
The Effect of Internal Market Orientation and Family–Work Balance Actions on Salespeople’s Perception of Family–Work Balance and Their Performance

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. H. H. H.', with a large, sweeping flourish underneath.

Date: 02.05.2024

DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

The thesis explores the impact of investing resources in creating a family–work balanced (FWB) working environment and adopting internal market orientation (IMO) on the well-being of employees and the organization. The aim is twofold: to understand what drives employees' perception of FWB within the organization and to explore the impact of employees' perceived FWB on their job satisfaction and performance. The objectives of this study include an examination how employees' workplace expectations, individual differences, and competencies affect their perception of FWB and its impact on their performance and exploring how the adoption of IMO and FWB policies jointly influence employees' perception of balance between work and family/personal life. The research involved the sales departments of 166 commercial companies in Greece and considered two levels: the managerial (corporate) level and the employee level. This thesis makes several contributions to literature. It presents a new perspective by jointly examining FWB and IMO, which have previously been researched separately. It also makes a methodological contribution by integrating multiple levels of analysis in IMO and FWB research using structural equation modelling for multilevel analysis. Additionally, it offers practical proposals for effectively managing IMO adoption and FWB actions. Overall, this thesis bridges the two highly related research streams of IMO and FWB and attempts to answer some of the questions the extant literature has not addressed.

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter lays the conceptual foundation for examining the intersection of family–work balance (FWB) and internal market orientation (IMO), two constructs that are increasingly relevant for employee well-being and organizational performance. It traces the evolution of FWB through spillover theory (Staines, 1980), enrichment theory (McNall et al., 2010), and needs theory (Baard et al., 2004), positioning balance as a dynamic and subjective outcome shaped by life stages and individual needs. Simultaneously, it outlines the development of internal marketing (IM), from Berry et al.’s (1976) foundational view of employees as internal customers to more recent frameworks emphasizing responsiveness to employee needs (Gounaris, 2006; Lings, 2004).

The chapter identifies a significant gap: while both FWB and IMO have been independently linked to positive outcomes like job satisfaction and performance, their combined effect has not been empirically tested. It raises the question of whether these constructs, when applied together, create synergy or lead to conflict – particularly given tensions between human resources (HR) and marketing over implementation responsibilities. The lack of research on individual perceptions of FWB and the undefined notion of “perceived value” within IMO further highlight the need for integrated investigation.

This thesis aims to assess how jointly adopting FWB and IMO impacts employees’ perceptions, satisfaction, and performance. It employs an interdisciplinary, multilevel design combining sociological, psychological, and business perspectives. It is original because it represents the first attempt to empirically test the dual impact of FWB and IMO, with implications for theory and practice. This chapter concludes by outlining the structure of the thesis, which includes a literature review, an overview of the qualitative phase of the thesis, formulation of the hypotheses, an overview of the quantitative phase of the thesis, and practical recommendations.

1.1 Introduction

The relationship between work and family roles has become a crucial issue in the contemporary organizational environment. This thesis aims to fill a gap in the literature by examining under-researched parallel emerging areas of FWB and IMO, and their combined influence on employee well-being and organizational performance within sales organizations. Based on the sociology, psychology, and marketing literature, this study weaves theoretical concepts to illuminate a three-dimensional view of the ways in which internal organizational factors and pressures of life collide.

FWB has been extensively researched through frameworks such as spillover theory (Staines, 1980), enrichment theory (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), needs theory (Baard et al., 2004), and fit theory (Chatman, 1991). However, there have been few empirical studies: they only emphasize or pay attention to direct effects of FWB policies on job satisfaction or turnover and cannot consider subjective perceptions in the middle or organizational culture. Hence, this thesis seeks to account for by exploring employees' experiences of FWB not as a set of ready-made benefits, but rather as an ongoing relational process that requires the channelling of personal life stages, individual expectations, and organizational responses. This follows suggestions for a more situated approach to work–family dynamics (Voydanoff, 2005).

In parallel, IMO has developed from its initial IM origins (Berry et al., 1976; Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000) to a broader concept in which employees are treated as internal customers. IMO focuses on three main pillars: gathering knowledge of employee requirements, spreading such knowledge, and taking action based on it (Gounaris, 2006; Lings & Greenley, 2005). Despite increasing attention, IMO has been treated as a unidimensional construct rather than as a construct consisting of multiple relational aspects, resulting in an incomplete understanding of how its various relational constituents – such as interdepartmental cooperation and managerial responsiveness – might impact employee–work experiences. In addition, there is some

controversy as to whether IMO should be driven by marketing or HR (Gounaris, 2010; Hales, 1994), with implications for the implementation.

The literature on FWB and IMO recognizes the potential of both to bring about positive individual ramifications, such as increased job satisfaction, retention, and performance (Allen et al., 2000; Sujana et al., 1994). However, there is a surprising gap in empirical studies regarding the joint application of these two lines of inquiry. There is no rule to the game that if you take two theoretically positive contributing variables you get always “synergy” between the two. Drawing on the analogy of innovation and customer-centric strategies, which may lead to conflict when operationalized by different organizational units, this thesis investigates whether FWB and IMO can be implemented simultaneously without diminishing returns or internal resistance.

This study draws on an interdisciplinary and multilevel research design to critically investigate the interface. It aims to construct a new model of the value and performance of employees by combining sociological, psychological, and marketing theories. The theoretical contribution is a dual investigation of the initiatives by which IMO can serve as a driver for FWB and how FWB perceptions will itself strengthen or weaken IM activities. Importantly, this study uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative data to cross-validate the findings. The qualitative phase captures the nuanced, lived realities of salespeople navigating work–life boundaries, revealing the heterogeneity of FWB expectations and how these are shaped by gender, caregiving roles, and managerial attitudes. The quantitative phase then operationalizes these emergent insights and tests them on a scale, using hierarchical linear modelling to control organization- and individual-level variance. The integration of these results confirms compatibility with previous research and indicates some discrepancies. For example, while previous research points to managerial support as key to the success of FWB, the qualitative data reveal how cultural values and informal forms of support frequently overshadow written policies in influencing the perception of balance.

Accordingly, there are two major gaps to fill in the literature: first, the need for models that integrate the effects of IMO and FWB on performance; and second, the need for a better understanding of how perceptions, instead of just availability, shape outcomes. This thesis addresses these gaps by presenting a conceptual and empirical model that considers the relational, the perceptual, and the contextual.

In conclusion, this thesis makes a valuable step forward for organizational theory for the following reasons:

- It proposes a new integrating framework that frames IMO and FWB as mutually interdependent constructs.
- It emphasizes the centrality of perception as an intermediary between formal organizational policies.
- It provides empirical support that IMO and FWB have a different effect when making mutual references to organizational culture, managerial responsiveness, and individual employee needs.

This theoretical advance contributes to an important void in the academic literature and provides leaders with practical guidelines for creating and implementing more adaptive and sustainable organizational strategies.

The relationship between FWB and IMO is a significant yet underexplored aspect of organizational dynamics. FWB is a highly personalized concept – the product of specific life stages, career objectives, and personal idiosyncrasies. Balance means something different to everyone, depending on your stage in life, and the policies you expect from your employer to support this balance change over time. Meanwhile, IMO, as a marketing strategy, makes the effort to respond and to consider the employees' wants as their customers as to if a business has satisfied its customers the benefit trickles down to the organization. This blurring of the lines between the two concepts is of particular importance as the organization's power to build an

employee-centric work environment hinges on its capability of acknowledging and accommodating these different expectations.

One of the biggest challenges in this research field is the notion of what value means for employees in terms of their personal and professional life. Historically, perceived value has been measured in the context of payrolls and career growth alone, which do not entirely encapsulate what employees gain from an employer who supports their work-life harmony. A company that incorporates IMO-driven programmes – including flexible work options, tailored career pathways, and a focus on wellness – can play a major role in enhancing the way employees perceive their position in the organization. Companies can improve employee engagement and long-term retention by focusing on both career development and personal fulfilment.

Therefore, how IM efforts are conducted is crucial for the success of FWB initiatives. Some contend that the programmes should be only HR driven, while others suggest that marketing should partner with HR to develop an authentic “internal brand” in which the employees believe. Because IMO emphasizes employees as valued internal customers, collaboration between HR and marketing has the potential to enhance the internal culture and effectiveness of a communication strategy to support the company’s brand promise for employees’ prosperity.

One area of particular interest to be explored by jointly considering FWB and IMO is the question of how they may combine to enhance organizational outcomes. Both are positively related to positive outcomes when implemented separately; however, there has been no research on their interaction when both are present. While IMO values individualized FWB expectations, it also promotes responsiveness and engagement. In turn, this could result in more on-the-job productivity, increased workplace cohesiveness and, ultimately, a more viable business model.

Although IMO is typically evaluated at the corporate (managerial) level in the literature (Gounaris et al., 2010), perceived FWB is subjective and should be assessed at the employee level. Therefore,

data from both levels are needed to enable hierarchical analysis before second objective of this thesis can be addressed.

By exploring the connection between FWB and IMO, researchers can contribute valuable insights into how organizations can strategically design work environments that enhance employee satisfaction and performance. As FWB expectations shift over time and the recognition of a personalized workplace policy approaches, the value of an IMO-centred approach cannot be overstated. This relationship might provide insights for businesses to develop more flexible, employee-focused approaches to work, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach to work–life. This flexibility could allow an individualized approach that reflects the needs of a multidimensional workforce.

1.2 Research Gaps

There are some essential gaps in the extant FWB literature. One notable gap is the absence of empirical evidence to elucidate an individual's perception of FWB. Prior studies have mainly examined the direct correlation between FWB perks and outcomes such as work satisfaction (Allen, 2001). Additionally, there has been no investigation regarding the elements influencing an individual's expectations in the work environment to achieve the “right” balance. In other words, individuals may easily use different approaches to define FWB. Moreover, various stages of their life cycle can cause this personal, subjective definition to vary (Washington & Mahalingam, 2016). It is crucial to fill this gap because it hinders management from evaluating the organization's capacity to support people in achieving FWB. Organizations may inadvertently neglect or overinvest in improving the financial welfare of their employees. Either way, this results in the organization's misallocation of resources.

Despite significant advancements in research on IMO adoption in recent years, there are still unresolved problems. Researchers have not yet defined employees' “perceived value” clearly and

relevantly. Prior studies have predominantly examined the idea via a microeconomic lens, focusing on their professional responsibilities (Gounaris et al., 2010). The working environment for employees is connected to how their employment affects their personal lives. Research on FWB provides a robust theoretical foundation for conducting more empirical studies. Second, scholars have expressed the opinion that IM programmes should be executed by the marketing department in close collaboration and coordination with the HR department (Gounaris et al., 2010), but this view has not yet been sufficiently elaborated and examined. Moreover, other scholars have postulated that this should be an exclusive interest of the HR department (Hales, 1994). It is necessary to clarify this issue to determine the department or departments responsible for executing these programmes and to prevent potential conflicts among them, which can prove disastrous for the outcome of the cooperation.

Although the positive contribution of IMO and FWB separately to an organization's performance has been well established, the positive outcome of the joint application of these two constructs cannot be taken for granted. Applying two positive notions does not necessarily guarantee a positive result. An example is the efforts to co-establish innovation and the customer-centric philosophy of an organization. On the one hand, it is widely accepted that innovation is a positive characteristic of organizations that allows them to push forward their performance, revenues, and competitive advantages, among other benefits. On the other hand, several decades ago, it was widely accepted that a customer-centric strategy is strongly related to positive and beneficial results for most organizations.

However, because the application of these two constructs – innovation and a customer-centric strategy – relies on the coordination of the research and development (R&D) and marketing departments in an organization, it does not always produce a positive result. Accordingly, the challenge of this thesis is to identify whether the application of two “positive” notions of IMO and FWB simultaneously can also create a positive outcome. These two notions have never been

examined jointly. It is necessary to investigate this outcome because if it proves to be positive, then we will have a convincing proposal for the companies to invest in specific actions to improve their performance; otherwise, investments in this direction could be a waste of resources.

This thesis utilizes an interdisciplinary method by combining the theory of FWB from sociology with the disconfirmation paradigm from psychology and the theory of IMO adoption from business to address the identified gaps. We examine whether a business can enhance its employees' worth by harmonizing their performance goals and objectives.

On the one hand, the literature suggests that there is a direct or an indirect interaction between FWB, job satisfaction (Kraimer & Wayne, 2004), and organizational performance (Frone et al., 1997) improvement. On the other hand, several empirical studies have shown that there is also a significant relationship between IM (Gounaris, 2008a) and job performance. No study has investigated FWB and IM jointly and the effect that these two may have on the employees' performance. The (Figure 1.1). depict this particular gap that this study seeks to fill.

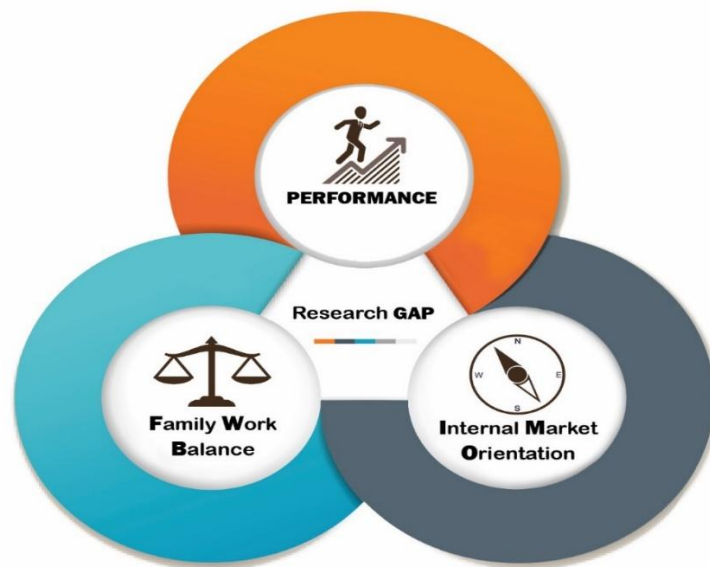


Figure 1.1 A schematic depiction of the literature gap that this study seeks to fill

1.3 Aim of the Study and Objectives

This thesis explores whether investing resources to create a FWB working environment and to adopt IMO simultaneously contributes to the “well-being” of the employees and the organization.

Specifically, this aim is twofold:

- To understand what drives employees’ perception of FWB within the organization.
- To explore the impact of the employees’ perceived FWB on their job satisfaction and performance.
-

Objectives

The following objectives will address this aim:

- To examine how the employees’ workplace expectations, individual differences, and competencies affect their perception of FWB and the impact on employees’ performance.
- To explore how and under what conditions the adoption of IMO and FWB policies jointly influence the employees’ perception of the balance (between work and family/personal life) they achieve in their working environment.

This thesis bridges these two highly related research streams and will attempt to answer some of the questions the extant literature has not addressed. In this respect, this thesis seeks to move the academic discourse forward by exploring the effect of IMO adoption on employee FWB and, subsequently, on employees’ job performance.

1.4 Originality of this Thesis

This thesis adds theoretically to the IMO and FWB literature and provides practical insights for executives. It attempts to address the identified deficiencies to assist management and people in achieving corporate and individual goals. The ramifications of this endeavour are substantial in terms of both social and economic aspects. It will enhance our comprehension of the factors and outcomes associated with obtaining FWB for the workforce. The findings will have the following impacts:

- They will benefit the individual employees and their fit in the social environment, increasing the value they can get from their work, which is also one of the main objectives of IMO.
- They will probably help organizations improve their competitiveness and performance by enhancing employees' performance
- They will allow companies to demonstrate strong evidence of a socially responsible organization.

The results will be crucial for management in various firms to develop and execute suitable and efficient employee-related strategies to enhance performance. By doing this, firms may improve their reputation in society and the labour market, making attracting and hiring talented and charismatic workers simpler, ultimately boosting the organization's competitiveness.

The thesis also contributes significantly through the selected methodological approach. It highlights the need for multilevel research in organizational studies using a hierarchical research design and data collected from different organizational sources.

Attaining FWB can have substantial academic repercussions. Modelling the causes and effects of FWB and IMO can significantly enhance theoretical understanding. This thesis represents the first time that the outcomes of the two constructs used together are studied.

1.5 Contribution

This thesis offers a dual contribution to both academic theory and managerial practice by bridging three important yet previously disconnected streams of research: IMO, FWB, and sales performance. Through the integration of these domains, this thesis refines existing conceptual frameworks and provides actionable insights for organizations seeking to enhance employee well-being and performance in demanding commercial environments. The key contributions are outlined below.

1.5.1 Theoretical Contribution

This thesis makes an original theoretical contribution by integrating three interrelated yet traditionally siloed streams of literature: IMO, FWB, and sales performance. While these fields have evolved individually, their intersection, especially in the high-demand context of sales, remains underexplored. This thesis refines the conceptualization of IMO as both a structural and relational capability, emphasizing that its effectiveness is mediated by organizational cohesion, demographic variables, and managerial engagement. It introduces a deeper understanding of how IMO is perceived differently across employee subgroups, informed by gender, caregiving status, and departmental integration.

In the FWB domain, this thesis shifts the focus from policy availability to employee perceptions of support, thereby underscoring the subjective dimension of work–life integration. It responds

to calls for more dynamic models by incorporating bidirectional work–family interference and demographic sensitivity, particularly relevant in occupational contexts like sales.

Most significantly, this thesis contributes to the sales literature by embedding IMO and FWB into the everyday pressures experienced by sales professionals. It proposes that these constructs act either synergistically or compensatorily depending on managerial responsiveness, interdepartmental collaboration, and personal circumstances. This triangulated contribution offers a novel, empirically grounded framework for understanding how internal organizational strategies impact frontline sales outcomes through employee well-being.

1.5.2 Managerial Implication

This thesis carries important managerial implications for sales managers, HR professionals, and executive decision-makers. First, it advocates for the strategic tailoring of IMO and FWB practices through internal market segmentation, mirroring external customer strategies. Managers are encouraged to recognize diverse employee needs, such as caregiving responsibilities or career stage, and to align support initiatives accordingly. This personalization enhances the impact of internal strategies on employee retention, motivation, and performance.

Second, the findings emphasize the necessity of embedding IMO and FWB not only structurally but also culturally and relationally. Effective implementation requires adaptive, informed, and empathetic leadership that reinforces cross-functional collaboration and organizational trust. FWB, when fully integrated, becomes a strategic facilitator of performance rather than an optional welfare add-on.

Third, this thesis provides evidence-based justification for treating FWB as a strategic investment rather than a discretionary expense. The empirical results link FWB support with improved job

satisfaction and performance, particularly when complemented by appropriate resources and managerial engagement. This insight supports executives in making data-informed decisions about resource allocation, ensuring alignment between internal well-being and external performance objectives.

Ultimately, this thesis recommends a holistic, integrative approach to IM and work–life balance – one that considers employee heterogeneity, fosters a supportive organizational culture, and aligns human capital development with long-term business sustainability.

1.6 Outlook

The following is a brief description of the structure of this thesis.

Chapter 1 provides a review of the critical concepts of the study (IMO and FWB), identifies the research gaps, and outlines the aim and objectives. The uniqueness of the selected topic is demonstrated.

Chapter 2 reviews the available literature and summarizes the most significant research on the subject to enhance the comprehension of current knowledge on the topic.

Chapter 3 demonstrates the suitability of qualitative research to achieve this thesis’s aim. It presents several research paradigms, explains the reasoning behind selecting a specific paradigm, and includes details on the sampling technique, sampling frame, and sampling units. The analysis consists of evaluating the data-collection procedure and the reliability and validity of the measuring tools.

Chapter 4 discusses the qualitative results from the semi-structured in-depth interviews, highlighting the emerging themes and factors influencing this study.

Chapter 5 introduces the study's hypotheses and explains the reasons for supporting them. It also presents the research framework at both the organizational and employee levels.

Chapter 6 details the quantitative research design and technique. It provides an overview of several research paradigms and a rationale for choosing a specific paradigm. This chapter discusses the significance of selecting a hierarchical study design and provides information on the sampling technique, frame, and units. Moreover, the data-collecting procedure is examined.

Chapter 7 presents the results of the quantitative research, including the outcomes of the hypothesis testing and multilevel analysis.

Chapter 8 thoroughly discusses the study outcomes and presents several practical recommendations from the investigation. It integrates the results of the quantitative analysis with the concepts and developed hypotheses. It outlines the significance of this thesis in this scientific field.

Chapter 9 concludes this thesis by providing theoretical implications, implications for management, limitations, and future research directions.

To build a comprehensive understanding of how FWB and IMO interact to influence employee outcomes and organizational performance, it is essential to first ground this study within the existing body of knowledge. Hence, Chapter 2 critically examines the extant literature on both constructs, tracing their conceptual evolution, theoretical foundations, and empirical applications. By reviewing key debates, identifying inconsistencies, and highlighting areas of convergence and divergence in prior research, this literature review lays the necessary groundwork for framing the

study's hypotheses and research model. This review not only situates this thesis within the broader academic discourse, but also further clarifies the unique contribution it seeks to make by bridging two traditionally distinct streams of inquiry.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter builds the theoretical and conceptual foundations of this study by presenting a critique of the literature relative to the two main constructs of this study: IMO and FWB. It discusses the origins and use of these constructs in relation to the larger marketing, HR management, and organizational behaviour fields, and highlights points of tangency, divergence, and underexplored topics that further justify this thesis.

The chapter starts with an extensive analysis of IMO, conceived as an IM philosophy that places the identification and satisfaction of the internal clients' needs as a valid strategic priority. Based on seminal studies, this chapter proposes that IMO comprises three major dimensions: generation of intelligence inside the organization, communication, and internal responsiveness. This orientation is suggested to have positive effects on job satisfaction, motivation, and performance, by providing a supportive internal climate. The literature also demonstrates that successful IMO implementation usually necessitates close intradepartmental cooperation between, for example, marketing and HR management, to coordinate internal competencies with the expectations of the employees.

This chapter proceeds to discuss FWB, paying attention to its structural and perceptual dimensions. Building on role theory, spillover theory, and the work–family enrichment framework, FWB is considered and tested as a dynamic concept shaped by individual traits (e.g., personality, career orientation, gender, age, and family status) and organizational parameters (e.g., availability of policies, managerial support, and allocation of resources). Indeed, the literature indicates that FWB is not just a matter of whether employees are aware of the policies; rather, is constructed based on how employees view their organization's support for balancing work and family obligations. Personal needs, social norms, and contextual factors contribute to these perceptions, rendering the construct multifaceted and deeply contextual.

A key finding from the literature review is that it is hard to find integrative studies that have tested both IMO and FWB in the same study and research model. While IMO and FWB have been studied extensively alone, there is a gap in the literature regarding their singular or combined impact on work-related outcomes including performance, engagement, and satisfaction. The discrepancy is particularly acute in high-stress work environments such as sales, where employees are subject to greater pressure, emotional labour, and performance scrutiny. Salespeople frequently work in a context that requires both organizational support and personal resilience (Kemp et al., 2016), indicating the interweaving between IMO and FWB could provide a more complete understanding of organizational supports for employees' well-being.

This chapter discusses the theoretical structure underpinning the construction of the study's conceptual framework, referring to various models to understand the interrelationships between the constructs investigated. The resource-based framework is used to model the way in which internal resources such as IMO and FWB can become strategic resources when optimally deployed. Social exchange theory helps explain how perceived support produces reciprocation of attitudes and behaviour in employees. Furthermore, the job demands–resources model puts into context the relationship between work stressors and the available organizational and personal resources that may buffer against the impact of work-related stressors. Taken together, these theoretical frameworks supply a multilevel explanatory lens through which internal policies interact with individual dispositions to affect pivotal outcomes.

The literature review also considers the multilevel nature of organizational life to acknowledge that employees' experiences are influenced by not only who they are personally, but the wider conditions in the organization. This reasoning is entirely consistent with multilevel modelling in teaching research, and it justifies why, analytically, both corporate-level practices and employee-level perceptions are given a prominent place in the study. In addition, it supports the purpose of this study in that employee perceptions of constructs such as IMO and FWB have been

examined, which can be related to the effective consequences of internal policies rather than to their planned form only.

The final part of this chapter discusses several outstanding issues and limitations of the extant literature. These also involve mixed evidence about the cross-cultural generalizability of IMO, equivocal evidence about the sustainability of FWB in the long run, and the absence of empirical work testing for the role of organizational resources in the mediation and or moderation of these links. Moreover, the existing studies do not provide clear evidence on how employee characteristics moderate the relationship between organizational practices of support and perceived support and performance in sales-driven industries.

In brief, Chapter 2 develops a sound theoretical basis for this thesis, presenting a critical review of available literature on IMO and FWB. It highlights the lack of coherence in the field that this thesis seeks to remedy and provides the theoretical basis for the hypotheses and methodological approach in the subsequent chapters. Thus, this chapter presents a strong argument for the importance and justification of this thesis.

2.1 The Theoretical Advance of Internal Marketing

Berry et al. (1976) introduced IM in the mid-1970s. They suggested that an organization must prioritize understanding workers' needs and enhancing their job satisfaction to meet its consumers' expectations effectively. Furthermore, they argued that the rules are valid for the external market (customers) but also apply to the internal market (employees). Based on its initial definition, IM involves the creation of internal goods (jobs) to meet the demands of an internal market (workers) and align with the organization's goals (Berry et al., 1976). Later, Rafiq and Ahmed (2000) defined IM as a strategic initiative that uses marketing techniques to address organizational resistance to change and to align, motivate, and coordinate employees across

functions to implement corporate strategies effectively and deliver customer satisfaction by creating motivated and customer-focused employees. Tortosa-Edo et al. (2010) postulated that IMO constitutes a philosophy that suggests the importance of having satisfied and motivated contact with employees to provide superior customer service. Overall, researchers have not reached a consensus on a definitive definition of IM. Substantial disparities and uncertainty in the conceptual framework have hindered the empirical investigation of the idea (Ballantyne, 2000; Lings, 2004; Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000). Table 2.1 presents a list of IMO definitions presented in the literature.

Table 2.2. List of IMO definitions

| Definition | Reference |
|--|-------------------------|
| IMO is a managerial philosophy that treats employees as internal customers, focusing on understanding and satisfying their needs to enhance organizational performance. | Lings & Greenley (2005) |
| IMO involves generating, disseminating, and responding to information regarding employees' needs, aligning internal practices with market orientation principles. | Gounaris (2006) |
| IMO encompasses managerial behaviours aimed at understanding and satisfying employees' needs through systematic information processes, enhancing employee satisfaction and organizational performance. | Lings (2004) |
| IMO is the implementation of marketing-like activities within the organization to ensure employees are treated as internal customers, with their needs identified and satisfied to improve service quality and customer satisfaction. | Tortosa et al. (2009) |
| IMO refers to the organization's orientation towards its employees, involving the generation of information about employee needs, dissemination of this information, and responsiveness to it, aiming to foster a supportive internal environment. | Fang et al. (2014) |
| IMO is a multidimensional construct comprising internal intelligence generation, dissemination, and responsiveness, focusing on employees as internal customers to enhance service quality and customer satisfaction. | Gounaris (2008) |

| Definition | Reference |
|--|------------------------|
| IMO is a type of organizational culture that captures employees' perceptions of managerial care, involving internal-market intelligence generation, dissemination, and responsiveness. | Ruizalba et al. 2016 |
| IMO is an organizational process that improves interdepartmental relationships and employee satisfaction, serving to leverage performance. | Gounaris et al. (2010) |
| IM is the process of viewing employees as internal customers and jobs as internal products that satisfy the needs and wants of these internal customers while addressing the objectives of the organization. | Berry (1981) |
| IM is a planned effort using a marketing-like approach to overcome organizational resistance to change, align, motivate, and integrate employees towards the effective implementation of corporate and functional strategies to deliver customer satisfaction through a process of creating motivated and customer-oriented employees. | Rafiq & Ahmed (2000) |
| IM is the application of marketing techniques to the internal environment of the organization, aiming to align, motivate, and integrate employees towards the effective implementation of corporate and functional strategies. | Rafiq & Ahmed (1993) |

Based on the literature, we can identify five main stages of understanding the concept of IM: (1) employee satisfaction (employee as a customer), (2) developing customer consciousness, (3) implementation of Marketing-like strategy, (4) internal relational approach, and (5) IM as a dynamic capability.

Stage 1: Employee Orientation The main element of this stage is the idea that the employees are internal customers. This opinion started from Berry (1981), who proposed the idea of an employee as a customer and jobs as “products”, and continued with Tansuhaj et al. (1991), who argued that the main element of IM is to motivate and satisfy the needs of internal customers and Greene et al. (1994), who said that employees do buy jobs from employers. However, a strong critique came against this opinion, mainly from Hales (1994), debating that employers represent the buyer who pays to buy an employee’s work. If the employee were the customer, they should have the option not to purchase the product or choose a different one; that does not apply in real

life because the employee does not have this option because their employer could fire them. In the same stream, others have argued that if an employee was a customer, they should “always be right”, which is not the case in real life (Rafiq & Ahmed, 1993).

Stage 2: Customer Orientation There is a need to create the right attitude in employees to be more customer oriented. The main element of this stage focuses on service to the external customer, arguing that the employees must develop customer consciousness. At this stage, the definition states that employees are most effectively motivated for service-mindedness and customer-oriented behaviour through an active, marketing-oriented strategy involving marketing activities inside (George, 1990). By applying marketing-like activities internally, we can identify an organization’s internal market of employees most effectively, motivating them in terms of market orientation and sales-mindedness (Gronroos, 1985). Other researchers have criticized this idea by saying that merely developing customer-conscious employees is insufficient and, more importantly, developing effective coordination between first line and background employees (Rafiq & Ahmed, 1993).

Stage 3: Strategy Orientation As the notion of IM became more mature in the 1990s, several scholars recognized that IM has a strategic role. The opinion that IM plays a substantial role in strategy implementation is essential during this stage. IM involves selling the marketing strategy to the entire firm by creating a marketing programme for the internal market that aligns with the programme for external customers and competition (Piercy & Morgan, 1991). Claiming that IM has the primary role of avoiding organizational obstacles, when necessary, other researchers have characterized IM as an organized initiative to address organizational opposition to change and unite, inspire, and include personnel to successfully execute corporate and functional plans (Rafiq & Ahmed 1993). However, IM is much more than implementing a marketing programme.

Stage 4: IM as a Relational Approach At this stage, IM is recognized as a relational approach. Internal exchanges among employees must operate effectively before the organization can achieve

superior performance in its external markets (Dunne & Barnes, 2000). Other scholars have argued that organizations should lower the barriers among departments. Organizations should integrate the related functions successfully to reach their objectives (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003). From this perspective, the link between employees' jobs and how they affect the customers must be precise.

Stage 5: IM as a Dynamic Capability At this stage, IM is recognized as a dynamic capability. Adopting an IMO is essential for the development of a dynamic capability that has significant benefits for service organizations. This indirectly affects the team climate and improves their internal performance (Gounaris et al., 2020).

Only a limited number of organizations prioritize information management despite growing research interest given the lack of the necessary philosophy to support the execution of IM strategies (Gounaris, 2006). While IM essentially aims to stimulate employee motivation and satisfaction through marketing-related approaches, IMO extends the notion by adding an even more deliberate and ordered process for the recognition and fulfilment of staff needs. IMO goes beyond traditional IM by attaching the active generation, dissemination, and responsiveness to internal market intelligence, resembling external market orientation activities (Lings, 2004). In short, IMO blends a scientifically tested understanding of what drives employees' needs and behaviour and organizational obstacles with management's strategic acumen, providing the means to make better strategic decisions about who is most suited to take on what roles in the organization. IMO is not concerned with communication and motivation like IM. Rather, IMO focuses on the capturing and interpretation of employee perception to strategically influence the decision-making processes and overall performance of the organization.

The evolution from IM to IMO represents a significant change in that nature of how entities view their staff. Whereas IM encourages motivation and involvement, IMO ensures that employees are strategically located within the organization's general market-led context (Gounaris, 2008). This

shift is important in today's constantly changing corporate world – as employee validation and efficiency within the organization directly influence the dynamics of relationships with external customers and ultimately the organization's results. Instituting IMO enables enterprises to foster a culture in which workers feel appreciated, acknowledged and empowered – not merely through warm-and-fuzzy engagement programmes, but with evidence-based insights that make their workplace better. In the end, IMO leads to an organization that is more flexible and responsive, which supports the argument that internal alignment is the basis for external business performance.

IMO represents a synthesis of specific beliefs with specific “marketing-like” behaviours (Gounaris, 2006). The values refer to the recognition that employees, irrespective of their organizational rank and hierarchical authority, impact the value the company's consumers perceive (Flipo, 1986). According to the previous definitions and descriptions, IM is a set of activities based on communication. Its main goal is to change employees' thinking and to make them care more about customer needs. A more complete and contemporary definition claims that IM is a transformative process that allows an organization to generate value for employees while ensuring that their competencies and performance align with the organization's objectives (Gounaris et al., 2010). Here, the adoption of IMO refers to the extent to which the organization practices IM. IMO represents the organization's emphasis on the labour force and shows the management's commitment to them.

Each stage illustrates both the evolution of thought and the persistent tension between various perspectives. Notably, these debates set the stage for one of the identified research gaps regarding the execution of IM programmes, that is, whether they should be a joint marketing–HR initiative or reside solely within the HR domain.

2.1.1 Internal Market Orientation: Dimensions and Approaches

Several studies have contributed to the dimensions of IM. Hogg et al. (1998) claimed that IM has the following dimensions: motivation, communication, empowerment, training, and development. Later, Rafiq and Ahmed (2000) proposed a revised framework for IM, including elements such as job satisfaction, understanding and distinction, interfunctional coordination and integration, training, and incentives. Interfunctional coordination and integration mean that different departments in the organization can work together to achieve smooth communication. Understanding and differentiation imply that an organization recognizes that each employee can be unique and different from the others with distinct characteristics that need a particular treatment. Four years later, another essential IM researcher suggested that IMO comprises three dimensions, namely internal market intelligence that should be collected, internal communication that should take place between managers and employees, and the organization's response to that intelligence aiming to ensure employee job satisfaction (Lings, 2004). The following year, Lings and Greenley (2005) identified and confirmed a similar set of five dimensions for IMO, namely (1) formal written information generation, (2) formal face-to-face information generation, (3) informal information generation, (4) communication and dissemination of information, and (5) responding to this internal market information. However, the following three dimensions seem to have prevailed, supported, and confirmed by another influential IMO researcher (Gounaris, 2006). This set has become more popular and aligns with the IMO dimensions of this thesis.

The first pillar refers to an organization's effort to collect intelligence on employees' needs and vocational expectations as the labour market and competition shape these. Through this process, the organization's management can better understand the employment conditions and what employees expect from their job (Lings, 2004). The second pillar refers to the organization's efforts to facilitate intelligence dissemination. This pillar is essential for two main reasons. First, employees can better understand the organization's strategy and management's expectations about their contribution to the company's effort to reach its objectives. Second, management

must better understand employees' difficulties and obstacles affecting their performance (Gounaris, 2006; Lingsm 2004). The third pillar refers to an organization's effort to be responsive to this intelligence and to optimize its policies and procedures in such a way as to improve employees' performance. This pillar includes recognizing employees' needs and adjusting their responses accordingly (Gounaris, 2006).

Finally, IMO creates a chain reaction in the organization. First, it enhances the internal effectiveness of marketing (Piercy & Morgan 1991), which increases employees' job satisfaction (Gounaris, 2006). Consequently, employees become more customer conscious (Gronroos, 1985), which in turn increases the organization's ability to fulfil customers' expectations (Conduit & Mavondo, 2001), which finally results in improving the organization's performance (Piercy, 1995). IM has two practical approaches. The holistic approach suggests that IM affects jobs and procedures to improve an organization's customer effectiveness through interdepartmental integration (George, 1990). This suggestion also reflects another opinion that IM is the integrating mechanism that enhances a company's coordination (Gronroos, 1985). The mechanical approach reflects the effort to communicate the necessary interdependency among all employees to increase their productivity and customer satisfaction (Ballantyne, 2003; Gummesson, 1987; Naudé et al., 2003).

Gounaris (2006) has provided the most complete and well-established opinion about the dimensions of IMO. This hierarchical approach framework (Figure 2.1) provides a complete, logical conceptualization of IMO based on three primary dimensions and ten sub-dimensions.

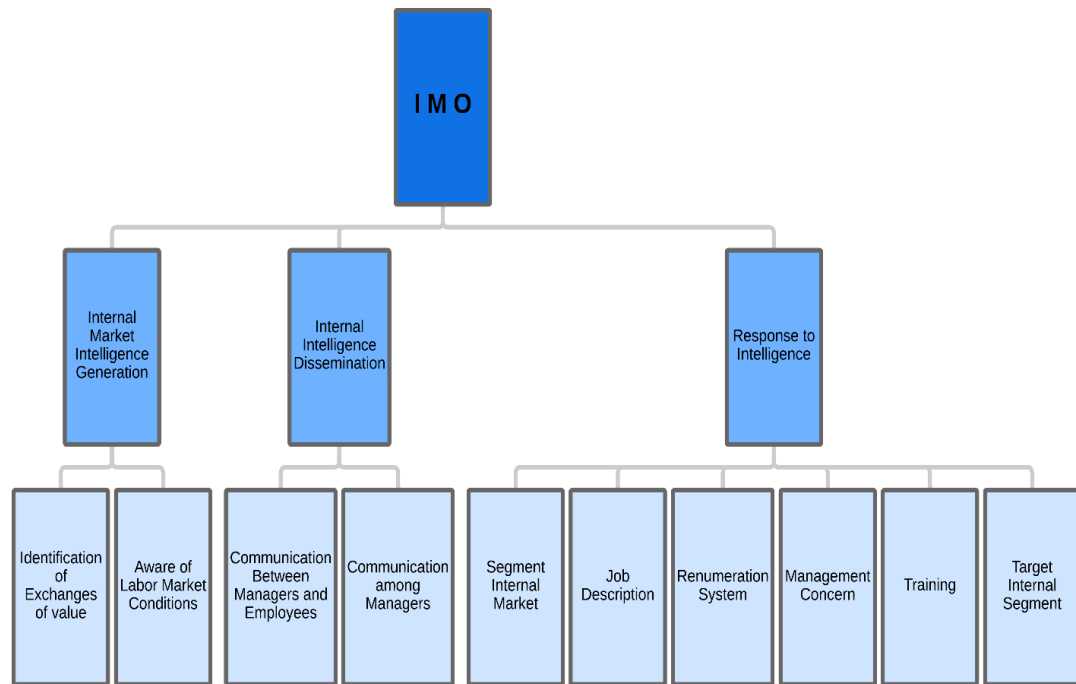


Figure 2.1 Dimensions of IMO (from Gounaris, 2006)

Although the contributions discussed above provide valuable insights into how organizations collect and utilize employee-related information, the literature has yet to clearly define “perceived value” within the context of FWB and IMO. This research gap points to a narrow microeconomic focus in prior work, despite the significant influence of employees’ subjective evaluations on both their professional and personal lives.

2.1.2 The Consequences and Benefits of Internal Market Orientation

During the last decades, many researchers have provided strong evidence that market orientation is a significant business philosophy and should be included in the strategy of contemporary firms and is positively related to their profitability (Avlonitis & Gounaris, 1997; Langerak, 2001; Matear et al., 2002). Furthermore, several researchers have supported the relationship between IM and market orientation (Gounaris, 2008b; Lings & Greenley 2009). More specifically, they have described IM as a mechanism that enables employees to behave more market-oriented and

motivates them (Gummesson 1987; Piercy & Morgan, 1990). Moreover, IM is grounded in the belief that the success of external marketing depends on the organization having motivated and satisfied employees (Greene et al., 1994).

Although internal and external markets are distinct constructs, they have conceptual similarities and can present capabilities such as information generation, dissemination, and organization responsiveness (Figure 2.2) (Lings & Greenley, 2009). Of course, balancing the activities and efforts between external marketing and IM for the organization to achieve maximum effectiveness is stressed (Lings, 1999).

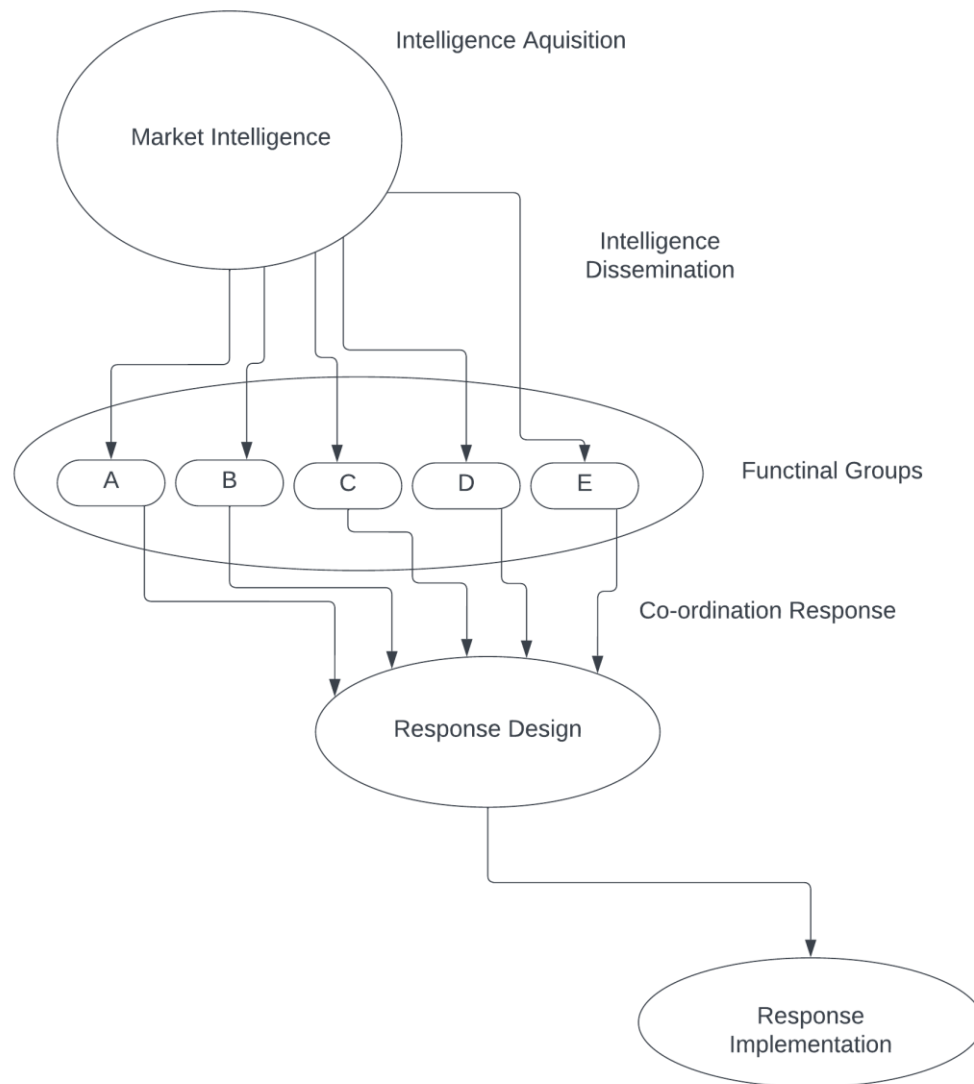


Figure 2.2 Market orientation (from Lings, 1999)

External marketing focuses on the organization's external environment, so the information collected relates to customers and competitors. Thus, the response is oriented to meet the needs of these customers and competitors. IM focuses on external and internal customer-employees gathering information for both needs. In this case, the response is to meet internal customers' needs primarily to help them cover the external customer's needs in the best possible way.

According to the pertinent literature, we could claim that IM facilitates matching an organization's internal environment with its external market goals by developing motivated and satisfied employees who can demonstrate the proper customer-oriented attitude and responses. Moreover, there is a significant relationship between IMO, marketing orientation, customer satisfaction, and financial performance of the organization (Lings & Greenley, 2009).

In the context of IMO, organizational support is critical for aligning internal practices with market demands. Supportive organizational cultures that prioritize employee well-being and provide adequate resources can enhance employee engagement and performance. For example, providing adequate information and communication technology support and fostering a positive technological environment can reduce technostress and improve work engagement in hybrid and virtual work settings (Harunavamwe & Kanengoni, 2023; Harunavamwe & Ward, 2022).

In the almost 40 years since the introduction of IM, several articles have been published, along with suggestions for future research (Table 2.2). This essential work has illustrated the main alternative approaches to understanding IM. These studies have captured the most critical approaches to IM and have been widely cited, thus shaping the IM literature.

Table 2.3 The key points from the IM literature

| Author | Year | Source | Key points |
|-----------------|------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Berry et al. | 1976 | <i>Journal of Retailing</i> | The precondition to satisfy customers is to satisfy employees. |
| Sasser & Arbeit | 1976 | <i>Business Horizons</i> | IM is a behavioural approach that influences job satisfaction. |
| Berry | 1981 | <i>Journal of Retail Banking</i> | This is the first study that considered the employee as an internal customer. |
| Flipo | 1986 | <i>European Journal of Marketing</i> | IM is a tool to help internal communication become a strategy for customer orientation. |

| Author | Year | Source | Key points |
|------------------|------|---|---|
| Gummesson | 1987 | <i>Long Range Planning</i> | IM is a concept that can increase productivity by using internal communication and referring to an employee as a customer. |
| Grönroos | 1990 | <i>Journal of Business Research</i> | As a management philosophy, IM is a tool used to attract and retain customer-oriented employees. |
| George | 1990 | <i>Journal of Business Research</i> | IM targets all employees and should follow a holistic approach. The marketing and HR departments should coordinate their actions to implement IM efficiently. |
| Piercy & Morgan | 1990 | <i>Marketing Intelligence & Planning</i> | The authors described the “matching” of IM with the 4Ps of marketing and marketing tools inside the organization. The same techniques used for the external market should be used inside the company. |
| Tansuhaj et al. | 1991 | <i>Journal of Professional Services Marketing</i> | Internal training and communication are the main elements of IM programmes. IM uses HR functions. |
| Ahmed & Rafiq | 1993 | <i>Journal of Marketing Management</i> | Through integration processes, IM motivates and aligns employees to the company’s goals. IM uses marketing techniques and HR practices to implement the organization’s objectives. |
| Jaworski & Kohli | 1993 | <i>The Journal of Marketing</i> | Interfunctionality is a necessary element for a marketing practice to motivate employees. |
| Hales | 1994 | <i>Human Resource Management Journal</i> | IM has nothing new to add because the HR department can execute all its functions. |
| Foreman & Money | 1995 | <i>Journal of Marketing Management</i> | IM can be targeted to a specific department or the entire company. IM implementation includes reward, motivation, communication, and development. IM and HR activities should be integrated. |

| Author | Year | Source | Key points |
|-----------------|------|---|---|
| Piercy | 1995 | <i>Journal of Marketing Practice: Applied Marketing Science</i> | IM facilitates breaking down barriers between divisions within the organization and enhances the execution of the company's goals. |
| Ahmed & Rafiq | 1995 | <i>Journal of Marketing Practice: Applied Marketing Science</i> | IM is described as the use of marketing tools inside the organization, consists of the 4Ps of the marketing mix, and helps reduce employees resistance to company changes. |
| Varey | 1995 | <i>International Journal of Service Industry Management</i> | IM is a process to help the organization improve service delivery |
| Lings & Brooks | 1998 | <i>Journal of Marketing Management</i> | IM is a model with external customer satisfaction as the final goal. It is based on the relationship between the employee (as an internal supplier) and the employee (as an internal buyer). |
| Hog et al. | 1998 | <i>Journal of Marketing Management</i> | Internal communication is important to communicate the values and objectives of the organization to employees, who should actively participate in the company's efforts |
| Lewis | 1999 | <i>European Journal of Marketing</i> | IM is a strategy and philosophy that makes the company responsive to changes in the internal and external environment in a short time. |
| Rafiq & Ahmed | 2000 | <i>Journal of Services Marketing</i> | IM aims to improve customer satisfaction through employee satisfaction and is based on interfunctional coordination. The significant elements are loyalty, motivation, communication, and employee empowerment. |
| Barnes & Morris | 2000 | <i>Total Quality Management</i> | Industrial management incorporates a participatory leadership approach that engages |

| Author | Year | Source | Key points |
|------------------|------|--------------------------------------|---|
| | | | employees in decision-making. This communication should go in both directions. |
| Ahmed & Rafiq | 2003 | <i>European Journal of Marketing</i> | The authors highlighted the use of IM to improve customer service skills through better management of internal relations and internal communication. They acknowledged the utilization of marketing tools within the organization and the application of HR management principles. They maintain a strong relationship between a company's performance and IM mix. |
| Naudé et al. | 2003 | <i>European Journal of Marketing</i> | IM refers to all the employees involved in the service sector and can increase job satisfaction and adoption of market orientation. |
| Ballantyne | 2003 | <i>European Journal of marketing</i> | IM is targeted towards all employees and has a significant impact on the procedures of customer service operations. |
| Lings | 2004 | <i>Journal of Business Research</i> | The authors introduced the new IMO concept, which embodies a company's ideology. The primary components are internal research, communication, and response. |
| Lings & Greenley | 2005 | <i>Journal of Service Research</i> | The authors described a measurement of the IMO dimensions (generation and dissemination of formal/informal intelligence and responsiveness to that information). According to their results, IMO has a positive impact on organizational factors while increasing the level of job satisfaction. |
| Gounaris | 2006 | <i>Journal of Business Research</i> | This paper supports the construction of IMO dimensions regarding the generation and dissemination of internal market intelligence and the response of that intelligence. IMO should be based on effective relations between managers and employees. |

| Author | Year | Source | Key points |
|------------------------|------|--|--|
| Zampetakis & Moustakis | 2007 | <i>European Journal of Innovation Management</i> | IM should include employee training, employee rewards, and job rotation. |
| Gounaris & Boukis | 2013 | <i>Journal of Services Marketing</i> | IM should support and motivate employees to report service complaints so that the organization can face the problems and facilitate the solutions more effectively. |
| Ruizalba et al. | 2014 | <i>International Journal of Hospitality Management</i> | IMO is a strategic decision that can increase employee commitment and job satisfaction. Employees' attitudes and performance can be improved through IM because there are essential factors for customer service quality. |
| Gounaris et al. | 2020 | <i>European Journal of Marketing</i> | Adopting IMO is essential for developing a dynamic capability to benefit service organizations significantly. There are indirect effects on the team climate and improvement of the new service development team's internal performance. |

While the positive link between internal effectiveness and satisfaction has been established, the literature has largely remained silent on how different individuals – each with their idiosyncratic expectations – perceive what constitutes the “right” balance in their work environment, which is one of the identified research gaps. This oversight limits our understanding of how personal lifecycle stages and unique predispositions shape the subjective definition of FWB.

2.1.3 Functions of Internal Marketing

Previous research suggests three main functions of IM: information, skill development, and motivation. Information should be bidirectional inside the organization, disseminated, and maintain a steady flow. Bidirectional communication within the organization ensures the

maintenance of consistent messaging and alignment of goals. Skill development is also important because employees should perform at a high standard, especially in service-providing organizations. These skills enhance employees' competencies to meet service standards and adapt to evolving market demands. Finally, motivation is the function of rewarding the employee's efforts and job satisfaction (Arndt, 1983). Aligning rewards and recognition systems with the organizational aim of fostering customer-focused behaviour.

The connection between IM and traditional marketing started in the early 1980s with the concept "employee as a customer". It inevitably created a relationship between IM and traditional marketing. The marketing tools used to attract customers can also attract and retain the best employees, who can be considered "internal customers" (Berry, 1981).

Notions such as market segmentation and market research could again correspond to IM, which refers to grouping employees with similar needs, such as segmentation and employee surveys, to identify their needs and wants (Rafiq & Ahmed, 1993). Gounaris et al. (2010) argued for the need to integrate IM and HR functions because, in this way, the organization improves its capabilities – recruitment, motivation, training, and monitoring – to deliver higher value to customers. This functional view underscores how IM integrates traditional marketing concepts, such as segmentation and market research, into the realm of HR. Yet, unresolved questions remain regarding which organizational unit should take primary responsibility for IM programmes. While some argue for a coordinated approach between marketing and HR (Gounaris, 2010), others maintain that such programmes should be the exclusive remit of HR (Hales, 1994), illustrating another crucial identified gap.

2.1.4 Internal Market Orientation: An Essential Link Between the Marketing and Human Resources Departments

The notion of IM crosses the boundaries between two primary functions of the organization: marketing and HR. Although these two departments have fundamental roles and clearly defined responsibilities, they should join forces to facilitate IM.

IM differs from HR in that it focuses on the employees as customers. While HR principals focus on employees from an organizational angle, IM focuses on employees from the customer stance. The primary role of HR is to keep employees “happy” and more productive (in quality and quantity), but IM tries to keep them “happy” by aligning their productivity with external customer needs and the objectives of the organization. Hence, IM is both customer focused, and employee focused. The traditional HR perspective focuses on the employee and employee functioning primarily for the firm’s benefit. An IM perspective (regardless of whether it is within the purview of HR) also focuses on the employee but primarily for the employee’s benefit, ultimately benefiting the organization and the customers (Dunne & Barnes, 2000). The external customer element is fundamental in IM. Mudie (2003) indicated that if IM is conducted without considering the company’s external customers, then it just amounts to conventional HR management.

Some researchers argue that the only role of IM is to foster effective HR; this position implies that IM is subordinate to HR. Hales (1994) went as far as saying that IM has nothing new to say. On the contrary, other scholars consider HR to be proficient at ensuring employees feel that the administration cares about their personal needs. Thus, this is the central thrust of the IM concept (Ewing & Caruana 1999). After a certain point, we cannot justify the critique unless we consider all the essential parameters. According to Bansal et al. (2001), IM and HR can better manage internal customer behaviour to serve the external customer (Figure 2.3).

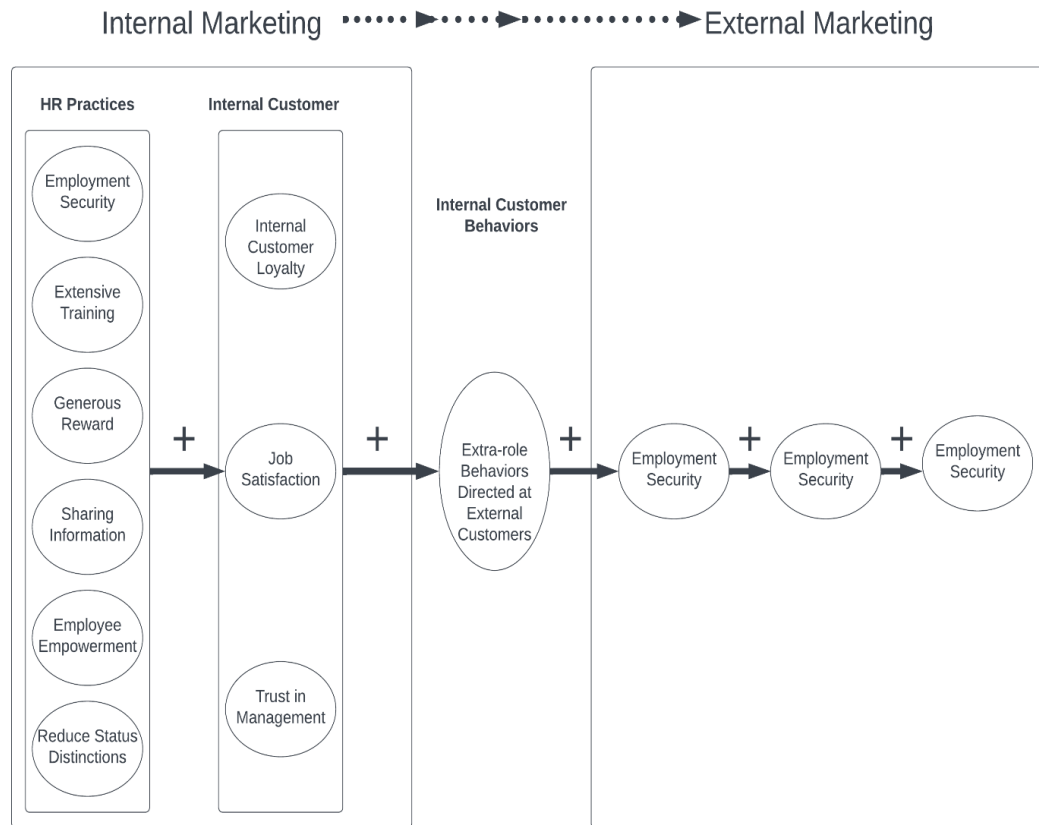


Figure 2.3 Linking IM and HR activities to external marketing outcomes (from Bansal et al., 2001)

Nevertheless, most studies agree there is enormous scope for integrating marketing and HR (Gounaris et al., 2010). The conclusion could be that the two disciplines should align their policies and practices to enable the organization to find a balanced orientation that simultaneously serves the needs of the company's customers and employees.

2.1.5 Internal Market Orientation Theories

The following subchapters present the underpinning theories for IMO notions.

2.1.5.1 Equity Theory

Equity theory, proposed in the early 1960s, suggests that employees evaluate their jobs by comparing what they put into their jobs (inputs) and what they get out of them (outputs). As

input, we can consider the employees' effort and time spent and their loyalty and compliance with their organization's regulations and policies. The outcomes include several tangible benefits, such as monetary or intangible rewards like status and recognition of their excellent work (Adams, 1963; Huseman & Hatfield, 1990). Equity theory underlines the IMO philosophy: employees feel more obligated to respond to organizational norms and values, putting extra effort into delivering higher customer service (Gounaris et al., 2010). Indeed, employees who perceive that they receive insufficient remuneration for their job may experience distress, lose their motivation, and decrease their level of performance (D'Arconte, 2017). Thus, most researchers propose that the organization's management should be honest, reliable, and direct and ensure the personnel's intentions (Lings & Greenley, 2005), because a manager's activities influence employees' behaviours and, consequently, their performance and response to customer needs.

Furthermore, by crossing marketing and HR management functions, IMO aims to balance employees' perceptions of their inputs and outputs, which equity theory describes. This theory is particularly valuable in underpinning the rationale for IM, as it highlights how perceptions of fairness – and, by extension, perceived value – can directly influence employee motivation and performance. Yet, it also indirectly reveals the need to examine individual differences in defining a “fair” work environment. This relates to the identified gap about the factors driving an individual's expectation in the work environment that will allow them to strike the balance that is “right” for them. In other words, different individuals may easily hold different approaches to defining FWB. Moreover, during different stages of their life cycle can cause this personal, subjective definition to vary (Washington & Mahalingam, 2016).

2.1.6 Theories Underpinning Both Internal Marketing and Family–Work Balance

This subchapter presents four theories underpinning IM and FWB: social exchange theory, fit theory, needs theory, and meso theory. The relevance and contribution of each theory to the understanding of IMO and FWB provides a theoretical framework for this study.

2.1.6.1 Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory is a highly prominent conceptual framework for comprehending workplace behaviour (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Its roots go back to the 1920s in sociology and psychology (Blau, 1964; Gouldner 1960). Social exchange refers to the actions that individuals perform voluntarily that motivate them by rewards they are anticipated to receive from others (Blau, 1964). The central concept includes exchanging intangible or tangible resources between two entities with an expected benefit (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Like other exchanges, it involves the concept of obligation or creates the expectation of some return. The entities enter transactions due to the other party's past actions or an expectation of future activity.

The social exchange procedure occurs as follows: one entity provides a service that obligates the other. The second entity frees itself from the obligation by serving the first entity. When the initial obligation happens, the other entity responds by returning the favour due to a norm of reciprocity to sustain the relationship (Blau, 1964). For a social trade to occur, the one who benefits must reciprocate by offering a long-term benefit. Unlike commercial exchanges, social transactions do not have a specified return period (Blau, 1964). In this case, when one entity offers a valued resource to another entity, we generate an obligation to return some other beneficial resource, resulting in a better-quality relationship. In turn, these better-quality relationships may reduce the conflicts in a working environment, improve working behaviour, and increase job performance (Cropanzano et al., 2002). Mutual exchanges between employees and management – both tangible

and intangible – can build stronger internal relationships that ultimately benefit external customer interactions. This perspective is instrumental in explaining why internal relationships have far-reaching implications for overall performance.

Social exchange theory has provided the theoretical foundation for relationship marketing science (Gounaris, 2006). It explains why internal customers and suppliers can develop solid relationships and how this relationship can positively affect external customers. In the IM context, customers and suppliers must be able to provide each other with some value to sustain an exchange procedure over an extended period.

2.1.6.2 Fit Theory

Fit theory reflects the congruence between an employee's values and those of the organization (Chatman, 1991). We can define two main types of fit. The first type is demands–abilities. Demands include each job's requirements and role expectations, while abilities comprise the skills, effort, and time employees must devote to meet the demands. In this case, fit occurs when an employee has the skills required to meet the organizational demands, and strain increases as the organizational demands exceed an employee's capabilities. The second type of fit is needs–supplies. Needs are an employee's values and requirements, while supplies are the resources that can cover these needs. In this case, fit occurs when an organization can supply the necessary resources to cover the employees' needs, while stress occurs when needs exceed the supplies. Finally, misfit occurs when needs and demands exceed supplies and abilities (Voydanoff, 2005).

Person–organization fit aligns organizations and individuals within the same stream. This compatibility arises when one individual fulfils the demands of the other and/or they possess comparable underlying traits (Kristof, 1996). Individuals who seek to align their personalities with their professions typically seek employment opportunities that cater to their requirements (Gounaris et al., 2010). According to fit theory, person–organization fit has a dual outcome. First,

fit may occur by selecting and assessing employees when they enter the organization. Second, fit is achieved by the socialization that the employee passes through by being a member of an organization. In other words, the organization influences an employee's attitude and values.

Recent research has also described three different levels of employee fit within the working environment: employee–organization, employee–supervisor, and employee–job. These three fits represent a holistic approach that allows the interpretation of the employees' perception of the fit concept that affects their behaviour (Helm et al., 2016).

Voydanoff (2005) described the correlation and interdependence between job and family. Specifically, they introduced a model that shows the direct link between work–family balance and work–family fit (Figure 2.4). This model includes work demands–family resources fit and family demands–work resources fit, both of which have a cumulative effect on FWB. According to this model, we assess FWB as having enough family and work resources to meet family and work demands. Furthermore, work–family fit affect FWB, and FWB has a positive effect on work and family role performance. This performance includes home and workplace behaviours, such as work duties and household chores. Role performance in the role description refers to positive emotions such as job satisfaction and marital happiness (Voydanoff, 2005). This theory is particularly crucial for understanding how IM and FWB initiatives might be personalized, thereby addressing individual idiosyncrasies which are related to the identified literature gap about the employees' perceptions according to their idiosyncrasies.

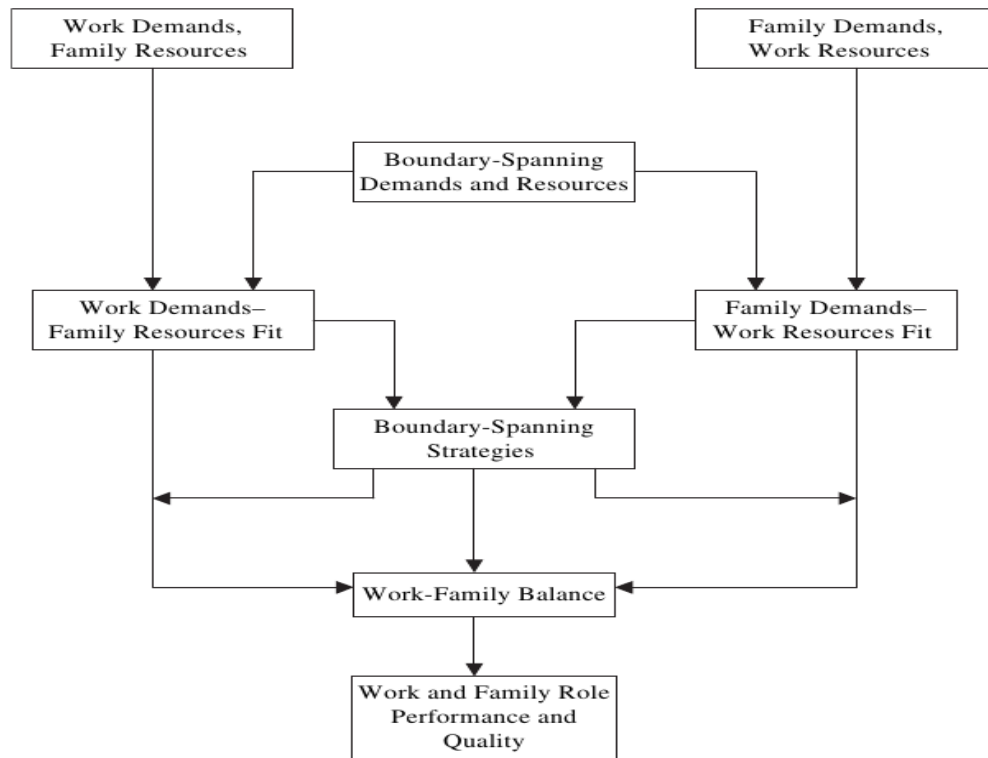


Figure 2.4 The work–family fit model (from Voydanoff, 2005)

2.1.6.3 Needs Theory

The term “needs” comes up continuously in the literature related to FWB and IMO. For example, when searching for FWB, individuals should balance their “needs”, and one of IMO’s main goals is to cover, fulfil, understand, and facilitate customers’ “needs”. So, needs theory is fundamental for both IMO and FWB.

Since the original application of needs hierarchy to management (Maslow, 1943), many scholars have examined the relationship between an individual’s needs and work attitudes. One of the reasons why the concept of needs is essential is that it has a substantial utility in defining the dimensions that are expected to lead to positive versus adverse work-related outcomes (Baard et al., 2004).

Needs are a person's wants, motives, or desires. Researchers have also classified needs into two major categories: primary/basic needs and the additional needs. The three basic psychological needs are the need for competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Warner & Hausdorf, 2009), based on self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The need for competence describes the desire of individuals to be effective in their external environment to develop skills and competencies that allow them to complete life tasks successfully. Simultaneously, the need for relatedness refers to the individual's desire to interact and feel connected with others – to feel caring towards and relate to others. Autonomy concerns people's willingness to act on their own will and feel independent in making decisions.

The most critical elements of supplementary needs are health and safety needs (an enhancement of good health and protection from injury and illness), economic needs (job security and regular payment), social needs (leisure time outside of work and collegiality in the workplace), esteem needs (appreciation and recognition in and out of the workplace), actualization needs (realization of one's professional potentials), knowledge needs (the effort of learning to enhance our personality as well as our professional skills), and aesthetic needs (creativity in our personal and professional life) (Sirgy et al., 2001).

IM focuses on satisfying customers' needs and, for this reason, seeks to encourage employees to perform well and discourages quitting (Berry, 1981). The logic behind looking at customers' needs is that meeting employee needs can deliver a better service to satisfy external customers' needs because satisfied employees make satisfied customers (Bansal et al., 2001). Moreover, IM may improve the capability of an organization to satisfy the needs of internal and external customers (Barnes et al., 2004).

It is evident from the literature review that meeting the above needs is a fundamental prerequisite and a strong driver in the search for balance between work and family life. This dual explanation

emphasizes that employee satisfaction and performance are not solely functions of extrinsic incentives, but also of the organization's ability to meet deeper, often more subjective, personal needs. Critically, scholars have called for a clear operationalization of "perceived value" in terms of work-life implications, which is missing from the literature.

2.1.6.4 Meso Theory

Meso theory refers to an intermediate level of analysis that focuses on the relationships and interactions between individuals or groups within a larger social structure. It bridges the gap between micro-level analysis, which looks at individual behaviour and interactions, and macro-level analysis, which examines broader social structures and institutions. Meso-level theory typically explores how social networks, organizations, communities, or other intermediate social units influence individual behaviour and shape larger societal patterns. It helps to understand the connections between personal actions and broader social phenomena (Bolibar, 2016).

In organizational research, meso theory refers to a theoretical framework that bridges the gap between micro-level (individual) and macro-level (organizational or societal) perspectives by focusing on intermediate levels of analysis, such as groups, teams, departments, or units within an organization. Meso theory explores the interactions, relationships, and dynamics that occur at these intermediate levels, providing a more holistic understanding of organizational phenomena (Frink et al., 2008).

There are five critical characteristics of meso theory.

- **Intermediate Level of Analysis** Meso theory examines phenomena between the individual and organizational/societal levels, considering how factors at these intermediate levels influence outcomes.
- **Integration of Micro and Macro Perspectives** Meso theory integrates insights from micro-level (individual behaviour and cognition) and macro-level (organizational

structures and culture) perspectives to offer a more comprehensive understanding of organizational processes.

- **Focus on Interactions and Relationships** Meso theory emphasizes the interactions, relationships, and interdependencies among various units or entities within an organization, highlighting the interconnected nature of organizational phenomena.
- **Contextualization** Meso theory contextualizes individual behaviours and organizational outcomes within the broader organizational context, considering how factors at different levels interact to shape outcomes.
- **Complexity and Dynamics** Meso theory recognizes the complexity and dynamics of organizational systems, acknowledging that phenomena at the meso level are influenced by multiple factors and interactions.

Meso theory offers an important framework for analysing organizational phenomena by examining the interactions of individual behaviours, group dynamics, and organizational structures, providing insights that go beyond conventional micro and macro viewpoints (Frink et al., 2008). This theoretical perspective is especially useful for analysing how IM and FWB practices are negotiated within different segments of an organization. By integrating these multilevel dynamics, meso theory offers insights into why a one-size-fits-all approach may fail to capture the idiosyncrasies in individual employee expectations.

2.2 Family–Work Balance

Work and family are fundamental institutions of any society, and balancing these two domains is challenging for an adult. The literature on FWB is vast. In recent years, it has been on the agenda of several organizations, governmental and non-governmental, leading to the adoption of various policies. Nevertheless, combining family and work activities remains a challenge for many

individuals. This literature review is not exhaustive; rather, it focuses on the fundamental and most popular theories, namely spillover theory, needs theory, and enrichment theory.

Work and family are often physically and temporally distinct, with men historically being the primary earners and women fulfilling domestic duties. Early researchers perceived work and family systems as functioning independently (Parsons, 1955). By the 1970s, studies on work and families adopted an open-systems approach (Katz & Kahn, 1978), where researchers assumed that events at work affected events at home and vice versa. Furthermore, interaction and interference between work and family life are among the ten primary stressors in the workplace (Gao et al., 2013). This kind of stress, which is a result of a conflict between work and family, is negatively associated with job performance (Grandey et al., 2005; Kalliath & Kalliath, 2013).

Researchers started to focus on FWB in the mid-1980s. Early research focused on the multiple roles of individuals (especially employee–parent or employee–spouse) and the conflicts generated by the interactions of these roles (Greenhaus & Beutell 1985). There are numerous instances of family structure in the workforce, such as dual-earner couples, blended families, single parents, and employees who care for older adults. This growing diversity has increased the importance of balancing work and family roles for several groups of men and women (Greenhaus et al., 1997). Studies have shown that FWB practices, such as flexible work arrangements and family-friendly policies, can reduce work–family conflict and improve employee well-being (Harunavamwe & Kanengoni, 2023; Medina-Garrido, 2023). For example, the availability of parental leave policies has been found to be particularly effective in reducing work–family conflict among men, especially in contexts where workplace characteristics and family responsibilities intersect (Hsiao, 2023). Similarly, IMO practices that align internal resources with organizational goals can reduce role ambiguity and role overload, which are common causes of work–family conflict (Wang et al., 2024).

Furthermore, gender differences can moderate the impact of FWB practices on work–family conflict and well-being. For example, parental leave policies have been found to be more effective in reducing work–family conflict among men than among women. Additionally, societal attitudes towards gender can play a crucial role in shaping the impact of FWB practices on work–family conflict (Hsiao, 2023).

The influence of multiple roles, especially the conflicts they can create, is a crucial aspect of FWB. On the other hand, enrichment theory postulates that experiences in one role improve the quality of life in the other and are positively related to job satisfaction (McNall et al., 2010). However, job satisfaction is insufficient for an employee to reach a higher performance level, a precondition for better organizational performance. As we will see later in this thesis, the necessary conditions for higher performance are personal happiness combined with job satisfaction, which can boost an employee's performance (Wright et al., 2007). In other words, even if the satisfaction one can get from their job is very high, it is less likely to be reflected in increased performance if they do not have good FWB. Additionally, job satisfaction is a result of the compatibility between the employee's needs and the means to satisfy them by the employer. This fits nicely with needs theory, which explains an individual's needs and how we try to fulfil them.

Additionally, organizational culture plays a pivotal role in shaping FWB practices. A family-friendly culture, where organizations value and support the articulation of various spheres of employees' lives, is essential for reducing work stress and enhancing well-being. Research has shown that the perception of a supportive organizational culture, particularly through colleagues and supervisors, has a greater influence on reconciliation capability and work stress feelings than the mere existence of reconciliation services (Monteiro, 2017). Similarly, a culture of organizational justice and fairness can mediate the relationship between work–family culture and job satisfaction (Hu, 2024).

It is evident that FWB plays a significant role in achieving higher performance. It is necessary to understand the multiple roles of employees, the needs and conflicts that can arise through these roles, and the spillover or enrichment effects that can occur.

2.2.1 Family–Work Balance Theories

This subchapter describes two prominent theories of FWB: spillover theory and enrichment theory. These theories provide valuable insights into the complex relationship between work and family domains and how they interact and influence each other. Understanding these theories is crucial in comprehending the dynamics of FWB and its impact on individuals and organizations.

2.2.1.1 Spillover Theory

In spillover theory, the work and family domains are treated as one entity without a boundary, so what happens in one domain also affects the other. Hence, a positive relationship occurs when a positive family experience is associated with a positive work experience. On the contrary, a negative relationship occurs when a negative work experience is associated with a negative family experience (Staines, 1980). For example, employees who have a bad day at work are more likely to be in a bad mood when they return home.

Spillover theory posits that emotions, behaviours, and resources from one domain (e.g., work) can transfer to another domain (e.g., family) (Okolie & Okereka, 2022; Uddin, 2020). This theory is bidirectional, meaning that both positive and negative experiences can spill over between work and family roles. For example, work-related stress can lead to family conflict, while job satisfaction can enhance family well-being (Lo Presti et al., 2020; Wayne et al., 2022).

Many researchers have argued that individuals transfer the attitudes, emotions, skills, and behaviours from their family life into their work role and vice versa (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985;

Near et al., 1980; Staines, 1980). Theoretically, we perceive spillover to be positive or negative (Crouter, 1984; Grzywacz & Marks, 2000; Sumer & Knight, 2001). Positive spillover occurs when the individual can successfully transfer positive experiences and benefits acquired from one domain to another to improve the performance or the quality of personal life accordingly (Wayne et al., 2007). In other words, positive spillover occurs when one domain's positive support is leaked to another. For example, increased job satisfaction in the work domain can improve family enjoyment and strong family values expressed as an employee with a great work ethic. In contrast, negative spillover occurs because of three main conflicts between life and work domains. A time-based conflict happens when the time devoted to one domain is significantly more than the time devoted to the other (e.g., an employee who works overtime or travels frequently). In a strain-based conflict, the strain produced in one domain prevents fulfilling the other domain's needs (e.g., a stressed employee can hardly be a patient or loving parent). Finally, specific behaviours necessary for one role cannot fulfil the needs of another (e.g., a manager's role can demand aggressive or detached behaviour, but the role of a parent demands understanding and emotional behaviour). In other words, in the case of negative spillover, work experiences and non-work experiences become opposing while work-life makes one's personal life difficult and unsatisfactory and vice versa (Greenhaus & Beutell 1985). Most researchers agree that conflicts between work and family domains could be sources of stress that make the FWB more difficult.

Some researchers have argued about the directions of spillover. For example, Frone et al. (1992) provided distinct definitions, such as spillover from work to family and spillover from family to work. However, because each type of spillover seems to have an equal impact on FWB, which is the main interest of this thesis, there is no reason for further discussion regarding the spillover direction.

Spillover theory directly impacts this thesis because it can depict how the balance one has in one's family and work can affect job satisfaction and, subsequently, job performance. Contemporary

social and professional life is highly vulnerable to the effect of one domain on the other, which determines the level of balance individuals may reach. While extensively documented, these dynamics are seldom linked back to the unique, subjective criteria individuals use to assess what balance is “right” for them. Moreover, the factors that drive an individual’s expectation in the work environment that will allow them to strike the balance that is “right” for them are unknown.

2.2.1.2 Enrichment Theory

Enrichment theory complements spillover theory by suggesting that experiences in one function enhance the quality and performance in another (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). This theory, also known as enhancement theory, focuses on the positive effects of multiple roles. It suggests that participation in both work and family roles can lead to personal growth, skill development, and increased well-being (Bello & Tanko, 2020; Joshi, 2024). For example, skills learned at work, such as time management, can enhance family life, and emotional support from family can improve job performance (Bansal, 2020; Bello & Tanko, 2020).

Enrichment occurs when resources are generated from one role to improve the performance of the other. Resources can be psychological or material and include several skills and perspectives, such as knowledge or flexibility. For example, skills we may have already developed in the family, such as problem-solving or listening skills, can make us more effective employees in work teams or managerial positions. Moreover, organizational skills we may have developed in a managerial position can also prove equally beneficial to our family life (Greenhaus, 1988). The success of a challenging task can make us more self-confident in tackling problems at home. In summary, while we feel stress when our family and work vie for our time, we experience enrichment when our family and professional lives strengthen each other.

There are two kinds of enrichment: work–family enrichment occurs when benefits from work positively affect the family, and family–work enrichment occurs when benefits from the family

are applied to work (Frone, 2003). Empirical findings have shown that work–family and family–work enrichment is positively related to family and Job satisfaction (McNall et al. 2010).

Enrichment is evident for both genders in multiple job domains: men experience enrichment from work to family, while women experience enrichment from family to work (Rothbard, 2001). Of note, there is asymmetry between the genders: men experience enrichment from work to family, but women do not, while women experience enrichment from family to work, but men do not. Cultural norms about what is accepted and what is not for each gender explain this asymmetry. Moreover, the relationship between work and family was different for men and women, at least until the end of the previous century (Pleck 1977; Tenbrunsel et al., 1995), so it is necessary to examine whether this asymmetry is present also in contemporary families.

Furthermore, a meta-analysis of 21 studies showed that both family and work enrichment are positively related to job satisfaction (McNall et al., 2010). This bidirectional nature of enrichment is very important for this thesis because it connects FWB with job satisfaction and employee performance and, subsequently, with organizational performance, given that all previous studies support the positive linkage between enrichment and employee performance. Although enrichment has been positively linked to organizational and personal outcomes, the literature has yet to clarify the mechanisms through which employees perceived value of FWB interacts with IM efforts because employees' working environment is related to the implications their job has in their personal life.

2.2.2 Work and Family Roles

Individuals have always had to play different roles in their personal and working lives. Especially in contemporary societies, these roles have become more complicated and more demanding. Since the end of the 1990s, researchers have identified the link between social roles and FWB, claiming

that different family structures – such as dual-earner couples, single parents, and blended families – make balancing the work and family roles more significant for employees (Greenhaus et al., 1997).

When the same person plays two roles, one in the work domain and the other in the personal life domain, during the same period of their life, there is a linkage of the roles. For example, a parent or spouse should develop specific skills, such as problem-solving or listening. These skills are also valuable in the workplace, especially in work teams or in supervisory roles. So, the necessary skills in one domain can “spill” over to the other and “enrich” it – hence the importance of spillover theory and enrichment theory.

However, several conflicts can surface during the performance of these roles that can harm FWB. Here, we highlight three. First, time-based conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985) occurs when the available time is insufficient to fulfil the requirements of both domains, so the time devoted to one domain is inevitably missing from the other. This strain is a feature of contemporary life: modern demanding professions, combined with the complexity of social relationships, are “consuming” our available time, the most precious commodity, too quickly. It is impossible to be in two places simultaneously, so employees who participate in a business meeting after working hours will not be present at a family dinner. Furthermore, employees who travel extensively miss important family events or extracurricular activities with their children. Second, strain (Greenhaus, 1988) occurs when a person’s performance in one cannot fulfil the requirements of the other role. For example, work stress can prevent someone from trying to be a loving parent or an understanding friend; on the other hand, a parent who faces too much tension with young children at home may find it difficult to be a calm team player at work. Finally, a conflict can result in specific behaviours that are necessary for one role but inappropriate for the other (Greenhaus, 1988). The same person can be aggressive as a salesperson, objective as a manager, and attentive or caring as a parent or partner. If people cannot change their behaviour effectively according to

the domain in which they act, a behavioural conflict may create significant stress and unpleasant psychological conditions.

Furthermore, Frone et al. (1992) argued that there is a duality to work–family conflict: work may interfere with family, and family may interfere with work. Due to the three forms of conflict described and the two directions, we have a six dimensions, namely: (1) time-based work interference with family, (2) time-based family interference with work, (3) strain-based work interference with family, (4) strain-based family interference with work, (5) specific behaviour–based work interference with family, and (6) specific behaviour–based family interference with work (Carlson et al., 2000). Additionally, some personal characteristics might influence conflicts between family and work, so some individuals comply with family activity demands. In contrast, others prefer work activity (Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 2002).

Different roles do not necessarily mean conflicts and negative results: there are also positive elements. Role accumulation might also lead to rewards. We can group the positive effects of role accumulation into four types: (1) role privileges, (2) overall status security (due to participation in multiple roles), (3) resources for status enhancement and role performance (e.g., meaningful connections that may develop or invitations to social events or improvement of creditability), and (4) enrichment of the personality and stimulation of the ego (Sieber, 1974). This reward from the role accumulation system can explain why working mothers may face role conflict (as mother and employee). They prefer to work because they seek to increase their resources and privileges and feel a sense of personal worth. Despite the occupational sex segregation of some communities, the role accumulation benefits seem to overcome a potential conflict’s negative results.

Table 2.5 The key points from the FWB summarizes the key findings from the FWB literature. These studies provide the most frequently used approaches to understand FWB. They have been widely cited and have shaped the FWB literature.

Table 2.5 The key points from the FWB literature

| Author(s) | Year | Source | Key points |
|-------------------|------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Greenhaus | 1987 | <i>Journal of Vocational Behavior</i> | The author examined the intricate connection between work experiences, job performance, and personal and family welfare; emphasized how views of an unsupportive work environment, job conflict, and time commitment; and stressed the significance of comprehending how work-related events might impact job performance and personal/family well-being. |
| Goodstein & Jerry | 1994 | <i>Academy of Management Journal</i> | The authors explored how institutional pressures, such as societal expectations and government regulations, influence employer involvement in work–family issues. They highlighted the strategic responses organizations can employ, such as providing flexible work arrangements and childcare benefits, to address these pressures effectively. |
| Thomas & Ganster | 1995 | <i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i> | The authors highlighted the importance of family-supportive work variables in reducing work–family conflict and strain among employees. They emphasized the positive impact of organizational policies such as flexible scheduling and supportive supervisors on enhancing employees’ sense of |

| Author(s) | Year | Source | Key points |
|----------------------|------|---------------------------------------|--|
| | | | control over balancing work and family responsibilities. |
| Netemeyer et al. | 1996 | <i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i> | The study focused on developing and validating brief, self-reported evaluations of work–family conflict and family–work conflict. The authors highlighted the importance of these notions in understanding the relationship between work and family domains. |
| Thompson et al. | 1999 | <i>Journal of Vocational Behavior</i> | A work environment that promotes a balance between work and family life is associated with higher utilization of benefits, particularly in terms of support from managers. The authors highlighted the importance of work–family benefits and a supportive work–family culture in influencing employee attitudes and actions around work–family balance. |
| Grandey & Cropanzano | 1999 | <i>Journal of Vocational Behavior</i> | The authors emphasized the importance of considering stress from both work and family areas to understand the complexities of work–family conflict. They applied the conservation of resources model to study work–family friction and strain. |

| Author(s) | Year | Source | Key points |
|----------------|------|--|---|
| Allen et al. | 2000 | <i>Journal of Occupational Health Psychology</i> | The authors extensively examined the repercussions of work-to-family conflict, emphasizing its harmful impact on individuals and families. They also highlighted the significance of resolving work-to-family conflict to enhance well-being and productivity in the contemporary workplace. |
| Carlson et al. | 2000 | <i>Journal of Vocational Behavior</i> | The authors introduced a new multidimensional measure of work–family conflict, including six components, and discussed its creation and validity. The scale provides a thorough instrument for scholars to evaluate the intricacies of work–family conflict across many aspects. |
| Barnett & Hyde | 2001 | <i>American Psychologist</i> | The authors examined the notable modifications in gender roles, employment, and family relations in the last 50 years, emphasizing the inadequacy of classical theories in comprehending these changes. |
| Allen | 2001 | <i>Journal of Vocational Behavior</i> | The author highlighted the significance of family-supportive work environments in minimizing work–family conflict and improving employee well-being. Family-supportive work environments plays an intermediary function in the correlation between supervisor support and work–family conflict. |

| Author(s) | Year | Source | Key points |
|-------------------------|------|---|---|
| Clark | 2001 | <i>Journal of Vocational Behavior</i> | The author explored the significant connection between work cultures and work/family balance, emphasizing how operational flexibility, temporal flexibility, and supervisor support influence workers' capacity to manage work and family obligations. She highlighted the significance of supportive work environments in enhancing work satisfaction and family well-being. |
| Parasuraman & Greenhaus | 2002 | <i>Human Resource Management Review</i> | The authors emphasized the need to move beyond a conflict perspective in work–family research and explore the positive connections between work and family roles. They also highlighted the gaps in existing research, such as the limited focus on role enhancement, gender differences, and diverse family structures. |
| Anderson et al. | 2002 | <i>Journal of Management</i> | The authors investigated how official organizational initiatives, informal workplace practices, work–family conflict, and job-related outcomes are interrelated. |
| Greenhaus et al. | 2003 | <i>Journal of Vocational Behavior</i> | The authors highlighted the significance of maintaining a balance between work and family duties for one's overall well-being. The findings indicate that people prioritizing family over job often experience a better quality of life. |

| Author(s) | Year | Source | Key points |
|--------------------|------|---|--|
| Wayne et al. | 2004 | <i>Journal of Vocational Behavior</i> | The authors examined the influence of the Big Five personality traits on work–family conflict and facilitation, demonstrating that some characteristics can either exacerbate conflict or enhance the equilibrium between work and family obligations. |
| Byron | 2005 | <i>Journal of Vocational Behavior</i> | The authors provided an examination of work–family conflict and its roots underscores the need to differentiate between work interference with family and family interference with work due to their distinct causes. |
| Eby et al. | 2005 | <i>Journal of Vocational Behavior</i> | The authors classified studies according to their purpose, effects, and analysed factors, providing insights on work–family conflict, work role stress, dual-earner couples, and other essential facets of the work–family relationship. |
| Greenhaus & Powell | 2006 | <i>Academy of Management Review</i> | The authors proposed a model that suggests two paths to work–family enrichment: resources generated in one role can enhance performance and positively affect that role, which can spill over to the other. |
| Wayne et al. | 2007 | <i>Human Resource Management Review</i> | The authors emphasized the significance of work–family facilitation, which refers to the beneficial impact of involvement in one area on the operation of the other system. |

| Author(s) | Year | Source | Key points |
|--------------------|------|--|---|
| Beauregard & Henry | 2009 | <i>Human Resource Management Review</i> | The authors explored the relationship between work–life balance techniques and organizational performance, focusing on explanations at both individual and organizational levels and emphasizing the importance of reducing work-life conflict, enhancing job-related attitudes, and perceived organizational support to improve performance. |
| Fisher | 2010 | <i>International Journal of Management Reviews</i> | The author discussed the importance of happiness at work beyond job satisfaction, highlighting the role of leadership behaviour, social connections, and organizational practices in influencing employee well-being. |
| Amstad | 2011 | <i>Journal of Occupational Health Psychology</i> | This meta-analysis of work–family conflict found that work interference with family and family interference with work are consistently linked to outcomes in work, family, and several other areas. |
| Las Heras et al. | 2015 | <i>Journal of Business Research</i> | The authors demonstrated that perceived organizational support and family-supportive supervisor behaviours play crucial mediating roles in these relationships. |
| Wayne et al. | 2017 | <i>Personnel Psychology</i> | The findings underscore the complexity of work–family balance, the significance of distinguishing between different conceptualizations, and the need for |

| Author(s) | Year | Source | Key points |
|------------|------|--|---|
| | | | empirical examination to advance theoretical understanding and research in this area. |
| Fan & Peng | 2018 | <i>Social Behavior and Personality</i> | The authors emphasized the significance of supervisor assistance in improving work–family balance and work attitudes. |

2.2.3 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction represents employees' well-being in the working environment and predicts job tenure, counter-productive behaviours, and withdrawal (Hackett & Guion, 1985). Hence, we can define job satisfaction as the compatibility between the needs and how the employer satisfies them (Brief, 1998). Other researchers have stressed that when we try to investigate job-related attitudes, such as job satisfaction, we should first separate the affective or emotional component from the cognitive or element of belief. This postulates that job satisfaction is based partially on what somebody thinks and partly on their feelings (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996).

FWB practices have been shown to enhance job satisfaction and organizational commitment. For example, family-friendly and high-performance work practices increase FWB, which is partially mediated by job satisfaction and working hours. While both types of practices increase job satisfaction, only family-friendly practices increase working hours, which can have a net positive effect on work–family balance (Ronda et al., 2016). Similarly, IMO practices that foster a supportive organizational culture can lead to higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment.

We can also associate job satisfaction with enrichment theory. A meta-analysis of 46 studies found a positive relationship between job satisfaction and work–family enrichment and family–work enrichment (McNall et al., 2010). Researchers have tried to investigate job satisfaction as an outcome of the bidirectional nature of enrichment and found a significant correlation (Aryee et

al., 2005). We could say that the notion of job satisfaction has been used, primarily by organization sciences, as an approach to operationalize the “happiness” that an employee can perceive from a working environment. In other words, it refers to the degree to which someone feels happy with their job. It is important to stress that we cannot compare job satisfaction with happiness in life as a whole, which is a much broader notion and includes aspects outside of work (Wright, 2005).

Several parameters affect job satisfaction, including a clear job description, supportive training, working climate and conditions, and remuneration (Gounaris & Boukis, 2013). As we will see later in this thesis, although job satisfaction significantly affects employees’ performance, it only comprises a part of human happiness. In comparison, other empirical studies have shown a positive relationship between IM and job satisfaction. At the same time, IMO can explain employees’ job satisfaction because it moderates the relationship between IM and job satisfaction (Gounaris, 2008b). Thus, this thesis aims to investigate how the increase in an employee’s FWB depends on FWB and an increase in job satisfaction, which is one of the IMO’s aims and can affect the performance of employees and the organization.

Several studies have referred to job satisfaction and IM (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003; Gounaris, 2008b; Hwang & Der-Jang, 2005; Kanyurhi & Bugandwa Mungu Akonkwa 2016). Research on family-friendly programmes indicates they can decrease work–family friction, foster good work attitudes, and improve job satisfaction and performance (Glass & Finley, 2002; Greenhaus & Foley, 2007). We can consider employee satisfaction as a strategic resource which directly affects organizational performance because we consider employees as a basis for a sustainable competitive advantage (Cropanzano & Wright, 2001). The literature has also linked customer orientation with superior sales performance (Donavan et al., 2004; Hartline & Ferrell, 1996), yet a joint examination of how simultaneously deploying IMO and FWB practices influences positive outcomes has not been undertaken. In the realm of sales management, where customer interaction is paramount, both IM and FWB contribute to creating a positive work environment that is reflected in individual

and organizational performance metrics. Despite these promising associations, an integrated examination of how simultaneous IMO and FWB interventions interact to produce cumulative, or even multiplicative, benefits is missing.

2.2.4 Salespeople's Performance

In the competitive environments of organizations, there is a continuous search for ways to enhance employee well-being, satisfaction, and performance. One such approach that is increasing in popularity, particularly in high-pressure domains such as sales, is the use of FWB initiatives. The programmes are designed to help team members manage their work and life more effectively to improve performance. Below, we discuss the literature that has examined the positive effects of FWB policies on salespeople, and how they can be expected to increase sales performance, reduce burnout, and foster emotional well-being.

Increased job satisfaction and decreased burnout are important advantages of flexible working benefits policies. Flexible working hours, telecommuting, and employee assistance programmes are effective in enhancing job satisfaction among salespeople. Employees who perceive a good balance between their work and personal life have a higher level of job satisfaction (Wulantika & Atifah, 2024). This is particularly evident within sales positions, when meeting targets overshadows personal priorities. In addition, FWB policies contribute to the prevention of burnout by enabling the employee to have control over their workload and fulfil their obligations outside work. Burnout decreases job satisfaction can be reduced with these policies which consequently increase job satisfaction (Lamin, 2022; Wulantika & Atifah, 2024).

Furthermore, policies supporting FWB have been proven to increase sales performance and productivity, engagement, and customer loyalty. Salespeople with work-life balance are able to concentrate and work harder during working hours, and this has been reported to improve

performance (Mladenović, 2020; Sumarno et al., 2025). One of the major drivers of sales performance, engagement, is also driven by FWB policies. Feeling highly valued and supported at work contribute to employee engagement that mediates the impact of FWB policies on sales performance (Matthews et al., 2021; Sumarno et al., 2025). High turnover rates, a common challenge in sales environments, can also be addressed through these policies. By improving job satisfaction and engagement, FWB policies reduce turnover intentions, leading to better retention rates and lower recruitment costs (Brown et al., 2022; Hasanudin & Pratama, 2023).

Salespeople's performance is a key variable of interest for every organization. Researchers and practitioners have been trying to model salespeople's performance and the elements that influence it for over a century. There is an apparent link between salespeople's performance and the organization's overall performance: salespeople's performance can be used to assess the quality and quantity of sales force achievements.

Salespeople's performance fits well in this thesis given that previous research has shown a link between customer orientation, the central aspect of IMO, and the positive impact on salesperson performance and sales outcome (Donavan et al., 2004). Salespeople represent the company and, in many cases, may be the only individual customers see as trying to satisfy their needs. Furthermore, although the relationship between salespeople's performance and job satisfaction is partially unclear (Bagozzi, 1980), we should examine it further (Hartline & Ferrell 1996). To increase customers' perception of service quality and subsequently improve salespeople's performance, managers should increase employees' job satisfaction and reduce their role conflict, which may mean adjusting their FWB.

Behrman and Perreault (1982) measured salespeople's performance based on self-evaluations and evaluation by managers and reported consistent results. Of course, each approach may have several difficulties. For example, self-evaluation can be strongly biased as people may be very "generous"

when evaluating their performance. Sales managers can be unwilling or unable to distinguish between different performance levels. To address these issues, employees can be assured that their responses will be anonymous or confidential, removing a motive for a responder to give insincere answers, and sales managers can receive better training in the evaluation process (Behrman & Perreault, 1982).

FWB and IMO can help create a supportive, inclusive workplace. For example, family-friendly systems and supportive leadership practices may result in higher job satisfaction and organizational commitment, which is very important for developing a positive organizational culture. Similarly, IMO practices that prioritize employee well-being can enhance organizational culture by reducing role ambiguity and role overload (Wang et al., 2024).

The pertinent sales management literature suggests several ways to measure performance. Half of the studies have measured performance using subjective evaluations such as self-reports, manager assessments, and peer reports. In contrast, the remaining studies have used objective data such as total sales volume, sales commissions, or per cent of quota (Rich et al., 1999). Although empirical evidence indicates that objective and subjective performance measures might not be as interchangeable as many believe, sales managers should choose the performance indicators they use very carefully to evaluate salespeople because different indicators may measure very different things (Rich et al., 1999).

2.2.5 Disconfirmation Theory and Family–Work Balance

Historically, disconfirmation theory has been employed to assess satisfaction by measuring the difference between predicted and perceived interactions (Helson, 1964). Many studies have used disconfirmation theory to describe and measure marketing theories, particularly service quality (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Disconfirmation theory laid the groundwork for the early development

of service quality constructs (Gronroos, 1984, 1988; Parasuraman et al., 1988). Parasuraman was one of the pioneering scholars who introduced the disconfirmation paradigm in the organization–individual connection (Parasuraman et al., 1985). Individuals form expectations when interacting with organizations based on their past experiences, shared experiences with peers, their interpretation of the interaction’s overall context, and the organization’s commitments. The disconfirmation paradigm is firmly established in the literature and is based on expectation confirmation theory, as demonstrated by Oliver (1980). This paradigm provides theoretical explanations of how the past influences the evaluation of a current situation (Oliver, 1977). The argument has been supported by empirical research (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Parasuraman et al., 1988). The detractors of this paradigm have not challenged the core thesis regarding the influence of the past on the present that has been demonstrated in the literature (Asubonteng et al., 1996; Cronin & Taylor, 1992).

Parasuraman et al. (1985) used the disconfirmation paradigm, which measures gaps between expected and perceived services, to develop a service quality construct. They found that expected service is a significant component of perceived service quality and is affected by word of mouth, personal needs, and previous experience.

In the present study, we rely on the principles of the disconfirmation paradigm to approach and conceptualize the notion of work balance. This analogy fits nicely given that the findings from the qualitative research support that previous working experience, employee needs, and understanding of labour market conditions are three elements that concern most of the participants; salespeople and, consequently, shape their perception of FWB. In the disconfirmation literature, consumers typically rely on experience properties (Parasuraman et al., 1985). Analogously, we consider that employees usually rely on their past experience when evaluating FWB. At the same time, personal experiences shape employees’ perceptions of the organization (Kozlowski & Farr, 1988). An employee’s past negative working experience, whether

the result of actual difficulties or simply an individual's tendency to see themselves as victims, will cause an employee to be less trusting of their current employer.

Another element of the disconfirmation paradigm is employees' needs. For example, employees who perceive they are working for a "caring" organization will be more engaged with their job and their job role because such caring manifests the value the organization has for its employees (Kraimer & Wayne, 2004). Thus, the employees' needs for belonging, recognition, emotional support, and appreciation are satisfied. As a result, they effectively engage with the organization and see their welfare as identical to the company's prosperity (Rhoades et al., 2001). The social exchange and the norm of reciprocity theories enhance this argument.

The socioeconomic and political framework of the company's labour market conditions, especially employment uncertainty, are also crucial in shaping employees' perceptions (Lucifora, 2015). In an unfavourable economic climate, many highly qualified employees may prefer the job security of the public sector over a higher salary in the private sector (Ortiz, 2010; Sánchez-Sánchez & Fernández Puente, 2021). In the economic literature, job insecurity, commonly approximated by unemployment, is a critical factor in individual job satisfaction (Chirumbolo & Hellgren, 2003; Dawson et al., 2017; Robone et al., 2011). At the same time, the management science and industrial and organizational psychology literature has presented employability as the most important resource for employees (Fugate et al., 2004; Van Dam, 2004). Employability is generally viewed as a worker's ability to hold or find another job (Forrier & Sels, 2003; Fugate et al., 2004). Continuous changes in the labour market, such as restructurings, mergers, and layoffs, have made jobs more unstable, increasing the need for employees to be employable to maintain employment (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2008). Perceived employability relates to employees' perceptions of employment opportunities and is founded on general skills and knowledge that are desirable beyond the current position and organization. In addition, previous research has demonstrated a correlation between perceived employability and employees' FWB in the

workplace (Berntson & Marklund, 2007; Berntson et al., 2010; De Cuyper & De Witte, 2008). Perceptions of better job opportunities and expected career advancement provide a view of employees' preferences –wages, status, and desired job quality, among others – and the ability to match those preferences with jobs (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2011).

Figure 2.5 provides a preliminary research framework for this thesis.

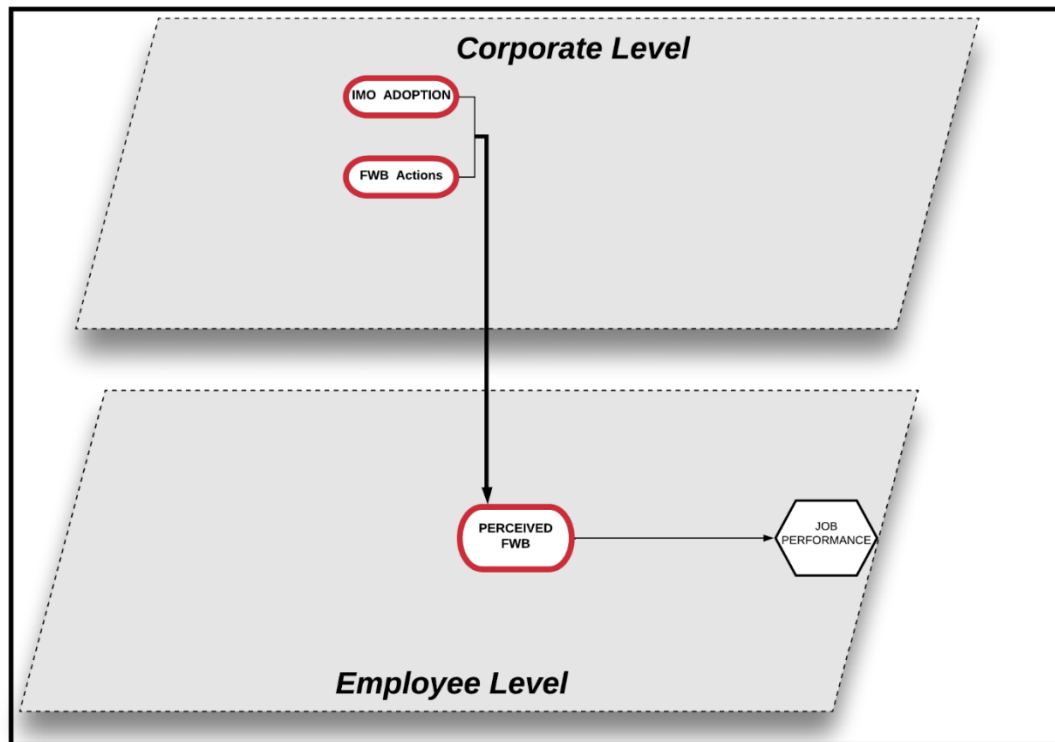


Figure 2.5 A preliminary research framework

The literature review revealed that the employees' perception is a crucial element. More specifically, we should understand how adopting IMO and FWB policies affects and shapes the employees' perception according to their experiences from the work and home domains. We must identify the elements that make employees feel, for example, happy and effective at home or happy, productive, and efficient at work. Moreover, it is essential to know the common ground and what it takes to land on this ground. Inevitably, employees should answer questions through in-depth interviews.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the qualitative research methodology. It is grounded firmly in the theoretical edifice and conceptual distinctions laid out in this literature review. Specifically, this review demonstrated that IMO is a three-dimensional construct – intelligence generation, information dissemination, and managerial responsiveness – and FWB is situated within the spillover, enrichment, and role-conflict frameworks. These lenses delineate the phenomena of interest and point to the lived, interpretive processes through which salespeople negotiate organizational practices and personal boundaries.

Adopting a phenomenological stance enables us to access the very experiences that scholars have theorized. Thus, semi-structured, in-depth interviews are not an arbitrary methodological choice; rather, they align with calls in the literature to understand how IMO dimensions and FWB dynamics manifest in the narratives and sense-making of individual sales professionals. By inviting participants to recount concrete instances of internal communications, managerial actions, and interrole spillovers, we will ensure that our data-collection procedures mirror the constructs and propositions identified in the previous chapter.

The decision to employ purposive sampling of seasoned salespeople in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) within the Greek service context also reflects the emphasis on contextual variation in IMO effectiveness and its impact on performance outcomes. Furthermore, salespeople traditionally have a varied background regarding knowledge, skills, age, etc. So, we can consider them a more representative sample of employees. This judgmental approach, coupled with the criterion of thematic saturation, ensures both breadth and depth: it allows us to confirm the presence of the core IMO and FWB dimensions and to reveal novel themes that may extend or refine the established framework.

Finally, our use of Braun and Clarke's thematic content analysis is directly informed by the integrative, multitheoretical synthesis presented earlier. Similarly to how the literature review

revealed that equity theory, social exchange theory, fit theory, and needs theory explain why and how IMO and FWB relate to job satisfaction and performance, our analytic procedures will code and categorize participant narratives in ways that both validate those theoretical linkages and reveal emergent patterns. In this manner, Chapter 3 is not merely a procedural outline. Rather, it is an epistemological continuation, ensuring that each step of data collection and analysis remains inextricably connected to the constructs and propositions that we identified from the literature review.

Chapter 3: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents a carefully considered qualitative research design as part of the larger mixed-methods design used in this thesis. The primary purpose is to collect information to meet the research objectives and to examine the related hypotheses (see Chapter 5). A qualitative inquiry into the process of what influences employees' perception of FWB (specifying what FWB means to employees within the study's framework), will be used to confirm the content of the conceptual variables, which will be investigated in a quantitative study. This dual approach underscores the aim to understand the phenomenon through supplementing thick, subjective information with empirical, quantitatively oriented investigation.

This chapter starts with a discussion of the various qualitative paradigms, and highlights that these methods reflect the shades of human experience capturing perceptions, actions, feelings, and emotions. Seminal studies are cited to justify the use of phenomenology as an appropriate approach. The phenomenological approach is particularly apt for distinguishing collective meanings from individual impressions. This choice is justified as it aligns well with this thesis's objectives to uncover underlying perceptions in an organizational setting.

A case is built for the use of a mixed-methods design. In this design, a qualitative study confirms the variables emerging from literature and guides the construction of a construct for a future quantitative study. This chapter explains the benefits of using mixed methods: better validity, better credibility, and richer findings (i.e., the findings jointly explain what, how, and why about the phenomena).

Qualitative data are gathered through semi-structured in-depth interviews, which provide in-depth information about individual experiences. The interview guide is systematically structured into four sections: (1) background and demographics, contextualizing the respondent by asking initial personal and professional questions; (2) experiences of FWB, investigating participants' perceptions of, and reflections on the phenomenon; (3) organizational and peer support, examining how supported the participants feel; and (4) job satisfaction, with a general job satisfaction scale and its relationship with their perception of FWB. We describe the pilot study we performed with experts to refine the interview guide in terms of understandability and suitability. Several sampling approaches – convenience, judgmental (or purposive), and snowball – can be used to select participants, salespeople with significant working experience in Greek SMEs, to obtain credible and representative responses.

This chapter also explains the use of thematic content analysis. Based on the procedure outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), the initial stage of analysis involved a manual coding process to condense the data into basic themes. We describe our procedure to develop and validate the themes based on the in-depth interviews.

In summary, this chapter not only explains the specific procedure for our qualitative study, but also discusses the rationale for situating employed a mixed-methods design. The qualitative data complete the quantitative data to provide sufficient depth and breadth to interpret employees' perceptions of FWB.

3.1 Review of Research Paradigms

Qualitative research can depict an individual's perceptions, actions, sentiments, and emotions about a specific phenomenon, social aspect, or organizational operation (Strauss & Corbin, 2015). (Cresswell & Sheikh, A., 2013) identified five methodologies: case study research, narrative

research, phenomenological research, and grounded theory research. This study employs the phenomenological research methodology.

Phenomenological studies include several individuals who have encountered the same phenomena and have collectively identified a shared meaning associated with their lived experience (Cresswell & Sheikh, A., 2013). The researcher tries to characterize a phenomenon shared by all participants and attributes it to a collective experience instead of an individual one (Cresswell & Sheikh, A., 2013).

The conventional approach to gathering data is to interview the individuals exposed to the occurrence (Cresswell & Sheikh, 2013). To give insight into the experiences of the individuals, salient statements or themes are underscored by using the data derived from the research questions (Cresswell & Sheikh, A., 2013). After identifying these themes, they are used to compose a textural description that recounts the participants' experiences (Cresswell & Sheikh, 2013).

Mixed-methods research combines qualitative and quantitative approaches to answer a given set of research objectives (Bell et al., 2022). The advantage of adopting mixed methods over a single approach is that it allows for a more valid and reliable interpretation of the studied phenomena (Collis & Hussey, 2013). Mixed-methods research is valued for its capacity to provide new perspectives on study problems, to increase the reliability of results, to provide generalized conclusions, and to provide profound perceptions that explain why things happen. On the other hand, there are various criticisms of mixed-methods research. Because the qualitative and quantitative methodologies have different grounding assumptions, combining the two elements in the same study could be challenging and troublesome (Bell et al., 2022). This argument is flawed because it implies that paradigms are distinct and cannot be combined. However, combining two approaches in one study is appropriate because the results are more accurate and robust than in the past. Furthermore, the mixed-methods approach has gained traction in business studies (Bell

et al., 2022). Hence, the mixed-methods approach appears to be a good fit for informing this empirical investigation and achieving the research goals of this thesis, especially our aim to determine employees' perceptions of FWB.

3.2 Qualitative Research Design

Given the fragmented and contradictory state of the FWB literature, we considered it necessary to include a qualitative study to develop a conceptual base for the subsequent quantitative inquiry. The academic discussion around FWB suggests a great diversity of understandings and conceptualizations, with little agreement on its fundamental elements (de Menezes & Kelliher, 2011; Kossek & Michel, 2011). Thus, we first conducted a qualitative study to deal with the chaotic issue of FWB, applying an inductive approach to elicit the lived experiences and perceptions of employees regarding FWB. This method facilitated the recognition and mapping of central aspects of the phenomenon in a cohesive and manageable manner based on empirical contributions, rather than by seeking recourse by using contested definitions from the literature (Gioia et al., 2013). The findings from this qualitative investigation then guided how we operationalized the FWB perception construct in the quantitative study by modifying existing validated instruments in ways that reflected participants' contextually situated understandings. This study design represents a pragmatic mixed-methods approach that ensures both conceptual understanding and enhances the validity of a measurement tool (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

As noted above, we used the qualitative study to provide a more valid and solid conceptual framework. Specifically, it had two aims: to validate and confirm the relevance of the pertinent notions in the literature review concerning the broader conceptual framework underpinning this thesis, and to explore whether other notions are also and equally relevant. In the following subchapters, we offer a detailed discussion of qualitative research design, the data collection protocol, and the approach to data analysis.

3.3 Semi-Structured In-Depth Interviews

Of the several ways that are available to collect qualitative data (Malhotra et al., 2017), there are several reasons why semi-structured in-depth interviews are the most appropriate approach for this thesis.

- They provide insights and abundant data that aid in the comprehension of the experience of the phenomenon by probing individuals' responses, impressions, attitudes, and behaviours.
- They are direct and personal, ideally allowing participants to engage meaningfully with an interviewer to elicit underlying motivations, beliefs, attitudes, and feelings about a topic.
- They provide for an open flow of information between interviewer and respondent.
- They are easier to prepare than other qualitative approaches because of their degree of flexibility (Arora et al., 2017).
- They facilitate the simultaneous confirmation and exploration of the notion relating to the specific investigation.

Unlike unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews combine open-ended questions with closed (yes/no) responses or allow the interviewee to choose from preset answers (Collis & Hussey, 2013). This approach allows the interviewer to explore new grounds while also stimulating the interviewee to discuss and address in more detail what extant and pertinent literature reports are of relevance (Collis & Hussey, 2013). As such, semi-structured interviews are the most appropriate approach given the research objectives of our qualitative study.

3.4 Sampling

Three primary sampling techniques are used in qualitative research: convenience sampling, judgmental or purposive sampling, and snowball or networking sampling (Collis & Hussey 2013).

Incorporating individuals with firsthand knowledge of the phenomenon under investigation is known as snowball sampling. During the data-gathering process, respondents are asked for the contact information of other people who have gone through similar events. The judgmental sampling process includes those with extensive knowledge of the topic studied. Individuals who are readily accessible during the duration of the research are included in convenience sampling.

Arora et al. (2017) described judgmental sampling as a convenience sampling technique: the researcher uses their judgment to pick population members. Because salespeople have sales expertise, judgmental sampling is the most suitable sample strategy for the qualitative study of this thesis. Moreover, their experiences (knowledge, skills, age, etc.) make them representative of the population (Arora et al., 2017; Collis & Hussey, 2013), and they are competent to offer their thoughts, which enhances the significance of this thesis for the business community.

This thesis focused on salespeople in Greek SMEs, which account for the majority of companies in Greece. Indeed, according to Eurostat-based data and European Commission reports, SMEs play a crucial role in the Greek economy. Greek SMEs constitute about 99.9% of all enterprises in the non-financial business sector, employing approximately 83% of the workforce in this sector. SMEs in Greece contribute around 56.7% of the total value added, which is above the European Union (EU) average of 56.4% in some reports but slightly below in others, reflecting some variation over time. In Greece, there are approximately 73 SMEs per 1,000 inhabitants, which is considerably higher than the EU average of about 40 per 1,000 inhabitants. Hence, SMEs are important for the Greek economy (European Commission, 2025).

The qualitative study involved 10 salespeople working within different commercial business organizations based in Greece. These actors come from a wide variety of sectors: textiles, sanitary ware, the food industry, the automotive industry, footwear, and others. Thus, they provided us with a comprehensive view of sales practices and organizational realities. The participants were

recruited through non-probability judgmental or convenience sampling (i.e., the researcher selected people according to their profession and/or work background). According to Collis and Hussey (2013), judgmental sampling is the most suitable method when the researcher wishes to search for informants who are well informed and knowledgeable about the problem to be explored and therefore improve the validity of the exploratory results.

The inclusion criteria were at least five years of sales experience, to guarantee that each participant had developed a mature view of his/her work environment, market interactions, and organizational dynamic; and aged 25–60 years, across early career to senior level, to add depth to collected data. The sample included an even number of men and women (five for each gender) to reduce the risk of gender influencing the perspectives of sales experiences.

3.5 Data Collection Protocol

As a result of logistic and public health constraints (due to the COVID-19 pandemic), all interviews were conducted over the phone in June 2020. Each interview lasted about 20 minutes. Although the interviews were somewhat short in length, the guide ensured they were focused on relevant themes including the workplace environment, internal organizational behaviour, perceptions of work–life balance, and IMO. Following typical practices in generating qualitative data (e.g., Mason, 2010), the interviews stopped after reaching data saturation (i.e., after the tenth interview). All interviews were recorded and then transcribed verbatim.

Following Wilson's recommendations (Young et al., 2018), a semi-structured, in-depth, four-part guide was used for the in-depth interviews (see Appendix 1). The first part presents the purpose of the interview to the interviewer and records their background and demographic information. The second part identifies their perception of the FWB. The third part explores how the

interviewer perceives the support or the lack of it; they may receive it from the organization and the co-workers. The fourth part aims to identify the interviewer's job satisfaction level.

A pilot study of the in-depth guide preceded the semi-structured in-depth interviews. The purpose of this pilot study was to fine-tune the guide in terms of clarity and relevance. For this purpose, the guide was presented to four scholars with a strong track record in investigating phenomena similar to those addressed in this thesis. Following their feedback, the guide was amended and improved for clarity and relevance.

3.6 Approach to Data Analysis

Thematic content analysis informs the analysis of the qualitative data this study has generated (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It relies on identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the (qualitative) data. A manual coding process (or data reduction) informed thematic content analysis, intending to select, discard, simplify, summarize, and reorganize the data into meaningful, emergent themes and thus connect them with meaningful theoretical constructs (Busetto et al., 2020; Collis & Hussey, 2013). This process resulted in four themes.

To ensure the validity of the coding process and its outcome (the themes), two senior PhD students were asked to match the coded responses with the themes identified by thematic content analysis. Neither of them was aware of the research objectives or involved in this investigation in any way. After extensive discussion, one theme was rejected because its content could not match the participants' original responses. To enhance further the validity of the themes, we relied on participant validation (Arora et al., 2017; Fossey et al., 2002). All 10 participants agreed with the identification, description, and composition of the three themes.

Overall, the methodological choices made – namely the application of a phenomenological approach and the implementation of semi-structured interviews – are consistent with the research aim of revealing the lived experiences and personal understandings of salespeople with regard to FWB. The open-ended and exploratory focus in the engagements with the participants facilitated the generation of in-depth narratives concerning time constraints, emotional demands, and the complex interplay between work and personal life, all of which are central to the theoretical constructs identified in the literature review. Purposive sampling of participants with diverse demographic and occupational characteristics allowed us to consider in a more subtle manner specific patterns of contextual and individual variances in perceptions of internal workplace support and balance.

Chapter 4 describes the qualitative analysis of the in-depth interviews. Thematic content analysis allowed us to synthesize the participants' views into central themes that reflect the negatives and positives of FWB as evident in the sales environment. These findings reflect and indeed extend the conceptual framework and are central to the development of the quantitative study. The following chapter therefore operationalizes the methodological approach presented here, offering empirical insight into how IM practices intersect with employees' personal lives in complex, context-dependent ways.

Chapter 4: QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This chapter provides a detailed and nuanced interpretation of the semi-structured interview data from 10 Greek SME salespeople. It builds directly upon the conceptual foundations outlined in the literature review (Chapter 2) and operationalized with the qualitative study. Thematic content analysis revealed three primary themes: concerns about time, stress-related challenges, and interference issues. These themes strongly resonate with FWB, particularly focusing on constructs such as time-based conflict, strain-based conflict, and bidirectional work–family interference, respectively.

The first theme, concerns about time, highlights that participants consistently reported that their sales roles requires long working hours. This significantly limits their availability for family, personal leisure, and rest. This aligns with time-based conflict, as conceptualized by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), where time invested in the work domain restricts involvement in non-work roles. The issue was particularly pronounced among participants with children, indicating that parenthood amplifies the strain on time resources and worsens perceived imbalance.

The second theme, stress-related challenges, illustrates that most respondents described sales work as emotionally taxing, with stress carrying over into their personal lives. This supports the construct of strain-based conflict, where psychological demands in one role hinder performance or satisfaction in another. Gender and parental status emerged as significant factors, with all female participants and all parents reporting high stress levels. This underscores the role of demographic moderators in FWB perceptions.

The third theme, interference issues, captures the bidirectionality of work–family conflict. This is divided into work-to-family conflict, where professional demands disrupted family life through aspects like travel and emotional exhaustion, and family-to-work conflict, where familial responsibilities impair workplace performance, such as anxiety over children affecting concentration. We also noted positive interactions: employment offers financial, social, and personal benefits that support non-work life, such as job flexibility and income for hobbies. This introduces the concept of work–family enrichment, in line with Greenhaus and Powell’s (2006) model, and reflects the positive spillover aspects of spillover theory (Staines, 1980).

Cross-cutting drivers that shape the participants’ perceptions of FWB included labour market conditions. High unemployment fosters gratitude for employment, thereby moderating dissatisfaction. Previous work experience sets expectations for balance and workplace quality. Job satisfaction is a reciprocal link with perceived FWB and performance. Finally, individual employee characteristics such as marital status, parenthood, and career stage are relevant.

The demographic analysis supported these thematic findings, showing that parents and married participants are more vulnerable to time and stress-related conflicts, while unmarried, childless men reported more positive work–life experiences. This chapter integrates these findings with what has been reported in the literature and the research objectives, confirming and extending theoretical constructs. It empirically validates models of bidirectional work–family conflict and identifies FWB as a function of both objective job conditions and subjective appraisals. The findings contribute to refining the study’s conceptual framework, which is presented at the conclusion of the chapter as a revised research model. This model guided the quantitative study. In summary, this chapter substantiates and contextualizes theoretical constructs with empirical data, highlighting how FWB is complex, context dependent, and demographically mediated among frontline sales professionals, particularly in the SME sector.

4.1 Demographic Analysis

Table 4.1 presents the demographics of the participants.

Table 4.1 The demographics of the participants

| Participant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | Notes |
|--------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|--|
| Age | 28 | 33 | 40 | 36 | 51 | 47 | 53 | 34 | 29 | 41 | The average age is 39.2 years |
| Gender | M | M | F | F | M | F | F | M | M | F | Five participants are women and five are men |
| Marital status | M | S | S | S | M | M | M | M | S | M | Six participants are married |
| Number of children | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | Five participants are parents |
| Years in sales | 5 | 8 | 10 | 8 | 21 | 15 | 16 | 9 | 5 | 14 | |

The participants are employed in the following sectors:

- **Textiles** – Participants 3 and 4;
- **Sanitary ware** – Participants 5 and 6;
- **Food industry** – Participants 7 and 8;
- **Automobile** – Participants 9 and 10;
- **Footwear** – Participants 1 and 2;

4.2 Emergent Themes

Thematic content analysis revealed three themes and four sub-themes.

Themes

- Concerns about time
- Stress-related challenges
- Interference issues

Sub-Themes

- Understanding of labour market conditions

- Previous working experience
- Job satisfaction
- Employee idiosyncrasies and employee needs

THEME 1: Concerns About Time

This theme is about work interfering with family time. Most participants stated that their job in sales is time-consuming, making it difficult to balance professional commitments with personal responsibilities. Some complained about not having enough time to spend with their families, and others complained about not having enough spare time to pursue their interests and relax. In any case, one of the participants' primary concerns is a lack of time.

Some participants focused on the lack of time to devote to their children and spouses. Participant 5 said, "I don't have enough time to devote to my family because I work long hours. My wife and children have both expressed their dissatisfaction with this." Similarly, Participant 7 said, "When I work such long hours, there is little time to do household chores and spend time with my children and husband." According to Participant 8, "I am sure that if I could work fewer hours, my relationship with my child and my wife could be much better." Likewise, Participant 6 claimed, "The primary issue is that I lost a significant part of my son's childhood because of the numerous hours I spent working. I believe that I will never be able to recoup this loss." Participant 1 expressed something similar: "Due to the long hours required by my employment, I couldn't have a great FWB. My wife sometimes complains that we don't spend enough time together."

Other participants focused on personal time or generally on FWB. Participant 2 said, "With this job, there is insufficient time for personal pursuits and social interaction." Participant 4 noted, "When you work such long hours in such a demanding environment, it's difficult to relax and feel like you have FWB." Additionally, Participant 1 stated, "Because of the many working hours, it is hard to find time to relax and get involved with my favourite hobbies as I used to."

However, not all participants focused on the time issue. For example, Participant 9 expressed concerns about the drain of his energy even if he does not feel a shortage of free time. He said, “I couldn’t believe that my job could drain so much of my energy that it made it difficult to engage in the things I enjoy, although I have sufficient time to do so.”

Overall, the interviews revealed that most of the participants face the same issue. In this group, there is a dominant demographic element. Most participants who complain about time issues are parents. This issue indicates that having children may magnify the free time shortage caused by long work hours.

Whether participants struggle with child-raising, have marital issues with their spouse, or do not enjoy their hobbies enough, the underlying denominator appears to be a lack of time due to long work hours. This issue is congruent and confirms the pertinent literature on time-based conflict, which occurs when available time is insufficient to fulfil both domains’ requirements, so the time devoted to one domain is inevitably missing from the other (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985)

THEME 2: Stress-Related Challenges

Another emerging theme is the issue of stress, which most participants mentioned. They pointed to various bad experiences related to the anxiety associated with a sales job. Participant 3 claimed, “Due to the demanding nature of my profession, I feel imprisoned in this way of life with little opportunity for personal growth. This issue prevents me from creating a family and greatly stresses me.” According to Participant 4, “When you work such long hours in such a demanding environment, you become full of stress, and it’s difficult to feel like you have FWB.” Furthermore, Participant 5 said, “When I get home, I am frequently anxious and overwhelmed, and I require time to recover.” Participant 6 provided similar insight: “Sometimes, I may claim to have FWB, but at others, I believe it is tough to achieve. Mainly due to the stressful nature of this job.” Participant 7 claimed, “Additionally, the time we spend together (wife and children), I am so

anxious that I cannot fully enjoy it most of the cases.” Participant 8 described a similar experience: “I despise the fact that after such a hard day at work, I am so irritable and stressed that I am unable to enjoy time with my family.” Participant 10 discussed her stress-related attitude towards her children, stating that “it’s tough to maintain a pleasant and calm manner around your children while you’re stressed and exhausted at work.”

However, not all participants’ answers contributed to this theme. According to Participant 1, “The most frequent issue is that I bring work concerns at home and vice versa. I don’t think it is as stressful as many believe, but it is annoying.” Similarly, Participant 2 stated, “Of course, the job in sales can be very demanding, but since I am single without children, it doesn’t stress me too much.”

Demographic factors contributed extensively to this theme. To begin, every female participant group stated having encountered stress due to their profession in one way or another. Thus, stress-related problems appear to be “the rule” among the female salespeople in this study. Second, the parents expressed stress. Consequently, the factor of children appears to act as a catalyst in this theme, causing salespeople to feel stressed and apprehensive. This issue is consistent with and supports the pertinent literature on conflict caused by strains since an essential kind of conflict can occur due to strain on one role’s performance that cannot fulfil the other role’s requirements. At the same time, work–life makes one’s personal life difficult and unsatisfactory (Carlson et al., 2000; Greenhaus, 1988; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

THEME 3: Interference Issues

This theme emerged from the participants’ replies regarding the conflicts that may appear due to the interference between the family–personal life and work–life domains. The inevitable interaction between these domains can create conflicts in several layers of salespeople’s lives, but it can also result in some positive outcomes. We noticed two categories of issues: the first occurs

when the family–personal domain influences the work–life domain (family–work conflicts) and the second happens when the work–life domain affects the family–personal life domain (work–family conflicts).

Work–Family Conflicts

This issue occurs when work-related factors have a detrimental influence on family–personal life. For example, Participant 3 claimed that “due to the demanding nature of my profession, I feel imprisoned in this way of life with little opportunity for personal growth. This prevents me from creating a family and makes me worry about it.” Participant 4 said, “Working in sales makes it harder for me to start a family because of the challenging working conditions.” Similarly, Participant 5 stated, “Because of my frequent business trips, I often miss important family events. My wife and children have expressed dissatisfaction with this.” Participant 7 said, “My profession, I am certain, damages the level of communication I have with my family because of the demanding nature of sales work.” According to Participant 9, “I couldn’t believe that my job could drain so much of my energy that it made it difficult to engage in the things I enjoy although I have sufficient time to do so”, and “The job is far more challenging than I anticipated. I’m not convinced I made the proper choice to pursue a career in sales. I feel that destroys my FWB.”

Family–Work Conflicts

These conflicts arise when family or personal life components negatively influence work. Participant 7 responded, “The truth is that I have discovered that when I am happy with my job and am not distracted by family difficulties, I am more focused and productive; otherwise, all this tension is transferred to my work. Usually, concerns about my family distract and irritate me. Naturally, this impairs my communication with the customers and negatively influences my performance. It is impossible to function well if you are not physically and psychologically well.” Participant 10 provided a comparable perspective on this subject: “It’s quite difficult to maintain concentration at work when I’m worried about my children who are alone at home”, and “Family

troubles, particularly those involving children, may be quite detrimental and impede my performance from improving.”

Positive Interaction

Although conflicts can result from the interaction of the two domains, there may be a beneficial influence from one domain to the other. For example, Participant 1 said, “I’m exposed to various critical sales factors in this firm. It will be extremely beneficial in the future, allowing me to work fewer hours for a greater wage. This will allow me to cover my expenses more easily.” In addition, “I’m pleased with my job, I have a wonderful relationship at work, and I’m constantly learning new things that make me a better person.” According to Participant 2, “Working in sales allows me to fund the hobbies I like. I don’t have as much free time as I want, but I generally feel balanced.” “Because I like my job and it fits into my personal life, I am more focused and effective, and my performance is great.” Participant 4 shared: “Through my employment, I’ve met a lot of individuals, which has benefited my social life.”. Similarly, Participant 5 said, “Although salesman is a demanding career that may be stressful at times, it enables me to earn enough money to satisfy my family’s rising requirements. So, yes, I feel relatively balanced in this way.” Participant 7 focused on her job’s practical help: “As a constructive effort, our employer provides schedule flexibility to working moms with little children, which is quite beneficial for some of us. Reduce our stress levels slightly, especially when our children are unwell or require extra attention.”

We made some interesting discoveries from the data analysis of this theme. To begin, several participants referred to multiple categories of conflicts. That is, they addressed both work–family conflicts and family–work conflicts. Some other work–family conflicts result from positive interaction as well. All three are combined, especially in one case (Participant 7). This indicates that the salespeople have a varied perspective on this matter. Second, only men without children did not mention conflicts. Third, all participants who noted family–work difficulties are married and had children. Therefore, this theme also underlies the significance of children.

Thus, we conclude that male salespeople without children in Greek SMEs are more likely to have happy experiences, free of conflict, due to the interplay of the two domains than people with different idiosyncrasies. Additionally, compared with single salespeople, parents are more likely to experience issues that originate in the family and spill over into the workplace. This issue is consistent with and supports the pertinent literature: researchers have argued for the duality of work–family conflict due to potential interference from work on family and interference from family on work (Carlson et al., 2000; Frone et al., 1992). Furthermore, according to spillover theory, a positive relationship between family and work occurs when a positive family experience is associated with a positive work experience. On the contrary, a negative relationship between work and family occurs when a negative work experience is associated with a negative family experience (Staines, 1980). Individuals transfer the attitudes, emotions, skills, and behaviours from their family life into their work role and vice versa (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Near et al., 1980; Staines, 1980).

Table 4.2 provides a summary of the main themes related to FWB.

Table 4.3 The main themes related to the concept of FWB

| | Concerns about time | Stress-related challenges | Interference issues | Participant | Quote | Participant | Quote |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|-------------|---|-------------|---|
| Time with the family | | | | 7 | When I work such long hours, there is little time to do household chores and spend time with my children and husband. | 8 | I am sure that if I could work fewer hours, my relationship with my child and my wife could be much better. |
| Time to relax | | | | 4 | When you work such long hours in such a demanding environment, it's difficult to relax and feel like you have FWB. | 1 | Because of the many working hours, it is hard to find time to relax and get involved with my favourite hobbies, as I used to. |
| Time for personal interests | | | | 2 | This job provides insufficient time for personal pursuits and social interaction. | | |
| Anxiety | | | | 7 | Additionally, I am so anxious about the time we spend together (wife and children) that I cannot fully enjoy it in most cases. | 6 | I used to work in a more organized setting at past jobs, and it's much more difficult to adapt today. This makes me anxious. |
| Stress | | | | 8 | I despise the fact that after such a hard day at work, I am so irritable and stressed that I cannot enjoy time with my family. | 10 | Maintaining a pleasant and calm manner around your children while you're stressed and exhausted at work is tough. |
| Exhaustion | | | | 9 | I couldn't believe that my job could drain so much of my energy that it made it difficult to engage in the things I enjoy, although I have sufficient time to do so | | |
| Work–family conflicts | | | | 5 | Because of my frequent business trips, I often miss important family events. My wife and children have expressed dissatisfaction with this. | 4 | Working in sales makes it harder for me to start a family because of the challenging working conditions. |
| Family–work conflicts | | | | 10 | Maintaining concentration at work is difficult when I'm worried about my children, who | 9 | Family troubles, particularly those involving children, maybe quite detrimental and impede my |

| | Concerns about time | Stress-related challenges | Interference issues | Participant | Quote | Participant | Quote |
|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|-------------|---|-------------|---|
| | | | | | are alone at home. | | performance from improving. |
| Positive interaction | | | | 4 | Through my employment, I've met a lot of individuals, which has benefited my social life. | 2 | Working in sales allows me to fund the hobbies I like. I don't have as much free time as I want, but I feel balanced. |

4.3 Sub-Themes

Our analysis also revealed sub-themes. Although not as strong as themes, they helped us to better understand the participants' perception of several important points. These sub-themes are understanding of labour market conditions, previous working experience, job satisfaction, employee idiosyncrasies, and employee needs.

Understanding of Labour Market Conditions

Several participants expressed that although they may have minor or significant problems with their current job and consequently with their FWB, they are afraid of losing their job and feel lucky to have it due to the considerable unemployment in the labour market. Participant 6 stated, "I used to work in a lot more organized settings at past jobs, and it's much more difficult to adapt today. This makes me anxious. However, given the sector's high unemployment rate, I am limited in my alternatives." Also, "I'm attempting to maintain a high-performance level since I cannot afford to lose my work." Similarly, Participant 7 said, "I don't believe I have FWB, and the primary reason is the hard nature of my sales career. On the other hand, unemployment is so prevalent that I consider myself grateful to have this work." They also added, "On the one hand, I am pleased because I have a job and can support my family's needs, given the high unemployment in our sector." Overall, the participants take labour market conditions seriously and they appear to influence their assessment of FWB substantially.

Previous Working Experience

This sub-theme concerns previous working experience and how this affects employees' perception of their current jobs. Participant 3 said, "I had not anticipated devoting so much of myself to this profession and receiving so little in return. It was completely different from my previous company. I'm genuinely disappointed." They added, "My accomplishments are seldom recognized; my minor errors are exaggerated greatly. This is completely different to what I used to have at my previous jobs." Participant 5 stated, "Considering my prior employment in this field, I appreciate my present position. At the very least, my effort is recognized in this organization. I am delighted about this." Similarly, according to Participant 6, "I used to work in a more organized setting at past jobs, and it's much more difficult to adapt today. This makes me anxious." Participant 7 added something similar: "The most positive aspect of my present work environment is that it is close to my house, so I do not have to travel a long distance to get to work. As I was obliged to do in my previous jobs." In addition, "I've been doing this profession for many years. I was aware of what to anticipate. Long hours of work combined with stress." Participant 8 said, "I wasn't prepared to be so exhausted and stressed out in this work. I couldn't believe how competitive and difficult some professions can be. My life is difficult due to this problem. I wasn't used to working [at] this tempo." Finally, according to Participant 10, "I'd say that my connection with my employees is free of tension. However, it is not the great collaborative environment I was used to in my prior employment, which I miss."

Based on the interviews, we conclude that salespeople's former occupations may have shaped their expectations for their current position, shaping their impression of the FWB. Thus, prior experience appears to be a significant driver of this approach.

Job Satisfaction

According to the responses, there appears to be a link between FWB and job satisfaction. We might include job satisfaction as a driver in comprehending FWB and its effect on employee

performance. Participant 5 said, “Yes, I am happy with my profession, which allows me to maintain some sort of balance with my personal life.” In addition, “I believe that both the job pleasure I receive and the reasonably decent FWB contribute significantly to my ability to maintain a high level of performance.” Participant 7 explained, “The truth is that I have discovered that when I am happy with my job, and I am not distracted by family difficulties, I am more focused and productive; otherwise, all this tension is transferred to my work.” Similarly, Participant 9 stated, “My bad FWB and job dissatisfaction prevent me from improving my performance. I am unable to work longer or harder. As a result, I believe my performance cannot be improved.” Participant 1 claimed, “I cannot derive satisfaction from this job. Too much stress, too many hours worked, and too much conflict in our relationship. I am way out of balance.” Several of the participants expressed that there is a correlation between job satisfaction and the level of FWB they experience. Some feel that while these two aspects are connected, they may influence their performance.

Employ Idiosyncrasies

Several idiosyncrasies of salespeople play a significant role in forming their perceptions and defining their attitudes, according to the findings of this study. For example, we discovered that parents have a different perspective on stress or time-based difficulties than those who do not have children. They are more stressed and grumble about not having enough time to spend with their families. Furthermore, married participants intend to see lengthy hours of work or business travel differently than singles. Similarly, salespeople starting their careers and those in sales for a long time have distinct perspectives. The former have no concerns about the lengthy working hours because they could “grow” their careers, whereas the latter have issues. Taken together, salespeople’s opinion of FWB appears to be influenced by factors such as the stage of family life, attitude towards their career, and overall lifestyle.

4.4 Conclusions and the Final Research Framework

According to the participants' responses, working in sales can be highly stressful, leading to various FWB concerns. Occupational stress, the emotional demands of sales employees, and work–family conflict are just a few of the issues that affect salespeople's work-life balance. Due to a lack of time dedicated to personal and family problems, salespeople's personal and family lives may suffer, resulting in relationship problems and distance. The main themes from the qualitative study emphasize the issue of time, which is frequently insufficient for employees to handle their personal family responsibilities. The participants described problems due to the stress they experienced due to their demanding jobs and conflicts and the favourable situations they may encounter due to the interaction between work and non-work domains. We also identified various critical drivers, such as their awareness of labour market circumstances, prior work experience, and job satisfaction.

The findings presented in this chapter offer rich, empirical insight into how sales employees perceive and navigate the challenges of FWB. The three core themes – time pressures, occupational stress, and role interference – along with the identified influencing factors such as job satisfaction, labour market awareness, and employee idiosyncrasies, deepen our understanding of the lived realities behind FWB perceptions. These results substantiate and extend the conceptual framework established in the literature review and provide a grounded empirical basis for the formulation of testable propositions.

Moreover, the qualitative findings highlight the interplay between individual-level experiences and broader organizational practices, particularly the perceived availability and effectiveness of IMO and FWB policies. They also underscore the moderating role of contextual factors, such as resource availability and demographic characteristics, in shaping employee attitudes and behaviours.

Building upon these insights, Chapter 5 presents a set of hypotheses that formalize the observed relationships into a comprehensive model suitable for quantitative investigation. These hypotheses integrate theoretical constructs with the emergent patterns from the qualitative analysis, thereby bridging inductive and deductive reasoning. Chapter 5 marks the transition from interpretive inquiry to empirical testing and outlines the structural framework that guides the quantitative study.

Chapter 5: HYPOTHESES

This chapter synthesizes the conceptual connections between the literature review and the qualitative results into a structured set of hypotheses that serve as the starting points of the causal model in the quantitative study. At the centre of the chapter is the notion that individual employees' perceptions of FWB are influenced by a combination of individual, organizational, and environmental factors.

Using disconfirmation theory as a framework, we argue that employees compare their anticipated balance (based on past experiences, personal needs, and job security perceptions) or expected balance and satisfaction with their existing balance or satisfaction at their workplace. Based on this view, we propose hypotheses to examine the impact of previous work experience, individual wants, and perceptions about the labour market on FWB evaluations.

This chapter then considers how the influences are moderated by employee characteristics, including marital status, parental status, personality type, and career stage. These features influence how employees make sense of organizational realities, and cope with work–life tensions, which is supported by the qualitative data and prior research on life-stage and trait differences.

The analysis next moves to the organizational level: cultural and behavioural forces (e.g., empowerment, resistance to change, and intra-organizational politics) that influence the way that HR and marketing departments coordinate with one another. This coordination may affect the successful implementation of IMO and FWB policies. We also posit that both IMO and FWB are positively related to employees' perceptions of balance but acknowledges that the availability of organizational resources may enhance or diminish these effects. In this sense, resource availability serves as a moderator of the potential of organizational support mechanisms.

Finally, this chapter focuses on the desired consequences of positive FWB perceptions, proposing job satisfaction as mediator through which subjective performance is affected. This relationship is also contingent on employee competence: more skilled employees are better able to convert satisfaction into enhanced performance.

Taken together, these hypotheses provide a multilevel explanatory model that combines individual differences, organizational systems, and contextual moderators to account for how FWB develops and what its outcomes are. This model offers a unified framework (**Error! Reference source not found.**) for the subsequent empirical analysis.

5.1 Disconfirmation Paradigm and Family–Work Balance

Disconfirmation theory assesses satisfaction by comparing expected and perceived outcomes. It has played a crucial role in developing service quality constructs within the marketing literature. This theory posits that individuals form expectations based on past experiences, peer input, and organizational context, influencing how they evaluate present interactions. The expectation confirmation model, foundational to this theory, has been widely supported by empirical research.

In applying this framework to the concept of FWB, we draw parallels between how employees, like consumers, rely on their previous experiences, personal needs, and interpretation of the labour market when evaluating their current work situation. Past negative work experiences can decrease trust in employers, while positive perceptions of organizational support and care enhance employee engagement and fulfilment of needs like belonging and recognition. Theories of social exchange and reciprocity further explain how perceived organizational support leads to greater employee commitment and alignment with company goals. On these grounds, we hypothesize:

H1a: Salespeople’s previous working experience influences their perception of FWB.

H1b: Salespeople’s needs influence their perception of FWB.

H1c: Salespeople's perception of employability and job uncertainty affects their perception of FWB.

5.2 Employee Idiosyncrasies and Family–Work Balance

Employees' perceptions of FWB can vary due to their idiosyncratic conditions (Wang et al., 2019). These conditions may include whether one is single or married, whether a parent is nearing retirement, several aspects of their personality and behaviour, or a specific career stage. For example, research has shown that personality traits, career orientation, marital status, and parenthood can affect the relationship between employee needs and perceived work–life balance (Panisoara & Serban, 2013; Sayehmiri et al., 2020). Employees with different personality traits, career orientations, marital statuses, and parental responsibilities may perceive work-life balance differently (Gatrell et al., 2013). An employee who is a single parent may have different work-life balance needs than an employee who is married without children. Similarly, an employee nearing retirement may have different work–life balance priorities than an employee in the early stages of their career. These idiosyncratic conditions can influence how employees perceive and experience FWB (Lamovšek et al., 2023).

Employee idiosyncrasies may also function as moderators between the previous elements and FWB perception. The study of the qualitative research participants showed that idiosyncrasies affect the participant's perceptions. For example, employees perceive the risk of losing their jobs differently depending on their number of responsibilities, such as if they are married or single or whether they have children. Moreover, although previous working experience shape the perception of salespeople's current jobs, these experiences may be mediated by the idiosyncrasies of the current salespeople's stage of life. A salesperson may have loved regular working travel in a previous position. Still, these business trips may not be appreciated as much if they are now a parent and have different needs. Additionally, an employee's personality may affect their

perception of FWB. For example, traits such as empathy have a vital emotional component and influence the employee's perception of the working environment (Buss & Finn, 1987).

In the context of employee attitude, we can also include the aspect of work centrality, which is defined as an individual's beliefs about the importance of work in their lives (Paullay et al., 1994). People who view work as a central life interest identify strongly with work because they believe the work role is an essential and significant part of their lives. Work centrality consists of normative beliefs regarding the value and significance of work in the context of an individual's life structure (Brooke et al., 1988; Kanungo, 1982).

Another essential construct supported by the literature that can be integrated into the attitude context is proactive behaviour, which may be a significant and measurable component of organizational behaviour, with implications for understanding and predicting a wide range of behaviours (Bateman & Crant, 1993). Proactive behaviour refers to a relatively stable tendency in individuals to take initiative, to anticipate future needs or changes, and to engage actively in actions aimed at influencing their environment positively and constructively. It involves being forward-thinking, taking control of situations, and seeking improvement opportunities (Bateman & Crant, 1993). Proactive individuals are characterized by their willingness to go beyond their assigned tasks, identify problems or opportunities, and take proactive steps to address them (Bretz et al., 1989).

The career stage may also affect employees' perception of FWB. The core premise of the career stage perspective is that people go through several distinct professional stages during their careers. Each stage is characterized by differences in work attitudes and types of relationships, employee needs, and aspects of work that the employee values (Slocum & Cron, 1985). Although different workers at the same career stage try to meet their work-related needs similarly (Mount, 1984),

employees are likely to have different goals and dilemmas at distinct career stages, and their aspirations will be correspondingly different (Mehta et al., 2000; Pogson et al., 2003).

Taken together, it appears that the idiosyncrasies of the employee can significantly affect the extent to which they perceive FWB. On these grounds, we hypothesize:

H2a: Salespeople's idiosyncrasies moderate the effect that employees' previous working experience have on their perception of FWB.

H2b: Salespeople's idiosyncrasies moderate the effect that employees' needs have on their perception of FWB.

H2c: Salespeople's idiosyncrasies moderate the effect that employees' perception of labour market conditions have on their perception of FWB.

5.3 The Effect of Organizational Characteristics on Marketing and Human Resources Departments and Internal Market Orientation and Family–Work Balance Policies

In addition to elements that act at the employee level, some elements happen at the corporate level. They are related to IMO and FWB actions and involve the marketing and HR departments, which are central for their implementation. Additionally, the availability of resources seems to affect the structure of the interactions and interrelations between these elements.

Many businesses provide different FWB programmes and advantages, including work sharing, flexible scheduling, and on-site daycare to help individuals manage multiple obligations more efficiently (Thomas & Ganster, 1995). Research has shown that individuals who prioritize their family roles over their work roles tend to experience a better quality of life, increased work engagement, and higher life satisfaction. Scholars have found a direct relationship between

adaptable work practices and enhanced financial prosperity for both the company and its staff. These policies usually include flexible start and finish times, part-time work, telecommuting, job-sharing, daycare, and leave choices (Perlow & Kelly, 2014). Promoting a more substantial work–life balance for workers can lead to favourable organizational results regarding attendance, retention, and overall job satisfaction (Boyar et al., 2005; Bruck et al. 2002; Kelliher & Anderson, 2010).

In contrast, the absence of FWB, also known as FWB conflict, can have profound implications for organizations and individuals. Moreover, FWB concerns and dissatisfaction have been cited more frequently than other aspects of the job or company policies (Hughes & Bozionelos, 2007). Employees with high levels of FWB conflict may experience increased tension, which may negatively impact their job performance (Heckerson & Laser, 2006).

Supportiveness operates on two primary levels: proximal support from direct supervisors and distal support at the organizational level, demonstrated by FWB rules in the HR department and an informal stance from HR managers on FWB matters. HR managers oversee and assist with the organization’s FWB policy. Their opinions and attitudes towards these programmes might impact employee FWB concerns, such as adoption, inside an organization (Eversole et al., 2007; Kopelman et al., 2006). Studies in the work–family field have shown that an organization’s culture, which consists of shared views on its endorsement of FWB, can impact employees’ use of work–family benefits, experiences of work–family conflict, and overall job attitudes (Allen, 2001; Behson, 2002; Greenhaus & Foley, 2007; Thompson et al., 1999).

This work and family culture has three elements. The first is managerial support, which refers to the perception of how sympathetic supervisors, middle managers, and administrators are to their workers’ work–family demands. Prior studies have investigated how supervisors and coworkers provide social support in the workplace and have shown that this support is associated with lower

levels of work–family conflict (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005; Thomas & Ganster, 1995). The second dimension of FWB culture is the perception of unfavourable career repercussions when employees believe that FWB rules or efforts to balance FWB priorities are linked to adverse career outcomes (Thompson et al., 1999). While flexible working hour programmes, like FWB policies, are associated with favourable workplace attitudes in employees, not all employees are inclined to use them. The third element of FWB culture is organizational time demands, which refers to the expectation that workers must work extended hours and prioritize work over personal life to gain approval from management (Thompson et al., 1999). This aspect represents the organization's explicit and implicit rules for allocating time and effort between work and personal obligations.

Organizations have increasingly emphasized FWB policies to assist employees in balancing their work and family obligations in response to this trend. For example, Thomas and Ganster (1995) suggested that such programmes enhance well-being. There is sufficient evidence linking FWB corporate culture to FWB conflict (e.g., Frye & Breugh, 2004; Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005; Premeaux et al., 2007). Another study indicated that the presence of FWB programmes relates to the assistance provided by supervisors and the organization (McCarthy, 2013). The research revealed how helpful HR managers and direct supervisors are seen in terms of FWB influences employees' participation in FWB programmes, their FWB-related results, and their intentions to leave the company. The author introduced a model that connects FWB programme availability, supervisory support, organizational support, and FWB results across several organizational levels (Figure 5.1).

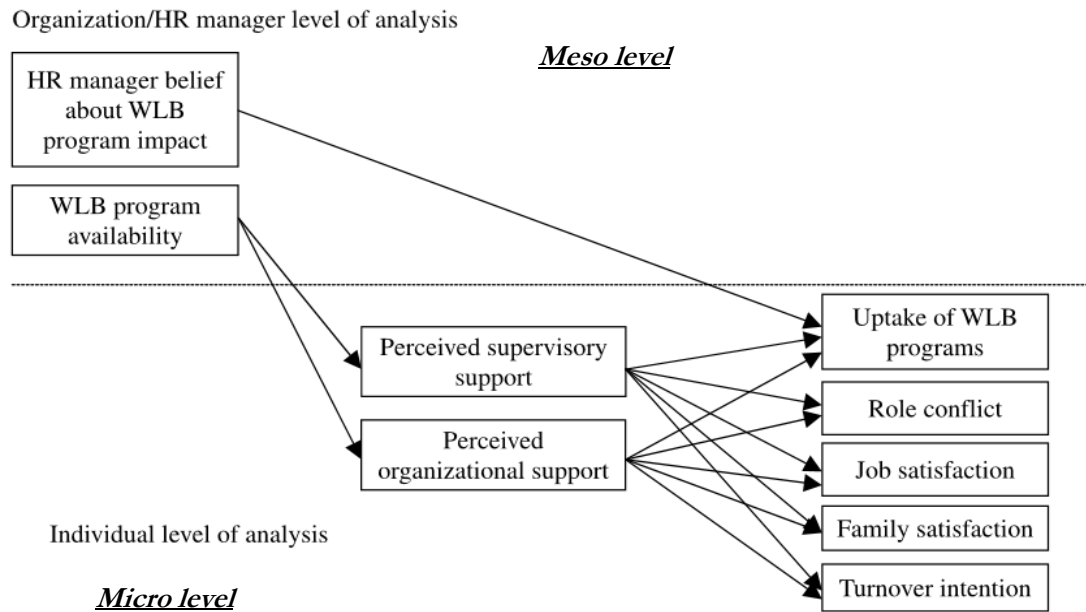


Figure 5.1 A model linking FWB programme availability, supervisory support, organizational support, and FWB outcomes at different organizational levels (McCarthy, 2013). WLB, work–life balance

This model aligns well with the multilevel approach of this thesis, as demonstrated by the similarity to the final research framework of this thesis (Figure 5.2).

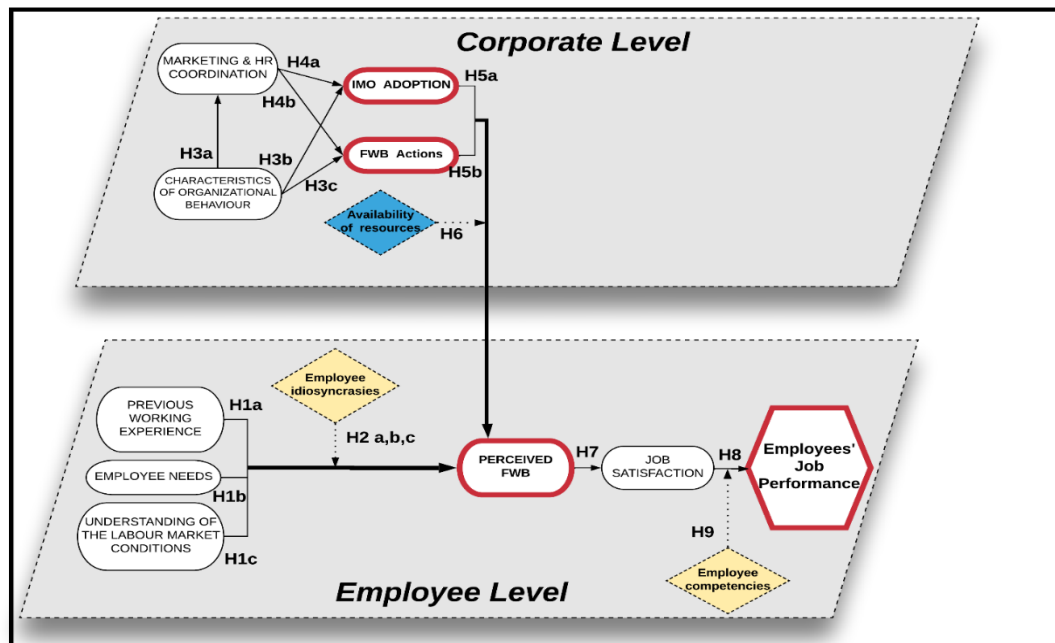


Figure 5.2 The final research framework

The availability of FWB policies may be interpreted as an indication of a company's commitment to the welfare of its employees. Rhoades et al. (2001) postulated that the availability of FWB programmes could promote perceptions of organizational support related to outcomes such as commitment and turnover intentions. Therefore, we hypothesize:

H3a: Characteristics of organizational behaviour such as empowerment/participation, politicking, and resistance to change affect marketing and HR coordination.

H3b: Characteristics of organizational behaviour such as empowerment/participation, politicking, and resistance to change affect IMO adoption.

H3c: Characteristics of organizational behaviour such as empowerment/participation, politicking, and resistance to change influence the adoption of FWB actions.

A company's marketing and HR departments commonly employ IMO and FWB policies. We must comprehend the link between organizational behaviour characteristics and marketing and HR coordination. Open lines of communication, collaboration, trust, and common objectives may contribute to more united HR and marketing divisions. A company's culture, leadership, and structure may also affect this connection.

Coordination strategies such as planning, communication, and leadership alignment may strengthen the collaboration between marketing and HR. According to Chimhanzi (2004), these tactics may enhance the sharing of information and resources and the alignment of priorities. Better communication and cooperation between marketing and HR may also result in more effective execution of the marketing plan (Chimhanzi & Morgan, 2005).

Rafiq and Ahmed (1993) discovered that the quality of marketing–HR connections might impact the efficacy of marketing activities by facilitating the flow of information, formulating a shared goal, and developing trust. Additionally, the authors highlight the importance of leadership support for marketing–HR relationships. The literature also emphasizes the significance of

excellent communication and coordination between marketing and HR to reach similar objectives and the need to identify the boundaries between marketing and HR management to prevent duplication of efforts and conflicts.

Organizational behavioural characteristics may impact HR and marketing cooperation. The literature has provided valuable guidelines for enhancing cooperation between marketing and HR, which may improve organizational performance. Marketing–HR integration requires clear communication channels, collaboration, trust, and common objectives. Other variables, including organizational culture, leadership, and structure, significantly influence this connection. The installation of coordination mechanisms might increase this cooperation, the assistance of senior management, and establishing separate marketing and HR boundaries. Therefore, we hypothesize:

H4a: The coordination of marketing and HR affects the adoption of IMO.

H4b: The coordination of marketing and HR influences FWB-related actions.

5.4 The Effect of Internal Market Orientation and Family–Work Balance Actions on the Perception of Family–Work Balance

We examine the effect of the essential elements from the corporate level (IMO + FWB actions) on FWB perception, which is the dominant element at the employee level. IM activities and employee empowerment can result in job satisfaction and customer-oriented employees. This indicates that employees are more likely to be pleased with their jobs when they feel empowered and engaged in marketing initiatives (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003). Moreover, IM might have a favourable effect on workers' happiness with their jobs. Tortosa Edo et al. (2015) reported a favourable correlation between IMO and job satisfaction. Hence, investing in IM efforts may benefit external outcomes and improve employee attitudes and satisfaction. Employee work

satisfaction is also enhanced by certain internal activities, including empowerment, participatory decision-making, and informal communication, and by embracing the notion of IMO. Implementing IM campaigns can enhance job satisfaction (Gounaris, 2008b).

IM can improve employee engagement and satisfaction. By treating employees as internal customers, organizations can create a customer service culture that extends to external and internal stakeholders. This can enhance employee work satisfaction, motivation, and dedication. Additionally, firms may build a sense of ownership and pride among employees by including them in formulating marketing initiatives and acknowledging their achievements. These factors can contribute to improved employee engagement and satisfaction (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003)

Another link between IMO and FWB is supervisor support. Researchers have shown that supervisor support predicts both work–family and family–work conflicts (Boles et al., 2001). Specifically, when an employee perceives that their supervisor is supportive of balancing work and family demands, they will likely report less family–work conflict. Additionally, a supportive supervisor is essential in creating an environment that supports using family-friendly policies, which can help reduce role conflict. There is a favourable correlation between supervisory support and work satisfaction. Individuals who perceive that their superiors endorse the integration of work and home duties are more likely to express elevated job satisfaction levels. Boles et al. (2001) and Carlson and Perrewé (1999) investigated the correlation between work–family conflict and job satisfaction. A helpful supervisor can have a favourable impact on reducing work–family conflict and increasing job satisfaction, as indicated by these studies (Frye & Breugh, 2004). Richman et al., 2008 suggested that perceived organizational support is a factor that influences job engagement, which in turn has a favourable correlation with job performance. Positive sentiments from high work satisfaction, stemming from favourable appraisals of what the company provides, increase individuals' willingness to engage in behaviours that enhance organizational success (Richman et al., 2008). Therefore, it can be inferred that perceived

organizational support positively impacts job satisfaction through its relationship with job engagement. Thus, we hypothesize:

H5a: IMO adoption affects perceived FWB.

Establishing a thorough FWB programme as part of the company's overall business plan can increase the firm's competitiveness. This indicates that if a firm offers rules that assist people in balancing their professional and personal lives, it might result in a more favourable opinion of their FWB. Providing FWB initiatives in a planned and deliberate manner can increase employee engagement and result in advantages that cannot be attained with managerial gimmicks and short solutions. Implementing FWB legislation is believed to positively affect employees' perceptions of their FWB (Khan & Agha, 2013).

Likewise, FWB policies may benefit individuals, their families, companies, and society. Such policies can help reduce FWB conflict and its adverse effects (e.g., decreased productivity, increased absenteeism, and turnover), improve employee prosperity and job satisfaction, enhance the organizational reputation and appeal to prospective employees, and contribute to broader societal goals such as increased fertility rates and labour supply. By offering flexible work choices such as telecommuting, flexible scheduling, and job sharing, businesses may help workers better manage their work and personal responsibilities, leading to a more incredible feeling of control and less stress. In addition, FWB policies such as parental leave and childcare assistance may help workers balance work and family responsibilities. However, the efficacy of these programmes may be contingent on cultural context and other factors (Brough et al., 2008).

Attempts at achieving FWB may be helpful for individuals and enterprises in various ways. These programmes can aid individuals in managing work and family responsibilities, resulting in improved job satisfaction. This may also result in decreased levels of stress and turnover intent. Implementing FWB rules can enhance companies' organizational dedication, productivity, and

customer happiness. In addition, providing perks linked to employee health can increase employee retention rates and decrease absence expenses (Osoian et al., 2009).

Based on the above background, we hypothesize:

H5b: FWB actions influence salespeople's FWB.

5.5 The Role of Available Resources

Another important element that might moderate the influence of IMO and FWB actions on FWB perception is the availability of resources the organization may allocate for this purpose. Ewing and Caruana (1999) examined the effect of adopting IMO in the public sector and found that the availability of resources significantly moderates the association between IMO and organizational performance. In particular, they found that IMO has a more significant beneficial impact on performance when resources were available.

The link between IMO and company performance is influenced by the availability of resources on adopting IMO in SMEs (Ngo et al., 2020). Researchers discovered that the favourable impact of IMO on performance is more significant when more resources are available. The authors of another study on adopting IMO in the hotel sector discovered that the availability of resources influences the link between IMO and customer satisfaction. They found that when resources are available, IMO has a more favourable impact on customer satisfaction (Lee et al., 2015).

The relationship between IMO and job satisfaction among workers in SMEs is be impacted by resource availability (Ngo et al., 2020). IMO has a more pronounced positive effect on job satisfaction when resources are accessible. While there is limited research on this topic, these studies suggest that resource availability can moderate the impact of IMO adoption on FWB

outcomes such as job satisfaction and job strain. Specifically, the positive effects of IMO on FWB may be more robust when resources such as support and training are more abundant.

In addition, to successfully deploy IM, a company must plan and implement several programmes and activities. These programmes might include training and development initiatives, employee appreciation programmes, and communication techniques that enhance employee engagement and job satisfaction. Organizations should prioritize investing in their internal clients' needs to satisfy consumer requirements better. Implementing IM techniques may involve an initial investment, but increasing staff happiness and productivity will likely pay off in the long term (Munteanu, 2014). The more resources a company spends in this area, the more efficient its programmes and the better its level of IM will be. Overall, this research indicates that the availability of resources may moderate the association between IMO adoption and organizational success. Specifically, when resources are plentiful, the favourable impacts of IMO may be amplified.

On the other hand, there is substantial evidence in the literature that the availability of resources within an organization may attenuate the link between the FWB policies and perceived FWB.

Kossek and Ozeki (1998) found that FWB policies, such as flexible work options and childcare support, influence the relationship between work–family conflict and job satisfaction. Despite experiencing significant work–family conflict, employees who saw their company as offering extensive work–family advantages reported higher job satisfaction levels. Another study found that job autonomy and supervisor support influenced the connection between work–family conflict and employee welfare (Hammer et al., 2011). The authors indicated that individuals with solid job autonomy and supervisor support experienced lower stress levels and higher welfare while facing significant work–family conflict.

Based on this evidence, we suggest that resource availability could mediate the relationship between IMO adoption and FWB actions on FWB perception. Even in the context of IMO adoption, organizations that provide sufficient resources to their workers, such as a supportive culture, FWB policies, and other types of support, may be better equipped to encourage FWB. However, further study is required to comprehend the interplay between these factors.

Clark et al. (2017) highlighted the availability of organizational resources as a factor that might influence work–family conflict. The analysis indicated that more organizational resources, such as schedule flexibility and family-friendly policies, were related to lower work–family conflict levels and more excellent work–family facilitation. This shows that when firms give resources to assist their workers in fulfilling their family duties, the detrimental effects of job pressures on family life are mitigated. This research implies that an organization’s resource availability might significantly mediate the association between perceived FWB and employee outcomes. When firms offer work–family benefits, job autonomy, supervisor assistance, and a family-supportive culture, they may assist workers in managing work and family life demands, which can benefit employees’ job satisfaction. Therefore, we hypothesize:

H6: The availability of resources moderates the impact of IMO adoption and FWB actions on salespeople’s perception of FWB.

5.6 The Effect of Job Satisfaction

Research indicates that FWB has a favourable effect on job satisfaction. Powell and Greenhaus (2006) showed that greater FWB correlates with greater work satisfaction. Kossek (2016) observed that workers with superior FWB report greater job satisfaction and lower levels of burnout. According to Wayne et al. (2007), FWB is positively connected to job happiness, with employees expressing more significant levels of job satisfaction when they perceive better FWB. The available research generally indicates a good association between FWB and work happiness. When workers

can adequately balance their personal and professional lives, they are more likely to be pleased with their professions. Therefore, we hypothesize:

H7: Salespeople's perception of FWB influences job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction has a favourable effect on employee performance. A meta-analysis of 312 research papers revealed a positive correlation between work happiness and job performance (Judge et al., 2001). According to the authors, this correlation may be because people who are satisfied with their jobs are more likely to be motivated, engaged, and dedicated to their work, which results in higher performance levels. Cropanzano and Wright (1999) evaluated the relationship between work satisfaction and many performance outcomes, including absenteeism, turnover, and productivity. They found that higher work satisfaction relates to a reduction in absenteeism, turnover, and higher productivity. Finally, Podsakoff et al. (2009) investigated the influence of work satisfaction on various performance outcomes, including task performance, citizenship behaviour, and counterproductive conduct. The authors discovered a positive relationship between job happiness and all three forms of performance, indicating that pleased individuals are more likely to participate in productive and pleasant behaviours at work.

These abovementioned studies provide solid evidence that job satisfaction substantially affects employee performance. By building a healthy work environment and boosting job satisfaction, firms may increase employee motivation, engagement, and commitment, enhancing performance and productivity. Therefore, we hypothesize:

H8: The level of job satisfaction affects salespeople's performance.

Evidence also suggests that employee competency moderates the association between work satisfaction and performance. Researchers determined that the association between job satisfaction and performance is more substantial for more competent employees. According to the survey, highly skilled people who are content with their professions may be more driven to

perform well (Judge et al., 2001). Ng and Feldman (2012) reported that the association between job satisfaction and performance is more significant for employees with higher levels of education and training. This indicates that highly educated and skilled workers may be more likely to convert their job happiness into enhanced performance. Finally, Sturman et al. (2005) indicated that workers with a high feeling of personal control over their work have a more significant association between job satisfaction and performance. This study hypothesizes that individuals who feel competent and in charge at work may be more likely to perform well if they are content with their employment.

In conclusion, employee competence may modulate the association between work satisfaction and performance. Further study is required to completely comprehend the nature of this link and how it might be used to enhance organizational results. Based on these considerations, we hypothesize:

H9: Salespeople's competence moderates the impact of job satisfaction on performance.

In summary, this chapter has established the theoretical model and articulated the hypotheses derived from both the literature and qualitative findings. These hypotheses reflect a multilevel understanding of how organizational practices – including IMO and FWB policies – interact with individual-level perceptions, needs, and behaviours to shape outcomes such as job satisfaction and performance. This chapter has also identified several moderating factors, including employee idiosyncrasies, perceived employability, and resource availability, which provide additional explanatory depth to the proposed framework.

These relationships are empirically examined with a quantitative methodology, which is described in Chapter 6. It details the philosophical stance, research design, sampling strategy, measurement instruments, and analytical techniques employed to test the hypotheses. Specifically, the use of a positivist paradigm, a cross-sectional time horizon, and a hierarchical multilevel research design

ensures methodological alignment with the study's theoretical foundations. Chapter 6 operationalizes the constructs introduced here, explaining how they are measured using validated scales and how the nested data structure – consisting of employees and their managers – is handled through multilevel statistical modelling. Attention is also given to the procedures used to mitigate common method variance (CMV) and ensure instrument reliability and validity. In this way, Chapter 6 transforms the abstract relationships proposed in the hypotheses into a concrete empirical framework, setting the stage for statistical testing and the generation of findings that will confirm, refine, or challenge the developed propositions.

Chapter 6: QUANTITATIVE METHODOLOGY

This chapter lays a robust foundation for the quantitative study of this thesis by detailing its philosophical and procedural framework. It operates on a positivist epistemology, which emphasizes the existence of an objective reality that can be systematically observed and measured. It adopts a deductive approach to test causal hypotheses related to the key constructs: IMO, FWB, job satisfaction, and employee performance. This approach bridges earlier conceptual frameworks and hypotheses with empirical testing in subsequent chapters.

The quantitative study employs a cross-sectional design, capturing data at a single point in time, and leverages a multilevel research model informed by meso theory. This model enables simultaneous analysis of organizational-level (macro) and employee-level (micro) outcomes. The study hypothesizes that organizational practices, including FWB policies and IMO strategies, influence individual-level outcomes, including job satisfaction and performance, while perceptions and individual differences mediate or moderate these effects. The rationale behind multilevel modelling is carefully articulated to justify this analytical approach.

Data collection for the study involved 166 Greek commercial enterprises, each contributing one sales manager and five sales employees, resulting in a robust sample of 830 employee-level responses. Sampling was meticulously structured with two defined levels: the corporate level (sales managers) and the employee level (salespeople). Specific sectors such as pharmaceuticals and call centres were excluded due to their unique sales processes. Snowball sampling was utilized at the organizational level, while a minimum employment duration of five years was imposed as a criterion to ensure participants' familiarity with workplace practices.

We implemented multiple mitigation strategies to address concerns regarding CMV. These included varied Likert scales, reverse-coded items, assurances of anonymity, and statistical

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techniques such as Harman's single-factor test. We selected the measurement instruments from established, validated scales found in the literature and adapted for the study's multilevel structure. Constructs measured at the organizational level include IMO (Gounaris, 2006), interdepartmental cooperation (Chimhanzi & Morgan, 2005), and organizational behaviour characteristics (Bouckennooghe et al., 2009; Oreg, 2003). At the employee level, we analysed constructs such as FWB (Netemeyer et al., 1996; Carlson et al., 2000), employee personality (Hirschfeld & Feild, 2000; Bateman & Crant, 1993), job satisfaction (Hartline & Ferrell, 1996), and performance (Cross et al., 2007). Additional controls include participants' previous working experience and social desirability bias (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960).

We conducted separate pilot tests for the employee and manager questionnaires, using convenience samples, to refine clarity and reduce potential biases. All instruments were translated into Greek to ensure cultural and linguistic relevance, further enhancing the accuracy of the results.

In summary, this chapter provides a comprehensive and methodologically rigorous framework for testing the hypotheses. By integrating positivist principles, multilevel modelling, validated measurement instruments, and detailed sampling procedures, the quantitative study is well-positioned to deliver empirical insights. The methodological rigor lays a solid foundation for the transition to Chapter 7, which analyses the quantitative findings derived from these carefully constructed methodological processes.

6.1 Review of Research Paradigms

Paradigms provide a foundational framework of thinking that guides theory, study, and the structure of the scientific research community. These knowledge statements are crucial for understanding the philosophy of science. Interpretivism and positivism are situated at the two

extremes of a spectrum. Some scholars and researchers may not fully support one method due to the emergence of various alternative paradigms in social science, leading academics to introduce additional scientific paradigms. The following subchapter explores these two significant scientific paradigms and elaborates on the reasoning behind selecting positivism to guide the quantitative study.

6.1.1 Positivism and Interpretivism

Positivism is the prevailing paradigm in science, asserting that science objectively quantifies distinct truths about a singular observable reality. The data and interpretation have no inherent value, and the data remain unchanged during monitoring. Positivists remove themselves from the world they study. Researchers from different perspectives acknowledge the need to interact with real-world experiences to gain a deeper understanding and effectively express its emerging features and qualities (Healy & Perry, 2000). The positivist viewpoint in social research is based on the idea that human challenges are not confined to specific locations. Positivists unquestionably acknowledge the existence of an external objective world of social phenomena, the reliability of quantitative measurement, and the capacity to form empirical generalizations and construct more abstract theoretical claims (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Deductive reasoning is used to formulate testable hypotheses. The findings of investigations can be utilized to determine if the facts support a theory well; if not, the theory must be updated to anticipate reality better. According to positivists, science must be studied through observation and measurement.

The positivist approach aims to find and assess valid explanations or causes of facts or social patterns through scientific verification standards. The interpretivist paradigm focuses on revealing patterns of subjective perception rather than seeking an objective reality. The last assumption is that all interpretations of truth are shaped by the perspectives and understanding of the observer (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Interpretivist social science is linked to hermeneutics, a theory of

meaning from the eighteenth century guided by the researcher's subjective beliefs and feelings on the world and its interpretation. The pragmatic method emphasizes interpersonal interactions and building relationships (Neuman & Blundo, 2000). The interpretivist approach asserts that a methodological materialist perspective is inadequate for examining the social environment (Healy & Perry, 2000). The researcher's interpretations influence the true meaning of the cosmos, leading to the creation of the social reality experienced by individuals (Guba et al., 1994).

6.2 Justification for the Choice of Positivism

The positivist method represents the ontological stance of this work. This investigation seeks to comprehend the causal explanation for the investigated phenomena. The best approach to obtain this information is via scientific means. These methods ensure a clear distinction between the subjective biases of the researcher and the objective reality under study. This requires the development and testing of hypotheses using quantitative methods.

This method is predicated on the idea that universal cause–effect patterns may be utilized to anticipate and manage natural occurrences (Healy & Perry, 2000). Consequently, this strategy's primary purpose is to identify these patterns. Furthermore, empirical validation of the findings is significant because we may depend on world measurements to deliver reliable information.

From an ontological point of view, the positivist perspective is based on the theoretical premise that the researcher can comprehend an objective world provided they employ the proper methods and implement them properly. Three criteria are used to assess this sort of research: validity, reliability, and generalizability. As a result of a measurement approach or procedure, validity is determined by whether the results provided by the approach or procedure are accurate (allowing the researcher to quantify or assess an objective fact). Reliability refers to the consistency with which a measuring technique or procedure yields the same findings. Generalizability refers to the

ability to extend a study's results to settings other than the original study environment. A fundamental precondition of positivism is the assumption that these conditions are met. Those principles are in line with the design of the study.

6.2.1 Epistemology and Ontology

The positivist approach is based on empirically valid quantitative research. Science relies on empirical inquiry to evaluate all occurrences utilizing indications that reveal the truth. Positivism aims to measure and examine cause-and-effect relationships between variables within a value-free framework (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). To guarantee this, approaches such as randomization, tightly regulated procedures, and surveys with a limited range of preset responses are employed. Sample sizes in quantitative research are markedly larger than those in qualitative research, and the larger samples enable the use of statistical methods (Carey et al., 1993).

6.3 Time Horizon

The quantitative study used a cross-sectional design of time. When analysing connections between variables, a cross-sectional time horizon in research refers to using data acquired at a specific moment. The process entails examining a subset of things or subjects at a particular juncture and analysing the attributes or results of significance. Cross-sectional analysis facilitates the examination of distinct entities or topics at a single moment in time, hence offering valuable insights into the present condition of things. It finds widespread use across several fields, including healthcare forecasts, financial market analysis, and policy research. Using cross-sectional data, scientists can identify the connections between variables and derive conclusions or predictions from the observed data (Bauer et al., 2005; Tucker, 1982). The quantitative study was conducted from November 2020 to March 2021.

6.4 Research Design

Some marketing studies have demonstrated the impact of cross-level interactions among actors at different organizational levels on organizational performance, particularly in enhancing strategy execution efficiency (Wieseke et al., 2009). The quantitative study delineates the corporate level as the uppermost and the employee level as the lowest. The first level of analysis focuses on organization-level activities, while the second level investigates employee-level acts and their perceptions of these actions.

6.4.1 Understanding Multilevel Effects Through Meso Theory

Meso theory plays a crucial role in understanding multilevel models by bridging the gap between micro-level individual behaviours and macro-level organizational phenomena. This theory is essential for analysing complex interactions within organizational structures, such as the dynamics between employees and managers.

In an organization, employees' satisfaction and performance are influenced not only by their traits and direct interactions with their managers, but also by broader organizational policies, culture, and structure. Meso theory facilitates an examination of how these layers interact and influence each other, providing a comprehensive understanding of organizational dynamics. A multilevel model that incorporates meso theory might examine the follow.

- **Micro-level Analysis** Analyse individual employee's job satisfaction and performance, considering personal skills, motivations, and direct interactions with their managers.
- **Meso-level Analysis** Department-level dynamics, including management styles, team cohesion, and department-specific policies, mediating the relationship between individual behaviours and organizational outcomes.
- **Macro-level Analysis** Organization-wide policies, culture, and structures that create the broader context within which departments and individuals operate.

Such a multilevel approach, informed by meso theory, could enable researchers to identify the direct effects of managerial and organizational attitudes and behaviours on employee outcomes and understand how departmental and organizational contexts moderate these effects. This comprehensive analysis sheds light on the complex, layered nature of organizational dynamics, offering richer insights than what could be gained by looking at any single level in isolation.

6.4.2 Multilevel Modelling

Multilevel statistical modelling, particularly in meso theory, is pivotal for studies exploring the intricate dynamics between organizational policies, such as FWB and IMO, and their impact on employee performance and job satisfaction. Meso theory is a conceptual bridge that links micro-level individual behaviours and macro-level organizational policies and practices, enabling a nuanced understanding of how organizational strategies translate into individual employee outcomes. This approach acknowledges the complexity of organizational life, where interactions at different organizational levels shape outcomes.

Recent studies have used multilevel modelling to examine similar concepts. For example, Koon (2022) performed multilevel research to investigate the relationship between organizational work–life balance practices and individual views of work–life balance and performance assessment, impacting employee commitment. They highlighted the significance of workers' views of organizational practices and their consistency with organization-level implementations in improving commitment. Katou (2022) investigated how FWB mediates the connection between core self-evaluations and organizational performance. The study used multilevel structural equation modelling to demonstrate the critical influence of work–family enrichment and balance in connecting individual characteristics with organizational results. These two studies affirm the significance of considering both personal and organizational levels to fully capture the dynamics

at play, providing valuable insights for organizational leaders aiming to foster environments that support employee performance.

In this study, we examined the effects of organizational FWB policies and IMO on employee performance and job satisfaction through a multilevel modelling approach.

- **Analysis of the Direct Effects at the Employee Level (Micro Level)** This involves assessing how individual perceptions of FWB directly influence job satisfaction and performance.
- **Assessment of the Organization-Level Influence (Macro Level)** This includes evaluating how the overarching organizational policies and culture around work–life balance and market orientation create a conducive environment for employee satisfaction and performance.
- **Exploration of Cross-Level Interactions** This involves investigating how organization-level policies moderate the relationship between individual-level perceptions and outcomes. This moderation could reveal the conditions under which these policies are most effective.

Given this rationale, the quantitative study employed a multilevel hierarchical research methodology using data collected from employees and managers.

6.4.3 Actions to Prevent Common Method Variance

CMV is a potential source of bias in behavioural research, especially when collecting data using self-report surveys. CMV can inflate or deflate the genuine associations between variables, leading to misleading conclusions (Baumgartner et al., 2021; Menold & Toepoel, 2022; Schwarz et al., 2021). This effect is particularly relevant for studies employing online surveys, where the

researcher has less control over the data collection environment. In this study, we used the following strategies to prevent or minimize CMV.

- **Mixed Question Format and Different Scale Points** Questions in the survey included 3-, 4-, 5-, and 7-point Likert scales; multiple response items; and ordinal scales to reduce response patterns associated with scale type and discourage habitual responses.
- **Inclusion of Reverse-Coded Items** We included reverse-coded items to reduce the effects of acquiescence bias, where respondents may agree with statements without fully considering them.
- **Anonymity of Responses** Respondents were guaranteed the anonymity and secrecy of their replies to minimize social desirability bias.
- **Statistical Testing** We used Harman's single-factor test for post hoc exploratory factor analysis to check if a single factor accounts for most of the variance in the data, which could indicate CMV.

6.5 Sampling

6.5.1 Sampling Frame

A preliminary step in this field study was establishing a precise definition for the target population (Parasuraman, 2004). We selected salespeople in Greece because this country experienced the most severe consequences due to the economic recession from 2008 to 2018 among all the European countries. Greece experienced a severe and prolonged recession triggered by the global financial crisis, with real gross domestic product declining by about 26% between 2007 and 2013. The recession officially ended around 2014, but growth remained very weak, less than 1% over the following two years according to a 2019 European Commission report (Small Business Act [SBA] Fact Sheet for Greece). In that environment, the need to improve sales was crucial, and any suggestion in that direction had great value. In this context, the possibility of increasing

salespeople's performance through the joint adaptation of IMO and FWB actions was an interesting aspect for many organizations.

Greece is home to numerous commercial industries, including advertising, finance, insurance, retail, wholesale, and information technology services. It also includes salespeople who work inside and outside the organization. We excluded specific sectors from our sample due to their unique characteristics that impeded the investigation of our study goals. For example, we excluded pharmaceutical companies and call centres, as their sales personnel typically do not engage in direct sales but rather inform stakeholders seeking imminent sales opportunities.

SMEs in Greece have an average 27 employees (European Commission, 2025). We considered firms with a minimum of 40 people to ensure that we could get responses from one respondent at the management level and five respondents at the employee level from each company. According to data extracted from the "Sales Institute Greece" database, 166 SMEs met this requirement.

6.5.2 Sampling Unit

We designated two distinct sampling units. The first unit – representing the corporate level – comprised sales managers, namely senior, middle, and management executives from the sales department overseeing a sales team. We chose one sales manager per company. The second unit – the employee level – comprised salespeople with varying skills and educational backgrounds working under the sales managers. The sampling unit included a minimum of five salespeople from each company. Figure 6.1 shows the hierarchical multilevel research design.

We chose the key informant strategy as the principal methodology for gathering data. Differently from expert surveys (Kumar et al., 1993) and elite surveys (Walker & Enticott, 2004), the key

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informant approach is suitable for situations in which representative survey respondents are unable to provide comprehensive or detailed information regarding the subject matter of the inquiry (Kumar et al., 1993). The informants had to have a minimum of 1 year of employment with the company, guaranteeing their familiarity with organizational rules and procedures and their assessment of the working environment and other pertinent contextual elements. Additionally, we only examined regular members of sales teams; thus, we did not analyse the potential contributions of executives or other employees who may have been present irregularly. We set these conditions to guarantee the credibility and reliability of the reports provided by the informants.

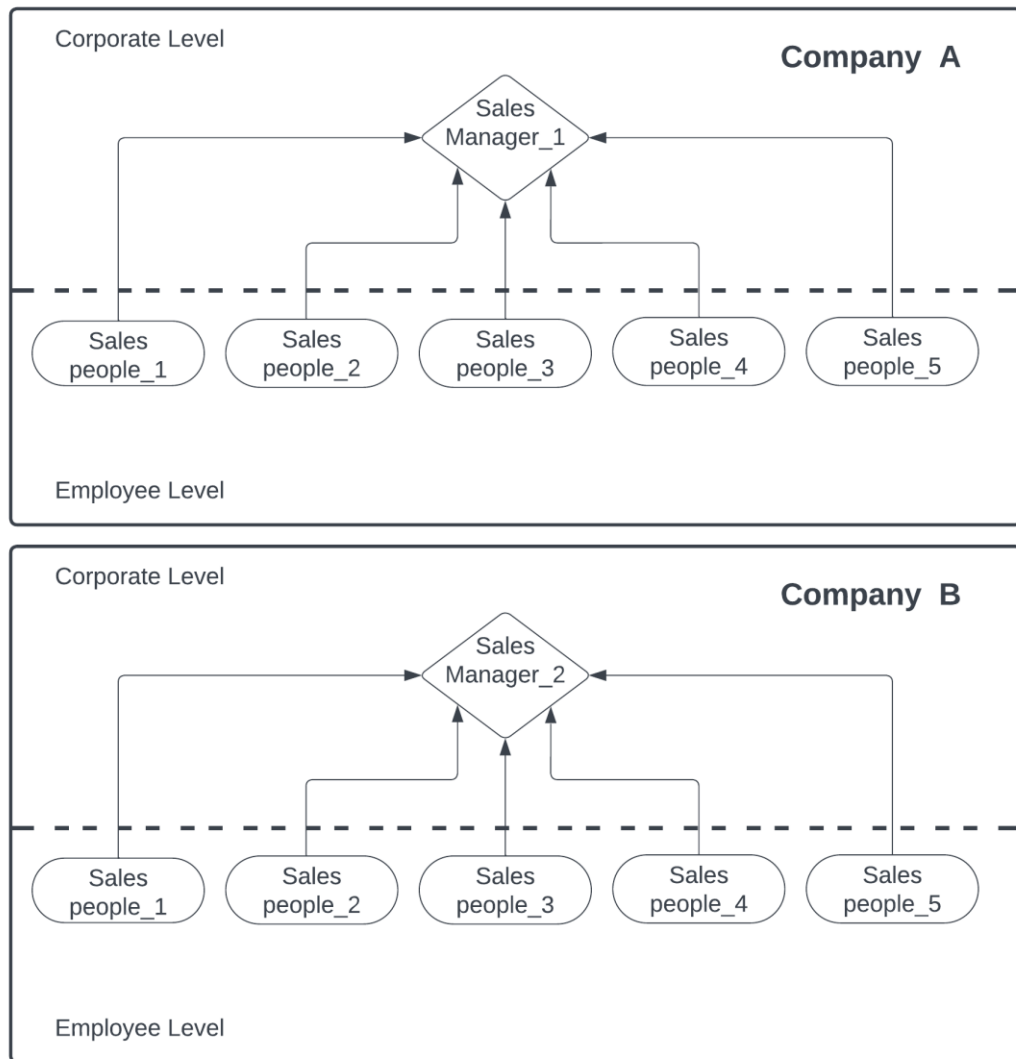


Figure 6.1 The hierarchical multilevel research design

6.5.3 Sample Size

According to existing research, it is recommended that 100 groups be selected from the highest level in hierarchical research designs (Kreft & De Leeuw, 1998; Van der Leeden & Busing 1994). Furthermore, Maas and Hox (2005) argued that a substantial number of groups is more significant in this regard rather than a larger number of individuals per group. In total, we collected data from

166 different companies, from 166 managers and 830 salespeople. This sample size is adequate and exceeds the minimum requirements.

6.6 Data Collection Method

The research design consisted of a multilevel model that included salespeople working for nationwide commercial enterprises and reporting to a sales manager for oversight. The research data was gathered through two structured questionnaires sent to commercial enterprises of various sizes and types across many industries.

We employed snowball sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, to gather corporate-level data from the selected firms. With this technique, participants are recruited by recommendations or information provided by the initial participants (Green & Tull, 1988). Snowball sampling is the most efficient way to evaluate the relationships and interactions between managers and workers.

Data were collected between November 2020 and March 2021. In the beginning, an email was sent to the sales manager of each company; it included a link to the Qualtrics platform for the electronic manager questionnaire (Appendix 2). When the manager started answering the questionnaire, a unique serial number was automatically assigned to them. At the end of the questionnaire, the platform created a unique link and suggested the manager send it to five salespeople on their sales team. The salespeople received an email with a link to employee questionnaire on the Qualtrics Platform (Appendix 3). When they clicked the link, they received a description of the research. After completing the questionnaire, a unique serial number related to the manager's serial number was assigned to the salesperson. As a result, the serial number of managers and employees from the same company could be grouped.

6.6.1 Construction of the Questionnaires

We considered several development concepts while constructing the questionnaires to ensure they were dependable and valid. We prioritized several concerns based on researchers' recommendations about developing successful questionnaires (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2006; Landsheer & Boeije, 2010). For example, we aimed to produce a condensed and more precise questionnaire (Parasuraman, A., 2004) because the response rate increases when the questionnaire takes less time to complete. Furthermore, this approach decreases the likelihood of non-response bias and the sample size necessary to ensure there are a sufficient number of participants for statistical analysis. We included more straightforward questions rather than fewer complex ones to prevent a reduction in content validity (Parasuraman, A., 2004).

Except for questions about the demographic and personal traits of the participants, all elements in both surveys were evaluated using Likert scales with seven or five points. The Likert response scales include the anchors strongly agree, strongly disagree, very lot, and not at all. The utilized scales use verbal answer descriptions, from which each respondent chooses one that best represents their degree of agreement. We deliberately selected Likert scales due to the potential impact that scale format may have on the resulting data (Dawes, 2008).

6.6.2 Pilot Testing the Employee Questionnaire

We conducted a pre-test of the employee questionnaire to identify unclear or deceptive questions and to reduce the likelihood that the respondents would not be able to answer the questions and provide the needed information. We used convenience sampling, the method employed most often to pre-test questionnaires (Parasuraman, A., 2004), to select 25 sales representatives from various industries. They provided consent and completed the questionnaire. Based on the feedback, we made some modifications to phrasing, question substance, and response format. We did not include the pilot responses in the data analysis.

6.6.3 Pilot Testing of the Manager Questionnaire

We also used convenience sampling to pilot test the manager questionnaire. A total of 13 managers from various industries were involved in this process; this sample size is sufficient for a pilot test (Krosnick & Presser, 2010). We used the feedback to eliminate superfluous/irrelevant questions and to make substantial enhancements (Krosnick & Presser, 2010). Similarly to the pilot testing of the employee questionnaire, we did not include the responses in the data analysis.

After the pilot testing, we constructed the online questionnaires to facilitate data collection. Note that the original questionnaires were in English, but the participants are Greek. Consequently, the questionnaires were translated into Greek to reduce potential complications and misunderstandings among the participants.

6.7 Measurement Scales

We also used established measurements scales that have been validated in previous research. The exception was perceived FWB, for which there is no published scale. Table 6.1 provides a summary.

Table 6.1. The measurement scales used in this study

| Item | Reference |
|---|---|
| IMO | Gounaris (2006) |
| Marketing–HR cooperation | Chimhanzi & Morgan (2005) |
| Characteristics of organizational behaviour | Bouckennooghe et al. (2009) |
| Resistance to change | Oreg (2003) |
| FWB | Carlson et al. (2000); Netemeyer et al. (1996) |
| Previous working experience | Parasuraman et al. (1985) |
| Employee personality | Bateman & Crant (1993); Hirschfeld & Feild (2000) |
| Career orientation | Wrzesniewski et al. (1997) |
| Job satisfaction | Hartline & Ferrell (1996) |
| Salespeople's performance | Crowne & Marlowe (1960) |

6.7.1 Scales Used For the Corporate Level

IMO

IMO was assessed based on Gounaris's (2006) scale, which comprises three primary dimensions:

- Internal market intelligence generation includes the sub-dimensions identification of exchanges of value and target internal segment.
- Internal intelligence dissemination includes the sub-dimensions communication between managers and employees and communication among managers.
- Response to intelligence includes the sub-dimensions job description, remuneration system, management concern, and training.

Each primary dimension and sub-dimension has four items, except internal market intelligence generation, which has seven items. The 39 items are measured with a 7-point scale.

Marketing–HR Cooperation

We used the scale developed by Chimhanzi and Morgan (2005) to measure collaboration between the marketing and HR departments. It has three dimensions: relationship effectiveness (five items), interfunctional conflict (three items), and interpersonal communication (three items). The 11 items are measured with a 7-point scale.

Characteristics of Organizational Behaviour

We used the scale developed by Bouckennooghe et al. (2009). The main elements are participation (four items) and politicking (seven items). We also measured resistance to change based on the 10-item scale proposed by Oreg (2003). The 24 items are measured with a 5-point scale.

6.7.2 Scales Used for the Employee Level

FWB

The most popular approach to measure FWB is to estimate the conflict items that prevent balance in a family. According to the literature, there are four major conflict categories, which we measured with two popular scales (Carlson et al., 2000; Netemeyer et al. 1996). The conflicts are time-based work interference with family (three items), strain-based work interference with family (three items), work–family conflict (three items), and family–work conflict (three items). The 13 items are measured with a 5-point scale.

Previous Working Experience

We used a scale reported by Parasuraman et al. (1985), modified to a 7-point scale for the purposes of this study.

Employee Idiosyncrasies

We assessed employee idiosyncrasies by measuring employee personality and career orientation

- **Employee Personality** We used two scales: the first is the Work Centrality Scale (Hirschfeld & field, 2000), which is based on a scale reported by Paullay et al. (1994). It contains seven items each measured with a 7-point scale. The second is the Proactive Personality Scale (Bateman & Crant, 1993). It comprises 17 items, each measured with a 7-point scale.
- **Career Orientation** We used a three-item instrument, with each item measured with a 4-point scale (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997).

Job Satisfaction

We used a six-item instrument, with each item measured with a 7-point scale (Hartline & Ferrell, 1996).

Salespeople Performance

We used the instrument described by Cross et al. (2007). It includes 11 items; each measured with a 7-point scale.

Social Desirability

We also measured the social desirability bias by using the short form of the scale suggested by Crowne and Marlowe (1960) to enhance the validity of the measurements. It is a true–false scale with 9 items.

Building upon the theoretical underpinnings and methodological rigor established in this chapter, Chapter 7 presents the empirical findings of the quantitative study. It includes an examination of demographic profiles, assessments of reliability and validity, and the hypothesis test results. This empirically based approach allows us to validate the conceptual framework and to examine the relationships between organizational patterns and experiences of the individual.

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Chapter 7 describes the empirical findings based on the quantitative study. The results are presented at two analytical levels – corporate and employee – each of which focuses on a different aspect of this thesis’s multilevel structure.

First, descriptive statistics of the sample, composed of 166 managers and 830 of their employees, are presented. This information includes the gender distribution, age range, years of job tenure, years of experience at the management level, and organizational features such as revenue. At the employee level, family status, sales experience, and personal characteristics are supplied; this information gives a description of the sample’s heterogeneity and context.

The chapter continues with an assessment of the reliability and validity of the measurement instruments. The instruments used to measure IMO, marketing–HR cooperation, resistance to change, job satisfaction, and FWB, and the manager and employee questionnaires show acceptable to excellent internal consistency (measured by Cronbach’s alpha [α] and McDonald’s omega [ω]). Moreover, the risk of CMV, based on Harman’s single factor test, is generally low, which confirms the reliability of the precautions taken when designing the quantitative study.

This chapter continues with a thorough description of the main variables through descriptive statistics. Measures of central tendency and dispersion (e.g., mean, median, standard deviation, and range) provide a preliminary empirical lens on constructs such as IMO adoption, relationship effectiveness, interpersonal communication, and various aspects of work–life balance. These findings indicate variability at both the organizational and individual levels.

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Correlations provide additional insight into how some important variables are associated. Managerially, IMO use is significantly associated with relationship effectiveness, interpersonal communication, and organization participation. At the employee level, sales productivity is related to job satisfaction, employee capabilities, and knowledge about labour market conditions. Such associations provide an indication of the structure of the model under consideration.

The proposed hypotheses are examined through hierarchical linear regression as well as univariate and multilevel analyses. Many of the positive relationships are supported by the results. For example, perceived FWB is highly contingent upon employee needs and previous work history, and is moderated by variables such as personality characteristics, career orientation, marital and parental roles, and age. Job satisfaction appears as a keystone mediator, which connects FWB to job performance. At the organizational level, participation in internet marketing across the corporate culture and the effectiveness of the relationship between marketing and HR influence IMO adoption and marketing–HR cooperation effects.

This chapter concludes with multilevel structural equation models, which verify the overall model. Cross-level interactions involving organizational and individual characteristics are also supported, and that macro-level policies and practices – IMO and family-friendly practices – lead to micro-level outcomes in terms of employee satisfaction and performance. The results provide empirical support to the need to account for both structural and personal factors in the analysis of organizational efficacy.

Overall, Chapter 7 provides a strong empirical foundation to unpack the interplay between IMO, FWB, and employee outcomes. It lays the foundation for the theoretical integration and interpretive critique that follow in the subsequent chapter.

7.1 Demographic Characteristics

Table 7.1 present the demographic characteristics of the managers, Table 7.2 presents the incomes of the considered companies, and Table 7.3 presents the demographic characteristics of the employees.

Table 7.4 Demographic characteristics of the managers (N = 166)

| | | N | % |
|--|--------|-------------|-------|
| Gender | Male | 114 | 68.67 |
| | Female | 52 | 31.33 |
| Age (years) | 18–25 | 9 | 5.42 |
| | 26–40 | 81 | 48.80 |
| | 41–50 | 58 | 34.94 |
| | 51–60 | 17 | 10.24 |
| | >60 | 1 | 0.60 |
| Experience in job position in years, mean (standard deviation) | | 8.13 (6.46) | |
| Managerial experience (years) | 1–5 | 70 | 42.17 |
| | 6–10 | 53 | 31.93 |
| | >10 | 43 | 25.90 |

Table 7.5 Company income

| | | N | % |
|--|------|----|-------|
| Total company income (millions of euros) | <1 | 3 | 1.81 |
| | 1–3 | 47 | 28.31 |
| | 3–6 | 21 | 12.65 |
| | 6–10 | 35 | 21.08 |
| | >10 | 60 | 36.14 |

Table 7.6 Demographic characteristics of the employees (N = 830)

| | | N | % |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----|-------|
| Gender | Female | 317 | 38.19 |
| | Male | 513 | 61.81 |
| Age group (years) | 18–25 | 21 | 2.53 |
| | 26–40 | 460 | 55.42 |
| | 41–50 | 300 | 36.14 |
| | 51–60 | 38 | 4.58 |
| | >60 | 11 | 1.33 |
| | 2–7 | 254 | 30.60 |
| Sales experience (years) | 8–12 | 386 | 46.51 |
| | >12 | 190 | 22.89 |
| | Single | 298 | 35.90 |
| Family status | Married | 205 | 24.70 |
| | Couple with kids | 284 | 34.22 |
| | Couple without kids | 41 | 4.94 |
| | Close to retirement | 13 | 1.57 |
| | Single-parent family | 10 | 1.20 |
| | Caring for older adults | 14 | 1.69 |

7.2 Reliability Analysis

Note that the convergent and discriminant validity of the scales employed in this study was examined in previous studies during scale development. We calculated Cronbach's α – the most common and accepted form of reliability estimation (Nunnally, 1988) – for each scale and subscale to assess their reliability. We also calculated McDonald's ω using the item factor loadings and uniqueness from a factor analysis. Note that McDonald's ω cannot be calculated for scales with two items (Padilla & Divers, 2016). Finally, we assessed CMV with Harman's single factor test (Podsakoff et al., 2012). This process involved exploratory factor analysis with extraction of one-factor and checking whether the extraction variance explained by one-factor solution is close or greater than 50%.

Manager Scales

Table 7.7 presents the reliability of the IMO scale (Gounaris, 2006). Harman's single-factor test indicated that the one-factor solution explains 41% of the variance ($\sim 50\%$); therefore, there is some evidence of CMV. Consequently, we hypothesize there is a single factor for IMO.

Table 7.8 Reliability analysis of the composite IMO variable and the IMO subscales

| Subscale | Cronbach's α | McDonald's ω |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Internal market intelligence generation – exchanges of value (7 items) | .894 | .900 |
| 2. Internal intelligence dissemination – communication between managers and employees (4 items) | .868 | .871 |
| 3. Internal intelligence dissemination – communication between managers (4 items) | .765 | .784 |
| 4. Response to intelligence – internal-market segmentation (4 items) | .528 | .772 |
| 5. Job description (4 items) | .803 | .800 |
| 6. Remuneration system (4 items) | .451* | .724 |
| 7. Management concern (4 items) | .727 | .761 |
| 8. Training (4 items) | .592 | .564 |
| 9. Internal segments targeting (4 items) | .592 | .967 |
| IMO (39 items) | .949 | .990 |

Note. Measured based on the scale proposed by Gounaris (2006)

*Deleting this item did not show an improvement

We assessed the composite variables relationship effectiveness, interfunctional conflict, and interpersonal communication by averaging the respective items of the marketing–HR cooperation scale (Chimhanzi & Morgan, 2005). For interpersonal communication, we used the two-item scale to maximize reliability and excluded the connectedness subscale due to its very low reliability (Table 7.9). Harman's single-factor test indicated that the one-factor solution explains 26.6% of the variance (<50%); therefore, there is no evidence of CMV.

Table 7.10 Reliability analysis of the marketing–HR cooperation subscales

| Subscale | Cronbach's α | McDonald's ω |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| Relationship effectiveness (5 items) | .860 | .868 |
| Interfunctional conflict (3 items) | .865 | .868 |
| Connectedness (3 items) | .090* | .246 |
| Interpersonal communication (3 items) | .440 | — |
| Interpersonal communication (2 items, without email) | .576** | — |

Note. Measured based on the scale proposed by Chimhanzi and Morgan (2005)

*If the item was deleted, there was no improvement; hence, it was not used in the analysis

**The two-item scale was used in the analysis to maximize reliability

“—” McDonald's ω could not be calculated

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For resistance to change, cognitive rigidity presents very low reliability, so we removed its items (Table 7.11). Hence, we calculated resistance to change by averaging the 10 remaining items on the scale.

Table 7.12 Reliability analysis of the resistance to change items

| | Cronbach's α | McDonald's ω |
|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Routine seeking (4 items) | .823 | .834 |
| Emotional reaction (3 items) | .715 | .741 |
| Short-term thinking (3 items) | .774 | .776 |
| Cognitive rigidity (3 items) | .021* (items removed) | .257 |
| Resistance to changes (13 items) | .824 | .922 |
| Resistance to changes (10 items, without cognitive rigidity) | .873 | .870 |

Note. Measured based on the scale proposed by Oreg (2003)

Harman's single-factor test indicated that the one-factor solution explains 33.4% of the variance (<50%); therefore, there is no evidence of CMV

The rest of the scales and subscales present acceptable reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.7$), and there is no evidence of CMV (Tables 7.13 and 7.14).

Table 7.15 Reliability analysis of the availability of resources (Q24) items

| | Cronbach's α | McDonald's ω |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Availability of resources (2 items) | .935 | — |

Note. McDonald's ω could not be calculated because the scale has only two items

Table 7.16 Reliability analysis of characteristics of the organizational behaviour items

| | Cronbach's α | McDonald's ω |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Empowerment/participation (4 items) | .714 | .694 |
| Politicking (7 items) | .790 | .776 |

Note. Measured based on the scale proposed by Bouckennooghe et al. (2009)

Harman's single-factor test indicated that the one-factor solution explains 29.7% of the variance (<50%); therefore, there is no evidence of CMV.

Employee Scales

As shown in Tables 7.17 through 7.18, all scales and subscales present acceptable reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha > .7$). Only the scale used to measure salespeople's performance (Cross et al., 2007) presented some evidence of CMV (Table 7.19). Thus, we used a total composite score to analyse salespeople's performance.

Table 7.20 Reliability analysis of the salespeople's performance items

| Scale Q1 | Cronbach's α | McDonald's ω |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Salespeople performance (11 items) | .896 | .893 |

Note. Measured with the scales proposed by Barker (1999) and Cross et al. (2007)
Harman's single-factor test indicated that the one-factor solution explains 45.86% of the variance (~50%); therefore, there is some evidence of CMV.

Table 7.21 Reliability analysis of the job satisfaction items

| Scale Q2 | Cronbach's α | McDonald's ω |
|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Job satisfaction (6 items) | .912 | .926 |

Note. Measured with the scale proposed by Hartline and Ferrell (1996)

Table 7.22 Reliability of work-family conflict items

| Subscale Q3 | Cronbach's α | McDonald's ω |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| Time-based work interference with family (items 4) | .707 | .745 |
| Strain-based work interference with family (items 3) | .780 | .789 |
| Work-family conflict (items 3) | .725 | .729 |
| Family-work conflict (items 3) | .797 | .809 |
| FWB (items 13) | .882 | .867 |

Note. Measured with the scales proposed by Carlson et al. (2000) and Netemeyer et al. (1996)
Harman's single-factor test indicated that the one-factor solution explains 38.2% of the variance (<50%); therefore, there is no evidence of CMV.

Table 7.23 Reliability analysis of the employee personality 1 items

| Scale Q6 | Cronbach's α | McDonald's ω |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| (8 items, reverse Q6_1, Q6_5, Q6_7) | .469* | .651 |
| (7 items if Q6_1 removed) | .671 | .675 |

Note. Measured with the Work Centrality Scale (Hirschfeld & Feild, 2000), which is based on Paullay et al. (1994)

Table 7.24 Reliability of the employee personality 2 items

| Scale Q7 | Cronbach's α | McDonald's ω |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| (17 items, reverse Q7_3) | .908 | .990 |

Note. Measured with the Proactive Personality Scale (Bateman & Crant, 1993)

Table 7.25 Reliability analysis of the career orientation items

| Scale Q8 | Cronbach's α | McDonald's ω |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| Career orientation (3 items, reverse Q8_3) | .656 | .722 |

Note. Measured based on the scale proposed by Wrzesniewski et al. (1997)

Table 7.26 Reliability of employee competencies

| Scale Q9 | Cronbach's α | McDonald's ω |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Employee competencies | .951 | .951 |

Table 7.27 Reliability analysis of understanding of labour market conditions

| Scale Q13 | Cronbach's α | McDonald's ω |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Understanding of the labour market | .810 | .808 |

Table 7.28 Reliability analysis of employee needs

| Scale Q14 | Cronbach's α | McDonald's ω |
|----------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Employee needs | .940 | .939 |

7.3 Descriptive Statistics

Table 7.29 presents the descriptive statistics of the variables related to the managers. The table includes the mean (average), median (middle value in a sorted list of numbers), standard deviation (a measure of the amount of variation or dispersion of a set of values), range (difference between the maximum and minimum values), and the minimum and maximum values.

IMO adoption has a mean of 3.25 and a median of 3.18, indicating a moderate level of adoption among the respondents, with a relatively low spread (standard deviation of 1.03) around the mean. The range of 4.72 suggests some variability in responses, but most seem to agree on moderate adoption. Relationship effectiveness is slightly lower than moderate (the mean is 2.91 and the median is 2.60, lower than 4 in the 7-point Likert scale), with a standard deviation of 1.18, indicating some variability in perceptions of relationship effectiveness. The broad range (6) suggests significant differences in individual experiences. Interfunctional conflict has a notably higher mean (4.68) with a median of 5, suggesting a trend for more frequent or severe conflicts. The standard deviation of 1.50 and the range of 6 denote considerable differences in conflict levels across the participants. Interpersonal communication has moderately positive values (mean of 3.11 and median of 3), but the standard deviation of 1.43 and the range of 6 indicate a wide variation in experiences. Participation and politicking present moderate to low means (3.23 and

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2.80, respectively), indicating a slightly higher participation culture than politicking. Routine seeking, emotional reaction, short-term thinking, and resistance to change show varying intensity. Routine seeking stands out with a high mean (3.85) and median (4; based on a 5-point Likert scale), indicating a tendency to maintain the status quo among the participants. Resistance to change and short-term thinking have high means (3.53 and 2.79, respectively), pointing to potential challenges in adapting to long-term strategies and changes.

These data reveal a complex picture of organizational dynamics, where moderate communication, participation, and IMO adoption coexist with significant concerns about relationship effectiveness, conflict, and resource availability. Behavioural factors, like routine seeking and resistance to change, could be potential barriers to organizational adaptability and long-term strategic planning.

Table 7.30 Descriptive statistics of the main variables for the managers

| | Mean | Median | Standard deviation | Range | Minimum | Maximum |
|-----------------------------|------|--------|--------------------|-------|---------|---------|
| IMO adoption | 3.25 | 3.18 | 1.03 | 4.72 | 1.00 | 7.00 |
| Relationship effectiveness | 2.91 | 2.60 | 1.18 | 6.00 | 1.00 | 7.00 |
| Interfunctional conflict | 4.68 | 5.00 | 1.50 | 6.00 | 1.00 | 7.00 |
| Interpersonal communication | 3.11 | 3.00 | 1.43 | 6.00 | 1.00 | 7.00 |
| Availability of resources | 1.65 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
| Participation | 3.23 | 3.25 | 0.83 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
| Politicking | 2.80 | 2.71 | 0.77 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
| Routine seeking | 3.85 | 4.00 | 0.82 | 3.00 | 2.00 | 5.00 |
| Emotional reaction | 3.15 | 3.00 | 0.81 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
| Short-term thinking | 3.53 | 3.33 | 0.86 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
| Resistance to change | 2.79 | 2.83 | 0.55 | 3.00 | 1.00 | 5.00 |

Table 7.19 presents the descriptive statistics for the variables related to employees. Salespeople's performance has a mean of 2.32 and a median of 2.27, suggesting a relatively low level (compared with 4 on the 7-point Likert scale), indicating higher actual performance. The standard deviation of 0.63 and a wide range indicate variability in perceptions of performance.

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Balance in previous working experience, with a mean of 3.64 and a median of 3, suggests that the employees' views on the balance in their previous working experience vary significantly, as indicated by a standard deviation of 1.23 and a range of 5. Job satisfaction shows a mean of 2.77 and a median of 3, indicating moderate employee satisfaction when interpreted reversely. The standard deviation and range suggest notable variability in job satisfaction levels.

Both time- and strain-based work interference with family show means slightly above the midpoint. Work–family balance and FWB scores indicate challenges in achieving a healthy balance, with the latter showing somewhat better conditions. The tight standard deviations and narrow ranges indicate less variability in these perceptions. Perceived FWB with a mean of 3.16 and a median very close to the mean suggest a moderate level of perceived FWB. There is low variability among the participants, indicated by a standard deviation of 0.58.

The Work Centrality Scale and Proactive Personality Scale scores suggest that work might not be the central focus for many (mean of 4.10), and there is a moderate level of proactive behaviour (mean of 3.28). The relatively narrow ranges and small standard deviations point to consistent responses among participants.

The career orientation, employee competencies, and understanding of labour market conditions scores generally indicate moderate perceptions towards these variables. The standard deviations and ranges suggest these perceptions are relatively uniform among the participants.

Employee needs, with a mean of 3.88 and a broader range of responses (standard deviation of 1.58 and a range of 9), suggests that employees recognize a variety of needs, which may not be fully addressed. This indicates the potential for increased focus on understanding and meeting these needs for improved satisfaction and performance.

Table 7.31 Descriptive statistics of the main variables for the employees

| | Mean | Median | Standard deviation | Range | Minimum | Maximum |
|---|------|--------|--------------------|-------|---------|---------|
| Salespeople's performance (reverse) | 2.32 | 2.27 | 0.63 | 5.73 | 1.00 | 7.00 |
| Balance in previous working experience | 3.64 | 3.00 | 1.23 | 5.00 | 2.00 | 7.00 |
| Job satisfaction (reverse) | 2.77 | 3.00 | 1.05 | 6.00 | 1.00 | 7.00 |
| Time-based work interference with family | 3.26 | 3.25 | 0.74 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
| Strain-based work interference with family | 2.75 | 2.67 | 0.63 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
| Work–family balance | 2.97 | 3.00 | 0.64 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
| FWB | 3.62 | 3.67 | 0.81 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
| Perceived FWB | 3.16 | 3.15 | 0.58 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
| Work Centrality Scale (reverse) | 4.10 | 4.14 | 0.68 | 4.14 | 1.00 | 7.00 |
| Proactive Personality Scale (reverse) | 3.28 | 3.18 | 0.69 | 4.59 | 1.00 | 7.00 |
| Career-oriented (reverse) | 2.29 | 2.33 | 0.59 | 2.33 | 1.00 | 4.00 |
| Employee competencies (reverse) | 2.61 | 2.45 | 0.87 | 6.00 | 1.00 | 7.00 |
| Understanding of labour market conditions (reverse) | 2.71 | 2.80 | 0.57 | 4.00 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
| Employee needs | 3.88 | 3.50 | 1.58 | 9.00 | 1.00 | 10.00 |

7.4 Correlation Analysis

We next delved into the relationships between the corporate- and employee-level factors within an organization, focusing on IMO adoption, relationship effectiveness, communication, performance, and job satisfaction. We employed Pearson correlation coefficients (r) to measure the strength and direction of these relationships. Below, we highlight correlations that are statistically significant (i.e., $p < .01$).

At the corporate level (Table 7.20), IMO adoption is strongly related to relationship effectiveness ($r = .738$, $p < .01$) and interpersonal communication ($r = .522$, $p < .01$) and moderately related to

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non-financial performance ($r = .408, p < .01$) and participation ($r = .337, p < .01$). Therefore, higher levels of IMO adoption are associated with better relationship effectiveness and communication within the corporate environment. IMO adoption also contributes to improved organizational outcomes and engagement. Relationship effectiveness is strongly related to interpersonal communication ($r = .540, p < .01$) and moderately to non-financial performance ($r = .386, p < .01$), indicating that effective relationships contribute to better communication and play a role in organizational success beyond financial metrics. Interpersonal communication is positively related to non-financial performance ($r = .422, p < .01$). This result also highlights the importance of communication in achieving non-financial organizational goals, suggesting that better communication is associated with improved non-financial performance.

At the employee level (Table 7.21), salespeople's performance (reverse) is positively related to job satisfaction ($r = .565, p < .01$), employee competencies ($r = .373, p < .01$), and understanding of labour market conditions ($r = .364, p < .01$). These relationships suggest that higher sales performance is associated with greater job satisfaction, higher competencies, and a better understanding of the labour market. Job satisfaction is positively related to work–family balance ($r = .446, p < .01$), FWB ($r = .541, p < .01$), perceived FWB ($r = .547, p < .01$), work centrality ($r = .661, p < .01$), and understanding of labour market conditions ($r = .410, p < .01$), indicating that satisfaction at work is closely linked with how well employees balance their professional and personal lives. Additionally, individuals who prioritize work tend to report higher job satisfaction. At the same time, job satisfaction also relates to how well employees understand their position within the broader labour market.

Table 7.32 Pearson correlation analysis of variables related to managers (corporate level)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
|--------------------------------|---------|--------|--------|---------|-------|--------|-------|------|--------|-------|----|
| 1. IMO adoption | — | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Relationship effectiveness | .738** | — | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Interfunctional conflict | .088 | -.018 | — | | | | | | | | |
| 4. Interpersonal communication | .522** | .540** | .031 | — | | | | | | | |
| 5. Availability of resources | -.221** | -.174* | .065 | -.281** | — | | | | | | |
| 6. Participation | .337** | .195* | .065 | .271** | .049 | — | | | | | |
| 7. Politicking | -.242** | -.195* | .334** | -.13 | -.143 | -.161* | — | | | | |
| 8. Routine seeking | .255** | .131 | .136 | .012 | .026 | -.035 | -.005 | — | | | |
| 9. Emotional reaction | .248** | .151 | .119 | .144 | -.055 | -.107 | -.091 | .093 | — | | |
| 10. Short-term thinking | .184* | -.026 | .300** | .008 | .037 | -.052 | -.008 | .04 | .231** | — | |
| 11. Resistance to change | .275** | .104 | .216** | .059 | .007 | -.073 | -.037 | .099 | .165* | -.027 | — |

Note. The table presents the Pearson correlation coefficients (r)

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

Table 7.33 Pearson correlation analysis for variables related to employees (employee level)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
|---|---------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|
| 1. Salespeople's performance (reverse) | — | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Balance in previous working experience | -.097** | — | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Job satisfaction (reverse) | .565** | .093** | — | | | | | | | | |
| 4. Work–family balance | .244** | .252** | .446** | — | | | | | | | |
| 5. FWB | .292** | -.051 | .541** | .527** | — | | | | | | |
| 6. Perceived FWB | .284** | .101** | .547** | .830** | .853** | — | | | | | |
| 7. Work Centrality Scale (reverse) | .247** | .045 | .661** | .345** | .309** | .296** | — | | | | |
| 8. Proactive Personality Scale (reverse) | .249** | .054 | .094** | .259** | .063 | .160** | .306** | — | | | |
| 9. Career orientation (reverse) | -.149** | -.069* | -.238** | -.240** | -.315** | -.281** | .019 | .114** | — | | |
| 10. Employee competencies (reverse) | .373** | .209** | .131** | .272** | -.009 | .115** | .259** | .801** | .227** | — | |
| 11. Understanding of labour market conditions (reverse) | .364** | .088* | .410** | .283** | .415** | .423** | .308** | .418** | .147** | .598** | — |
| 12. Employee needs | -.176** | -.009 | -.322** | -.279** | -.531** | -.500** | -.283** | -.181** | .013 | -.224** | -.674** |

Note. The table presents the Pearson correlation coefficients (r)

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

7.5 Testing the Employee-Level Hypotheses

Hypotheses H1a, H1b, H1c

We performed hierarchical linear regression analysis to explore the relationship between balance in previous working experience, employee needs, and understanding of labour market conditions, which we entered as independent variables, and perceived FWB (the dependent variable). The model is statistically significant ($F(3,783) = 124.068, p < .001$) and explains 32% of the dependent variable. Only balance in previous working experience ($\beta = 0.030, p < .05$) and employee needs ($\beta = -0.202, p < .05$) are significant predictors. Understanding of labour market conditions has no significant effect ($p > .05$) (Table 7.34). **In conclusion, hypotheses H1a and H1b are accepted, while H1c is rejected.**

Table 7.34 Balance in previous working experience, employee needs, and understanding of labour market conditions

| Coefficients ^a | | | |
|---------------------------|--|--------|------|
| Model | Standardized beta coefficient | t | p |
| (Constant) | | 28.511 | .000 |
| 1 | Balance in previous working experience | 0.072 | .022 |
| | Employee needs | -0.560 | .000 |
| | Non-understanding of labour market condition | -0.027 | .485 |

Note. ^aThe dependent variable is perceived FWB

Hypotheses H2a, H2b, and H2c

We performed univariate analysis of variance to explore the moderating effects of employee idiosyncrasies on the relationship between previous working experience, employee needs, and understanding of labour market conditions on perceived FWB (

Table 7.35). Personality1 ($\beta = 0.103$, $p < .001$), career orientation ($\beta = 0.193$, $p < .001$), marital status ($\beta = -0.248$, $p < .001$), parenthood ($\beta = -0.504$, $p < .001$), and age ($\beta = -0.045$, $p < .001$) moderate the relationship between employee needs and perceived FWB. Personality1 ($\beta = 0.353$, $p < 0.001$), personality2 ($\beta = -0.323$, $p < .001$), career orientation ($\beta = 1.061$, $p < .001$), and parenthood ($\beta = -0.351$, $p < .001$) moderate the relationship between the market conditions and the perceived FWB. Finally, personality1 ($\beta = -0.067$, $p < .001$), personality2 ($\beta = 0.058$, $p < .001$), career orientation ($\beta = 0.153$, $p < .001$), marital status (married) ($\beta = -0.417$, $p < .001$), and gender (male) ($\beta = -0.050$, $p < .001$) moderate the relationship between previous working experience and perceived FWB. **Overall, hypotheses H2a, H2b, and H2c are accepted.** Specifically, employee idiosyncrasies mediate the relationship between previous working experience, employee needs, and understanding of labour market conditions and perceived FWB.

Table 7.35 The moderating effects of employee idiosyncrasies in the relationship between previous working experience, employee needs, and understanding of labour market conditions on perceived FWB

| Parameter estimates | | | |
|---|-----------------------|----------|----------|
| Dependent variable: perceived FWB | | | |
| Parameter | Standard error | t | p |
| Intercept | 1.226 | 10.051 | .000 |
| Personality 1 (Work Centrality Scale) | 0.217 | −4.045 | .000 |
| Personality 2 (Proactive Personality Scale) | 0.181 | 2.368 | .018 |
| Career oriented | 0.303 | −14.348 | .000 |
| Married | 0.359 | 4.954 | .000 |
| With kids | 0.282 | 9.328 | .000 |
| Male | 0.222 | 0.599 | .549 |
| Age | 0.149 | 3.199 | .001 |
| Previous working experience | 0.137 | 0.526 | .599 |
| Market conditions | 0.361 | −6.675 | .000 |
| Employee needs | 0.143 | −3.798 | .000 |
| Personality1 * employee needs | 0.031 | 3.348 | .001 |
| Personality2 * employee needs | 0.020 | −1.948 | .052 |
| Career orientation * employee needs | 0.035 | 5.588 | .000 |
| Personality1 * market conditions | 0.054 | 6.535 | .000 |
| Personality2 * market conditions | 0.038 | −8.625 | .000 |
| Career oriented * market conditions | 0.084 | 12.686 | .000 |
| Employee needs * married | 0.031 | −8.066 | .000 |
| Employee needs * with kids | 0.035 | −14.550 | .000 |
| Employee needs * male | 0.020 | −0.910 | .363 |

| | | | |
|---|-------|---------|------|
| Employee needs * age | 0.017 | -2.650 | .008 |
| Market conditions * married | 0.094 | 2.327 | .020 |
| Mark conditions * with kids | 0.063 | -5.535 | .000 |
| Mark conditions * male | 0.055 | 0.037 | .971 |
| Mark conditions * age | 0.038 | -1.867 | .062 |
| Personality1 * previous working experience | 0.025 | -2.739 | .006 |
| Personality2 * previous working experience | 0.022 | 2.664 | .008 |
| Career oriented * previous working experience | 0.027 | 5.575 | .000 |
| Previous working experience * married | 0.028 | -15.052 | .000 |
| Previous working experience * with kids | 0.023 | -0.847 | .397 |
| Previous working experience * male | 0.017 | -2.853 | .004 |
| Previous working experience * age | 0.015 | -0.827 | .409 |

Hypothesis H7

We used hierarchical linear regression to explore the relationship between perceived FWB (the independent variable) and job satisfaction (the dependent variable). The model is statistically significant ($F(1,821) = 497.008, p < .001$) and explains 37.7% of the dependent variable. In Model 1, perceived FWB ($\beta = 0.614, p < .05$) is a significant predictor. In Model 2, gender, age group, single-parent family, and sales experience are statistically significant (Table 7.36). **Overall, hypothesis H7 is accepted.**

Table 7.36 Perceived FWB and job satisfaction

| Coefficients ^a | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|--------|------|
| Model | | Standardized beta coefficients | t | p |
| 1 | (Constant) | | -5.036 | .000 |
| | Perceived FWB | 0.614 | 22.294 | .000 |
| 2 | (Constant) | | -7.693 | .000 |
| | Perceived FWB | 0.628 | 21.488 | .000 |
| | Gender (male vs female) | 0.063 | 2.181 | .030 |
| | Age group | 0.097 | 3.396 | .001 |
| | Married | 0.052 | 1.644 | .100 |
| | Couple with kids | 0.018 | 0.625 | .532 |
| | Single-parent family | -0.114 | -4.153 | .000 |
| | Sales experience | 0.104 | 3.476 | .001 |

Note. ^aThe dependent variable is job dissatisfaction

Hypothesis H8

We used hierarchical linear regression analysis to evaluate the relationship between job satisfaction (the independent variable) and employees' job performance (the dependent variable). Model 1 is statistically significant ($F(1,818) = 221.241, p < .001$) and explains 21.3% of the dependent variable. In Model 1, perceived FWB ($\beta = 0.614, p < .05$) is a significant predictor. Model 2 is also statistically significant ($F(7,812) = 53.085, p < .001$) and explains 31.4% of the dependent variable. In this model, gender, age group, couple with kids, single-parent family, and sales experience are statistically significant (Table 7.37). **Overall, hypothesis H8 is accepted.**

Table 7.37 Job satisfaction and employees' job performance

| Coefficients ^a | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|--------|------|
| Model | | Standardized beta coefficient | t | p |
| 1 | (Constant) | | 38.935 | .000 |
| | Job dissatisfaction | 0.461 | 14.874 | .000 |
| 2 | (Constant) | | 20.502 | .000 |
| | Job dissatisfaction | 0.494 | 16.381 | .000 |
| | Gender (male vs female) | 0.080 | 2.614 | .009 |
| | Age group | 0.184 | 5.852 | .000 |
| | Married | 0.035 | 1.070 | .285 |
| | Couple with kids | -0.224 | -7.122 | .000 |
| | Single-parent family | -0.121 | -4.015 | .000 |
| | Sales experience | -0.141 | -4.280 | .000 |

Note. ^aThe dependent variable is salespeople's performance (reverse)

Hypothesis H9

We used univariate analysis of variance to explore the moderating effect of employee competencies in the relationship between job satisfaction and perceived job performance. Employee competencies ($\beta = 0.177, p < .001$) moderates the relationship between job satisfaction and perceived job performance (Table 7.38). **Overall, hypothesis H9 is accepted.**

Table 7.38 Employee competencies, job satisfaction, and perceived job performance

| Parameter estimates | | | |
|--|----------------|---------|------|
| Parameter | Standard error | t | p |
| Intercept | 0.099 | 28.181 | .000 |
| Job satisfaction | 0.028 | −8.662 | .000 |
| Employee competencies | 0.032 | −13.170 | .000 |
| Job satisfaction * employee competencies | 0.008 | 22.638 | .000 |

Note. The dependent variable is salespeople's performance (reverse)

7.6 Testing the Corporate-Level Hypotheses

Hypothesis H3a

We performed hierarchical linear regression to explore predictors of relationship effectiveness. In the first step (Model 1), we entered participation, politicking, and resistance to change as independent variables. Model 1 is statistically significant ($F(3,159) = 6.452, p < .001$) and explains 10.8% of the variance in relationship effectiveness. Only participation ($\beta = 0.234, p < .05$) significantly predicts relationship effectiveness. In the second step (Model 2), we also entered total company income. Model 2 is statistically significant ($F(4,158) = 4.924, p < .001$) and explains 11.1% of the dependent variable. Participation ($\beta = 0.253, p < .05$) remains a significant predictor of relationship effectiveness, and the other variables have no significant effects ($p > .05$) (Table 7.39).

Table 7.39 Multiple linear regression results for relationship effectiveness

| Coefficients ^a | | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|--------|------|
| Model | | Standardized beta coefficient | t | p |
| 1 | (Constant) | | 2.640 | .009 |
| | Participation | 0.234 | 2.737 | .007 |
| | Politicking | −0.151 | −1.735 | .085 |
| | Resistance to change | 0.103 | 1.337 | .183 |
| 2 | (Constant) | | 2.122 | .035 |

| | | | |
|----------------------|--------|--------|------|
| Participation | 0.253 | 2.816 | .005 |
| Politicking | −0.141 | −1.603 | .111 |
| Resistance to change | 0.091 | 1.159 | .248 |
| Total company income | 0.056 | 0.696 | .488 |

Note. ^aThe dependent variable is relationship effectiveness

We also performed hierarchical linear regression analysis to explore predictors of interfunctional conflict. In the first step (Model 1), we included participation, politicking, and resistance to change as independent variables. Model 1 is statistically significant ($F(3,162) = 13.031, p < .001$) and explains 19.4% of the variance in interfunctional conflict. Participation ($\beta = 0.278, p < .05$), politicking ($\beta = 0.419, p < .05$), and resistance to change ($\beta = 0.167, p < .05$) are significant predictors of interfunctional conflict. In the second step (Model 2), we also entered total company income. Model 2 is statistically significant ($F(4,161) = 10.876, p < .001$) and explains 21.3% of the dependent variable. Participation ($\beta = 0.329, p < .05$) and politicking ($\beta = 0.449, p < .05$) are significant predictors of interfunctional conflict, meaning that increased levels of participation and politicking are combined with high levels of interfunctional conflict. Moreover, there is a marginally significant effect of total company income ($\beta = 0.146, p = .055$), showing that companies of higher income may present lower levels of interfunctional conflict (Table 7.40).

Table 7.40 Multiple linear regression results for interfunctional conflict

| Coefficients ^a | | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|--------|------|
| Model | | Standardized beta coefficient | t | p |
| 1 | (Constant) | | −0.563 | .574 |
| | Participation | 0.278 | 3.531 | .001 |
| | Politicking | 0.419 | 5.252 | .000 |
| | Resistance to change | 0.167 | 2.305 | .022 |
| 2 | (Constant) | | −1.352 | .178 |
| | Participation | 0.329 | 3.991 | .000 |
| | Politicking | 0.449 | 5.566 | .000 |
| | Resistance to change | 0.138 | 1.873 | .063 |
| | Total company income | 0.146 | 1.936 | .055 |

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Note. ^aThe dependent variable is interfunctional conflict

We used hierarchical linear regression to explore predictors of interpersonal communication. In the first step (Model 1), we entered participation, politicking, and resistance to change as independent variables. Model 1 is statistically significant ($F(3,161) = 5.489, p < .001$) and explains 9.3% of the variance in interpersonal communication. Participation ($\beta = 0.258, p < .05$) is the only significant predictor of interpersonal communication. In the second step (Model 2), we also included total company income. Model 2 is statistically significant ($F(4,160) = 7.949, p < .001$) and explains 14.5% of the dependent variable. Participation ($\beta = 0.357, p < .05$) and total company income ($\beta = 0.222, p < .05$) are significant predictors of interpersonal communication, meaning that increased participation and lower company income are related to higher levels of interpersonal communication (Table 7.41).

Table 7.41 Multiple linear regression results for interpersonal communication

| Coefficients ^a | | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|--------|------|
| Model | | Standardized beta coefficient | t | p |
| 1 | (Constant) | | 1.576 | .117 |
| | Participation | 0.258 | 3.057 | .003 |
| | Politicking | −0.090 | −1.060 | .291 |
| | Resistance to change | 0.096 | 1.244 | .215 |
| 2 | (Constant) | | −0.065 | .948 |
| | Participation | 0.357 | 4.182 | .000 |
| | Politicking | −0.039 | −0.474 | .636 |
| | Resistance to change | 0.035 | 0.460 | .646 |
| | Total company income | 0.292 | 3.741 | .000 |

Note. ^aThe dependent variable is interpersonal communication

Overall, hypothesis H3a is accepted. Specifically, relationship effectiveness and interpersonal communication are positively related to the participation dimension of organizational behaviour. At the same time, interfunctional conflict is affected by higher levels of participation, politicking, and resistance to change.

Hypothesis H3b

We used hierarchical linear regression to explore the relationship between characteristics of organizational behaviour and IMO adoption. We entered participation, politicking, and resistance to change as independent variables and IMO adoption as the dependent variable. The model is statistically significant ($F(3,161) = 14.987, p < .001$) and explains 27.3% of the dependent variable. All three variables are significant predictors: participation ($\beta = 0.299, p < .05$), politicking ($\beta = -0.248, p < .05$), and resistance to change ($\beta = -0.356, p < .05$) (Table 7.42). **In conclusion, hypothesis H3b is accepted.**

Table 7.42 Organizational behaviour and IMO adoption

| Coefficients ^a | | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|--------|------|
| Model | | Standardized beta coefficient | t | p |
| 1 | (Constant) | | 7.607 | .000 |
| | Participation | 0.299 | 3.962 | .000 |
| | Politicking | -0.248 | -3.255 | .001 |
| | Resistance to change | -0.356 | -5.172 | .000 |

Note. ^aThe dependent variable is IMO adoption

Hypothesis H4a

We used hierarchical linear regression to explore the relationship between marketing–HR coordination and IMO adoption. We entered relationship effectiveness, interfunctional conflict, and interpersonal communication as independent variables and IMO adoption as the dependent variable. Relationship effectiveness ($\beta = 0.258, p < .05$) is the only significant predictor of IMO adoption (Table 7.43).

Table 7.43 Marketing–HR coordination and IMO adoption

| Coefficients ^a | | | | |
|---------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| Model | | Standardized beta coefficients | t | p |

| | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|--------|--------|------|
| 1 | (Constant) | | 4.491 | .000 |
| | Relationship effectiveness | 0.745 | 13.073 | .000 |
| | Interfunctional conflict | 0.085 | 1.810 | .072 |
| | Interpersonal communication | 0.091 | 1.604 | .111 |
| 2 | (Constant) | | 4.896 | .000 |
| | Relationship effectiveness | 0.737 | 13.024 | .000 |
| | Interfunctional conflict | 0.091 | 1.955 | .052 |
| | Interpersonal communication | 0.110 | 1.918 | .057 |
| | Total company income | -0.092 | -1.944 | .054 |

Note. ^aThe dependent variable is IMO adoption

7.7 Hypothesis Testing and Confirmation of the Model:

Analysis with Mplus

Here we present the findings from Mplus analysis. It is divided into two subsections. In the first subsection, we test the hypotheses that function at both the employee and corporate levels (H5a, H5b, and H6), and the hypotheses that are part of one level but are measured by elements derived from the other (H3c and H4a). For example, although FWB actions are a part of the corporate level, their effectiveness is measured based on the employees' responses.

7.7.1 Multilevel Analysis

Hypotheses H5a, H5b, and H6

As shown in Table 7.44, IMO has no significant effect on perceived FWB ($B = -0.028$, $p = .486$) (H5a). FWB actions have no significant direct effect on perceived FWB ($B = -0.040$, $p = .449$) (H5b). However, the interaction of FWB actions and availability of resources ($B = -0.045$, $p = .011$) has a positive effect on perceived FWB (H6). **Thus, we reject hypotheses H5a and H5b and accept hypothesis H6.**

PRCDFWBC ON**Table 7.45 The impact of IMO adoption and FWB actions on FWB perception**

| | Estimate | Standard error | Estimate/standard error | p |
|---------|----------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| IMO | -0.028 | 0.041 | -0.696 | .486 |
| FWBACT | -0.040 | 0.052 | -0.758 | .449 |
| AVRES | 0.132 | 0.072 | 1.832 | .067 |
| EIMOD23 | 0.027 | 0.015 | 1.761 | .078 |
| EIMOD24 | -0.045 | 0.018 | -2.529 | .011 |

Hypotheses H3c and H4a

As presented Table 7-46, only participation has a significant positive impact on FWB actions ($B = -0.421$, $p = .029$). **As a result, hypothesis H3c is partially accepted, while the H4a is rejected.**

FWB ACTIONS ON**Table 7.47 The effect of organizational behaviour characteristics and marketing–HR coordination on FWB actions and IMO adoption**

| | Estimate | Standard error | Estimate/standard error | p |
|----------|----------|----------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| TOTCOINC | -0.128 | 0.115 | -1.109 | 0.267 |
| RELEFF | -0.122 | 0.137 | -0.896 | 0.370 |
| INTFCON | 0.079 | 0.090 | 0.880 | 0.379 |
| INTPCOM | -0.049 | 0.101 | -0.485 | 0.627 |
| PARTICIP | -0.421 | 0.193 | -2.187 | 0.029 |
| POLITIC | -0.034 | 0.243 | -0.140 | 0.889 |
| RTC | 0.015 | 0.203 | 0.074 | 0.941 |

7.7.2 Confirmation of the Model**Hypotheses H1a, H1b, H1c, H2a, H2b, and H2c**

Understanding market conditions, employee needs, personality characteristics, career orientation, and salespeople's age directly affects perceived FWB. Personality, career orientation, being

married, having kids, and age also have a moderating effect on perceived FWB (Table 7.48). **Thus, hypotheses H1a, H1b, H1c, H2a, H2b, and H2c are accepted.**

PRCDFWBC ON

Table 7.49 The effect of employee characteristics on perceived FWB

| | Estimate | Standard error | Estimate/standard error | p |
|----------|----------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| PRWEXP | −0.172 | 0.213 | −0.805 | .421 |
| MARKCOND | −2.956 | 0.324 | −9.117 | .000 |
| EMPNDS | −1.834 | 0.202 | −9.101 | .000 |
| PERS1 | −1.199 | 0.222 | −5.409 | .000 |
| PERS2 | −1.958 | 0.246 | −7.949 | .000 |
| CAREEROR | −2.911 | 0.298 | −9.774 | .000 |
| MARRIED | 0.390 | 0.479 | 0.813 | .416 |
| KIDS | 0.381 | 0.376 | 1.014 | .310 |
| ISMALE | 0.030 | 0.180 | 0.165 | .869 |
| AGESP | 0.508 | 0.105 | 4.831 | .000 |
| EIMOD1 | 0.061 | 0.047 | 1.298 | .194 |
| EIMOD2 | 0.037 | 0.027 | 1.407 | .160 |
| EIMOD3 | −0.004 | 0.010 | −0.461 | .645 |
| EIMOD4 | 0.002 | 0.012 | 0.202 | .840 |
| EIMOD5 | 0.044 | 0.052 | 0.849 | .396 |
| EIMOD6 | 0.132 | 0.034 | 3.863 | .000 |
| EIMOD7 | −0.105 | 0.032 | −3.286 | .001 |
| EIMOD8 | 0.026 | 0.106 | 0.244 | .807 |
| EIMOD9 | −0.060 | 0.065 | −0.926 | .355 |
| EIMOD10 | −0.013 | 0.047 | −0.285 | .776 |
| EIMOD11 | −0.102 | 0.023 | −4.433 | .000 |
| EIMOD12 | 0.167 | 0.061 | 2.739 | .006 |
| EIMOD13 | 0.304 | 0.068 | 4.481 | .000 |
| EIMOD14 | 0.631 | 0.082 | 7.683 | .000 |
| EIMOD15 | −0.194 | 0.059 | −3.306 | .001 |
| EIMOD16 | −0.137 | 0.055 | −2.505 | .012 |

| | | | | |
|---------|--------|-------|--------|-------------|
| EIMOD17 | −0.001 | 0.015 | −0.062 | .951 |
| EIMOD18 | −0.042 | 0.012 | −3.435 | .001 |
| EIMOD19 | 0.186 | 0.055 | 3.402 | .001 |
| EIMOD20 | 0.135 | 0.030 | 4.480 | .000 |
| EIMOD21 | 0.380 | 0.071 | 5.329 | .000 |

Hypothesis H7

Perceived FWB has a positive direct effect on job satisfaction ($B = 0.742$, $p < .001$). **Thus, hypothesis H7 is accepted.**

JOBSAT ON**Table 7.50 The effect of FWB on job satisfaction**

| | Estimate | Standard error | Estimate/standard error | p |
|----------|----------|----------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| PRCDFWBC | 0.742 | 0.206 | 3.601 | 0.000 |

Hypotheses H8 and H9

Perceived FWB ($B = 0.149$, $p < .001$) and the interaction between job satisfaction and employee competencies ($B = 0.167$, $p < .001$) have positive effects on salespeople performance. **Thus, hypotheses H8 and H9 are accepted.**

SPPERF ON**Table 7.51 The effect of job satisfaction and employee competencies on employee performance**

| | Estimate | Standard error | Estimate/standard error | p |
|----------|----------|----------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| PRCDFWBC | 0.149 | 0.036 | 4.135 | 0.000 |
| JOBSAT | −0.182 | 0.113 | −1.612 | 0.107 |
| EMPCOMP | −0.420 | 0.068 | −6.178 | 0.000 |
| EIMOD22 | 0.167 | 0.022 | 7.432 | 0.000 |

Hypothesis H3b

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Relationship effectiveness ($B = 0.504$, $p < .001$), interpersonal communication ($B = 0.105$, $p = .022$), participation ($B = 0.179$, $p = .016$), and resistance to change ($B = -0.379$, $p < .000$) have significant impacts on IMO (Table 7.52). **Thus, hypothesis H3b is accepted.**

IMO ON

Table 7.53 The effect of organizational behaviour characteristics on IMO adoption

| | Estimate | Standard error | Estimate/standard error | p |
|----------|----------|----------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| TOTCOINC | -0.056 | 0.037 | -1.492 | 0.136 |
| RELEFF | 0.504 | 0.057 | 8.849 | 0.000 |
| INTFCON | 0.053 | 0.035 | 1.521 | 0.128 |
| INTPCOM | 0.105 | 0.046 | 2.298 | 0.022 |
| PARTICIP | 0.179 | 0.074 | 2.403 | 0.016 |
| POLITIC | -0.174 | 0.091 | -1.909 | 0.056 |
| RTC | -0.379 | 0.083 | 4.552 | 0.000 |

We used a robust multilevel framework to analyse the quantitative data, clarifying the relationships between IMO, FWB, job satisfaction, and employee performance. The results have validated a few of the postulated relationships and have also revealed some unexpected findings, require further justification. Specifically, while IMO adoption and FWB initiatives exert differential effects on employee perceptions and outcomes, mediating and moderating variables – for example, personality, career orientation, organizational involvement, and resource allocation – play a particularly key role in influencing these impacts.

Chapter 8 presents a critical discussion of these results. It contextualizes the findings within the relevant literature on IM and work–life balance, makes comparisons with prior research, and explains the commonalities and differences. The purpose of this discussion is not only to develop the theoretical implications of the statistical relationships we have identified, but also to describe the practical significance of these effects in relation to managerially actionable organizational efforts to increase the performance and engagement of employees by means of internal policies and strategic alignment.

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Chapter 8 also presents the theoretical implications of this thesis, notably concerning the knowledge of how corporate-level initiatives and individual-level characteristics interact in sales-driven organizations. It also indicates limitations of the study (generalization and culture specific) and the methodological implications and future research. Implications for managers provide evidence-based decision support for the development and implementation of IM and FWB programmes. Hence, Chapter 8 plays the role of a bridge between empirical validation and conceptual synthesis, where these results, developed through statistical modelling and procedures, are translated into meaningful insights for both academic theory and organizational practice.

Chapter 8: DISCUSSION

8.1 Introduction

This chapter undertakes a comprehensive interpretation of the qualitative and quantitative findings and systematically relates them to the theoretical and empirical insights identified from the literature review (Chapter 2). By drawing connections between the empirical data and the established frameworks on IMO and FWB, this chapter aims to explain how IM practices, organizational behaviours, and individual demographics coalesce to shape key employee outcomes. These include not only job satisfaction and sales performance, but also the degree to which employees perceive a healthy integration between their work and personal lives. The discussion is structured around the central themes that emerged from the data, including organizational responsiveness, interdepartmental dynamics, conflict and interference, demographic variation, and the interplay between qualitative and quantitative insights. The synthesis attempts to reconcile inconsistencies, affirm convergences, and highlight areas requiring further inquiry.

Of note, most of the effects predicted in the hypotheses have been confirmed. However, several discoveries are unforeseen and need consideration, as they contradict some of the predictions. The results indicate that several factors influence employees' perception of FWB, at both the employee and corporate levels.

Employee Level

The findings confirm that FWB is affected by employees' previous working experience, their needs, and their perception of labour market conditions. However, their perception is highly moderated by their idiosyncrasies. For example, their personality, career orientation, and whether they are married or have children significantly moderate their FWB perception. While their age is

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an equally important factor, their gender does not significantly impact their perception. Furthermore, FWB positively affects employees' job satisfaction and performance. However, their performance is moderated by their competencies.

Corporate Level

We examined the impact of several factors at the corporate level – mainly characteristics of organization behaviour and coordination between the marketing and HR departments – that may significantly affect IMO and FWB actions within the organization. The findings show that organizational behaviour characteristics significantly impact marketing–HR coordination and IMO adoption. Specifically, relationship effectiveness and interpersonal communication are positively related to the participation dimension of organizational behaviour. At the same time, interfunctional conflict is affected by higher levels of participation, politicking, and resistance to change. In the relationship between marketing–HR cooperation and IMO adoption, we expected several elements to have a significant role – including relationship effectiveness, interfunctional conflict, and interpersonal communication. Surprisingly, however, only relationship effectiveness is a substantial predictor of IMO adoption.

8.2 Internal Market Orientation and Organizational Response

The quantitative findings indicate a moderate adoption of IMO practices across the sample (mean = 3.25), with strong internal consistency for key subdimensions. The internal market intelligence generation subscale scored highly (Cronbach's $\alpha = .894$), as did the dissemination of intelligence between managers and employees (Cronbach's $\alpha = .868$) and among managers (Cronbach's $\alpha = .765$). These findings validate the multidimensional model of IMO conceptualized by Gounaris (2006), who framed IMO as a dynamic organizational capability predicated on generating, disseminating, and responding to internal intelligence. The theoretical alignment with Lings and

Greenley's (2005) operationalization of IMO further supports the robustness of this conceptualization.

While the structural foundations of IMO are evident, the effectiveness of IMO as a driver of employee outcomes appears diminished by other organizational realities. The analysis revealed low scores in relationship effectiveness (mean = 2.91) and a concerningly high mean (4.68) for interfunctional conflict, which suggests that although IMO principles may be formally espoused, their practical enactment remains inconsistent. This finding reinforces the observations by Ahmed and Rafiq (2003), who posited that IMO's success hinges not just on informational flows, but also on the integration of departmental efforts, cultural coherence, and the erosion of silos.

These discrepancies indicate that although IM mechanisms are present in design, their impact may be constrained by behavioural and structural tensions that limit the responsiveness of the organization to employee needs. As Gounaris (2006) argued, an effective IMO system must be more than procedural – it requires attitudinal buy-in and cultural embedding.

8.3 Interfunctional Conflict and Internal Communication

The data underscore a critical disconnect between the intended functionality of IMO and its lived execution within organizational settings. Increased interfunctional conflict undermines cross-departmental collaboration, a key IMO principle, which encourages the free flow of decisions across management and nonmanagement gates. As George (1990) and Grönroos (1990) have noted, IM is holistic and requires ongoing open communication. When this coalition is disrupted, perhaps as we see in quantitative data, the advantages of IMO become weakened.

The qualitative interviews further enrich this picture, with vivid descriptions of managerial detachment and communication practices that are fragmented. Insufficient feedback, opaque

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decision-making, and a lack of empathetic engagement from superiors were cited time and time again by participants. These deficiencies feed an internal climate of fear, isolation and a lower level of containment that is not conducive to the spread of internal market intelligence.

These results reinforce the argument of Gounaris (2006) that a comprehensive IMO model is required – beyond just transactional information-sharing – to promote such trust relationship, participative governance and reciprocal understanding. In the end, structural matters of IMO, without strong relational infrastructures, the structural components of IMO are unlikely to translate into enhanced employee experiences or organizational outcomes.

8.4 Balance Between Work and Family Life: Time and Strain Conflicts

The qualitative results revealed three themes that describe the experience of tensions between work and family: lack of time, pressure-induced stress, and conflicting roles. The participants recounted a recurrent concern that work is increasingly blurring personal and family spaces. In particular, long working hours and irregular work schedule are key obstacles to achieving FWB, particularly among workers with caregiving responsibilities. These findings virtually mirror Greenhaus and Beutell's (1985) time-based conflict model, in which pressures of time in one domain limit activity in another. Stress-related difficulties are evidenced by symptoms of emotional exhaustion, irritability, and withdrawal at home, largely reflecting pressures in the workplace. This corresponds to the strain-based typology of conflict in which workers bring disturbing thoughts and feelings from work to the home and reduce their general level of well-being (Carlson et al., 2000).

The quantitative findings validate the themes identified by the qualitative study to some extent. Time-based (mean = 3.26) and strain-based (mean = 2.75) interference also reflect that the

conflicts are not isolated – they are pervasive. They further reflect (Netemeyer et al.'s, 1996) observation that unresolved work-family tensions are associated with declines in job satisfaction, emotional well-being, and productivity.

8.5 Work–Family and Family–Work Interference

A subtle observation from the qualitative interviews is the concept of motivators that affect both work and family: factors that hinder family conflict with work and act as inhibitors to job performance. For example, a few participants reported that worries about their children's health or marital problems are distractions from their concentration on work, which is in agreement with the framework of Frone et al. (1992). This reversibility indicates the systemic quality of the conflict (the borders between work and family are porous and both affect each other). The quantitative results support this narrative. The participants rated family–work conflict higher (mean = 3.62) than work–family conflict (mean = 2.97), indicating that personal commitments are a major obstacle to work engagement. These findings expand upon the theoretical implications of Staines (1980), who introduced the idea of negative spillover, and Carlson et al. (2000), who empirically demonstrated that both types of interference lead to role deprivation. The implication is that attempts to enhance employee job performance would have to reduce job demands and facilitate employees' ability to cope with personal stressors. Consequently, a responsive IMO system needs to include family-friendly policies, part-time arrangements and emotional supports.

8.6 Internal Market Orientation and Employee Outcomes

The quantitative study supports that higher IMO leads to favourable employee outcomes. Satisfaction with the job is high (Cronbach's $\alpha = .912$) and performance rating (reverse-coded mean = 2.32) among employees with stronger IMO practices exposure indicate that successful IMO has a meaningful impact on organizational success. This result is consistent with the

propositions of Gounaris (2006) and Conduit and Mavondo (2001) that the adoption of IMO would increase motivation and service quality.

However, simultaneous existence with high interfunctional conflict and organizational resistance to change (mean = 2.79) is paradoxical. Although IMO processes are associated with performance, their effectiveness is constrained when cultural and behavioural contingencies are non-supportive. This tension resonates with the work of Dunne and Barnes (2000), who stated that IMO cannot be fully operational without working with HR principles and organizational behaviour frameworks. In very tangible terms, IM cannot be a stand-alone operation. IMO will only really nurture job satisfaction and performance if it is framed in the context of psychological safety, managerial empathy, and strategic coherence.

8.7 Demographic Factors and Differential Experiences

One dimension raised in this qualitative data is the effect of organizational dynamics on different subpopulations. Women and participants with dependent children reported more challenges merging work and family life. Their narratives emphasize the intersectional challenges that some segments of the workforce juggle, and the shortcomings of a cookie-cutter IMO policy. These insights are consistent with the quantitative data: 34.22% of the sample are couples with children, the most likely to report high interference and low satisfaction. Consistently, Greenhaus and Powell (2006) showed that gender and work status significantly moderate the experience of work–life conflict. The practical implication is that IMO should accommodate workforce diversity. Custom interventions, including flexible scheduling, childcare assistance, and inclusive communication strategies, are essential to equitably delivering FWB and performance outcomes.

8.8 Integrating the Qualitative and Quantitative Perspectives

Triangulation of the qualitative and quantitative findings strengthens the validity of our findings. Quantitative metrics allow for statistical analysis and enhance generalizability, and qualitative narratives provide contextual depth and insight into how organizational expectations and norms are perceived and acted upon by employees in a range of job functions and circumstances of life. For example, the quantitative evidence of moderate IMO use and high conflict becomes more understandable considering the participants' narratives of communication failures, managerial inaction, and lack of support structures. Taken together, these findings underscore that IMO is a precondition, albeit not the only determining factor contributing to employee well-being and organizational effectiveness. Furthermore, the collective results highlight that the mediating constructs (interfunctional conflict, resistance to change, and demographics diversity) needs to be actively managed if IMO is to be fully realized. Accordingly, a multidimensional approach is needed, which is sensitive to the structural, relational and demographic dimensions of the phenomenon.

8.9 Summary

In summary, this chapter has critically analysed the empirical results in relation to the conceptual underpinnings of IMO and FWB. It has demonstrated that the effectiveness of IMO practices is undercut by relational pathologies, organizational sclerosis, and demographic disparities, despite their positive relationship with performance and satisfaction outcomes. One of the central ideas to be aware of is that successful IM cannot only be organized along the line of formal structures, but it also needs to be ingrained within the cultural and relational makeup of the company. In addition, demographic differences require individualized approaches to address a spectrum of employee needs. In the next chapter, we discuss the practical and academic contributions of these findings and provide some evidence-based recommendations for the improvement of IMO and work-life balance in today's organizations.

Chapter 8: DISCUSSION

This chapter has critically explored how IM strategies, organizational behaviour, and employee demographics collectively shape perceptions of FWB and influence performance outcomes. While the empirical results validate several theoretical propositions, they also reveal complex contingencies – such as interfunctional conflict, demographic diversity, and organizational misalignment – that can dilute the effectiveness of IMO. These findings underscore the importance of moving beyond structural adherence to relational and contextual responsiveness. Building on this multidimensional understanding, the next chapter turns to outline the theoretical advancements and practical implication that emerge from these insights, offering both a conceptual framework and actionable guidance for scholars and practitioners.

Chapter 9: THEORETICAL AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

This chapter presents the theoretical contributions and managerial implications derived from the empirical findings of this thesis. This chapter integrates the literature on IMO, FWB, and sales performance to articulate how the confluence of these domains advances academic understanding and informs organizational practice. The discussion highlights novel conceptual linkages and moderating dynamics while offering evidence-based recommendations for strategic design, policy implementation, and leadership decision-making. Through this synthesis, this chapter aims to demonstrate the relevance of this thesis not only to scholarly discourse, but also to the enhancement of employee well-being and organizational effectiveness in performance-intensive environments

9.1 Theoretical Contribution

This thesis makes an original theoretical contribution by integrating and extending three distinct yet interconnected streams of literature: IM (specifically IMO), FWB, and sales performance. While each of these fields has evolved with substantial conceptual and empirical development, their convergence – particularly in the high-pressure context of sales – has remained largely unexplored.

9.1.1 Contribution to the Internal Marketing and Internal Market Orientation Literature

A core contribution of this research lies in refining our understanding of IMO as both a structural and relational capability within organizations. Previous studies have established that IMO can

enhance employee outcomes such as job satisfaction, motivation, and engagement (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003; Gounaris, 2006; Lings & Greenley, 2005). However, this thesis extends these models by demonstrating that IMO's influence on employee outcomes is contingent upon interdepartmental cohesion, demographic sensitivity, and organizational responsiveness. Notably, we highlight that without alignment across functions and buy-in from line managers, even high IMO scores fail to generate corresponding perceptions of support or work-life integration.

By combining the qualitative and quantitative data, this thesis also offers a multidimensional account of how IMO practices are received across diverse employee groups. This helps advance the IMO literature by identifying key moderating factors – such as gender, caregiving responsibilities, and organizational silos – that either facilitate or inhibit the operationalization of IMO as a strategic resource (cf. Gounaris et al., 2020).

9.1.2 Contribution to the Family–Work Balance Literature

FWB research has historically focused on the impact of supportive policies, managerial attitudes, and job demands on employees' ability to manage competing role obligations (Allen et al., 2000; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). This study adds to that literature by introducing a more granular, perception-based understanding of FWB – what employees *feel* about the support they receive and how this perception, rather than formal availability of policies alone, shapes satisfaction and performance outcomes. This addresses a notable gap in the FWB literature, which often neglects how subjective perceptions mediate the link between formal structures and role satisfaction (Carlson et al., 2006; Voydanoff, 2005).

Moreover, this thesis examines the *bidirectionality* of work–family interference – both work-to-family and family-to-work – which is underdeveloped in the context of sales (Frone et al., 1992; Staines, 1980). This approach aligns with emerging calls in the FWB literature for more dynamic,

context-sensitive models that account for demographic and role-specific differences in how balance is experienced and enacted.

9.1.3 Contribution to the Sales Literature

Perhaps most significantly, this thesis contributes to the sales literature by situating IMO and FWB within the specific occupational pressures that define sales roles. The existing sales literature emphasizes the emotional labour, autonomy, and performance pressures salespeople face (Sujan et al., 1994). However, researchers have rarely considered how internal organizational strategies like IMO or work–life policies interact to buffer or exacerbate these challenges. This thesis responds to that gap by showing that the effectiveness of both IMO and FWB practices in enhancing salespeople’s performance is highly contingent on context-specific variables, including managerial responsiveness, interdepartmental communication, and personal circumstances (e.g., caregiving roles). The empirical findings demonstrate that IMO and FWB can function either synergistically or compensatory depending on organizational conditions, offering a refined model for understanding how internal dynamics affect frontline commercial performance.

Overall, this thesis advances theoretical understanding in three critical areas.

- It *extends* IMO theory by uncovering how its relational and structural dimensions interact with FWB and demographic variables.
- It *refines* FWB theory by highlighting the importance of employee perceptions, demographic sensitivity, and dual-directional conflict.
- It *integrates* these constructs into the sales literature, providing a holistic model of how organizational and personal factors shape the well-being and performance of salespeople—an underexplored yet high-stakes occupational category.

By triangulating these three streams of literature, this thesis offers a novel, empirically validated framework that enriches both conceptual discourse and practical understanding across disciplines.

9.2 Managerial Implications

The findings of this thesis have significant practical implications for practitioners, particularly sales managers, HR professionals, and organizational leaders. By clarifying this intricate relationship between IMO and FWB in the sales context, this research provides practice-based findings on how the employees' well-being can be enhanced to increase their performance and aid the long-term development of the company.

9.2.1 Designing and Implementing Strategic Internal Market Orientation and Family–Work Balance Programmes

This thesis highlights the need to temper the wide-scale roll-out of IMO and FWB with the strategic, on-the-ground distribution of these initiatives. Sales managers and HR professionals are advised to go beyond one-size-fits-all solutions and leverage internal market segmentation, considering employees as distinct internal market segments with their unique preferences, priorities, and limitations. For example, workers with caregiving responsibilities may particularly value flexible working conditions and psychological support, and very productive salespeople may value development opportunities and autonomy. This sort of segmenting, the way companies look at external customers, could dramatically improve recruitment, training, retention, and engagement, because it allows the organization to develop policies and communications that are relevant to sub-groups. It also optimizes the combined impact of IMO and FWB activities by making sure they reach the right people, in the right way, at the right time.

This thesis also suggests that IMO structures alone are not enough unless they are culturally and relationally embedded. Managers should be encouraged to demonstrate effective communication, cross-functional collaboration, and empathetic leadership. In this context, FWB-sensitive

practices are no longer an add-on; rather, they a strategic facilitator that reinforces the relational aspect of IMO in making it directly enhance the effects of employee performance.

9.2.2 Empowering Salespeople to Leverage Organizational Support

From the employee perspective, this thesis offers insights that can help salespeople proactively engage with internal resources and cultivate their own career development and work–life integration. Understanding the advantages of IMO and FWB can enable workers to advocate for the support they require, link their personal objectives to organizational expectations and use policies that enable professional effectiveness while promoting personal health.

Crucially, given the reciprocity of positive work–family spillover, the findings present a balanced perspective on which employees can focus. Specifically, employees should acknowledge that high family satisfaction and career advancement need not be incompatible, and, with sufficient organizational support, can reinforce one another. Drawing on such insight, employees may be better positioned to follow long-lasting career paths and prevent burnout in high-stress sales situations.

9.2.3 Reframing Executive Decision-Making on Resource Allocation

This thesis empirically validates that FWB investments result in greater job satisfaction and enhanced job performance. Importantly, the effects of FWB policies are significantly larger when they are supported by proper resources (in managerial support, flexible arrangements, or dedicated infrastructure). Spending on these initiatives is not discretionary; rather, it is an investment in strategic capabilities for organizational sustainability and productivity. This finding alleviates uncertainty regarding the return on the investment in FWB efforts, an important implication for (senior) management. Executives are advised to treat FWB as something that is “more than just welfare” and a “key driver of human capital” that links internal states of well-being with external

market performance. This thesis also cautions against only investing in surface-level IMO initiatives without the relational trust and alignment: structural investments need to be matched with cultural investments. Organizations unable to resolve interfunctional tension, fragmented communication, or unequal policy access may reap limited benefits from IMO or FWB separately.

In conclusion, the managerial implications of this thesis span from tactical HR and sales management strategies to executive-level resource decisions and theoretical refinements. The evidence presented herein offers a compelling case for adopting a holistic, integrative approach to IM and work–life balance, one that is sensitive to employee diversity, grounded in empirical analysis, and aligned with broader organizational objectives.

9.3 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

9.3.1 Limitations of the Research

As with all empirical investigations, this study carries certain limitations that should be acknowledged. These limitations do not undermine the validity of the findings but rather offer guidance for interpreting the results within their appropriate scope and for advancing the research agenda further.

First, the research focused exclusively on salespeople in commercial sectors in Greece, which limits the generalizability of the findings. While the sample was diversified across multiple industries (e.g., textiles, automotive, and consumer goods), it excluded sectors such as pharmaceuticals and telemarketing, which operate under distinct performance logics and sales structures. Consequently, the insights presented here may not fully capture the nuances of IM and FWB dynamics in these omitted domains.

Chapter 9: Theoretical and Managerial Implications

Second, this thesis is situated within a single cultural and national context – Greece. Given the well-documented influence of cultural values on perceptions of organizational support and work–life balance (e.g., individualism vs collectivism), the findings may not readily translate to other cultural environments. Cross-national differences in organizational norms, gender roles, and societal expectations around family and work could significantly moderate the observed relationships.

Third, we employed a cross-sectional design, which limits causal inference. Because we assessed variables such as job satisfaction and perceived balance at a single point in time, the directionality and temporal stability of the observed associations cannot be definitively established. Moreover, the reliance on retrospective self-reporting introduces potential recall biases, including hindsight bias (Fischhoff, 1975), which may have shaped participants' evaluations of past organizational practices and their personal well-being.

Fourth, while we examined the role of internal departments such as sales, marketing, and HR, we did not sufficiently account for the influence of senior executives or top leadership. This omission may overlook critical drivers of policy implementation, cultural alignment, and resource allocation. Leadership commitment to FWB and IMO initiatives is a known enabler of effective organizational transformation, and its absence from the current framework limits the completeness of the analysis.

Fifth, we did not explore non-work-related antecedents of FWB perceptions, such as exposure to social media, reference groups, or prevailing social role expectations. These factors can shape how employees define and evaluate work-life balance, independently of formal organizational policies. Their exclusion constrains the explanatory depth of the findings and overlooks the broader socio-cultural forces that influence subjective well-being.

Finally, we did not include perspectives from employees who might have opted out of organizational life entirely (e.g., due to burnout or role strain), nor did we investigate the evolving post-COVID-19 pandemic landscape, where hybrid work arrangements and digital overload have redefined the boundaries between professional and personal domains.

9.3.2 Suggestions for Future Research

Consistent with the above limitations, a few directions for future research are recommended to further develop and solidify the concept of IMO, FWB, and the impact of these two constructs on employee outcomes in sales-intensive environments.

Taking a Longitudinal Approach Future, studies should adopt longitudinal or panel designs to assess how IMO and FWB initiatives influence employee perceptions, performance, and retention over time. Such designs would help establish causal links and capture dynamic changes, particularly in periods of organizational transformation or crisis recovery (e.g., post-COVID-19 pandemic adaptations).

Cross-Cultural Replication The cultural specificity of the present study demands comparative research in other countries and cultural settings. Research into the influence of cultural values (e.g., individualism, power distance, masculinity) on the perception and effectiveness of IMO and FWB policies would increase the global relevance and external validity of our results.

Evaluating the Role of Executive Leadership The impact of senior leadership members in the success or failure of IMO and FWB programmes clearly requires further investigation. Future research could explore the extent of the impact of executive commitment, leadership style, and

strategic prioritization on the intensity and scope of IMO activities and, whether top-down support acts as mediating or moderating factor in the IMO–FWB–performance relationship.

Extending the Antecedent Domain of FWB Researchers are invited to look beyond work-related antecedents and to scrutinize non-organizational antecedents of FWB perceptions. For example, stories employees see on social media about work–life ideals, comparisons made with peers, and socially constructed role expectations (e.g., what it means to be a “good parent” or “ideal worker”) can all influence employees’ perceptions of balance, satisfaction, and support. These constructs could be incorporated in a multilevel model that considers organizational and societal factors.

Connecting IMO and FWB to Organization-Level Outcomes In contrast to limiting the scope of this study to individual performance, future studies need to explore larger scale organization-level outcomes (e.g., customer satisfaction, ability to innovate, and firm profitability). An analysis at multiple levels may illustrate how higher order perceptions of FWB and IMO impact team processes and strategic performance.

Post COVID-19 Pandemic Context Replicating this study in a post-COVID-19 context would permit comparison of how changes in work practices (e.g., hybrid work, digital collaboration, and mental health considerations) have altered worker expectations and organizational responses. It would also be interesting to explore how these developments interact with IM and balance initiatives.

Including Alternative Populations To increase generalizations to other groups than traditional commercial salespeople – gig workers, knowledge workers, and public sector employees – should be studied in future studies to see if similar mechanisms are present when working in a less structured or lower performance-oriented environment.

This broadened research agenda contributes to a richer theoretical understanding of how internal support systems might be optimally configured to meet ever-shifting employee expectations and external market demands, especially in performance-intensive fields where pressure on the job and stress at home are tightly concurrent.

9.4 Conclusions

We set out to investigate how the concurrent implementation of IMO and FWB initiatives can influence employees' perceptions of balance, job satisfaction, and ultimately performance. Through a mixed-methods approach – qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys – we explored key mechanisms, experiences, and outcomes associated with IM and work-life integration among salespeople in Greek commercial firms. The findings provide both theoretical contributions and practical implications, particularly by demonstrating that the interplay between structural policies, organizational culture, and individual demographic characteristics determines the success of IMO and FWB strategies.

Revisiting the Research Objectives

Objective 1: *To examine how the employees' workplace expectations, individual differences, and competencies affect their perception of FWB and the impact on employees' performance.*

We addressed this objective with both the qualitative and quantitative studies. The qualitative data revealed that employee expectations regarding managerial empathy, scheduling flexibility, and emotional support are frequently unmet – especially among caregivers and women – resulting in heightened strain and dissatisfaction. These themes correspond to the models of time- and strain-based conflict by and Carlson et al. (2000) and Greenhaus and Beutell (1985). Quantitatively, demographic segments such as employees with dependent children experienced significantly higher levels of family-to-work conflict (mean = 3.62), and these conflicts have a negative

association with job satisfaction and performance. This substantiates earlier arguments by Greenhaus and Powell (2006), who contended that individual and contextual variables moderate work–family dynamics.

The findings thereby affirm that employee perceptions of FWB are influenced not merely by formal policies but by how such policies intersect with personal roles, expectations, and capacities. The perception of imbalance negatively affects emotional well-being and, in turn, job performance, highlighting the need for tailored organizational responses.

Objective 2: *To explore how and under what conditions the adoption of IMO and FWB policies jointly influence the employees' perception of the balance (between work and family/personal life) they achieve in their working environment.*

The evidence indicates that while IMO structures are in place (as reflected in the moderate mean IMO of 3.25), their translation into positive employee outcomes is uneven and conditional. The study supports the proposition by Gounaris (2006) and Lings and Greenley (2005) that IMO can improve employee satisfaction and alignment, but only under certain conditions. High interfunctional conflict (mean = 4.68) and organizational resistance to change (mean = 2.79) act as significant inhibitors to IMO's effectiveness, echoing Ahmed and Rafiq's (2003) emphasis on the importance of internal cultural cohesion.

Moreover, we found that the joint application of IMO and FWB is effective only when organizational commitment extended beyond symbolic gestures. As revealed by the qualitative findings, FWB practices generate meaningful improvements in perception only when backed by sufficient resources and managerial support. This confirms that a synergistic relationship between IMO and FWB is not automatic: it must be cultivated through structural alignment and relational integrity.

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This thesis further highlights that IMO systems need to move from being procedurally adequate to relationally embedded. Without relational infrastructures such as trust, communication, and participatory decision-making, even well-intentioned IMO practices may falter. The bidirectional nature of work–family interference, as revealed in the qualitative narratives and supported by the quantitative metrics, reinforces the need for a more integrated model of IM that is sensitive to employees' lived experiences.

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APPENDIX

1. In-Depth Interview Discussion Guide

Introduction

- Introduce yourself to the interviewee.
- Describe the interview's purpose.
- Interviewee's background
 - Could you kindly tell me about your employment background?
 - Demographic information
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Marital status
 - Children status
 - Years in sales.

Q1. Let's begin our conversation by explaining to me what you understand when I ask you to define the term family–work balance.

Q2. Based on the definition you just described, would you please assist me with recording the challenges you faced in achieving your family–work balance?

Q3. Does your work in sales allow you to have family–work balance?

Q4. How does your work environment contribute to family–work balance?

Q5. Does your current job meet the expectations you had before you started? How does this affect your family–work balance?

Q6. What efforts does your organization have about family–work balance? What effect does this have on you?

Q7. How is your manager there to assist you? What is the best way to characterize your relationship?

Q8. Could you tell me a little about your relationships with your co-workers? Is this anything that affects your attitude about your work?

Q9. How satisfied do you feel at work? How does family–work balance affect job satisfaction?

Q10. How do family–work balance and job satisfaction affect your performance as salespeople?

Thank you for your participation.

2. Manager Questionnaire

Internal Market Orientation

Internal market intelligence generation

Identification of exchanges of value

To what extent do you agree with the following phrases?

The value 1 represents “totally agree” while the value 7 represents “totally disagree”.

| | | Strongly agree | | | | | | Strongly disagree |
|-----------|---|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|----------------------|
| <i>Q1</i> | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 1 | This company emphasizes understanding our needs. | | | | | | | |
| 2 | There are regular meetings with my supervisor, so I have the chance to say what I expect from the company | | | | | | | |
| 3 | At least once per year we fill in questionnaires regarding our needs and wants from the company | | | | | | | |
| 4 | Our manager seeks to find out what competitors do to keep their employees satisfied. | | | | | | | |
| 5 | The company is informed about legal development in the labour market | | | | | | | |
| 6 | The company is aware of the employment rate in our industry | | | | | | | |
| 7 | The company is systematically analysing the working conditions of employees working in competition. | | | | | | | |

Internal intelligence dissemination

Communication between managers and employees

| <i>Q2</i> | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Before any policy change, my supervisor informs me face-to-face in advance. | | | | | | | |
| 2 | My supervisor sincerely listens to the problems I have doing my job. | | | | | | | |
| 3 | My supervisor is sincerely concerned about the personal problems I have that may affect my performance. | | | | | | | |
| 4 | My supervisor spends time informing me about my tasks my objectives and to reach an agreement with me. | | | | | | | |

Communication among managers

| <i>Q3</i> | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|-----------|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | The supervisors in this company meet regularly to discuss subordinate's problems and listen to what the other supervisors have to say. | | | | | | | |
| 2 | If an employee in this company is faced with a serious problem, the supervisors from other departments will become aware of it in no time. | | | | | | | |
| 3 | This company encourages our supervisors to meet and discuss among them issues concerning their subordinates. | | | | | | | |
| 4 | On many occasions, the solution to a problem I had came from a supervisor from a different department, not from my direct supervisor. | | | | | | | |

Response to intelligence

Internal-market segmentation

| <i>Q4</i> | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|-----------|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | In this company, employees are identified in groups based on our individual characteristics and needs. | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Before any policy change is introduced, our individual characteristics have always been considered in advance. | | | | | | | |
| 3 | All employees are treated exactly the same way. Individual needs are ignored. | | | | | | | |
| 4 | Our individual needs are systematically assessed in this company. | | | | | | | |

Job description

| <i>Q5</i> | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | My job description allows me to satisfy my personal needs and goals through my work. | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Nothing has ever been assigned to me unless my supervisor and I had agreed that I could really do it. | | | | | | | |
| 3 | The tasks I am assigned with help me to advance my career with this company | | | | | | | |
| 4 | My supervisor is expected to justify my job description and tasks I am assigned with to more senior levels of management. | | | | | | | |

Appendix

Remuneration system

| Q6 | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | When I do something extraordinary, I know that I will receive some financial bonus/reward. | | | | | | | |
| 2 | My income and the annual increases are very closely tied to my qualifications and my performance. | | | | | | | |
| 3 | Everyone gets an annual bonus regardless of their performance. | | | | | | | |
| 4 | My income and the annual increases are very related to those of people with similar qualifications working in this or any other industry. | | | | | | | |

Management concern

| Q7 | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | The senior management of this company is really indifferent to our problems. | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Nothing is too expensive for our senior management if this would satisfy the specific needs of specific groups of employees. | | | | | | | |
| 3 | The senior management is really considerate about our individual needs and makes policies that reflect it. | | | | | | | |
| 4 | The senior management is resolved to solve our problems and to give us all required support necessary for our job. | | | | | | | |

Training

| Q8 | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | In this company, training is closely related to the individual needs of each employee. | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Massive training seminars are organized when possible. | | | | | | | |
| 3 | A newly hired employee will have to find his own answers to the requirements of the job. | | | | | | | |
| 4 | If one is moved from one department to another, the new supervisor will personally train him/her for a prespecified period of time. | | | | | | | |

Internal segment targeting

| Q9 | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Every important decision regarding human-resource policies is always adapted according to our individual needs. | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Specific human-resource policies are always considered for specific groups of employees with a common set of needs | | | | | | | |
| 3 | No action is ever taken unless its impact on specific groups of employees with common needs is evaluated. | | | | | | | |
| 4 | The human-resource-related policies apply to everyone. Individual needs are never considered. | | | | | | | |

Marketing–Human Resources Cooperation

Relationship effectiveness

| <i>Q10</i> | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | To what extent do you have an effective working relationship with the human resources department. | | | | | | | |
| 2 | To what extent does the human resources department carry out its responsibilities and commitments in regard to you? | | | | | | | |
| 3 | To what extent do you carry out your responsibilities in regard to your human resources department? | | | | | | | |
| 4 | To what extent do you feel the working relationship between marketing and the human resources department is productive? | | | | | | | |
| 5 | Overall, to what extent were you satisfied with the working relationship between HR and marketing during the past 6 months? | | | | | | | |

Interfunctional conflict

| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | When members of the marketing and human resources departments get together, tensions frequently run high. | | | | | | | |
| 7 | There is often tension over the specific terms of the working relationship between the marketing and human resources departments. | | | | | | | |
| 8 | The objectives pursued by the marketing department are often incompatible with those of the human resources department | | | | | | | |

Connectedness

| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | Members of one department are easily accessible to the other. | | | | | | | |
| 10 | The marketing and human resources people here talk “different languages”, which makes it difficult to communicate. | | | | | | | |
| 11 | Individuals in one department will only contact someone in the other only when it is strictly necessary | | | | | | | |

Interpersonal communication

| <i>Q11</i> | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|------------|----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Electronic mail | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Individual face-to-face meetings | | | | | | | |
| 3 | Meetings between teams | | | | | | | |

Q12 What is the total turnover of the company?

| Less than 1 million euros | 1–3 million euros | 3–6 million euros | 6–10 million euros | More than 10 million euros |
|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| | | | | |

Availability of Resources

Please answer the following questions

| <i>Q13</i> | | Less than 5,000 euros | 10,000 euros | 15,000 euros | 20,000 euros | More than 25,000 euros |
|------------|---|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------------|
| 1 | What is the approximate amount you spent last year on training to ensure that your salespeople align with the needs of the customers? | | | | | |
| 2 | What is the approximate amount you spent last year on training to ensure that your salespeople align with the company objectives? | | | | | |

Q14 Do you have a budget dedicated to family–work balance actions?

| No | Yes |
|----|-----|
| | |

If No, please go to Question no. 16.

If Yes:

| <i>Q15</i> | | Less than 5,000 euros | 10,000 euros | 15,000 euros | 20,000 euros | More than 25,000 euros |
|------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------------|
| | What is the approximate amount you spent last year on family–work balance actions? | | | | | |

Characteristics of Organizational Behaviour

Please indicate the extent that you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Empowerment/Participation

| <i>Q16</i> | | Strongly agree | | | | Strongly disagree |
|------------|---|----------------|---|---|---|-------------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | Changes are always discussed with all the people upon whom the changes will bear an impact. | | | | | |
| 2 | Those who implement change have no say in developing the proposals | | | | | |
| 3 | Staff members were consulted about the reasons for change. | | | | | |
| 4 | The way any change is implemented leaves little room for personal input | | | | | |

Politicking

| <i>Q17</i> | | Strongly agree | | | | Strongly disagree |
|------------|---|----------------|---|---|---|-------------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | Within our organization, power games between the departments play an important role. | | | | | |
| 2 | Staff members are sometimes taken advantage of in our organization. | | | | | |
| 3 | In our organization, favouritism is an important way to achieve something | | | | | |
| 4 | Plans for future improvement will not come too much. | | | | | |
| 5 | Most change projects that are supposed to solve problems around here will not do much good. | | | | | |
| 6 | The change will improve work. | | | | | |
| 7 | The change will simplify work. | | | | | |

Resistance to changes

Please indicate the extent that you agree or disagree with the following statements:

| <i>Q18</i> | | Strongly agree | | | | Strongly disagree |
|------------|---|----------------|---|---|---|-------------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | Generally, change is good. | | | | | |
| 2 | I prefer having a stable routine to experiencing changes in my life. | | | | | |
| 3 | I generally consider changes to be a negative thing. | | | | | |
| 4 | I like to do the same old things rather than try new and different ones. | | | | | |
| 5 | If I were to be informed that there's going to be a significant change regarding the way things are done at work, I would probably feel stressed. | | | | | |
| 6 | When I am informed of a change of plans, I tense up a bit. | | | | | |
| 7 | When things don't go according to plan, it stresses me out. | | | | | |
| 8 | Changing plans seems like a real hassle to me. | | | | | |
| 9 | When someone pressures me to change something, I tend to resist it even if I think the change may ultimately benefit me. | | | | | |
| 10 | Often, I feel a bit uncomfortable even about changes that may potentially improve my life. | | | | | |
| 11 | I don't change my mind easily. | | | | | |
| 12 | I often change my mind. | | | | | |
| 13 | My views are very consistent over time. | | | | | |

Demographics

Q19 Please indicate your gender:

Man ☐
 Woman ☐
 Other ☐

Q20 Please choose your age group:

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 18–25 years | 26–40 years | 41–50 years | 51–60 years | Older than 60 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Q21 How long have you been employed in a managerial selling position (current and prior firms)?

Years:

3. Employee Questionnaire

Salespeople's Performance

How do you rate yourself in terms of your performance in relation to the following?

To what extent do you agree with the following phrases?

The value 1 represents "totally agree" while the value 7 represents "totally disagree".

| Q1 | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Quotas/sales objectives? | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Customer relations? | | | | | | | |
| 3 | Time management? | | | | | | | |
| 4 | Managing of expenses? | | | | | | | |
| 5 | Knowledge of your company's products? | | | | | | | |
| 6 | Knowledge of your company policies? | | | | | | | |
| 7 | Knowledge of your competitors' products? | | | | | | | |
| 8 | Knowledge of your customers' needs? | | | | | | | |
| 9 | Selling products with the highest profit margins | | | | | | | |
| 10 | Generating sales for new products/services | | | | | | | |
| 11 | Producing sales/contracts with long-term profitability | | | | | | | |

Job Satisfaction

What is your satisfaction level with regards to?

| Q2 | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Your overall job | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Your fellow workers | | | | | | | |
| 3 | Your supervisor(s) | | | | | | | |
| 4 | Your organization's policies | | | | | | | |
| 5 | The support provided by your organization | | | | | | | |
| 6 | Your opportunities for advancement with this organization | | | | | | | |

Work—Family Conflict Items

Time-based work interference with family

| Q3 | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | My work keeps me from my family activities more than I would like. | | | | | |
| 2 | I have to miss family activities due to the amount of time I must spend on work responsibilities. | | | | | |
| 3 | The time I spend on family responsibilities often interferes with my work responsibilities. | | | | | |
| 4 | The time I spend with my family often causes me not to spend time in activities at work that could be helpful to my career. | | | | | |

Strain-based work interference with family

| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | When I get home from work, I am often too frazzled to participate in family activities/ responsibilities. | | | | | |
| 6 | I am often emotionally drained when I get home from work that it prevents me from contributing to my family. | | | | | |
| 7 | Due to all the pressures at work, sometimes when I come home, I am too stressed to do the things I enjoy. | | | | | |

Work—family conflict

| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life. | | | | | |
| 9 | The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfil family responsibilities. | | | | | |
| 10 | My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfil family duties. | | | | | |

Family—work conflict

| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11 | The demands of my family or spouse/partner interfere with work-related activities. | | | | | |
| 12 | I have to put off doing things at work because of the demands on my time at home. | | | | | |
| 13 | Family-related strain interferes with my ability to perform job-related duties. | | | | | |

Family–Work Balance Actions

Please mark those actions/policies that are available in your organization.

| <i>Q4</i> | | Yes | No |
|-----------|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Child-care resources | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 | Career counselling | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 | Mentoring programme | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 | Compressed workweek | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 | Option to choose their own starting and quitting times | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 | Flexible working hours | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7 | Option to work at home | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8 | Part-time working arrangement | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9 | Insurance policy for self and for family | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10 | Employee education fund | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11 | Employee assistance program (EAP) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Employee Idiosyncrasies

Which of the following options best describes your current family situation?

| | | |
|-----------|-------------------------|--|
| <i>Q5</i> | | |
| | Single | |
| | Married | |
| | Couple with children | |
| | Couple without children | |
| | Close to pension | |
| | Single parent | |
| | Care for the elderly | |

Employee Personality 1

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

| <i>Q6</i> | | Strongly disagree | | | | | | Strongly agree |
|-----------|--|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 1 | Work should only be a small part of one's life. * | | | | | | | |
| 2 | In my view, an individual's personal life goals should be work oriented. | | | | | | | |
| 3 | The major satisfaction in my life comes from my work. | | | | | | | |
| 4 | The most important things that happen to me involve my work. | | | | | | | |
| 5 | I have other activities more important than my work. * | | | | | | | |
| 6 | I would probably keep working even if I didn't need the money. | | | | | | | |
| 7 | Most things in life are more important than work. * | | | | | | | |
| 8 | Overall, I consider work to be very central to my existence. | | | | | | | |

Employee Personality 2

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

| Q7 | | Strongly disagree | | | | | | Strongly agree |
|----|---|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 1 | I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve my life | | | | | | | |
| 2 | I feel driven to make a difference in my community, and maybe the world. | | | | | | | |
| 3 | I tend to let others take the initiative to start new projects. | | | | | | | |
| 4 | Wherever I have been, I have been a powerful force for constructive change. | | | | | | | |
| 5 | I enjoy facing and overcoming obstacles to my ideas. | | | | | | | |
| 6 | Nothing is more exciting than seeing my ideas turn into reality. | | | | | | | |
| 7 | If I see something I don't like, I fix it. | | | | | | | |
| 8 | No matter what the odds, if I believe in something, I will make it happen. | | | | | | | |
| 9 | I love being a champion for my ideas, even against others' opposition. | | | | | | | |
| 10 | I excel at identifying opportunities. | | | | | | | |
| 11 | I am always looking for better ways to do things. | | | | | | | |
| 12 | If I believe in an idea, no obstacle will prevent me from making it happen. | | | | | | | |
| 13 | I love to challenge the status quo. | | | | | | | |
| 14 | When I have a problem, I tackle it head-on. | | | | | | | |
| 15 | I am great at turning problems into opportunities. | | | | | | | |
| 16 | I can spot a good opportunity long before others can. | | | | | | | |
| 17 | If I see someone in trouble, I help out in any way I can. | | | | | | | |

Career Orientation

Please indicate how much each statement measured how you feel about your current work.

| Q8 | | Not at all | | | A lot |
|----|---|------------|---|---|-------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 1 | I expect to be in a higher-level job in five years. | | | | |
| 2 | I view my job as a steppingstone to other jobs. | | | | |
| 3 | I expect to be doing the same work in five years | | | | |

Employee Competencies

Please mark only the competencies you believe that you have from 1 (“I need significant help to improve”) to 7 (“I have this in full; I am ‘top in the league’”).

| <i>Q9</i> | | I need significant help to improve | | | | | | I have this in full |
|-----------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---------------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 1 | Interpersonal skills | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Customer oriented | | | | | | | |
| 3 | Objectives oriented | | | | | | | |
| 4 | Empathy | | | | | | | |
| 5 | Synthesis/analytical mind | | | | | | | |
| 6 | Time management | | | | | | | |
| 7 | Negotiations skills | | | | | | | |
| 8 | Team player | | | | | | | |
| 9 | Flexibility/adaptability | | | | | | | |
| 10 | Problem solving skills | | | | | | | |
| 11 | Communication skills | | | | | | | |

Selling Experience

Selling experience is operationalized as the total number of years in sales.

How long have you been employed in a selling position (current and prior firms)?

Q10

| | |
|--------|--|
| Years: | |
|--------|--|

Previous Working Experience

Q11 Please indicate the choice that was closer to the situation at your previous jobs.

In my previous work, on broader working environment as well as my direct manager:

| | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Always emphasized the need to put the job first, even at the expense of personal life, if required. | | | | | | Always emphasized the need to strike a balance between meeting objectives and having a healthy personal life. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Social Desirability Bias

Please answer the following statements about yourself. There is no right or wrong answer to these statements.

| <i>Q12</i> | | True | False |
|------------|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 | I always try to practice what I preach. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 | I never resent being asked to return a favour. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 | I have never been annoyed when people express ideas very different from my own. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 | I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 | I like to gossip at times. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7 | There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8 | At times I have really insisted on having things my way. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9 | There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Understanding of Labour Market Conditions

Please indicate the degree to which you are aware about each of the following labour market conditions.

| <i>Q13</i> | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|------------|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | What types and levels of jobs make up the current demand for labour | | | | | |
| 2 | What sort of skills and qualification levels make up the current labour supply | | | | | |
| 3 | How job and employment demand varies across different sectors | | | | | |
| 4 | The sort of work, in terms of work patterns, which is in demand: full-time, part-time, temporary work, self-employment, etc. | | | | | |
| 5 | The levels of skills and qualifications needed for the jobs that are available | | | | | |

Employee Needs

Many different salespeople have expressed that various needs are important before they can feel successful or accomplished in their role. One such list appears below. Please assess the following, based on the importance of each individual need in the list has for you as a professional. Please give 10 to very important to 1 not important at all.

| <i>Q14</i> | | Not at all | | | | | | | | | | Very much |
|------------|---|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|--------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| 1 | To have support with personal problems and/or work-related problems | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | To have Mentoring | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | To have career Development | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | To have recognition at work | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | To have autonomy at work | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | Financially Support children's insurance/studies | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | My company to support me as a parent | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | My company to support me to take care my older relatives | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9 | To have enough Leisure and personal time | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 | To have time for vacation | | | | | | | | | | | |

Q15

If it was only and entirely up to you, IDEALLY where would you like to be today in terms of your personal and professional life?

| | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Full focus on PROFESSIONAL life | | | BALANCE between professional and personal life | | | Full focus on PERSONAL life |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Q16

All things considered, where do you feel you REALLY are in terms of your personal and professional life?

| | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Full focus on PROFESSIONAL life | | | BALANCE between professional and personal life | | | Full focus on PERSONAL life |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Demographics

Q17

Please define your gender:

Man ☐

Woman ☐

Other ☐

Q18

Please choose your age group:

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 18–25 years | 26–40 years | 41–50 years | 51–60 years | Older than 60 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |