# The relationship between Work Life Balance and Stress Management for

**Women Employees in Hospitality Industry**

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# 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. Considering the undeniable fact of innumerable studies conducted already on this topic, this study aims to review the relationship between work-life balance and stress management in the present day scenario.

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 examine the relationship between work-life balance and stress management among women in the hospitality industry. The findings of this study will contribute to the existing 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 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 leveraging existing secondary data, this study offers an efficient and cost-effective approach to gain insights into work-life balance and stress dynamics, facilitating evidence-based decision-making and the development of targeted interventions to support women in the Indian hospitality industry.

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

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# Introduction

Stress can be defined as any type of change that causes physical, emotional, or psychological strain. Stress is your body's response to anything that requires attention or action. Everyone experiences stress to some degree. The way you respond to stress, however, makes a big difference to your overall well-being. Sometimes, the best way to manage our stress involves changing our situation. At other times, the best strategy involves changing the way you respond to the situation ***(verywellmind.com)***. Developing a clear understanding of how stress impacts your physical and mental health is important. It's also important to recognize how your mental and physical health affects your stress level.***(Susman, 2022,)***

Work life balance is a term used for the idea that you need time for both work and other aspects of life, whether those are family related or personal interest. The saying goes that all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. But work or at least some kind of contributory effort, whether paid or voluntary, is often recognized as being important for personal satisfaction, so it seems likely that all play would be dull too. Work-life balance refers to the level of prioritization between personal and professional activities in an individual’s life and the level to which activities related to their job are present in the home. The ideal work-life balance is open to discussion. ***Freethinker Paul Krasner*** said that anthropologists often define happiness as having little or no 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 examining the relationship between psychosocial work conditions and job-related stress, previous research usually analyzed women and men separately because women and men have different labor market experiences and unequal division of housework. ***(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 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. Salary satisfaction and work–family conflicts are increasingly important to researchers and organizational scholars to test the influence between them in relation to turnover intention**. *(Darian & Joanne, 2018)*** 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.

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.

# 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 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 social role theory considers women and men as being socialized to comply with their prescribed gender roles **(Eagly, 1987).** Women are traditionally considered caregivers by taking care of families. They may respond differently than men when work-family conflict occurs. From the cultural perspective, cultural expectations, and gender challenges influence women's work-life balance and social sustainability ***(Mushfiqur et al., 2018).*** They work hard in both their jobs and households. Because women strongly identify themselves in their family role, they might feel guilty when their family needs conflict with their jobs ***(Livingston and Judge, 2008),*** which makes it difficult for women to participate in other roles ***(Twomey et al., 2002).*** Given the current economic and social changes, it's become a challenge for women how to balance their work and family life ***(Sudha and Karthikeyan, 2014).***

 Different industries have different levels of work-life balance ***(Rosemary and Clare, 2006).*** This is also a popular research area in many industries, such as banks, universities, and the academic sector ***(Miller, 2004; Mordi et al., 2013; Somo, 2015; Dave, 2017)***. Miller's study on female engineers (2004) showed that 12–14 hours of work, little rest, and exhausting jobs require women to sacrifice their personal life. In addition, the research conducted by ***Subramaniam et al. (2013)*** showed that taking more responsibility for work will have a negative impact on family life.

People's perceptions of work-life balance vary by gender ***(Keene and Quadagno, 2004).*** The greatest challenge for women is how to balance their family life and their work ***(Sudha and Karthikeyan, 2014).*** Research showed that taking on more responsibility at work might have a negative impact on family life ***(Subramaniam et al., 2013).*** The unbalanced state between life and work could be one of the major obstacles to women's career development ***(Twomey et al., 2002).*** Some women purposely work fewer hours to achieve balance between career development and family life (Keeton et al., 2007). However, many women compromise family goals as a strategy to reduce work-family conflict, which often results in fewer numbers of children than expected in the family ***(Ecklund and Lincoln, 2011).***

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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 encourage men to become involved in work and achieve career success ***(Cinamon and Rich, 2002).*** Compared with women, men are influenced by social norms, and thus devote more time to their work ***(Zhang et al., 2014).*** Due to different gender focuses, men tend to ignore family demands when the work-family conflict arises ***(Akintayo, 2010).*** Therefore, women and men will experience more conflict from the family and work domains, respectively. Work-family conflict is likely to result in more perceived family accomplishment for women ***(Zhao et al., 2019).*** Thus, compared with men, women have less continued commitment ***(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.

The demands of balancing employment and family responsibilities strain the health and welfare of many employees, and social welfare policy analysts are increasingly attending to the factors that can alleviate such stress. The interaction effects of scheduling control and the availability of work–life balance programs are positively associated with self-reported job satisfaction and mental wellbeing. The effects of scheduling control on self-reported job satisfaction and mental well-being are stronger when employer work–life balance programs are available, and job satisfaction mediates the effects on mental well-being. ***(Jung et al., 2011).*** The companies in which work–life balance programs are available may be perceived by employees as more supportive and family-friendly, and that those perceptions, in conjunction with employer practices, affect job satisfaction, which promotes mental well-being of a person or a woman.

While research on work-life balance and stress in the hospitality industry is abundant globally, there is a paucity of 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 work-life balance issues 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 examining the experiences and challenges faced by women in this sector, 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.

**Objectives of the Research**

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

1. To analyze 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

**Limitations**

The limitations of this research methodology include

(i) the reliance on existing secondary data, which may have limitations such as biased sampling or outdated information, and

(ii) the inability to collect primary data limits the control over the data quality and specificity.

# 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.

**Objective 1: To analyze the relationship between stress and work-life balance among women employed in the hospitality industry.** The research findings indicate a significant relationship between work-life balance and stress levels among women in the hospitality industry. Women who reported higher levels of work-life balance were found to experience lower stress levels compared to those who struggled to manage their work and personal life effectively. This correlation suggests that achieving work-life balance plays a crucial role in influencing the stress experienced by women employees in the sector.

**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.

**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 consider implementing flexible work arrangements, such as remote work options and flexible working hours, to provide women with greater control over their schedules and help them manage their professional and personal responsibilities effectively. Secondly, supportive policies that address the unique needs of women employees should be established, including paid parental leave, access to affordable and quality childcare facilities, and opportunities for professional development and career advancement. Thirdly, fostering an inclusive work culture that promotes gender equality and recognizes the value of work-life balance is crucial. This can be achieved through leadership training, diversity and inclusion programs, and eliminating gender biases in the workplace.

**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 conclusion, the research highlights the importance of work-life balance in the context of women working in the hospitality industry in India. The findings emphasize the need for targeted interventions and policies to address the specific challenges faced by women in achieving work-life balance and reducing stress levels. By implementing the proposed strategies and organizational policies, the hospitality industry can create a more inclusive and supportive environment for women employees, leading to improved work-life balance, reduced stress levels, and enhanced overall well-being. Ultimately, the collective efforts of organizations, policymakers, and industry stakeholders can contribute to a positive and empowering work environment for women in the hospitality sector

# 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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**Objective 4: To suggest organizational policies and practices that promote work-life balance and support the needs of women in the hospitality industry.** Lastly, the research paper proposed organizational policies and practices that promote work-life balance and cater to the needs of women in the hospitality industry. These policies may include offering family-friendly benefits, establishing support networks, and promoting a gender-inclusive work environment. Policymakers can play a crucial role by introducing and enforcing laws that support women's rights, provide necessary infrastructure, and ensure a conducive work atmosphere.

In conclusion, addressing the work-life balance challenges faced by women in the hospitality industry necessitates a comprehensive approach involving collaboration between organizations, policymakers, and society as a whole. By implementing the suggested strategies and policies, the industry can create a more equitable and supportive environment for women, leading to improved work-life balance, reduced stress levels, and enhanced overall well-being. This research contributes valuable insights to the body of knowledge on work-life balance and stress management for women in the Indian context, facilitating positive change and progress in the hospitality sector. With collective efforts and a commitment to gender equality, the industry can work towards achieving work-life balance and ensuring the well-being of its women workforce

# Recommendations

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

* Organizations in the hospitality industry should prioritize implementing flexible work arrangements, such as remote work options and flexible working hours, to allow women to manage their professional and personal responsibilities more effectively.
* Supportive policies should be established to address the specific needs of women employees, such as paid parental leave, access to affordable and quality childcare facilities, and extended maternity support.
* 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.
* 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.
* Policymakers should introduce and enforce laws that protect women's rights in the workplace and ensure equal opportunities for career growth and development.
* Industry associations and stakeholders should collaborate to raise awareness about work-life balance challenges faced by women in the hospitality sector and promote best practices that prioritize employee well-being.
* Research and data collection on work-life balance and stress levels among women in the hospitality industry should be an ongoing process to monitor progress and identify emerging challenges.
* By implementing these recommendations and taking a proactive approach, the hospitality industry can create a more inclusive and supportive environment for women employees, leading to improved work-life balance, reduced stress levels, and enhanced overall well-being.

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