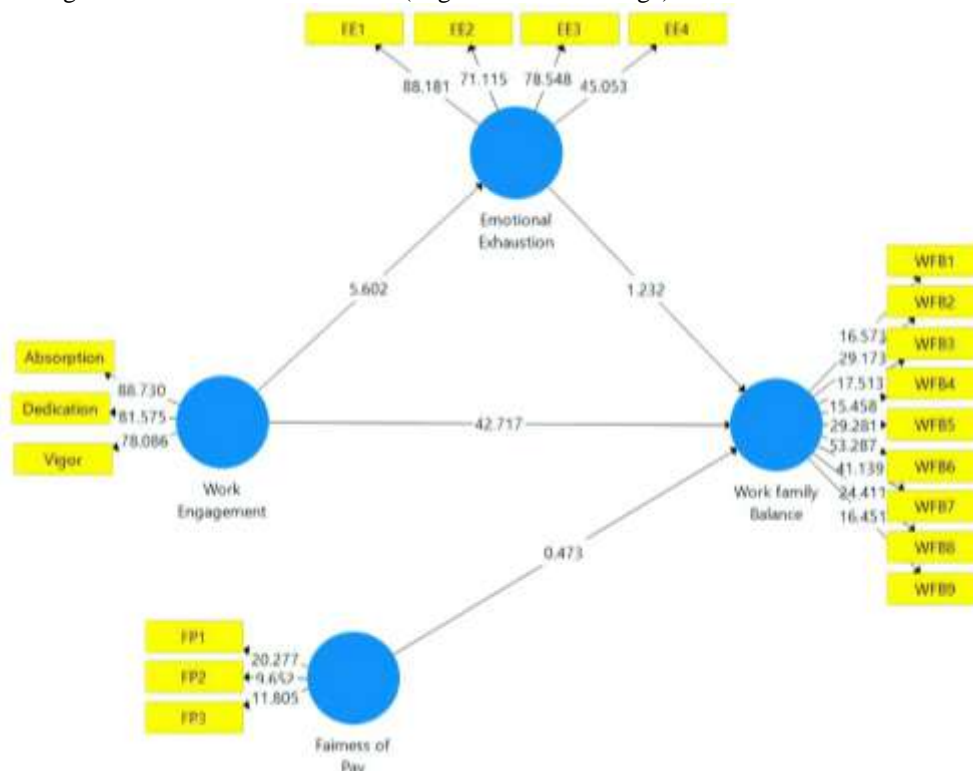
Table 6: The result of R^2, Q^2

Constructs	R Square	R Square Adjusted	Q Square
Emotional Exhaustion	0.063	0.061	0.047
Work-Family Balance	0.649	0.646	0.313

Value effect size. 0.02= Small; 0.15=Medium; 0.35=Higher

The higher-order construct variables in this study are presented in the form of a model in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Higher -order Construct variables (High-Resolution Image)



Hypothesis results

The analysis conducted by this study establishes a strong relation between the RWE and WFB ($\beta = 0.799, p < 0.001$). Additionally, a weak relationship between RWE and emotional



exhaustion is found ($\beta = -0.25, p < 0.001$). Moreover, a significant positive relationship between fairness of pay and WFB is also observed ($\beta = 0.742, p < 0.001$). These results validate this study's first, second, and fourth hypotheses. In addition, since no significant relationship between EEX and WFB is established by the results ($\beta = -0.052, p = 0.229$), the third hypothesis of the study is rejected. On its part, Table VIII presents the result of bootstrapping (adopted for mediation analysis). Furthermore, the indirect effects are also evaluated in the model. The result of this evaluation reveals that EEX does not mediate the effects of RWE ($\beta = 0.013, t = 1.163, p = 0.245$) on WFB. Based on this result, the fifth hypothesis of the study is rejected.

Table 7: Hypothesis testing result

Hypotheses	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Status
H1: Remote Work Engagement -> Work-Family balance	0.799	43.379	0.00	Supported
H2: Remote Work Engagement -> Emotional Exhaustion	-0.25	5.591	0.00	Supported
H3: Fairness of Pay -> Work-Family balance	0.742	0.415	0.00	Supported
H4: Emotional Exhaustion -> Work-Family Balance	-0.052	1.203	0.229	Rejected

Source: Author's own work

Table 8: Mediation analysis

Total effect (WE->WFB)		Direct effect (WE-> WFB)		An indirect effect of WE on WFB			
Coefficient	p-value	Coefficient	p-value	Coefficient	SD	T value	p-value
0.812	0.000	0.799	0.000	0.013	0.011	1.163	0.245

Source: Author's own work

Discussion

Considering the pandemic-induced changes in workplaces across the world in the backdrop of social role theory, this study seeks to understand why female managers experiment with various kinds of roles in order to accomplish a robust WFB.

During times of uncertainty marked by mandatory social distancing protocols, female hotel managers must first learn to adapt their functioning such that it suits the remote work culture, so that they can maintain WFB. Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic has altered how people live and work, significantly affecting both workplace and family settings. For example, many teachers and students have had to learn about online learning specifically during the pandemic, in response to the shutting down of schools and colleges. In this period, many working mothers have resorted to helping their kids as assistant teachers. However, the necessity of acting as assistant teachers for their wards has undoubtedly affected female hotel managers and impaired their WFB (Savage, 2020; Adisa et al., 2021).

In particular, this study's findings highlight that female hotel managers' pay fairness during the COVID-19 pandemic has affected their family life. Female hotel managers have been largely unpaid and overworked throughout the pandemic, which has led them to develop an unhealthy WFB. On the other hand the findings of Adisa et al. (2021) suggest that less-paid female managers have commonly cut back on their work hours and have used informal childcare arrangements (e.g. seeking the help of grandparents or relatives in child care) to balance their job and family responsibilities throughout the pandemic.

This study also investigates the relevance of emotional exhaustion to WFB. Contrary to the conclusion of Brough et al. (2014) that female managers facing emotional exhaustion with regard to remote work are unable to pay attention to their children or to maintain a robust WFB, this study corroborates Karatepe and Demir (2014) findings by reporting that female



managers resorting to RWE are more efficient in successfully blending the responsibilities of their professional and family lives. Hence, this study's results contradict the claims of conflict theory, as they illustrate that female managers are not placed under excessive pressure due to additional professional workload and family duties such as childcare and household responsibilities.

The analysis conducted by this study also reports that the mediating effect of EEX in establishing a relationship between RWE and WFB is found to be insignificant. In fact, it finds that female managers have resorted to playing various roles in order to combine work and family obligations and avoid emotional exhaustion during the COVID-19 period. Similarly, Kossek et al. (2010) establish that work fatigue negatively impacts both telecommuting from home and WFB, thus increasing work-life conflict. Comparing their results, Adisa et al. (2021) also conclude that remote-working female managers could become family-focused, reduce juvenile delinquency, and simultaneously perform a cluster of roles to manage hotel operations throughout a phase of high uncertainty such as a global pandemic. Hence, this study's outcomes support the assertions of social role theory.

Specifically, the findings of the study highlight that when female hotel managers are highly engaged in remote work, they may experience increased emotional exhaustion that can be further aggravated due to family interference. This revelation contrasts with the assertion of Gursoy et al. (2020), who posit that working from a home office increases motivation, thereby reducing emotional exhaustion. It also diverges from the findings of Chi et al. (2021), who suggest that a home-based job instils high energy to propel improved performance and prevent emotional exhaustion.

Furthermore, this study's findings suggest that remote work promotes better family life, increases parental bonding, offers job autonomy, and enhances the balance between an employee's professional and family lives. These findings support Kahn's theory, which suggests that remote work engagement plays a positive role in offering job autonomy, improved time management, and the opportunities to attend live webinars and yoga sessions that support employee well-being. Furthermore, this study concurs with Chen et al. (2012), who posit that organizations' active work engagement, flexible working hours, and maternal/paternal leaves collectively contribute to employees' WFB. However, in contrast to this study's findings, Brough et al. (2014) report that within a remote working engagement, work and family responsibilities together require considerable time, drive, and effort; they can destabilise the harmony between job and family responsibilities.

Conclusion

The present study establishes that remote working has the potential to make a substantial improvement in the WFB of female hotel managers by demarcating clear boundaries and expectations from their work schedules. Such demarcations in the daily online routines of operations, special projects, and meetings can foster a productive workplace while maintaining an equilibrium between work and family life. As per the study, female hotel managers who work remotely tend to have more breaks, a condition which improves their performance, motivation, and creativity and promotes their WFB. Remote working, furthermore, enhances female hotel managers' ability to share more responsibilities and to multitask. However, the dearth of childcare support for female hotel managers undermines the balance between their personal and professional responsibilities and emotionally drains them (Leroy et al., 2021). Specifically, as males in Asian cultures are not expected to share domestic work responsibilities, females tend to take on a significant share of household work, thus depleting their energies and disrupting their WFB. Under these settings, the pursuit of their own professional ambitions becomes a challenging prospect.



Moreover, this study establishes a correlation between RWE and WFB. While in the pre-COVID-19 era, employee engagement characterised by ‘vigour’, ‘enthusiasm’, ‘dedication’, ‘reliability’, and ‘devotion’ has remained a heavily debated issue, this study also establishes its significance to the maintenance of a healthy WFB, in agreement with the works of Abdou et al. (2022) and Gupta and Sharma (2018) but in contrast with the findings of Cabaraban and Borbon (2021).

This study further establishes how fairness of pay positively impacts WFB. While the existing literature illustrates how fair compensation raises female managers’ expectations, motivation, and performance, the findings of this study indicate that the dimension of female managers’ WFB is also influenced by the fairness of pay. These findings are critical, especially considering the phases of uncertainty and devastation caused by a pandemic; in the last pandemic, female managers who were underpaid and overworked reportedly had a disturbed WFB.

Despite several studies claiming the significance of techno stressors like EEX to WLB, this study’s findings illustrate that no such relationship can be established. Instead, factors like ‘fairness of pay’ and ‘remote work engagement’ are better predictors of WLB. Additionally, this study establishes a meaningful association between RWE and EEX. Its findings highlight that those female managers who are highly engaged in remote work experience more EEX, contrasting with the findings of the Job Demand Resources (JDR) model used by Shimura et al. (2021). Hence, this study asserts that remote work experience and EEX are connected because remote engagement allows employees to spend more time with their families.

Theoretical implications

Despite several shortcomings, this study offers numerous theoretical implications with regard to the theories it uses. According to Adisa et al. (2021) who explore WFB using the social role theory, professional responsibilities, various social roles, resources for work execution, and family commitments determine WFB. The present study, however, demonstrates how excessive resource allocation to one of the above components negatively impacts the others and can lead to tension between different roles. Furthermore, in the context of India, the nation’s cultural traditions putatively expect only female managers to multitask, to fulfil housekeeping and child-rearing responsibilities along with professional ones. Such expectations hamper the work capabilities of female managers working in the nation and exacerbate their feelings of exhaustion (Cabaraban et al., 2021). In this respect, this study recommends strategies to overcome the challenges troubling female managers who consistently face conflicts over maintaining well-balanced professional and family lives.

Indeed, female executives across the world continue facing myriad barriers to the establishment of balance between their work and family obligations, as demonstrated by Lekchiri and Eversole (2021). This study elucidates certain approaches that can restore and enhance the WFB of female executives, particularly female hotel managers. Its findings demonstrate how RWE is positively related with ‘burnout’, predicting lower work-family conflict among employees resorting to RWE. Furthermore, this study uses the theory of employee engagement to focus on strategies that leaders in the hospitality industry can use to engage their employees more effectively. Such strategies can enhance organisational productivity and profitability in the long term, as asserted by Sahi et al. (2022). Furthermore, irrespective of work and family obligations, most female managers in the hospitality industry can augment their various roles and produce positive outcomes, thus possibly achieving an ideal WFB. Additionally, this study’s outcomes illuminate a crucial point: social role theory demonstrates that female managers’ RWE could lead to a healthier work environment and



facilitate all stakeholders' commitment to a better WFB, as proposed by Chernyak-Hai and Tziner (2016) and Lekchiri and Eversole (2021).

Practical implications

Remote working renders female workers more absorbed in their work, which increases the possibility of their burnout by interfering with their WFB. Since females commonly have a more demanding role to play in domestic work settings, especially in a country like India, hotel managers must strategise their HR practices such that the effective WFB of female managers remains a surety, e.g. by incorporating flexible working hours, implementing a five-day work week policy (which is currently absent in most hospitality companies), and providing coaching on remote work practices.

In other words, this study finds that female remote workers become more absorbed in their work, which increases the likelihood their burnout. The problem of exhaustion is further aggravated due to high work-home interference for female employees, including female managers. Fortunately, hospitality organisations can reduce female managers' stress by offering them well-structured work schedules, mentoring, and training sessions on WFB. Additionally, hospitality firms should offer remote workers the opportunities to improve their overall well-being by conducting training sessions on mindfulness and meditation. In addition to flexible working hours and a five-day work week policy (highly recommended with regard to remote work), firms should respond to the changing employee needs, especially during trying times like pandemic periods, in order to ensure organisational survival, as per Liu-Lastres et al. (2022).

Female managers who prefer to work from home can receive coaching on the best remote work practices from trained supervisors. Additionally, they can be made aware of the potential psychological consequences of work-family imbalance and learn about the strategies using which they can set useful boundaries between these two domains of responsibility. Such ethical practices to ensure a healthy work-family relationship are also recommended by Lim et al. (2022). Additionally, firms can organise workshops to make all employees aware of such practices and to encourage them to safeguard their psychological well-being, as recommended by Cheng et al. (2018) and Shukla Nisha (2020). Moreover, fair pay plays a leading role in restoring/maintaining WFB by raising female managers' expectations, motivation, and performance, three outcomes that can greatly improve their WFB. Therefore, the management within the hospitality industry must recognise the importance of fair pay and prioritise it as a strategic human resource function. It is truly unfortunate that gender bias in fair pay has always been a demotivating factor for female managers; thus, management must implement a systematic reward system to restore female managers'/employees' confidence and improve their job satisfaction (Skalpe, 2007). For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic period, remote female workers were paid significantly lesser salaries while having to complete multiple tasks at home, which led to poor WFB among them (Craig & Churchill, 2021); this finding makes the case for fair pay reforms even stronger. On their part, HR managers must launch special initiatives to manage the stress and emotional weariness among female managers so that the latter can channel their energies productively and constructively (Shukla Nisha, 2020).

Limitations and suggestions for future studies

Despite adopting robust methods for evaluating the various variables that influence female hospitality managers' WFB, this study has several limitations that future studies on this topic are expected to overcome. Indeed, future studies should focus on including more participants from other kinds of hospitality businesses – restaurants, airlines, etc. – to including possibly



contrasting data and provide more robust strategies of restoring WFB during distressing situations like a pandemic. Furthermore, other variables like stress, job satisfaction, and security can be included in the analyses of future studies so that they can ensure a holistic understanding of the challenges faced by female managers who resort to remote work. Furthermore, the role of non-monetary organisational inducements for remote working female managers can also be analysed by future studies that aspire to understand the role of these inducements in improved employee engagement and WFB.

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