

# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORK LIFE BALANCE AND STRESS MANAGEMENT FOR WOMEN EMPLOYEES IN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

## Abstract

Hospitality, being a service industry, requires being in function 24 x 7 throughout the year, so that the needs and requirements of the guests can be immediately looked into and attended to. The attention to be paid to the guests should make them feel home away from home. Such a feel, eventually, makes the guests recall the same property during their next visit. In marketing terms, the homely feel works like an invisible product offered to the guests. Therefore, the process of offering a complete product requires involvement and dedication of the employees attending to the needs of the guests. This dedication, in combination with other factors such as personal, family and work, hikes the stress level of the employees of the hospitality industry. The stress level also varies from time to time due to other external factors such as technological, political, societal and environmental. Given the wealth of prior research in this field, our study seeks to explore the connection between maintaining a healthy work-life balance and effectively managing stress in today's world..

This research will rely on existing secondary data, such as academic journals, industry reports, government publications, and other relevant sources. The data will be systematically analyzed to know the relationship between work-life balance and stress management among women in the hospitality industry. The findings of this study will contribute to the known knowledge on work-life balance and stress in the hospitality industry, specifically focusing on women in India. By examining secondary data, the research aims to identify the challenges faced by women in achieving work-life balance and to understand the impact of such imbalances on

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work-life balance. The study will also highlight potential strategies and interventions that can be implemented by organizations and policymakers to promote better work-life balance and reduce stress among women in the hospitality sector in India. By utilizing pre-existing secondary data, this research provides a practical and budget-friendly method for obtaining insights into the dynamics of work-life balance and stress. This approach can aid in making informed decisions and crafting specific interventions to support women working in the Indian hospitality sector.

**Keywords:** work-life balance, stress, women, hospitality industry, India, secondary data analysis.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Stress can be described as the reaction to various changes that impose physical, emotional, or psychological strain. It is the body's response to situations that demand attention or action. Stress is a universal experience, albeit its intensity varies from person to person. What significantly affects your overall well-being is how you handle stress. Sometimes, effective stress management involves altering the circumstances, while at other times, it entails changing your response to those circumstances (*verywellmind.com*). It is crucial to develop a clear understanding of how stress influences both your physical and mental health. Equally important is recognizing how your mental and physical well-being can impact your stress levels (*Susman, 2022*).

The concept of work-life balance encompasses the need to allocate time for both one's professional commitments and other aspects of life, which may include familial responsibilities or personal interests. As the saying goes, "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." However, it's worth noting that some form of productive effort, whether in the form of paid work or voluntary activities, is often seen as essential for personal satisfaction. Therefore, an excessive focus on leisure can also lead to dullness. Work-life balance revolves around how individuals prioritize and balance their personal and professional activities, including the extent to which work-related tasks spill over into their home life. The definition of an ideal work-life balance can vary and is subject to discussion. According to the *Paul Krasner*, anthropologists often define happiness as the presence of minimal differentiation between an individual's professional and personal lives (*Fanshawe College, 2021*).

Work-life balance has emerged as a critical area of concern in today's dynamic and fast-paced work environments. It encompasses the ability to effectively manage both professional responsibilities and personal life, ensuring individuals can allocate time and energy to various domains without experiencing excessive stress or conflict (*Robert, 2021*). When investigating the connection between psychosocial work conditions and job-related stress, past studies typically conducted separate analyses for women and men. This division was based on the recognition that women and men tend to have distinct experiences in the labor market and unequal responsibilities when it comes to household tasks (*Jung et al., 2011*).

Achieving work-life balance is particularly pertinent for women, as they often bear additional responsibilities related to family and household tasks (*Smith., 2019*). In the context of the hospitality industry in India, work-life balance becomes an even more complex and challenging issue due to the sector's demanding nature and long working hours. The hospitality industry is known for its unique characteristics, including irregular and long working hours, high customer service expectations, and a fast-paced environment (*Robert, 2021*). These factors often create work conditions that are challenging to navigate, leading to potential conflicts between work and personal life. Women in the hospitality industry encounter various barriers to achieving work-life balance due to multiple responsibilities, societal expectations, and cultural norms (*Smith, 2019*). Therefore, it is imperative to investigate the relationship between stress and work-life balance specifically for women in this sector to gain insights into their experiences and explore potential strategies to alleviate stress and promote well-being.

Extensive research has established the detrimental impact of work-life imbalance on individuals' physical and mental health, job satisfaction, and overall well-being (*Patel & Gupta, 2020*). Numerous studies have demonstrated the adverse effects of work-life conflict and high levels of stress, including burnout, reduced job satisfaction, decreased productivity, and increased turnover intention. Researchers and organizational scholars are increasingly focusing on examining the relationship between salary satisfaction and work-family conflicts concerning turnover intention. This interest is especially prominent in the hospitality industry, which has been recognized as a high-stress sector because of the demanding nature of the work and the continuous need to meet customer expectations (*Darian & Joanne, 2018*).

Women in the hospitality industry face unique challenges in achieving work-life balance. They often experience role overload, as they are expected to balance their professional duties with domestic responsibilities and caretaking roles within the family (*Smith., 2019*). In many Indian households, traditional gender norms assign women the primary responsibility for managing household chores, childcare, and elderly care.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Work-life balance has emerged as a critical area of concern in today's dynamic and fast-paced work environments. It encompasses the ability to effectively manage both professional responsibilities and personal life, ensuring individuals can allocate time and energy to various domains without experiencing excessive stress or conflict (*Robert, 2021*). Achieving work-life balance is particularly pertinent for women, as they often bear additional responsibilities related to family and household tasks (*Smith., 2019*). In the context of the hotel industry in India, work-life balance becomes an even more complex and challenging issue due to the sector's demanding nature and long working hours.

The idea behind the social role theory is that society shapes our behavior by assigning certain roles based on gender (*Eagly, 1987*). Traditionally, women have been expected to take care of their families, and this upbringing can lead to unique responses when they face conflicts between work and family life. Cultural expectations and the challenges related to gender also play a significant role in how women balance their jobs and personal lives (*Mushfiqur et al., 2018*). Many women find themselves juggling demanding roles at work and at home. Because they strongly identify with their family roles, women often feel guilty when their family's needs clash with their work commitments (*Livingston and Judge, 2008*), making it hard for them to pursue other aspects of life (*Twomey et al., 2002*). In today's changing economic and social landscape, striking a balance between work and family life has become quite a challenge for women (*Sudha and Karthikeyan, 2014*).

It's interesting to note that the balance between work and personal life can vary widely depending on the industry (*Rosemary and Clare, 2006*). This topic has gained a lot of attention in various fields like banking, universities, and academia (*Miller, 2004; Mordi et al., 2013; Somo, 2015; Dave, 2017*). For example, Miller's study on female engineers (2004) revealed that their demanding jobs, characterized by long hours and little time for rest, often force women to sacrifice their personal lives. Similarly, research by *Subramaniam et al. (2013)* pointed out the negative impact of taking on more work responsibilities on family life.

People's perceptions of work-life balance aren't the same for everyone, especially when it comes to gender (*Keene and Quadagno, 2004*). For women, the biggest challenge is finding that sweet spot between their family and work obligations (*Sudha and Karthikeyan, 2014*). Studies have shown that taking on more work responsibilities can have a detrimental effect on family life (*Subramaniam et al., 2013*). This imbalance between personal life and work can be a significant roadblock to women's career progress (*Twomey et al., 2002*). Some women deliberately choose to work fewer hours to strike a better balance between their career and family life (*Keeton et al., 2007*). However, many women end up compromising their family plans to reduce conflicts between work and family life, often resulting in fewer children than they had initially planned (*Ecklund and Lincoln, 2011*)

The hospitality industry is known for its unique characteristics, including irregular and long working hours, high customer service expectations, and a fast-paced environment (*Robert, 2021*). These factors often create work conditions that are challenging to navigate, leading to potential conflicts between work and personal life. Women in the hospitality industry encounter various barriers to achieving work-life balance due to multiple responsibilities, societal expectations, and cultural norms (*Smith., 2019*). Therefore, it is imperative to examine the relationship between work-life balance and stress levels specifically for women in this sector to gain insights into their experiences and explore potential strategies to alleviate stress and promote well-being.

Extensive research has established the detrimental impact of work-life imbalance on individuals' physical and mental health, job satisfaction, and overall well-being (*Patel & Gupta, 2020*). Numerous studies have demonstrated the adverse effects of work-life conflict and high levels of stress, including burnout, reduced job satisfaction, decreased productivity, and increased turnover intention. The hospitality industry, in particular, has been identified as a high-stress environment due to the demanding nature of the work and the need to constantly meet customer expectations.

Traditional gender roles often encourage men to prioritize their careers and strive for professional success (*Cinamon and Rich, 2002*). Men are typically influenced by societal norms that lead them to dedicate more time to their work in comparison to women (*Zhang et al., 2014*). Consequently, when confronted with the conflict between work and family responsibilities, men may tend to give precedence to their work commitments, potentially neglecting family demands (*Akintayo, 2010*). This divergence in gender orientations often leads to women experiencing more conflict in the family domain, while men encounter greater conflict in the work domain. This work-family conflict can result in women perceiving greater accomplishment in their family roles (*Zhao et al., 2019*). As a result, in contrast to men, women may exhibit reduced commitment to their work over time (*Hoshmandja, 2013*)

Women in the hospitality industry face unique challenges in achieving work-life balance. They often experience role overload, as they are expected to balance their professional duties with domestic responsibilities and caretaking roles within the family (*Smith, 2019*). In many Indian households, traditional gender norms assign women the primary responsibility for managing household chores, childcare, and elderly care. These societal expectations place additional burdens on women, making it difficult for them to dedicate sufficient time and energy to their professional lives. Consequently, women working

in the hospitality industry may experience heightened stress levels due to the interplay of work-related demands and domestic responsibilities (*Patel & Gupta, 2020*).

Furthermore, cultural factors play a significant role in shaping work-life balance experiences for women in India. Indian society places a strong emphasis on collectivism and family values, which can create tension for women striving to balance their work and personal lives (*Mishra & Dash, 2022*). The cultural expectation for women to prioritize family responsibilities and fulfill traditional gender roles can limit their ability to invest in their careers and achieve work-life balance. The lack of adequate support systems, such as affordable and accessible childcare facilities, exacerbates the challenges faced by women in managing their dual roles effectively.

Balancing the demands of both work and family responsibilities can put a significant strain on the health and well-being of many employees. Social welfare policy analysts are now paying more attention to factors that can help alleviate this stress. One of the factors that has been studied is the combined influence of having control over one's schedule and the availability of work-life balance programs. Interestingly, these factors have shown a positive association with self-reported job satisfaction and mental well-being. What's particularly noteworthy is that when employees have control over their schedules, this effect on job satisfaction and mental well-being becomes even more pronounced when their employers offer work-life balance programs. Additionally, it has been found that job satisfaction plays a crucial role in mediating the impact of scheduling control on mental well-being. Employees tend to perceive companies that provide work-life balance programs as more supportive and family-friendly. These perceptions, coupled with actual employer practices, contribute significantly to job satisfaction, which in turn, promotes the mental well-being of individuals, including women (*Jung et al., 2011*).

While research on work-life balance and stress in the hospitality industry is abundant globally, there are many studies focusing specifically on women in the Indian context (*Rajput & Agarwal, 2019*). India's cultural and societal dynamics, coupled with the unique challenges of the hospitality industry, necessitate a closer examination of the work-life balance experiences and stress levels of women in this sector. Understanding the specific factors that contribute to the issue of work-life balance and high stress levels among women in the Indian hospitality industry can detail the development of targeted interventions and policies to promote their well-being and job satisfaction.

This research aims to address this research gap by exploring the impact of work-life balance on stress levels among women in the hospitality industry in India. By investigating the various challenges faced by women in this industry, the study seeks to provide valuable insights into the interplay of work and personal life and its impact on stress (*ibid*). The new findings of the present study is that job satisfaction plays a role as a mediator. Previous studies have established job satisfaction as an outcome variable of work-life balance programs or scheduling control. (*Jung et al., 2011*)

The findings of this research can suggest organizations, policymakers, and industry stakeholders in implementing strategies and interventions to support women in achieving work-life balance and reducing stress levels. These studies provide valuable insights into the

relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction among women in the hospitality industry, with a particular focus on the Indian context.

### **III. OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH**

The objectives for the research paper mentioned below are as following:

1. To investigate the relationship between stress and work life balance among women employed in the hospitality industry.
2. To identify the specific factors contributing to work-life balance issues and high stress levels among women in the hospitality industry.
3. To propose strategies and solutions to support women in achieving work-life balance and reducing stress levels in the hospitality industry.
4. To suggest organizational policies and practices that promote work-life balance and support the needs of women in the hospitality industry

### **IV. LIMITATIONS**

The limitations of this research methodology include

1. The reliance on existing secondary data, which may have limitations such as biased sampling or outdated information, and
2. The inability to collect primary data limits the control over the data quality and specificity.

### **V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The literature review highlights the importance of addressing these challenges and promoting work-life balance among women in the hospitality industry. Following are the various results documented from this study.

1. **Objective 1: To analyze the relationship between stress and work-life balance among women employed in the hospitality industry.** The research outcomes clearly reveal a noteworthy connection between work-life balance and stress levels, particularly among women in the hospitality industry. It was observed that women who reported having a better work-life balance tended to experience lower levels of stress in comparison to those who found it challenging to effectively manage their work and personal life. This correlation suggests that achieving work-life balance plays a crucial role in influencing the stress experienced by women employees in the sector.
2. **Objective 2: To identify the specific factors contributing to work-life balance issues and high stress levels among women in the hospitality industry.** Based on the secondary data analysis, the study identified several specific factors contributing to work-life balance issues and high stress levels among women in the hospitality industry. The

demanding nature of the industry emerged as a primary factor, with long and irregular working hours creating challenges in balancing personal and professional responsibilities. Additionally, societal expectations and cultural norms played a significant role, as women often faced pressure to fulfill traditional gender roles and family responsibilities while pursuing a career in hospitality. The lack of adequate support systems, such as affordable and accessible childcare facilities, also compounded the work-life balance challenges faced by women.

- 3. Objective 3: To propose strategies and solutions to support women in achieving work-life balance and reducing stress levels in the hospitality industry.** Based on the research findings, several strategies and solutions can be proposed to support women in achieving work-life balance and reducing stress levels in the hospitality industry. Firstly, organizations should contemplate the adoption of flexible work arrangements, such as remote work options and adjustable working hours. This would empower women to have more control over their schedules, enabling them to effectively balance their professional and personal commitments. Secondly, it's imperative to implement supportive policies tailored to address the unique needs of female employees. These policies might encompass initiatives like paid parental leave, ensuring access to affordable and high-quality childcare facilities, and creating opportunities for professional growth and career advancement for women. Thirdly, nurturing an inclusive work culture that champions gender equality and acknowledges the importance of work-life balance is paramount. This can be achieved through leadership training, the implementation of diversity and inclusion programs, and the eradication of gender biases within the workplace. Such steps can help create an environment where all employees, irrespective of gender, can thrive both professionally and personally.
  
- 4. Objective 4: To suggest organizational policies and practices that promote work-life balance and support the needs of women in the hospitality industry.** To promote work-life balance and support the needs of women in the hospitality industry, organizations should consider adopting various policies and practices. Offering family-friendly benefits, such as flexible working hours, paid parental leave, and telecommuting options, can significantly contribute to achieving work-life balance. Providing access to resources and support networks that help employees manage their work and personal responsibilities, such as on-site childcare facilities or referral services, can alleviate stress and promote well-being. Moreover, promoting a culture of work-life balance through leadership support and recognition can create an environment where employees feel valued and encouraged to prioritize their well-being.

In summary, this research underscores the significance of work-life balance for women employed in India's hospitality industry. The results underscore the necessity for focused interventions and policies to tackle the distinct challenges that women encounter when striving for work-life equilibrium and alleviating stress. By embracing the recommended strategies and organizational measures, the hospitality sector can establish a more inclusive and supportive atmosphere for its female workforce. This, in turn, can lead to improved work-life balance, reduced stress levels, and an overall enhancement of well-being. Ultimately, the collaborative efforts of organizations, policymakers, and industry stakeholders hold the potential to create a positive and empowering workplace environment for women within the hospitality sector.



## VI. CONCLUSION

The research paper has delved into the critical area of concern within the fast-paced and demanding hospitality industry in India – work-life balance for women employees. The study highlighted the unique challenges faced by women due to their dual roles and societal expectations, leading to heightened stress levels and compromised overall well-being. In light of these challenges, the research objectives were strategically formulated to address the issue comprehensively.

- 1. Objective 1: To analyze the relationship between stress and work-life balance among women employed in the hospitality industry.** The first objective aimed to analyze the relationship between stress and work-life balance among women in the hospitality industry. The findings revealed a strong correlation between the two, emphasizing the pressing need to tackle work-life balance issues to alleviate stress levels. This insight serves as a basis for further interventions and policies to be developed.
- 2. Objective 2: To identify the specific factors contributing to work-life balance issues and high stress levels among women in the hospitality industry.** The second objective focused on identifying the specific factors contributing to work-life balance issues and high stress levels among women in the hospitality industry. The study successfully pinpointed the demanding nature of the industry, combined with societal expectations and cultural norms, as major culprits. Additionally, the lack of support systems like affordable childcare facilities further exacerbated the imbalance between work and personal life. Understanding these contributing factors is crucial for devising targeted strategies to address women's unique needs in this sector.
- 3. Objective 3: To propose strategies and solutions to support women in achieving work-life balance and reducing stress levels in the hospitality industry.** Building upon the insights gained from the research, the third objective sought to propose strategies and solutions to support women in achieving work-life balance and reducing stress levels in the hospitality industry. The study highlighted the significance of implementing flexible work arrangements, supportive policies, and fostering an inclusive work culture. By doing so, organizations can create an environment that promotes work-life balance, reduces stress levels, and enhances the well-being and job satisfaction of women employees.
- 4. Objective 4: To propose organizational policies and practices that foster work-life balance and address the specific needs of women working in the hospitality industry.** In the final section of this research paper, we put forward a series of organizational policies and practices designed to encourage work-life balance and cater to the unique requirements of women within the hospitality sector. These policies may encompass the provision of family-friendly benefits, the establishment of support networks, and the promotion of a workplace culture that values gender inclusivity. Additionally, policymakers can play a pivotal role by introducing and enforcing laws that safeguard women's rights, facilitate necessary infrastructure, and create a conducive work environment.

In summary, effectively addressing the work-life balance challenges encountered by women in the hospitality industry demands a holistic approach that involves collaboration between organizations, policymakers, and society at large. By implementing the proposed strategies and policies, the industry can establish a fairer and more supportive atmosphere for its female workforce, ultimately leading to improved work-life balance, decreased stress levels, and an overall enhancement of well-being. This research makes a significant contribution to the existing body of knowledge on work-life balance and stress management among women in the Indian context, paving the way for positive change and progress within the hospitality sector. With collective efforts and a steadfast commitment to gender equality, the industry can make strides towards achieving work-life balance and ensuring the well-being of its female employees

## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following suggestions are made so as to reduce the stress level and to bring equality between work and life:

1. **Flexible Work Arrangements:** Organizations should make a concerted effort to implement flexible work arrangements. This can include options like remote work and flexible working hours. By doing so, they empower women to better balance their professional and personal responsibilities, ultimately contributing to their overall well-being.
2. **Supportive Policies:** Organizations should establish supportive policies tailored to the unique needs of women employees. These policies should encompass essentials like offering paid parental leave, ensuring access to affordable and high-quality childcare facilities, and providing extended maternity support. Such measures not only benefit the women employees but also create a more inclusive and family-friendly work environment.
3. By prioritizing these initiatives, organizations in the hospitality industry can create a more harmonious and supportive workplace that fosters the well-being and success of women employees. Fostering an inclusive work culture that promotes gender equality and diversity is essential. Companies should strive to eliminate gender biases and create a supportive environment that values and empowers women in leadership positions.
4. Employee support networks and mentoring programs should be established to provide a platform for women to seek guidance, share experiences, and receive mentorship from senior professionals in the industry.
5. Policymakers should introduce and enforce laws that protect women's rights in the workplace and ensure equal opportunities for career growth and development.
6. **Raise Awareness:** Collaborate to increase awareness about the work-life balance challenges that women face in the hospitality sector. Promote best practices that prioritize employee well-being. By working together, industry leaders can set positive examples and encourage a culture that values work-life balance.

- 7. Continuous Research and Data Collection:** Ensure that research and data collection on work-life balance and stress levels among women in the hospitality industry remain ongoing processes. This will help monitor progress and identify any emerging challenges. Data-driven insights are essential for refining policies and practices to better support women employees.

By implementing these recommendations and adopting a proactive approach, the hospitality industry can truly make strides toward creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for women employees. This will ultimately lead to improved work-life balance, reduced stress levels, and an overall enhancement of well-being for women working in the sector.

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