

# The Role of Stress on Work Life Balance: A Study on Female Employees of Hotel Industry

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## 1. Abstract

The hospitality industry operates around the clock, 24/7, throughout the year to ensure guests' needs and expectations are promptly met. The level of care provided should make guests feel as comfortable as if they were in their own homes. This sense of familiarity encourages guests to return to the same property on future visits. In marketing terms, this "homely feel" becomes an intangible yet valuable product offered to guests. Achieving this requires the full engagement and commitment of employees who cater to guest needs. However, this dedication, combined with personal, family, and work pressures, increases stress levels among hospitality workers. Stress can also fluctuate due to external factors like technological changes, political developments, societal shifts, and environmental conditions. Given the substantial amount of research already available on this topic, this study seeks to review the link between work-life balance and stress management in today's context. The research will use secondary data sources, such as academic literature, industry reports, government documents, and other relevant materials. Through systematic analysis, the study will explore the relationship between work-life balance and stress management, focusing on women working in the hospitality sector in India. The results will add to the current understanding of work-life balance and stress within the industry, with a specific focus on the challenges women face in maintaining balance. Additionally, the study will examine the effects of imbalances on women's work and personal lives. By utilizing existing secondary data, this study offers a cost-effective and efficient approach to understanding the dynamics of work-life balance and stress, facilitating informed decision-making and the creation of targeted interventions that support women in the industry.

**Keywords:** Work-Life balance, Stress, Female Employees, Hotel industry, India.

## 2. Introduction

Stress refers to any change that triggers physical, emotional, or psychological tension. It is your body's natural reaction to situations that demand attention or action. While everyone encounters stress at some point, the way you handle it plays a crucial role in maintaining your overall well-being. **Lee and Kang (2022)** examined how stress caused by work-life imbalance affects job performance and turnover intentions in women employees in the hotel sector. The study found a strong correlation between high stress levels and decreased productivity, with many women contemplating career changes due to the lack of work-life balance. In some cases, managing stress effectively means altering the situation itself. In other instances, it requires adjusting how you respond to the circumstances at

hand. ([verywellmind.com](http://verywellmind.com)). Developing a clear understanding of how stress impacts your physical and mental health is important. It's also important to recognize how your mental and physical health affects your stress level. (*Susman, 2022*)

Work-life balance refers to the concept of allocating sufficient time for both work and other aspects of life, such as family or personal interests. The well-known saying, "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," emphasizes the importance of balancing professional commitments with leisure. However, meaningful work, whether paid or voluntary, is often regarded as essential for personal fulfillment, implying that a life without any productive engagement could also be unfulfilling. Additionally, research indicates that supportive workplace cultures can enhance job satisfaction and reduce stress levels for female employees (*Kumar et al., 2024*)

*Santos and Cabral (2023)* conducted a study on the role of work-life balance in the well-being of women in the hospitality industry, highlighting that long working hours and irregular shifts significantly impact stress levels. They found that flexibility in work schedules and support from management could reduce stress and improve job satisfaction. Work-life balance highlights the prioritization between personal and professional tasks and the extent to which job-related activities impact home life. The ideal work-life balance varies depending on individual perspectives. For instance, freethinker Paul Krasner pointed out that some anthropologists view happiness as a minimal distinction between one's professional and personal lives (*Fanshawe College, 2021*). In today's fast-paced work environment, achieving work-life balance has become a significant concern. It involves effectively managing professional duties and personal commitments without excessive stress or conflict (*Robert, 2021*). Previous research examining the relationship between psychosocial work conditions and job-related stress often considers men and women separately. This approach stems from the recognition that men and women experience the labor market differently and face unequal responsibilities at home (*Jung et al., 2011*).

*Sharma and Verma (2022)* analyzed how organizational support influences stress and work-life balance for women in the hospitality industry. Their study emphasizes the importance of family-friendly policies and flexible scheduling to improve work-life balance and reduce stress. Achieving work-life balance is particularly pertinent for women, as they often bear additional responsibilities related to family and household tasks (*Smith., 2019*). In the context of the hospitality industry in India, work-life balance becomes an even more complex and challenging issue due to the sector's demanding nature and long working hours. The hospitality industry is known for its unique characteristics, including irregular and long working hours, high customer service expectations, and a fast-paced environment (*Robert, 2021*). These factors often create work conditions that are challenging to navigate, leading to potential conflicts between work and personal life. Women in the hospitality industry encounter various barriers to achieving work-life balance due to multiple responsibilities, societal expectations, and cultural norms (*Smith, 2019*). Therefore, it is imperative to examine the relationship between work-life balance and stress levels specifically for women in this sector to gain insights into their experiences and explore potential strategies to alleviate stress and promote well-being.

Extensive research has established the detrimental impact of work-life imbalance on individuals' physical and mental health, job satisfaction, and overall well-being (*Patel & Gupta, 2020*). Numerous studies have demonstrated the adverse effects of work-life conflict and high levels of stress, including burnout, reduced job satisfaction, decreased productivity, and increased turnover intention. Salary satisfaction and work-family conflicts are increasingly important to researchers and organizational scholars to test the influence between them in relation to turnover intention. (*Darian & Joanne, 2018*) The hospitality industry, in particular, has been identified as a high-stress environment due to the demanding nature of the work and the need to constantly meet customer expectations.

Women working in the hospitality sector encounter distinct obstacles in maintaining work-life balance. They frequently face role overload, as they are required to juggle their professional responsibilities alongside domestic duties and caregiving roles within the family (*Smith, 2019*). In many Indian households, traditional gender norms place the primary burden of managing household tasks, childcare, and elder care on women, further complicating their ability to balance work and personal life effectively.

## 2. Literature Review

*Gupta and Singh (2021)* investigated the effects of work-life balance on stress and mental health among women in the Indian hospitality industry. Their research revealed that the dual burden of work and domestic responsibilities significantly contributes to elevated stress levels and mental health issues.

*Martínez and Torres (2020)* explored the coping strategies women in the hotel industry use to manage stress related to work-life balance. The findings indicate that mindfulness and flexible working conditions are effective in mitigating stress and promoting work-life harmony. Work-life balance has emerged as a critical area of concern in today's dynamic and fast-paced work environments. It encompasses the ability to effectively manage both professional responsibilities and personal life, ensuring individuals can allocate time and energy to various domains without experiencing excessive stress or conflict (*Robert, 2021*). Achieving work-life balance is particularly pertinent for women, as they often bear additional responsibilities related to family and household tasks (*Smith, 2019*).

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

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

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

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

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

Traditional gender roles encourage men to become involved in work and achieve career success (**Cinamon and Rich, 2002**). Compared with women, men are influenced by social norms, and thus devote more time to their work (**Zhang et al., 2014**). Due to different gender focuses, men tend to ignore family demands when the work-family conflict arises (**Akintayo, 2010**). Therefore, women and men will experience more conflict from the family and work domains, respectively. Work-family conflict is likely to result in more perceived family accomplishment for women (**Zhao et al., 2019**). Thus, compared with men, women have less continued commitment (**Hoshmandja, 2013**).

Women in the hospitality industry face unique challenges in achieving work-life balance. They often experience role overload, as they are expected to balance their professional duties with domestic responsibilities and caretaking roles within the family (**Smith, 2019**). In many Indian households, traditional gender norms assign women the primary responsibility for managing household chores, childcare, and elderly care. These societal expectations place additional burdens on women, making it difficult for them to dedicate sufficient time and energy to their professional lives. Consequently, women working in the hospitality industry may experience heightened stress levels due to the interplay of work-related demands and domestic responsibilities (**Patel & Gupta, 2020**).

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

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

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

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

The findings of this research can suggest organizations, policymakers, and industry stakeholders in implementing strategies and interventions to support women in achieving work-life balance and reducing stress levels. These studies provide valuable insights into the relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction among women in the hospitality industry, with a particular focus on the Indian context.

### 3. Objectives of the Research

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

- 1.To analyze the impact of work life balance on stress among women employed in the hotel industry.
- 2.To identify the specific factors contributing to work-life balance issues and high stress levels among women in the hotel industry.
- 3.To propose strategies and solutions to support women in achieving work-life balance and reducing stress levels in the hotel industry.

### 4. Limitations

The limitations of this research methodology include

- (i) the reliance on existing secondary data, which may have limitations such as biased sampling or outdated information, and
- (ii) the inability to collect primary data limits the control over the data quality and specificity.

### 3. 5. Results and Discussion

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

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

**Objective 2: To identify the specific factors contributing to work-life balance issues and high stress levels among women employees in the hotel industry.** Based on the secondary data analysis, the study identified several specific factors contributing to work-life balance issues and high stress levels among women in the hospitality

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

**Objective 3: To propose strategies and solutions to support women in achieving work-life balance and reducing stress levels in the hotel industry.** Based on the research findings, several strategies and solutions can be proposed to support women in achieving work-life balance and reducing stress levels in the hospitality industry. Firstly, organizations should consider implementing flexible work arrangements, such as remote work options and flexible working hours, to provide women with greater control over their schedules and help them manage their professional and personal responsibilities effectively. Secondly, supportive policies that address the unique needs of women employees should be established, including paid parental leave, access to affordable and quality childcare facilities, and opportunities for professional development and career advancement. Thirdly, fostering an inclusive work culture that promotes gender equality and recognizes the value of work-life balance is crucial. This can be achieved through leadership training, diversity and inclusion programs, and eliminating gender biases in the workplace.

In summary, this research underscores the significance of work-life balance for women employed in the hospitality industry in India. The findings highlight the necessity for tailored interventions and policies that specifically address the unique challenges women encounter in striving for work-life balance and managing stress. Implementing the recommended strategies and organizational policies can foster a more inclusive and supportive atmosphere for female employees, which, in turn, can enhance work-life balance, lower stress levels, and improve overall well-being. Moreover, organizations should prioritize training programs aimed at increasing awareness of work-life balance issues and promoting mental health resources. Encouraging mentorship programs can also provide women with guidance and support as they navigate their professional and personal lives (*Gupta & Singh, 2021; Lee & Kang, 2022; Santos & Cabral, 2023*). By advocating for flexible work arrangements and promoting a culture that values employee well-being, the hospitality sector can significantly contribute to the empowerment of women in the workforce. Ultimately, the collaborative efforts of organizations, policymakers, and industry stakeholders are essential in cultivating a positive and empowering work environment for women in the hospitality sector, leading to sustainable improvements in both employee satisfaction and organizational performance (*Martínez & Torres, 2020; Robert, 2021; Sharma & Verma, 2022*).

#### 4. 6.Conclusion

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

**Objective 1: To analyze the impact of work-life balance on stress among women employed in the hotel industry.** The first objective aimed to analyze the relationship between stress and work-life balance among women in the hospitality industry. The findings revealed a strong correlation between the two, emphasizing the pressing need to tackle work-life balance issues to alleviate stress levels. This insight serves as a basis for further interventions and policies to be developed.

**Objective 2: To identify the specific factors contributing to work-life balance issues and high stress levels among women in the hotel industry.** The second objective focused on identifying the specific factors contributing to work-life balance issues and high stress levels among women in the hospitality industry. The study successfully pinpointed the demanding nature of the industry, combined with societal expectations and cultural norms, as major culprits. Additionally, the lack of support systems like affordable childcare facilities further exacerbated the imbalance between work and personal life. Understanding these contributing factors is crucial for devising targeted strategies to address women's unique needs in this sector.

**Objective 3: To propose strategies and solutions to support women in achieving work-life balance and reducing stress levels in the hotel industry.** Building upon the insights gained from the research, the third objective sought to propose strategies and solutions to support women in achieving work-life balance and reducing stress levels in the hospitality industry. The study highlighted the significance of implementing flexible work arrangements, supportive policies, and fostering an inclusive work culture. By doing so, organizations can create an environment that promotes work-life balance, reduces stress levels, and enhances the well-being and job satisfaction of women employees.

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

## 7. Scope of the Research

This research paper focuses on the relationship between work-life balance and stress among female employees in India's hospitality industry, addressing several key areas:

5. **Gender Dynamics:** The study examines how traditional gender roles influence women's work-life balance and stress levels, emphasizing the societal expectations that lead to work-family conflict.
6. **Role Overload:** It investigates the dual burden faced by women in balancing professional and domestic responsibilities, identifying specific stressors that contribute to their challenges in achieving work-life balance (Smith, 2019).
7. **Cultural Influences:** The research explores how cultural factors, particularly collectivism and family values, shape women's experiences in the hospitality sector, limiting their professional growth and well-being .
8. **Support Systems:** The effectiveness of existing work-life balance programs and support systems is assessed, analyzing their impact on job satisfaction and mental well-being among female employees (Jung et al., 2011).
9. **Targeted Interventions:** The study proposes practical strategies, such as flexible work arrangements and improved childcare facilities, aimed at reducing stress and promoting work-life balance for women in the industry.
10. **Contribution to Literature:** By focusing specifically on women in the Indian context, the research addresses existing gaps in literature on work-life balance and stress in the hospitality sector, informing policymakers and industry stakeholders about the need for gender-sensitive approaches.

## 8. Recommendations

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

1. Hospitality organizations should focus on introducing flexible working arrangements, such as offering remote work options and adjustable work hours, to help women balance their professional and personal lives more efficiently.
2. It is important to develop supportive policies that cater to the specific needs of female employees, including provisions for paid parental leave, access to affordable, high-quality childcare services, and extended maternity benefits.
3. Building an inclusive workplace culture that promotes gender equality and values diversity is crucial. Organizations must aim to eliminate gender biases and cultivate a work environment that empowers women, particularly in leadership roles.
4. Additionally, creating employee support networks and mentorship programs will provide women with opportunities to seek guidance, exchange experiences, and receive mentorship from senior industry professionals.
5. Policymakers should focus on implementing and enforcing regulations that safeguard women's rights at work, ensuring fair career growth opportunities and development.
6. Collaboration between industry associations and stakeholders is essential in raising awareness about the work-life balance challenges women face in the hospitality sector and promoting best practices that prioritize employee well-being.
7. Ongoing research and data collection on work-life balance and stress levels among women in the industry will help monitor progress and identify new challenges.
8. By adopting these strategies and maintaining a proactive stance, the hospitality industry can foster a more supportive and inclusive atmosphere for women, improving their work-life balance, reducing stress, and enhancing overall well-being.

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