

## Effects of work-health-personal life balance on job satisfaction and loyalty among women in front office positions: Evidence from banking sector of Serbia

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**Abstract:** This study aims to extend and deepen the understanding of what affects job satisfaction and loyalty of women in front office with reference to work- health- private life balance experience, based on survey data collected from the banking sector of Serbia. The research findings address important implications for academics, HR managers, business managers and policy makers to narrow the gap between work, health and personal life alignment and job satisfaction and loyalty among female employees in front office positions, and at the same time to improve existing business and HRM practices by shifting focus towards well-being of organizations, employees and their families. The paper contributes to the human resource theory, organizational behaviour theory, work-life balance theory, and research on front office work in service industry. The paper also enhances the literature on job satisfaction in both country's and regional context, which has been poorly addressed so far.

**Keywords:** Work-health-personal life balance, job satisfaction, loyalty, women, front office, banking sector of Serbia.

### Introduction

Employee satisfaction and loyalty are widely recognized as key elements for employees' performances and organizational effectiveness, success and sustainable growth (Duboff & Heaton, 1999; Tang & Lee, 2014; Tang et al., 2014; Monga et al., 2015). Human Resource Management (HRM) considers employees the most valuable asset of any organization, thus making it widely accepted that employees cannot be effectively developed and satisfied without knowing and taking into account their needs and perspectives (Cleveland et al., 2015).

Job satisfaction represents a significant aspect of employees' and underlying basis of organizational performances (Brown & Lam, 2008; Heskett et al., 2008; Sageer et al., 2012; Monga et al., 2015). Hunter & Tietyen (1997) acknowledge that employees are more productive and more loyal to their employers when they are satisfied. Similarly, Jun et al. (2006) have noted that increased employees' satisfaction leads to a higher degree of their loyalty. Matzler & Renzl (2006) argue that there is a strong link between interpersonal trust, employees' satisfaction and loyalty. The results of the study conducted by Chang et al. (2010) show that empowerment of employees, compensation, teamwork and management leadership are important positive postulates of job satisfaction. Also, the study

reveals that loyalty of employees can be enhanced through employees' satisfaction (Chang et al., 2010).

The value of loyal employees is remarkably increased nowadays due to constant developments in information and telecommunication technologies, global production networks and interconnected global marketplace. Frequent changes in the nature of job, shifts to more specialized and multidisciplinary skills and increased competition for talented employees, imply greater investments in employees' development that consequently leads to more expensive employee turnover. These phenomena resulted in a noticeable pressure on HRM, making the retention of employees a serious challenge today (Roehling et al., 2001; Cleveland et al., 2015; Monga et al., 2015). To keep employees loyal, many human resource experts suggest the adoption of policies related to the perspective of work-life balance that will allow employees flexible work hours, child care assistance and other support to effectively resolve work-life balance conflict (Hiltrop, 1995; Roehling et al., 2001).

Over the past two decades, the concept of work-life balance has attracted a considerable interest of researchers, policy makers, organizations, managers and employees (McCarthy et al., 2010). Studies on this phenomenon have found that work-life balance is a factor with

significant impact on organizations' issues. It can affect lower level of job satisfaction, lower organizational commitment, lower performance, absenteeism, turnover, depression and burnout (Kossek & Ozeki, 1998; Perrewé et al., 1999; Anderson et al., 2002; Voydanoff, 2002; Duxbury & Higgins, 2005; Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Bianchi & Milkie, 2010). Moreover, De Cieri et al. (2005) advocate greater awareness of work-private life balance given that today it is difficult to attract and retain highly valued and skilled employees. From an employee's perspective, harmony between responsibilities and activities at work and home is valuable both for individuals and organizations, taking into account that working conditions which support balance between work and private life bring benefits for both domains, i.e. work and private life (Bardoel et al., 1999; De Cieri et al., 2005).

Most studies on work-life balance and employees' satisfaction so far have been based on data collected in developed countries with the focus on employees' and organizational performances (Brown & Lam, 2008; Heskett et al., 2008; Bloom et al., 2009; Wang & Verma, 2012; Yamamoto & Matsuura, 2014; Monga et al., 2015); work-life balance from the perspective of organizations and employees (Chimote & Srivastava, 2013); work-family conflict and work arrangements (Kelly, et al., 2011; Allen et al., 2013); work-life balance and job satisfaction (Yadav & Dabhade, 2014); quality of work life and job satisfaction (Lee et al., 2015). Yet, despite increased female employment in developing countries, there is little evidence of deep understanding of effects related to work, health and personal life balance on job satisfaction and loyalty among women, particularly among those employed in customer services, i.e. front office.

This paper sets out to extend and deepen the understanding of effects of work-health-personal life balance on job satisfaction and loyalty among women working in front office, based on data collected from the banking sector of Serbia. The purpose of this paper is to develop, examine and explain what affects job satisfaction and loyalty of front office women with reference to work- health- private life balance experience, by exploring the relationships and perceived importance of various attributes of the domains and by identifying similarities and differences in responses among women in bank front offices.

### Literature review and hypotheses development

The service management literature widely accepts human resource as a vital element in service sector (Elmadag, et al., 2008; Tomé, 2011; Galperin & Lituchy, 2014), considering that interaction between front-line employees and customers affect customer perceptions and satisfaction (Brown & Lam, 2008). Providing a high quality service to end

customers is vital (Blešić et al., 2014) because satisfaction often results in customer retention and higher profitability, accordingly (Anderson et al., 1994; Hallowell, 1996). Saeed & Zehou (2014) have found that "customer satisfaction and loyalty would continue as long as employees are satisfied and deliver the required quality of goods and services" (Saeed & Zehou, 2014, p. 198).

Women are traditionally employed in front office positions in service industry. The reason for this lies in the assumption that women are better in care for customers than men (Mathies & Burford, 2011). Although women face challenges how to make distinction between work and family, some authors argue that job satisfaction is either higher or equal among female employees in comparison to men employees (e.g. Clark, 1997; Bender et al., 2005; Lange, 2008; Aletraris, 2010). Ladik et al. (2002) argue that high-performing and highly talented women are more loyal to employers than men. In contrast, Huang & Gamble (2015) found that Chinese women employed in retail services have significantly lower level of job satisfaction than their male counterparts. Ahmad et al. (2011) have revealed a weak negative relationship between work-family balance and job satisfaction among working women in Pakistan. Yet, Crompton (2002) argues that women are more likely to realize conflict between private life and career, and be more oriented to family responsibilities if work-life conflict occurs (Maume, 2006; Huang & Gamble, 2015). According to Babin & Boles (1998), work in front office is more emotionally exhausting for female employees as the result of ambiguous roles they have at work and non-work activities. Kossek et al. (2014) pointed out that work-family conflict is consistently linked to behavioural, physical health and mental issues that result in obesity, addictive behaviours, sleep quality, cardiovascular risks, depressive symptoms and burnout.

Over the time, banks have progressively become extensive places for female employment (Crompton, 1989; French & Strachan, 2007). Banking industry in Serbia employs 69.4% of women (UBS, 2013). Although the employment trend for women in banking is changed, their major responsibility for family-related issues and childcare remains the same given that Serbia's culture cherishes the traditional role of women in family responsibilities, i.e. women bear the major liability and concern of the household. With this in mind, our assumption is that harmonization between work and family life is important for women in banking sector, particularly significant for women in front office. We hypothesize that the balance between work and family life leads to job satisfaction and loyalty of female employees in front offices of banks in Serbia. Thus:

*Hypothesis 1: Alignment between work and family life is positively associated with job satisfaction and loyalty among women in front office.*

Long work hours are acknowledged as risk which negatively affects work-life balance and health of employees (e.g. Dembe et al., 2005; Tucker & Rutherford, 2005; Caruso, 2006; Wharton & Blair-Loy, 2006; Burke & Cooper, 2008). In terms of organizational performances, recent studies on the effect of long work hours on productivity of 18 mostly European countries, members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, have revealed that the productivity is always negative for a given increase in working hours (Cette et al., 2011; Golden, 2012). According to Thornthwaite (2004), nearly two-thirds of employees are satisfied with the number of working hours, but there is a strong and growing desire for reducing working hours among employees.

“In the US, employed mothers favor a 30.6 hour week on average (compared to the 41.4 hours they actually work) and employed fathers, 38.8 hours (compared to 50.9 hours). Similarly, in Europe, on average, men want a 37-hour week and women a 30-hour week, which would constitute an average weekly reduction of six hours for men and four for women. The greater reductions sought in the US, close to ten hours weekly, reflect the longer hours currently worked there” (Thornthwaite, 2004, p. 170).

With regard to women in Australia, Thornthwaite (2004) noted dissatisfaction with long working hours in relation to men employees engaged in full-time arrangements. Michaelson et al. (2003) stated that financial services industry is a difficult environment for female employees, due to its historical culture and long working hours. It is also found that unfavourable work schedule is associated with quality of performed job, quality in marital relationship, psychological distress, and collapse (Barnett et al., 1999; Gareis et al., 2003; Skinner & Pocock, 2008). In this paper we hypothesize that satisfaction related to working time in terms of hours and schedule influences job satisfaction and loyalty among women in front office. Hence:

*Hypothesis 2: Satisfaction related to working time positively affects job satisfaction and loyalty among women in front office.*

For many years, working conditions have been in the focus of many researchers who incorporated a wide range of views and impact of working conditions on job satisfaction, work-life balance and health in various industries. Herzberg et al. (1959) categorized working conditions in a

group of extrinsic factors in their two-factor theory on job satisfaction, arguing that extrinsic factors negatively affect job satisfaction. Schnorpfel et al. (2003) found that adverse working conditions and undeveloped social support are associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular disease and other negative health outcomes. Cheng et al. (2013) examined self-related health, burnout and their associations with psychosocial work conditions. Authors argue that low workplace justice is the most significant factor for low self-rated health and high burnout, predominated among younger employees (Cheng et al., 2013). Toch et al. (2014) suggest an increased academic and political focus on working conditions to potentially reduce occupational inequalities in health. Cano & Castillo (2004) have revealed that working conditions are the least important when it comes to job satisfaction. However, Sowmya & Panchanatham (2011) have found that working conditions have great impact on job satisfaction in banking sector in India. In this paper, we postulate that working conditions and low satisfaction with employers' concerns about employees have impact on job satisfaction and represent significant factors that cause women to think about changing job. Thus:

*Hypothesis 3: Working conditions and low satisfaction of employers' concerns about employees, lead to low job satisfaction and to increased thinking of changing job among women in front office.*

New working practices and changes of the nature of many jobs bring about more pressures, strains and stresses among employees at workplace, representing potentially influential factor to health (Cooper, 1998; Cooper, 1999). Research conducted by Stansfeld et al. (1997) and Stansfeld et al. (1998) indicates that job satisfaction may have an indirect effect on employees' health through both psycho-social and physical working conditions that include work stress, job security, effort-reward imbalance, safety at workplace, lightening and air quality. The results of systematic meta-analysis of almost 500 studies conducted by Faragher et al. (2005), revealed a strong relationship between mental and physical health and job satisfaction, with the particular emphasize on mental health, specifically related to lower self-esteem, burnout, anxiety and depression. In Serbia the most frequent health issues are hypertension (35.2% females and 26.6% males), deformity of the lower spine or other chronic back issues (22.9 % females and 15% men) and cervical deformity or another chronic problem with the cervical spine (16.4% female and 7.6% men). On the other hand, mental health issues of Serbia's population are expressed in smaller numbers. Of all respondents only 4.1% shows symptoms of depression. World Health Organization estimates that every 15th resident of Europe has symptoms of depression. In comparison to Europe, Serbia has a low level of notable

depression within the population, but the symptoms of depression are present in significantly higher percentage in women (5.3%) than in men (2.9%) (Institute of Public Health of Serbia, 2014). In this work, we hypothesize that having diseases implies that satisfaction with the employers' concerns about employees and loyalty are at the low level among women in front office. Therefore:

*Hypothesis 4: Diseases are in negative relationship with satisfaction with the employers' concerns about employees and induce negative effects on loyalty among women in front office.*

Stress and its negative effects on the health and well-being of employees have been explored throughout history, but only recently labelled as one of the major issues in both developed and developing countries. At the beginning of the 21st century, effects of stress have occupied a lot of academic research, organizations and managers given that health and well-being of employees are recognized as crucial requirements for productivity and overall socioeconomic and sustainable development (Beehr & Newman, 1978; Jamal & Baba, 2000; Spielberger, 2010). Chang & Lu (2009) have revealed that work behaviours and stressors are different across employee's occupations and individual demographics. In the study on work and family demands and life stress among Chinese employees, Choi (2008) has found that work and family demands are related to life stress in China. In relation to job satisfaction, job stress is recognized as an influencing factor on satisfaction and overall job performance (Zangaro & Soeken, 2007; Ahsan et al., 2009).

With the traditional role in households, women in Serbia have multiple roles in private and business life, which involves a great deal of time, energy and commitment in each area of life, making difficult work-life balance that accelerates manifestations of stress. Exposure to stress among population in Serbia has noticeably increased, amounting to 56.6% of residents. As with overall health status including depressive states, women are more vulnerable to stress (61.5%) compared to men (38.5%) (Institute of Public Health of Serbia, 2014). Babin & Boles (1998) noted that stress is a critical factor among women in customer services, which negatively influence work performance and consequently results in the lower degree of women job satisfaction. Therefore, we assume that stress has negative effects on job satisfaction and loyalty among women in front office.

*Hypothesis 5: Stress is negatively associated with job satisfaction and loyalty among women in front office.*

Ability of organization to learn, utilize collective intelligence and translate knowledge into action in response to external challenges, is the underlying element for competitive advantage in today's complex, uncertain and rapidly changing

business environment. Increasing the organization's capacity to learn increases organizational performances and employees' engagement at the same time (Crick et al., 2013). A few studies dealt with the relationship between continuing education and job satisfaction. Metle (2001, p. 316) has found that "education may be positively associated with satisfaction" in service organizations. However, researches of this phenomenon have not found consistent pattern, but the relationship tends to be negative (Brush et al., 1987; Vollmer & Kinney, 1955; Metle, 2001). Our proposition is that continuing education among women in front office is associated with job satisfaction and loyalty. Therefore:

*Hypothesis 6: Continuing education is positively associated with job satisfaction and loyalty among women in front office.*

### Research methodology

For the purpose of this paper we used a survey method. Our sampling frame includes female employees in front office of banking sector of Serbia. Banking sector was selected due to its importance (Săvoiu & Dinu, 2015) and the share of female work force. This industry represents the major segment of financial services (Fasnacht, 2009). In Serbia, banking sector dominates over the financial system and accounts for 92.4% of the total financial sector. As such it represents the main contributor to the Serbian financial system stability (NBS, 2013). With regard to gender structure, women in banking sector dominate with participation rate of 69.4% in total number of employees (UBS, 2013). Besides, work in front office is a profession continuously exposed to high job demands.

### Research instrument

Self-administered questionnaire (Cooper et al., 2006; Saunders et al., 2011) based on internet, i.e. a web-based questionnaire is used as a survey instrument in this research to assess and demonstrate relationships between variables, i.e. cause – and – effect relationships (Saunders et al., 2011). The questionnaire contains of 27 questions that are grouped into five main parts: (a) Personal information regarding age, marital status, child / children, education, opinions related to satisfaction with regard to this subject and their attitude related to having child/more children and continuing education; (b) Working hours, working conditions and opinions related to satisfaction with the conditions; (c) Current state of their health and opinions regarding their satisfaction with the employers' concerns about employees; (d) Assessment of significant items related to job, family, health, education and hobby, by adding attributes to each item according to the significant level; (e) Job satisfaction, loyalty with the open ended question that allows participant to reveal attitudes to why they would change a job in front



office. Measures of satisfaction in questionnaires include psychological elements that imply cognitive, affective and / or behavioural state of the participant in relation to corresponding element of evaluation.

Women were asked to answer the questionnaire based on their individual perception and organizational conditions where they work. The questionnaire specified that it was entirely used for research purposes and granted respondents confidentiality. Questionnaires were completed by submitting the form on the given web page. A pre-test was carried out through a questionnaire survey of 10 volunteers in banking sector who had less than 6 months of work experience. The

questionnaire was subsequently revised to eliminate any ambiguities, according to the suggestions obtained in the pilot survey.

### Data collection

A web-based questionnaire was sent via e-mail to 150 women who are employed in front office of banks in Serbia. Of the 150 women who are invited to participate in the survey, 100 women completed the questionnaire, yielding a response rate of 67%. According to the feedback from women who did not participate in the research, 26% had limited access to the internet at work, 6% was absent from work and 1% did not participate due to closed mindset. Demographic profile of respondents is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic analysis of the sample ( $N=100$ )

Age		Marital status			Child / Children		Education			
Age group	N	Single	Married	Divorced	No	Yes	High school	College	University	Postgraduate
21 – 30	30	24	6	0	28	2	6	2	16	6
31 – 40	47	10	34	3	19	28	3	14	23	7
41 – 50	17	2	11	4	5	12	7	5	5	0
51 – 60	6	2	3	1	3	3	3	2	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>13</b>

$N=100$

Source: Authors' calculation

### Analysis method

The first phase of data analysis encompasses a descriptive phase of detailed data analysis using Descriptive statistics and Frequency distribution for individual variables and their specific values according to particular categories. Descriptive statistics analysis is used to describe samples, validate assumptions that make a base for statistical techniques, and be able to answer the specific research questions (Saunders et al., 2011). The second phase of data analysis encompasses the assessment of distribution normality. Normal distribution is tested using the kurtosis as an indicator, frequency polygon and histogram (Miller et al., 1965; Wonnacott & Wonnacott, 1972; Saunders et al., 2011; Samuels et al., 2012). The third phase of data analysis includes the test of the hypotheses. Chi square test (Saunders et al., 2011) is employed to test the association of variables. To assess the strength of relationship between variables, Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (Spearman's rho) is used (Miller et al., 1965; Wonnacott & Wonnacott, 1972; Saunders et al., 2011; Samuels et al., 2012). To summarize the results of assessed significance between job, family, health, education and hobby, factor analysis (Thompson, 2004) is applied. Data were analyzed using SPSS software package.

### Research results

With regard to Hypothesis 1, our starting point in

data analysis is examining the relationship between categorical variables: age and marital status in relation to work and family alignment; marital status and children; and age, marital status and attitudes to having (more) children among respondents. The aim of this analysis is to better understand family characteristics and attitudes of women in terms of family life. The results of Chi-square test show no relationship between age and work-family alignment, and no relationship between marital status and work-family alignment. When it comes to marital status and children, the results show that most married women have children, while single women are without children. However, regardless of age women tend to have (more) children, which is particularly noticeable with women aged between 20 and 40. Also, irrespective of marital status, women are of the opinion that they would like to have children or more children. Moreover, according to the assessment of the most significant elements of life, women have evaluated family as the most important part of their life, followed by health, job, education and hobby.

Hypothesis 1 is tested using correlation analysis. According to the results, work-family balance is in weak positive correlation with job satisfaction ( $r=0.288$ ;  $p=0.004$ ) however, work-family balance is in insignificant correlation ( $r=0.002$ ;  $p=0.748$ ) with loyalty (Table 2).

Table 2. Spearman's rho correlation matrix

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Work-family balance	Correlation Coefficient	1.000										
	Sig. (2-tailed)											
2. Working time	Correlation Coefficient	.250*	1.000									
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012										
3. Satisfaction with the employers' concerns about employees	Correlation Coefficient	.383**	.236*	1.000								
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.018									
4. Working conditions	Correlation Coefficient	.051	0.003	.344**	1.000							
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.661	.926	.000								
5. Diseases with eyes	Correlation Coefficient	.001	-.157	-.238*	-.0785	1.000						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.483	.118	.017	.349							
6. Diseases with spine	Correlation Coefficient	-.094	-.203*	-.204*	-.081	.169	1.000					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.354	.042	.041	.424	.285						
7. Diseases with hormones	Correlation Coefficient	-.170	-.193	-.263**	-.103	.162	.016	1.000				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.090	.054	.008	.308	.543	.876					
8. Stress	Correlation Coefficient	-.272**	-.161	-.310**	-.162	.141	0.06	0.191*	1.000			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.109	.002	.107	.149	.475	.040				
9. Continuing education	Correlation Coefficient	.373**	.120	.194	.141	-.071	-.224*	-.105	-.049	1.000		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.235	.053	.162	.486	.025	.297	.626			
10. Job satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	.288**	0.129	.408**	0.169*	-.145	-.133	-.149	-.0246*	.197	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.079	.000	.039	.150	.187	.140	.003	.076		
11. Loyalty	Correlation Coefficient	.002	-.019	-.380**	-.0185*	.172	.234*	.111	-.0095	.060	.117	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.748	.850	.000	.047	.087	.019	.271	.346	.552	.247	

*N* = 100. \*\* = Significant at the 0.001 level, \* = significant at the 0.05 level.

Source: Authors' calculation

The results show that there is enough statistical evidence to infer that work-family balance and job satisfaction are related. In contrast, there is no sufficient evidence to conclude that work-family balance correlated with loyalty among respondents. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is partially supported.

With regard to Hypothesis 2, we first used descriptive statistics to summarize collected data related to working time. Women need approximately 1 hour from home to job. The latest hour of getting home is 7pm, while common hour of getting home from work is 5.30pm. Respondents spend 9 working hours at work daily on average.

Marital status affects satisfaction with working time. Most dissatisfied women are

married. However, there is no sufficient evidence to infer that having/not having children is associated with working time satisfaction among women in front office.

Table 3 depicts the results of association between satisfaction related to working time and job satisfaction using Chi-square test. Based on the answers, there is no relationship between the two. Results are insignificant ( $p=0.118$ ). Also, results reveal there is no relationship between working time and loyalty ( $p=0.920$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 2 is not supported. However, we have found that working time is weakly associated with work-family balance ( $r=0.250$ ;  $p=0.012$ ) (Table 2).

Table 3. Chi-square results of all observed variables for Hypothesis testing

Variables		Job satisfaction (a)			Loyalty (b)		Total	P-value
		Yes	Partially	No	Yes	No		
Satisfaction with working time	Yes	1	12	1	1	13	14	(a) $p=0.118$
	Partially	2	27	16	2	43	45	
	No	-	24	17	2	39	41	(b) $p=0.920$
Employers' concerns about employees satisfaction	Yes	2	9	3	5	9	14	(a) $p=0.000$
	Partially	-	44	10	-	54	54	
	No	1	10	21	-	32	32	(b) $p=0.000$
Number of diseases	0	-	-	-	5	20	25	(b) $p=0.003$
	1	-	-	-	-	19	19	
	2	-	-	-	-	20	20	
	3	-	-	-	-	29	29	
	4	-	-	-	-	7	7	
Stress	Yes	1	29	23	-	53	53	(a) $p=0.003$
	No	2	34	11	5	42	47	(b) $p=0.346$
Total		3	63	34	5	95	100	

Source: Authors' calculation

*Hypothesis 3 is tested by examining the relationship between variables using correlation analysis.* Results indicate that convenient working conditions ( $r=0.169$ ;  $p=0.039$ ) (Table 2) and better employers' concern about employees are factors that affect female employees' satisfaction. Unfavourable working conditions represent one of the reasons why they would change the job ( $r=-0.185$ ;  $p=0.047$ ) (Table 2). Satisfaction with employers' concerns about employees is in positive correlation with job satisfaction ( $r=0.408$ ;  $p=0.000$ ) and in negative correlation with loyalty ( $r=-0.380$ ;  $p=0.000$ ) (Table 2).

By Chi-Square test we analyzed categorical data, i.e. employers' concerns satisfaction, job satisfaction and loyalty. According to the results related to job satisfaction (Table 3), the largest group of respondents belongs to women partially satisfied with both employers' concerns about employees and job satisfaction ( $N=44$ ), followed by dissatisfied women ( $N=21$ ). However, only 2 women reported satisfaction with the employers' concerns about employees and job satisfaction ( $N=2$ ). Notable dissatisfaction with the employers' concerns about employees might be explained by the obtained responses in relation to working conditions. With regard to this, 80% of women reported they do not have natural light at workplace, 100% of women notified that airing is carried out via central air-conditioning, while 13% stated that there is no possibility to open windows in front office. Besides, 75% of respondents reported that discretion is not provided by

employer, and 57% of women have problem with concentration due to interference of conversation that colleagues have with their customers. With these working conditions, 73% of women reported they did not have verbal confrontation with customers. With regard to loyalty, only 5 women satisfied with the employers' concerns about employees do not think of changing the job ( $N=5$ ). The rest of respondents ( $N=95$ ), out of which 9 are satisfied with employers' concerns about employees ( $N=9$ ), 54 partially satisfied ( $N=54$ ) and 32 dissatisfied ( $N=32$ ), would like to change the job (Table 4). Results are significant ( $p_{a,b}=0.000$ ). Hypothesis 3 is supported.

With regard to Hypothesis 4, results from correlation analysis show there is a negative relationship between single diseases, i.e. diseases with eyes ( $r=-0.238$ ;  $p=0.017$ ) diseases with spine ( $r=-0.204$ ;  $p=0.041$ ), diseases with hormones ( $r=-0.263$ ;  $p=0.008$ ) and satisfaction with the employers' concerns about employees (Table 2). Sum of all diseases that women reported ( $N=75$ ) induces negative effects on loyalty according to the Chi-square test ( $p=0.003$ ) (Table 3). Results are significant. Hypothesis 4 is supported.

Having these results in mind, we established factor analysis to extract underlying dimensions between measured variables referring to self-evaluation of the important elements in the life of women. Results indicate that health, job, and family describe the factor analysis model. These three significant factors cumulatively participate with 90.83% in the variability (Table 4).

Table 4. Total Variance Explained by Factor analysis

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
Job	2.162	43.247	43.247	2.162	43.247	43.247	2.033	40.661	40.661
Family	1.344	26.878	70.125	1.344	26.878	70.125	1.364	27.286	67.946
Health	1.035	20.709	90.834	1.035	20.709	90.834	1.144	22.888	90.834
Education	0.458	9.166	100						
Hoby	0.000	0.000	100						

Source: Authors' calculation

Results of tested Hypothesis 5 are depicted in Table 2. Given outputs reveal that stress negatively affects job satisfaction ( $r=-0.246$ ;  $p=0.003$ ). On the other hand, there is no enough evidence to infer that stress is in positive / negative relationship with loyalty ( $p=0.346$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 5 is partially supported.

With regard to Hypothesis 6, results reveal there is no association between continuing education and job satisfaction ( $r=0.197$ ;  $p=0.076$ ) and loyalty ( $r=0.060$ ;  $p=0.552$ ) according to the Correlation analysis (Table 2). Hypothesis 6 is not supported.

However, evidence from correlation analysis depicts that continuing education is associated with work-family alignment among women in front office ( $r=0.373$ ;  $p=0.000$ ). Chi-square test results presented in Table 5 show that the largest group of women who have motivation and possibilities to continue education ( $N=13$ ) have harmonized work and family life. The largest group of women who are partially able to align work with family life have motivation to continue education, but they do not have possibilities for it ( $N=27$ ). Results are significant.

Table 5. Chi-square results with reference to continuing education and work-family balance

		Aligned work and family life			Total
		Yes	Partially	No	
Motivation and possibilities for continuing education	Yes, having motivation and possibilities	13	14	1	28
	Yes, having motivation but no possibilities	7	27	5	39
	No motivation and no possibilities	1	17	5	23
	No motivation but have possibilities	1	9	0	10
Total		22	67	11	100

$p=0.004$

Source: Authors' calculation

Finally, women in front office have revealed reasons why they would change job. Based on the responses, the most important reasons lie in insufficient wages, unfavourable working conditions, limited possibilities for career growth and advancement, organizational culture, morality at work and unsupportive management.

## Discussion

Offering the highest quality service to customers, in a high-pressure business environment, is one of the main objectives in financial services, a single bank or a unit within an organization. Achieving this goal requires committed, high-quality and satisfied employees in front office positions. This study provides insights and highlights the importance of recognizing what affect job satisfaction and loyalty among women in front office with reference to work-health-personal life harmonization. The research findings address important implications for academics, HR managers, business managers and policy makers to narrow the gap between work, health and personal life balance and job satisfaction and loyalty among female employees in front office positions, and at the same time to improve existing business and HRM practices by shifting focus towards achieving benefits for organizations, employees and their families.

Research findings indicate that women in the Serbian society continue to have traditional understanding when it comes to family. Women tend to keep their primary role rooted in Serbian traditional postulation of family, i.e. to be mothers, but first wife, and then mother. With regard to hypothesis 1, work-family balance is associated with job satisfaction in women in front office. This is in accordance with findings from China (e.g. Tang et al., 2014) and India (e.g. Yadav & Dabhade, 2014) but contrary to findings among women in Pakistan (e.g. Ahmad et al., 2011). On the other hand, we did not have enough evidence to conclude that alignment between work and family life correlates with loyalty. The formation of appropriate overall work-family strategies should be an integral part of HRM strategies in order to enable both organizations and female employees to

adjust to emerging challenges related to the need for harmonization of work and family life with the aim to enrich job satisfaction and thus increase quality of work in customer services and other units within an organization.

Results related to hypothesis 2 indicate that working time is not associated with job satisfaction and loyalty among women in front office. This is in contrasts with findings from China, where job satisfaction significantly declines with hours worked by female employees in China (e.g. Huang & Gamble, 2015). However, we have found that working time is associated with work and family life balance. Similar results are revealed by Lunau et al. (2014) in European countries. Having in mind that family is the most important part of women's life, and that women work approximately 9 hours per day, as well as taking into account that married women are respondents most dissatisfied with working time, the results indicate that women would rather sacrifice the time for family in order to earn money. Also, these results might signify that women would rather take the risk of work-family conflict in order to earn. These findings suggest that HRM should develop an effective management tool to facilitate harmony between work and family demands, i.e. to introduce family-friendly policies to improve the relationship between the conditions at workplace and lives of women.

When working conditions and satisfaction with employers' concerns are in question, it was found that convenient working conditions and better employers' concern about employees are factors affecting female employees' satisfaction. Similar results are issued by Sowmya & Panchanatham (2011), who have found that working conditions have great impact on job satisfaction in banking sector in India. However, our results are contrasted with the findings of Cano & Castillo (2004) who have revealed that working conditions are the least important when it comes to job satisfaction. Our findings related to dissatisfaction with the employers' concerns about employees might be explained by the obtained responses in relation to working conditions. Insufficient employers' concerns about employees



and unfavourable working conditions represent one of the reasons why they would change the job.

Another important finding comes from results of tested hypothesis 4. Research finding indicates that the more diseases increase, the less satisfaction with the employer's concerns about employees will be. The largest group of women who would like to change the job reported suffering from three diseases in parallel. Hence, having more diseases at the same time indicate that women in front office would rather leave the job. Moreover, we have found that health is shown as the most significant factor for women, followed by job and family. Obtained results of given sequences might be explained by the postulation that women prefer to be healthy to earn for their family. Besides, research results with reference to hypothesis 5 show that stress has an important role in job satisfaction. Similar findings revealed Babin & Boles (1998). Also, findings coincide with the results in Islamic banks (e.g. Khan et al., 2013). On the other hand, although women are not satisfied with the job due to negative stress effects, they do not think of changing the job. These findings further suggest that HRM should develop health policies, programs and practices to improve both physical and mental health of women in front office for well-being of organization, employees, and their families.

With regard to hypothesis 6, continuing education is not linked to job satisfaction and loyalty, but rather to the work and family life alignment. Contrary, Metle (2001) demonstrated that with increased educational level, the level of satisfaction of job decreases among Kuwaiti women. Given that women recognize never-ending need for education, and that the largest group is not able to fully harmonize business and family life, results suggest that HRM at banks should foster programs that would make possible for women to continue with education.

Finally, research findings derived from women's responses with regard to leaving the job in front office have implications for HRM and business management policies and practices. To maximize the returns on available talents for well-being of both organizations and employees, our research findings suggest developing HR and compensation strategies to build an effective and competitive organization. HRM should foster career advancement and promotions as growth and development opportunities for female employees in customer-services positions. Besides, HRM and business managers should re-evaluate organizational culture and develop emotional intelligence of managers as well as leadership skills.

## Conclusion

The study aims to shed light the understanding of the effects work-health-personal life balance have

on job satisfaction and loyalty among women working in front office, based on survey data collected from the banking sector of Serbia. More specifically, it examines the relationships and perceived importance of various attributes of the domains and by identifying similarities and differences in responses among employed women in banking front offices. Besides, it predicts the variables that are associated with job satisfaction pertaining to testing of the hypothesis. Finally, it summarizes the results of assessed significance between the most important elements of life and reveals attitudes to why women would change job in front office.

Our research findings indicate that women in Serbian society continue to have the traditional understanding when it comes to family. Results reveal that work-family balance influences job satisfaction, but not loyalty. Unexpectedly, working time is not linked to job satisfaction, neither to loyalty, but rather to work-family balance. We have found that convenient working conditions and better employers' concern about employees are factors affecting female employees' satisfaction. Insufficient employers' concerns about employees and unfavourable working conditions represent some of the reasons why they would change the job. An important finding reveals that as diseases increase, the less satisfaction with the employer's concerns about employees will be. In parallel, having more diseases at the same time indicate that women in front office would rather leave the job. Health is shown as the most significant factor for women. Stress has an important role in job satisfaction, but women would not change the job due to negative effects of stress. Continuing education is rather linked to work-family life balance than to job satisfaction and loyalty among women in front office. Finally, the main reasons why women would change a job in front office are: disaffection with paid work and working conditions, limited career growth and advancement, organizational culture, morality at work and unsupportive management.

The study has some limitations. First, data were collected with a self-administered questionnaire based on internet that reflects subjectivity of answers which might cause an underrating or overrating of results. Hence, future research should conduct qualitative studies to create potential to obtain deep factors that influence job satisfaction and loyalty with regard to work, health and personal life alignment. Secondly, this study was focused only to data collection from one country and single industry, i.e. banking industry of Serbia. Thus, future research should incorporate perspectives of women in front office positions from other industries in Serbia. Also, future research should include cross-cultural exploration to further examine the similarities and differences across the Balkan, poorly researched region with

regard to effects of work-health-personal life balance on job satisfaction and loyalty among women in front office.

Despite its limitation, the study can contribute both to theorists and practitioners in two important ways. First, the paper contributes to the human resource theory, organizational behaviour theory, work-life balance theory, and research on front office work in service sector by extending a general work-life balance concept with the health related cause and effects and by conceptualizing multidimensional research variables related to work-health-personal life balance, job satisfaction and loyalty among women in front office. Also, the

paper contributes to enriching the literature on job satisfaction in a country's and regional context that has been insufficiently researched so far. Secondly, front office employees play a vital role in providing quality service to the customers. Service management literature argues that employees' satisfaction and loyalty are main contributors to the effective service delivery in service industry (Galperin & Lituchy 2014). Thus, by focusing on the women in front office, this paper contributes to HR managers, business managers and policy makers by addressing the gap of work-health-personal life balance, satisfaction and loyalty of female employees in service sectors, traditionally outnumbered by women.

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