

Work-life Balance among the Workers of Hospitality Industry: A Case of Dhulikhel Municipality

Samjhana Tamang¹

Abstract

The paper gives useful information about how workers of the hotel industry perceive various areas of family support, workplace support, social support, working environment, and work-life balance. The findings highlight the interplay of these variables and their combined impact on workers' work satisfaction and overall well-being. Hence, the paper has taken 190 hotel workers from three 4-stars hotels operating within Dhulikhel municipality to collect opinions on work-life balance among the workers of the hospitality industry. The study found that family support plays a vital role among the variables of work-life balance in the context to hospitality industry. Similarly, the paper found a neutral to somewhat favourable opinion of society attitudes towards employment, with potential for increased appreciation, recognition, and support within the community. The paper also concluded that the working environment has a very strong impact on work-life balance among the workers.

Key Words: Dhulikhel, hotels, work-life balance, workers.

Introduction

Work-life balance is a global phenomenon that has long been seen as an important issue due to its major impact on job satisfaction, time management, stress management, and other facets of human existence (Pathak, 2015). In today's world, most businesses are becoming aware of the importance of work-life balance and have adopted it as a vital tool for attracting and retaining talent and facilitating long-term human resource development (Hossen et al., 2018). Work and family have both beneficial and negative influences on each other, such as time, attitudes, stress, tasks, emotions, and behaviour overflow (Gnawali, 2017). Work-life imbalance can reduce organisational performance by increasing absenteeism and turnover rates, which can be caused by family duties that relate to stress and mental health (Maslach et al., 2001).

Poor work-life balance has several negative consequences for the workplace, including lower performance, job satisfaction, and more conflict. It is vital to emphasise that stress-related absenteeism and mental health concerns in the workplace are increasing (Ravalier et al., 2016). Nicklin and McNall (2013) identified family and work as the two most significant areas for any individual. Maintaining work-life balance is crucial for both employers and employees (Mušura et al., 2013). Because there is a strong relationship between work-family balance and overall job satisfaction, achieving this balance is

¹Mrs Tamang was associated with Hotel Sarathi Pvt. Ltd., Dhulikhel, Kabhre, as a receptionist. Her email ID is solidsamjhanattm@gmail.com

crucial for any working individual (Rocereto et al., 2011). Competing for work and family responsibilities has a negative influence on employees, directly affecting productivity (Ajala, 2013). According to Nepali (2018), there was formerly a good connection between work and home. However, work is increasingly interfering with people's personal lives, and striking a work-life balance is no longer as easy as it once was. Thus, family work balance is a complicated issue involving financial values, career pathways, time management, and other factors.

Most Nepalese continue to encounter employment challenges (Nepali, 2018), as most of them labour in tiny businesses to support their households, educate their children, and manage their families (McEnhill & Steadman, 2015).

Part of the hotel industry is people-oriented and people-centered. People are essential in all aspects of service (Ireland & Ireland, 2005); consequently, it is required to work long and irregular hours, prioritise face-to-face communication (Blomme et al., 2010; Xiao & O'Neill, 2010), improve coordination, work shifts, and even work on holidays and festivals. The hospitality industry's success relies on providing high-quality service to customers, and hotel management must prioritise employee well-being to enhance their goodwill. Interpersonal contact between customers and staff is crucial for customer satisfaction, and the concept of emotion in the workplace and service orientation towards consumers has gained significant attention. Therefore, hotel management must carefully consider employees' work-life balance to ensure a positive work environment. Hotel employees face challenges in maintaining a work-life balance due to conflicting work and family responsibilities. Achieving a balance can improve performance and minimise conflict. Both work and family responsibilities are mutually related and achieving a balance can be achieved with minimal role conflict (Karakaş, & Şahin, 2017; Özdevecioğlu & Çakmak Doruk, 2009; Sturges & Guest, 2004). Considering this, the article seeks to determine the work-life balance of Nepali hotel employees.

Review of Literature

This section presents the review of conceptual and empirical studies around study.

Work Life Balance in Hospitality Industry

The hospitality industry operates 24/7, including weekends and federal holidays, making it a labour-intensive business with potential for growth. Long working hours and frequent moves are common, especially with multinational brands. Decisions must be made between staying in the comfort zone and relocating to new assignments, which can be challenging for families. The industry also requires constant presence during key holidays, causing stress and anxiety. Planning and responding to daily business activities is particularly challenging, as unsold rooms are perishable. The industry is influenced by business cycles, high and low seasons, political stability, and an increasing supply of new items. Achieving and enjoying work-life balance is crucial, regardless of one's status or position. Sacrificing time for work can make it difficult to accommodate family activities and personal schedules.

The nature of work and obligations in the hospitality business can occasionally contribute to job discontent due to stress, job uncertainty, heavy workload, long working hours, and other things. As a result, employee turnover occurs owing to a work-life imbalance known

as emotional labour in service-oriented businesses such as hotels, due to the face-to-face interaction with consumers that does not occur in factories. As a result of emotional labour as a stressor in hotels, maintaining work-life balance is a challenging endeavour (Kidd & Eller, 2012).

Long working hours are common in the hotel industry, and many employees accept them without question. Recent study on the long-hours culture has highlighted the repercussions of excessive workloads and long working hours (Cushing, 2004). Hsieh et al. (2004) undertook the first research of the Asian lodging business, focusing on how work and personal life overlap. The research assessed work interference with personal life (WIP), personal life interference with work (PIW), work enhancement of personal life (WEP), and personal life enhancement of work (PEW). According to the research, understanding these characteristics can help enhance the industry's work-life balance.

WLB is applicable to service businesses such as the hospitality industry. This concept arose from a dilemma in such businesses, in which personnel are mostly obliged to moderate their emotions to be exhibited to clients. As the motto of all service-oriented enterprises is 'The Customer is King,' personnel must be cheerful in the face of any client complaints, even if they are not their fault (Kidd & Eller, 2012). As a result, to better manage the situation, staff working on the front lines and in face-to-face interactions with customers should be rotated to maintain their emotional balance, leading us to the conclusion that staff selection is a critical factor in reducing stress caused by emotional labour. Extroverts, positive, and easy-going employees are better prospects for these positions because they do not demand the role of a pleasant and welcoming person (Kidd & Eller, 2012).

Hotel employees often struggle with a poor work-life balance due to constant 12–14-hour workdays, often due to seasonal changes and low-cost festivities. To address this issue, hotel operators have introduced solutions like increased leave, Employee Leisure Clubs for family fun, and defined working hours (Peshave & Gujarathi, 2014).

The hotel industry lacks family-friendly work environments that are beneficial to both employees and organisations (Cullen & McLaughlin, 2006; Deery & Jago, 2008; Farrell, 2012), and if organisations do not consider and manage employee balance, employee productivity and performance will suffer (Abioro et al., 2018). Work-life balance techniques have been shown to promote productivity, increase retention, and reduce absenteeism, all of which led to greater financial performance (Daniels & McCarraher, 2000).

Doherty (2004) found that operational level job opportunities are flexible, but not management level. Women require flexibility due to childcare duties. Deery & Jago, (2008) proposed changes to the Australian hotel business, including flexible working hours, job sharing, and family-friendly procedures. DiPietro et al. (2004) found that flexible working hours are a reason for employee retention in fast-food businesses.

Namasivayam and Zhao (2007) discovered a negative relationship between work-family conflict (WFC), job satisfaction (JS), and organisational commitment. Cleveland et al. (2007) discovered that time limitations and the requirement to be available increased stress among hotel personnel. Sharma et al. (2011) and Choi and Kim (2012) emphasised the Korean hotel industry's extended, unpredictable, and nonstandard working hours. Choi and Kim (2012) proposed investing in flexible scheduling, regular hours, family-

friendly programming, and extra family assistance. According to [Wong and Ko \(2009\)](#), an efficient management system and culture can assist employees in better managing personal and family concerns, such as workplace assistance, greater free time, and flexible work schedules. However, the emphasis on output and efficiency may obscure other values ([Crompton et al., 2007](#), [Gambles et al., 2006](#)).

According to [O'Connor \(2003\)](#), the number one personal problem for Irish managers is achieving a work-life balance. [Lewis \(2011\)](#) discovered that work-life balance initiatives at the Italian hotel studied were not recognised as such by employees. [Bharathi and Rajapushpam \(2017\)](#) discovered that hotel employees' work-life balance (WLB) is critical to their performance and satisfaction. [Pandey and Shukla \(2019\)](#) investigated the work-life balance of female employees in the hospitality industry, emphasising the impact of attitude, work shifts, and acknowledgment.

[Bali et al. \(2021\)](#) found that work-life balance (WLB) among hotel employees in India's metro cities varies based on organisational factors, gender, age group, and family structure. Front-of-house operations and housekeeping employees experience higher WLB levels. [Kukreti et al. \(2021\)](#) suggested hotels increase salary structures, provide overtime, and set working hours. [Liu et al. \(2021\)](#) discovered a strong link between work-life balance and organisational commitment among women in the hotel industry.

[Yeole et al. \(2023\)](#) found that work-life balance significantly impacts employee turnover and performance in the hotel industry, with long hours, overtime, and workplace stress causing challenges. [Sharma \(2024\)](#) studied the impact of work-life balance on job satisfaction in kitchen professionals in five-star hotels in Delhi NCR.

[Singh and Sreenivasan \(2024\)](#) explored the impact of work-life balance on employees' personal, work, and family life, highlighting the challenges faced by the industry, such as competition, marketing trends, 24-hour work, seasonality, and technological changes. They emphasised the need for a harmonious work-life balance to minimise negative impacts and maintain employee growth.

[Grigoryan \(2024\)](#) found that work-life balance, employee remuneration, and job instability significantly impacted employees' intentions to leave the hospitality sector during the post-epidemic period. [Khanal and Shrestha \(2024\)](#) found that workers in Nepal were content with their remuneration, work-life balance, and working conditions, but some expressed dissatisfaction with workload management and suitable benefits.

Research Methods

The paper has followed a descriptive and correlation research design has been used to establish empirical data on work-life balance issues and overall work-life balance. The study has followed the items used in the paper of [Wong and Ko \(2009\)](#) to maintain a criterion-related validity. A five-points Likert scale is used to measure the opinion for the work-life balance of the employees working at the hotels operating at Banepa Municipality.

All the employees working at the different star-categorised hotels within Nepal are the population for the paper. Among them, employees working in hotels operating within Dhulikhel Municipality have been selected as the sample for this study. There is a one 5-star hotel with other numerous 4-star and 3-star hotels in Dhulikhel. Among them, a

total of 190 employees from three sampled 4-star hotels of Dhulikhel Municipality is considered as respondents for the study. The paper followed a convenience sampling technique to select the required sample for the paper.

Cronbach's Alpha criteria were adopted to test the reliability of the items used in the questionnaire. After a pilot study among the 45 randomly sampled hotel employees, the following items were dropped from the questionnaire:

Table 1

Reliability Result and Items Dropped

Construct	Initial Items	No. of Items Dropped	Final Alpha Value
Family Support	5	2	0.839
Workplace Support	5	1	0.932
Social Support	5	Nil	0.957
Working Environment	5	2	0.906
Work-life Balance	5	3	0.889

Note. *Field Survey, 2024*

All the responses collected from the sampled hotel employees were compiled in an Excel spreadsheet. The responses given by the respondents by scoring at the Likert scale were further analysed using descriptive statistics. Similarly, a correlation and regression analysis were conducted to see the relationship among the dependent and independent variables.

Data Analysis and Discussion

This section presents data analysis and discusses the results.

Respondents' Profile

Of the total 190 respondents, 71.05 percent are seen male and remaining as female respondents. Similarly, 80 percent are from the age group of 20-40 years and remaining from 40 years and above. Of the total respondents, 66.7 percent are married and remaining as unmarried respondents. In total, 33.2 percent are with SEE, followed by SLC covering 31.1 percent. Only 6.8 percent of the respondents are seen with a master's degree.

Looking at the work experience, 37.8 percent of the total respondents have work experience below one year, followed by work experience of four to eight years, covering 33.3 percent.

The largest departments—Housekeeping (covering 24.4 percent), F&B (22.2 percent), and Front Office—are likely directly involved in the core business operations, especially in the hospitality sector.

Large portion of human resources is covered by house-keeping attendants followed by waiter and waitress covering 28.4 percent and 21.1 percent respectively. Overall, the workforce distribution reveals a strong emphasis on operational roles like housekeeping,

wait-staff, and security, which is typical for industries such as hospitality, service, or facilities management. The ratio provides insights into the organisation's priorities and operational focus.

Opinions on Family Support

The table below illustrates opinions on family support forwarded by the respondents:

Table 2

Opinions on Family Support

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
I feel happy when I have quality family time for my family life.	4.07	0.50
I have different responsibilities to meet during different life stages.	3.68	0.71
My family members are supportive when I talk about my work.	3.31	0.71
Overall Average	3.69	

Note. Field Survey, 2024

The overall average (mean) of the three items is 3.69, suggesting that respondents generally have a positive perception of their family life and the balance between work and family. However, the level of agreement is not as strong as for the individual items related to family time and responsibilities. In summary, the data indicates that quality family time significantly contributes to happiness, and respondents recognise the varying responsibilities throughout life stages. Family support in discussing work is present but less pronounced, reflecting some variability in family dynamics.

Opinions on Workplace Support

The table below illustrates opinions on workplace support forwarded by the respondents:

Table 3

Opinions on Workplace Support

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
I work very smoothly to hand over to the next shift because of a good management system.	3.45	0.72
My co-workers are supportive when I talk about personal or family issues that affect my work.	3.29	0.72
I can schedule my preferred days off supported by my team.	3.14	0.63
I can easily manage my work with my personal and family life because of the flexibility provided by the hotel.	3.03	0.70
Overall Average	3.23	

Note. Field Survey, 2024

Table 3 presents the results of employee opinions on workplace support, measured through four items with their respective means and standard deviations. The overall average mean score is 3.23, indicating a moderately positive perception of workplace support among respondents. The relatively low standard deviations across all items indicate consistency in responses, with most employees sharing similar perceptions. Overall, while the findings reflect a moderately positive work environment with support systems in place, areas like flexibility for work-life balance and scheduling could be targeted for improvement to enhance overall employee satisfaction.

Opinions on Society Support

The table below illustrates opinions on society support forwarded by the respondents:

Table 4

Opinions on Society Support

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
My society takes my work positively.	3.19	0.95
I appreciate the work I do for the society.	3.07	0.81
My success is not taken for granted by society.	3.05	0.61
The cultural diversity of my society adopts the practices within the hospitality industry.	3.05	0.79
Social support for my job has enhanced my job satisfaction.	2.96	0.58
Overall Average	3.07	

Note. Field Survey, 2024

Respondents feel neutral to slightly agree that their society's cultural diversity accommodates hospitality industry practices, with a mean score of 3.05. While some appreciation exists, it is not strongly felt across the board, indicating that society may not always fully recognise or value the contributions of those in the hospitality industry. The adoption of hospitality industry practices within a culturally diverse society is seen as moderate, suggesting room for improvement in aligning cultural practices with industry needs. Social support has a limited impact on enhancing job satisfaction, pointing to potential areas for strengthening community and societal engagement to better support individuals in their roles.

Overall, the data reflects a neutral to slightly positive perception of societal views on work, with opportunities for increasing appreciation, recognition, and support within the community.

Opinions on Working Environment

The table below illustrates opinions on working environment forwarded by the respondents:

Table 5

Opinions on Working Environment

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
I accept working extra hours each day because it is essential to progress in my career.	3.39	0.77
I can schedule my preferred days off supported by my team.	3.14	0.63
I can easily manage my work with my personal and family life because of the flexibility provided by the hotel.	2.89	0.71
Overall Average	3.14	

Note. Field Survey, 2024

Respondents are willing to work extra hours if it helps their career progression. The standard deviation of 0.77 suggests moderate variability, meaning that while most are inclined to work extra hours, opinions on this vary somewhat. Respondents are inclined to work extra hours to progress in their careers, reflecting a commitment to their professional growth, even if it requires additional time at work.

There is moderate support for scheduling preferred days off, indicating that while some flexibility exists, it may not be fully meeting everyone's needs. The lowest mean score reflects challenges in balancing work with personal and family life, suggesting that the flexibility provided by the hotel may not be sufficient to accommodate all employees' needs.

Overall, the data highlights a commitment to career growth but also reveals areas for improvement in work-life balance and scheduling flexibility, which could enhance overall job satisfaction.

Opinions on Work-life Balance

The table below illustrates opinions on WLB forwarded by the respondents:

Table 6

Opinions on Work-life Balance

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am not satisfied with the working hours, and it doesn't fit with my private life.	3.14	0.63
I have missed personal events because of work.	2.89	0.71
Overall Average	3.02	

Note. Field Survey, 2024

Table 6 presents data on employee satisfaction with working hours and the impact of work on personal life, including missing personal events. There is some dissatisfaction with how working hours align with private life, indicating that the current work schedule might not be the best fit for many employees.

Work occasionally interferes with personal life, causing employees to miss important events. This suggests that while work-life balance is a challenge, it may not be a major issue for everyone. The overall neutral score suggests that while there are concerns about work-life balance, they are not extreme, but there is still room for improvement in aligning work schedules with employees' personal lives.

Correlation Analysis

The table below shows the correlation coefficients among the selected variables of the paper:

Table 7

Correlation Coefficient Matrix

Variables	Family Support	Workplace Support	Social Support	Working Environment	Work-life Balance
Family Support	1				
Workplace Support	+0.747** (0.000)	1			
Social Support	+0.806** (0.000)	+0.863** (0.000)	1		
Working Environment	+0.684** (0.000)	+0.928** (0.000)	+0.851** (0.000)	1	
Work-life Balance	+0.566** (0.000)	+0.899** (0.000)	+0.782** (0.000)	+0.970** (0.000)	1

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

Table 7 shows the correlation matrix among five variables related to work-life balance: Family Support, Workplace Support, Social Support, Working Environment, and Work-Life Balance. Except for family support, there is a high degree of positive correlation among the independent and dependent variables.

All variables are positively correlated with each other, indicating that improvements in one area are associated with improvements in others. For instance, better workplace support, social support, and the working environment are all strongly related to a better

work-life balance. All correlations are statistically significant at the 0.01 level, meaning the observed relationships are unlikely to be due to chance. The highest correlation is between working environment and work-life balance ($r=+0.970$), indicating that changes in the working environment have a very strong impact on work-life balance.

Conclusion and Implications

The paper provides valuable insights into how hotel workers perceive various aspects of family support, workplace support, societal support, working environment, and work-life balance. The findings underscore the interplay between these dimensions and their collective influence on employees' job satisfaction and overall well-being.

Quality family time is identified as a significant contributor to happiness, but family support in discussing work-related matters is less pronounced, pointing to variability in family dynamics. The findings highlight the importance of fostering family support systems to enhance employees' emotional well-being.

An alignment of an average score with family support, suggesting that employees recognise the workplace's role in enabling quality family time. There is potential to enhance workplace initiatives, such as creating a more supportive culture for discussing family responsibilities and work-related challenges.

Societal recognition of the industry's contributions and support for employees in their roles remain limited, signalling an opportunity for community engagement and awareness campaigns. Improved societal alignment with industry needs could strengthen job satisfaction and the overall sense of community belonging.

The hotel workers show a willingness to work extra hours for career progression, demonstrating a commitment to professional growth despite challenges in the balance of work. Challenges in balancing personal and family life with work point to areas where hotels could improve scheduling flexibility to enhance employee satisfaction.

Work-life balance remains a challenge, as employees report missing personal events due to work commitments. However, the overall neutral satisfaction score suggests the issue is not overwhelming. The strongest correlation between the working environment and work-life balance indicates that improvements in workplace conditions, such as better scheduling and flexibility, can significantly enhance employees' ability to manage personal and professional responsibilities.

Employers can implement policies that promote flexibility, such as rotating shifts or employee-preferred days off, while societal campaigns can enhance public appreciation of the hospitality industry. In conclusion, while the overall findings suggest a neutral to slightly positive outlook on these dimensions, they reveal significant opportunities for improvement. By addressing these gaps, organisations can create a more supportive and fulfilling environment for employees, enhancing both job satisfaction and productivity.

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