

## **B & B innkeepers in the United States: When the boundary between work and personal life is blurred.**

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### **Abstract:**

Many bed-and-breakfast inns are operated by owners who live on the property. Working at home allows the boundary between work and personal life to become permeable. This flexibility either affords bed-and-breakfast innkeepers more time for their personal life or it serves as an intrusion. This study investigated bed-and-breakfast innkeepers' perceptions of the balance between work and personal life, as well as their interaction. The results indicate that most bed-and-breakfast innkeepers maintain a satisfactory balance between work and personal life. They tended to perceive each of these dimensions as enhancing the other more than interfering with it.

**Keywords:** work | personal life | life balance | conflict | bed & breakfasts | boundaries | hospitality management | tourism industry

### **Article:**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The growth of the bed-and-breakfast (B&B) concept is considered to be one of the most significant innovations in U.S. tourism since the post-World War II motel boom. According to the Professional Association of Innkeepers International (PAII) (2003), there are more than 20,000 B&Bs in the United States serving 55 million guests annually. This boom has led many individuals to become interested in starting their own B&Bs for both personal and financial benefits. This increase in the number of B&Bs has also contributed to the growth of home-based work, a recent phenomenon in which social roles merge with physical space. B&Bs provide an alternate or additional form of employment that is sought by today's workers, especially by women, who seek to combine work and family responsibilities. Unlike those who work at home but are paid by an employer, as is generally the case with telecommuters, most B&B innkeepers are self-employed individuals who provide accommodation and services in their homes. The occupational role and the domestic role are exercised at the same location. The blurring of the boundary between work and personal life may result in a more harmonious and balanced

relationship between them. However, the blurring can be also disruptive, because it might induce stress resulting from the attempt to master multiple roles in the same environment.

### The Dilemma of Blending Work and Personal Life

Although most people choose to work at home because they must accommodate needs resulting from both work and personal life, this might not be the case for most B&B innkeepers. They choose this occupation because they find it interesting (it is like a hobby to them) and they want to be entrepreneurs. In other words, their occupation is associated with their lifestyle. The blending of work and family seems to have more impact on B&B innkeepers than on other home-based workers for the following reasons:

No spatial boundaries. B&B innkeepers integrate their work and personal life within a single spatial environment. Other home-based workers, such as telecommuters and telemarketers, are able to demarcate their spatial boundaries by having a separate room as an office. For B&B innkeepers, their entire home is their workplace.

Vague temporal boundaries. Although the B&B is a small-scale operation, it provides services to its guests 24/7. Unlike other home-based workers, B&B innkeepers must respond to the needs of their guests whenever they arise. It is difficult for them to create separate blocks of time for working and not working.

Mental boundaries. The blending of work and personal life makes it difficult to define mental boundaries. It is hard for B&B innkeepers to put rituals and distractions in their place so their brains can switch gears between work and home. By being self-employed, B&B innkeepers take full responsibility for the success of their business. This increases the pressure on them, leading some to become workaholics or work overtime.

As is the case for all small businesses, running a B&B requires a significant personal commitment. B&B innkeepers have more freedom than other workers to control and accommodate both their work and their personal life, because they are not constrained by outside employers or workplace expectations. This blurring of boundaries also provides an opportunity for work to pervade all aspects of one's life. Thus, the study of B&B management offers a more promising context for examining how people balance their work and personal life than do other lodging organizations or other forms of home-based work. Even though an increasing number of such balancing studies have been conducted with hotel employees (Hsieh, 2004; Namasivayam & Mount, 2004; Wong & Ko, 2009), no such studies have examined B&B operators for this purpose.

### The Conflict Between Work and Family

Previous research on the balancing issue has focused on the conflict between work and family (Burden & Googins, 1987; Burke & Greenglass, 1987; Hunsaker, 1983; Kanter, 1977; Near,

Rice, & Hunt, 1980). Role theory has been widely used by researchers as a conceptual framework for the study of conflict in both work and personal life. According to role theory, an individual's life encompasses a number of roles, some work-related and some not. Role conflict occurs when two or more sets of pressures occur at the same time, so that compliance with one set makes it more difficult to cope with the other (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964). Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) define the conflict between work and family as “a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respects” (p. 77).

Although conflict is a normal part of life, its increase both at work and with the family has been linked to negative consequences. Family-to-work conflict has been found to be positively correlated with job stress and depression (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999). Kossek and Ozeki's (1998) reported a meta-analysis in which it was found that work and family outcomes are correlated with job and life satisfaction. Allen, Herst, Bruck, and Sutton (2000) reported that higher levels of conflict are associated with decreases in job satisfaction, career satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job performance, as well as increased absenteeism and turnover intention. Work and family conflicts were found to be significantly related to non-work-related outcomes, such as dissatisfaction with marriage, life, leisure activities, and family. Some stress-related outcomes, such as general psychological strain at both work and home, somatic problems, depression, substance abuse, and burnout, have also been found to be significantly associated with work and family conflict (Adams, King, & King, 1996; Allen et al., 2000; Boles & Babin, 1996; Burke, 1988; Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrin, 1996).

### Types of Work and Family Conflict

Researchers have identified three types of conflict: time-based, strain-based, and behavior-based. Time-based conflict occurs when time spent in one role creates difficulty in fulfilling another role. The literature reveals that individuals who spend long hours at work report higher levels of interference or conflict, or conflict between their work and family roles (Burke, 1988; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Shamir, 1983; Staines, 1980; Voydanoff, 1988). Strain-based conflict occurs when stress arising in one role spills onto another. Thus, symptoms of stress, such as irritability, fatigue, and depression, that are experienced in one role may make it difficult to participate effectively in or to enjoy the other role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Role behavior conflict occurs when a behavior that is effective in one role is ineffective in another role with which it is incompatible (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). For example, a caring, compassionate father may have to be strict and stern at the workplace.

Drawing on the theory of the conservation of resources, Fisher (2001) has suggested that energy be added as a fourth source of work and family conflict. According to this theory, stress is a reaction to an environment in which one is threatened with a potential or actual loss of resources, or fails to acquire expected resources (Hobfoll, 1988, 1989). Resources, defined as supplies that

can help or support an individual, can be placed into four distinct categories: mental energy, time, knowledge, and physical energy. The latter category includes resources that are particularly important for meeting the multiple demands of work and personal life (Fisher & Hemingway, 2000).

### The Interaction Between Work and Family

Most researchers have measured the work-family conflict unidirectionally; that is, they have limited their research to the conflict that occurs when work interferes with family (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Frone et al. (1992) have extended this research by empirically demonstrating that the work-family interface is bidirectional, which means that conflict can either originate in the workplace and then interfere with one's personal life, or it can originate in one's personal life and then interfere with work. Frone (2003) points out that it is important to incorporate the bidirectional facilitation between work and family in one's research and to define the work-family balance in terms of both the direction of influence (work-to-family vs. family-to-work) and the type of effect (conflict vs. facilitation).

### Boundary or Border Theory

Recent research based on the theoretical models of role boundaries and the dynamic process of role transition has broadened our understanding of the work-family balance. Boundary theory (also called border theory) posits that individuals create and maintain idiosyncratic boundaries around the various roles they assume (Perlow, 1998; Zerubavel, 1991). It addresses how the work-family balance is influenced by the integration and segmentation of domains, the creation and management of borders, cross-border participation, and the relationships between border-crossers and others, both at work and at home. Clark (2000) has applied boundary theory to investigate the relationship between work and the family and to explain the processes by which conflict and balance occur. The purpose of boundaries is to make the operating environment easier to negotiate by dividing it into manageable and circumscribed "slices of reality" and to allow one to concentrate on the more important role (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000). Boundaries pose challenges as individuals make the transition from one role or domain to another. According to Ashforth et al. (2000), the process consists of (a) role exiting, or gradually disengaging from one role and overcoming the boundaries set up by that role, (b) role transition, or psychologically (and sometimes physically) moving from one role to another, and (c) role entry, or gradually assuming the other role. Boundary theory is a rich source of ideas for analyzing the nature of borders, their permeability, and the ease with which they can be managed or moved. Such analyses can also help illuminate the degree to which individuals are in control of the factors that determine whether balance is achieved.

### Home Workers and Their Work-Life Balance

The introduction of paid work into the home poses a challenge to people's conception of work and family as spatially distinct (Sullivan, 2000). Work at home has often been seen as a response

to a growing demand for flexibility and reconciliation between work and the family. However, research evidence on the impact of working at home on the boundary between work and personal life suggests that the real picture is rather more complex.

Researchers have attempted to predict the potential impact of working at home and teleworking on the management of the work-home interface, but there is little consensus about whether this impact is positive or negative. Heck, Saltford, Rowe, and Owen (1992) found that home-based employment did not necessarily eliminate the need for child care during working hours and that male home workers used outside child care as frequently as did female home workers.

Previous studies on home-based telecommuting confirm the hypothesis that the flexibility inherent in telework increases autonomy in the scheduling of paid work, housework, and childcare (Kossek, 2001; McCloskey & Igarria, 1998; Sullivan & Lewis, 2001). Researchers also found that home-based telecommuters were more likely than office workers to report blurred boundaries between work and family (Kossek, 2001), role overload, stress, and even workaholism (Duxbury, Higgins, & Thomas, 1996; Olson & Primps, 1984). Hill, Miller, Weiner, and Colihan (1998) investigated work-life balancing in a virtual office environment; the results showed that the virtual office supported a better balance than the traditional office. In a study at IBM, Hill, Ferris, and Martinson (2003) compared the influence of three work venues (traditional office, virtual office, and home office) on work and personal-family life. Virtual office workers reported a significantly poorer work-life balance and less personal and family success than did traditional office workers and home-office workers. Working primarily from a home office was linked to more positive perceptions of the work-life balance and perceptions of greater success in dealing with personal and family issues.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this study was to learn more about the conflict and integration experienced by B&B innkeepers with regard to the work-family interface. Specifically, the study was intended to address the following questions:

How difficult do B&B innkeepers find it to balance the operation of their B&B with their personal life, and how successful do they think they have been in achieving this balance?

What types of conflict have they experienced in operating their home-based B&B?

How permeable has the boundary been between their work and personal life, given that their incoming-generating activities and household activities occur at the same place?

What personal characteristics do B&B innkeepers manifest in attempting to balance their work and personal life?

## METHODS

Because websites are widely used by B&B innkeepers as a marketing tool, almost all of them have public email addresses (Morrison, Taylor, Morrison, & Morrison, 1999). Thus, it was decided to use a web-based survey to collect the data.

## Participants

The sample consisted of all 1,976 members of all the state B&B associations in the United States.

## Questionnaire

The B&B Innkeepers' Work and Personal Life Balance Survey is comprised of four major parts. All the questions were drawn from previous work- and family-conflict research. The two questions in Part One measure perceptions of the difficulty or success in balancing personal life and work.

Part Two consists of sixteen questions that measure four interactions (conflict or facilitation) between work and personal life: (a) the extent to which personal life interferes with work life (PIW), (b) the extent to which personal life enhances work (PEW), (c) the extent to which work interferes with personal life (WIP), and (d) the extent to which work enhances personal life (WEP). The questions came primarily from the Measure of Work Tension recommended by the Virtual Think Tank Panel (MacDermid et al., 2000). Internal consistency reliability estimates obtained in the present study was 0.88 for the WIP Scale; 0.71 for the WEP Scale; 0.81 for the PIW Scale; and 0.86 for the PEW Scale.

Part Three consists of 22 questions measuring respondents' commitment to their B&B, their job involvement, personal life involvement, job satisfaction, and overall life satisfaction. B&B commitment was measured using a 6-item scale developed by Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979). Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with each item on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This scale has been used extensively in previous studies and has demonstrated acceptable reliability and validity. Published estimates of the scale's internal consistency range from .80 to .86 (Mowday et al., 1979). The internal consistency estimated from the data of the present study is .71.

Job involvement was measured by three items adapted from a scale of Lodahl and Kejner (1965). Responses to each item were again assessed using a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The final score is the average of the three item scores. Examples of the items are: "Most of the important things that happen to me involve my job," and "I am very personally involved in my job." Lodahl and Kejner's study reported a reliability of .79 for the scale. The corresponding reliability from the data in the present study is .75.

Personal life involvement was assessed using a parallel set of three items, with the substitution of the word "personal life" for "job." This latter scale has been successfully used in studies by

Parasuraman, Greenhaus, and Granrose (1992) and Greenhaus, Collins, and Shaw (2003). Examples of the items are: “Most of the important things that happen to me involve my non-work life,” and “I am very personally involved in my non-work life.” Both sets of authors reported acceptable internal reliabilities ranging from .84 to .86. The reliability calculated for the present study is .89.

B&B innkeepers’ overall level of job satisfaction was assessed using items from Hackman and Oldham's Job Diagnostic Survey (1975). The measure comprises five items, with seven-point responses from strongly disagree to strongly agree in each case. An example of the statements was: “Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with this job.” Cronbach's Alpha estimates of internal consistency reliability for the overall scale ranged from .74 to .76. Internal consistency reliability estimates obtained in the present study (coefficient alpha) were .64.

Overall life satisfaction was measured by using a 5-item Likert scale from Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985). This scale has been used frequently in quality-of-life research to assess individuals’ overall satisfaction with life, and has demonstrated appropriate levels of reliability and validity (Hart, 1999; Pavot & Diener, 1993). Participants responded to the five items of life satisfaction on a Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Examples of the statements were: “In most ways my life is close to ideal,” and “If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.” Participants’ Overall Life satisfaction score was computed by taking the average across the five items. Higher scores indicate higher levels of life satisfaction. Internal consistency reliability estimates were .87 for current data.

Part Four of the survey contains demographic items.

## Procedure

A pilot study was conducted before the formal administration of the survey. Minor modifications were made to the wording of several items so they would fit better with the unique features of operating a B&B. Survey invitations were then emailed to the formal group of respondents.

## RESULTS

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## Demographic Data

With 336 online questionnaires returned, the response rate was 17%. Of the 336 returned questionnaires, 60 answered only the first two questions. Hence, there were only 276 usable questionnaires for analysis. Of these 276 respondents, 66% were female and 34% were male. Their ages ranged from 21 to 89 years, and the average age was 53. Slightly more than 80% of the respondents were married, 6% had never been married, and about 8% were divorced. Forty-five percent of the respondents operated the B&B with their spouse. Approximately 32% had a bachelor's degree, 31% had a graduate degree, and 22% had some college. Sixty-nine percent reported that they did not take any day off during the week, 19% took one day off per week, and only 7.5% took two days off per week. On average, these B&B innkeepers worked up to 66.67 hours per week during busy season and 41 hours per week during low season. The majority of the respondents (80%) had children under 18 years of age living with them. Only 18% of the respondents had parents, in-laws, or other relatives for whom they needed to provide care.

## Research Question 1: Perceptions of Balancing Work and Personal Life

More than half of the respondents (60%) reported that they found it difficult or very difficult to balance the demands of work and personal life. Only 23% reported that it was easy or very easy to balance these (see Table 1). Likewise, 25% claimed they were either unsuccessful or very unsuccessful in maintaining a balance between work and personal life, whereas approximately 53% felt they were successful or very successful in doing so (see Table 2).

TABLE 1 Difficulty of Balancing Work and Personal Life (N = 276)

Difficulty	Frequency	Percentage
1 = very difficult	37	13.4
2 = difficult	129	46.7
3 = neutral	47	17.0
4 = easy	54	19.6
5 = very easy	9	3.3

Note.  $M = 2.53$ ,  $SD = 1.053$ .

TABLE 2 Success in Balancing Work and Personal Life (N = 276)

Success	Frequency	Percentage
1 = very unsuccessful	11	4.0%
2 = unsuccessful	57	20.7%

3 = neutral	63	22.8%
4 = successful	126	45.7%
5 = very successful	19	6.8%

Note.  $M = 3.30$ ,  $SD = 1.003$ .

### Research Question 2: Types of Conflict

The results indicate that B&B innkeepers experience different levels of conflict caused by time, strain, and energy. Of the three, time caused the greatest conflict,  $M = 3.32$ ,  $t(275) = 56.91$ ,  $p < .001$ . Because they were operating a B&B, the respondents had little time to participate in non-work activities. Strain-based conflict, resulting from respondents not being able to maintain the kind of relationships with family and friends they would have liked, was the second greatest of the three,  $M = 3.00$ ,  $t(275) = 47.88$ ,  $p < .001$ . Energy-based conflict, caused by transitioning from work to personal life, was experienced less often by the respondents than the other types,  $M = 2.79$ ,  $t(275) = 44.34$ ,  $p < .001$ .

The respondents experienced conflict in the opposite direction, transitioning from personal life to work, relatively rarely; the mean scores range from 2.18 and 1.97 on the 5-point Likert scale.

The respondents reported experiencing time-based conflict from their personal life to the B&B operation,  $M = 2.18$ ,  $t(274) = 45.56$ ,  $p < .001$ , followed by strain-based conflict ( $M = 2.11$ ,  $t(275) = 43.97$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and energy-based conflict ( $M = 1.97$ ,  $t(275) = 43.17$ ,  $p < .001$ ) spilling over from their personal life to work.

### Research Question 3: Interaction Between Work and Personal Life

Table 3 presents the means and standard deviations of the four variables representing the interactions between the domains of work and personal life. All the means are greater than three, except for PIW ( $M = 2.09$ ).

TABLE 3 Means and Standard Deviations of the Four Interactions (N = 276)

Interaction	M	SD
WIP	3.04	.91
PIW	2.09	.67
WEP	3.37	.86
PEW	3.27	1.02

The extent to which the two domains interfered with or enhanced each other was evaluated by  $t$  tests (see Table 4). The B&B innkeepers tended to perceive their work as enhancing their

personal life (WEP:  $M = 3.37$ ,  $SD = .86$ ) more than interfering with it (WIP:  $M = 3.04$ ,  $SD = .91$ );  $t(275) = -3.84$ ,  $p < .001$ . Conversely, they perceived that their personal life (PEW:  $M = 3.27$ ,  $SD = 1.02$ ) enhanced their work to a greater extent than it interfered with it (PIW:  $M = 2.09$ ,  $SD = .67$ );  $t(275) = -15.78$ ,  $p < .001$ .

Thus, work interfered with personal life more than personal life interfered with work,  $t(275) = 18.17$ ,  $p < .001$ . On the other hand, there was no significant directional difference with respect to enhancement,  $t(275) = 1.87$ ,  $p = .06$ , although enhancement was slightly greater in the work to personal life direction.

#### Research Question 4: Characteristics of the Difficulty-Success Clusters on Work-Life Balance

To further explore the characteristics of the innkeepers, a cluster analysis was performed to divide them into homogeneous groups based on their perceptions of the difficulty and success of their balancing. Analysis of variance and chi-square analyses were used to determine if there were statistically significant differences among the four clusters in terms of sociodemographic and other characteristics. The four distinctive clusters were labeled as follows:

The Defeated. These respondents believed that it was easy for them to balance work and personal life, but they admitted that they were unsuccessful in achieving this balance.

The Fatalists. These respondents believed it was difficult for them to maintain a balance between work and life, and they admitted that they were unsuccessful in achieving this balance.

The Fighters. These respondents believed that it was difficult for them to balance work and personal life, but they claimed that they were successful in achieving this balance.

The Achievers. These respondents believed that it was easy for them to balance work and personal life, and they claimed that they were successful in achieving this balance.

The four clusters differed in many respects (see Tables 5 and 6). The achievers had the highest job satisfaction, the highest scores on PEW and job satisfaction, and the lowest scores on PIW. At the other extreme, the fatalists had the lowest job satisfaction, the lowest overall life satisfaction, and the lowest scores on WEP and PEW. The defeated claimed the highest overall life satisfaction and lowest scores on WIP.

No statistically significant differences were found among the four groups in commitment, job involvement, and personal life involvement. They all claimed high commitment to their B&B operation (means ranging from 4.18 to 4.50 on the 5-point Likert scale) and high job involvement (means ranging from 4.01 to 5) (see Table 5).

TABLE 5 Means of the Four Cluster Groups on the Study Variables

Variable	Cluster 1 defeated (N = 4)	Cluster 2 fatalists(N = 69)	Cluster 3 fighters (N = 141)	Cluster 4 achievers (N = 62)	F
Difficulty	3.50 (.58) a	1.49 (.50)	2.30 (.49)	4.13 (.38)	364.62
Success	1.00 (.00)	1.97 (.42)	3.62 (.54)	4.23 (.46)	290.43
WIP	2.17 (.43)	3.94 (.72)	2.97 (.71)	2.23 (.61)	69.77
PIW	1.92 (.32)	2.34 (.77)	2.05 (.63)	1.89 (.55)	5.67
WEP	4.33 (.47)	2.95 (.58)	3.41 (.81)	3.67 (1.04)	10.90
PEW	3.42 (.74)	2.96 (.75)	3.26 (1.02)	3.63 (1.19)	4.95
Job satisfaction	4.00 (.67)	3.89 (.86)	4.27 (.59)	4.70 (.39)	12.02
Overall life satisfaction	4.17 (.52)	2.80 (1.08)	3.90 (.83)	4.10 (.70)	11.91
Commitment	4.50 (.) b	4.20 (.37)	4.18 (.31)	4.23 (.26)	0.60
Job involvement	5.00 (.) b	4.01 (.92)	4.04 (.82)	4.04 (.88)	0.75
Personal life involvement	0.00 (.) c	2.86 (1.31)	3.07 (1.30)	3.52 (1.19)	1.12

aStandard deviations in parentheses.

<sup>b</sup>No standard deviation because  $N = 1$ .

<sup>c</sup>No standard deviation because  $N = 0$ .

\* $p < .05$ ,

\*\* $p < .01$ ,

\*\*\* $p < .001$ .

aStandard deviations in parentheses. bNo standard deviation because  $N = 1$ . cNo standard deviation because  $N = 0$ . \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

TABLE 6 Demographic Characteristics of the Cluster Groups

Variable	Cluster 1 defeated (N = 4)	Cluster 2 fatalists (N = 69)	Cluster 3 fighters (N = 141)	Cluster 4 achievers (N = 62)	F
Gender	Male: 0%	Male: 25%	Male: 36%	Male: 41%	0.14
	Female: 100%	Female: 75%	Female: 64%	Female: 59%	
Marital status	Married:100%	Married:85%	Married:84%	Married:83%	0.84
	Single: 0%	Single: 15%	Single: 16%	Single: 17%	
Education	High school or lower: 50%	High school or lower: 46%	High school or lower: 36%	High school or lower: 24%	0.23
	Bachelor or higher: 50%	Bachelor or higher: 54%	Bachelor or higher: 64%	Bachelor or higher: 76%	
Age	59 (10.50)a	50 (8.15)	53 (10.44)	58 (8.50)	7.29
Work hours per Week (high season)	51.25 (39.66)	72.21 (34.26)	63.88 (28.93)	68.34 (33.67)	2.88
Work hours per week (low season)	40.50 (26.66)	48.41 (22.86)	36.78 (20.73)	42.00 (36.93)	2.88
Household chores	39.00 (32.45)	21.48 (21.02)	20.38(14.75)	19.42(15.19)	1.30
Community activities	6.00 (5.66)	4.03 (4.97)	5.92 (3.85)	9.79 (8.14)	10.61
Self-development	4 .00 (5.66)	3.03 (4.87)	5.13 (7.06)	4.71 (5.02)	1.55
Relaxing hours	14.50 (0.71)	9.14 (6.21)	10.36 (6.44)	13.87 (7.80)	5.00
Child-elder care	0.0 (.) b	8.78 (24.08)	45.76 (11.80)	4.58 (11.33)	0.87

aStandard deviations in parentheses.

bNo standard deviation because N = 1.

$p < .05$ ,

$p < .01$ ,

$p < .001$ .

bNo standard deviation because  $N = 1$ .  $p < .05$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $p < .001$ .

In terms of sociodemographics, it is noteworthy that the defeated were all females. At least 50% of the respondents in each cluster had at least a bachelor degree. The rates were highest for the achievers (76%) and the fighters (64%), and lowest for the defeated (50%). There is a statistically significant difference among the four groups in their average number of working hours during the low season. The fatalists worked the most hours on average (48 per week) and the fighters the fewest hours (37 per week) during the low season. There was no significant difference among the four groups in the average number of hours spent on household chores, self-development, and child-elder care. The achievers spent the most average time on community activities (9.79 hours per week), followed by the defeated (6.0 hours per week). The defeated spent the most average time relaxing (14.5 hours per week), followed by the achievers (13.87 hours per week), the fighters (10.36 hours per week), and the fatalists (9.14 hours per week) (see Table 6).

## DISCUSSION

The majority of respondents (60%) reported that it was difficult or very difficult for them to maintain a balance between their job as innkeeper and their personal life. Yet, in general, the respondents believed that they were able to maintain such a balance. Only 25% described themselves as unsuccessful or very unsuccessful at balancing their work and their personal life. About 53% reported that they were successful in balancing them, and about 22% claimed that they were neither successful nor unsuccessful at doing so. One explanation for this somewhat contradictory result is that some respondents may have accepted some degree of conflict between work and other aspects of their life. In other words, even though some B&B innkeepers did not achieve perfect balance, they were still reasonably satisfied with the balance that they were able to achieve. The results suggest that even when the boundary between work and personal life becomes blurred, most B&B innkeepers can still strike an acceptable balance between their business and their personal life.

This study identified several bidirectional relationships between managing a B&B and maintaining a personal life. Both conflicts and enhancements between the two dimensions were found. Positive spillover in both directions (from work to personal life and from personal life to work) was more common than negative spillover. The respondents experienced benefits from both domains equally.

These findings imply that a home-based business such as a B&B creates a permeable boundary that allows the work and home spheres to benefit from each other. The finding that managing a

B&B seems to improve the quality of personal life more than worsen it can at least provide encouragement for people who are hesitant to open a B&B because they are worried about the cost to their personal life.

Conversely, personal life has a beneficial impact on work. In fact, the respondents reported less interference from personal life than from their B&B work. Unlike many other businesses, a B&B requires a personal commitment. Many B&B owners live on their property and take full responsibility for the success of the business. It seems that the respondents try not to let their personal life interfere with their work. Hence, it should not be surprising that the respondents' PIW scores were lower than their WIP scores.

### Implications of the Study

The results of the study have several implications for individuals or B&B associations that are interested in improving the quality of life of B&B innkeepers. This study shows that although many B&B innkeepers maintain a satisfactory balance between their work and personal life, they still experienced conflict between these two aspects of their existence. These conflicts are associated with such factors as time, strain, and energy. Unlike hotel employees, B&B innkeepers are on their own and have relatively little access to the resources that could help them keep their work and personal life in balance. I strongly recommend that hospitality researchers devote more study to this issue. B&B state associations can provide workshops on topics such as time management, conflict resolution, and stress management to help B&B innkeepers cope with these balancing problems.

### Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations. The sample was limited to B&B innkeepers in the United States, so its results cannot be generalized to B&B innkeepers in other countries. Moreover, the research relied exclusively on self-reports. Although the respondents were asked to check off the statements that best reflected their feelings, it is possible that many were more concerned with giving an "appropriate" or "desirable" answer than a true one (Cacioppo & Petty, 1981). Such respondents may have been especially sensitive to questions such as, "How successful are you in balancing work and personal life?" Such questions pertain to self-identity, and the respondents might have been reluctant to select the answer that is true for them, even though the study was anonymous. Thus, the responses may not truly reflect the respondents' success in managing a B&B. Likewise, the motivation of B&B innkeepers to work at home might be different from that of other home-based workers.

### Suggestions for Future Research

Future studies should explore the findings uncovered in this study. First, the majority of respondents reported that work interfered with their personal life and that their personal life interfered with their work; however, many also reported success in balancing the two. The results

also show that most of these innkeepers found some interference from work or personal life to be tolerable. As there currently are no data that establish a maximum tolerance level, future research should explore the threshold between acceptable and unacceptable levels of conflict. In addition, operating a B&B might offer people a way to combine their personal interests with their work. Therefore, they might have more tolerance for dealing with conflicts between work and personal life. However, due to the design of the present study, I was not able to test this hypothesis. It is left for future studies to explore the relationship between motivation and work-life balance.

Second, the results of the current study do not provide an explanation for the success claimed by many of the respondents in balancing their work and personal life. It is recommended that future studies employ personal interviews to identify the skills or strategies that B&B innkeepers use to balance these demands.

Third, the cluster analyses revealed the existence of a group of respondents (the defeated) that believed it was easy to maintain the balance between work and personal life but were nonetheless unsuccessful in maintaining such a balance. It would be worthwhile to identify the factors that caused this lack of success, so that they could be avoided or prevented. Another group (the fighters) believed that it was difficult to balance the work and personal life even though they managed to do so successfully. The strategies they used to maintain a successful balance could be shared with other B&B innkeepers who have problem maintaining a successful balance. Further research should focus on these two groups.

Fourth, sometimes the B&B innkeepers' families might sense an imbalance that the innkeepers themselves do not notice. A stakeholder analysis that includes the perceptions of the innkeeper's spouse or other relatives might more accurately reflect the degree of balance or imbalance in the innkeeper.

## Notes

a Standard deviations in parentheses.

b No standard deviation because  $N = 1$ .

c No standard deviation because  $N = 0$ .

$p < .05$ ,

$p < .01$ ,

$p < .001$ .

b No standard deviation because  $N = 1$ .

$p < .05$ ,

$p < .01$ ,

$p < .001$ .

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