Work-life balance initiatives’ impact on perceived employee performance

A qualitative study of hospitality organizations

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PREFACE

I want to thank my supervisor, Besrat Tesfaye, and express my gratitude to my opponents and the respondents. Finally, my family's support has been crucial for this study.

Thank you for your contribution!

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ABSTRACT

Work-life balance (WLB) is becoming a topic of focus for management, employees, HR specialists and wellness coordinators due to its association to the health, wellbeing and performance of employees. In line with this, the aim of the study was partly to study which initiatives exist for a balance between work and private life in hospitality organizations and partly how employees and managers, respectively, experience its impact on performance. Furthermore, the aim was to find out which strategies, according to employees' and managers' perceived experiences, can enable hospitality organizations to achieve improved employee performance from work-life balance initiatives. The study employed qualitative research design using semi-structured interviews as the data collection tool and thematic analysis. Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory of Motivation-Hygiene was used as the theoretical framework to aid in the analysis of the findings. The findings revealed a positive relationship between WLB initiatives and perceived employee performance in hospitality organizations. Moreover, the study indicated that managers had a positive attitude towards WLB implementation as they alluded that WLB help to improve employees’ performance because it helps employees manage their roles in a better way without stress and burnout. These initiatives (such as paid leaves, work breaks, and flexible scheduling) were found to contribute positively to the performance of employees in terms of increasing their productivity as they help employees to manage their roles in a better way without any stress. The study concluded that the hospitality organizations can enhance work-life balance through the creation of various HR policies, flexible scheduling, paid time off for child care, paid maternity leave, fitness centers, counseling, and training sessions as well as implement programs such as workshops and seminars on time management, stress reduction, efficient job management among other things.

Keywords: Work-life balance (WLB), WLB initiatives, Perceived performance, Employee, Manager, Middle manager, Hospitality organizations
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DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

**Work life balance** – refers to a person's ability, irrespective of gender or age, to effectively handle their responsibilities at home and at work (Bataineh, 2019).

**Work life balance initiatives** – these are workplace policies or activities that address the issue of work-life balance, including offering paid leave or options for reducing hours, as well as workplace supports like paid leave, personal time off, childcare facilities, monetary support for childcare services, and other family-friendly policies (Garg & Yajurvedi, 2018).

**Performance** – refers to the degree to which a member of the organization contributes to the achievement of the organization's objectives. It is measured in terms of the timely delivery of work, attendance at work, accommodating and helpful behavior, and both the amount and quality of output (Singh, 2018).

**Perceived performance** – refers to the degree to which an employee believes that a factor (such as technology) can enhance or diminish their work performance. In this study, perceived employee performance in the context of WLB refers to the degree to which an employee believes that WLB initiatives will enhance their performance. It is measured in terms of effectiveness, work quality, consistency and efficiency (Singh, 2018).
1 INTRODUCTION

The backdrop of the study is given in this first chapter, the introduction, which also outlines its rationale, questions, purpose, and significance.

1.1 Research Background

As employees and businesses alike benefit from having well-being and health when work-life balance (WLB) is promoted strategically, which in turn impacts performance and efficiency, WLB is becoming a focus subject for management, employees, HR specialists, and coordinators of wellness (Bataineh, 2019). In this case, performance refers to the degree to which a member of the organization contributes to the achievement of the organization's objectives. It is measured in terms of the timely delivery of work, attendance at work, accommodating and helpful behavior, and both the amount and quality of output (Singh, 2018). According to Cvenkel (2021), the WLB issue is becoming progressively pressing for both employers and employees, both in the workplace and at home. Due to the increasingly demanding nature of the workplace today, many employees struggle to balance work and family obligations (Cvenkel, 2021).

In this case, as a result of shifting workplace dynamics brought on by economic insecurity and an internal struggle for survival, work-life balance gained prominence as a field of study. Since each person is essential to the smooth operation of society, work-life balance is highly valued by the government and decision-makers (Wong, Chan & Teh, 2020). The working population is now burdened with a greater amount of information due to the growing reliance on information technology over time. Employees are expected to work longer hours and be available on the weekends. Additionally, it is required of the staff to answer phones and emails promptly after work hours and to be available at all times. This has increased the pressure points at work (Sen & Hooja, 2018).

As a result, there is rising worry that the longer workdays and increased pressures and responsibilities at work are leaving little time for spending meaningful time with family and friends outside of the workplace. Notably, balance between work and life is the result of a company's and a person's constructive approach to realizing the value of a contented and balanced work life as well as a life outside of the workplace (Bataineh, 2019). Improved work-life balance enables employees to make more significant contributions to the expansion
and success of their organizations when they work for companies that prioritize effective and efficient performance (Sen & Hooja, 2018).

Thus, in today's fast-paced corporate environment, HR professionals seek methods to improve their companies' bottom lines, increase morale among employees, maintain key company acumen, and keep up with the latest workplace developments (Gautam & Jain, 2018). Since WLB has a substantial effect on both an individual's physical and mental growth as well as the long-term viability of businesses, it has emerged as one of these strategies to have a positive effect on employees (Wong et al., 2020).

As a result, employers in the public and private sectors must make sure that there are improved work-life balances to guarantee employee performance as the workplace grows more dynamic every day. Organizations now face more competition as a result of globalization and technological innovation, which has prompted them to prioritize work-life balance programs to improve employee performance, which is the perceived employee performance. In this context, perceived employees' performance is equivalent to actuality and potentiality, where potentiality is the best job that can be done when all workplace limitations are eliminated and one believes it to be their potential resource, while actuality is the work that needs to be done on a daily basis. It is the degree to which an employee believes that a factor (such as technology) can enhance or diminish their work performance. Thus, perceived employee performance in the context of WLB refers to the degree to which an employee believes that WLB initiatives will enhance their performance. The perception is self-measured in terms of effectiveness, work quality, consistency and efficiency among other measures (Singh, 2018). Because employees are an organization's most valuable asset, human resource managers should maximize their input into the organization's objectives and goals in order to maintain good employee performance and reduce work-life conflicts (Cvenkel, 2021). Given this background, the study of WLB and its effect on employees’ performance is essential.

1.2 Research rationale

An improved work-life balance must be the major goal of the workout. Employees who struggle with striking a balance between their family and work tend to perform poorly. Employee commitment to their jobs decreases as the rate of absence rises, which lowers morale among the workforce. By experiencing the joy of their work, each person can
establish their own unique work-life balance (Wong et al., 2020). This is also true for hospitality firms, where careers in the sector are now characterized by long hours, a high workload, irregular shift work, and dealing with demanding clients (Chandran & Abukhalifeh, 2021). Work-life balance has become increasingly important in human resources management due to changes in demographics, worldwide labor mobility, technological advancements, and the blurring of regional boundaries (Chandran & Abukhalifeh, 2021).

Furthermore, research indicates that most employees prioritize work-life balance (WLB) initiatives over pay, according to Cvenkel (2021). More than half of respondents in a 2016 Scott study of 2000 employees in the UK stated that they choose jobs that encourage work-life balance over ones that offer alluring compensation and benefits. According to a FlexJobs poll done in the US, almost 80% of participants prioritize work-life balance over greater compensation when looking for a job amongst 1100 employed parents (Wong et al., 2020). Nevertheless, not much research has been done on how WLB efforts affect employees' performance in hospitality firms, despite their significance. For example, Wong et al. (2020) conducted a meta-analysis to investigate the correlation between WLB arrangements and organizational performance; Chandran and Abukhalifeh (2021) conducted a systematic literature review of research on WLB in the hospitality sector since the year 2000; Gautam and Jain (2018) studied the difficulties and remedies of work-life balance; and Roopavathi and Kishore (2021) studied the impact of WLB on employee performance. However, none of these studies has specifically focused on the perspectives of both employees and managers on how WLB initiatives impact the performance of employees in hospitality organizations. This, therefore, creates a problem for the hospitality industry because employees are increasingly prioritizing WLB, yet no study has specifically focused on examining how WLB initiatives impact perceived employee performance from the perspective of both the managers and the employees in hospitality organizations. Therefore, it is necessary to study how WLB initiatives impact the perceived performance of employees in hospitality organizations from the combinational perspective of both employees and managers, which is the research gap that this thesis intends to cover.

The study has chosen to focus on perceived employee performance and not actual employee performance because actual performance is the degree of contribution of each employee towards achieving the organization's objectives while perceived performance is believed or
assumed and it results from a mediating factor. It is the degree to which an employee believes that a factor (such as technology) can enhance or diminish their work performance (Singh, 2018). Moreover, Alamri (2019) argues that the opinions of respondents (through focus groups or interviews among other methods) in a study is not the actual reflection of what is being studied, but form an assumption. Thus, since the study is not focusing on WLB initiatives as a factor and using interviews to collect data, the perceived performance best suits the context of the study as the interest is in analyzing how WLB initiatives are believed or assumed to impact the perceived performance of employees in hospitality organizations.

1.3 Research questions

1. What are the existing work-life balance initiatives implemented in hospitality organizations and their utilization by employees?
2. What is the relationship between the implementation of these initiatives and the employees' perceived performance?
3. What are managers' attitudes towards the implementation of work-life balance initiatives in hospitality organizations and their perception of whether the initiatives affect employee performance?
4. What strategies can enable hospitality organizations to achieve improved employees' perceived performance from work-life balance initiatives?

1.4 Research purpose

The aim of the study is partly to study which initiatives exist for a balance between work and private life in hospitality organizations and partly how employees and managers, respectively, experience its impact on performance. Furthermore, the aim is to find out which strategies, according to employees' and managers' perceived experiences, can enable hospitality organizations to achieve improved employee performance from work-life balance initiatives.

1.5 Research significance

Since it tackles a current issue that worries employees and managers in the hospitality industry—which is notorious for having high demands and stress levels—this research subject is pertinent. The study is important because it can add to the body of knowledge on work-life balance and employee performance. It can also have real-world applications for
managers and legislators in the hospitality sector. The corporations may find it useful to implement the advice in order to improve the organization. This thesis is significant in addition because the results will serve as a foundation for future research that other scholars with an interest in the field might investigate. The results can offer insightful references for future studies in this field.

1.6 Delimitations of the study

The study focuses on hospitality organizations that deals with accommodation, travel and tourism, food and beverages, and recreation. These will include three hospitality organizations that deal with either of the four mentioned sectors within Stockholm city. These sectors are chosen because they are known to have high demands and stress levels, which the study is interested in to understand how WLB initiatives in these organizations help in moderating the high work demands and stress levels and how this, in turn, impacts employees perceived performance.
2 THEORY AND PRIOR RESEARCH

The primary goal and core issue of this study is to find out how WLB initiatives affect employees' performance in hospitality companies, as perceived by employees and managers in the hospitality sector. As previously said, this chapter provides an analysis of earlier academic research that examined ideas pertaining to the relationship between WLB activities and employees' performance. The chapter provides definitions and explanations for the main ideas that make up the research topic. The chapter specifically describes and clarifies ideas like employee performance and WLB initiatives. The chapter then goes on to identify and support the hypothesis that provides a comprehensive explanation for the relationship between the two variables. A review of a theory and academic publications on the connection between WLB efforts and employees' performance comes next.

2.1 Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory of Motivation-Hygiene

Herzberg in 1959 came up with a model with two dimensions of the variables (hygiene factors and motivators) influencing people's perspectives about their jobs. He came to the conclusion that variables like pay, status, working environment, supervision, personal life, interpersonal relationships, security, and corporate policy are more hygienic considerations than motivators (Herzberg, 2015). According to the idea of this theory, not having hygienic variables might cause job discontent, but their presence can also promote or inspire the satisfaction of employees. Nevertheless, he concluded from his research that the motivators were elements of an individual's work that improved it; he found five variables, in particular, advancement, responsibility, the task itself, achievement, and recognition, which were extremely important indicators of job satisfaction. These motivators (satisfiers) were associated with long-term positive effects on job outcomes, whereas the hygiene parameters (dissatisfiers) typically only produced brief changes in work mindsets and performance that swiftly recovered to their previous level (Haque, Haque & Islam, 2014). In brief, job satisfaction explains an individual's feelings about their employment, which are frequently related to the responsibilities assigned. Dissatisfiers, on the other hand, are related to how an individual feel about the setting or context in which they work. The things that a person does are what satisfy them, and the circumstances around their actions are what dissatisfy them (Herzberg, 2015).
The rest of the section is based on the thoughts behind this theory. This is because this theory will act as the theoretical framework that will guide the study in terms of assisting in analyzing the findings of the study. In this case, the WLB initiatives implementation or lack thereof will be related to the hygienic factors and motivators and how their presence satisfies or their absence dissatisfies employees in the hospitality firms.

2.2 Work-Life Balance

2.2.1 What entails work-life balance and its concepts

The benefits of WLB can improve both the productivity of a company and the well-being of its personnel. Consequently, there appear to be multiple interpretations of WLB, despite the general consensus that work can be understood as a series of official tasks performed by an individual when employed (Bataineh, 2019). A variety of non-work-related tasks make up life, including housework, taking care of the elderly, and raising children (Gautam & Jain, 2018). According to Adnan Bataineh (2019), harmony exists between the domains of work and life when balance is reached. Accordingly, WLB refers to a person's ability, irrespective of gender or age, to effectively handle their responsibilities at home and at work. In this sense, the term "work" refers to both paid employment and unpaid labor performed by an employer (Bataineh, 2019).

From the perspective of the employee, Cvenkel (2021) claims that the difficulty of balancing work obligations with individual and family responsibilities is part of WLB. Employers view WLB as the challenge of creating a productive work environment that allows employees to focus on their job while they are there. Achieving WLB, according to Gautam and Jain (2018), entails deftly striking a balance between our paid professions and other meaningful endeavors, like volunteering, spending time with families, returning to school, or engaging in leisure and sports. It includes the proportion of an employee's time spent between work and family. An imbalance between work and family—either an excessive amount of work or an excessive amount of family time—may result in stress and unfavorable work attitudes, which can eventually lead to burnout (Sen and Hooja, 2018).

Effective work-life balance, according to Roopavathi and Kishore (2021), is supported by two relevant core concepts: enjoyment and daily accomplishment. Achievement is the accomplishment of a goal, often after several earnest tries or receiving the intended outcome.
In terms of the concept of enjoyment, it is not synonymous with happiness. Instead, it symbolizes happiness, pride, celebration, the pleasures of life, and overall wellbeing. Achieving goals and having fun are closely related in terms of worth in life. Said another way, an individual must possess both. This explains why people who are considered successful don't feel content or aren't content as much as they should be (Singh, 2018).

### 2.2.2 Importance of work-life balance

The employee and the employer are both impacted by the negative aspects of WLB. Negative effects on an employee's physical and emotional well-being, job satisfaction, and overall organizational performance may occur. Employers would suffer from a WLB in the form of subpar performance, absenteeism, sick leave, and higher staff turnover, as well as increased expenses for recruitment and training (Roopavathi & Kishore, 2021). Supporting this, Sen and Hooja (2018) accentuate that work-life imbalance has been shown to be negatively correlated with employee dedication and satisfaction, reduce psychological capital, staff psychological well-being, and resignation rates. It also increases the likelihood of employee turnover and increases feelings of job overload. It causes a host of behavioral and emotional issues, including problematic drinking, anxiety, despair, and guilt (Sen & Hooja, 2018).

On the other hand, there is evidence to suggest that improving WLB can benefit companies and employees alike. It can aid in the growth of thriving businesses and vibrant communities. In a world where duties and responsibilities can occasionally collide, WLB has become a major issue for employers. The three primary factors influencing interest in and the importance of WLB are an aging workforce, global competition, and a return of interest in one's private life and family values (Gautam & Jain, 2018).

Additionally, preserving a work-life balance lessens life’s stress and burnout. A lot of companies are actively involved in WLB initiatives to control high employee rates of turnover, properly recruit and select new hires, and retain top talent through the development of numerous organizational policies and strategies (Singh, 2018). Organizations also primarily run these work-life balance programs to distress employees at the appropriate times through particular coping mechanisms by lowering their stress levels by rebalancing work and life (Sen & Hooja, 2018). Several companies also provide their employees with flexible scheduling, long-term vacations, and the opportunity to work from home, particularly for
women who balance multiple roles. These benefits truly foster goodwill between the employer and the workforce (Roopavathi & Kishore, 2021).

2.2.3 Factors causing work-life imbalance

It is important to denote the factors that cause work-life imbalance to address them and achieve WLB at workplace. Addressing the causes of the imbalances through WLB initiatives is necessary to improve employee performance through WLB. In this instance, competitiveness is one of the factors. According to Wong et al. (2020), there is intense competition between the populace to do better and accomplish more on the organizational front, necessitating increased focus, longer workdays, and awareness. Second, a person's desire for a particular vocation obscures other facets of life. Third, work-life balance is impacted by the global economy more broadly, which has an impact on everything from career choices to educational choices. The fourth issue is employees' inadequate pay. The fifth problem is that those with lower incomes must work longer hours to make ends meet, while those with higher incomes are forced to work longer hours and take on more responsibility. In addition, because of traffic congestion and the problem of changing demographics, more time is spent traveling (Gautam & Jain, 2018). However, the Covid-19 pandemic changed the situation of long time spent on travelling as it led to many more persons working from home, thereby reducing travelling time and improving work-life balance. Finally, the boundaries between work and home are collapsing for a variety of reasons, such as both professional and personal anxieties, a narrow perspective on job security, issues and employees, excessive utilization of communication technology, a lack of understanding and support from co-employees and family, ambiguity in work roles, and conflict, all of which form other factors contributing to the imbalance between work and life (Roopavathi & Kishore, 2021).

2.3 Work-Life Balance Initiatives

Businesses are starting to understand how vital employees who maintain a healthy work-life balance are to their companies. Work quality is impacted by an employee's personal life quality. Many organizational activities or policies help relieve some of the stress associated with work-life balance. These initiatives, which could all be workplace policies that address the issue of work-life balance, include offering paid leave or options for reducing hours, as
well as workplace supports like paid leave, personal time off, childcare facilities, monetary support for childcare services, and other family-friendly policies. When determining how to support employees' work-life balance, companies have a variety of alternatives at their disposal (Garg & Yajurvedi, 2018).

Employers are beginning to realize how important it is for their staff to have a good WLB. The quality of an employee's personal life affects the quality of their work. A lot of corporate initiatives or rules serve to reduce some of the stress related to work-life balance. Providing paid leave or choices to reduce working hours, as well as workplace supports like paid leave, personal days off, childcare facilities, financial support for childcare services, and other family-friendly policies, are some examples of these programs, which could all be workplace practices that address the issue of WLB. Businesses have a range of options at their disposal when deciding how to support employees' work-life balance (Obiageli, Uzochukwu & Ngozi, 2019).

2.3.1 Self-rostering

Employees self-roster their own hours as they see fit. Every day, the company determines how many employees and what talents are needed, and it gives the employees the freedom to choose their own schedules. As a result, employees may easily allocate their time between work and leisure activities.

2.3.2 Flexible scheduling option of teleworking

According to Wong et al. (2020), employees really value the flexible scheduling option of teleworking, or working from home, and its popularity is growing. Employees can do their duties remotely through the use of contemporary communication technologies. They can frequently work from home or from nearby telecenters or satellite offices. Employees can take care of personal or non-work-related matters as long as output or quality is not compromised (Wong et al., 2020).

Employees can now work remotely using a variety of devices, including computers, cell phones, and email, thanks to progressively more advanced and reasonably priced technology. These tools allow employees to stay in touch with their jobs even when they are not in their workplaces. Employees who are not technically "on the job" may answer voicemails or emails after hours or on the weekends (Roopavathi & Kishore, 2021). Researchers have discovered
that employees will be more likely to utilize these communication tools to work in their leisure activities domains if they believe that their jobs are an essential part of who they are. While teleworking is not feasible or appropriate for every profession (like most of the hospitality jobs), it does save employees a significant amount of money, time, and stress related to commuting. Additionally, it guarantees work-life balance for employees and allows for workplace collaboration time when they arrive (Wong et al., 2020).

2.3.3 Child care support (welfare policies)

Once more, child care support can increase productivity and motivation among staff members. Additionally, it lowers absenteeism, turnover, and accidents. The availability of childcare for parents who are working can have a significant impact on job satisfaction and work-life balance. Families with two earners are more common since it is now too expensive for a potential wage earner to stay at home. Families no longer have the luxury of having a stay-at-home caregiver. As a result, there is a growing need for child care solutions to assist employees in striking a work-life balance. There are various alternatives for child care, such as crèche, day nursery, leader-at-home, adolescent care, after-school care, and host parent care (Chandran & Abukhalifeh, 2021).

2.3.4 Flexible scheduling (work shifts)

Additionally, if a specific number of hours are worked, employees are given the flexibility to choose when to begin and end their workday under flexible scheduling. This enables them to attend to personal or family obligations and emergencies. Employees have more options with a flexible timetable, which is especially useful for occupations where precise work hours are not really important. Additional policies pertaining to work-life balance that result in more satisfied and productive employees include educational programs offered by the company, such as ones on the welfare of a new baby or family, which have been linked to a decrease in work-life conflicts (Garg & Yajurvedi, 2016).

2.4 Employee Performance

2.4.1 What employee performance is and its importance

According to Abualoush et al. (2018), carrying out work tasks or job responsibilities is referred to as employee performance and calls for increased quality, efficiency, and
effectiveness. It speaks to an employee's ability to perform their job in a manner that advances the company's aims and objectives as well as their own. Every employee is responsible for ensuring that the company's goals are met. Employee contributions create the foundation for a business' success. Employees who work in positive environments are more driven to do well (Abualoush et al., 2018). Roopavathi and Kishore (2021) assert that employee performance is a critical component that indicates a person's and a company's advancement and is advantageous to both. Employee performance is correlated with their ability to carry out their tasks and work tasks in an efficient manner. Along with examining productivity, work attendance, and attitude among employees, it also emphasizes the employee's contribution to the organization (Roopavathi & Kishore, 2021).

Employee performance is a critical factor in accomplishing company goals and objectives, as highlighted by Amin and Malik (2017). Because of this, businesses investigate several strategies for inspiring their employees. Every rule in a company should be focused on raising employee performance. This is due to the fact that a company must monitor and enhance employee performance in order to stay ahead of the competition. If this isn't done, the firm may encounter a number of issues that impair organizational performance (Obiageli et al., 2019).

2.4.2 Measures of employee performance

Roopavathi and Kishore (2021) assert that using several approaches makes employee productivity measurable. According to Wong et al. (2020), the worrying issue is how someone can manage both a fulfilling personal life and productive professional performances. The question about whether these aspects are complementary or conflicting with one another arises. According to Johari et al. (2018), an inability to maintain precise balance and improved control would result in a lack of energy and an excessive workload. Fatigue and subpar performance are caused by the imbalance, which further lowers the standard of living (Roopavathi & Kishore, 2021).

In light of this, controlling employee performance has emerged as one of the primary factors influencing organizational success in the current environment of developing a more devoted and effective workforce. It entails timely delivery of work, attendance at work, accommodating and helpful behavior, and both the amount and quality of output (Sari, Aliyu & Ahmad, 2017). Enhancing organizational performance is mostly dependent on employee
performance. It outlines the tasks that employees perform for the company or refrain from doing so. Within the context of an organization, performance is commonly understood to be the degree to which a member of the organization contributes to the achievement of the organization's objectives. Motivation affects work-life balance because motivated employees will put forth more effort at work, which will boost employee productivity within an organization (Singh, 2018).

2.5 The link between work-life balance and employee performance

According to Liu et al. (2021), companies can invest in WLB programs and policies to improve employee performance, productivity, reduce absenteeism, reduce stress among employees, improve employees’ health and wellbeing, increase dedication, loyalty, and motivation, enhance customer services, improve employee health, enable flexible work schedules, and have a happier, more motivated workforce. Therefore, work-life balance is crucial for employees and improves their productivity inside the company (Liu et al., 2021). Numerous studies have been carried out to investigate the correlation between WLB programs and employees' productivity, and the findings have indicated a favorable association between the two. For example, the goal of Hughes and Bozionelos (2015) was to investigate the perspectives of male employees in a field where men predominate on matters relating to work-life balance. It became clear that participants' primary cause of discontent stemmed from work-life imbalance, which was not simply a cause for concern. Additionally, participants clearly linked withdrawal behaviors, such as turnover and fake sick leave, to issues with work-life balance.

Roopavathi and Kishore (2021) investigated how work-life balance affected employees' productivity. The goal of the research was to thoroughly investigate the potential relationships between production efficiency and labor flexibility, relationships between employer-employee and improved productivity, work environment and employee turnover rate, and, finally, job protection and employee retention. The study concluded that enhanced production quality, greater efficiency, a lower turnover rate, and employee retention are all positively impacted by labor stability, employer-employee relationships, a favorable work environment, and job protection. The findings demonstrated that employees react badly to a
perceived work-life imbalance and that executives should adopt WLB initiatives to improve employee performance.

A 2013 study by Khatri and Behl (2013) examined the impact of WLB on employees' productivity within organizations. They made an effort to investigate the meaning of work-life balance for both employers and employees, as well as the notion in the context of employment relations. 200 regular staff from the various HDFC Bank, Bajaj Alliance, and Punjab National Bank branches in Jammu City, J&K State, were included in the sample. Data was collected using a Likert scale. The data were analyzed using factor analysis, ANOVA, regression, and descriptive statistics. The results revealed that the WLB strategy is applicable when employers and employees collaborate and is favorably correlated with employees' success inside the company.

In a 2016 study, Adikaram and Jayatilake (2016) assessed the impact of WLB on job satisfaction of employees at Sri Lanka's private commercial banks. The variables under consideration were WLB and job satisfaction in relation to working conditions, working hours, WLB initiatives, employee intention to change jobs, and work pressure. To get the data, both secondary and primary sources were utilized. A total of 150 surveys were given to various commercial banks' personnel. The data was gathered using a Likert scale. The data was analyzed using regression and correlation. The results indicated that employee job satisfaction in Sri Lanka's private sector commercial banks is significantly impacted by work-life balance.

In order to promote a more emotionally sound workplace, Cvenkel (2021) investigated the perspectives of nonmanagerial and managerial employees regarding WLB. Specifically, the study looked at work-family conflicts, well-being and health, initiatives to foster WLB contentment, and the firm's implementation of WLB (also known as family-friendly policies). The study employed a qualitative methodological technique to gather data from a varied range of occupational groups' management and non-managerial staff through 36 semi-structured interviews and two focus groups. The study discovered that workplace stress, abuse of drugs, poor relationships, limited resources, and other external variables are among the work-life conflicts that have an impact on employees' WLB. Family-friendly and fun activities, counseling, secrecy, trust, and regular breaks are a few examples of organizational family-friendly WLB programs that have been found to improve employee health and well-being and hence their performance at work. Examples of organizational employees'
well-being and health initiatives that promote WLB satisfaction include the following: equity at work, wellness programs, employer group health coverage, employee assistance programs (EAPs), flexible work hours, and gym membership.

2.6 Conceptual framework

The ability to feel in control, remain competitive and productive at work, and lead a happy, healthy work life with enough leisure time is known as work-life balance. It is achieving awareness and focus in the face of apparently never-ending tasks and activities that compete for one's time. It maximizes productivity, reduces stress, and boosts employee motivation. An employee can have a positive work-life balance and a high quality of work life. This conceptual framework will guide the study:

![Figure 1: WLB and employee performance (Source: Author)](image)

2.7 Theoretical synthesis

Studies analyzed above indicate that WLB initiatives in the workplace helps in improving employees performance by helping to improve the health and wellbeing of employees. This is because WLB initiatives such as equity at work, wellness programs, employer group health coverage, employee assistance programs (EAPs), flexible work hours, and gym membership positively impact labor stability, employer-employee relationships, a favorable work environment, and job protection. All these in turn lead to enhanced production quality, greater efficiency, a lower turnover rate, and employee retention. These studies seem to agree with
the notion behind the Herzberg theory, which states that motivators such as advancement, responsibility, the task itself, achievement, and recognition are extremely important indicators of job satisfaction as they are associated with long-term positive effects on job outcomes. In this case, WLB can be assumed as a motivator element that results in job satisfaction and hence job performance of employees.

The results of these studies and Herzberg's theory act as the foundation for the study, as they will help in guiding the study in terms of assisting in analyzing the findings of the study, and how WLB impacts perceived employees' performance. In this case, the WLB initiatives implementation or lack thereof will be related to the hygienic factors and motivators and how their presence satisfies or their absence dissatisfies employees in the hospitality firms. This entails helping to analyze how the presence of WLB initiatives positively impact labor stability, employer-employee relationships, a favorable work environment, and job protection, which in turn lead to enhanced production quality, greater efficiency, a lower turnover rate, and employee retention of employees in the hospitality firms.
3 METHODOLOGY

The development of the research technique is explained in this chapter, along with an analysis of the study's chosen strategy and its justification. This section also explains the procedures for gathering and evaluating data and the reasoning behind the study's qualitative research approach. The practical ethical considerations for the research are also presented in this chapter, along with some remarks regarding the approach's limitations.

3.1 Research strategy

The general plan that a researcher uses to carry out the study—that is, how the research addresses the research questions—is referred to as a research strategy. It offers the researcher a great deal of direction for carrying out, overseeing, and organizing the research (Clark & Bryman, 2019). According to Bell, Bryman and Harley (2022), a research strategy helps the investigator decide what kind of information has to be gathered and how to go about doing it. Consequently, grounded theory, experiments, action research, case studies, ethnography, and surveys are among the kinds of research methodologies that researchers can employ. The study's goals or questions, its scope, and the degree of subject control all influence the kind of research approach that is used (Bell et al., 2022).

3.2 Research approach and design

3.2.1 Research Approach

The methods and strategies a researcher employs to clarify the complex processes and presumptions employed in data gathering and interpreting them are referred to as the research methodology. According to Bell et al. (2022), there are two main research methodologies in this context: deductive and inductive. Assessing the reliability of preexisting hypotheses and assumptions is a key component of the deductive method. Surprisingly, the creator of this method starts with a research hypothesis and then breaks it down into particular hypotheses that are used to gather data. On the other hand, the inductive technique creates knowledge and information that is then used to construct new theories (Bell et al., 2022). In light of this, this thesis used a deductive methodology to aid in the understanding of the connection between WLB initiatives and employees' perceived performance in hospitality organizations.
It is possible to draw inferences from the respondents' generated findings that have broad applicability in the hospitality sector (Bell et al., 2022).

3.2.2 Research Design

According to Clark and Causer (2020), research design offers a logical framework that the author can utilize to address the research questions or problems. Both quantitative and qualitative research designs are most frequently employed in this situation. In order to look at the relationship between WLB initiatives and employees' performance in hospitality firms, this study used a qualitative methodology, specifically, narrative research design. As part of the qualitative research design, participants' perspectives, experiences, and opinions are recorded through the collection of qualitative data. Accordingly, a qualitative study provides a thorough investigation to give basic explanations for any phenomena or activity occurring (Stratford & Bradshaw, 2021). Moreover, this design is advantageous, particularly in the social sciences, as it bypasses social and contextual meaning and directly impacts individuals (Bell et al., 2022).

This narrative research strategy is effective when the researcher wishes to get as much information as possible about a particular social issue from a small sample of study participants (Stratford & Bradshaw, 2021). Because it allowed the researcher to collect extensive data on the experiences and feelings surrounding the relationship between work-life balance initiatives and perceived employee performance in hospitality firms, a qualitative study was thus ideal for this research.

3.3 Data collection methods, sampling, and the data collection process

3.3.1 Data collection methods

The techniques and methods used by researchers to compile information on a specific topic of interest are referred to as data gathering methods. Questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups are among the key data collection methods that researchers frequently use (Bell et al., 2022). Because there are a lot of subjects to cover in the interviews, this research used semi-structured interviews. By utilizing this method, respondents got an opportunity to share their opinions and knowledge about the WLB initiatives used by the firms (Alamri, 2019).
Furthermore, a somewhat loosely structured interview plan is open and offers more freedom and flexibility than a completely structured interview schedule, which has limited capacity for variability and flexibility in the manner in which questions are asked or answered (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). The researcher asked the respondents the questions outlined in the study, but the interviewer was still in complete control of the questions' wording, topic, and order. This allowed the interviewees to go into more detail on the subjects and they were asked additional questions that aren't included in the interview guide. Loosely structured interviews schedule yielded qualitative information that was enhanced by interviewees sharing more about their experiences and elaborating on the subject (Alamri, 2019). This enabled the researcher to examine some of their experiences or knowledge about WLB projects and how they relate to employees' performance in the companies more closely, which helped to develop themes.

Furthermore, interviews were a better fit for this study since they provided the chance to clarify or elaborate on questions or responses, which improves the accuracy of the data gathered, in contrast to questionnaires with predetermined questions and answers (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). In addition, the interviewer has the ability to provide clarification on the questions to the participants, giving them a chance to elaborate on or clarify their responses. The ability to audio-record or tape interviews is yet another benefit; this allows for easier data categorization, transcription, and analysis (Alamri, 2019). But the biggest drawback of interviews is that they can be expensive and time-consuming because the researcher needs to set up the interview schedule, record and gather data, transcribe the code, and analyze the results (Alamri, 2019).

3.3.2 Sampling

The researcher used non-probability sampling where certain population entities have higher chances of selection. This contrasts with probability sampling, which provides the researcher with an equal chance for anybody in the population to be selected, hence giving the chance of selecting respondents at random with a known chance of selection (Bell et al., 2022). In particular, this study employed convenience sampling. Convenience sampling was appropriate since it guarantees that accessibility and availability served as the foundation for participant selection. This made it easier and faster to reach the managers and staff of the three firms at a reduced expense. As a result, using the convenience sampling method, within 3 hospitality industry organizations I interviewed a total of 12 respondents where 6 were
employees (E) and 6 were managers, meaning I selected 4 respondents (2 employees and 2 managers) from each company. Of these six managers, 3 of them were general managers (GM), while the other 3 were middle managers (MM) with flexible work roles within the categories of management and employee. In each company, a middle manager was interviewed. The table below shows the interviewees’ profile.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>E1</td>
<td>Trainee</td>
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<td>GM1</td>
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<td>Flexible kitchen manager</td>
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<td>MM3</td>
<td>Flexible manager</td>
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Table 1: Interviewees’ profile

3.3.3 Data collection process

In order to gather information, the researcher spoke with the general managers of the three hospitality companies and outlined the goal and purpose of the study. Once the researcher was granted authorization and the managers acknowledged the importance of the study, the researcher asked the manager to connect the him/her with additional staff members. The researcher then requested a recommendation for department heads or managers from the human resources manager. After that, the researcher gave the chosen participants a briefing on the goals, purpose, and aims of the study and work with them to schedule a convenient time for the interview. Every interview took place in person. The answers were taped so that the data analysis can use the transcription. A half-hour time slot was allotted for each
interview. All the interviews were held in English, and the questions were created with the goals of the study in mind.

3.4 Validity and reliability

Research quality is evaluated using concepts such as validity and dependability. They show how well a test, approach, or procedure assesses a particular object. Whereas consistency is the focus of reliability, accuracy is the focus of validity. In light of this, a method's reliability is defined as the consistency with which it measures a particular quantity. A measurement is deemed reliable if the same result is consistently obtained under the same conditions with the same techniques. On the other hand, a method's validity is determined by how accurately it assesses the variables it is meant to evaluate. When a study has high validity, it means that its findings accurately represent the real traits, qualities, and variations of the real world—be it social or physical. A high level of reliability is one sign that a measurement is legitimate. A method is probably invalid if it is unable to be trusted (Rezapour Nasrabad, 2020).

The interview is legitimate if the questions align with certain competencies listed on the Competency Assessment Worksheet. For maximum validity, there must be a one-to-one correspondence between the interviewer's queries and the candidate's fundamental competency. To ensure interviewer dependability, all interviewers must utilize questions that are developed in this way. Interview data on a particular candidate may only be considered reliable and legitimate if it aligns with the competencies that are considered critical for the role. This can only happen if all interviewers have used and documented this mapping (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021).

The reliability and validity of the qualitative findings are determined by what the investigator is expecting during the interview process (Hayashi, Abib & Hoppen, 2019). In order to ensure that interviewees understand the questions being asked and to collect the data required to address the research objectives, the role of the investigator in conducting the interview is essential (Rezapour Nasrabad, 2020). A qualitative interview almost certainly assisted the researcher in gathering detailed information that could provide a more comprehensive and understandable picture of the study findings. For an inexperienced researcher, however, doing a qualitative interview could be difficult. Therefore, when performing qualitative research, conducting a pilot interview is both necessary and beneficial, as it highlights the major
study's improvisation. A pilot test is a component of any research effort that ensures the validity of the instruments (Aung, Razak & Nazry, 2021).

Many authors have stressed the necessity of doing a pilot test to add value and trustworthiness to the study, as well as to detect any potential issues early in the conduct of the study that would require instrument revisions (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). According to Aung et al. (2021), this leads the researcher to conduct a pilot semi-structured interview test. In comparison to a structured interview, which is believed to be more rigid and restricted to the prearranged list of questions, a semi-structured interview is more flexible in terms of changing the order of questions and enabling a more complete follow-up on participants' responses. It hits the ideal mix between openness and rigidity and permits the presentation of extra questions as needed during the interview based on the participant's responses (Hayashi et al., 2019). Therefore, interviewees from one of the hospitality organizations participated in a pilot test interview conducted by the researchers, but they were not included in the main study. This supported maintaining the authenticity and dependability of the interview tool.

3.5 Data analysis method

The researcher used theme analysis (see Appendix 2), which involves manually coding the interviewees' responses, to examine the qualitative data. A thematic analysis involves thoroughly scrutinizing the gathered data to find recurring themes in the responses of the participants. Patterns in the replies become apparent as common themes in WLB projects through code identification (Lochmiller, 2021). Since the researcher is interested in theme patterns (WLB initiatives) that affect perceived employee performance in companies, thematic analysis is a suitable data analysis method for this thesis. According to Terry and Hayfield (2021), thematic analysis can be applied as a contextualist or constructionist approach that is in between the two extremes of essentialism and constructionism. This research will be analyzed using a contextualized lens, which recognizes the various ways in which people interpret their experiences. The six-phase guideline will be applied by the researcher. The study's thematic analysis is guided by Lochmiller's (2021) highlights, which include getting to know the data, coming up with preliminary codes, looking for themes, evaluating the themes, identifying and defining themes, and writing the report.
3.6 Ethical considerations and trustworthiness

One of the ethical concerns in research is obtaining informed consent, which the researcher must do in this study, along with assuring those participating of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses (Pietilä et al., 2020). The researcher should also preserve the validity and reliability of the research findings in order to guarantee trustworthiness (Kang & Hwang, 2021). For this study, three hospitality firms' management granted permission or a research permit to the author. The study was completed in compliance with the institutions' specifications. During the interview, verbal informed consent was also obtained. Additionally, the author guaranteed participants that any accidental or confidential information they provided would be kept private.

Additionally, the researcher let the participants know that taking part in the study was completely voluntary and asked about their opinions on the WLB programs' experiences at the companies and how those experiences have affected their performance. Participants received an interview guide ahead of time, so they have time to go back and consider what experiences they would like to offer on the company's WLB initiatives. However, in order to guarantee the research findings reliability, comparable research instruments (interview questionnaires) were designed to establish the reliability and validity of the study.

However, to enhance the reliability of the information gathered from the interviews, the researcher first made sure that each respondent was asked to sign a consent form indicating that they were participating voluntarily. Second, the interview was audiotaped by the researcher, who then transcribed it. In order to strengthen the study's credibility, interview transcripts were securely kept for the purpose of future verification through the use of a document trail (Pietilä et al., 2020).

3.7 Research hypothesis

This thesis will test the following two hypothesis:

H1: The implementation of WLB initiatives positively impact the employees' perceived performance
Previous studies have found that the presence of WLB initiatives in an organization such as flexible work arrangements and paid leaves enhance employees job satisfaction and hence their performance. However, this study aims to give more details into this claim and confirm the existence of this correlation from the perspective of employees and managers in the context of hospitality firms.

*H2: Managers have a positive attitude towards the implementation of work-life balance initiatives in hospitality organizations that the initiatives positively affect employee performance*

Previous studies have not confirmed the managers attitudes and perception about WLB initiatives and their impact on employees performance because of a research gap. Therefore, this study will investigate this claim and uncover its existence.
4 FINDINGS

This chapter describes the findings of this study. In order to investigate the relationship between WLB initiatives and employees' performance in hospitality organizations, the research used a qualitative methodology. The interview transcripts that are credited to the research participants clearly show the conclusions presented in this chapter. The analysis of the responses and the explanation of the results in relation to the study objectives—which included looking at the WLB efforts put in place in hospitality organizations and how they relate to employees’ perceived performance—open this chapter. Then it goes to exploring the managers’ attitudes towards WLB implementation and their perception of the link between WLB initiatives and employees' performance in the three hospitality firms, as well as suggesting strategies that can assist hospitality firms in attaining improved employee performance through WLB initiatives. Finally, the chapter will conclude with an overview of the findings. The key themes that have emerged from the analysis of the interview responses include the workplace experience, work-life balance initiatives implemented by the organizations, the link between or contributions of the WLB initiatives to the performance of employees, managers’ perceptions of the implementation of WLB initiatives, WLB initiatives that are more beneficial to employees, and strategies to help hospitality firms attain enhanced employee performance through WLB.

4.1 The findings of WLB initiatives in hospitality organizations and their link to employees' perceived performance

4.1.1 Interviewees profile

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<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
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<tr>
<td>E1</td>
<td>Trainee (employee)</td>
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<td>E2</td>
<td>General employee</td>
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<td>E3</td>
<td>Kitchen employee</td>
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<td>E4</td>
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<td>E5</td>
<td>General employee</td>
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<tr>
<td>E6</td>
<td>Kitchen employee</td>
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4.1.2 The workplace experience

The participants reported a mixed experience working in their organizations. While others stated a good working experience despite some drawbacks, others also acknowledge the bad working experience they have had working for their organizations. Majority pointed out that work pressure, work overload and stress are the reasons for the bad experience but at the same time they recognized the effort that their organizations put to ensure that they effectively balance and manage their work and personal life such as flexible work arrangements, rewards and compensations and good working environment, making the experience a good one. For instance, Interviewee E6 and E2 stated:

“It is a rewarding working experience because of the bonuses and rewards but also stressful due to high work demands of ensuring all guests are satisfied at all times leading to long working hours at times. However, I appreciate my company because despite the pressure, they have put for us some policies that enable us to balance both work and life issues adequately. So I am happy and the experience is good” (Interviewee E6).

“Bearing in mind the kind of pressure and work demands in the hospitality sector, because we have to ensure that every guest receives the best possible care, working here can be stressful but at the same time it is rewarding because of the flexibility and passion that we put as employees to ensure that we achieve the stated goals, as well as the good culture of our organization” (Interviewee E2).

Notably, the employees who have worked for their organizations for long and had good work experience reported more positively than those who are still new to the industry. For instance, Interviewees E1 and MM3 asserted:

<table>
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<th>GM1</th>
<th>General manager</th>
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<td>GM2</td>
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<td>GM3</td>
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Table 2: Interviewees’ profile
“I can say that I have not been in this organization for long because I am here for training (attachment) but I can say that the experience is not so good because there is a lot of pressure that leads to stress especially during this holiday season” (Interviewee E1).

“Work overload causes stress especially when there are high number of visitors coming in and this may cause dissatisfaction among employees here including me. But we have learned to adapt with time and the company also try to create a good working environment through flexible work arrangements and compensations for long working hours making the experience a good one” (Interviewee MM3).

4.1.3 Work-life balance initiatives implemented by the organizations

When asked to describe their workplace work-life balance initiatives, all the participants were aware and had an idea of what WLB initiatives were by mentioning the examples such as paid leaves and flexible working arrangements. Ninety percent of the employees mentioned paid leaves and flexible working policies, denoting that they are the well-known WLB initiatives by employees in their organizations. For instance, Interviewees E3 and E5 asserted:

“My organization has some work-life balance policies like the paid leaves and flexible work arrangements. These work-life balance initiatives help us in managing work stress and family/personal life well and in turn reduce the burnout that we may experience without them because of the work overload and pressure in my organization” (Interviewee E3).

“Yes, we have work-life balance policies in my company and the ones that I know are working currently are the flexible working arrangements (shifts), work breaks and the paid leaves. They are really good as policies like working in shifts and work breaks help us in managing work and family issues adequately” (Interviewee E5)

In responding to this question of WLB in their workplace, the participants also noted the WLB initiatives that are most important to them. The great majority of the respondents reported that flexible work arrangements, taking work breaks, paid leave and choices to reduce working hours are the most important WLB initiatives. For instance, Interviewee MM1 affirmed:
“All the work-life balance initiatives implemented by my organization are good but the most important ones to me are flexible working arrangements, paid leaves, work breaks and compressed working hours. Especially, the flexible working hours, breaks and compressed working hours enable to arrange myself well for work and also give me time to handle personal or family issues” (Interviewee MM1).

4.1.4 Contributions of the WLB initiatives to perceived performance of employees

All the participants agreed that the WLB initiatives that are present or have been implemented in their organizations has helped them improve their perceived performance and productivity, which translate to perceived organizational performance. As per the respondents, this is because these WLB initiatives help individuals to manage their roles in a better way without any stress, which in turn enhance the employees’ health and well-being and translating to higher productivity in the workplace. For instance, Interviewee E3 and E5 reported that:

“These work-life balance policies in my company has helped to improve my performance as an employee because they help to reduce stress and burnout such as work breaks and paid leaves. When you come back from leave or short work breaks, you feel rejuvenated and you are able to manage your tasks effectively and meet the deadlines as expected” (Interviewee E3).

“Indeed, I can confess that these work-life balance policies have helped me to manage the workplace stress, which increases my wellbeing and health in the workplace and by this, I have been able to always accomplish the goals set for me. Accomplishing my goals and targets enhances my productivity” (Interviewee E5).

Other respondents also reported that the positive relationship between the perception of WLB initiatives and higher productivity or performance of employees comes due to the safe workplace environment that these initiatives bring, which increases their satisfaction, commitment and loyalty in their workplace. For instance, one participant noted that flexible working hours helps them to arrange and manage themselves effectively and deal effectively with both their work and personal demands. For instance, interviewee E4 asserted that:
“Some of the WLB initiative that my organization has implemented is paid leave and work breaks and this are good because they have always helped me to arrange myself and avoid work-life conflicts. This has always increased my commitment and I ensure that I finish my job on time and meet the goals both personal and organizational” (Interviewee E4).

Another interviewee noted that “flexi time and breaks from work are very important as they have helped management my work and family issues well. I am able to accomplish my work target on time and effectively and also I rarely absent myself from work with no good reason” (Interviewee MM2).

### 4.1.5 WLB Initiatives more beneficial to employees

When asked to describe the work-life balance initiatives that are more beneficial than others, the opinion of the participants varied as some mentioned paid leaves, work breaks and flexible scheduling as the most beneficial but to some, especially women, child care support and personal time off were the most beneficial initiatives. Furthermore, some of the initiatives mentioned were not currently available in their workplace such as child care support and personal time off work were not available in two hospitality organizations, which only focused on paid leaves and flexible scheduling as the WLB initiatives implemented for employees. For instance, E2 stated:

“I know all the work-life policies implemented by my organizations are good but the most beneficial ones to me are paid leaves, work breaks and flexible scheduling because they best fit this kind of work environment and enable me to reduce burnout and stress” (Interviewee E2).

Another participant noted: “As a wife and a mother, the most beneficial work-life balance initiatives to me are personal time off and child care support. However, my organization does not currently have the child care support policy” (Interviewee MM3).

### 4.1.6 WLB employees would like to be implemented at their workplace

The participants mentioned their concern for welfare policies are currently not available or not active in their workplace. One of the WLB initiatives they mentioned that they would like to be implemented is the welfare policies. The lack of several welfare programs, including mother-friendly childcare facilities, recreational facilities, and counseling services, was a
source of concern for the respondents. The majority recommended that access to childcare services and recreational facilities will help them perform better. For instance, E4 asserted:

“I know the effort that my organization has put concerning work-life balance to help us manage the work pressures and family/personal issues adequately. But I would like welfare policies such as child care support to be implemented” (Interviewee E4).

Others mentioned things like personal time off, recreational facilities and counselling services. Even some hospitality organizations have it, some have not prioritized them yet. For instance, E1 stated:

“If my organization can implement things like counselling services, personal time off and recreational facilities or offers such as discount for gym membership or a pool, it can really help us manage the life and work balance other than the policies that are in place right now” (Interviewee E1).

4.1.7 Factors that enhances the successful implementation of WLB initiatives

Respondents held differing opinion regarding the factors that enhance the successful implementation of WLB in hospitality organizations. The factors mentioned include leadership, for instance, Interviewee GM1 stated:

“I can say the leadership is an important factor when it comes to successful implementation of WLB in these organizations. For instance, a leadership style or a leader who understand the importance of WLB and how it contributes to employees and organizational performance prioritize WLB and implement them effectively. This is unlike those leaders who do not take WLB serious and does not take them into account” (Interviewee GM1).

Another factor that enable successful implementation of WLB initiatives as per the managers’ opinions is the effective communication. Effective communication to the employees regarding the work-life balance initiatives that are in place help employees to become aware, understand and take these policies seriously. Interviewee MM2 asserted that:

“When the management communicate effectively to the employees regarding the available WLB and how they can make use of them, employees will be able to understand and utilize these initiatives and in turn enhance their performance” (Interviewee MM2).
Culture of an organization also matters as the participants said the culture, for instance, a culture that fosters a good working environment and is concerned with employees’ health and well-being implement WLB initiatives more than those that are not. For instance, Interviewee M2 stated:

“The organization culture matters because if the culture values WLB, for instance, if managers or supervisors understand the benefits of WLB and values employees personal time off, breaks and paid leaves, employees, especially those working in the kitchen have to be given these leaves and breaks whether there is an increase in work demands or not” (Interviewee GM2).

4.1.8 Challenges of implementing WLB at workplace

The participants mentioned varied reasons acting as challenges for WLB implementation in the workplace including increasing workloads, working hours (additional hours and overtime) and marital status (especially for women). These factors present challenges to the organization and individuals, making implementation of work-life balance difficult. For instance, Interviewee GM2 emphasized that:

“One of the challenges that may hinder full implementation of work-life balance especially for employees working in the hospitality companies is the increasing workloads that sometimes make employees forfeit some of these work-life balance initiatives like personal time off and work breaks. This is because majority if not all employees have to come physically to work like kitchen employees (they can’t work remotely) and therefore, increasing workloads can sometimes make them miss enjoying some of these policies and at times, organizations do not implement them to avoid issues” (Interviewee GM3). Participant M1 also stated that:

“Marital status of the employees impact implementation of WLB, especially for married women because they are not capable additional working hours or compressed working hours since this may deny them the chance to their children and other dependents in the family, so it makes implementing such WLB initiatives a challenge to them” (Interviewee GM1).

4.1.9 Suggestions to improve WLB in hospitality organizations
Participants gave varied suggestions on how WLB initiatives can be improved in hospitality organizations including implementing wellness programmes in the workplace such as fitness in the daily routine of workers by provision of free memberships to gyms or by organizing office fitness programmes, monetary appraisal, having strict work-free holidays, and establishing an environment of concern and care by providing examples such as a boss who is supportive and coworkers who help working women in an emergency to demonstrate that the company values its workers and their families.

For instance, Interviewee GM2 mentioned that:

“I believe things like fitness programs, a culture of care and strict-holiday programs for all employees can be very important in improving work-life balance in hospitality organizations and hence need to be implemented, especially for those who are lacking such” (Interviewee GM2).

Some participants also gave responses that revolved around employees’ assistance programs and welfare policies such as child care support, counselling and training programs and providing a safe and healthy work environment free from exploitation, harassment and discrimination.

For instance, Interviewee MM3 affirmed that:

“Things like organizing counselling and training sessions to cultivate a positive outlook and coping mechanisms for achieving a perfect balance between their personal and professional lives are important for employees and need to be incorporated to attain a WLB” (Interviewee MM3).

“Employers should be able to provide a secure and healthy work environment by adopting stringent policies against harassment, discrimination, and exploitation and by effectively implementing these policies. This helps to protect employees, especially female employees, against these forms of abuse, and I support that” (Interviewee GM1).

4.2 Summary of the findings

The findings reveal that hospitality organizations are generally associated with work pressure due to the nature of services they offer. However, employees are able to manage the work pressure and have a great working experience due to various WLB policies implemented by
these organizations. Also, the study indicates a positive relationship between WLB initiatives and employees’ performance. The successful implementation of these initiatives is enhanced by factors such as workplace leadership, effective communication of the WLB policies to all employees and culture of an organization. However, the hospitality firms should take into account the challenges or barriers to implementation of WLB such as increasing workloads, additional hours/overtime, and marital status.
This chapter compares the findings from Chapter 4 to the theory and prior research that were laid out in Chapter 2 for critical analysis. The findings and previous research are compared and contrasted, and any apparent gaps are noted, along with recommendations for suitable future applications.

5.1 Interview response analysis

As described in Chapter 4, this section examines the interviewees' comments and makes a connection between them, theory and previous research findings. The analysis will indicate if the conclusions of the thesis and the earlier research agree or conflict with each other with respect to each defined subject. The analysis chapter has been guided by recurring themes through the use of thematic schema analysis (see Appendix 2).

5.1.1 Work experience

The study found that participants have varied experiences working in their organizations, with the majority agreeing that they have had a great experience despite drawbacks like work pressure and increasing workloads because their organizations have put some effort into policies such as work breaks and flexible scheduling that help them manage their work and life issues effectively. Interestingly, those who had longer working experience in the industry reported positively regarding their working experience compared to those who had less than one year working in the industry. This implies that the more one works in the industry, the more they get used to the working culture of the hospitality sector, and hence the great working experience. This finding aligns with Quiñones, Ford and Teachout's (2015) study findings, which revealed that task level and amount as well as work experience had the highest correlation with employees job satisfaction and job performance. This implies that the experience of employees is a factor that influences their performance, as great working experience positively correlates to job satisfaction. The study concluded that the more time the employees spent working in the organization, the more experienced they gained and the more satisfied they were with their work. As per Herzberg (2015) classification, work experience emerged as a hygiene factor which positively influences work satisfaction of employees in the long term.
5.1.2 Work-life balance initiatives implemented by the organizations

The study indicates that hospitality organizations implement WLB initiatives and mostly revolve around flexible work arrangements (flexible scheduling), paid leaves, and work breaks, which are well-known and most important to employees. This finding is in agreement with the Garg and Yajurvedi (2016) study, which found that flexible scheduling and paid or unpaid leaves are the most common work-life balance policies implemented by hospitality firms due to the nature of work that employees engage with there.

However, the findings also noted that most of the hospitality firms lack other important WLB initiatives, such as welfare policies, including child care support, counseling and training services, and fitness programs. These are the initiatives that the participants suggested they would like their organizations to implement. Additionally, the WLB initiatives that were found to be more beneficial to employees than others include flexible scheduling, paid leaves, work breaks, child care support, and personal time off. This finding is supported by Tag-Eldeen and Shawky's (2013) assertion that employees in the hospitality sector favor some WLB initiatives over others, depending on what works well for them in a particular organization or industry. According to the findings, the WLB policies favored by most employees are flexible work schedules and paid leaves, as the flexibility enables them to arrange themselves and manage their work at their own discretion, which brings autonomy and, in turn, enhances job satisfaction and commitment. Although these workplace benefits are important motivating factors for hospitality employees, Herzberg (2015) and Haque et al. (2014) are of the view that they are hygiene factors that only produce brief changes in work mindsets and perceived performance that swiftly resets to the previous level.

5.1.3 The Contributions of the WLB Initiatives to the Performance of Employees

The study indicates a positive relationship between WLB initiatives and employee performance in hospitality organizations. These initiatives (such as paid leaves, work breaks, and flexible scheduling) were found to contribute positively to the performance of employees in terms of increasing their productivity as they help employees to manage their roles in a better way without any stress, which in turn enhances the employees’ health and well-being by accomplishing the targets and goals set for them, meeting deadlines as expected, reducing absenteeism, and also increasing their satisfaction, commitment, and loyalty in their
workplace. All these translate to enhanced organizational performance. This implies that work-life balance initiatives enhance the performance of employees, while a lack of them results in job dissatisfaction, low morale, high absenteeism, burnout, and high turnover, all of which are linked to low employee performance. This finding is in line with Gautam and Jain's (2018) and Tag-Eldeen and Shawky's (2013) assertions. Gautam and Jain (2018) emphasize that attaining work-life balance requires us to expertly strike a balance between our paid professions and other meaningful endeavors, including volunteering, returning to school, spending time with loved ones, or engaging in sports and leisure. It encompasses the percentage of time that an employee dedicates to their family and their job. A discrepancy between family and work—either too much work or too little time spent with family—may cause stress and negatively affect one's attitude at work, which can ultimately lead to burnout. In a similar vein, Tag-Eldeen and Shawky (2013) contend that a harmonious union of work and family life is mutually beneficial to both parties. There are benefits and drawbacks to work-life balance, and maintaining the proper balance is crucial. Utilization and accessibility of WLB practices, when implemented in an environment where employers and employees are supportive, can lower work-life conflict and raise favorable opinions of the company. These outcomes are frequently linked to employee attitudes like higher job satisfaction, improved performance, decreased absenteeism, higher productivity, lower training and recruitment expenses, higher retention of key personnel, and higher commitment to the organization and loyalty. In turn, each of these variables is then connected to reduced costs, higher levels of satisfaction from clients, and, ultimately, better company performance. It takes time for large companies to develop an organizational culture that prioritizes WLB.

Moreover, this study finding confirms Liu et al.'s (2021) assertion that companies can invest in work-life balance programs and policies in order to improve employee performance, productivity, reduce absenteeism, reduce stress among employees, improve employees’ health and wellbeing, increase dedication, loyalty, and motivation, enhance customer services, improve employee health, enable flexible work schedules, and have a happier, more motivated workforce. Therefore, work-life balance is crucial for employees and improves their productivity inside the company (Liu et al., 2021). The study finding also concurs with Sen and Hooja (2018) assertions regarding the importance of WLB, emphasizing that organizations also primarily run these work-life balance programs to distress employees at the appropriate times through certain coping mechanisms by lowering their stress levels by rebalancing work and life (Sen & Hooja, 2018). The finding also agrees with Roopavathi and
Kishore (2021), who assert that several companies also provide their employees with flexible scheduling, long-term vacations, and the opportunity to work from home, particularly for women who balance multiple roles. These benefits truly foster goodwill between the employer and the workforce (Roopavathi & Kishore, 2021).

The finding of a positive relationship between WLB initiatives and employees’ performance is further confirmed by Cvenkel's (2021) study findings. The study discovered that workplace stress, abuse of drugs, poor relationships, scarce resources, and other external variables are among the work-life conflicts that have an impact on employees' work-life balance. Fun and family-friendly activities, counseling, regular breaks, trust, and secrecy are a few examples of organizational family-friendly work-life balance programs that have been found to improve employee health and well-being and hence their performance at work. The findings further concur with Hughes and Bozionelos (2015) study findings, which found that employees' primary cause of discontent stemmed from work-life imbalance, which was not simply a cause for concern. Additionally, participants clearly linked withdrawal behaviors, such as turnover and fake sick leave, to issues with work-life balance.

5.1.4 Linking the findings to Herzberg’s Motivation/Hygiene Theory

The study indicates a positive relationship between WLB initiatives and employee performance in hospitality organizations. These initiatives (such as paid leaves, work breaks, and flexible scheduling) were found to contribute positively to the performance of employees in terms of increasing their productivity, as they help employees manage their roles in a better way without any stress. Relating this finding to Herzberg theory, it can be deduced that WLB initiatives are hygiene factors that can be categorized under the company policy that their absence can lead to job discontent. This implies that WLB policies in hospitality organizations explain how an individual feels about the setting or context in which they work. Without these policies, such as flexible scheduling, paid leaves, and work breaks, among others, employees get dissatisfied, and this is reflected in their low performance. On the other hand, the presence of these policies, as found in the study, results in job contentment and, hence, enhanced employees’ performance. This helps to explain the finding that WLB initiatives implemented by the three hospitality firms are linked to improved employees’ performance. The presence of these policies makes employees have a great working experience despite the pressure and increasing work demands, meaning the WLB policies enhance their job contentment and hence their positive performance.
5.1.5 Factors for Successful Implementation of WLB Initiatives

The study indicates various factors that influence the successful implementation of WLB initiatives at the workplace, such as leadership, effective communication of the WLB policies to all employees, and the culture of an organization. For instance, a culture that fosters a good working environment and is concerned with employees’ health and well-being implements WLB initiatives more than those that do not. This implies that these factors, among others, are important for an organization to have working WLB policies; failure to do so may cause the organization to not understand the importance of WLB and miss implementing the most significant WLB for employees.

This study's results are consistent with those of De Cieri et al. (2015), who discovered that unbalanced work environments might result in increased absenteeism, decreased job satisfaction, and occasionally increased employee attrition. It may be easier for employees to achieve a healthy work-life balance in cooperative work environments, suggesting that organizational culture plays a role in the success of WLB programs. The results also align with the findings of Madhusudhan, Mahesh and Nagaraju (2013), who identified the factors responsible for work-life balance and deduced that co-employee support, family culture, flexibility in time, working hours, role clarity, dependents, and head support are responsible for WLB. In order to handle the issues of work and life, management must prioritize flexibility of time, clarity of roles, peer support, head support, and working hours.

5.1.6 Challenges encountered in implementing WLB

The findings also revealed that there are challenges that organizations and individual employees face when implementing WLB policies. These include increasing workloads, additional hours or overtime, and marital status. All these make it difficult to implement WLB. For instance, increasing workloads can sometimes make employees (especially those working in hospitality organizations) miss enjoying some of these policies, such as work breaks and personal time off, because some, like kitchen employees and front desk employees, have to be there physically all the time. The findings from a study by Budhiraja and Kant (2020) support this study’s findings. According to Budhiraja and Kant's (2020) research, women who lack a healthy balance face numerous challenges in their employment, including diminished mental and physical health, intrusion into family space, and poor job
performance that leads to high turnover rates. Furthermore, their circumstances have gotten worse due to ineffective organizational rules, lengthy work hours, and corporate culture.

5.2 Chapter Summary

This chapter analyzes the interview data used in this research. Overall, the hospitality sector is characterized by work pressure, but the implementation of WLB policies by the three organizations has enabled employees to effectively manage the pressure. Also, the study indicates that there is a positive link between WLB initiatives and employees’ performance, which benefits organizations in terms of improved organizational performance. Also, the hospitality organizations should focus on addressing the challenges to WLB implementation by considering the factors that aid successful implementation, as found by the study, to ensure that they attain these benefits correlated with WLB policies.
6 CONCLUSIONS

In order to give readers a better understanding of the relationship between WLB efforts and employee performance in hospitality organizations, the final chapter examined the research study's findings in conjunction with previously published studies. This chapter will examine if these goals were met and whether any research gaps were found during the investigation.

6.1 Conclusion

The hospitality sector has long been thought to be difficult to remain in for an extended period of time. Immediately, one envisions long hours, working at the whim of sometimes dissatisfied visitors, and a short-term strategy that ends with a few years out of the business. It has never been a career for the timid, whether it is event management or working for a hotel.

The study found that hospitality organizations implement WLB initiatives that mostly revolve around flexible work arrangements (flexible scheduling), paid leaves, and work breaks, which are well-known and most important to employees. These WLB initiatives are a major concern in the current environment since they have a direct impact on employee and organizational growth and productivity. Productivity rises when work and home responsibilities are successfully balanced. This allows room for growth for both the business and the employee. Proper scheduling and stress reduction help to reduce the pressure of juggling work and family obligations. Effective management and a precise balance between the two are essential. A person can work as stress-free as possible by adhering to the numerous policies and processes that organizations oversee. Companies now offer a variety of resources, guidelines, and initiatives to assist staff members in carrying out all of the responsibilities assigned to them. A person who is emotionally well can function more effectively in a work environment. As a result, hospitality companies can enhance work-life balance through the creation of various HR policies, flexible scheduling, paid time off for child care, paid maternity leave, fitness centers, counseling, and training sessions, among other things.

The study also indicated a positive relationship between WLB initiatives and employee performance. It found that WLB positively contributes to employees’ performance by improving their health and well-being, helping them to accomplish the targets and goals set for them, meeting deadlines as expected, reducing absenteeism, and also increasing their
satisfaction, commitment, and loyalty in their workplace. Additionally, in line with this, the study also indicated that managers had a positive attitude towards WLB implementation as they alluded that WLB helps to improve employees’ performance because it helps employees manage their roles in a better way without stress and burnout. The contentment of an employee's personal life and their capacity to fulfill personal obligations have a significant impact on their productivity as an employee, which is highly advantageous to any organization. Assisting employees in attaining a healthy work-life balance boosts their loyalty to their employers, improves job satisfaction, and extends their career. When an organization acknowledges these advantages and puts in place work-life policies, it will witness a rise in employee productivity as well as improvements in employee retention, lower costs related to high attrition, and reduced costs associated with employee turnover. In this case, this study leads to practical contributions as the findings indicate that the hospitality organizations should implement strategies to improve WLB in their workplace such as the following suggested by the study:

- Hospitality organizations need to organize workshops and seminars on time management, stress reduction, efficient job management, and setting priorities for employees' tasks. By being trained on managing stress and time at the workplace, employees will form the habit of being on time and hence enhance their WLB and performance.
- Hospitality organizations should create a work-life balance plan for each job role inside the firm as this can increase employee productivity and job satisfaction as per the insights from this study finding. Hence, the organizations should adopt this strategy to enhance their employees' performance.
- Hospitality organizations need to invest in technological advancement as one of the WLB strategies since it's essential to do away with paper documents and human labor. This helps to save time and closes the communication gap, hence improving WLB.
- Hospitality organizations should establish a wholesome work atmosphere in the company so that their staff can be positive role models. Successful lifestyles make it easier to address the issue of WLB and work performance.
- Hospitality organizations need to implement further WLB projects that are not presently available, such as a childcare center close to the workplace, to greatly assist employees in caring for their children and lessen the stress that parents face.
Hospitality organizations should allow employees to work from home, have shortened workweeks, and have flexible hours so they can better manage their time and handle the demands of varying roles in their lives.

Furthermore, some of the themes presented in this study align with the themes in the existing literature. This indicates a consistency in the perspectives of employees across both this study and previous research. However, even though there are overlapping themes, this study provides distinct and supplementary insights and delves deeper into how to practically strategize in order to achieve WLB and improve perceived employee performance. In addition to studying from the perspective of employees, as the existing literature always has done, this study fills a specific research gap within the parameters of studying this subject from the managers' perspectives and their attitudes towards WLB initiatives and their impact on perceived employee performance. This contributes to a more comprehensive understanding and practical utilization of the findings, which are supported by the combination of both employees and managers within the hospitality organizations studied in this research. Undertaking this study revealed that most of the existing literature on WLB in the hospitality sector focuses on factors that offer short-term motivation and satisfaction over those that deliver long-term outcomes like career satisfaction.

In general, more should be done to utilize WLB options such as job sharing, flextime, and breaks from work so that employees feel supported in juggling their personal and professional lives in hospitality companies. In this instance, it is necessary for hospitality firms to upgrade their current procedures and reevaluate their current regulations. To foster a work atmosphere free from injustice and resentment, provisions for leave facilities—whether paid or unpaid—for family emergencies and on-site child care for female employees should be made whenever feasible.

In addition, possibilities for job sharing must be introduced alongside paid and unpaid career pauses. Additionally, WLB-specific counseling programs must exist. Formal counseling departments should be established by hospitality businesses to understand the challenges of work-life balance faced by employees and assist them in making the best decisions. Once more, regular exercises, mediation, and other soft skill activities might be started to help employees improve their emotional equilibrium. The study offers fresh perspectives and avenues for future investigation into WLB practices and how they relate to worker productivity and organizational success. The study recommends that hospitality companies
play a proactive role in creating an environment that is more encouraging and supportive of employees, since this can help with the application of rules.

Although this study was founded on Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation-hygiene, it was noted that hospitality employees are attracted to hygiene factors over motivation factors. This is because they draw more satisfaction from factors like pay, working environment, and interpersonal relationships rather than achievement, career progression, and recognition. This makes the theory less relevant in explaining the drivers of job satisfaction and performance in the hospitality industry. In addition, the theory does not explain employee preference of some WLB practices over others. As a result, there is a need to form new theories that explain the correlation between different hygiene variables which are most relevant to employees in the hospitality industry.

6.2 Limitations of the study

The first significant constraint this study faced stems from the fact that there were only twelve participants in the interview. This statistic reduces the validity and dependability of the findings because it represents a comparatively small percentage of employees and managers at the three hospitality firms. The relationship between work-life balance initiatives and employee performance in hospitality organizations may not be properly represented by the opinions of a mere twelve individuals. On the other hand, the examination of the twelve participants' rich and detailed data revealed insights to bolster the research's conclusions. In order to prevent similar problems in the future, the researcher ought to employ other data collection techniques or a larger sample size, such as questionnaires and focus groups, in future studies so that the opinions gathered could be more representative than in this research.

Additionally, the 12 participants interviewed may have contributed to source bias as they provide limited view of the relationship between WLB initiatives and perceived employee performance. However, the 12 participants were chosen as representatives from different departments and the interview was thoroughly conducted to ensure that the participants provided a broad view (in terms of their experience and opinions) regarding how WLB initiatives impact their performance in their hospitality organizations, which helped in countering this source bias.
REFERENCES


APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questionnaires

2 questionnaires, 1 questionnaire for employees (6 employees) and 1 questionnaire for managers (6 managers):

Questionnaire (employees)
1. How long have you worked at your workplace?
2. What do you think is best about your workplace?
3. Which work-life balance initiative(s) are most important to you?
4. Tell me about your workplace’s work-life balance initiatives?
5. Briefly describe how these initiatives have contributed to your performance?
6. What are some of these initiatives that you find more beneficial than others?
7. Would you like to implement other WLB initiatives to your workplace?
8. Is there something I haven’t included that you want to tell me?

Questionnaire (managers)
1. How long have you worked at your workplace?
2. Can you tell us about your background in this workplace?
3. What initiatives do you have for balance between work and private life for the employees?
4. How do you think you succeed in implementing these WLB initiatives?
5. How do you think these initiatives affect employee performance?
6. What are some of the challenges of implementing WLB initiatives in the organization?
7. What future plans do you have to improve these WLB initiatives, more initiatives or improve/change existing initiatives?
8. Is there something I haven’t included that you want to tell me?
## Appendix 2: Thematic schema analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workplace experience</td>
<td>Workplace experience (Good and bad experience)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLB initiatives in the hospitality organizations</td>
<td>Work-life balance initiatives implemented by the hospitality organizations (paid leaves and flexible work arrangement/policies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WLB Initiatives more beneficial to employees (Paid leaves, work breaks and flexible scheduling, child care support and personal time off)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WLB employees would like to be implemented at their workplace (welfare programs, including mother-friendly childcare facilities, recreational facilities, and counseling services)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLB initiatives and employee performance</td>
<td>Contributions of the WLB initiatives to perceived performance of employees (managers have a positive attitude towards WLB initiatives; WLB implementation linked to improved performance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLB implementation success factors and challenges</td>
<td>Factors that enhances the successful implementation of WLB initiatives (Leadership, effective communication of the WLB policies, organizational culture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Challenges of implementing WLB at workplace (increasing workloads, working hours (additional hours and overtime) and marital status (especially for women)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving WLB implementation</td>
<td>Suggestions to improve WLB in hospitality organizations (implementing workplace wellness programmes, monetary appraisal, having strict work-free holidays, and building a culture of care and concern)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*Table 3: Thematic schema analysis*