ABSTRACT

Research Goals and Objectives

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this research is to determine if work-family conflicts in the hotel industry differ between managers and service employees. A survey will be developed to measure job characteristics, family characteristics, work place policies and support, child care arrangements, and marital quality for all employees in the hotel industry. Much of this project is focused on three areas:

1) Methodological issues concerned with constructing a survey instrument for the hotel industry;

2) Methodological issues focusing on the most suitable survey mode and survey non-response issues;

3) The degree to which language affects the understanding of survey questions and if translation is necessary to reach part of the population of interest.

Research Methods

Both survey modes and the effects of using a translated survey version for English as a second language respondent will be tested using a quasi-experimental design. For cost reasons due to the location of the researchers, the sample of hotels will be drawn from the northeast region of the United States. Because the hotel industry has many different sizes of hotel establishments and ownership types for comparison purposes similar hotels in terms of number of employees and occupancy rates will be used. Large hotels will be needed for this research project due to
the three different modes being tested. A minimum number of 75 employees in both exempt positions and service sector positions will be needed. Hotels in major metropolitan and surrounding areas will be sampled for this research in order to have a larger population to sample. A list of eligible hotels will be purchased from Survey Sampling Inc. based on the established criteria above. Hotels will be selected at random from the list and will be contacted in order until four hotels have agreed to participate. One of the three versions of the survey will be given to all employees from the randomly selected hotels.

**Analysis**

Using appropriate statistical methods, methodological and substantive issues will be analyzed, which include:

1. Does the mode, in which the survey was administered, affect the results of the survey?
2. Are there differences in work family conflict between people who speak the translated language versus those who speak English only?
3. Are there difference in work family conflict between exempt employees and service sector employees?

The results of this study will be useful for policy and for practice. Information gathered on survey mode and translation will be useful for future research in the work place. Although, previous research on sensitive issues exists the setting is not often in the workplace. In addition information will be gained on work family conflict for service sector employees. In addition information will be gained on work family conflict for service sector employees. This group of employees are not traditionally studied in work family literature.
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Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this research is to determine if work-family conflicts in the hotel industry differ between managers and service employees. A survey will be developed to measure job characteristics, family characteristics, work place policies and support, child care arrangements, and marital quality for all employees in the hotel industry. Much of this project is focused on three areas:

1. Methodological issues concerned with constructing a survey instrument for the hotel industry;
2. Methodological issues focusing on the most suitable survey mode and survey non-response issues;
3. The degree to which language affects the understanding of survey questions and if translation is necessary to reach part of the population of interest.

Overview

Much of the previous research on work and family is conducted with dual-earner middle class couples, which are similar to the managers in the hotel industry. This research will examine an additional sample of lower social economic status service employees for comparison purposes. However, the methods used to study dual-earner middle class couples may not have the same reliability and validity or have the same response rates for the lower socioeconomic population.
In particular, thirty percent of service workers in the hotel industry do not speak English well, compared to ten percent of managers if the hotel industry\(^1\). In addition, over twenty-five percent of service workers are immigrants compared to only fifteen percent of managers in the hotel industry. This raises concerns about translation and language affects for the survey design.

Although work and family concerns would appear to be universal to all employees, job characteristics and economic standing can bring certain concerns to the forefront for different groups of employees. Managers in any industry are normally assumed to work long hours. However, the hotel industry is a 24-hour a day industry. Customers are always on the premises and in need of service. Managers are always on call and responsible for operations should employees call in sick or a crisis arises. They often must go into work to take care of the problem. If a manager’s spouse is also employed childcare issues can soon become a concern. For service workers in the industry the business also does not stop, but takes the form of shift work. Shift work creates its own problems for childcare for service workers. In addition, marital problems for both groups of workers would be of concern due to number of hours worked for managers and the shift work for the service employees.

Economic standing can alleviate many family stressors and problems for managers because they can purchase services such as quality childcare, laundry services, and house keeping services. All of which are part of the second shift that service workers must perform themselves once they get home from work.

\(^1\) Figures based on researcher’s findings using the PUMS data from the 2000 Census.
This research is the first step to studying work and family issues in an industry where two divergent groups of employees will be compared by using a survey that is reliable, valid, and can add to the current body of knowledge. This research will improve on previous research designs to include not only dual-earner middle class couples, but also lower socioeconomic status service employees.

**Literature Review**

There are four areas of past research on methodological issues and survey designs that are relevant to the research project of the hotel industry. They include sampling, survey mode effects, survey non-response, and translation. Each of these has been found to affect responses of participants and to affect the reliability and validity of the findings.

**Sampling**

Sampling for the final research project will involve sampling hotels based on occupancy rates and number of employees. Permission will be required by the hotels in order to gain access to employees and employee contact information. Many typical sampling problems for selecting individuals will not apply, because it will be the hotels that initially will be randomly sampled. All of the employees in each selected hotel will be contacted to survey. The survey mode and non-response will become bigger concerns for the employee respondents.

Sampling methods can impact not only costs and efficiency of the survey and research, but most importantly it can bias survey results. Sampling hotels will eliminate some of the typical
problems when sampling individuals such as random digit dialing and missing respondents who may not have telephones or are not accessible through the sampling method. The population of interest for this study is large hotels with high occupancy rates and a large number of employees. Large hotels of this size will be listed in business directories and phone books since public awareness of their business is necessary for their profitability. Therefore it is assumed that there will not be large hotels that are missing from directory listings. A directory listing will be used to randomly sample hotels that match the criteria established for the study.

Once hotels are selected and agree to participate, all employees of the hotel will be sampled. Hotels will be providing the contact information on each employee. Employees will be randomly assigned to a survey mode. If an employee does not have a telephone, but was selected for a phone interview they will be assigned to one of the other two modes. Their information will be kept separate to determine if their responses for the mode they received are similar to those randomly assigned to the mode. In addition, representativeness can be determined at two levels for the samples. The demographics of employees within each hotel can be compared to the Public Micro Use Data from the 2000 Census to determine if they are representative of employees working within the hotel industry. Because the demographic information for each hotel will be accessible to researchers a comparison of who responds to the survey can be compared to the demographics for each hotel of those who did not respond.

**Survey Mode Effects**

A large body of research has examined the effect survey mode can have on participant responses. Significant mode effects have been found by many studies (Aquilino 1994; Epstein et al. 2001;
Krysan, Schuman, Scott, and Beatty. 1994, Tourangeau and Smith 1996; Wright, Aquilino, and Supple, 1998). Mode effects are not as strong when the topic areas are less sensitive (Herzog and Rodgers 1988, Herzog, Rodgers, and Kulka, 1983, Wiseman, 1972) such as “general health, attitudes toward social issues, and voting behavior” (Aquilino 1994, p.213). Although there are many types of survey modes to be considered, this project will focus on the three modes; personal interviews, phone surveys, and mail surveys.

_Sensitive Issues_

Gaining information on sensitive issues is a concern for the hotel project. Respondents will be asked to provide information on their work and family. Respondents may be reluctant to acknowledge any family problems as well as hesitant to provide information about their employer and job. Aquilino (1994) and Holbrook, Green and Krosnick (2003) find that telephone surveys are typically one of the poorer methods of gathering admissions to sensitive questions. Particularly relevant to this research is Herman’s (1977) findings that employees surveyed over the telephone were less willing to provide sensitive information than the employees personally interviewed. This previous research suggests that for the hotel survey personal interviews or pencil and paper surveys could provide better information for sensitive questions than telephone interviews.

Personal interviewing can take on many forms. Most common of the modes are self-administered questionnaires and ones asked directly by the interviewer. Aquilino (1994), O’Reilly, Hubbard, Lessler, Biermer, and Turner (1994), Tourangeau and Smith (1996), Wright et al. (1998) and Epstein et al. (2001) report findings that computer assisted interviews, which could include audio assistance, that can be self-administered have the best results concerning
responses to sensitive issues. The computer appears to offer some legitimacy to the study as well as to provide a means to answer a question without verbally telling it to an interviewer. However, Tourangeau and Smith’s (1996) research only include well-educated respondents. Service workers with lower education levels may not respond as well to computer assisted interviews then would managers who typically have at least a bachelor’s degree and use a computer regularly as part of their job. This could provide an advantage for paper-and-pencil self-administered surveys in the hotel research.

*Mistrust and Social Desirability*

As Wright et al. (1998) and Aquilino (1994) illustrate, high levels of mistrust for others can affect reporting by mode. Research has shown that lower socioeconomic status respondents, which would be the service workers in the hotel industry, have a tendency to be more mistrustful of others and surveys (Wright et al. 1998). For highly mistrustful respondents confidentiality is an issue of concern. For the hotel project, employees who are already highly mistrustful of their employer or the research, might want to avoid paper and pencil mode as they can produce respondent reports that are more socially desirable and instead might want to use the computer assisted mode.

Answering questions concerning problems with one’s family can involve issues of social desirability. A respondent who admits there is a problem with work family conflict admits that he or she is not an ideal worker and not an ideal parent. Previous research shows that there is a connection between survey mode and answers reflecting social desirability. Socially desirable answers are more likely to be given using self-administered surveys in the presence of an interviewer, particularly concerning sensitive topics. Krysan et al. (1994) found that when
comparing mail surveys and face-to-face interviews whites expressed more negative attitudes towards racial integration and affirmative action programs when using mail surveys. Anonymity appears to allow respondents to report less social desirable answers to sensitive questions. Epstein et al. (2001) finds that higher percentages of health syndromes were reported for the audio computer assisted self-interviews than the paper and pencil surveys.

Predicting effects of social desirability is complicated since effects can be both positive and negative for respondents within the same mode. Acree, Ekstrand, Coates, and Stall (1999) found that phone surveys of gay men yielded a higher percentage of volunteerism for AIDS prevention and the mail survey yielded a higher percentage of risky sexual behaviors. Significant differences by race where found by Aquilino’s (1994) research on reported alcohol and illegal drug use, with differences much larger for black than white respondents. However, social desirability is not the only factor concerning mode effects and the desired mode for a research project. Experienced interviewers may be able to assure respondents of confidentiality when interviewing in person (Aquilino, 1994). Other methodological issues can create differences that are not just mode related such as response rate (Tourangeau and Smith, 1996), survey content and sampling (Smith, 1993).

Survey Non-Response

Organizational Non-Response
For this research project, organizations, hotels, with be sampled to gain access to employees within the organization. Although, individual response rates to a survey are of concern for non-response bias. Organization non-response also will be an issue for this research. Previous research shows that organization response for heterogeneous population are significantly lower
than the normal response rates of 70 to 75 percent for individuals from the general population (Tomaskovic-Devey, Leiter, and Thompson, 1994). For manufacturing plants, Lincoln and Kalleberg (1985) reported 35 percent cooperation rates and a 53 percent response rate for North Carolina private sector for profit establishments. Tomaskovic-Devey et al. (1994) finds five areas of concern to improve organization non-response that are applicable to this research project. They include: financial information, headquarters responsibility, time burden and information dispersal, survey administration flexibility, and attention to motive considerations.

Financial Information:
Request for financial information can easily cause a non-response. Requests for such information should be included if only absolutely necessary for the study.

Headquarters Responsibility:
If companies are part of larger establishment responsibility for completion of the survey may be unclear. Make sure the request asks specifically for that establishment to complete the survey.

Time Burden and Information Dispersal:
The survey should not require a large amount of time to complete and identify the proper respondent early on.

Survey Administration Flexibility:
Due to time burdens having different modes for survey administration would allow the respondents to select the mode best for them.

Careful attention to Motive Considerations:
The survey topic should be directly applicable to the organization and marketed as a way to motivate the organization to gain access to the information. (Tomaskovic-Devey et al. 1994)

Individual Non-Response

Interviewer

Survey non-response is an important concern for all studies since high response rates are valued in survey research. The concern is that low response rates could bias the data because it will not be representative of the entire population. For personal interviews, interviewer characteristics
can have an effect on the response of respondents. Response rates can increase for experienced interviewers because they can adjust the dialogue to fit the survey better to the respondent’s views and attitudes (Groves, Singer, and Corning. 2000, and Groves, Cialdini, and Kulka 1992). This ability to go beyond the ‘script’, which would be followed in a telephone survey, provides some strength for the use of experienced personal interviewers to increase response rates. However, many other factors can also affect survey non-response such as race and gender of the interviewer and its similarity to that of the respondent (Groves et al. 1992).

**Incentives, Psychological Factors, and Location**

Incentives are commonly used to increase response rates. A feeling of reciprocation is created when monetary incentives are used before completion if sent in a mail survey or paid at the end of an interview (Chromy and Horvitz, 1978 and Groves et al. 2000). Incentives may be helpful to get the lower socioeconomic service workers to respond to the survey. It would be necessary to clarify the incentive is from the research project and not from the employer to ensure that coercion is not a problem. As suggested by Groves et al. (1992) even the mood of the respondent can affect response rates. Allowing employees to select the time of day for the interview and place of interview, for example home versus workplace or start of the shift versus the end of the shift, could increase response rates.

**Costs and Benefits**

High response rates are often assumed to reduce no response error and increase representativeness. Teitler, Reichman, and Sprachman (2003) illustrate that it is important to have responses from hard to reach people, but only to a point. After a certain point, the benefits gained in response do not justify the cost. However, their research does not justify low response
rates. Teitler et al. (2003) was able to demonstrate with their own data that the cases which required the most effort and money did not reduce “non-response bias and were poor proxies for the non-respondents” (p.136). Curtain, Presser, and Singer (2000) further emphasize how data can be altered by response rates. They show that the additional effort required to attain information for respondents who require refusal conversion do not necessarily affect the data. In particular, this is true for conversions that require a large number of callbacks, effort, and money to attain answers. An important note from the Curtain et al. (2000) research is that with larger sample sizes non-response bias becomes greater. However, if comparison data for the population, such as the census, is available representativeness of the sample to the population can help establish how large the non-response error might be.

Translation and Cross-Cultural Equivalence

Much of the literature reviewed concerning translation examines issues when translating existing instruments into different languages (Beaton et al. 2002 and Rand Corporation). Researchers focus on similar steps for the process of survey translation, which typically include: direct or simple translation, back translation, translation and review expert by committee, and pretesting.

Direct/Simple Translation

This is the initial step in the translation process, whereby a bilingual person, translates the original English version into the target language. Beaton et al. (2002) recommends two translators with different background, who have the target language as their mother tongue, complete the simple translations. At this point in time, technical and conceptual equivalence are desired outcomes of the translations (Rand) although this is a simple process it should not stop at this first step. A review and synthesis of two translations by a third unbiased person Beaton et al.
(2002) or an independent committee (Behling and Law, 2000) is advisable at this time to discuss translation differences, make recommendations, and document the findings.

*Back Translation*

This step translates target language questionnaires back into the source language for comparison to the original questionnaire (Beaton et al. 2002, Rand, and McGorry, 2000). This translator should have the source language as their mother tongue (Beaton et al. 2002, and Rand) and not have prior knowledge of the survey instrument (Beaton et al. 2002). Again, Beaton et al. (2002) recommend the use of at least two translators for this process. If significant differences still exist another translation and back translation should be carried out until an acceptable version is achieved (Behling and Law, 2000). However, a successful translation and back translation does not ensure equivalence between the survey instruments. Behling and Law (2000) point out that translation and back translation ensure semantic equivalence but do not ensure conceptual or normative equivalence.

*Expert Committee Review*

Beaton et al. (2002) state that an expert committee is “crucial to achieving cross-cultural equivalence of the translated instrument” (p. 5). Decentering (McGorry, 2000) is a technique that allows for changes in the questionnaire to allow for ‘culturally and linguistically equivalent’ translations, which evolve during the course of the translation process. The source language instrument can be changed to include the use of short phrases, employ active rather than passive voice, and avoid metaphors and colloquialisms (McGorry, 2000). The result would be a more accurate and linguistically correct questionnaire.
Pretesting

Several methods are available for testing the effectiveness of translations. Brislin (1973) discusses the use of bilinguals who are interviewed on two separate occasions once in each language and then compare answers to both interviews. A random probe can be used by administering the instrument to a test group which is asked to explain why they answered the way they did (Behling and Law, 2000). The intent of the original question can then be assessed. The Rand Group recommends using a focus group of 8 to 12 members to gather information on “experiences, values, beliefs, and feelings.” Cognitive interviewing allows respondent to “think aloud” as they answer the questions (Rand). This allows the researcher to see the process the respondent goes through to answer a question.

Research Methods

Both survey modes and the effects of using a translated survey version for English as a second language respondent will be tested using a quasi-experimental design. For cost reasons due to the location of the researchers, the sample of hotels will be drawn from the northeast region of the United States. Because the hotel industry has many different sizes of hotel establishments and ownership types for comparison purposes similar hotels in terms of number of employees and occupancy rates will be used. Large hotels will be needed for this research project due to the three different modes being tested. A minimum number of 75 employees in both exempt positions and service sector positions will be needed. Hotels in major metropolitan and surrounding areas will be sampled for this research in order to have a larger population to sample. A list of eligible hotels will be purchased from Survey Sampling Inc. based on the
established criteria above. Hotels will be selected at random from the list and will be contacted in order until four hotels have agreed to participate. One of the three versions of the survey will be given to all employees from the randomly selected hotels.

Mode Effects

The modes that will be used in this comparison are paper and pencil surveys, in person interviews, and phone interviews. These three modes were selected based on previous research from gaining information on sensitive topics. However, very little research has examined questions ask concerning work and family conflicts. Both paper and pencil and phone surveys are included as more cost effective alternatives to access all employees rather than in person interviews (Tanur, 1983). This is of particular concern for large hotels if all employees of the hotel are to be surveyed. The phone and in person interviews will be both conducted using computer assisted interviewing techniques, which can reduce errors related to response categories and skip patterns (Tanur, 1983). Employees will be randomly assigned a survey mode.

Translation

The second main focus of this research proposal is the effect of translated survey versions on the response rates and reliability and validity of the survey instrument. A fair amount of the service sector employees in the hotel industry are not United States citizens and speak English as a second language. If the survey was only given in English valuable information may not be gained from this group of employees, which are of great interest for this research comparison. The translation techniques will not be tested as part of this research. Translation will be
completed following the procedure outlined in the previous section. What is of interest for this research is a comparison between the responses of those who speak English as a second language and received the English version versus those who speak English as a second language and received the translated version.

Service sector employees in the hotel industry have a much higher percentage of immigrants status, non United States Citizens, and English as a second language workers than exempt employees in this industry. A majority of these employees live in metropolitan areas therefore, we should be able to gain enough respondents to have a suitable sample size for analysis purposes, since our focus is hotels in metropolitan areas. For simplicity during the pilot study only one language will be used for the translation. The language the survey will be translated into will be determined after the hotels are selected and will be based on the demographics of those hotel employees. Of the hotel employees who speak the translated language a random sample will be administered the translated version of the survey.

*Sampling and Response Rates*

One concern in evaluating survey mode effects is to control for other factors that may be related to survey mode. In previous research comparison of modes have been made in which different sampling techniques were used for each mode. This problem will be avoided in this research on the individual respondent level since each employee of the hotel will be surveyed. Important information on the respondents will be accessible to the researcher that is not normally available for survey research. Participating hotels will be able to provide the researcher with demographic information on each employee such as age, race, gender, education and income at the hotel job.
Employees will not be forced to complete the survey as part of their employment. Therefore, participant non-response could become an issue. Managers may say they do not have time to complete the survey and service workers may not want to disclose information about their employer if it will not be favorable. Incentives will be provided in all three-survey modes, likely to be a cash incentive. An introductory letter will be sent to all participants with the incentive. This letter will be important to establish confidentiality and separation between the research and the employer. The letter will include information about the anonymity of responses and the importance of their participation. The demographic information allows an examination of non-response because demographics of those who completed the survey can be compared to the population demographics within each hotel. In addition representativeness of the survey respondents based on demographics will be made to Public Micro Use Data from the 2000 Census to determine if the survey respondents are representative of the entire population of the hotel industry.

After the initial prenotification letter, efforts to decrease non-response rates will be based on the mode. Using the Dillman (2000) method after the initial pre-notification letter, a copy of the survey will be sent with a self-addressed stamp enveloped for return of the survey. A reminder post card will be sent a week later. An additional week after the reminder another survey with return envelope and postage will be sent to all non-respondents. Dillman (2000) suggests these follow-up steps which can get mail response rates similar to telephone survey response rates. For phone surveys, multiple calls will be made up to five to contact the respondent and complete a survey. If the employee works a regular shift, the researchers will have their schedule information to make contact at home easier. If no shift information is available the number of
calls will be increased to make contact and calls will be made at various times during the day to contact the employee. For in person interviews, an appointment time will try to be established with the employee either through contact at work or through a phone call to the home. This will help reduce costs of sending interviewers out into the field with the hopes of the employee being home. As previously stated above shift information should be available to make contact easier, by narrowing the time frame down of when the respondent should be home.

The pencil and paper mail survey will not produce any interviewer bias or interviewer concerns. However, for the telephone survey and the computer assisted personal interviews interviewer bias will be important to recognize. Training will be given to all interviewers. To control for interviewer effects all interviewers will be randomly assigned. Of concern is the need for bilingual interviewers for the translated version. The number of interviewers with these skills will be determined once information is gathered on the number of English as second language speakers and the language of translation.

**Analysis**

The survey results will be analyzed to determine if survey modes affected information gathered on work and family conflicts. In addition to the analysis on mode effects, analyses will be conducted on differences in work family conflict responses based on the language used during the interview. For this analysis subjects are divided into the following categories
Using appropriate statistical methods, methodological and substantive issues will be analyzed, which include:

1. Does the mode, in which the survey was administered, affect the results of the survey? Each of the three modes will be compared against each other for all respondents as well as, for just exempt employees, and for just service employees to determine if one mode is better in gaining the sensitive information on family and work conflict. As sample size allows additional comparison will be made which could include: Each mode by exempt and service employment status, each mode by English only speakers and translated language versions for all respondents, as well as additional breakdowns of English only speakers and translated language for exempt and service employees. The comparison of modes will allow for a better determination as to which modes will be used in the final study based on costs, non-response issues, and responses for sensitive information.
2. Are there differences in work family conflict between people who speak the translated language versus those who speak English only?

This analysis would be a more general analysis than the above comparison in which mode and language interact. For this analysis findings for work and family conflict will be compared for all respondents regardless of occupation and mode surveyed. Additional comparisons would include exempt versus service workers English only respondents and translated respondents, only service employees English only respondents and translated respondents, and only exempt employees English only respondents and translated respondents. These comparisons are important for the final study as to whether translation is necessary to get a representative sample. This answer will provide researchers with information as to whether the survey can be done in English only and still be representative if it excludes a portion of the population who does not speak English well enough to be surveyed without a translated version.

3. Are there difference in work family conflict between exempt employees and service sector employees?

This part of the analysis is concerned the most with content analysis and findings concerning work and family conflict for the hotel industry. Mode of survey and translation status will not be considered in this part of the research. Of interest is to determine if one group of employees has more work family conflict than the other as well as what types of programs the employers offer to help alleviate the conflict. This information is particularly important since most research on work and family studies dual earner middle class couples similar to the exempt hotel employees. If a significant difference exists between exempt and service workers in the industry traditional research on work and family conflict cannot be generalized
to include working and lower class employees. It is expected that this group will have the least amount of access to work family policies but are the ones who are most likely to need it the most.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The results of this study will be useful for policy and for practice. Information gathered on survey mode and translation will be useful for future research in the work place. Although, previous research on sensitive issues exists the setting is not often in the workplace. And surveys designed for distribution in the work place often center around opinions and attitudes concerning that particular employer and not overreaching concerns for all employees in one industry.

In addition information will be gained on work family conflict for service sector employees. This group of employees are not traditionally studied in work family literature. However, this working and lower class group of employees are often the ones who need the most help when it comes to work family conflict in terms of child care and flexible schedules, particularly for single parents. This research could help determine what changes in employer policies and government policies could help alleviate work family conflict for employees.
References


