

**WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT MEDIATION EFFECT ON
THE RELATIONS BETWEEN EMOTIONAL DISONANCE
AND EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION – A STUDY OF CIVIL
SERVANTS IN CHINA**

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Abstract

The aim of the present study is to investigate the level of emotional exhaustion in civil servant of China and also to examine the relationship among emotional dissonance, work-family conflict and emotional exhaustion. Data were collected through self-report questionnaires (N=254), targeting groups of civil servants in China.

The findings indicate that there is a significant high level of emotional exhaustion in Chinese civil servants. The result also shows that work-family conflict mediates the relationship between emotional dissonance and emotional exhaustion. Management implications of the findings, limitations, and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Keywords: Emotional dissonance; work-family conflict; emotional exhaustion; civil servant; China.

JEL: J53; M100

Resumo

O objetivo do presente estudo é investigar o nível de exaustão emocional dos funcionários públicos da China e também para examinar a relação entre a dissonância emocional, o conflito trabalho-família e a exaustão emocional. Os dados foram recolhidos através de questionários (N=254), destinados a grupos de funcionários públicos na China.

As descobertas indicam que há um alto nível de exaustão emocional nos funcionários públicos chineses. Os resultados também mostram que o conflito trabalho-família medeia a relação entre dissonância emocional e exaustão emocional. As implicações das descobertas, limitações e sugestões para investigação futura são discutidas.

Palavras-chave: dissonância emocional; conflito trabalho-família; exaustão emocional; funcionários públicos; China.

JEL: J53; M100

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	II
Abstract.....	III
Resumo	IV
Table of Contents	V
List of Tables	VII
List of Figures.....	VIII
1. Introduction.....	1
1.1. Background.....	1
1.2. Research Questions.....	3
1.3. Structure.....	4
2. Literature Review.....	5
2.1. Emotional Dissonance	5
2.2. Work-Family Conflict.....	7
2.3. Emotional Exhaustion.....	9
2.4. Mediation effect of Work-Family Conflict.....	10
3. Research Method	14
3.1. Sampling and Procedure	14
3.2. Measures	14
3.2.1. Emotional Dissonance	14
3.2.2. Work-Family Conflict.....	15
3.2.3. Emotional Exhaustion.....	15
3.3. Data Analysis.....	15
4. Results.....	17
4.1. Participants.....	17
4.2. Factor Analysis.....	19
4.2.1. Emotional Dissonance	19
4.2.2. Work-Family Conflict.....	19
4.2.3. Emotional Exhaustion.....	20
4.3. Correlation analysis	21
4.4. Analysis of variance test.....	23
4.5. Hypothesis Testing.....	24
5. Discussion and Conclusion	28
5.1. Discussion.....	28
5.2. Conclusions.....	33
6. Limitation and Future Directions.....	34

References.....	35
Appendix: Questionnaire	42

List of Tables

Table 1. Model Fit Criteria Indices.....	16
Table 2. Demographic characteristics of participants.....	18
Table 3. Emotional Dissonance - Total Variance Explained.....	19
Table 4. Work-family Conflict - Total Variance Explained.....	20
Table 5. Emotional Exhaustion - Total Variance Explained	20
Table 6. Summary of the Factor Analysis of Three Scales.....	21
Table 7. Correlations.....	22
Table 8. ANOVA Results of Key Variables by Job Positions.....	23
Table 9. Regression Analysis - Hypothesis 1	25
Table 10. Regression Analysis - Hypothesis 2	25
Table 11. Regression Analysis - Hypothesis 3	26
Table 12. Regression Analysis - Hypothesis 4	26

List of Figures

Figure 1. Proposed research model.....	13
Figure 2. Emotional Dissonance and Emotional Exhaustion Model with Work-Family Conflict as a mediator	29

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

At present, Chinese society is in a period of comprehensive transition, which imposes a higher expectation and greater requirement of public administration service (Han & Zhang, 2011). Chinese government indeed responds to such needs with varied reforms. For example, in 2011, “Administrative Accountability System (AAS)” (《行政问责制》) was promulgated in the field of public administration. AAS aims to enhance administrative accountability and efficacy, and prevent power abuses. More recently in year 2015, Chinese State Council issued “*Outline on the Implementation of a Law-Based Government (2015-2020)*” (《法治政府建设实施纲要 2015-2020 年》), which aims to build a government under the rule of law by year 2020, and also to build a “*Responsible government*”, “*Limited government*” and “*Service-oriented government*”. The implementation of such reforms increase the stress of civil servants as they needed to be more cautious when interacting with public.

In addition, internet develops rapidly in China, and it is common that internet public opinion leads to public crisis. With the advent of the information age, the public not only demands more and more information that is relevant to their interests and rights, but also access to information with more and faster ways. Under the state’s propaganda of “ruling country with law” (依法治国), Chinese people have a better understanding of the power of law and awareness of their rights. As a result, the public expect to be able to get quality service from civil servants (Han & Zhang, 2011). Thus, civil servants are given high expectation and they are also subject to close public supervision.

Moreover, in China’s public sector, there are typical hierarchical organizations. Such organizations are control-oriented with rigorous rules and close supervisions from supervisors (Jaussaud & Liu, 2011). These rules regulate the behavior of civil

servants at all levels. Civil servants abide by the principles and rules, act according to the procedures with little autonomy but huge workload. All these make the Chinese civil servants face tremendous pressure and many are experiencing emotional exhaustion (Lee, & Kim, 2011; Zhang & Zhu, 2008).

According to “Statistical Bulletin on the Development of Human Resources and Social Security in 2015” by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security of the People’s Republic of China, China has approximately 7,167,000 civil servants, including the staff of state, National People’s Congress (NPC) of the People’s Republic of China, the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference(CPPCC), government at varied levels, courts, and procuratorates, but not including the staff of public institutions like universities (Wang, 2016). Civil servant are the main bearer of state affairs and public affairs, and they face huge challenges to adapt to the changes in a timely manner for meeting the needs of the new public administration reforms. Given the size of such workforce and the important role they play in China, it is important to understand their psychological wellbeing, and in particularly emotional exhaustion they may experience under the age of public reform.

In literature, the reasons of emotional exhaustion are multifarious, and emotional dissonance is considered one of its antecedent variables (Arnold & Ellen, 2006; Francis & Ray, 2013). This could be truer in the context of China due to the influence of Chinese traditional culture which is still deeply rooted in Chinese society, and a profound impact on Chinese management practice (Yang, 2004). Chinese culture values on harmony and interpersonal relationships. In the working environment, people would like to restrain themselves and avoid confrontation with others. They believe that maintaining neutrality is one of the ways to deal with people. People can speak freely and express their views very well, but very rare to do so in workplace to avoid offending others. Hence, there is a common cultural-related emotional adjustment habits - people’s felt emotions tend to be different with their display emotions in their workplace. Therefore, in this cultural background in China, it is

likely to give rise to emotional dissonance which in turn leads to emotional exhaustion (Francis & Ray, 2013; Arnold & Ellen, 2006; Middleton, 1989).

Work-family conflict was proposed by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985). Over the past decade, the relevant researches in the field of work-family conflict has been growing steadily (Michel et al., 2011). Chinese researchers have studied the consequences of work-family conflict more recently with great interest and some scholars have pointed out that work-family conflict has a positive significant correlation on emotional exhaustion (Lin, Ju & Chen, 2013). For example, research suggest that reducing work-family conflicts can effectively prevent and correct emotional exhaustion (Li et al., 2003). Zhang and Hu (2007) propose that work-family conflict is positively associated emotional exhaustion. Xie, Zeng and Shi (2007) argue that emotional exhaustion has a complete mediating effect on the mental health of work-family conflict. As the study in China is limited, the research of domestic work-family conflict is far from mature (Lin, Ju & Chen, 2013). This study will explore the role of work-family conflict between emotional dissonance and emotional exhaustion in civil servants of China.

In summary, this study attempts to understand the emotional exhaustion Chinese civil servants may experience in the transitional society and public reform period, and explore the relationships among emotional dissonance, work-family conflicts and emotional exhaustion. By so doing, we may have an update understanding of the psychological wellbeing of these more than 70 million working population and theoretically, this study may enrich the literature with research findings from a relatively under research population – civil servants in China. Hence, it is a great theoretical and practical significance to study the civil servants.

1.2. Research Questions

In this study, therefore, we want to get deep understanding on emotional exhaustion and its relationship between work-family conflict and emotional dissonance of the

employees in Chinese civil servant. By so doing, we hope that we may have insight how to manage and improve employee's well-being in Chinese civil servant who are facing increasing emotional exhaustion in their work to provide high quality public service. Thus, this study attempts to answer the following two questions: 1) how is the level of emotional exhaustion, emotional dissonance and work-family conflict among Chinese civil servants? 2) what is the relationship among the three variables? In particular whether the work-family conflict is the mediator between emotional dissonance and emotional exhaustion?

1.3. Structure

Following this chapter, we will first review the existent literatures regarding emotional dissonance, work-family conflict, emotional exhaustion to develop the theoretical framework of the present study. In the third chapter, we will explain the research methods used in the study, in particular, sampling procedure, and analysis strategy. Finally, we will present the results of our research, discuss the management implications, limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

2. Literature Review

This chapter reviews the relevant construct pertaining to the study. The origins and development of the emotional dissonance, work-family conflict as well as emotional exhaustion are discussed to develop a theoretical framework of the study.

2.1. Emotional Dissonance

Emotional dissonance derived from emotional labor theory (Hochschild, 1983). Emotional dissonance refers to the psychological effect of separating one's real felt emotions from the emotional displays that are mandated at work (Hochschild, 1983). Emotional dissonance also refers to structural differences between sensory emotions and emotional expressions that are desired and appropriate in the workplace (e.g., Zapf, 2002). The expression of an appropriate emotional display can be achieved through "deep acting" and "surface acting" (Heuven & Bakker, 2003; Grandey, 2000).

Surface acting was described by Hochschild (1983) as disguising what we feel, or visually pretending to feel what we do not. Zapf (2002) suggested that surface acting is the physical attempt to conceal emotional dissonance. They described surface acting as the employee's attempt to manage physical or visible displays of emotion. For example, a call center operator must display a friendly, polite and helpful voice when a customer calls even when she is having a trouble. Due to the discordance between internal feelings and external expressions, surface acting not only appears spurious to observers, but can result in emotional dissonance and therefore, high levels of stress and emotional exhaustion for the actor (e.g., Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002).

Deep acting is trying to amend feelings to match the required displays (Hochschild, 1983). When performing deep acting, the employees not only control the physical display of themselves, but try their best to amend internal feelings (i.e., emotional dissonance) in order to fulfill expectations of emotional display (Brotheridge &

Grandey, 2002). While surface acting has been described as “acting in bad faith” as it involves going through the motions, deep acting has been described as “acting in good faith” as it involves trying to experience the emotions (Grandey, 2003).

The majority of the researches on emotional dissonance have been conducted in for-profit organizations until Guy, Newman and Mastracci (2008) applied the concept to public sector. These studies show that the high occurrence of emotionally dissonance work and emotive expression in jobs where employees face citizens in their daily work (Hsieh, Jin, & Guy, 2012). For example, police officers may get frightened in front of criminals, but they need to show calm and confidence. To achieve successful service delivery, police officers face scenarios which require emotions to be regulated for the benefit of the people with whom they are dealing and also for the goals of the employing organization (Constanti & Gibbs, 2004). Specifically, they have to manage and conceal their actual feelings to ensure that their affective displays of emotion conform to display rules. Such displays are to a variety of stakeholders, some of whom differ in their expectations of customer service (Julie & Daniel, 2015).

Emotional dissonance is often related to psychological ill-health, such as emotional exhaustion. According to Maslach (1986) and Leiter (2001), burnout is a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job and emotional exhaustion is one of the three dimensions of burnout -emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. Employees who need to suppress the display of anger or irritation (negative emotional dissonance) may feel they have lost some control over their emotional expression (Paige & Bill, 2008). For example, the intrusion of professional requirements upon personal expressions may create negative reactions in employees which may be amplified by being unexpressed. Consistent and unequivocal relations have been found between a specific element of emotion work, namely emotional dissonance, and emotional exhaustion complaints

across a wide variety of human service professions (Arnold & Ellen, 2006; Francis & Ray, 2013; Mark, Kyungjin & Jiho, 2014; Junlie & Daniel, 2015).

Across time certain studies might be possible that a reciprocal influence between emotional dissonance and emotional exhaustion. A number of studies have found that emotional dissonance increases emotional exhaustion (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Morris & Feldman, 1997), and Kim (2009) also found that there is a significant impact between emotional dissonance and emotional exhaustion. A recent meta-analysis by Hulsheger and Schewe (2011) supported the strong positive associations between emotional dissonance and the emotional exhaustion. Moreover, Mark, Kyungjin and Jiho (2014) supported that emotional dissonance was found to be related to burnout in in the Korean public sector. Hyun (2016) pointed out that the employees suppress negative emotions while emotional exhaustion was increased in public-service organizations of large metropolitan area in the United States of America. Therefore, we propose that emotional dissonance will contribute to emotional exhaustion. Based on the aforementioned literature the following hypothesis was formulated:

Hypothesis 1: Emotional dissonance is positively related with emotional exhaustion.

2.2. Work-Family Conflict

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) proposed the concept of work-family conflict (WFC), a form of inter-role conflict in which both work and family stress are reciprocally inconsistent domains in some aspects. In particular, work-family conflict is the application of inter-role conflict theory. Inter-role conflict is a special form of role conflict caused by the incompatibility between the different roles. When role conflicts occur, the role pressure of membership in a group conflicts with the role of the membership in another group. In short, when people participating in a role, it is extremely difficult to take part in another role, and role conflicts will arise (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). For example, male employees working overtime at night conflict

with going home for family time with their wife and children, and thus conflicts arise among workers, husbands and fathers (Garry et al., 2010). Work-family conflict is considered to be two domains, including work-family conflict and family-work conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Carlson, Kacmar, & Williams, 2000). Because previous literature has shown that work factors are more strongly related to work-family conflict than to family-work conflict, we focused on work-family conflict in this study (e.g. Byron, 2005; Carlson, Kacmar, & Williams, 2000).

The negative emotional spillover from workplace to family has been widely researched (e.g. Evans & Bartolome, 1984; Goldsmith, 1996; Judge, Lepine, & Rich, 2006; Ulrich & Dunne, 1986). Some studies have broadened the focus by investigating the role of emotional dissonance as an antecedent of work-family conflict. For example, Nancy et al. (2010) suggest that emotional dissonance is related to work-family conflict. Furthermore, Montgomery et al. (2003) suggest that work-family conflict partially mediate the association between emotional dissonance and burnout (. Thus, emotional dissonance would generate higher negative emotional spillover which would inevitably relate to family dysfunctions. When applying the COR model, we hypothesize that since emotional dissonance represented the display of emotion that employees did not genuinely feel, it would deplete personal resources as well as threaten the loss of energy in dealing with competing demands of work and family roles. Thus, emotional dissonance would eventually affect the performance of family roles. This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Emotional dissonance is positively related with work-family conflict.

Previous research has shown an effect of work-family conflict on emotional exhaustion (Garry et al., 2010; Karatepe & Tekinkus, 2006). Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness (1999) contend that work-family conflict is associated with emotional exhaustion. Posig and Kickul (2004) argue that work-family conflict is the main cause of emotional exhaustion, and also a mediating variable between work, role,

anticipation, and emotional exhaustion. Earlier research shows that work-family conflict mediate the relationship between negative emotion and emotional exhaustion (Montgomery et al., 2003). Furthermore, Innstrand et al's study (2008) revealed that the relationship between stresses derived from work-family relations and emotional exhaustion. Based on these previous researchers' investigations into work-family conflict, we propose hypothesis as follows:

Hypothesis 3: Work-family conflict is positively related with emotional exhaustion.

2.3. Emotional Exhaustion

Burnout has been defined as a specific kind of occupational stress reaction among human service professionals, resulting from demanding and emotionally charged interactions with recipients (Maslach, 1982). Some study identified burnout as a common reaction to extreme levels of job stress (Lee & Ashforth, 1993). The most widely accepted definition of burnout conceptualizes the phenomenon as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, cynicism and a sense of diminished personal accomplishment (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996).

Emotional exhaustion is the central quality of burnout and the most obvious display of this complex syndrome (Christina, Wilmar and Michael, 2001). When people describe themselves or others as experiencing burnout, they are most often referring to the experience of emotional exhaustion. The strong identification of emotional exhaustion with burnout has led some to argue that the other two aspects of the syndrome are incidental or unnecessary (Shirom, 1989). In other words, the exhaustion component of burnout is more predictive of stress-related health outcomes than the other two components, therefore we focus on emotional exhaustion.

When a civil servant has emotional exhaustion, it will have an immeasurable negative impact. It will not only directly affect the physical and mental health of themselves, but also affect their work performance. It will affect the happiness of civil servants'

families, colleagues and services (Zhang & Sun, 2008). In addition, it will have a direct impact on government management efficiency and public service level. When the civil servants have emotional exhaustion, they will show a sense of fatigue; work enthusiasm gradually disappear; the work efficiency is reduced; the sense of accomplishment is reduced; (Han & Zhang, 2011). Emotional exhaustion thus may seriously hinder the implementation of government administrative reform initiatives.

Zhang and Zhu's study (2008) shows that 79.89% of the grassroots civil servants reported slight emotional exhaustion, 6.40% of the senior civil servants severe emotional exhaustion. More recently, Lee and Kim (2011) through the survey of 2015 civil servants in 30 provinces and autonomous regions, more than half of the civil servants were found to have different degrees of emotional exhaustion.

2.4. Mediation effect of Work-Family Conflict

The present study uses the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory developed by Hobfoll (1988, 1989, 2001) to examine how emotional dissonance and work-family conflict contribute to explaining variance in emotional exhaustion. The basic tenet of COR theory is that individuals strive to acquire, maintain, and protect things that they value (known as resources), and stress occurs when these resources are lost, threatened with loss, or when individuals fail to replenish these resources after significant investments. Resources include objects (e.g. a house), conditions (e.g. a good marriage), personal characteristics (e.g. a sense of optimism), and energies (e.g. time). The extent to which these resources are valued and ranked is dependent on culture.

Hobfoll (2001) proposed two important principles of the COR model. The first one focus on resource loss. Past studies have indeed shown that, other things being equal, negative events appear to elicit more physiological, affective, cognitive, and behavioral responses than neutral or positive events (Taylor, 1991). The second

principle focus on the importance of resource investment, where people would try to minimize and protect these resources.

In applying this model to the workplace, emotional dissonance (an aspect of emotional labor) threatens an individual's resources, and over time, prolonged exposure to such demand would result in strain, such as emotional exhaustion. As many employees now combine work with family roles, this strain might interfere with their family life. There are very few studies that have tested for the mediator role of work-family conflict in the emotional dissonance-emotional exhaustion relationship. Past studies testing for the mediator role of work-family conflict has tended to focus on aspects of job demands as the antecedent (such as work overload, role conflicts, role ambiguity and time strains), with few studies considering emotional demand as a source of stress, although emotions and emotional labor are increasingly becoming more significant in many jobs. The relationship between emotional labor, work-family conflict, and emotional exhaustion in a sample of 174 male and female workers in a Dutch government organization reveals that work-family conflict partially mediate the relationship between surface acting and emotional exhaustion (Montgomery et al., 2003). However, there was no mediator effect of work-family conflict on the deep acting outcome relationship. In contrast, Karim (2009), using psychological distress as the outcome measure, found work-family conflict to mediate the relationship between both surface acting and deep acting with distress, in a sample of male and female Pakistani civil service employees. These two studies imply that work-family conflict might also act as a mediator in the relationship between emotional dissonance and emotional exhaustion.

There are limited Chinese studies that have examined the relationship between emotional dissonance, work-family conflict, and emotional exhaustion. As Chinese cultures are "collective and familial" (Hofstede & Bond, 1988), people are expected to assume the responsibility for the home and children. This traditional homemaker role expectation, combined with work, has resulted in many being prone to stress, role

conflict (Noor, 2003), and role overload (Aziz, 2004). There are also a few studies in China. Studies. (Xie, Zeng, & Shi, 2007; Zhang & Hu, 2007) show that work-family conflict is related to emotional exhaustion. In addition, Li et al. (2003) contend that reducing family conflict can effectively prevent and correct emotional exhaustion. In another study, Karim (2009) examined the relationship between emotional labor, work-family conflict, and psychological distress among a sample of Pakistani employees, and provided support for work-family conflict acting as a mediator in the emotional labor-distress relationship. According to the above literature, we draw the following assumption:

Hypothesis 4: Work-family conflict will mediate the relationship between emotional dissonance and emotional exhaustion.

In utilizing this model for the present study, we focused on three pathways through which emotional dissonance unfolds its influence on emotional exhaustion (Fig. 1).

Path A is a direct association between emotional dissonance and emotional exhaustion. Past studies have consistently provided support for the positive association between the two (e.g. Bono & Vey, 2005; Grandey, 2003; Karim, 2009). Path B is a direct relationship between emotional dissonance and work-family conflict. The third pathway, Path C shows that work-family conflict related to emotional exhaustion. Path B&C indicates a mediator role of work-family conflict on the relationship between emotional dissonance and emotional exhaustion. While past studies have shown that work-family conflict might mediate the emotional dissonance - emotional exhaustion relationship in civil servant of China, the findings are mixed (e.g. Xie, Zeng, & Shi, 2007; Karim, 2009). The mixed results might be due to the samples used, where they were not taken from proper service-related organizations and there was no control for family responsibilities.

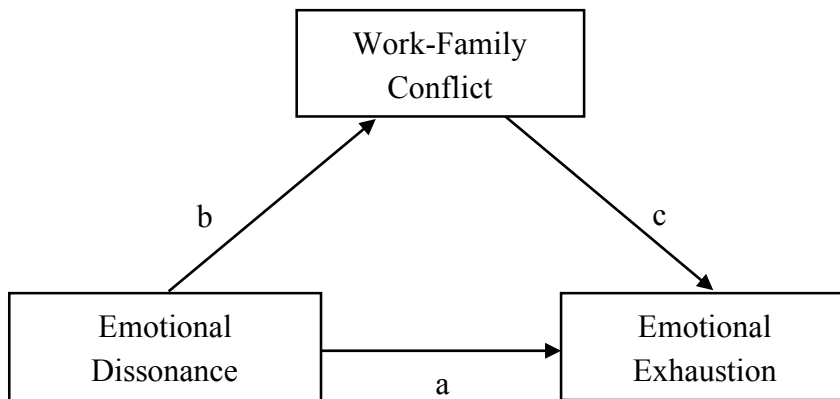


Figure 1. Proposed mediation model

Figure 1. Graphical depictions of the three pathways. (a) Direct effect of emotional dissonance on emotional exhaustion (Hypothesis 1). (b) Direct effect of emotional dissonance on work-family conflict (Hypothesis 2). (c) Direct effect of work-family conflict on emotional exhaustion (Hypothesis 3). Work-family conflict mediates the emotional dissonance - emotional exhaustion relationship (Hypothesis 4).

3. Research Method

3.1. Sampling and Procedure

This study is using convenience sampling method by distributing the questionnaires to the several offices in the north city of China. Data were collected via self-report questionnaires (Dollard et al., 2007). As the scales used in this study were developed in West, to ensure the reliability of the scales used in China, a pilot tested was conducted in August 2016. And 54 valid questionnaires were collected. CFA and EFA were conducted to the psychometric quality of the measures. Following the analysis and discussions with respondents, we modified the wording of some items to make them easier to understand and adapt to the working experience of the sample population.

After that, the 300 questionnaires were send to the civil servants in a northern city in China between October 2016 to December 2016. After data screening, there are 254 useable responses that will be used in further analysis in this research.

3.2. Measures

In the questionnaires, participants responded to scales assessing emotional dissonance work-family conflict and emotional exhaustion. All details of measures used in the civil servants' questionnaire can be found in Appendix.

3.2.1. Emotional Dissonance

Emotional dissonance was measured using the emotional dissonance scale of Erickson and Wharton (1997). Questions concerned the suppression or faking of feelings. A sample item would be "Could not be myself". Respondents are asked to rate their level of agreement with each item on a 6-point scale from 1 ("Strongly disagree") to 6 ("Strongly agree").

3.2.2. Work-Family Conflict

The Work-Family Conflict Scale (WAFCS) developed by Netemeyer, Boles and Mcmurrian (1996) consists of WFC (Work-Family Conflict) and FWC (Family-Work Conflict). This study used WFC scale, including 5 items. Respondents are asked to rate their level of agreement with each item on a 6-point scale from 1 (very strongly disagree) to 6 (very strongly agree). A sample item is “The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life”.

3.2.3. Emotional Exhaustion

Emotional exhaustion was measured by the subscale of Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) to fit the Chinese context (Maslach, Jackson, and Leiter, 1996). The original scale consisting of 6 items, was designed to assess the emotional exhaustion of burnout. A sample item is “I feel emotionally drained from my work”. The scale used a six-point response format (0 = ‘never’ to 6 = ‘always’).

3.3. Data Analysis

After data collection, we first conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) with AMOS20.0 to confirm the factor structures of the scales in this study and then we ran an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) when CFA fit indices were not satisfactory. To determine the goodness of fit of the scales (Table 1), we use threshold levels proposed by Hu and Bentler (1999) and Hair et al. (2010): The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) less than .08; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) less than .08; and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) above .09. We tested the internal consistency using Cronbach’s coefficient alpha in this study.

Next, descriptive statistics and correlations were computed. Then, one-way ANOVA analysis was performed to examine the differences of the key variables on job position. Lastly, regression analyses were conducted to test the four hypotheses proposed in this study.

Table 1. Model Fit Criteria Indices

Indices	Criteria
SRMR	< .08
RMSEA	< .08
CFI	>.90

Source: Hu and Bentler (1999)

4. Results

4.1. Participants

Participants were employees of Chinese civil servants. Demographic information of the participants included information about gender, age, marital status, education level, tenure and job position, which is presented in the Table 1. The age distributions of the participants were predominated by employees who are 30 years old and below (39.4%), then followed by employees whose age are between 31-40 years old (33.1%) and 41 years old and above (27.5%). The sample consists of predominantly males (74 %). The composition of the job position was predominantly frontline officers (47%) whereas managerial and junior officers were 27% and 26% respectively.

The tenure of the participants is described as follows: about 54 % of them have been working for more than 5 years and 15.4% have been working for 3-5 years. In term of direct interaction with public, respondents who always interact with public accounted for 45.3%. The staff who have bachelor degree or above were 77.1%. Married participants were 76.4%.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of participants

Measure	N=254	%
Gender		
Male	188	74
Female	66	26
Age		
≤ 30 years old	100	39.4
31-40 years old	84	33.1
≥ 41 years old	70	27.5
Marital Status		
Married	194	76.4
Single	56	22
Others(divorcee)	4	1.6
Education		
College degree or below	58	22.8
Bachelor degree or above	196	77.1
Object of work		
Colleagues at work unit	61	24
Public	115	45.3
Others	78	30.7
Tenure		
More than 5 years	137	54
3-5 years	39	15.4
Less than 3 years	78	30.7
Job position		
Medium Officials	68	27
Junior officers	119	47
Frontline officers	67	26

4.2. Factor Analysis

4.2.1. Emotional Dissonance

A confirmatory factor analysis with the original factor structure displays adequate fit indicators (SRMR=.0209, CFI = 0.985, RMSEA = 0.140) and an exploratory factor analysis of 4 items was further conducted. The initial exploration shows a clean one-factor solution which is both valid (KMO = .829, Bartlett's $X^2(6) = 688.746$, $p < .001$), parsimonious and meaningful. The construct includes four statements such as "Could not be myself". The Cronbach's alpha was 0.909.

Table 3. Emotional Dissonance - Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3,145	78,617	78,617	3,145	78,617	78,617
2	,391	9,783	88,400			
3	,273	6,816	95,217			
4	,191	4,783	100,000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

4.2.2. Work-Family Conflict

A confirmatory factor analysis with the original factor structure displays questionable fit indicators (SRMR=.0274, CFI = 0.963, RMSEA = 0.185) and therefore an exploratory factor analysis of 5 items was conducted. An initial exploration shows a final one-factor solution which is both valid (KMO = .877, Bartlett's $X^2(10) = 1173.191$, $p < .001$), and meaningful. The construct therefore includes five statements such as "The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life". The Cronbach's alpha was 0.935.

Table 4. Work-family Conflict - Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3,985	79,691	79,691	3,985	79,691	79,691
2	,480	9,604	89,295			
3	,265	5,303	94,598			
4	,138	2,767	97,365			
5	,132	2,635	100,000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

4.2.3. Emotional Exhaustion

A confirmatory factor analysis with the original factor structure displays unacceptable fit indicators (SRMR = 0.0566, CFI = 0.903, RMSEA = 0.210) and therefore an exploratory factor analysis of 6 items was conducted. An initial exploration shows a mixed solution and after removing the 6th item on the basis of facial validity and reliability, a final one-factor solution was found which is both valid (KMO = .842, Bartlett's $X^2(10) = 940.540, p < .001$), parsimonious and meaningful. A further CFA shows an improved fit index (SRMR = 0.0456, CFI = 0.922, RMSEA = 0.200). The construct includes five statement like "I feel emotionally drained from my work". The Cronbach's alpha was 0.916.

Table 5. Emotional Exhaustion - Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3,760	75,203	75,203	3,760	75,203	75,203
2	,539	10,777	85,980			
3	,315	6,299	92,279			
4	,217	4,341	96,620			
5	,169	3,380	100,000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

The aggregate factor analysis of the three constructs is shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Summary of the Factor Analysis of Three Scales

Scale	Items	Cronbach's alphas
Emotional Dissonance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Could not be myself. 2. Was forced to fake certain feelings. 3. Appeared different than I felt. 4. Suppressed my own feelings to fake a neutral appearance. 	0.909
Work-Family Conflict	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life. 2. The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfill family responsibilities. 3. Things I want to do at home do not get done because of the demands my job puts on me. 4. My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfill family duties. 5. Due to work-related duties, I have to make changes to my plans for family activities. 	0.935
Emotional Exhaustion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I feel emotionally drained from my work. 2. I feel used up at the work day. 3. I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job. 4. Working with people all day is really a strain for me. 5. I feel like I'm at the end of my rope. 	0.916

Next, the results of correlation analysis and ANOVA analysis on the key variables are reported and summarized.

4.3. Correlation analysis

Table 7 reports correlations between the key variables. These findings provide primary supports for the proposed research model.

Table 7. Correlations

	Gender	Age	Educational Level	Work Objects	Tenure	Work Type	Position	Marital Status	E.D.	WFC
Gender										
Age	-,099									
Educational Level	,072	,072								
Work Objects	-,163**	,204**	-,151*							
Tenure	-,118	,560**	,189**	,111						
Work Type	-,189**	-,014	-,127*	,245**	,084					
Position	,299**	-,553**	-,243**	-,131*	-,506**	-,097				
Marital Status	-,173**	,311**	-,116	,248**	,521**	,109	-,382**			
E.D.	-,112	,064	,146*	-,032	,256**	,182**	-,263**	,123*		
WFC	-,203**	,210**	,241**	,086	,430**	,080	-,364**	,311**	,507**	
E.E.	-,164**	,233**	,190**	,184**	,396**	,072	-,405**	,168**	,443**	,651**

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

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

E. D. =Emotional Dissonance

WFC=Work-family Conflict

E. E. =Emotional Exhaustion

4.4. Analysis of variance test

Table 8 is the summary of the difference of the key variables on job positions by using analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Table 8. ANOVA Results of Key Variables by Job Positions

	Emotional Dissonance	Work-family Conflict	Emotional Exhaustion
Medium Officials (n=68)	4,03 (1,13) ^a	4,14 (1,14) ^c	4,15 (1,25) ^e
Junior Officers (n=119)	3,74 (1,44) ^b	3,8 (1,40) ^d	3,36 (1,33) ^e
Frontline Staff (n=67)	3,03 (1,36) ^{ab}	2,75 (1,24) ^{cd}	2,64 (1,10) ^e
F	10,099***	21,850***	24,697***

Mean values are reported with standard deviations in parentheses.

Means with the same superscript letter (a,b,c,d,e) are significantly different at the 0.001 level by post hoc Tukey HSD test.

Means with the same superscript letter (f) are significantly different at the 0.01 level by post hoc Tukey HSD test. * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 8 shows that there is significant difference on the level of emotional dissonance regarding job positions between medium official and frontline staff, as well as junior officers and frontline staff. Frontline staff respondents in the sample reported the lowest value (Mean = 3.03, S.D.= 1.36) about emotional dissonance while the medium officials the highest (Mean = 4.03, S.D.=1.13) with junior officers in the middle (Mean = 3.74, S.D.=1.44), showing a general trend of higher position, higher emotional dissonance. However, significance differences only exist medium officials and frontline staff, as well as junior officer and frontline staff while there is no significant difference between the groups of medium officials and junior officers.

In addition, there is significant difference on the level of work-family conflict regarding job positions between medium official and frontline staff, as well as junior

officers and frontline staff. Frontline staff respondents in the sample reported the lowest value (Mean = 2.75, S.D.= 1.24) about work-family conflict while the medium officials the highest (Mean = 4.14, S.D.=1.14) with junior officers in the middle (Mean = 3.80, S.D.=1.40), showing a tendency of higher position, higher work-family conflict. However, significance differences only exist medium officials and frontline staff, as well as junior officer and frontline staff while there is no significant difference between the groups of medium officials and junior officers.

Lastly, there is significant difference on the level of emotional exhaustion regarding job positions among medium official, junior officers and frontline staff. Frontline staff respondents in the sample reported the lowest value (Mean = 2.64, S.D.= 1.10) about emotional dissonance while the medium officials the highest (Mean = 4.15, S.D.=1.25) with junior officers in the middle (Mean = 3.36, S.D.=1.33), showing the trend of higher position, higher emotional exhaustion. Significance differences exist among the three groups of medium officials and frontline staff, as well as junior officer.

4.5. Hypothesis Testing

We follow Baron and Kenny (1986) to test the mediation relationship with regression analysis. The analyses for the first three hypotheses were conducted to approve the following relationships: First, there is a significant relation between the predictor (in this case emotional dissonance) and the outcome (emotional exhaustion). Second, the predictor is related to the mediator (work-family conflict) and lastly there is an association between the mediator, work-family conflict and the outcome variable, emotional exhaustion.

In order to test hypothesis 1 “*Emotional dissonance is positively related with emotional exhaustion*”, a simple linear regression was conducted to test the relationship between these two variables.

Table 9. Regression Analysis - Hypothesis 1

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1,805	,215		8,386	,000
Emotional Dissonance	,434	,055	,443	7,845	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Emotional Exhaustion

As indicated in the Table 9, emotional dissonance is significantly related with emotional exhaustion with an adjusted explained variance of 19.3% ($\beta=.443$, $p<.001$). Therefore, hypothesis 1 is fully supported.

For hypothesis 2 “*Emotional dissonance is positively related with work-family conflict*”, we conduct a similar regression analysis as above.

Table 10. Regression Analysis - Hypothesis 2

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1,772	,211		8,380	,000
Emotional Dissonance	,508	,054	,507	9,339	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Work-family Conflict

As indicated in Table 10, emotional dissonance is significantly related with work-family conflict with an adjusted explained variance of 25.4% ($\beta=.507$, $p<.001$). Therefore, hypothesis 2 is fully supported.

For hypothesis 3 “*work-family conflict is positively related with emotional exhaustion*”, the dependent variable, emotional exhaustion was regressed on work-family conflict and generated the following results.

Table 11. Regression Analysis - Hypothesis 3

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1,078	,181		5,945	,000
	WFC	,637	,047	,651	13,613	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Emotional Exhaustion

As indicated in Table 11, emotional dissonance is significantly related with work-family conflict with an adjusted explained variance of 42.1% ($\beta=.651$, $p<.001$). Therefore, hypothesis 3 is fully supported.

The above results clearly demonstrate that these three relationships as preconditions for mediation analyses are fulfilled (Baron and Kenny, 1986). We tested the last hypothesis (4) “*work-family conflict will mediate the relationship between emotional dissonance and emotional exhaustion*” and emotional exhaustion was regressed on emotional dissonance and work-family conflict.

Table 12. Regression Analysis - Hypothesis 4

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	,810	,203		3,981	,000
	eDS	,149	,054	,152	2,777	,006
	WFC	,562	,054	,574	10,481	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Emotional Exhaustion

As indicated in Table 12, the model which includes both emotional dissonance and work-family conflict explained variance of 43.6% of the variance in emotional exhaustion. Of the two variables, work-family conflict makes the largest unique contribution ($\beta=.574$, $p<.001$), although emotional dissonance also made a statistically significant contribution ($\beta=.152$, $p<.001$). As can be seen in Figure 2, the direct effect decreased from .443 to .152. In addition, the Sobel-test indicated that work-family conflict ($z=6.82$, $p < .01$) was a significant mediator of the influence of emotional dissonance on emotional exhaustion. Taken together, work-family conflict appears to partially mediate the relationship between emotional dissonance and emotional exhaustion among the respondents surveyed in this study. Therefore, our hypothesis that “*work-family conflict partially mediating the relationship between emotional dissonance and emotional exhaustion*” is supported.

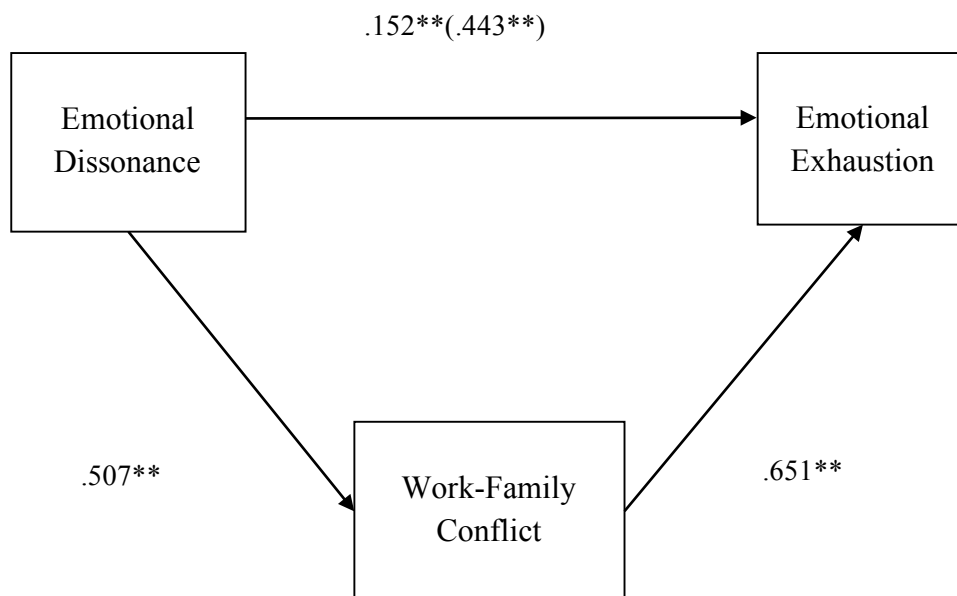


Figure 2. Emotional Dissonance and Emotional Exhaustion Model with Work-Family Conflict as a mediator

Notes: All numbers represent standardized beta coefficients (numbers in brackets are direct effects without including the mediator); ** $p < .001$

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to understand the level of emotional dissonance, work-family conflict and emotional exhaustion of Chinese civil servants in the age of social transformation and public administration reform, and also to test a model for emotional dissonance, work-family conflict and emotional exhaustion. The findings advance the dialogue and theory building surrounding the subject.

The current study examined two research questions regarding emotional dissonance, work-family conflict and emotional exhaustion. First, this study finds that the degree of emotional exhaustion is high in civil servants of China. Second, this study shows that work-family conflict partially mediates on the relationship between emotional dissonance and emotional exhaustion.

This study reveals that civil servant respondents suffer high emotional exhaustion which are associated with work-family conflict and emotional dissonance. These results provide evidence for the claim that civil servants of China suffer higher emotional exhaustion in than other occupations like teachers and nurses (e.g. Han & Zhang, 2011; Sun & Wang, 2009; Zhang & Zhu, 2008). Moreover, the result also reveals that Chinese civil servants suffer higher level of emotional exhaustion (Mean=3.38 with a scale of 6), compared with their counterparts in other countries (Candido et al., 2015; Lizano & Barak, 2012). Hall et al.'s study (2010) on 257 Australian frontline police officers' emotional exhaustion reported the level of emotional exhaustion (Mean=2.10 with a scale of 7), which is lower than that of Chinese civil servants in this study. Besides, Candido et al.'s study (2015) shows the emotional exhaustion of Spanish Army (Mean=2.7 with a scale of 6) is comparatively lower compared with the result of this study. Similarly, the level of work-family conflict (Mean=3.62 with a scale of 6) in Chinese civil servants surveyed in this study is higher than others (e.g. Lin, Ju & Chen, 2013; Leineweber et al., 2013), as well as

emotional dissonance (Mean=3.63 with a scale of 6) (e.g. Francis & Ray, 2013; Paige & Bill, 2008; Arnold & Ellen, 2006). For example, the level of work-family conflict of Japanese civil servants (Mean=6.0 with a scale of 12) reported in Fujimura, Sekine, & Tatsuse (2014), is relatively lower than that figure reported by Chinese civil servants in this study. Similarly, the emotional dissonance of Korean civil servants (Mean=2.85 with a scale of 5) reported in (Mark, Kyungjin & Jiho, 2014) is relatively lower than their counterparts in this study. In China, in the face of varied factors that negatively affect employees' emotion exhaustion, including the government reform policy, red tape, growing consciousness of civil right, speedy advance of network culture. Emotional exhaustion becomes much more important issue in public administration.

Interestingly, while earlier studies typically showed that older score higher than younger on emotional exhaustion (e.g. Bakker and Heuven, 2006; Bakker, Demerouti and Schaufeli, 2010), but not position score the present study shows that position matters - medium officials scored higher on emotional dissonance, work-family conflict and emotional exhaustion. Higher scores on emotional dissonance, work-family conflict and emotional exhaustion among medium officials and junior officers are usually explained by the facts that medium officials and junior officers more focus on interpersonal communication, while frontline staff just need to pay attention to their fair share of the work.

Is emotional dissonance positively related with emotional exhaustion?

In this study shows that there is a significant positively relationship between emotional dissonance and emotional exhaustion. Specifically, respondents in this study reported significantly higher emotional dissonance were associated with higher emotional exhaustion. This finding supports the idea of Arnold and Ellen (2006) that emotional dissonance experienced by police officers as a result of the emotional demands in their jobs provides an important contribution to explaining why police

officers get emotionally exhausted. Our findings indicate that civil servants experience a discrepancy between felt and displayed emotions which, in turn, leads to emotional exhaustion. Thus, the findings of the present study underscore the relevance of including emotional dissonance in future studies on the emotional exhaustion and emotional dissonance as a forerunner in emotional exhaustion.

Is emotional dissonance positively related with work-family conflict?

Our second hypothesis for this study tested the relationship between emotional dissonance and work-family conflict. It was found that civil servants with higher emotional dissonance were related to higher work-family conflict. The hypothesis H2 is fully supported in this study. These findings corroborate former theory that emotional dissonance will be positively related to work-family conflict (Nancy et al., 2010). As stated in literature review, it is well known that emotional dissonance is negative emotional spillover from workplace to family (e.g. Evans & Bartolome, 1984; Goldsmith, 1996; Judge, LePine, & Rich, 2006; Ulrich & Dunne, 1986; Williams & Alliger, 1994). Due to this, emotional dissonance is positively related with work-family conflict.

Is work-family conflict positively related with emotional exhaustion?

The third hypothesis of this study is that work-family conflict is positively associated with emotional exhaustion. This hypothesis is supported in this study. This result implies that civil servants with high work-family conflict may have high emotional exhaustion. This finding is supported by earlier researches on the relationship between work-family conflict and emotional exhaustion (Bridger et al., 2008; Lizano & Barak, 2012). For example, work-family conflict is shown to affect police officers' ability to perform their duties, with work-family conflict contributing to increased emotional exhaustion (Garry et al., 2010; Johnson, Todd and Subramanian, 2005; Candido et al., 2015). In addition, higher position civil servants reported higher level work-family conflict. Our interpretation is that, higher rank officials there are expected to meet

higher work requirements which may contradict with their family responsibilities.

Does work-family conflict mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and leader-member social exchange?

This finding supports the hypothesis that work-family conflict mediates the relationship between emotional dissonance and emotional exhaustion in civil servants of China. The results showed that one pathway by which emotional dissonance influences emotional exhaustion is via work-family conflict, with partial mediation observed for emotional exhaustion. That is, these mediated pathways imply that for civil servants' survey in this study, emotional dissonance exacerbates work-family conflict, which leads to emotional exhaustion. Thus, the emotional dissonance in the workplace will spill over from work to family, increasing work-family conflict which further results in emotional exhaustion. Therefore, as suggested by Maslach (1982) and Montgomery et al. (2003), people working in emotional and demanding environments might need to 'reduced pressure' themselves before moving home into their personal field.

Practical Implications

The findings of this study are of particular importance for public organizations that seek to strengthen the psychological construction of civil servants in the face of increasing emotional dissonance, work-family conflict and emotional exhaustion in a transitional society like China. The results confirmed that work-family conflict is a predictor of emotional exhaustion, therefore work-family conflict should be given attention. For example, the public organizations can build a child-care center or offer flexible working hour which may help to reduce work-family conflict to civil servants. Besides, management could encourage employees to be aware that performing deep acting instead of surface acting is better for lower emotional dissonance and then encourage them to improve this ability by giving training regularly.

In addition, this study indicates that civil servants of China have high level of emotional exhaustion, as well emotional dissonance and work-family conflict. To improve the situation, Chinese governments need to consider changing the hierarchical organizational structure and developing more employee-centered job design. Government also can reduce emotional dissonance of civil servants through training to develop their emotional regulation skills for more use of deep acting.

Moreover, results show that the work-family conflict as mediator between emotional dissonance and emotional exhaustion. Therefore, in order to be able to help civil servants to effectively relieve the symptoms of emotional exhaustion, administrators need to take measures such as reducing emotional dissonance, providing strong support to reduce civil servants' work-family conflict, thereby reducing their emotional exhaustion.

5.2. Conclusions

The aim of the present study is to investigate the level of emotional exhaustion, emotional dissonance and work-family conflict experienced by Chinese civil servants in the context of social transition and public administrative reform, and also to examine the relationship among emotional dissonance, work-family conflict, and emotional exhaustion. The findings indicate that there is a high level of emotional exhaustion in civil servants of China. The results of this study also demonstrates that work-family conflict mediates the relationship between emotional dissonance and emotional exhaustion.

6. Limitation and Future Directions

As it happens in most studies, there are some limitations that should be acknowledged in this research. First, and most importantly, the data were gathered at one point in time such that we are not able to infer causal relationships or rule out the possibility of reverse causality. The second limitation is related to the sampling method used in this study which is non-probabilistic sampling (in this study, respondents are chosen from the north city of China). Non-probabilistic sampling being used in this study might decrease the representativeness of the samples.

This study is one of few studies about emotional exhaustion that have been done in China especially in public organizations. Future research would be to examine this relationship in a broader institution or in private companies.

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Appendix: Questionnaire

This questionnaire is an academic research on the emotional labor domain in China. There is no right or wrong answers and all data will be kept strictly confidential. On the following pages you will find several different kinds of questions. Specific instructions will be given at the start of each section. Please answer each item as honestly and frankly as possible. It will take approximately 15 minutes to finish. Please answer all of the questions to support for our researching. Thank you very much!

I. Instruction for completing this survey

This survey consists of four sections. At the beginning of each section there will be an instruction.

Choose the answer as directed.

A. EMOTIONAL DISSONANCE						
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Some-what disagree	Some-what agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Could not be myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Was forced to fake certain feelings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Appeared different than I felt.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Suppressed my own feelings to fake a neutral appearance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

B. WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT						
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Some-what disagree	Some-what agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfill family responsibilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Things I want to do at home do not get done because of the demands my job puts on me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfill family duties.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Due to work-related duties, I have to make changes to my plans for family activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

C. EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION						
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Some-what disagree	Some-what agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. I feel emotionally drained from my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. I feel used up at the work day.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Working with people all day is really a strain for me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I feel like I'm at the end of my rope.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

II. Respondent's information

1. Your Gender: Male
 Female
2. Your Age : ≤30 years old
 31-40 years old
 ≥41 years old
3. Your marital status: Single
 Married
 Others (divorcee, etc.)

4. Your Education Level: College degree or bellow
Bachelor degree or above

5. Your objects of work: Colleagues at work unit
Public
Others

6. Your tenure: > 5 years
3-5 years
 < 3 years

7. Your job position: Medium officials
Junior officers
Frontline officers