

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Title:

**WORK-LIFE BALANCE POLICIES AND
EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING IN THE
HOSPITALITY SECTOR OF THE UK**

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1.0 Proposal Introduction

Justification and rationale for conducting the research:

In the present era of increasing workloads in the UK hospitality sectors with massively growing service volumes, the employees are suffering with the daunting issues of work-life imbalance, which eventually leads to burnout, thereby reducing job satisfaction and performances of the employees and collectively organisations (Abubakar et al., 2022). The issues of existing work-life policies toward leveraging physical and mental health issues decreased morale and thereby increased dissatisfaction, decreasing employee retention rates, productivity, and efficiency. In these critical circumstances, the present research will examine the challenges, impacts, implications, and other aspects of existing work-life policies in the UK hospitality industry for driving employee well-being factors in a reliable, quantified, and systematic manner for developing adequate recommendations to elevate the work-life balance, and related policies and practices in the UK hospitality industry.

2.0 Research Methodology

Based on Tuzovic and Kabadayi (2021) and Moon and Blackman (2014), the research methodology for the proposed research will navigate the researchers' psychological worldview in uncovering real-world social science perspectives of employee well-being policies and underlying issues limiting the benefits and implementation of the policies in the UK hospitality sectors. This psychological worldview of the researcher will guide the ontological choice for the present research philosophy, thereby integrating the epistemology by validating with adequate support of literature sources and data analysis under the axiological guidelines (Vasquez, 2014). These inferences of ontology, epistemology and ontology for the present research will be presented with adequate justification based on each layer of Saunders' research onion, thereby eventually presenting the entire research methodology with philosophy, approach, choice, strategy, process, and techniques.

2.1 Research philosophy:

The first layer of Sauder's research onion indicates the philosophy of the researcher to explore, analyze, and assess the natural sciences and realities based on observations and perceived values.

In the domain of research philosophies, Positivism is associated with studying and assessing natural phenomena and real-world observations based on objective-driven patterns and quantified indicator variables (Bianchi, 2021). In this context, the present research will be developed based on the positivist research philosophy to objectively measure the impact and implications of the employee well-being policies presently existing and operating in the UK health sector, thereby presenting adequate recommendations toward further improving the benefits and addressing the challenges. This positivism will further structure the axiological support for the research discussion and framing conclusion remarks.

2.2 Research choice:

Deductive reasoning is a significant research choice to sequentially and systematically frame up specific theories, formulas, models, and specific indicator metrics by analysing the generalised information concerning diversified perspectives related to specific themes of discussion (Park, Bahrudin and Han, 2020). In this context, the present research will follow Deductive reasoning as the research choice to highlight the specific impact and implications of work-life balance policies from the perspectives of the existing literature sources and survey responses, thereby assessing and comparing those findings toward formulating a predictive model regarding employee well-being and work-life balance in the UK health sector without any predetermined hypothesis.

2.3 Research approach:

The positivism philosophy and epistemological choice of numerical quantified observations will influence the present research to integrate the Mono-method Quantitative research approach for the previous research. The quantitative approach will ensure the extraction of measurable and tangible insights regarding the effectiveness of work-life balance policies in the UK hospitality sector for extracting benefits on employee satisfaction and overall well-being, thereby eventually optimising and elevating health sector costs, performances and long-term sustainability in the UK health sector.

2.4 Research strategy and data collection:

The primary data collection method using a Survey as the research strategy can be significantly helpful in capturing the perceptions, opinions, experiences, and behavioural attitudes in a quantified manner based on the responses (Lohr, 2021). Therefore, in terms of the research strategy for the present research, based on South et al. (2022), a Likert-scale Survey can be helpful to collect interval and ordinal data from the responses of eighty (80) UK health-sector employees. This will be performed to assess the total ordinal scores for each of the survey questions, and based on those ordinal values and analysed results, interpret and assess the research variables and findings. The participants for this survey will be chosen randomly to ensure equal possibility of inclusion for every health-sector employee in the UK. Therefore, the population set will be entire UK health-sector employees, the sample will be eighty (80) UK health-sector employees, and the sampling will be performed as random sampling to enhance the diverse inclusion possibility of UK health-sector employees associated with different job roles, designations, and salary scales, thereby eventually elevating the authenticity and reliability of the responses and validity research findings.

2.5 Research time horizon:

Based on Ghorbani (2023), a cross-sectional time horizon helps researchers extract data and perform analysis on any intersection of time periods, irrespective of long-term time series data. This ensures the integration of immediate assessment of employee well-being driven by existing work-life balance policies in the UK hospitality sector. Therefore, the present research will be structured by a cross-sectional time horizon for data collection and data analysis regarding the research aspects.

2.6 Research data analysis techniques:

Statistical data analysis techniques are crucial to analyse numeric data through descriptive statistics indicating the sample characteristics contrasting against population characteristics, followed by inferential statistics ensuring validity and reliability of the research instruments and tools toward identifying associations among the research variables and developing predictive models for forecasting the quantified measures (Aithal and Aithal, 2020). In this context, the

present research will utilise Statistical data analysis by using SPSS software based on the ordinal responses of the Likert-Scale survey. Based on Bidzan-Bluma et al. (2020), the data analysis part will consist of demographic analysis of the sample, and this demographic characteristics will be help to establish the research findings concerning the population perspectives, thereby establishing validity and authenticity of the research findings. with the population, followed by descriptive statistics to highlight the population characteristics, and finally, inferential statistics will be performed to ensure the validity and reliability of the survey questions as a strategic tool for the research, thereby highlighting relations between research variables, and formulating predictive model regarding employee well-being benefits and challenges driven by work-life balance policies in the UK hospitality sector.

3.0 Research aim and objectives

3.1 Research aim:

The aim of the present research is associated with examining the influence of work-life balance policies for impacting employee well-being in the UK hospitality industry by evaluating and measuring the perceptions of the employees and standardising the findings toward ensuring adequate job satisfaction and well-being for the employees in the UK hospitality industry.

3.2 Research objectives:

- To assess the impact of existing work-life balance policies based on perceptions of the employees from the UK hospitality sector
- To scrutinise the influence of the work-life balance policies on employee satisfaction, mental and physical health, and effective communication facilities for ensuring overall well-being in the UK hospitality sector
- To measure the influence of organisational leadership, culture, and communication mediums for maintaining and improving work-life balance policies in the UK hospitality sector
- To craft proactive initiatives and recommendations for improving work-life balance practices and policies across organisations and for employees in the UK hospitality industry

3.3 Research questions.

- How do the work-life balance policies impact employee satisfaction, physical and mental health, and communication approaches for overall well-being in the UK hospitality sector?
- How do organisational culture, leadership, and communication processes impact the implementation of work-life balance policies in the UK hospitality sector?
- From the employees' perspectives, how do the existing work-life balance policies impact the UK hospitality sector?
- How can work-life balance policies and implementation initiatives help elevate employees' overall well-being and satisfaction?.

4.0 Literature review

4.1. Definition

4.1.1 Work-life balance policies

These policies are associated with different organisational initiatives and existing practices regarding specific workplace supports for employees to help them to manage their professional responsibilities without jeopardizing personal life priorities. Therefore, these policies consider parental leaves, flexible work arrangements, wellness programs, childcare and healthcare programs for employees toward promoting a supportive framework for maintaining work-life balance.

4.1.2 Employee satisfaction

Employee satisfaction depends on fulfilling employee desires and goals by providing adequate job recognition, growth opportunities, training and development, job security, work-life balance, and improved workplace engagement experiences. Employee satisfaction levels drive individual inspiration for job engagement, performance, and productivity.

4.1.3 Physical and mental health

Both of these health aspects cover employees' overall well-being, including psychological conditions, physical fitness, emotional stability, and capability of stress management. These aspects are crucial for maintaining work-life balance concerning to individual capabilities, personal resilience capabilities, characteristics, and the tendency of getting mentally or physically impacted.

4.1.4. Communication approaches

These are crucial to cover all the mediums and approaches of communication to ensure an adequate level of connectivity and collaboration among employees, organisational teams, and management. Face-to-face meetings, organisational email, internal feedback mechanisms, and team collaboration software are helpful to strengthen communication approaches among employees, teams, and management, thereby elevating the possibility of maintaining work-life balance.

4.1.5 Overall well-being

This indicates the overall mental, physical, emotional and social conditions that are driving health and happiness for employees. With adequate mental resilience, physical health, social connections, and emotional stability, employees can maintain an optimised work-life balance to maintain their elevated productivity and efficiency levels in their personal and professional lives.

4.1.6 Organisational culture

This is the foundation of organisational norms, practices, and behaviors under shared beliefs and values, thereby showcasing the organisational identity and approaches toward employees. Therefore, organisational culture navigates leadership styles, makes decisions, and communicates accordingly to employees concerning their interactions and engagements, thereby eventually influencing work-life balance for employees.

4.1.7 Leadership

This is the driver for guiding and influencing employees to achieve personal and professional goals in alignment with organisational goals. This inspiration, support, motivation, and training by organisational management, team, and departmental leaders significantly impact employee engagement patterns and work-life balances for employees.

4.1.8 The implementation of work-life balance policies

The implementation process is associated with designing, assessing, and amending organisational and operational policies concerning crafting and integrating supportive initiatives for employees to provide work-life balance. Therefore, ensuring a balance between the personal and professional lives of employees requires in-depth planning and communication to perceive individual perspectives and allocate resources accordingly toward successfully implementing these policies toward ensuring adequate work-life balance for employees.

4.2. Work-life Balance Policies (WLBP) and Employee Well-being in the UK Hospitality Sector

4.2.1. Hypothesis 1

Impact of Work-life Balance Policies on Employee Satisfaction, Physical and Mental Health, and Communication Approaches

Effective communication of work-life balance policies under the leaders of the UK hospitality sector significantly impacts the overall well-being of employees and employee satisfaction. In this context, referring to Piso (2022), communication between UK hospitality sector employees and line managers is very poor, and with the lowest trade union membership rate from the hospitality sector, employees may not often get enough chances to communicate regarding their concerns for overall well-being necessities. Previous studies have extensively explored the relationship between work-life balance policies (WLBP) and various facets of employee well-being. Based on Sheppard (2016) and Mohezar, Jaafar, and Akbar (2021), a positive correlation between the implementation of WLBP and employee satisfaction levels. Employees who have

access to flexible work arrangements and supportive policies tend to report higher job satisfaction due to better work-life integration and reduced stress. Therefore, the positivist perspective of ontological belief regarding the quantified and objective-driven association between employee well-being and work-life balance will guide the present research to categorise literature sources toward developing theoretical frameworks and survey questions as the base of the research and measurement tool for the present research, respectively.

Moreover, according to CBE, Biron and Burke (2014), organisations with well-designed WLBP improvements in employee physical and mental health outcomes can help manage work-related stresses. Communications regarding flexible scheduling, health conditions, and other aspects can help provide different work-life balance initiatives for employees while establishing a culture of openness, empathy, and trust within the organisation.

4.2.2. Hypothesis 2

Influence of Organisational Culture, leadership, and Communication Toward Shaping the Implementation of work-life balance policies in the UK Hospitality Sector

According to Chandran and Abukhalifeh (2021), organisational culture and leadership play crucial roles in supporting and guiding employees to maintain a balance between their work and personal lives. However, the following figure indicates that the maximum recruiting challenges in hospitality are associated with increased workloads, which are influenced by organisational culture.

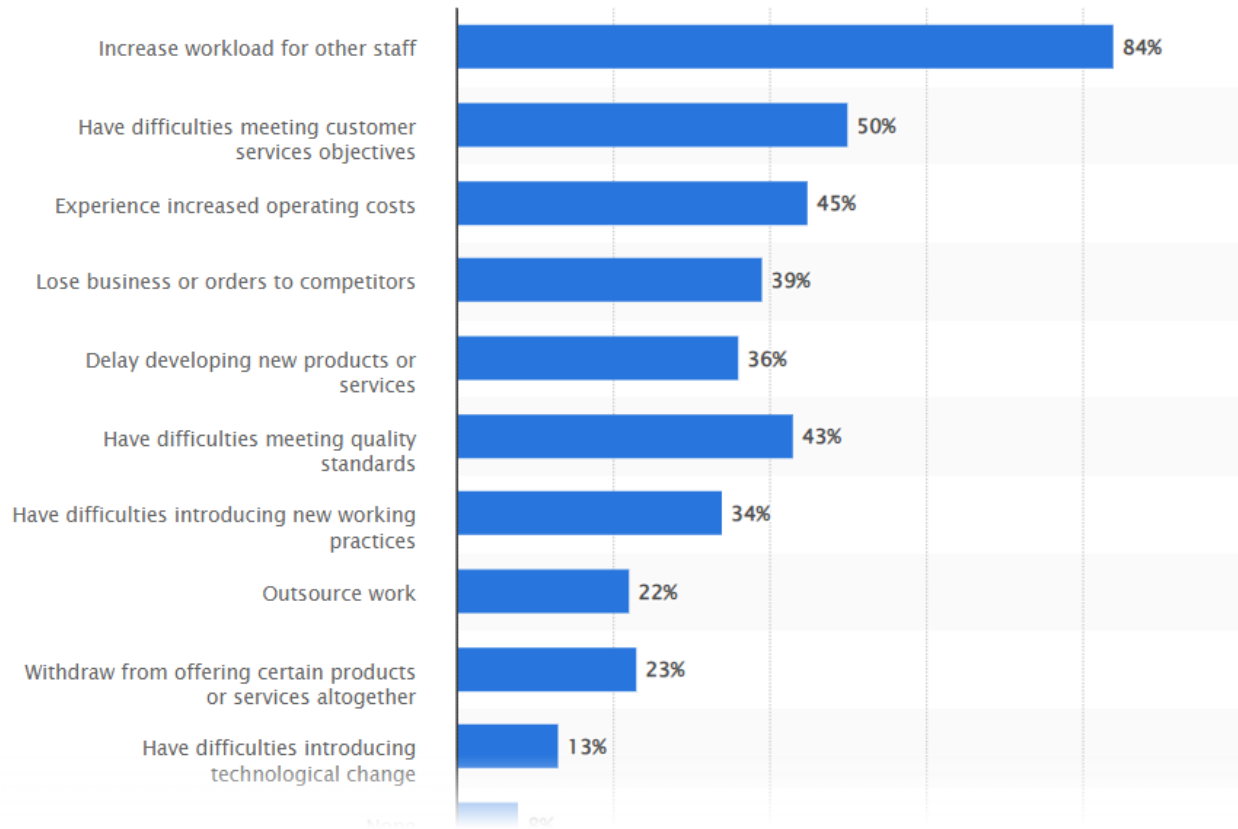


Figure: Increased workload is the key reason against filling vacancies in the UK hospitality sector

(Source: Statista Research Department, 2023).

The challenges of filling vacancies due to increased burnout and job leaving in the UK hospitality sector also persist in the present times (Dempsey, 2023). In this context, the survey question will be developed concerning the independent variables as flexibility and adaptability in organisational culture to support work-life balance policies, followed by communication of these policies under organisational culture and leadership toward shaping the dependent variable of employee job satisfaction and well-being in the UK hospitality sector toward structuring a predictive model and quantified metrics to assess the effectiveness of work-life balance policies for offering employee well-being.

4.2.3. Hypothesis 3

Impact of Employee Perceptions on Work-life Balance Policies Toward Shaping Work Environment in the UK Hospitality Sector

Employees in the UK hospitality sector perceive significant gaps in existing work-life balance policies. Based on Piso (2022), unpredictably long and exhausting working hours, instability in the contract of payment and job security, and rigidity in employers' autocracy have significantly impacted workload and **stress** for employees in the hospitality sector in the UK. Worldwide, employees from the hospitality industry suffer the most burnout rates, which are presented in the following bar graph.

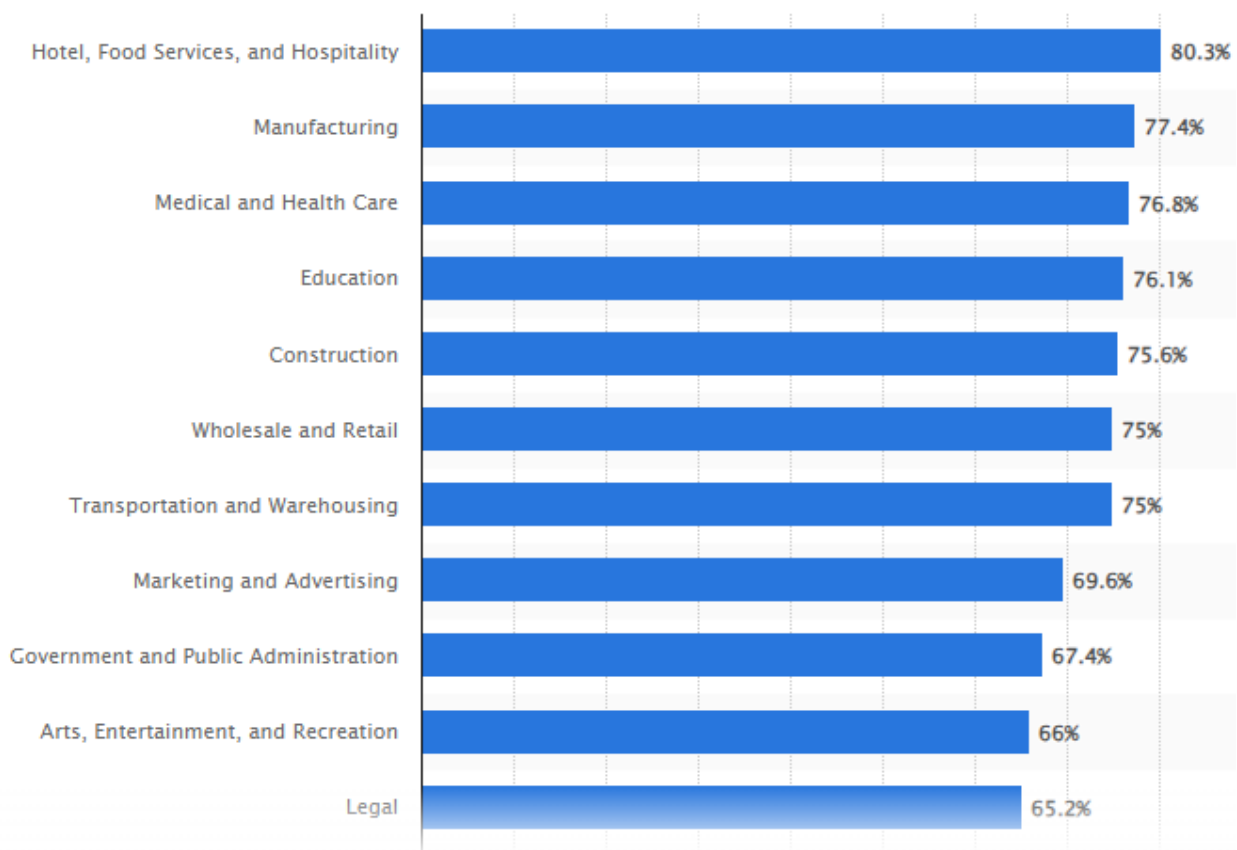


Figure: Highest employee burnout rate in 2019

(Source: Dyvik, 2024)

Perceived transparency and fairness in policy implementation contribute to positive perceptions among employees, fostering trust and loyalty towards the organisation. Therefore, despite several policies, the hospitality sector employees in the UK are also not capable of raising their voices and communicating to present their concerns about overall well-being with work-life balance practices.

4.2.4. Hypothesis 4

Impact of improving Work-life Balance Policies and Initiatives on Employee Well-being in the UK hospitality sector

In the UK hospitality sector, Organisations that emphasise employee well-being by providing and implementing supportive work-life balance policies experience higher levels of employee engagement, followed by lower turnover rates. Several strategies are evolving to develop addressable recommendations for alleviating the emerging challenges against maintaining and improving work-life balance policies for employees in the UK hospitality sector. Based on Barck-Holst et al. (2022), employees with better work-life balance are less likely to experience burnout and stress-related health issues. Therefore, the Quantitative research choice will influence the research strategy and data collection process for developing a structured and systematic approach toward identifying and objectively measuring the association between the research variables of work-life balance policies, leadership and organisational cultural support, communication, employee satisfaction, and other related aspects of employee overall well-being in the UK health sector, thereby eventually crafting necessary recommendations for improving work-life balances.

4.3. Literature gap

While existing studies have provided valuable insights into the positive correlation between WLBP and overall well-being including mental and physical health, employee satisfaction, and communication approaches, there is a significant absence of in-depth exploration into the effectiveness of specific strategies and initiatives aimed at improving WLBP implementation.

5.0 Ethical considerations:

The present research will adhere to the Data Protection Act regarding the secured storage of survey data responses with adequate safeguarding, cleaning, and preparation by maintaining ethical practices of data collection and presentation processes for research analysis. Moreover, the survey responses will be destroyed after the research and will not be used for any other purpose. The participants will engage after getting the complete information about the survey and may withdraw from the survey at any time with no consequences. With these ethical standards, adequate citation and referencing to credible literature sources without self-biased interpretation will also be integrated into the ethical consideration for the present research.

6.0 Research limitations

The limitations of the present research will be associated with its small sample size, indicating constraints in the generalisability of the findings and embedded biases with the self-reported survey response data. Moreover, examining the impacts of work-life balance policies solely on the perceptions of the same size may also be intruded on by personal biases.

7.0 Time frame

Individual time-frames for each of the research activities along the research stages are classified based on the total time frame of sixteen (16) weeks for the present research, and this is presented in the following Gantt chart.

Sl. No.	Research activities	Weeks												
		1	2 - 3	4	5	6 - 7	8 - 9	10	11 - 12	13	14	15 - 16		
1	Project Introduction													
2	Background and problem statement													
3	Research Methodology													
4	Aim, objectives, questions													
5	Literature sources extraction from databases													
6	Ethical consideration and limitation													
7	Submitting project proposal													
8	Feedback and modification													
9	Developing Survey questions													
10	Conducting Survey													
11	Data collection													
12	Data analysis													
13	Findings and discussion													
14	Conclusion													
15	Final submission													

Table: Gantt chart for the proposed project time-frame

(Source: Self-developed)

Conclusion for proposing the research

In a nutshell, with methodological choices and ethical considerations, the present research proposal presented the complete aim-objective-driven outline for investigating the diversified impacts, influences, and implications of the employee well-being practices and existing policies in the UK hospitality industry concerning the approaches of leaders under the environment of organisational culture to address necessary communication supports and empowerment for ensuring overall well-being and job satisfaction for the employees in the UK hospitality sector.

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